

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD PRODUCTION

Baguettes for Northern Residents

It has become natural to speak of the 'Tyumen North' in terms of oil. But daily bread always has been, and today remains, a current issue. Judge for yourself: while more than one and a half billion rubles were spent on housing construction last year in the Tyumen Oblast, the amount spent on the food industry was a mere 72 million.

It is true that economic organs are now beginning to turn their attention to the food program and are starting to allocate a portion of the monies to those working in the food industry. But is the money always used wisely? Unfortunately, the availability of money has not made the problem less acute.

Serious complications begin at the planning stage. Developing plans for food enterprises for oil and gas industry workers has become the duty of sectoral institutes, whose primary profile is finding oil and gas. As for the specialized planning organizations of the Oblast Agro-Industrial Committee, they are overbooked with other tasks.

What you get when the pastry chef starts making shoes is obvious to anyone. The plans drawn up by oil industry personnel for food industry workers are, of course, not distinguished by their quality. What's more, plans borrowed from more central regions of Russia are often simply 'hitched on' to the Siberian situation in a mechanical fashion, without any regard for local conditions. But those paying are happy even for borrowed plans -- there have been cases where food enterprises were planned without any documentation at all.

"As early as 1981," recounts R. Katsen, director of the "Obneftegazstroi" Trust, "in response to strong pressure from local authorities, and