

incentives for quality, and allows prices to be controlled by the central administration. The government "provided" farmers with seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, farm machinery, and other agricultural inputs, however the quality of these inputs was poor. Payments for crops were unstable, and credit for new machinery was not available. The state purchased about 70 percent of all agricultural production and distributed this among the food industry and retail markets.

Agricultural Inputs

Not only was farm machinery in Poland outdated, but there were very few machines per hectare of agricultural land, in large part because the small farm size did not justify such equipment. For instance, Polish agriculture in 1966 had 6,106 grain combines for 15.6 million hectares of arable land. By contrast, East Germany had 16,776 grain combines with a total arable land of 4.9 million hectares.¹² Tractors when measured by number per hectare, follow the same pattern. Fertilizer availability was higher in Poland than most other eastern European nations, but the quality of fertilizer was generally inferior.

Polish citizens were better fed than most of their eastern neighbors. Food consumption patterns match those found in some of the most developed industrialized nations. Table 3 shows comparisons of daily caloric intake by several developed nations, including Poland and the Soviet Union.

¹²ERS Agricultural Statistics