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COLLECTIVE FARM MARKETS AND FAIRS IN THE ACTIVITIES OF CONSUMER COOPERATION OF THE UKRAINIAN SSR IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 20th CENTURY

*Колгоспні базари та ярмарки в діяльності споживчої
кооперації Української РСР в другій половині ХХ ст.*

Проблема продовольчого забезпечення населення залишається актуальною в контексті сучасних економічних і політичних криз. Виходячи з цього, автор на основі архівних джерел та законодавства (на матеріалах Української РСР) простежив особливості діяльності споживчої кооперації в містах і спроби держави використовувати кооперативну торгівлю для зни-

ження цін на колгоспних ринках і вирішення перманентного продовольчого дефіциту в останні роки існування СРСР.

Ключові слова: споживча кооперація, Українська РСР, продовольча проблема, колгоспний базар, ярмарок, сільськогосподарська продукція.

The article examines a specific aspect of consumer cooperation in the Ukrainian SSR during the latter half of the twentieth century, focusing on trade within collective-farm markets and the organization of fairs. While existing scholarly works on the history of consumer cooperation in Ukraine are predominantly descriptive and cover its entire lifespan from the late nineteenth century, there is limited research on the peculiarities of consumer cooperation's activities during the last period of its existence in a totalitarian state.

Consumer cooperation held a unique position in the planned economy of a totalitarian state, with its primary role being the organization of retail trade in rural areas, complementing the state's management of urban shopping centers through the Ministry of Trade. Additionally, the Ukrainian Union of Consumer Societies was involved in the procurement of agricultural products and their subsequent processing, primarily focusing on food products made from harvested agricultural raw materials. In this regard, consumer cooperatives acquired goods that were distributed to towns and industrial centers through a network of collective farms and specially organized fairs.

One distinctive feature of trading in collective-farm markets was that it was one of the few places in a command-administrative economy where market forces came into play. Prices for goods were determined by market demand and supply rather than state intervention. The majority of sellers in these markets were individual farmers who sold products they had grown themselves. Consequently, urban residents had the opportunity to purchase goods that were often unavailable in state-run stores, albeit at market prices that exceeded state-controlled prices.

The article draws upon archival sources and legislation from the Ukrainian SSR to explore the specific activities of cooperative trade in cities and the state's efforts to leverage this trade to lower prices within collective-farm markets and address chronic food shortages in urban areas. The primary motivation for transferring ownership of the collective-farm markets from the state to consumer cooperatives was to reduce market prices for food products and alleviate food shortages in cities. However, these measures were not entirely successful in achieving these objectives before the collapse of the Soviet system.

Keywords: consumer cooperation, Ukrainian SSR, food problem, collective-farm market, fair, agricultural product.

The daily existence of a Soviet citizen in the second half of the twentieth century was marked by the constant search for food. This behavioral pattern, pri-

marily affecting urban residents, gave rise to unique phenomena that were largely unfamiliar outside the totalitarian context. These phenomena included queues, shortages, rationing, blat (the exchange of favors), and more. While these issues were primarily associated with state-owned stores, there were also collective-farm markets where one could obtain essential products without these shortcomings, albeit at higher «market» prices.

However, even though the aforementioned phenomena vanished with the collapse of the Soviet economic system, the issue of food supply for the population remains pertinent, especially in the face of ongoing economic and geopolitical crises. In this regard, the role of markets where individual peasant farmers act as producers and sellers is a highly valuable component of the food supply system.

The author's recent personal experience, when in late February to March 2022 they were in a city isolated from conventional food supply routes due to ongoing military operations, serves as a testament to the significance of peasant and small-scale agricultural producers. These individuals, who transported and sold their own hand-grown products at the local market, emerged as saviors during such trying times. Their efforts helped alleviate the severity of the food crisis in those challenging circumstances.

Hence, we believe that collective farm markets and fairs, as integral components of consumer cooperatives in the Ukrainian SSR during the latter half of the 20th century, warrant in-depth examination, aligning with the aforementioned significance.

Efforts by the party-state leadership to address urban food shortages by utilizing the collective farm markets in conjunction with consumer cooperatives were inherently bound to fail. While some isolated successes may have been achieved through the involvement of consumer cooperatives in urban trade and collective farm markets, the overall bureaucratic and inflexible nature of the planned administrative economy prevented a comprehensive solution to the problem. At its core, the issue stemmed from the lack of genuine market incentives within the framework of a totalitarian state.

The phenomenon of collective-farm markets within the Soviet economic system has been partially explored in various works, but a comprehensive study specifically focused on this aspect of Soviet trade is yet to be undertaken. For instance, Julie Hessler, in her monograph «A Social History of Soviet Trade», acknowledges the significant role played by collective-farm markets in food provision alongside an inefficient state trade system (Hessler, J. 2004). Ukrainian researcher Volodymyr Kuzmenko also addressed this topic in his article, «Trade in the Collective-Farm Market in the Everyday Life of Villagers in the Ukrainian SSR during the 1940s to 1960s (Based on Materials from the Chernihiv Region)» (Кузьменко, В. 2016). However, neither these works nor those dedicated to the historical development of consumer cooperation in Ukraine have extensively

explored the activities of consumer cooperatives within the collective-farm markets of the Ukrainian SSR (Аліман, М. та ін. 2013).

Given the limited research on this topic, our study heavily relies on archival sources, forming the foundation of our investigation. The primary source base comprises unpublished archival documents from the Ukrainian Union of Consumer Societies, which are housed in the Central State Archive of Higher Authorities and Administration of Ukraine (TsDAVO of Ukraine). These documents consist mainly of internal records of the Ukrainian Union of Consumer Societies, including minutes of departmental meetings, analytical memoranda sent to the government and Central Committee of the CPU, directives from regional consumer associations, and comprehensive reports on the activities of the consumer cooperation system for specific years. Additionally, certain documents from regional archives, such as the State Archives of Chernihiv Region, and the Central State Archive of Public Associations of Ukraine (CDAGO of Ukraine), were also consulted. These materials predominantly pertain to the operations of the consumer cooperation system in urban areas and the functioning of collective-farm markets. To further our research objectives, we conducted a thorough analysis of legislative acts issued by party and state authorities related to the activities of collective-farm markets and consumer cooperation within cities.

The research methodology is primarily shaped by our heavy reliance on archival data sources, particularly considering the critical approach necessary when analyzing documents from the Soviet era. Hence, we consider the critical method as one of the primary approaches in this study. We also employed the cliometrics method, which allowed us to extract and present various relevant indicators in tabular form concerning the subject under investigation. When examining regional Soviet periodicals for articles and reports related to the activities of collective farm markets and consumer cooperatives in urban areas, we utilized content analysis.

In addition to these specialized methods, we applied general scientific approaches, including analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction, and the typological method. Throughout our research, we adhered to fundamental principles such as objectivity, systematicity, and comprehensiveness.

Based on the provided source base and employing the aforementioned research methods, we aim to analyze the activities of consumer cooperation within the cities of the Ukrainian SSR. We will also examine the state's efforts to address the broader issue of food scarcity and reduce the price levels for food products within the collective farm markets through the consumer cooperation systems.

Collective farm markets were, in essence, the sole places within the Soviet Union where market forces of supply and demand operated «officially». The state, unable to adequately provide its citizens with the required quantity and variety of food, and likewise the peasants with financial compensation for their strenu-

ous work on collective farms, was compelled to tolerate this pocket of economic freedom. The only stipulation imposed by the authorities on products in these markets was that they must be grown or produced by the peasants themselves. Additionally, the lack of currency among the majority of peasants, who were compensated with agricultural products for their collective farm labor, prompted them to sell these products on the collective farm markets to acquire necessary items such as clothing, tools, kitchen utensils, and more.

Nonetheless, many peasants from remote settlements often found it impossible to travel to the cities' markets due to a lack of personal and public transportation. Moreover, the time spent by peasants on such trips was deemed unproductive by the Communist Party leadership, as it diverted them from their work in collective farms or state farms. The authorities believed that the solution to these issues lay in utilizing the procurement infrastructure of consumer cooperatives to acquire agricultural products in rural areas, followed by their sale in cities. Simultaneously, the prices of these products needed to be set lower than the market rates.

This sphere of activity of Ukoopspilka (Ukrainian Union of Consumer Societies) gained significant importance in the context of persistent food shortages in cities and industrial centers, as well as the engagement of the consumer cooperation system in addressing this issue.

In the immediate post-war years, when cities were grappling with severe food shortages, the state, in accordance with the directives of the Central Committee of the CPSU and the government on November 9, 1946, tasked consumer cooperation institutions with addressing a crucial «economic and political» objective: to actively contribute to the gradual reduction of prices in urban bazaars and markets¹.

This objective aimed to be achieved by procuring agricultural products at the most affordable prices and through rigorous cost-saving measures related to transportation, product handling, and so on.

However, despite the efforts of consumer cooperatives to influence market prices, as one cooperative worker metaphorically expressed it, “surrounding the bazaar with their outlets,” the situation could not be drastically altered. The primary reason was quite simple: the war-devastated Ukrainian villages were unable to produce sufficient food to meet the population's needs. For instance, near the regional consumer society store that opened at the indoor market in Zhitomir in 1946, where meat was sold for 10–15 rubles less than the market price, there were daily queues of 300–400 people. There were instances when meat purchased from this store was then resold nearby at a higher price².

Trade in the collective-farm markets began to develop more actively from the mid-1950's, coinciding with changes in the country's leadership. These chang-

¹ Центральний державний архів вищих органів влади та управління України (ЦДАВО України). Ф. 296. Оп. 8. Спр. 165. Арк. 189

² ЦДАВО України. Ф. 296. Оп. 8. Спр. 165. Арк. 190.

es provided peasants with additional opportunities to sell their agricultural surpluses and improve their financial situation. Furthermore, a series of laws were enacted to encourage the development of trade in the collective-farm markets. For instance, on September 1, 1953, a significant reduction (averaging 30%) in the one-time trade fee for collective-farm markets was implemented. Additionally, when selling wild berries, mushrooms, and fruits, the market fee was completely abolished¹.

By 1956, more than 2,000 collective-farm markets were operating in Ukraine. These markets were situated in every city, district center, the majority of working settlements, many railway stations, and 727 large villages (Аліман, М. та ін. 2013, с. 706). During this period, there was a shift in the attitude of state authorities toward collective-farm markets. The state began to acknowledge the significance of products from individual peasant producers and the remaining produce from collective farms in ensuring food supplies for urban residents and improving the material well-being of both city and rural populations (Хорунжий, М. 1963, с. 3).

During this time, the country's top leadership emphasized the importance of legislative support and incentives for the trade of agricultural products in collective-farm markets. In a speech at the June plenum of the Central Committee in 1958, Khrushchev stated: «Alongside the expansion of state trade, all necessary conditions for the expansion of collective farm trade should be created to allow collective farms to sell their agricultural products directly in the collective-farm markets. However, this does not mean that each collective farm must directly engage in market trade. This should primarily be done by our consumer cooperatives to benefit the state, the farmers, and the consumers» (Балашов, А 1959, с. 4).

This shift in state policy was reflected in the issuance of several normative acts on the matter. On February 25, 1961, in the decision of the Central Committee of the CPSU and the Government of the USSR titled «On Improving the Organization of Sales of Surplus Agricultural Products from Collective Farms and Individual farmers», consumer cooperatives were mandated to expand the trade of surplus agricultural products in cities and workers' villages, with a primary focus on collective-farm markets. On February 15, 1965, a resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR titled «On measures to improve the operation of the collective-farm markets of the Ukrainian SSR» was adopted. This resolution tasked local authorities, the Ministry of Trade, road transport and highways, as well as the production and procurement of agricultural products, to actively promote the activities of collective-farm markets and ensure the convenience of their services for both sellers and buyers².

¹ О снижении размеров разового сбора на колхозных рынках. Указ президиума Верховного Совета СССР от 01.09.1957 URL: <http://surl.li/lmkla>

² Збірник постанов і розпоряджень уряду Української Радянської Соціалістичної Республіки. 1957. Київ: Видавництво політичної л-ри України. С. 10–11.

Regional trade departments began to actively develop the necessary infrastructure to support the full operation of collective-farm markets. With the cooperation of local authorities in cities, especially regional centers, they expanded the market areas and constructed new pavilions, counters, hotels for collective farmers, and refrigerators for storing perishable products. Additionally, certain legislative restrictions on the trade of farmers in the collective-farm markets were lifted. For instance, the «Rules of Trade on Collective-Farm Markets», approved by the order of the Minister of Trade of the Ukrainian SSR on February 20, 1965, stated in paragraph 8 that kolkhozes and collective farmers were no longer required to provide information about the affiliation of their products for sale (Петльований, В. 1965, с. 2).

During this period, consumer cooperatives began to engage in commission trade of agricultural products. They would acquire goods from both individual peasants and collective farms on a commission basis, and then sell these products at the collective-farm markets in the cities. However, the commission trade conducted by consumer cooperatives was limited in scale because they only provided farmers with 50% of the value of the goods accepted for commission. As a result, many peasants preferred to sell their self-cultivated agricultural products independently.

As a result, on the collective-farm markets, individual producers, including peasant-kolkhoz workers and residents of urban suburbs with private households, continued to be the primary sellers. This characteristic of market trade actually became more pronounced over time. For instance, while the ratio of products from collective farms to those from individual producers was 1:1 in 1940, by 1954, collective farms accounted for only 11% of the output, while individual producers made up 89%. The percentage of individual producers in specific products was even higher. For example, in the sale of potatoes and pork in the collective-farm markets of the Ukrainian SSR, collective farmers contributed to only 10%, beef 15%, butter and milk 6%, vegetables 25%¹.

To provide a clearer perspective on these statistics, consider a specific example. In the collective-farm market of Nizhyn, located in the Chernihiv region, in 1970, a total of 489.8 tons of vegetables were sold. Out of this quantity, only 75.5 tons came from collective farms. In the case of fruit, the figures were 100 tons in total sales, with collective farms contributing just 14.4 tons². At the Nizhyn collective-farm market in 1984, individual producers were responsible for the sale of a substantial quantity of goods. For instance, they sold 2794.9 tons of vegetables, while collective farms and state farms contributed a mere 100.8 tons. Similarly, in terms of meat, individual producers sold 361.3 tons,

¹ ЦДАВО України. Ф. 296. Оп. 8. Спр. 921. Арк. 17

² Ніжинський відділ Державного архіву Чернігівської області (НВ ДАЧО). Ф. 5293. Оп. 1. Спр. 1456. Арк. 25.

compared to the 1.6 tons sold by collective farms and state farms. In the case of milk and dairy products, the figures were 184.9 thousand liters sold by individual producers, while collective farms and state farms sold just 0.6 thousand liters combined¹.

The term «collective-farm market», originally implying the sale of agricultural products primarily by collective farms, did not accurately reflect its actual nature. To diminish the impact of individual producers on these markets, the party authorities instructed consumer cooperatives to establish their trading outlets on or near the collective-farm markets in urban areas. In just the 1966/67 period, the number of consumer cooperative trade institutions, including tents and stalls, situated on collective-farm markets increased from 1707 to 1834².

In the overall commodity circulation of the consumer cooperative system, the trade of agricultural products in cities accounted for 6.1% in 1965 and 5.7% in 1966. Meanwhile, the share of this type of trade in the commodity turnover of consumer goods within consumer cooperatives was 13.8% and 12.6% for the respective years³.

Despite the relatively small share of sales for certain agricultural products in cities, it had a significant impact on price formation in collective-farm markets in certain periods. In 1966, for example, the cooperative products accounted for 21.1% of meat sales and 32.7% of oil sales. However, this influence remained limited for other products, such as potatoes (2.7%), vegetables (6.7%), and poultry (8.9%)⁴. However, in terms of monetary value, the trade of consumer cooperatives with goods purchased at negotiated prices consistently increased over time. For instance, in 1960, consumer cooperatives in the cities of the Ukrainian SSR sold such goods worth 257.1 million rubles, and by 1964, the figure had risen to 334.1 million. In 1971, it reached 401.7 million, and in 1974, it amounted to 427 million rubles⁵.

In general, the party authorities and the leadership of the Ukoopspilka directed their institutions to sell food products in cities at prices lower than market rates. However, these directives were not always effectively implemented. For instance, by August 25, 1966, in Odessa, city cooperative trade was selling oil for 1 ruble 90 kopecks per liter, while the weighted average market price was around 1 ruble 80 kopecks; sugar-sand was sold in cooperative trade for 76 kopecks per kg, compared to the market price of 70 kopecks; bacon was priced at 1 ruble 85 kopecks per kg in cooperative trade, whereas it was available in the market for 1

¹ НВ ДАЧО. Ф. 5293. Оп. 1. Спр. 2295. Арк. 45.

² ЦДАВО України. Ф. 296. Оп. 8. Спр. 2837. Арк. 2.

³ ЦДАВО України. Ф. 296. Оп. 8. Спр. 2837. Арк. 5.

⁴ ЦДАВО України. Ф. 296. Оп. 8. Спр. 2837. Арк. 37–42.

⁵ Статистичний щорічник. Народне господарство Української РСР у 1965 році / ред. Фаєрман П. Київ: Видавництво політичної літератури України, 1966. С. 544; Статистичний щорічник. Народне господарство Української РСР у 1973 році / ред. Фаєрман П. Київ: Видавництво політичної літератури України, 1974. С. 457.

ruble 70 kopecks. In 1971, Dnipropetrovs'k city cooperative trade had been selling wheat for six months at prices 11% higher than those in the collective-farm market. Similarly, Zaporizhzhya city cooperative trade was selling flour for 17% more than the market price¹. Comparable situations were reported in the Kyiv, Chernihiv, and Crimean regional consumer associations.

The reason for this phenomenon is likely the city cooperative organizations' eagerness to meet planned targets at any cost. Reports from external inspections of cooperative trade in cities revealed instances where city cooperative trade acquired agricultural products from dealers or purchased them directly in the collective-farm markets, leading to such unexpected price disparities. However, on the whole, the prices in urban cooperative trade were lower than market prices, as indicated in the following table.

Table 1.

**Price Comparison for Meat Between Cooperative and Market Trade
as of September 25, 1973²**

Cities	Pork		Beef	
	City Cooperative Trade Prices	Market prices	City Cooperative Trade Prices	Market prices
Donetsk	2.80	3.50	2.60	3.50
Odesa	2.80	3.50	2.60	4.00
Zaporizhzhia	1.80	3.50	2.80	3.50
Poltava	2.90	3.00	2.70	3.00

Nonetheless, in the face of persistent food shortages and the continual urban population growth, the quantities of food provided to city centers via the consumer cooperation system fell notably short of meeting the escalating demands of urban residents. To address this shortfall, especially in anticipation of public holidays, Ukoopsilka consistently organized food fairs to help bridge the gap in the urban population's need for essential food products.

For instance, in the spring of 1970, as part of the festivities commemorating the 100th anniversary of Vladimir Lenin's birth and the May holidays, the Vinnitsa Regional Consumer Union had planned to conduct fairs in both Vinnitsa and district centers. During this period, a substantial quantity of goods was made available for sale, including 590 tons of meat, 315 tons of oil, 1500 tons of flour, and 75 tons of fruit in the Vinnitsa region. These sales goals were communicated in written form to every district consumer society and city cooperative trade³. Similar fairs were also organized to coincide with other «significant» occasions. In the 1970s, New Year fairs became a tradition in the Vinnytsia region, and in Sevastopol, fairs were arranged by the Crimean Consumer Union on the eve of Navy Day⁴.

¹ ЦДАВО України. Ф. 296. Оп. 8. Спр. 3721. С. 107

² ЦДАВО України. Ф. 296. Оп. 8. Спр. 2837. Арк. 9.

³ ЦДАВО України. Ф. 296. Оп. 8. Спр. 3647. Арк. 6.

⁴ ЦДАВО України. Ф. 296. Оп. 8. Спр. 3647. Арк. 9–11.

Similar fairs were also organized in smaller towns. For instance, on December 28, 1973, the district center of Nosivka in the Chernihiv region hosted a pre-holiday fair in which all the district's shops offering food and industrial goods participated. Visitors were catered to by a public catering and bread-baking plant belonging to the consumer society, ensuring the availability of confectionery and bakery products (Anonymous, 1973, p. 4). A few months later, on April 27, another pre-holiday fair took place in Nosivka, on the eve of the May holidays. This fair welcomed farmers and collective farms to sell their agricultural products (Anonymous, 1973, p. 4).

In reality, starting from the mid-1960's, pre-holiday fairs became a regular occurrence, taking place not only in major cities but also in district centers. These fairs served important socio-political purposes, showcasing the government's commitment to the well-being of the working people and facilitating the fulfillment of trade turnover quotas, a key performance indicator for trade organizations. Consequently, consumer cooperatives in the USSR began organizing such fairs almost every week. During the latter half of the 1960s, Ukoopspilka organized a staggering total of 50,900 such fairs (Гетьман, Г. 1985, с. 151).

Conversely, certain regions within the republic exhibited a more deliberate and purposeful approach to consumer cooperatives' involvement in collective-farm market trade. The cities and towns of Transcarpathia, in particular, saw active development in cooperative trade on collective-farm markets. This growth was facilitated by the presence of an ample array of storage and refrigeration facilities, including vegetable storage for 300 tons, general storage facilities for 5,200 tons, refrigerators for 170 tons, and ten wine cellars, each capable of holding 900 tons. A significant number of these facilities were strategically located directly on the collective-farm markets, thereby exerting a direct influence on the reduction and stabilization of market prices. Notably, in the city of Berehove, the entire city's collective-farm market was transferred to the sphere of consumer cooperation management during the 1970's¹.

Recognizing the significance of market-based trade in providing food to the urban population, the government aimed to intensify and streamline this form of trade through consumer cooperation. To this end, on April 3, 1970, the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR issued Resolution No. 187, titled «Measures for the Further Development of Trade in Collective-Farm Markets». This resolution mandated Ukoopspilka to facilitate a substantial increase in the purchase of surplus agricultural products. It called for the involvement of all contractors and rural consumer associations, expansion of the cooperative trade network within markets, and the implementation of measures to prevent city cooperative trade of agricultural products at prices exceeding market rates.

¹ ЦДАВО України. Ф. 296. Оп. 8. Спр. 4578. Арк. 39.

Subsequently, on May 28, 1973, Ukoopspilka issued its own resolution titled «Measures to Enhance Cooperative Trade in Collective-Farm Markets». In this resolution, the Ukoopspilka Board instructed regional consumer unions to take necessary actions to increase the procurement of surplus agricultural products from collective farms and the general population. They were tasked with fully utilizing resources in remote areas and proposing the expansion of the retail network for cooperative trade within collective-farm markets to local Soviets of People's Deputies¹. Additionally, city cooperative trade and district consumer associations were allocated resources to organize agricultural product trade outside the markets. This issue was also included in the program of methodological seminars and meetings designed to enhance the qualifications of consumer cooperation system leaders².

In response to these regulations, cooperative organizations at the grassroots level made efforts to revitalize their presence in the collective-farm markets. This revitalization included the opening of new permanent stores, seasonal tents, and stalls in regions such as Donetsk, Ivano-Frankiv's'k, and Dnipropetrovs'k. For instance, Poltava's city cooperative trade significantly expanded its footprint on the local collective-farm market during the 1970s. During the trade of early vegetables, Poltava cooperators introduced an additional 20–25 trays in the market. In 1972, Poltava city cooperative trade held an 85% share in fruit, 41% in vegetables and potatoes, and 31% in oil.

In 1973, a total of 80 booths were established, and 30 exhibitions for the sale of agricultural products were organized in various markets in Poltava, Pyryatyn, Kremenchug, and other cities within the Poltava region. Meanwhile, the Vinnitsa Union of Consumer Societies managed to generate a turnover of 11.6 million rubles from agricultural enterprises in the agricultural industry markets during the 1970s, accounting for only 41% of the region's commission turnover³.

Cooperative trade in surplus agricultural products during the 1960s to the 1980s was efficiently organized in the collective-farm markets of Simferopol. The central market featured the «Cooperator» shop with 30 workstations, offering a continuous supply of a diverse range of products. In Uzhgorod's collective-farm market, nearly half of the premises were designated for city cooperative trade, including storage for meat, sausage products, vegetable pavilions, and additional spaces to store the necessary stock of products. Dnipropetrovs'k also had a well-organized cooperative trade during the 1970's and 1980's, with four large stores in the collective-farm markets that were consistently stocked with a variety of food items and primarily handled the sale of meat acquired from collective farmers and collective farms on a commission basis.

¹ ЦДАВО України. Ф. 296. Оп. 8. Спр. 4151. Арк. 31.

² ЦДАВО України. Ф. 296. Оп. 8. Спр. 4302. Арк. 1–2.

³ ЦДАВО України. Ф. 296. Оп. 8. Спр. 3992. Арк. 27.

Zaporizhia, Cherkassy, and Ternopil' saw an increase. For instance, in the collective-farm markets of Kharkiv in 1971, 1342 tons of meat were sold, while city cooperative trade handled 1731 tons. In Dnipropetrovs'k, the collective-farm markets sold 2282 tons of meat, compared to 1170 tons in city cooperative trade. Ternopil witnessed a significant rise, with the share of meat sales by urban cooperatives in the collective-farm markets increasing to 44.2% in 1973, and in Poltava, it reached 37.4%. Cooperative trade in Voroshilovgrad and the surrounding region was well-organized, featuring both stationary cooperative networks and additional trade directly on the collective-farm markets. In the first half of 1973 alone, cooperators in the Voroshilovgrad region generated a profit of 2,427 thousand rubles, and numerous fairs, trade shows, and evening bazaars were held during this period¹. In the Kherson region, 60 stalls for the sale of vegetables and fruits were established on the collective-farm markets, along with 10 wells for watermelon trade in the early 1970's.

In all of these cities, due to the substantial sales of meat and other products by cooperative trade, it had a notable impact on the pricing dynamics in the collective-farm markets. For instance, in the first half of 1973, Kharkiv's collective-farm markets sold 854 tons of meat, whereas city cooperative trade handled 1094 tons, resulting in the share of city cooperative trade in meat sales in Kharkiv reaching 56%. Similar effects were observed in other cities such as Kirovograd, where the share reached 35%, and Uzhgorod, where it surged to 88%².

Table 2.

**Sales of Surplus Agricultural Products by Consumer Cooperatives
in the Collective-Farm Markets of the Ukrainian SSR in 1973**

Types of agricultural products	Sales volume
Meat	20,000 tons
Poultry	1 million pieces
Oil	7,000 tons
Eggs	50 million pieces
Lard	3000 tons
Honey	1000 tons
Flour, Grain	35,000 tons

In certain regions of the Ukrainian SSR, consumer cooperatives did not give sufficient attention to trading in the collective-farm markets during this period. Specifically, within 14 regional consumer associations, there was a reduction in the retail and sales network of consumer cooperatives within the collective-farm markets. Regions such as Volyn, Zhytomyr, Ternopil, Rivne, and others had severely limited cooperative retail networks within these markets. The reasons for this

¹ ЦДАВО України. Ф. 296. Оп. 8. Спр. 4151. Спр. 36.

² ЦДАВО України. Ф. 296. Оп. 8. Спр. 4151. Арк. 38.

³ ЦДАВО України. Ф. 296. Оп. 8. Спр. 4151. Арк. 22.

lag were both objective and subjective. Region, city, and district councils of people's deputies were generally reluctant to allocate space for setting up shops for the sale of agricultural products. Throughout the 1960's and 1970's, city councils in regions like Zaporizhzhya, Zhytomyr, Kirovograd, Odessa, Kharkiv, Cherkassy, and Chernihiv rarely provided spaces for cooperative trade¹. For instance, in the Lviv region, cities such as Zolochiv, Stryi, Truskavets, Brody, and Boryslav, the city executive committees did not grant spaces for consumer cooperatives to establish stores for agricultural product trade. In some cases, city councils even made decisions to withdraw trade premises from city cooperatives².

The prevailing approach to increasing the sale of agricultural products in cities within Ukoospilka did not fundamentally improve the state of urban food supply. Reports from this organization included data indicating a gradual decrease in the volume of agricultural product sales through the cooperative system in certain cities. For instance, the 1966 report noted that the Chernivtsi Regional Consumer Society experienced a reduction in the sale of various goods in cities, including sausages, oil, fish, milk, and cereals. In the Odessa region, which boasted the largest market in the region known as «Privoz», with thousands of daily visitors, city cooperative trade had only one workplace for vegetable sales and three for meat. Many regions saw a decline in the cooperative retail network for agricultural trade during the 1950s and 1960s. Notably, in the Odessa region, there was a decrease of 16 institutions, while L'viv saw a reduction of 22, Cherkassy - 26, Dnipropetrovs'k — 28, Crimea — 42, and Kharkiv — 75³.

The limited development of the cooperative trade network for commission sales of agricultural products in cities can be attributed, in part, to the reluctance of peasants to consign their products to cooperative commissions. Several reasons contributed to the peasants' disinclination to use consumer cooperatives as intermediaries. Firstly, the prices offered by cooperatives to farmers were lower compared to market prices. Secondly, as observed by British researcher Alec Nove, peasants not only lacked trust in cooperatives but also had the need to visit the city themselves to independently sell their products and procure necessary industrial goods from the rural trade network in villages (Nove, A. 1992, p. 347). Furthermore, many peasants viewed these trips as a form of cultural leisure, affording them the opportunity to visit cinemas, dine at cafes, and more.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, there were subsequent efforts by the authorities to address the issue of food shortages by promoting the production and sale of agricultural products from small-scale farm households, including peasants and the petty bourgeoisie. In light of this, it is relevant for us to examine various government resolutions related to this matter.

¹ ЦДАВО України. Ф. 296. Оп. 8. Спр. 4303. Арк. 34.

² ЦДАВО України. Ф. 296. Оп. 8. Спр. 4444. Арк. 14.

³ ЦДАВО України. Ф. 296. Оп. 8. Спр. 2825. Арк. 150.

In 1977 and 1981, the government issued resolutions aimed at fostering the commercialization of individual subsidiary farms with the involvement of consumer cooperatives. The 1977 decree not only included measures to support peasants' subsidiary farms but also encouraged consumer cooperatives to establish long-term contracts with individual agricultural producers for the purchase of their products. To facilitate this, the State Bank was instructed to provide loans to consumer cooperative organizations at a nominal interest rate of 1% per annum¹. The 1981 amendment expanded upon the previous resolution by emphasizing that improvements in the supply of agricultural products to the population had not been achieved. According to this document, consumer cooperatives were expected to strengthen the material resources of their procurement infrastructure and actively engage in agreements with peasants for the purchase of agricultural products, which would then be sold in urban areas. Concurrently, local authorities were tasked with enhancing the material resources of collective-farm markets to create suitable conditions for trading agricultural surpluses.

The final paragraph of this resolution vividly illustrates the state's policy towards individual farms. In this paragraph, local party committees were advised to foster a social environment where farmers, workers, employees, and other citizens would recognize that raising livestock and poultry in their personal subsidiary farms, as well as participating in gardening, was not only a personal endeavor but also a valuable contribution to the state's larger objectives².

As a result, the Soviet state came to realize that large agricultural enterprises such as collective farms and state farms were not exclusively capable of providing the population with agricultural products. Despite their low level of mechanization and limited land cultivation (only 7.7%), individual farms played a significant role in the production of essential items. Specifically, potatoes accounted for over 50%, vegetables and melons for 24%, and fruits and grapes for 35% of the total production (Баран, В. & Даниленко, В. 2006, с. 481). Therefore, consumer cooperatives needed to tap into these resources for sales in urban markets and their own stores. This shift in the focus of consumer cooperation was emphasized in subsequent government and party resolutions.

In preparation for the «food program», the government took action on January 7, 1982, by issuing a resolution titled «On Increasing the Purchases of Agricultural Products in Private Subsidiary Households by Consumer Cooperation and Expanding Trade in them in the Cities and Industrial Centers of the Country». This resolution acknowledged that the previous year's objectives in terms

¹ О личных подсобных хозяйствах колхозников, рабочих, служащих и других граждан и коллективном садоводстве и огородничестве. Постановление ЦК КПСС и Совета Министров СССР от 14 сентября 1977 г. № 843 URL: <http://surl.li/lmkoo>

² О дополнительных мерах по увеличению производства сельскохозяйственной продукции в личных подсобных хозяйствах граждан. Постановление ЦК КПСС и Совета Министров СССР от 8 января 1981 г. № 176 URL: <http://surl.li/lmkov>

of agricultural procurement from private subsidiary households and urban trade, as outlined in the 1981 decision, had not been adequately met by consumer cooperation. In addition to general recommendations for expanding agricultural procurement and ensuring a consistent supply of meat and other products in the cooperative trade network within cities, the government allocated an additional 1000 small-tonnage cargo vehicles, 1000 passenger cars, and additional construction vehicles, machinery, and technological equipment to facilitate the expansion and development of the procurement base of consumer cooperation¹.

The intensification of consumer cooperation's mediating role in the distribution of agricultural products was further reinforced by the decree titled «On Additional Measures to Expand the Sale of Fruit and Vegetable Products by Collective Farms, State Farms, and other Agricultural Enterprises to Consumer Cooperative Organizations on the Collective-Farm Markets», issued on August 5, 1982². Subsequently, on August 24, 1982, this decree was duplicated by both the government and the party of the Ukrainian SSR, retaining the same title. In accordance with this document, local authorities and the Ministry of Trade of the Ukrainian SSR were tasked with implementing additional measures to enhance the functionality of collective-farm markets and prevent restrictions on the sale of vegetables, fruits, and berries to consumer cooperatives³.

Indeed, the authorities consistently pursued a policy aimed at strengthening the role of consumer cooperation as an intermediary between individual producers of agricultural products and urban consumers, starting in the mid-1950's. This strategy prioritized the procurement of agricultural products from the population and the expansion of the cooperative retail network, particularly in the collective-farm markets, within the structure of consumer cooperation.

One of the final administrative measures aimed at improving urban food supply was the transfer of collective-farm markets from the management of the Ministry of Trade to Ukoopspilka. This decision was formalized through a decree by the Government and the Central Committee of the CPSU on February 26, 1987, titled «On measures to improve the work of collective-farm markets». This decree was subsequently duplicated by the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine on April 14, 1987.

¹ Об увеличении потребительской кооперацией закупок сельскохозяйственных продуктов в личных подсобных хозяйствах граждан и расширении торговли ими в городах и промышленных центрах страны. Постановление ЦК КПСС, Совета Министров СССР от 07.01.1982, № 6 URL: <http://surl.li/lmkpa>

² О дополнительных мерах по расширению продажи колхозами совхозами и другими сельскохозяйственными предприятиями плодовоощной продукции организациями потребительской кооперации на колхозных рынках. Постановление ЦК КПСС, Совета Министров СССР от 05.08.1982, № 72 URL: <http://surl.li/lmkpb>

³ Зібрання постанов уряду Української Радянської Соціалістичної Республіки. Київ: Видавництво політичної л-ри України, 1982. С. 3–4.

The preamble of this resolution painted a rather bleak picture of the functioning of collective-farm markets. It highlighted several issues, including the markets' failure to meet modern requirements, the limited utilization by collective farms, state farms, and other agricultural enterprises of the opportunity to sell their products in the collective-farm markets to fulfill state purchase plans for items such as potatoes, vegetables, melons, fruits, berries, and table grapes. Additionally, insufficient support and assistance were provided to collective farms in coordinating with consumer cooperatives. The organization of agricultural product exchanges between different regions and republics was unsatisfactory, and the impact of cooperative trade on reducing market prices was deemed insignificant. These shortcomings were also highlighted in regional periodicals.

Ukoopspilka received a total of 424 collective-farm markets from the Ministry of Trade of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic without any cost. The Dnipropetrovs'k region had the highest number with 33 markets, while the Volyn region had the least with 4 markets¹. The authorities believed that improving the food supply in cities necessitated a comprehensive overhaul of the collective-farm markets. Consumer cooperatives were tasked with restructuring the logistical framework, as well as the material and technical infrastructure of these markets. Their responsibility included ensuring a consistent supply of agricultural products and taking measures to enhance, expand, and equip these trading facilities with essential refrigeration equipment, sewage systems, and electricity. In practice, during the waning years of the USSR, addressing the challenges related to the operation of collective-farm markets became one of the most pressing economic priorities for Ukoopspilka. Solving these issues demanded substantial material resources, and collective farms played a crucial role in this effort, providing what was referred to as «auxiliary assistance». As part of the plan, collective farms were expected to secure a permanent presence in the markets for the sale of surplus agricultural products to the population².

As a result of these efforts, there were some instances where the economic performance of the collective-farm markets showed signs of improvement. For instance, in Chernihiv region in 1991, the markets generated an income of 230 thousand rubles for the regional consumer union. This marked a turnaround from their previous financial status, where they had incurred a total loss of 109 thousand rubles. During this period, reconstruction efforts were also undertaken in the collective farms located in the cities of Bakhmach, Chernihiv, Shchors, and Pryluky (Ткачук, В. 1991, с. 11–13).

However, when considering the overall results of consumer cooperation in this endeavor, the achievements were not particularly impressive. Despite the prevalent commodity shortages in 1989, the import of agricultural products to the col-

¹ ЦДАВО України. Ф. 296. Оп. 8. Спр. 5050. Арк. 108.

² ЦДАВО України. Ф. 296. Оп. 8. Спр. 5047. Арк. 78.

lective-farm markets was even 200 thousand rubles less than it was in 1984. In certain regions, the management of consumer cooperation, following the enactment of the cooperative law, established separate cooperative entities in the markets for trade and purchasing purposes. For example, the «Svitanok» cooperative in Zhytomyr managed to sell an additional 10 tons of agricultural products (Соколов, В. 1987, с. 5)¹.

Thus, it can be concluded that despite attempts, consumer cooperatives were not entirely successful in significantly influencing individual peasant trade in the collective-farm markets during the period under study. Individual trading in these markets continued to play a substantial role in supplying agricultural products to urban and workers' settlement populations. For instance, in Kyiv alone, there were up to 140 thousand traders in 19 markets during the mid-1970s, serving up to 1 million buyers annually. Across the entire republic, there were a total of 2,037 collective-farm markets by the end of the period studied. In response, city cooperative organizations began establishing their own points of sale directly within the markets, such as trading trays and individual sellers². The decision to transfer the management of collective-farm markets to consumer cooperation in 1987 aimed to improve their operations and establish a more organized structure for supplying agricultural products to urban and industrial center residents at reasonable prices, with consumer cooperatives at the core of this structure. However, during this period, Ukoopspilka struggled to expand cooperative trade in all cities, reduce the influence of individual sellers in the collective-farm markets, and effectively address the pressing food supply issues in urban areas.

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¹ ЦДАВО України. Ф. 296. Оп. 8. Спр. 5085. Арк. 255.

² ЦДАВО України. Ф. 296. Оп. 8. Спр. 3992. Арк. 28.

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