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MEMORANDUM FOR: Emory Donaldson  
Budget Examiner  
International Affairs Division  
Office of Management and Budget

SUBJECT : Estimates of Soviet Grain Output

1. In response to your request, a comparison of the USSR's 1968-1974 grain output with harvest estimates made by the Office of Economic Research at the opening and closing of the crop year is attached.

2. It is important to note that the early estimates assumed that "average" weather conditions would prevail during the remainder of the crop year. Because weather through mid-summer is critical in determining grain yields and often at sharp variance with "average" conditions, these early estimates often change markedly. For example, in 1972 we dropped 20 million tons from the initial estimate of 195 million tons of grain due to severe drought. The early projection was 10% above the actual harvest of 168.2 million tons, and the later estimate was 2% below the actual.

3. It should be noted also that our success in forecasting the size of the Soviet grain crop is due to a methodology that has evolved over the past two decades

These data are not necessarily available for other countries. Application of our methodology to other countries therefore would not guarantee similar success.

4. If further information is desired please contact Office of the Comptroller, on Code 143, Extension 5197.

Office of Economic Research

Attachment:  
As stated

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Comparison of USSR Grain Output with Estimates by the  
Office of Economic Research During the Crop Year

| Year | First Estimate                 |                         | Final Estimate                 |                                     | Actual Harvest<br>million<br>metric tons | Error as a Percent of     |   |
|------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|---------------------------|---|
|      | Date 1/<br>million metric tons | Amount                  | Date 4/<br>million metric tons | Amount                              |  | First Estimate<br>percent | Actual Harvest<br>Final Estimate<br>percent |
| 1968 | June                           | 148 2/                  | August                         | 154-158 (i.e. 156)                  | 169.5                                    | -13                       | -8  |
| 1969 | July                           | 155-160 (i.e. 157.5) 3/ | September                      | 157                                 | 162.4                                    | -3                        | -3  |
| 1970 | August                         | ≥ 174 (i.e. 174)        | August                         | > 174 (i.e. 174)                    | 186.8                                    | -7                        | -7  |
| 1971 | September                      | 171-177 (i.e. 174)      | September                      | 171-177 (i.e. 174)                  | 181.2                                    | -4                        | -4  |
| 1972 | March                          | 185                     | August                         | 165                                 | 168.2                                    | +10                       | -2  |
| 1973 | May                            | 190                     | October                        | 206, "as much as<br>220" (i.e. 213) | 222.5                                    | -15                       | -4  |
| 1974 | June                           | 190                     | October                        | 195                                 | 195.6                                    | -3                        | -0.3  |

1. Publication date: estimate actually made up to one month earlier.
2. "Approximately the 1967 level".
3. "Well below the 1968 level but somewhat above the annual average production for 1965-68".
4. Estimate closest to the end of the crop year.