

July 4 1978

S

hauling grain to elevators amassed by trucking organizations in the North Caucasus, the Volga region, the South Urals, the Crimea and North Kazakhstan: The need for vehicles drops by at least 20%, there are no more lines of trucks waiting to be unloaded, the receiving enterprises' equipment is kept working at an even pace, and the process of selling grain to the state is shortened drastically.

Animal husbandry is making efficient use of grain, thanks to the procurement of concentrate feeds. It has been established that when animals are fed pure grain there is an overexpenditure of roughly 30% per unit of output as against concentrate feeds. Every year over 40% of gross grain production is used by animal husbandry. Concentrate feeds made up only 26% of this amount in 1966 but accounted for 37% in 1977; the rest is fed whole or crushed, and little of it is assimilated.

The production of concentrate feeds was 46 million tons in 1978. By the end of 1980, its production at state enterprises is slated to reach 52 million tons; protein-vitamin supplements will exceed 4 million tons. However, production growth is being held back by the consistent failure of contracting organizations to meet the plan for commissioning production capacities. In the production of concentrate feeds, grain can be saved and losses cut by new technology and the use of other ingredients: biologically active substances, urea, fats, liquid lysine, hydrol, molasses and dry beet pulp. Good results have been obtained from the heat treatment of grain. Feeding animals concentrate feeds in granulated form lowers consumption per unit of output by 8% to 10%.

Soviet Zoos: Limited in Imagination, Space and Numbers

WHERE BEASTS ARE HAPPY.—

Survey of Readers' and Special-

ists' Opinions. (Prepared by M. Podgorodnikov. Literaturnaya gazeta, May 30, p. 11. 1,300 words. Abstract.) Ye. Vishnevsky's article "I Don't Want to Go to the Zoo" (Literaturnaya gazeta, No. 31, 1978) criticized the conditions in which animals are kept in Soviet zoos and suggested that we think about more up-to-date ways of exhibiting them. All but one of the letters received from readers agree with Vishnevsky. Foreign zoologists whose opinions were solicited also believe that zoo animals should be given as much freedom as possible.

Most zoos in the USSR, with few exceptions, should be completely rebuilt. We don't have very many zoos—only 33, and half of them aren't really zoos but menageries. Even such large cities as Gorky, Kuibyshev and Minsk have no zoos.

And most Soviet zoos have limited space. Even the Leningrad zoo covers just seven hectares, and the one in Novosibirsk is tiny—only three-quarters of a hectare. The Karaganda zoo is housed in a single barn. It's impossible to keep animals in such conditions. The only exceptions to the sorry rule are the Kiev zoo (40 hectares), the Rostov zoo (about 75 hectares) and the future Moscow zoo, which will cover 160 hectares.

The specialist S. Kudryavtsev thinks that, as the preservation of rare and endangered species of animals becomes a more urgent task, spacious open-air cages are becoming more important. As "islands of safety," zoos are often able to reestablish rare species—as the Moscow zoo has done with przhevalski's horse, the wild ass and the swan goose. But this effort will have to be expanded in the next few years, and vast new areas will be required.

We don't have a zoo union to coordinate the various zoos' operations. This function is handled by the USSR Ministry of Culture's Department of Museums—actually, by just one specialist in that office, who has other duties besides overseeing the zoos. Zoos come under the jurisdiction of

city Soviets, which cannot be counted on to provide the skilled management that is needed.

Another problem is the lack of architects' studios that specialize in zoos. The people who design zoos also design stadiums, markets and movie theaters. The architects are aware of this deficiency, but seem uninterested in landscape-coordinated planning.

V. Spitsin, director of the Moscow zoo, and zoo staff members V. Ostapenko, L. Yegorova and N. Istratova, write that in recent decades zoos the world over have come to play a more important role as institutions of conservation, as active agencies for preserving endangered species and breeding them in captivity. However, they go on, the present state of zoos in the USSR makes it very difficult to fulfill these functions (there are too few zoos, most of them are extremely small, and specialists are lacking).

In this short survey, we have drawn attention to only a few of the problems of zoo organization. We hope that the agency in charge of zoos, the USSR Ministry of Culture, will give some substantive answers to the questions that have been raised.

Wolf Problem Grows, as Population Doubles in Decade

Man and Nature: A DANGEROUS

'SANITARIAN.' (By Candidate of

Abstract

Biology A. Kaletsky. Sovetskaya Rossia, June 13, p. 4. 700 words. Abstract.) Over the past decade, the wolf population in the USSR has more than doubled, to a total of at least 70,000. Their numbers have shown an especially sharp increase in the central provinces of the Russian Republic, where losses caused by wolves come to about 10 million rubles a year. This does not include the damage done to other wild animals. There have also been instances of rabid wolves attacking people.

In recent years all large predatory beasts have come to be called "wise selectionists," "sneperas" and "sanitarians." These terms may be at least partially correct for tigers, snow leopards, wolverines and bears, but they are not applicable to wolves. According to the biologist S. P. Kucherenko, a wolf needs more than a ton and a half of meat in a year, but because wolves are so wasteful, they destroy many more animals than this figure would imply. For example, in one attack on a reindeer herd in the spring of 1977 a single wolf killed 28 deer, mostly pregnant cows.

An order of the Russian Republic Chief Administration for Hunting Preserves and Nature Reserves provides for the acquisition of vehicles for hunting wolves, including aircraft, and the formation of regular wolf hunters' units. Bounties for the killing of wolves have been raised. They are now 150 rubles for females, 100 rubles for males and 50 rubles for cubs. Although 22,000 wolves were killed in the USSR in 1978, the problem remains unsolved.

Hunting experts O. K. Gusev and M. P. Pavlov contend that regulating the numbers of harmful animals—up to and including their complete extermination, where necessary—is a noble and humane action. Also, they say, there's no point in talking about the "protection" of wolves. Wolves know how to protect themselves, and they do a very good job of it. So don't get alarmed—the wolf as a species won't become extinct.

It's hard to disagree with this view. We should turn our thoughts to protecting other species of fauna, the ones that the gray marauders are slaughtering in such numbers.

[For previous articles on the wolf problem, see CDSF, Vol. XXVII, No. 31, p. 17; Vol. XXVIII, No. 29, p. 12; Vol. XXX, No. 10, pp. 4-5; and Vol. XXXI, No. 21, p. 13.]