

Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev Visits Farms, Research Center in Iowa, 1959

Signs of hello in Russian hang across main streets in small Iowa town. Views of Garst farms, near Coon Rapids, Iowa, are shown. Farmer Roswell Garst and Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev are doggedly followed by reporters and cameramen as they walk around the farm and livestock.

Voiceover (VO): Signs in Russian greeted Premier Khrushchev as his motor caravan drove through Iowa towns today on his way to several farms in the Coon Rapids area. He told Roswell Garst, his host for the tour, that he felt this was going to be a jovial day, and he took a keen interest in whatever he saw, whether it was soybean, hybrid corn or healthy Iowa livestock.

Corn chopping caught his eye and he had several questions to ask wherever he went about the crop and machinery used for harvesting. It seemed to observe that the worriedness that he showed at the dinner last night had been replaced by an earadis (sic) more characteristic of Khrushchev.

The press of cameramen irritated Garst more than once. Then, through an interpreter, Khrushchev and Garst discussed the relative merits of American and Russian corn. But the conversation took a very strange twist – at least for an atheist such as Khrushchev.

Video shows Khrushchev on the left, Garst on the right with the interpreter in the middle. They are surrounded by a throng of reporters.

Nikita Khrushchev (through interpreter): When Mr. Garst first came to our country, we both harbored corn from him. This year, Mr. Garst visited our country again and sold the hybrid corn that we now have – is it any worse than yours?

Roswell Garst: No, I think, I don't like to say worse. I think it is very good.

Khrushchev: And now if I was to say that I was to buy some more hybrid corn now, Garst would probably think I am going stupid. (Laughter) You have wonderful cattle.

Garst: Tell Mr. Khrushchev that we have a higher rain fall in this area than is true in most of the Soviet Union and the thickness of our planting is probably somewhat based upon higher rainfall expectations.

Khrushchev: I must say that you are very a very wise and intelligent people in this part of the country, but you must also admit that God has helped you quite a bit.

Garst: That's right! He's on our side.

Khrushchev: The soil...you mustn't think that God is helping only you. (*Garst laughs*) He's helping us too, because we are developing just as fast.

Garst: You tell him we have a saying in the United States – he likes a good saying. “The Lord helps those that help themselves.”

Khrushchev: He only supports the intelligence. (*Laughter*)

VO: And that was today's special report, now back to John Daily in New York.

Video jumps to blank screen. Then jumps to former Illinois Governor Adlai Stevenson II speaking to reports before meeting Khrushchev at Garst farms near Coon Rapids, Iowa.

Reporter: Well, here we are in Iowa where Premier Khrushchev is apparently getting the first tour, what is your personal opinion of that.

Governor Adlai Stevenson: Well, he's getting a farmer's tour in any event. This is, of course, one of the great sites of the world for anyone who is interested in corn culture. The Garst farms, the (unintelligible) management and the Sedgwicks, they have increased yield by use of fertilizer, insecticides and herbicides...I think is phenomenal and it aggravates our farm problem and also ensures our productivity.

I think the...if Mr. Khrushchev had anything he wanted to see most in this country, my guess would be corn farming and the Garst farms in Iowa.

Reporter: He does admit that he is not quite up to our productivity and methods of farming.

Stevenson: I think they know a good deal about the methods, they haven't applied them yet. But they have approached us about doing it, I have no doubt.

Reporter: Why or how do think this is all going ahead, Governor?

Stevenson: I can't say its value to the resolution of our problem of peace with the Soviet Union, but I think if we think of it in terms of the increased wellbeing of mankind that the insurance of an adequate diet all over the world – whether they are Russians or whether they are Indians – is very important. And, of course, the increased production of corn means an increased production of livestock, and that means more meat in the human diet. And this is one of the things the Russians have been very deficit in and hopefully in our plan to correct.

Reporter: How about just an increase and understanding between Mr. Khrushchev and the United States?

Stevenson: Well, I said to Mr. Khrushchev when I was in Moscow last summer that the best place to have a summit meeting would be in an Illinois cornfield...but he ended up in an Iowa cornfield.

Reporter: He told us yesterday governor that he thought it would be a good idea that once a year, he or his successor, and the president of this country have a meeting once a year. What do you think of that idea?

Stevenson: I made a speech several years ago in a recent presidential campaign which I said I thought we ought to have more or less formal meetings at all levels, so I'm in favor of talking at every opportunity that we get.

I didn't suppose there were so many flies out there, it was a great surprise to me. (Laughter)

You'll have to excuse me now, I'm going to go and see some more of this farm, because I am not only going out here to pay my respects to our distinguished visitor but also see what I can do to improve the yield of corn in Iowa.

Reporter: Governor, just one last question. Is there anything special you want to say to Khrushchev when you see him at the Garst farm?

Stevenson: I'd like to talk with him about some things...having to do with what he has learned about us and we he thinks he has learned about the Russians. And also, I'd like to talk a little about the implementation of his proposal for universal disarmament.

Reporter: Is that as hair-brained to you as it is for some, sir?

Stevenson: No, it isn't. On the contrary, I think we should treat it with the utmost propriety and examine it most carefully. I've always been one of those that felt that the arms race was the most hazardous affliction that we...from which we suffered and we have to do something to arrest it. And I think we are on the eve of doing something about nuclear testing and maybe we can go beyond that.

Reporter: Thank you, Governor.

Stevenson: At least, I'd like to hope so.