

Who needs capital investment which doesn't result in a return, in this case, products? What is the point of construction for the sake of reporting that there is construction in the North, or keeping cows only to be able to say that we have cattle in the Arctic? The particular conditions for the development of the agricultural industry in the Arctic resulted in a certain attitude towards it: don't do anything without calculations, without a feasibility study.

For example, the economics of milk production look fine: it's cheaper to produce milk locally than to bring in dried milk powder from somewhere, and then mix it here. It turned out differently with hay. Hay is brought here from the Saratov Province and from the Novgorod area. Hay shipments are another curious thing about the Arctic.

"Isn't it possible to grow it locally?", I asked the head of the Agriculture and Food Production Department of the Provincial Committee of the Communist Party, Vasillii A. Podolyak. "Is it really cheaper to bring it from Saratov?"

"Exactly," was the answer. "The economics worked out this way."

This is how a state farm with a name like "Murmanskii" appeared in the Aleksandrov-Gai Region of Saratov Province: up to 35,000 tonnes of hay are harvested annually on a 6,000 hectare area. As soon as the Saratov hay was put into the feeding-troughs of the Arctic "critters", the milk yields shot up. This is not surprising - can you really compare the nutritional value of hay grown in the irrigated meadows of Central Russia with those of hay which grows in drained peatbog?