collectivization was resumed under the leadership of Antonin Novotny. The government used heavy price discrimination against private farmers and the nationalization of all machinery, among other coercive measures, to force farmers to join the cooperatives. The methods were successful. By 1958, 76.8 percent of all agricultural land had been collectivized, and by 1961, that figure had risen to almost 88 percent (Agricultural Statistics 25).

During collectivization, state investment in the cooperatives and state farms also increased. Total investment rose from 3.2 billion crowns in 1955 to 6.4 billion crowns in 1961 (Agricultural Statistics 27; crowns in 1960 prices). Production and yield increases did not nearly match investment increases, however. Decision-making on the collectives was often left in the hands of those with little background in farm management, and the farms were plagued by inefficiency and waste. Morale among workers was very low and passive resistance was common. The average annual growth in agricultural production between 1950 and 1960 was only 1.4 percent. More striking is the fact that annual growth between 1958 and 1962 averaged -0.8 percent (Hajda 133).

The 1960s and the Prague Spring

Faced with severe economic problems, the Twelfth Party Congress, meeting in 1962, announced a program of rural development. The program's goal was the "industrialization" of agriculture to help facilitate the recent collectivization and to help cope with labor shortage problems in all sectors. It was also hoped that such industrialization would eventually lead to complete food self-sufficiency for the nation. Investment was shifted away from heavy industry and was directed toward agriculture, particularly toward grain production. Fertilizer use on the state farms and cooperatives increased from 106 to 167 kilograms per