

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD PRODUCTION

Excessive Quotas Discourage Soviet Fishermen

When will this confusion over targets finally end for us fishermen? After all, no matter what the scientists and publicists write or say about changes in the economic system, at our level, the gross product still reigns supreme, just as before. Here is an obvious example. Last winter we caught 9 000 tonnes of pollock. A misfortune was instrumental in our fortune. Instead of five fishing trawlers there were only three. Two ships broke down and returned to port. The floating factories were only working off the three ships. Therefore, we were giving them fish very quickly. There were three ships catching fish from the schools which we discovered instead of five. Now all five trawlers are operating, but the target for each of them is the same as last year's level achieved by each of the three ships under emergency conditions. The objective has been more than doubled!

There is another hidden misfortune here. The thing is that the major portion of the fishermen's wages is made up of the bonuses for overfullfilling targets. Mind you, this is not some vast sum. Due to the generally low fixed prices - 57 kopeks per centner of fish caught - even considering last year's share bonuses, we got almost half as much as we would on seiners, which only catch about 1 500 to 2 000 tonnes. And now what will happen with such an excessive target? Won't the fisherman leave, feeling that they won't get anything for extremely difficult work in the winter seas and the bitter cold wind?

When the Magadanrybprom* Association changed over to self-financing and self-sufficiency, there was a lot of talk about hard, long-term economic standards which would allow us to face the future with the greatest certainty. In fact, none of this has happened yet. This is why I would really like to