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**INDIVIDUAL HOUSEHOLD PLOTS IN AGRICULTURAL
PRODUCTION IN SOUTHERN DAGESTAN (1965 -1985)**

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Abstract

Individual household plot was and is one of the most common forms of organization of agricultural production in Dagestan, which provides employment in a labor-surplus region, as well as the income growth for rural residents of the southern region. In the 60-80s of the twentieth century individual household plots retained their significance despite the criticism and certain administrative obstacles, the rhetoric about the “withering away” of individual household plots and the primacy of social production. In some industries individual household plots received their further development, especially after the enactment of certain decrees and orders in 1964, 1965, 1977 that reduced the pressure on the villagers who had household plots. There was the growth of sheepheads, especially in mountainous areas, the reactivation of farms, and the slow expansion of land for individual household plots. They had the trade growth in agriculture and its geographical expansion. It was noted that the commercial orientation of individual household plots was higher than in social farms, their material and labor costs paid off due to higher incomes. Such incomes were provided by the production of those products that were produced by little or not produced by collective and state farms, and therefore products were in great demand. The difficulty of collecting statistical data on the development of individual plots was noted, since they were rarely cited in statistical compilations.

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Keywords: Dagestan, farming, individual household plot, southern region, animal husbandry, gardening.



1. Introduction

In the period under review the agricultural production of the country, including Dagestan, relied on public farms: collective (kolkhoz) and state (sovkhoz) farms, which were the main producers of agricultural products. Any assistance to the development of public farms was elevated to the rank of unshakable state policy. At the same time, various types of individual production, personal farms, which remained in the production of a number of products and occupied a rather prominent place were subjected to various restrictions and moral and political pressure. State propaganda impressed disbelief in the future of the individual sector, doomed, as was thought, to die.

2. Problem Statement

The problem is to study the process of individual household plots development in southern Dagestan, its borders and forms of interaction with social production, because there is still a superficial idea of the place and essence of individual household plots in the period under review.

3. Research Questions

The subject of the article is individual household plots, rural agricultural organizations in Southern Dagestan, the state and development of individual household plots in the second half of the 60s - the first half of the 80s of the twentieth century.

4. Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this article is to analyze the mechanisms of the development of individual household plots in its integration with social production, in meeting the needs of the population in products and incomes; analysis and assessment of functioning conditions of individual household plots in Dagestan in the second half of the 60s - the first half of the 80s of the twentieth century, on the example of its southern region.

5. Research Methods

The study was based on the methods for analyzing cause-effect relations and studying the nature of socio-economic phenomena. General scientific dialectic methods, principles of formal logic were used. The principle of historicism, the principle of integrated approach, the principle of chronological presentation of the material, etc. were applied.

6. Findings

State farms and collective farms, despite a considerable financial support, could not fully meet the needs of the population for agricultural products. The decree of the Central Committee of the CPSU "On the elimination of unreasonable restrictions on individual household plots of collective farmers, workers and employees", adopted in October 1964, and the decisions of March plenum (1965) of the Central Committee of the CPSU removed a number of restrictions on individual household plots, especially in rural areas. Thus, the restrictions on livestock maintenance in individual plots were lifted, and its number was

regulated taking into account the national peculiarities of farming and local conditions. Collective farmers and state farm workers were allowed to provide land for use in the amount of 0.50 hectares (on irrigated land – up to 0.20 hectares) for a garden, a yard, and a house construction. The regulations of agricultural collective farms in the mountain area of the republic were defined as the norm – from 0.25 to 0.50 hectares of arable land for collective farmers and certain categories of employees. Moreover, in such areas as Khivsky, Tabasaransky, Gunibsky, Akhtynsky, the norm of land plots for collective farmers was 0.20-0.30 hectares, and on plane areas the norm ranged from 0.19 to 0.25 hectares (Iskenderov & Talibov 2007).

Public farms remained the main producers of agricultural products. In 1971-1975, collective and state farms of the republic produced an average annual output of more than 318 million rubles or more than 60% of the total gross agricultural output of the republic. In individual household plots the average annual production of agricultural products in the 70s of the twentieth century amounted to more than 165 million rubles. In the country and in Dagestan, public farms were the most efficient and productive in the production of agricultural products, especially cereals, industrial crops and grapes. In Dagestan, for example, public farms produced agricultural products within the year for 182.8 million rubles on average, while individual household plots produced products for 31.4 million rubles. At the same time, without any equipment and owning only 49 thousand hectares of land, where 40.1 thousand hectares were arable land, in 1971 in individual household plots there were 368.1 thousand heads of cattle (of which 158.8 thousand were cows), 6.9 thousand were pigs, 963.8 thousand were sheep and 97.9 thousand were goats. They also produced vegetables, fruits and other agricultural products. For comparison, it can be pointed out that public farms, which had 2897.7 thousand hectares of agricultural land and a relatively high material and technical base, contained 306.2 thousand heads of cattle, including 91.8 cows, 31.6 thousand pigs, sheep – 1949.6 thousand and goats – 52.4 thousand (*History of centuries-old relationships ...*, 2009). When some restrictions for individual household plots were removed, especially in animal husbandry, the republic controlling authorities faced the fact that collective farms began to violate the regulations, in terms of the possible keeping of personal livestock. So, in Rutulsky district in 1967 in collective farms of Socialism, Dimitrov, Voroshilov, New Way not all able-bodied collective farmers took part in the production of a collective farm and did not produce a minimum of working days. These collective farmers increased their individual household plots at the expense of the public ones. In the farms “New Way”, XXI Party Congress farm, Telman farm, Ordzhonikidze farm, etc. some work was done to restore order in combining social and personal interests in the development of animal husbandry, the number of collective farmers was divided from public livestock, their number was in accordance with the regulations of collective farms. In April – May 1967, the recalculation of livestock at collective farms of the region revealed a number of facts, when many collective farmers, workers and employees contained livestock of a super-established rate. This problem was especially vivid in Kuibyshev collective farm, Lenin collective farm, “Samur” collective farm, “Socialism” collective farm, “Rutul” state farm. In Lenin collective farm of Rutulsky District, there were 42 heads of sheep and goats per household on average, in some farms there were 70-100 heads. A similar situation was in Ihrek village. In Kuybyshev farm individual collective farmers owned 100-150 heads of sheep and goats, 10-20 heads of cattle, and 7-10 horses. In the 60s. there was a rapid growth of livestock of collective farmers, workers and employees, at the same time, the public population decreased from year to year. On June 1, 1967 there were 114011 heads of sheep and goats in collective farms of Rutulsky district,

and on June 1, 1968 there were 107657 heads of cattle, respectively, 6296 heads and 6185 heads. Almost in all collective and Soviet farms, livestock of collective farmers, workers and employees was kept with public livestock, not only in Rutul district, but also in all districts that had livestock. Collective farmers' sheep were distilled for winter period together with public cattle and kept together. A particularly large population of personal livestock of collective farmers was surpassed by the following collective farms – 1 May collective farm – 3000 heads, “Pravda” collective farm – 2400 goals, Sverdlov collective farm – 1371 heads, “Rutulsky” state farm – 1115 heads, Karl Marx state farms – 1150 heads, “Samur” state farm – 1900 heads, etc. In some farms, like Telman farm, Kuibyshev farm, and “Socialism” farm, the number of livestock of collective farmers exceeded the public ones (Gadzhieva, 2014). In the 70s of the twentieth century, republic individual household plots produced 134 million rubles worth of livestock products for the year on average, while in public household plots they produced about 136 million rubles. The existing severe restrictions on land management, as well as bans on the sale of agricultural machinery to individuals, did not allow them to expand not only the land area, but also the number of livestock even after the removal of restrictions on their maintenance in their personal estate. Moreover, many Soviet economic authorities, referring to the land shortage, did not provide everyone with land plots even in those strictly limited norms that were established by the relevant regulatory acts to be allocated to rural and urban residents. For these and other reasons, public farms remained the main source of livelihood for the rural population, and the role of individual household plots for many workers was reduced to an additional source of replenishment of the family budget. The comparison of products produced by public and individual farms showed that in the latter farms fewer people directly involved in them managed to produce more products than public farms. At the same time, involving in the production not always the most active part of the productive population as pensioners, women and adolescents, individual household plots produced products that was reluctantly taken or public farms completely refused to produce due to its labor intensiveness and the need to use unattractive manual labor (Iskanderov, 2015).

However, it is impossible to provide the data for all years of the period under consideration, since, as a rule, they were not given in published statistical collections. In the 70s of the twentieth century the information was published in the press and in individual publications reflecting the state of individual household plots development. Information about them can be found in Central public record office of Dagestan republic. But these materials are scattered in nature and presented for individual years; therefore, it is difficult to get a complete picture of their development over a certain period from them.

The data for 1976 are most fully reflected in the documents. They confirm that individual household plots occupied the largest share in the production of animal products, potatoes, vegetables and a number of other products. In 1976, household plots produced 29.5 thousand tons of potatoes or 58.8 percent of the total volume of its production, milk – 49.2 percent, meat – 41.2 percent, wool – 53.2 percent, eggs – 38.5 percent. The gross meat production by the population was 40.5 thousand tons (by public farms – 57.6 thousand tons), milk – 139.5 thousand tons (143.1 thousand tons), wool – 5521 tons (6297 tons). Despite the number of large poultry farms, private farming in this area achieved good results due to the intensification of its labor. They produced 53.4 million eggs out of 138.5 million produced by all categories of farms (*History of Dagestan from ...*, 2005).

However, comparing the production of agricultural products by public and individual household plots, it should be noted that the current practice, when a significant part of the production, especially livestock produced by collective farmers and state farm workers, was leased to collective farms and state farms. On average, they produced over 34% of all products per year. In 1976, collective workers, workers and employees, who worked at collective and state farms or their maintenance, had more than 32 thousand hectares of land allotted for household plots (excluding land allotted for individual plots for citizens). 21.3 thousand hectares of land were occupied under the crops and over 9 thousand hectares were under gardens and perennial plantings. According to other data, 4.2 thousand hectares were occupied with vegetables, 5.2 thousand hectares with potatoes, 8.8 thousand hectares with gardens, 960 hectares with grapes, etc. For comparison, we can state that in 1976 collective and state farms had 392.9 thousand hectares of land, including about 230.9 thousand hectares of grain, 8 thousand hectares of vegetables, 3.2 thousand hectares of potatoes, 44 thousand hectares of orchards, and 58.4 thousand hectares of grapes. The share of farms by the presence of livestock remained high. In sheep breeding, almost a third of the livestock — 1174.9 thousand heads out of 3281.8 thousand heads belonged to collective farmers, workers and employees (Iskanderov & Osmanov, 1997).

First of all, it explains the high proportion that individual household plots occupied in the production of certain types of agricultural products, and not because they achieved, as was commonly thought, higher results than social farms. Moreover, in many types of agricultural crops, individual plots received lower crops than social farms. Despite the low crops obtained by individual plots, they served as an additional source of income for the family budget. Individual household plots produced even a significant part of the marketable products for a number of products.

When the commercial orientation of individual household plots was higher than in social farms, their material and labor costs paid off due to higher incomes. Such incomes were provided by the production of those products that were produced by little or not produced by collective and state farms, and therefore, it was in great demand. At the same time, individual households offered their products fresh and of higher quality. For these reasons, it was sold at prices higher than the state, retail, and even collective and state farms. In individual plots they grew parsley, dill, green onions, tomatoes, cucumbers, eggplants, peppers, radishes, hazelnuts, pomegranates, persimmons, pears, walnuts, quinces, cherries, etc., made brynza cheese, sour cream, dried meat and sausage. Most of the above-mentioned products were not produced at collective and state farms or a part of it was sold in a short period of time.

In Soviet state, one of the main problems in the development of vegetable growing and gardening was the absence or a small number of equipped warehouses for the long-term storage of vegetables and fruits. The farms suffered from large losses at the storage and transportation, and often their cultivation in large farms was unprofitable, the farms tried to sell them to canneries more quickly, so there was a shortage of fruits and vegetables, both in the markets and in stores. Residents of large villages, cities needed vegetables and fruits all year round. Due to the small turnover, individual plots kept the harvest more neatly, vegetables and fruits retained their “marketable” condition. The peasants of Southern Dagestan sold the grown vegetables and fruits in different ways. In Southern Dagestan, the sale of fruits, berries and vegetables spread on spontaneously created retail outlets along major highways: Makhachkala-Derbent, Derbent-Baku, along highways from Derbent to regional centers of rural Southern Dagestan: Khuchni,

Magaramkent, Kasumkent, Kurakha, Rutula and others. In the areas inhabited by Lezgins they were called “Bedre-Bazaar” (Vedro Bazaar), because the products were put up for sale in buckets.

In the villages of Southern Dagestan, there were small, so-called collective farm markets, where villagers sold products from their vegetable gardens and gardens, they worked mainly on Sunday, because the majority of the inhabitants of small villages had individual plots, and agricultural products were bought by teachers, doctors, village administration workers, collective farms and state farms. Also, larger markets functioned in district centers, in particular in Kasumkent, Magaramkent, Ahty, etc. The gravity center for residents of the regions of Southern Dagestan was the city of Derbent. Long since, Derbent was the center of international transit, as well as regional trade, without losing its importance for the residents of the surrounding areas in the second half of the twentieth century. In Derbent there were several markets in which residents of Derbent, Tabasaran, Magaramkent, Suleiman-Stalsky and other districts sold surplus agricultural products. They were taken to the market as plant products: apples, pears, persimmon, grapes, tomatoes, cabbage, etc. and animal husbandry: meat, cheese, milk, etc.

Residents of rural areas of Southern Dagestan also sold surplus agricultural products at Belidji, Arablinka, Izberbash and Derbent railway stations during train stops to Baku or Makhachkala. The size of the turnover in this case will not be able to figure out, since it is not reflected in the official statistics. Nevertheless, this trade had a positive effect on the budget of village residents and settlements in Southern Dagestan. Both parties of that process benefited, as passengers bought fresh food.

In addition, villagers tried to export and sell surplus agricultural products produced by them in the large industrial centers of the country, where prices for agricultural products, especially from the southern regions, were significantly higher than in local markets. The peasants of Southern Dagestan delivered their products to the most remote regions of the country. Pensioners, workers on vacations, etc., travelled by road and rail.

Due to the fact that villagers sold their products more expensive than in shops, this was often considered as speculation. The mass media showed the complex and controversial relations in the market, unilaterally, from the standpoint of the interests of buyers, often without taking into account the interests of the manufacturer. On the pages of the press, on the radio and television, unflattering characteristics were given to those who sold their products on the market. Especially criticized manufacturers were those who exported products outside the republic, to other cities and regions of the country. Bans on the export of agricultural products outside the region were established periodically by resolutions of the Council of Ministers of the DASSR under the pretext of preventing the spread of agricultural pests.

In one of the articles in the newspaper “Dagestan Pravda” it was noted that in the markets of Moscow, Leningrad, Saratov, Volgograd, Astrakhan, Mineralnye Vody and other cities “some residents of Dagestan” illegally sold cabbage, apples, pears, grapes, other fruits and vegetables. In this particular case, law violation was seen in the sale of these products at inflated prices, and exporting them outside the country, of course, product prices were higher in the city centers and north of the country, therefore they went there with the goods willingly (Osmanov, 2006).

Broader opportunities for management of individual household plots were provided by the resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU and the Council of Ministers of the USSR on September 14, 1977 “On individual household plots of collective farmers, workers, employees and other citizens and

collective gardening and vegetable gardening”. But despite the measures taken by the state to support individual plots, the villagers of the republic faced various prohibitions, sometimes in the form of a “quarantine” with a categorical ban on the export of agricultural products outside the region, or not to solve land-related issues (Orlov & Bogdanovskiy, 1988).

Local authorities were particularly active in imposing various restrictions on the development of individual plots. In April 1975, a resolution was adopted by the Bureau of the Dagestan Regional Party Committee on the liquidation of farms in the mountainous regions of the republic. The fact is that in the mountainous regions there was a system when in the distant parts of the village the peasants created farms where they kept cattle and farmed the land. Land farms in the 20-30s of the twentieth century were socialized. But when collective farms received land in the flat areas of the republic and when they had enough agricultural equipment, which made it possible to expand the sown areas and get good harvests, they threw small land plots in the mountains. As a result, in the 60-70s there were the increased number of “abandoned” lands. The initiative farmers, especially from among the former owners of farms, restored them. The regional committee demanded that village councils and farm managers prohibit the development of “farm” land (Iskanderov, 2014).

In May 1976, the Bureau of the Regional Committee of the Party sharply criticized the party organizations of a number of districts, which did not fulfill its previous resolution on the liquidation of farms and other violations of land use. The leadership of the mountainous regions of Southern Dagestan was also criticized. The dangerous character of such events by the Party saw that the individual source of farming, not the collective and state farms, became the main source of income for the collective farmers, while some weak farms could not provide the workers with the necessary living wage. All of this had a negative effect on labor discipline, harmed social production, since very few people wanted to work, knowing that the work would be poorly paid. Local authorities decided that prohibitive and administrative measures would work. Local party and Soviet organizations were asked to liquidate the farms, resettle some of the population on the plain and within the region and thereby solve the problem. However, having moved, sometimes the inhabitants returned to their abandoned villages, the same thing happened to the most high-mountainous village – Kurush. In spite of the fact that a new well-appointed village was founded on the plain, several families returned, taking up cattle breeding (Osmanov, 2006).

Resolutions and orders were regularly made, pointing out the shortcomings of the district and village authorities concerning the employment of the villagers, labor discipline, and violation of the regulations of farms. The reason for these phenomena was low pay for a whole range of agricultural work. Therefore, farmers often began to “earn money” outside the republic, especially from the mountainous regions. Active, dissatisfied with working conditions and earnings farmers were leaving, and those who often did not find a job. Individual household plots that eased social tensions in work-surplus areas did not receive the necessary support (Firsova, Gasho, & Yaseneva, 2018).

In the rates of individual plots development, in their production indicators, there were no changes, which could be characterized as very significant. For ten years from 1970 to 1980, the area of agricultural land used by the population increased from 49.1 to 50.7 thousand hectares – by 1.6 thousand hectares. The limited land resources, the unsolved problems of allotment of land plots to those who wished to engage in individual household plots for years did not provide the expansion of individual plots. Farmers of collective

and state farms, who concentrated in their hands the main land tracts, were reluctant to invest in the land plots of the villagers. It did not matter whether the land was used or abandoned. But even if the land restrictions were lifted, there was hardly an opportunity to significantly expand the land wedge allocated by the farm for agricultural use. Collective farmers, workers and employees, without having agricultural machines, hardly coped with the processing of those small plots that were allotted to them (Uvarova, 2009).

Despite those difficulties, the proportion of individual plots in the production of agricultural products of the Dagestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (DASSR) remained consistently high. In 1980, the individual sector produced 30% of the total gross agricultural output of the republic. This level was higher in individual branches of agriculture. In individual plots there were 369 thousand heads of cattle or 50.6% of the total livestock, including 159 thousand heads of cows or 60.4%, 1217 thousand heads of sheep and goats or 36%. In fact, this level was higher, as there were a lot of unregistered livestock in private use (Iskanderov, 1997). In individual plots they produced 37.9 thousand tons of meat or 38.2 percent, 135.6 thousand tons of milk or 45.3%. The population sold the state 239 thousand tons of vegetables or 20.1% of the total sales, fruit – 20.6%, wool – 48.1%, a large amount of meat, milk and other products (Osmanov, 2006).

Residents of the mountainous regions of Southern Dagestan preferred animal husbandry in individual household plots. In 1971, there were 1062 thousand heads out of a total population of 3.064 thousand heads of sheep and goats in individual plots. In 1984, the total number of livestock of sheep and goats almost did not change and amounted to 3370.8 thousand heads, where 1215 thousand heads were in individual household plots. In 1985, the total number of sheep and goats livestock increased to 3465 thousand heads among the population – up to 1318.3 thousand heads.

The production of basic livestock products by individual plots in comparison with other categories occupied a prominent place. In 1971-1975 all categories of farms produced 89.9 thousand tons of live weight meat on average; the population produced 33.4 thousand tons. In 1981-1985 they produced 103.7 thousand and 33.4 thousand tons respectively. The average annual milk production in 1971-1975 by all categories of farms amounted to 276.6 thousand tons, and by the population – 145.6 thousand tons. In 1981-1985, 309 thousand tons of milk were produced by all categories of farms and 143.7 thousand tons were produced by the population. On average only 121.6 million eggs were produced per year in 1971-1975 including 55.7 million eggs produced by the population. The average annual production of eggs in 1981-1985 amounted to 171.7 million, while the production of the population remained almost at the same level – 57.8 million. On average 10778 tons of wool were produced in 1971-1975, the population produced 5506 tons of wool. In 1981-1985 the average annual production of wool increased to 13,262 tons, and wool produced by the population – to 7.686 tons (Iskanderov & Talibov, 2007).

Farmers, who had individual plots, tried to put the work in those branches of plant growing and animal husbandry where they could receive the greatest return with the smallest expenses. In crop production, such crops were primarily those ones that cultivation was refused by public farms due to their labor intensity. Unsatisfied demand for such crop production gave rise to high prices on the market, which paid for the material and physical costs of their production. The rural farmers of Southern Dagestan grew vegetables and fruits, berries, and nuts in their individual household plots.

Farmers of individual plots used their products not only for sale, but also for consumption. The fact is that if in the city shops the product variety of vegetables, fruits and berries was not great, there was no assortment at all in rural shops. Villagers practically could not buy berries and fruits, therefore, in order to satisfy their family needs, they had to grow them; the same situation was with fresh meat and milk (Iskanderov & Iskanderov, 2013). Moreover, it can be noted that the main suppliers of products sold through the market were individual household plots, although there was an increase of collective and state farms in trade.

Household plots as the public ones, lost some of the products due to the lack of development in the village of farms processing agricultural products. In September 1967, the resolution of the Council of Ministers of the USSR “On the further development of individual plots and crafts in agriculture” was adopted and paid special attention to the processing of agricultural products, fruits and berries. The processing of personal products at the factories for an appropriate fee was also encouraged.

By the end of 1977, there were four canneries, 18 juice lines, two fruit storages, four points of primary processing of vegetables and other individual plots in collective and state farms of the Ministry of Agriculture of the DASSR. In the southern region there were Derbent, Gereykhanovsky, Ahtynsky, Samursky and other canneries.

Not only the villagers had individual household plots, but also some of Derbent residents, workers' settlements such as Dagestan Ogni, Beligi. Many farmers worked productively on land plots of 2-4-6 acres provided to citizens for house construction and agricultural production. They grew flowers, greenery, vegetables and fruits on the remaining land free from buildings; they often realized surplus supplies. The employment of the rural and urban population also became one of the most difficult tasks for the republic with its labor-surplus resources. To solve it, the republic and local authorities tried to build industrial factories and their branches in rural areas. However, despite the measures taken, individual household plots did not lose their value (Amirkhanova, 2014).

At the end of 80-90ss of the twentieth century, individual household plots became the main source of food as well as the budget of rural families. Individual plots became the main “breadwinner” for people who lived in the villages of Southern Dagestan when there was the decay of collective and state farms. Despite the prohibitions, organizational and legal obstacles, tough administrative methods, etc., individual household plots survived and continued to provide the peasants and citizens (Plotnikov, 2010). At present, the social and economic role of individual plots of the rural population is increasing in Russia. Individual plots provide food and additional income to rural families and are the guarantor of the country's food independence (Maksimova, 2015).

7. Conclusion

Thus, the history of the development of individual and other forms of farms shows that they served as an additional source of food and budget. For almost the entire period of the USSR social and economic system, individual plots were considered to be a passing and archaic economic structure. However, the role and importance of individual household plots in the production complex of the country and its individual regions were not small. Neither in social terms nor in terms of solving the production problem, they did not

and could not become the main factor and still those tasks were carried out by social farms in the period under review.

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