Russian and Canadian Farmers' Quality of Life: comparative analysis (exemplified by Moscow Region and Ontario)

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Abstract

This research is based on mail and personal surveys conducted with Ontario and Moscow Region farmers from 1991 to 1994-95. When we compared the 1991 stratified random sample of 1,105 Ontario farmers with a 1992 random sample of 165 newly privatized Moscow Region farmers, we discovered that the Ontario farmers usually were relatively less favourable predisposed toward government interventions to sustain agriculture than were their neophyte private counterparts in the Moscow Region. We wondered if the first of these farmers to lease or buy land in 1991-92 were similar to those who acquired land later so we conducted another 20 Moscow Region interviews in 1993 and a further 52 in 1994-95.

The earliest private Russian farmers were very different from those privatized more recently both in demographic characteristics and attitudes toward farming and the environment. There were also substantial differences between small family farming Muscovites and private farm managers. For instance, though most Moscow Region farmers oppose the reduction of State subsidies, farm managers are much more opposed to this than the nonmanagerial farmers.

Ontario farmers generally ranked their relative quality of life higher than did Moscow Region farmers even though Ontario farmers fell significantly more negatively affected by recent rural institutional changes than did Moscow Region farmers. Generally, the higher the Ontario farmer's income, education and opportunity to employ farm hands, the higher their perceived quality of life whereas the »triple« day faced by worker-farm homemakers affects Ontario farmers most negatively especially if they have children less than six years old. Ontario farmers were much more likely to think their quality of life was better than that of the farmers of their parents' generation than were the Moscow Region farmers relative to their own parents' generation. Moscow Region farmers were, however, more likely to consider their quality of life to be higher than that of other Russians than were Ontario farmers relative to other Canadians. The majority of the Russian farmers still await an improvement in their lives from privatization. The paper concludes with some recommendations for rural extension work which could provide some of the support presently missing in the Russian agriculture and food system.

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Introduction

This paper employs a comparative study of newly privatized Russian farmers in the Moscow Region with a sample of Ontario farmers to look at how they perceive sustainable agricultural issues and their relative quality of life. A common questionnaire made the comparison possible even though neither group of farmer was aware that their responses would be compared with farmers from another country so in that sense the comparison is indirect.

Ontario farmers have faced growing concentration and centralization of agricultural production, in the process, continually bankrupting a sizeable percentage of the re-

maining 'small' farming operations. The number of Ontario farmers has dropped from 24 percent of the population in 1931 to about two percent of the population of the 1990s. »As the overall number of farms decreased, the number of larger farms (gross receipts of $50,000 or more in constant 1990 dollars) increased 6 percent« (Statistic Canada, 1992: 2). Ten percent of Ontario's farmers now produce 53 percent of all farm produce (Statistics Canada, 1992).

Meanwhile, Russian farms are getting smaller (decollectivization). By 1992 27,000 Sovkhozy (State farms) and Kolkhozy (Collective Farms) were required to be reorganized and separated more significantly from the State (privatization). Since then the movement toward smaller plot private farming has been accelerated. State and Collective farms are therefore bein to the point where by 1995 there are over 300,000 private Russian farms. Farms are being restructured as individual family farming on a smaller unit basis is being increased dramatically while privatization is occurring through both leasing arrangements and private landed property with cooperatives assuming many of the marketing and supply responsibilities for these farms (Macey, 1994). McNell and Kerr, however, have recently argued that little has really changed (1995).

Like the McNeil and Kerr study, this paper concentrates on the Moscow Region, one of 78 Regions throughout Russia. It is Russia's largest Region in population (but not area) with approximately 16 million inhabitants. Somewhere between 25 and 30 percent of Russians live and work in the countryside and about 20 percent of them farm.

This contrasts with Ontario, also Canada's largest Province with about 10 million inhabitants. Fewer than 15 percent of Ontarions live in rural areas and just more than 2 percent farm. Instead of farming in a more individualistic, small family farm basis, the industrialized form of farming is displacing small family farm units.

Privatization, Decollectivization and their Personal Significance

The motive for reforming the agrarian system in Russia is the belief that improving the system's efficiency will raise rural people's standard of living and thereby improve their quality of life (Macey, 1994).

> »Privatization« is a complex notion that involves changes from state to private ownership, from state to private management and from a planned or administered economy to a market economy. De-collectivization, on the other hand, is relatively simple and seems to mean the break-up of the state farm and collective farm system (Macey, 1994: 157).

The problems associated with the command economic form of Russian agricultural planning within which the State and Collective farms operated were legion. Within the Russian dairy system, McNell and Kerr (1995: 52) have itemized some of the consequences of their structures relative to the West.

> The outcome from the Russian system with its compartmentalized management structure is low productivity compared to the West, no matter how it is measured-low milk production per cow, high rates of calf mortality, poor herd health and very short shelf-life for milk. Furthermore, shirking by farm workers was widespread.

Before assessing the extent to which the agrarian reforms of privatization and decollectivization have helped to solve such problems of Russian agriculture as low productivity, bad rural infrastructure and wasted harvests, let us return to the optimism with which early reforms were greeted by neophyte privatizers.

In September, 1991 we heard Nikolai Mikhilovic Podgornov, the Chairman of a Collective Farm in the Vologda Region (500 km north of Moscow) who happened also

to be a pioneering Deputy of the Supreme Soviet in Moscow, speaking to the European Society for Rural Sociologists in Vologda, RSFSR. He and his collective farm members had transformed their Kolkhozy into a sort of capitalist corporation by buying out the pensions of the retired members and giving each farmer a portion of stock based on that farmer's part of the assets of the Collective. Podgornov insisted that profit must be the basis of labour productivity. For two years his collective had been working under new accounting conditions. He had convinced the 450 members of their Collective Farm to create what he called a »shared farm« from based on private property principles. All assets were divided into shares. In the balance sheet there is a residual of 60,000 rubles for a cattle farm. So they had 1,500 rubles per person at a time when 35 rubles equalled one US dollar.

»We bought the assets from the State. To those who are not alive«, Podgornov continued, »we allocate some money and put it in the savings bank. Forty-nine percent of profit goes into turnover, 47% goes into modernization and redemption of the property of the State and pensionners. Three percent goes into credit rotation. The latter get their share from productive assets. The Chairman is given unlimited control of entrepreneurship. Forty-three small businesses were created each with its own accounting.« But it had not been possible, until Dec., 1990 when the Congress of the RSFSR passed the private property law, for small businesses and larger ones like Podgornov's to set up business.

Podgornov called himself a small scale capitalist who eventually wanted to develop family farms out of his Joint Stock Company (JCA) farm. Anyone on this farm could take their share in cash and leave if they wanted to leave. Podgornov continued:

> Farming should not be run from Moscow. With the correct tax policy this can work. It's foolish to produce food which rots in the warehouse and yet people get paid for it. Our industrial system is still organized for gross production and this may still destroy everything. Farmers must learn the Cost Accounting Method. Only about 10% of our employees have the independent initiative to run their own businesses (transcription of translation, Filson, 1991).

His fear was that Russian businesses will not be able to enter the world market without being ruined so he was strongly in favour of State support until a viable competitiveness could develop.

Podgornov observed that »we don't allow anyone who isn't working with us to buy a share.« He has found that young people up to the age of 40 accept the approach which he is taking. The older ones can't adjust to it. Pensionners were crying when we bought them out« (transcription). He admits that there is »nothing democratic« about the way he runs the former collective. He hoped that once everything was finally based on private property, democracy might later come to the fore.

The Structure of Everyday Russian Rural Life

In the four years since his optimistic comments, however, privatization and decollectivization have not fulfilled their promise. Health and education services have been declining, especially since the onset of the economic recession which dates from around the time of the beginning of perestroika and glasnost. Rural health is poor partly because doctors do not want to live in rural areas. Rural hospitals are particularly short of medicines and x-ray machines. General food supplies are often worse than in towns because of poor roads and rural infrastructures. Cultural services are inadequate (Butyrin, 1993).

Life expectancy has dropped from 65 years in 1988 to 57 in 1995. Agricultural production has fallen twice as much as it did during the cataclysmic period of Stalinist Collectivization in the early 1930s. About one-fifth of the fertilizer applied was applied to the land in 1994 as in 1990. The Shortage of pesticides contributed to a major potato blight in 1993 destroying 70 percent of the private plots in Central Russia. In 1990 fewer than two percent of the Collective and State Farmers were unprofitable but by 1994, 57 percent were (Wegren and Durgin, 1995).

Votes taken in the aftermath of Yeltsin's attack on the Duma confirm that most rural Russians are not as prepared for change as their urban counterparts. Support for the Agrarian and reformed Communist parties suggests that most rural folks would like as little change as possible. This coexists with substantial but uneven support for the market oriented reforms within both the joint stock companies (such as Podgornov) and the smaller, private, family farms.

Conditions were never very good, however. Only about one quarter of the State and Collective farms had modern machinery. More than 50 percent of the work was therefore done manually. Rural work days have always been longer than urban work days and these reasons encouraged the youth to move to the cities. Where no milking machines exist it is typical for milk maids to work 330 days per year (Vologda Conference Proceedings, 1991).

Rural housing is not as nice as urban housing but due to the exodus of people from rural areas, people living in rural areas often enjoy more space than urban people. Since 1988 there has been a regression of housebuilding. Only about one quarter of rural homes have such amenities as gassification, electricity and phones. Depopulation of rural areas has continued unabated.

Rural depopulation has led to the closing of rural schools. Some rural children are now in boarding schools. Many daycares, kindergartens hospitals and services for the elderly have had to close (Wegrin and Durgin, 1995). There has been a shortage of money available for research on rural areas. Initially the intention of the Yeltsin Government was to slowly phase out State farms but continue with Collective Farms, develop some Private Farms and some corporatized collectives but the pace of reform has since quickened with the official privatization of both kinds of publically run farms. The productivity of the different types of farms is being studied and the best of them be promoted while the worst will be dropped.

State farms were run by the State from the top-down. Farm workers usually lived in apartment like dwellings in the country and owned only their own belongings within those apartments. Decisions emanated from Moscow about what they were to produce, when they were to sell it to the State agents, etc. Collective farms, on the other hand, had more autonomy although they were still largely controlled by the Collective Farm Manager. A major difference was that Collective Farm workers could own their own homes and most lived in village houses not apartments. Even private farms are still not private in our sense of the term because many of them still sell much of what they produce to the State at fixed prices. They may also, however, sell independently to whomever pays the most.

Now that as much as half of a particular State or Collective farm of somewhere between 5,000-10,000 hectares is divided up into independent private farms and the remaining half functions as a JSC, many of the kindergarten teachers, museum personnel, social service workers, etc. have had to be paid less or even, in some cases, laid off.

Within the sovkhoz and kolkhoz auxiliary personnel used to be paid by the State or Collective Farm.

Many farmers as well, particularly if relatively old, felt secure within the State and Collective Farm system. They received modest incomes but they had access to education, health care, cultural and recreational opportunities as well as pensions when females retired at 55 years old and males at 60. Younger, relatively educated farmers often feel most strongly about the potential benefits of independent farming.

Table 1: Russian Private Farms*

	1992	1993	1994	1995**
Number of farmers in thousands	49,0	182,8	269,9	320
Average size of one farm in hectares	42,0	43,0	42,0	42,0
All the hectares calculated overall throughout Russia	2,068	7,804	11,333	13,440
The number of defunct farms in thousands	not available	5,1	14,1	>65
The percentage of defunct farms	not available	2,8%	5,2%	20,3%

*Data refers to January 1 st of each year

**Imputed from Wegrin and Durgin, 1995

In 1993 the process of new private farms emerging slowed down a little. For example, in 1992 134,000 private farms were set up. In 1993 only 87,000 farms were set up. The majority of the farmers own small plots. In 1993 approximately 53 percent of the farmers owned less than 20 hectares of land per farmer. More than two-thirds of the farmers owned up to 50 hectares per farmer and only 7 percent of them owned more than 100 hectares. According to Wegrin and Durgin,

> By the end of 1993, an estimated 52 private farms were failing for every 100 that were created, up from four per 100 in 1992 and five per 100 during the first quarter of 1993. Farm failures continued to increase substantially in 1994. Through the first three quarters of 1994, for every 100 private farms created, 103 private farms ceased operations. But the end of 1994, the actual number of private farms had declinded from the midyear total (1995; 54).

Many of the private farmers interviewed in 1992 were essentially urban state officials who saw the opportunity to use their networks and influence to make a success of private farming via their access to inputs and other resources. They have been followed most recently by large numbers of former rural proletariat on State and Collective farms. The first private farmers often had a high level of education and had either moved to the city from the farm previously or were the children or grandchildren of rural proletariat or peasants. Many of the most recently privatized farmers were the older people who wanted a salary and a guaranteed pension and therefore did not generally want to take up leases. Not surprisingly, as will be seen below, the age spread of the early private Moscow Region farmers was much younger (more than 45 percent are below 40 years old) than that of Ontario's farmers (with only 24 percent younger than 40).

Whether the newly privatized Russian Joint stock companies, private cooperatives and small independent family farms will be any more sustainable than the relatively unsuccessful large monocultural State and Collective Farms out of which they are being carved has much to do with their economic viability. When comparing Ontario views about governments' role in promoting sustainability we discovered that Moscow Region farmers were usually much more willing to see the government penalize abusers of

wetland policies, provide long-term grants to improve conservation practices, break up food processing monopolies and diversify the rural economy than were Ontario farmers (Filson, 1995). Privatization has not allowed Russian agriculture to displace the growing influx of foreign food which is often of better quality and cheaper price.

> After his Russian visit in the summer of 1995 American Eric Fenster observed that
> We seemed to be observers of the widespread result of privatization under »option two«, purchase by the work collective, in which the reality is assumption of ownership by the managers. We also returned to [a] private dairy farm near Moscow. It was now almost two years since Peter had been found hanged for apparently not wanting to share his success with the mob and since the state farm grabbed back all the pasture land it was leasing in order to sell it to the nouveaux riche for construction of extravagant dachas.
>
> Peter's wife, Alla, had invited a family to live with her and her daughter to help run the place. The size of the herd had dropped further, and the cows did not look as if they were giving much milk. A Swiss farmer was working on the farm as a way to practice Russian after a few months of formal instruction. He was convinced that with the means available it would be possible to get the same amount of milk with half the number of cows and turn a profit by not spreading resources so thin. His advice to Alla was to cut the herd, but she faced at least two obstacles. One was that there could be no going back if the decision were wrong. The second was probably a lifetime of living with the mentality that more and bigger was better. Alla's choice was more radical. Russians prefer pork, she said, so by next year we'll going to get rid of the cows and raise pigs (via email).

Despite Russia's relatively educated but cheap agricultural labour and not too outdated technology, the economic resilience of many of its small new private farms therefore appears dubious.

When the first Russian interviews done in 1992 most of the agricultural production was still conducted on State (Sovkhoz) and Collective Farms (Kolkhoz) by rural farm workers and the supervisors and managers of these publically owned and operated mega-farms. Workers on both Sovkhozy and Kolkhozy have small plots for their own consumption in addition to what they earn from their wages or share of production profits. Sometimes, as in southern Russia, these small plots have been their main source of income. Until recently most output was purchased by the State at fixed prices. Much time was spent calculating input/output ratios as a way of compensating for the lack of supply and demand. Bartering between the state and these large farms meant that, for example, 0.007 tractors would be traded for perhaps a ton of fodder.[1]

In 1992 about 10 percent of public agricultural land was scheduled for step-by-step privatization. This was the situation during which the 'private farmers' described below were functioning, in which their very existence was a threat to the majority of conservative rural proletariat who continued to work on the State and Collective farms (Van Atta, 1993). Later, on October 27, 1993 Yeltsin signed a decree legalizing the purchase and sale as well as mortgaging of land, for the first time guaranteeing Russian citizens' right to own land. A majority of newly created private farmers were unwilling test subjects of this latest attempt to break up the large state and collective farms. The private farmers interviewed here were usually in the position of leasing parcels of land from State or Collective Farms using nearly interest free loans. Therefore, most of them were really a type of tenant farmers, managing private farms more so than is the case with the majority of independent and/or capitalist farmers of Ontario.

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1 From a lecture at Moscow State University, July 6, 1993, given by Eugenia Serova, doctor of agricultural economics and adviser to the Russian Minister of Agriculture.

Demographic and Farm Differences between Ontario and Moscow Region Farmers

We found that the often quite young early privatizers had a higher than average educational level than their Ontario counterparts but usually farmed very small holdings with much more diverse types of commodities per farm than in Ontario. Compared to the 1991 Ontario farm sample, the Moscow Region sample of the same time had a comparable or better average level of education than Ontario farmers. But those who have belatedly chosen to farm privately, either as small family farmers or as part of larger unit joint stock companies or private cooperatives, tend to be somewhat older than the first group with lower average educational levels than the first farmers. They share demographic profiles more similar to the average farm workers and managers of the State and Collective farms. Generally, the older the Russian farmers, the more likely they were to feel positively affected by special scenic views in their landscape (2 tailed probability > 0.002 for those over 45 versus under) and the more likely they were to believe that private agriculture.

While 38 percent of the Ontario farmers worked full time and had some hired help throughout the year only 29 percent of the Moscow Region farmers did. Of the Ontario farmers, 48 percent worked off their farms whereas only 35 percent of the Moscow Region farmers said they often worked off their farms.

The four main Ontario enterprises are field crops, dual enterprises, beef and dairy whereas in the Moscow Region the four main enterprises are dairy, beef, field crops and swine. Whereas the largest percentage of Ontario farms are specialized, the largest percentage on Moscow Region farms are mixed operations. Thus, even though Ontario has many more types of crops than the Moscow Region, the average Ontario farm is much more specialized. Many of the newly created Russian farms fit the small, sustainable (or subsistence) type of family farm.

Table 2: Numbers of Respondents by Age and Size of Holding Level in Ontario and the Moscow Region in 1991 (n= 1 073 and 165)

Age	Ontario n=1073	Moscow Region N=165
30 years and under	44 (4,1)	30 (18,2)
31-40 years	212 (19,8)	45 (27,3)
41-50 years	291 (27)	40 (24,2)
51-60 years	264 (24,6)	45 (27,3)
61 years and over	262 (24,4)	5 (3,0)

Size of Holding and Region where Respondents Farm (n=1083 and 165)

Size of Holding	Ontario n=1083	Mosvow Region N=165
40 hectares or less	18,6% (201)	90,9% (150)
40,0-80,5 hectares	29,8% (323)	9,1% (15)
80,5-121,0 hectares	19,0% (206)	0
more than 121 hectares	32,6% (353)	0

Comparative Environmental Attitudes

When we compared my sample of 1,105 Ontario farmers with the 165 newly privatized Moscow Region farmers, we discovered that the Ontario farmers usually were relatively less favourably predisposed toward government interventions to sustain agriculture than their neophyte private counterparts in the Moscow Region. The latter were more inclined to say they favoured establishing sustainable agriculture than were Ontario farmers and the Moscow Region farmers were much more likely to say they wanted to learn how to farm more sustainably. By contrast, most Ontario farmers thought they were already farming sustainably. Moscow Region private farmers also saw a much bigger role for Government in regulating the environment and promoting sustainable agriculture than Ontario farmers did. While most Ontario farmers felt that Canadian agricultural land was in better condition that it ever was, Moscow Region farmers were more likely to believe that Russian agricultural land is in worse condition that it was in the past. Indeed Moscow Region farmers thought that Russian rural land degradation is quite serious.

Moscow Region farmers favoured sustainable agriculture more than Ontario farmers and said they would like to learn how to farm more sustainably. Ontario farmers generally thought they were already managing their farms sustainably. Moscow Region private farmers saw a much bigger role for Government in regulating the environment and promoting sustainable agriculture than Ontario farmers did.

Substantially more Moscow Region farmers (58%) disagreed with the statement that making agriculture more sustainable would also reduce levels of production, whereas a minority of Ontario and Australian disagreed (both about 40%). Only 36% of Moscow Region farmers agreed that the profitability of agricultural production would be reduced compared to 69% of Australian and 59% of Ontario farmers. While 65% of Moscow Region farmers agreed that farmers should not receive the benefits of primary producer status unless they are following recommended sustainable agricultural practices, half of Ontario farmers agreed (49% whereas only 32% of a random sample of 2100 Australian farmers agreed). Thus, by contrast, Ontario farmers usually expected a smaller government role than desired by newly privatized Moscow Region farmers (Filson, 1993).

Looking at the 1994/95 data, we see that while Muscovite farmers generally still doubt that private farming leads to ecological problems, those farmers who regularly purchase farm labour are less convinced of this than those who do not used hired labour.

Table 3: Means of Moscow Region Farmers' Views about whether or not Private Farming Causes Ecological Farming as a Function of Whether they Purchase Seasonal Labour or Not

	Number of Cases	Mean	Standard Deviation	T- value	2 tailed probability
Purchase Seasonal Labour	25	-,9600	0,200	-2,07	0,047
No Seasonal Labour	27	-,7037	0,609		

Table 4: Means of Ontario (1991) and Moscow Region Farmers (1992) regarding their Perception of the Seriousness of Land Degradation

Region	Mean	Cases	Standard Deviation	T-value	2 tailed probability
Ontario	5,82	1091	17,49	-14,66	0,000
Moscow Region	17,69	165	7,97		

Moscow Region farmers believed it is fair to expect farmers to bear the costs of repairing degraded land on their land but most Ontario farmers did not, however, many more Ontario than Moscow Region farmers thought that farmers should pay something for environmental research on agriculture. While Moscow Region farmers wanted poor-marginal country to be officially zoned along with all rural land as a conservation measure, Ontario farmers usually neither agreed nor disagreed. Though Moscow Region farmers tended to believe that agricultural chemicals create more problems than they solve, that agricultural pesticides are a threat to public health and the pollution effects of fertilizer are important, Ontario farmers usually did not. Ontario farmers were, however, less likely to think there is too much talk about the harm from pesticides (Filson, 1993).

Comparing Russian Farmers' Perceived Quality of Life with Ontario Farmers' Sense of Well-being

As will be seen below, Ontario farmers perceived their quality of life to be substantially better than do Moscow Region farmers. Table 3 below summarizes how farmers in Ontario and the Moscow Region differed regarding their perceptions of their relative Quality of Life, a scale comprised of seven questions. It also included a scale called Factors Farmers Feel Affected By which is a scale comprised of two sub-scales (determined by factor analysis) made up of micro (seven questions) and meso (four questions) social structural changes.

Table 5: Means of Ontario (1991) and Moscow Region Farmers (1992) regarding their Perception of their Quality of Life

Region	Mean	Cases	Standard Deviation	T-value	2 tailed probability
Ontario	2,412	1059	4,553	3,17	0,002
Moscow Region	1,371	159	3,746		

Thus Ontario farmers generally ranked their relative quality of life higher than did Moscow Region farmers.

Table 6: Means of Ontario (1991) and Moscow Region Farmers (1992) Perceptions regarding their Perception of Rural Changes they Feel Most Affected by over the past 20 Years

Region	Mean	Cases	Standard Deviation	T-value	2 tailed probability
Ontario	-4,500	1083	8,94	-4,84	0,000
Moscow Region	-0,707	133	3,74		

Hence, Ontario farmers feel much more negatively affected by changes within their rural areas than do Moscow Region farmers over the past 20 years.

Table 7: Means of Ontario (1991) and Moscow Region Farmers (1992) Perceptions about their Relative Quality of Life

Quality of Life	Region	Mean	Cases	Standard Deviation	T-value	2 tailed probability
Compared to other farmers in my country	Ontario Mos. R.	0,360 -,365	998 96	0,736 1,007	6,88	0,000
Compared to the average person in my country	Ontario Mos. R.	0,339 0,565	1026 115	0,987 0,880	-2,58	0,011
Compared to farmers of my parents' generation	Ontario Mos. R.	0,632 0,040	1024 50	1,134 0,807	4,88	0,000

Compared with Moscow Region farmers, Ontario farmers usually felt that their quality of life was higher than other Canadian farmers. Ontario farmers were also much more likely than the Russian farmers to think their quality of life was better than that of the farmers of their parents' generation than the Moscow Region farmers were likely to feel relative to farmers of their parents' generation. Moscow Region farmers were, however, more likely to believe their quality of life was better than other Russians' quality of life than Ontario farmers were likely to say their quality of life was better than that of other Canadians.

If we look at the factors farmers felt most affected by in the past two decades we see that Moscow Region farmers generally felt more positive about what has happened than Ontario farmers did.

Table 8: Means of Ontario (1991) and Moscow Region Farmers (1992) Perceptions about the Factors which they Have Been Most Affected by Over the Past Two Decades

Things Farmers Felt Most Affected By	Region	Mean	Cases	Standard Deviation	T-value	2 tailed probability
Decline of traditional farm organizations	Ontario Mos. R.	-,293 0,389	1059 105	1,165 0,750	-6,00	0,000
Non-farm rural people	Ontario Mos. R.	-,359 0,629	1059 105	1,165 0,750	-12,12	0,000
Overproduction of farm commodities	Ontario Mos. R.	-,631 0,169	1051 105	1,068 0,772	-9,06	0,000
Farm financial crisis	Ontario Mos. R.	-,817 -,526	1067 114	1,170 1,350	-2,28	0,024
Change in the price of land	Ontario Mos. R.	-,289 -,591	1053 66	1,223 0,744	3,05	0,003
Necessity of off-farm income	Ontario Mos. R.	-,480 0,271	1049 96	1,310 0,774	-8,45	0,000
Family stress	Ontario Mos. R.	-,573 0,127	1064 79	1,214 0,774	-7,39	0,000
Shift to material values	Ontario Mos. R.	-,494 -,226	1040 102	1,096 1,089	-2,38	0,019
Growing interest in protecting the environment	Ontario Mos. R.	0,510 0,973	1063 109	0,958 0,645	-6,76	0,000
Large number of off-farm rural people	Ontario Mos. R.	-,159 -,643	1065 112	1,168 0,815	5,70	0,000

Again, while these questions were developed from the experience of Ontario farmers and are, therefore, more relevant to their situation, the comparison still provides some interesting contrasts. The decline of traditional farm organizations was seen by Moscow Region farmers to have affected them positively, whereas most Ontario farmers felt

badly about such a decline. More recently privatized farmers are less sanguine about the decline of their former organizations, however, than the early privatizers. Moscow Region farmers usually felt good about non-farm people moving into rural areas but Ontario farmers typically were not pleased about it. On the other hand, Moscow Region farmers were even more negatively affected than Ontario farmers by the large number of off-farm rural people. Moscow Region farmers felt good about the growing interest in protecting the environment and so did Ontario farmers but not to the same degree (not as many work off the farm). Moscow Region farmers also said they were somewhat positively affected by family stress whereas Ontario farmers were negatively affected by it. The overproduction of some farm commodities also affected Moscow Region farmers somewhat positively but it affected Ontario farmers negatively. The farm financial crisis impacted both sets of farmers negatively but Ontario farmers felt significantly more negatively affected. On the other hand, the change in the price of land affected Moscow Region farmers more negatively than it affected Ontario farmers. The shift to material values also affected Ontario farmers more negatively than it did Moscow Region farmers.

Table 9: Means of Ontario (1991) and Moscow Region Farmers (1992) Perceptions about Sustainable Agricultural Policies

Sustainable Govt. Agric. Policies	Region	Mean	Cases	Standard Deviation	T-value	2 tailed probability
Use import tariffs to protect farmers	Ontario Mos. R.	-,674 0,507	1067 144	1,054 0,819	-15,64	0,000
Gaurantee adequate on-farm incomes	Ontario Mos. R.	-,810 1,485	1064 165	1,156 0,853	-30,50	0,000
Allow marketing of specialty products	Ontario Mos. R.	0,698 1,206	1033 165	0,921 0,720	-8,07	0,000
Work toward elimination of subsidies	Ontario Mos. R.	0,801 -,504	1054 125	1,041 0,591	21,12	0,000
Have a Canadian/Russian food self-sufficiency plan	Ontario Mos. R.	-,960 1,543	1057 160	0,822 0,500	-53,38	0,001
Provide better retirement plan to farmers	Ontario Mos. R.	1,073 1,228	1068 158	0,921 0,585	-2,84	0,005
Encourage consumption of organic food	Ontario Mos. R.	0,251 1,249	1058 165	1,210 0,744	-14,49	0,000
Tell public that animals not mistreated	Ontario Mos. R.	-1,211 0,644	1062 101	0,927 0,986	-18,17	0,000

Overall Means of Ontario and Moscow Region Farmers Perceptions regarding their Perception of Sustainable Government Agricultural Policies

Region	Mean	Cases	Standard Deviation	T-value	2 tailed probability
Ontario	12,93	1089	7,45	-20,21	0,000
Moscow Region	22,81	165	5,57		

Table 8 reveals that Moscow Region farmers wanted their government to guarantee adequate on-farm incomes, use import tariffs to protect farmers, have a country-wide food self-sufficiency plan and tell the public that animals are not being mistreated by farmers but with respect to all of these issues Ontario farmers generally did not want their government to do these things. Moscow Region farmers are even more anxious than Ontario farmers that the government encourage consumption of organic foods and

provide a better retirement plan for farmers. While Ontario farmers usually say they wanted the government to work toward the elimination of subsidies, Moscow Region farmers do not.

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

While most Ontario farmers thought that Canadian agricultural land is in better condition that it ever was, Moscow Region farmers were more likely to believe that Russian agricultural land is in worse condition that it was in the past. The latter did not agree that Russian rural land degradation is minor whereas most Ontario farmers felt that Canadian rural land degradation is minor. No doubt much Moscow Region land is in worse condition than Ontario's land and this goes some of the way to explaining why Moscow Region farmers so urgently endorse soil conservation measures (cf. for example Breburda, 1990).

Relative to Moscow Region farmers, Ontario farmers felt that their quality of life was significantly better. Ontario farmers were also much more likely to think their quality of life was better than that of the farmers of their parents' generation than were the Moscow Region farmers relative to the Moscow Region farmers' perception of their parents' generation. Moscow Region farmers were, however, more likely to consider their quality of life to be higher than that of other Russians relative to how Ontario farmers perceived their quality of life in relation to that of other Canadians.

Ontario farmers felt much more negatively affected by changes within their rural areas than did Moscow Region farmers over the past years. They felt particularly badly about the farm financial crisis and the overproduction of many farm commodities which have exacerbated family stress. On the other hand, the earliest Muscovite private farmers (1992 sample) were pleased with the opportunity to obtain their own farms and felt better about recent reforms.

While the decline of traditional farm organizations was seen by Moscow Region farmers to have affected them positively, the same decline affected Ontario farmers negatively. The fact that Moscow Region farmers felt positively affected by the decline of traditional farm organizations which were dominated by the Communist Party is not surprising nor is the nostalgia most Ontario farmers feel about the organizations that once gave them more support services and a greater voice in provincial and federal affairs than they now enjoy. Russian farmers are enjoying increased autonomy but they often lack the capital to actualize their dreams.

Moscow Region farmers were much more keen than Ontario farmers to see that government pays attention to farmers' social needs, penalizes abusers of wetlands policies, breaks up monopolies in food processing, diversifies the rural economy and reduces the number of land severances and provides long-term grants to improve conservation practices. Moscow Region farmers usually wanted their government to guarantee adequate on-farm incomes, use import tariffs to protect farmers, have a country-wide food self-sufficiency plan and tell the public that animals are not being mistreated by farmers whereas Ontario farmers usually did not want their government to do these things. Muscovites were also stronger about wanting the government to provide a better retirement plan for farmers. Ontario farmers were also more open to the possibility that subsidies might be eliminated than were Moscow Region farmers.

At this stage it is easy to agree with writers like Macey (1994) and Wegren&Durgin (1995) who doubt that privatization and decollectivization are likely to adequately ad-

dress the problems of land degradation, low productivity and poor rural infrastructure. While McNeil and Kerr's analysis of what is wrong with the State farm system has cogent implications for the way in which especially dairy production and retailing could be facilitated by rural extension, we are puzzled by their claim that little has changed organizationally. Perhaps too much has changed too quickly.

The collapse of production which has occurred since 1991 and the acceleration of farm failures in 1994 and 1995 is a harbinger of the coming return of a more collectivist Government in Russia. The pendulum seems set, once again, following the December 1995 elections for the Duma, to swing back in the direction of collectivization and more of a planned economy, especially within agriculture. This does not mean that privatization and decollectivization has really been given an adequate chance to influence total productivity, the environment and farmers' quality of life. In fact, many perceive the changes which have attempted to generate market-led incentives to be merely surface, managerial style changes. Perhaps less of the management structure has changed than McNell and Kerr would have hoped but in terms of total productivity and generally perceived quality of life in rural areas, too much certainly has changed. As a consequence there will be a return to a more authoritarian form of agricultural management, a more collectivist approach to the social division of labour within agriculture and renewed regulation and control from the Russian Government.

Under the State and Collective Farm system Rural Extension in the form that we know that Rural Extension as such did not exist. Nonetheless, well-trained agronomists and agricultural managers were part of the State and Collective farm system and many have since become private farmers. Others could easily be retrained as publicly and privately funded Rural Extensionists, capable of performing many of the same functions such as subject matter specialists to community developers. Western countries have already being trying to do this for some time as McNeil and Kerr (1995) indicate, however, they have often not sufficiently understood how the more collectivist mentality of a people not too far from State Socialist and Czarist Russia view their quality of life and sustainable agricultural potential.

Many first rate agricultural institutes exist throughout Russia but they have been notoriously isolated from the farmers themselves. Without a system of Rural Extension to go hand in hand with their newly privatized farms, these institutes function within a vacuum. This is why a farming systems research and extension model, which views farmers as coresearchers and coextensionists, is needed and must be linked more effectively with existing agricultural research institutes. FSR/E contains a gender analytic component which differentially analyzes the roles of women in farm work, off-farm employment and household labour. FSR's extension effort must promote human resource development skills which will enhance the new institutions' administrative capacity. To do this they must teach marketing and business management skills and other social organizational skills such as leadership and entrepreneurship including the management of risk. Perhaps many of the small farms will function not far above subsistence for some time, but with a suitable and growing rural extension effort, Moscow Region farmers have just as much potential to learn how to farm sustainably as do Ontario farmers.

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