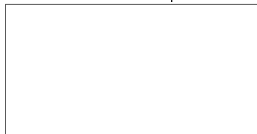


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THE AFFORESTATION PROGRAM OF THE USSR

Ilse Hofer

The plan for shelter belt planting initiated by the Soviet Union on 20 October 1948 includes the planting of trees for field protection, introduction of grass-crop rotation, and construction of ponds and water reservoirs to assure large and uniform harvests in the steppe and forest steppe zones of the European USSR by minimizing the effect of droughts, 20 of which have occurred in the Volga region during the last 65 years.

The plan is unique in its magnitude and may acquire revolutionary significance, if the experience gained from it can be applied to other drought-stricken agricultural regions of the world, or insofar as irrigation potentialities can be created there, to hitherto agriculturally unproductive areas. Similar shelter belt planting attempts were made in North America after World War I when the fertile wheat-growing regions threatened to become barren steppes. The present measures of the Soviet government are based on the experience which V. V. Dokuchayev has gained since 1892 on an experimental station in the rocky steppe zone between the Volga and Don rivers.

A. Shelter Belts

In the course of the next 15 years, an area of about 6.1 million hectares (equivalent to about 4 percent of the total Soviet cultivated area) is to be planted with shelter belts. There are to be eight wide state shelter belts, to be planted by the government, which will cover 117,900 hectares and have a cumulative length of 5,320 kilometers; they will run in a generally north-south direction and are to intercept the east winds blowing from the sandy expanses of the Kara-Kum Desert. They will increase moisture content in the air 20 to 30 percent, reduce surface evaporation, and prevent further blowing away of

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the topsoil. The most easterly belt, running from the Urals to the Caspian Sea, will be the widest. It will be composed of six individual belts, 60 meters wide and 300 meters apart. The most westerly belts are to be composed of only two individual belts.

State Shelter Belts

Name	Planting	Length (km)	Belts (units)	Width of	Distance
	Area (1,000 ha)			Individual Belts	Between Belts
				(meters)	
1. Saratov - Astrakhan (on the banks of the Volga River)	18.0	900	2	100	-
2. Penza - Yekaterinovka - Kamensk	11.3	600	3	60	300
3. Kamyshin - Stalingrad	3.3	170	3	60	300
4. Chapayevsk - Vladimirovka	15.3	580	4	60	300
5. Stalingrad - Stepnoye-Cherkessk	14.4	570	4	60	300
6. Vishnevaya Mountain - Caspian Sea (on the banks of the Ural River)	41.6	1,080	6	60	200 [sic]
7. Voronezh - Rostov (on the banks of the Don River)	11.0	920	2	60	-
8. Belgorod - Don (on the banks of the Severnyy Donets River)	3.0	500	2	30	-
Total	117.9	5,320	-	-	-

The planned belts will be complemented by already existing forests, especially west and north of the upper reaches of the Ural River, in the Kuban area, and in the northern Ukraine. While it is believed that Rumania will benefit from these shelter belts, the Academy of Sciences in Bucharest has already been at work since the beginning of 1949 planning a similar system of shelter belts for the frequently drought-stricken steppes of Rumania.

To carry out the necessary planning work, the Ministry of Forestry is establishing 300 forest conservation stations, 50 steppe forest managements, 200 forest managements, and 60 large state tree nurseries. Fifty-four forest conservation stations, 41 steppe forest managements, and 67 state tree nurseries are already in operation. An additional 270 forest conservation stations are being established by the Ministry of Agriculture. An area of 3,532 hectares had been sown by the nurseries as of 10 May 1949.

The sovkhoses and kolkhozes are to plant a system of field shelter belts covering an area of 6,031,000 hectares between the large state shelter belts. This figure includes the areas to be planted for the purpose of stabilizing shifting sands and the slopes of ravines. The field shelter belts are to be only 30 meters wide for the present.

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Field Shelter Belts, 1949 - 1965

<u>Purpose</u>	<u>1,000 Ha</u>
Field protection	4,172.5
Stabilization of ravine slopes	368.0
Stabilization of shifting sands	322.0
Afforestation in state forests	960.5
Afforestation on kolkhozes	190.0
Total forest planting	6,031.0

Types of Planting (Excluding State Shelter Belts)
(1,000 ha)

<u>Planting Agency and Purpose</u>	<u>1949</u>	<u>1950</u>	<u>1951-1955</u>	<u>1956-1965</u>	<u>Total</u>
Kolkhozes (field protection)	80.5	160.0	1,364.0	1,988.0	3,592.5
Sovkhozes (field protection)	8.0	21.0	150.0	401.0	580.0
Ministry of Forestry					
Stabilization of ravine slopes	16.0	42.0	328.0	-	386.0
Stabilization of shifting sands	22.4	43.1	256.5	-	322.0
Afforestation in state forests	148.1	159.2	653.2	-	960.5
Afforestation on kolkhozes	-	-	190.0	-	190.0
Total	275.0	425.3	2,941.7	2,389.0	6,031.0

B. Planting

About 38 different species of trees and shrubs will be used in planting the shelter belts. This number is adequate to permit planting a species adapted to every possible type of soil. Long-lived species include oak, ash, walnut, birch, pine, Siberian larch, and others suitable for dry areas, and eucalyptus for the banks of rivers and other bodies of water. In front of the long-lived trees, elm, maple, linden, or fruit trees are to be planted, and in front of these, such shrubs as willow, hawthorn, hazelnut, etc., and berry bushes on the kolkhozes. Two- to 3-year-old nursery seedlings will be planted. In the course of 6 years, 33,712,000,000 plants are to be grown. The new forests will provide a 3-percent increase in the ratio of forested to nonforested area in the USSR, and will effect an 80-percent increase in the absolute forest area, if a present forest area of 8 million hectares is assumed. In the course of 15 years, 20 times as much forest will be planted in the European USSR as now exists in Denmark, and 25 times as much as now stands in the Netherlands.

The Ministry of Forestry, which must provide 56 percent of the seedling requirements, will establish 60 new nurseries in addition to those already existing. The Ministry of Agriculture will operate 60 more nurseries. The sovkhoses have been charged with establishing 110 nurseries -- 80 in 1949 and 30 in 1950 -- to provide stock for their plantings, and one nursery is to be set up for every five to ten kolkhozes in 1949.

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Plan for Seedling Supply
(million units)

<u>Supplier</u>	<u>1949</u>	<u>1950</u>	<u>1951-1955</u>	<u>Percent of Total Requirements</u>
State Nurseries				
Of Ministry of Forestry	1,900	2,550	14,477	56.2
Of Ministry of Agriculture	634	1,015	8,062	28.8
Kolkhoz nurseries	246	377	2,686	9.8
Sovkhoz nurseries	86	219	1,460	5.2
Total	2,866	4,161	26,685	100.0

C. Working Personnel

The 570 forest conservation stations will perform the technical work in their respective districts. They will have the most modern soil-cultivating and tree-planting machines at their disposal. Each soil-cultivating machine will replace 300 workers. Nevertheless, a large number of specialists will have to be trained.

By 1948, 198,900 hectares of shelter belts had been planted on the fields of sovkhoses and kolkhozes. This planting met the plan 103.6 percent. The kolkhozes planted 48,800 hectares of the total, the sovkhoses 3,300 hectares, and the state forest managements 146,800 hectares.

D. Irrigation

From 1949 to 1955, a planned program of irrigation is to be carried out through the construction of ponds, water reservoirs, and dams on the small streams. A total of 44,228 ponds and reservoirs are to be built in the Ukrainian SSR: 41,300 by kolkhozes and 2,938 by sovkhoses. Even before the war, almost every other kolkhoz had a natural reservoir; 14,200 ponds covered an area of 63,000 hectares. Of those destroyed during the war, about 500 can be restored. In 1948, 1,952 new ponds were constructed.

This irrigation system is intended to increase the productivity of the soil and increase harvests of wheat, sugar beet, sunflower, caoutchouc, etc., and to make possible the establishment of additional tea and cotton plantations in the desert areas of Turkestan and the Transcaucasus. The electric power and fish industries will also benefit from this irrigation system.

E. Production Increases

In connection with the afforestation program, the grass-crop rotation system devised by V. R. Williams is to be introduced on 10,866 kolkhozes in 1949 and on 6,265 kolkhozes in 1950. It has been recommended that clover, spartina, and alfalfa be grown on fields for 2 years to increase feed production.

This recommendation is in line with the Soviet Two-Year Plan for increasing livestock production. Under this plan, production of meat, lard, milk, butter, eggs, and other food products, as well as leather, wool, etc., would increase at least 50 percent by 1951. To what extent yields per hectare would be increased by these measures will be shown by statistical results in future years.

F. Plan Fulfillment

In 1949, 136 state forest conservation stations were established. Each station has from 100 to 200 kolkhozes under its supervision.

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