

Farm Family in the United States, between 1915 and 1923



Harris & Ewing, "Farm," between 1915 and 1923. [Courtesy of Library of Congress](#)

Letter from Giles S. Thomas to His Family, July 23, 1876 (Pg. 1)

Dear and affectionate friends,
 After so long a while I permit myself the present opportunity to send you a few lines to let you know something about things in Nebraska. Times (financially) are very close in fact it seems there is no money in Neb. and I may say how we "apparently" get along with out or at best but very little is more than it can solve. Crops - Wheat don't look very promising at present in fact it is to far gone for redemption although the rain we had the last week has helped the looks of it 50 per cent it is thin, short, and weedy. Barley - most of it looks splendid. Oats generally looks well but thin on the ground. Hay looks splendid where the weeds did not get the start of it. Corn looks promising for a good crop - has a splendid color and generally in good stands. Potatoes - good, where the bugs did not hurt them. Garden truck of all kinds good - especially cukes. Prairie grass very good for grazing. Timber is ~~not~~ making a ^{good} growth - consequently looks fine. Horses have never seen look better since I have been in Neb. - Cattle in the herds are fat. Milk Cattle when they had not been worked looked well. Hogs (what few there is) is good. The crops on my place look very well excepted wheat of which I only had out 21 sts and that at 12 shos 5/4 sts. Barley very good. Oats 4/4 sts - is good. Hay - 17 sts of which two thirds is nice. Corn 11 sts of is very good and very clean. Potatoes good plenty to use if we would dig them - but as we had plenty of other ones - we will not dig them and let the indians grow larger.

Lush Soybean Field on Dean and Julie Folkmann's Hog Farm in Newhall, Iowa, August 8, 2016



Highsmith, Carol M., "Lush soybean field on Dean and Julie Folkmann's hog farm in Benton County, near Newhall, Iowa," 8 August 2016.
[Courtesy of Library of Congress](#)

Rolling Country Road and Crops in Benton County, Iowa, August 8, 2016



Highsmith, Carol M., "Rolling country road and crops in Benton County, Iowa," 8 August 2016. [Courtesy of Library of Congress](#)

Stacks of Sugarcane in Emmet County, Iowa, December 1936



Lee, Russell, "Several Stacks of Sugarcane, Emmet County, Iowa," United States Resettlement Administration, December 1936. [Courtesy of Library of Congress](#)

USDA Crop Production 2015 Summary, January 2016 (Pg. 1)



United States
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Crop Production 2015 Summary

January 2016



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Corn for grain production is estimated at 13.6 billion bushels, down slightly from the November forecast and down 4 percent from the 2014 estimate. The average yield in the United States is estimated at 168.4 bushels per acre. This is down 0.9 bushel from the November forecast and 2.6 bushels below the 2014 average yield of 171.0 bushels per acre. Area harvested for grain is estimated at 80.7 million acres, up slightly from the November forecast but down 3 percent from the 2014 acreage.

Sorghum grain production in 2015 is estimated at 597 million bushels, up slightly from the November forecast and up 38 percent from the 2014 total. Planted area for 2015 is estimated at 8.46 million acres, up 19 percent from the previous year. Area harvested for grain, at 7.85 million acres, is up 23 percent from 2014. Average grain yield, at 76.0 bushels per acre, is down 1.7 bushels from the previous forecast but up 8.4 bushels from 2014 and represents a record high yield for the United States.

Rice: Production in 2015 is estimated at 192 million cwt, up less than 1 percent from the previous forecast but down 13 percent from the revised 2014 total. Planted area for 2014 is estimated at 2.61 million acres, down 12 percent from 2014. Area harvested, at 2.58 million acres, is also down 12 percent from the previous crop year. The average yield for all United States rice is estimated at 7,470 pounds per acre, up 47 pounds from the previous forecast but 106 pounds below the 2014 United States average of 7,576 pounds per acre. A record high yield is estimated for California.

Soybean production in 2015 totaled a record 3.93 billion bushels, down 1 percent from the November forecast but up slightly from 2014. The average yield per acre is estimated at a record high 48.0 bushels, 0.3 bushel below the November forecast but 0.5 bushel above the 2014 yield. Harvested area is down less than 1 percent from last year's record acreage to 81.8 million acres.

All cotton production is estimated at 12.9 million 480-pound bales, down less than 1 percent from the December forecast and down 21 percent from 2014. The United States yield is estimated at 769 pounds per acre, up 1 pound from the December forecast but down 69 pounds from last year. Harvested area, at 8.08 million acres, is down less than 1 percent from the December forecast and down 14 percent from last year.

This report was approved on January 12, 2016.



Secretary of Agriculture
Designate
Robert Johansson



Agricultural Statistics Board
Chairperson
James M. Harris

USDA Crop Production 2015 Summary, January 2016 (Pg. 8 of Report)

Corn Area Planted for All Purposes and Harvested for Grain, Yield, and Production – States and United States: 2013-2015

State	Area planted for all purposes			Area harvested for grain		
	2013 (1,000 acres)	2014 (1,000 acres)	2015 (1,000 acres)	2013 (1,000 acres)	2014 (1,000 acres)	2015 (1,000 acres)
Alabama	320	300	260	295	285	245
Arizona	85	75	70	51	28	34
Arkansas	880	540	460	870	530	445
California	600	520	430	180	95	60
Colorado	1,220	1,150	1,100	980	1,010	950
Connecticut ¹	27	26	26	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
Delaware	180	175	170	174	168	164
Florida	115	75	80	78	40	50
Georgia	510	350	330	465	310	285
Idaho	350	320	280	115	80	70
Illinois	12,000	11,900	11,700	11,800	11,750	11,500
Indiana	6,000	5,900	5,650	5,830	5,770	5,480
Iowa	13,600	13,700	13,500	13,050	13,300	13,050
Kansas	4,300	4,050	4,150	4,000	3,800	3,920
Kentucky	1,530	1,520	1,400	1,430	1,430	1,310
Louisiana	680	400	400	670	390	390
Maine ¹	31	31	31	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
Maryland	480	500	440	420	430	380
Massachusetts ¹	16	16	16	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
Michigan	2,600	2,550	2,350	2,230	2,210	2,070
Minnesota	8,600	8,200	8,100	8,140	7,550	7,600
Mississippi	860	510	510	830	485	490
Missouri	3,350	3,500	3,250	3,200	3,380	3,080
Montana	120	130	105	75	75	50
Nebraska	9,950	9,300	9,400	9,550	8,950	9,150
Nevada ¹	7	4	2	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
New Hampshire ¹	14	15	15	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
New Jersey	90	85	80	80	79	72
New Mexico	120	125	125	38	48	40
New York	1,200	1,140	1,080	690	680	590
North Carolina	930	840	790	860	780	730
North Dakota	3,850	2,800	2,750	3,600	2,530	2,560
Ohio	3,900	3,700	3,550	3,730	3,470	3,260
Oklahoma	370	320	310	310	290	280
Oregon	80	80	65	36	39	30
Pennsylvania	1,480	1,460	1,340	1,090	1,030	940
Rhode Island ¹	2	2	2	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
South Carolina	350	295	295	335	280	260
South Dakota	6,200	5,800	5,400	5,860	5,320	5,030
Tennessee	890	920	780	810	840	730
Texas	2,350	2,250	2,300	1,950	1,990	1,970
Utah	83	75	60	31	28	15
Vermont ¹	92	92	92	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
Virginia	510	500	450	360	350	300
Washington	190	215	170	105	110	75
West Virginia	53	51	50	36	36	35
Wisconsin	4,100	4,000	4,000	3,030	3,110	3,000
Wyoming	100	90	85	67	60	59
United States	95,365	90,597	87,999	87,451	83,136	80,749

See footnote(s) at end of table.

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USDA Crop Production 2015 Summary, January 2016 (Pg. 16 of Report)

Oat Area Planted and Harvested, Yield, and Production – States and United States: 2013-2015

State	Area planted ¹			Area harvested		
	2013 (1,000 acres)	2014 (1,000 acres)	2015 (1,000 acres)	2013 (1,000 acres)	2014 (1,000 acres)	2015 (1,000 acres)
Alabama	60	50	55	20	15	20
Arkansas	11	12	11	7	8	8
California	150	120	120	15	10	10
Colorado	55	45	45	12	9	10
Georgia	50	60	65	18	20	25
Idaho	70	70	75	15	15	15
Illinois	40	35	40	25	25	25
Indiana	20	20	15	10	10	5
Iowa	220	145	125	60	55	57
Kansas	100	85	95	20	15	40
Maine	28	32	30	26	31	29
Michigan	50	55	75	30	40	50
Minnesota	240	230	280	105	125	160
Missouri	30	25	30	14	13	14
Montana	50	45	50	22	16	22
Nebraska	150	110	135	25	30	40
New York	75	55	70	46	40	40
North Carolina	35	33	35	13	17	16
North Dakota	225	235	275	135	105	140
Ohio	50	50	70	25	35	40
Oklahoma	60	60	40	7	10	7
Oregon	30	30	35	13	18	11
Pennsylvania	95	90	95	50	60	65
South Carolina	20	21	24	9	10	9
South Dakota	260	250	325	120	100	145
Texas	450	450	520	40	45	55
Utah	40	20	20	5	3	2
Virginia	10	10	12	2	3	4
Washington	20	25	18	5	5	5
Wisconsin	255	255	280	105	140	195
Wyoming	31	30	23	10	7	12
United States	2,980	2,753	3,088	1,009	1,035	1,276

See footnote(s) at end of table.

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USDA Crop Production 2015 Summary, January 2016 (Pg. 20 of Report)

All Wheat Area Planted and Harvested, Yield, and Production – States and United States: 2013-2015

State	Area planted ¹			Area harvested		
	2013 (1,000 acres)	2014 (1,000 acres)	2015 (1,000 acres)	2013 (1,000 acres)	2014 (1,000 acres)	2015 (1,000 acres)
Alabama	310	255	260	285	225	220
Arizona	87	85	150	84	83	142
Arkansas	680	465	350	610	395	240
California	690	530	465	394	220	210
Colorado	2,310	2,759	2,408	1,639	2,358	2,147
Delaware	85	80	70	78	75	65
Florida	25	15	25	19	10	15
Georgia	430	300	215	360	230	145
Idaho	1,321	1,271	1,200	1,261	1,196	1,135
Illinois	880	740	540	840	670	520
Indiana	460	390	290	435	335	260
Iowa	30	26	20	21	15	15
Kansas	9,500	9,600	9,200	8,450	8,800	8,700
Kentucky	700	630	560	610	510	440
Louisiana	265	160	110	255	150	92
Maryland	345	340	355	260	250	270
Michigan	620	550	510	590	470	475
Minnesota	1,227	1,262	1,532	1,184	1,212	1,473
Mississippi	400	230	150	385	215	120
Missouri	1,080	880	760	985	740	610
Montana	5,400	5,985	5,520	5,165	5,650	5,265
Nebraska	1,470	1,550	1,490	1,140	1,450	1,210
Nevada	31	21	12	15	10	8
New Jersey	34	33	27	29	25	20
New Mexico	440	380	385	100	105	190
New York	125	120	120	115	95	110
North Carolina	990	830	650	925	770	570
North Dakota	6,105	7,960	7,990	6,025	7,490	7,915
Ohio	660	620	520	640	545	480
Oklahoma	5,600	5,300	5,300	3,400	2,800	3,800
Oregon	880	830	835	868	818	828
Pennsylvania	185	185	195	155	150	175
South Carolina	280	230	170	265	220	160
South Dakota	2,494	2,514	2,756	1,839	2,364	2,236
Tennessee	640	530	455	575	475	395
Texas	6,300	6,000	6,000	2,350	2,250	3,550
Utah	138	130	125	124	117	119
Virginia	335	290	260	290	260	210
Washington	2,210	2,320	2,280	2,175	2,250	2,215
West Virginia	9	10	9	7	7	4
Wisconsin	315	295	230	265	250	210
Wyoming	150	140	145	120	125	130
United States	56,236	56,841	54,644	45,332	46,385	47,094

See footnote(s) at end of table.

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USDA Crop Production 2015 Summary, January 2016 (Pg. 46 of Report)

Soybeans for Beans Area Planted and Harvested, Yield, and Production – States and United States: 2013-2015

State	Area planted			Area harvested		
	2013 (1,000 acres)	2014 (1,000 acres)	2015 (1,000 acres)	2013 (1,000 acres)	2014 (1,000 acres)	2015 (1,000 acres)
Alabama	440	480	500	430	470	490
Arkansas	3,270	3,230	3,200	3,240	3,200	3,170
Delaware	165	185	175	163	183	173
Florida	32	39	33	30	37	31
Georgia	235	300	325	230	290	315
Illinois	9,500	9,800	9,800	9,480	9,770	9,720
Indiana	5,200	5,450	5,550	5,190	5,440	5,500
Iowa	9,300	9,850	9,850	9,250	9,770	9,800
Kansas	3,600	4,000	3,900	3,540	3,960	3,860
Kentucky	1,670	1,760	1,840	1,660	1,750	1,810
Louisiana	1,130	1,410	1,430	1,120	1,395	1,395
Maryland	485	510	520	480	505	515
Michigan	1,930	2,050	2,030	1,920	2,040	2,020
Minnesota	6,700	7,350	7,600	6,620	7,270	7,550
Mississippi	2,010	2,210	2,300	1,990	2,190	2,270
Missouri	5,650	5,650	4,550	5,610	5,590	4,480
Nebraska	4,800	5,400	5,300	4,770	5,330	5,270
New Jersey	90	105	105	88	103	103
New York	280	330	305	278	327	301
North Carolina	1,480	1,750	1,820	1,450	1,730	1,790
North Dakota	4,650	5,900	5,750	4,630	5,870	5,720
Ohio	4,500	4,700	4,750	4,490	4,690	4,740
Oklahoma	345	375	395	335	365	375
Pennsylvania	560	570	580	555	565	575
South Carolina	320	450	475	310	440	405
South Dakota	4,600	5,150	5,150	4,580	5,110	5,120
Tennessee	1,580	1,640	1,750	1,550	1,610	1,720
Texas	105	155	130	92	135	115
Virginia	610	650	630	600	640	620
West Virginia	23	27	27	22	26	26
Wisconsin	1,580	1,800	1,880	1,550	1,790	1,870
United States	76,840	83,276	82,650	76,253	82,591	81,849

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Sugarcane Area Harvested, Yield, and Production – States and United States: 2013-2015

State	Area harvested			Yield per acre ¹		
	2013 (1,000 acres)	2014 (1,000 acres)	2015 (1,000 acres)	2013 (tons)	2014 (tons)	2015 (tons)
For sugar						
Florida	400.0	392.0	409.0	34.3	38.4	39.8
Hawaii	15.5	14.2	16.5	87.2	88.8	86.2
Louisiana	410.0	386.0	385.0	30.5	29.5	31.0
Texas	34.1	31.5	37.0	42.4	37.9	36.0
United States	859.6	823.7	847.5	33.8	35.1	36.5
For seed						
Florida	16.0	16.0	16.0	42.5	42.8	43.2
Hawaii	2.2	2.2	2.2	20.5	20.4	20.0
Louisiana	32.0	25.0	25.0	30.5	29.5	31.0
Texas	1.0	1.6	2.0	37.0	37.9	36.0
United States	51.2	44.8	45.2	33.9	34.1	35.0
For sugar and seed						
Florida	416.0	408.0	425.0	34.6	38.6	39.9
Hawaii	17.7	16.4	18.7	78.9	79.6	78.4
Louisiana	442.0	411.0	410.0	30.5	29.5	31.0
Texas	35.1	33.1	39.0	42.3	37.9	36.0
United States	910.8	868.5	892.7	33.8	35.0	36.5
State	Production ¹					
	2013 (1,000 tons)	2014 (1,000 tons)	2015 (1,000 tons)			
For sugar						
Florida	13,720	15,053	16,278			
Hawaii	1,352	1,261	1,422			
Louisiana	12,505	11,387	11,935			
Texas	1,446	1,194	1,332			
United States	29,023	28,895	30,967			
For seed						
Florida	680	685	691			
Hawaii	45	45	44			
Louisiana	976	738	775			
Texas	37	61	72			
United States	1,738	1,529	1,582			
For sugar and seed						
Florida	14,400	15,738	16,969			
Hawaii	1,397	1,306	1,466			
Louisiana	13,481	12,125	12,710			
Texas	1,483	1,255	1,404			
United States	30,761	30,424	32,549			

¹ Net tons.

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Potato Area Planted and Harvested, Yield, and Production – States and United States: 2013-2015

State	Area planted			Area harvested		
	2013 (1,000 acres)	2014 (1,000 acres)	2015 (1,000 acres)	2013 (1,000 acres)	2014 (1,000 acres)	2015 (1,000 acres)
Arizona	3.5	3.8	3.6	3.4	3.5	3.5
California	34.3	33.3	31.0	33.8	33.1	30.7
Colorado	54.8	60.2	58.2	54.6	59.8	58.0
Delaware	1.4	1.2	(D)	1.4	1.2	(D)
Florida	30.9	30.5	30.0	29.5	29.3	29.6
Idaho	317.0	321.0	325.0	316.0	320.0	324.0
Illinois	6.8	6.5	7.5	6.7	6.4	6.9
Kansas	4.4	4.2	3.8	4.3	4.1	3.6
Maine	55.0	51.0	51.0	54.0	50.5	50.5
Maryland	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.1	2.3	2.4
Massachusetts	3.9	3.6	3.6	3.9	3.6	3.6
Michigan	44.5	43.0	46.0	44.0	42.5	45.0
Minnesota	46.0	42.0	41.0	45.0	41.0	40.5
Missouri	9.5	8.2	8.5	9.0	7.9	8.1
Montana	11.3	11.5	11.0	11.1	11.3	10.9
Nebraska	18.5	17.0	16.0	18.3	16.9	15.8
Nevada	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)
New Jersey	2.4	2.0	(D)	2.4	1.9	(D)
New Mexico	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)
New York	17.5	16.0	15.0	17.1	15.8	14.6
North Carolina	14.5	14.5	13.5	13.5	13.5	12.7
North Dakota	81.0	79.0	82.0	78.0	77.0	80.0
Ohio	1.9	1.6	1.6	1.8	1.5	1.5
Oregon	40.0	39.0	39.0	39.6	38.9	38.9
Pennsylvania	6.7	5.3	5.5	6.6	5.2	5.3
Rhode Island	0.5	0.5	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.7
Texas	18.0	21.0	20.0	17.7	20.6	18.2
Virginia	4.0	5.0	5.0	3.9	4.5	4.7
Washington	160.0	165.0	170.0	160.0	165.0	170.0
Wisconsin	62.5	65.0	63.0	62.0	64.0	62.5
Other States ¹	10.9	9.4	11.3	10.7	9.3	11.1
United States	1,063.9	1,062.6	1,065.2	1,050.9	1,051.1	1,053.3

See footnote(s) at end of table.

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"An Essay on the 80's Des Moines: A World Food Center for the Nation," November 26, 1982 (Pg. 1)

Paper

By Gary G. Gerlach

Prairie Club Monthly Dinner for Members
Des Moines, Iowa

November 26, 1982

AN ESSAY ON THE '80s

DES MOINES: A WORLD FOOD CENTER

FOR THE NATION

It was just three years ago this Fall that Pope John Paul II made his historic journey from Rome in Italy to Des Moines and Iowa.

The Pope made this historic journey, in part, to see Iowa and its famous land.

As many of you know, Iowa has 25 per cent of the nation's Grade A farm land -- far more than any other state in the Union. In his homily to Iowa and its land at Living History Farms on a crisp October afternoon, Pope John Paul reminded us all of the incredible wealth that is the land which stretches from Des Moines in all directions. Pope John Paul said, and I quote his words:

"You who live in the Heartland of America have been entrusted with some of the earth's best land: The soil so rich in minerals, the climate so favorable for producing bountiful crops, with fresh water and unpolluted air available all around you. You are stewards of some of the most important resources God has given to the world."

Now I appear here before you this evening as a native Iowan and as a newspaper publisher here in Des Moines. My task this evening is two-fold:

1. To present some evidence;
2. To present some questions.

“An Essay on the 80’s Des Moines: A World Food Center for the Nation,” November 26, 1982 (Pg. 2)

More specifically, I want to review with you some of the evidence supporting the general proposition that Iowa and Des Moines have long been a World Food Capital. I also want to review with you some fundamental questions that are increasingly on the minds of Iowans -- questions, to use Pope John Paul's words, which are prompted by the central fact of life that we Iowans are "stewards of some of the most important resources God has given to the world."

I.

Let's review some evidence.

At the geographical crossroads of North America, and in the middle of one of the most literate states in the land, Des Moines has long been a leader in the nation's agriculture and in agricultural thinking. Des Moines is the place where the Pope and Nikita Khrushchev, and thousands of others over the years, have come to see American agriculture close-up.

Des Moines is the place where U.S. Presidents (and those who would be President) come regularly -- usually at State Fair time -- to make farm policy pronouncements. Des Moines is only the 112th largest city in America -- with little more than 360,000 people in its metro area. But Des Moines, despite its relatively small size, is the leading city in a leading farm state, a leading export state, and in a state with a leading university in the agricultural arts and sciences -- Iowa State University at Ames.

This Fall in Iowa there was another quiet but nevertheless dramatic drama unfolding. Iowa's some 120,000 farms have set the stage for another of the state's large corn and soybean crops. In recent years, Iowa farmers harvested the largest

“An Essay on the 80’s Des Moines: A World Food Center for the Nation,” November 26, 1982 (Pg. 3)

corn and soybean crops in the nation. For example, more than \$8.2 billion in farm products were reaped in 1980. That makes Iowa second only to California in the cash value of its agricultural products.

Iowa is also meat country. Iowa is the number one state in livestock (at \$5.7 billion). Nearly half of those 120,000 Iowa farms raise beef cattle. Iowa's 16.2 million hogs clearly make Iowa number one in pork production. And many don't realize that Iowa boasts more sheep producers than any other state.

Iowa's role as a leader is a global one too. Ranked consistently among the top 10 exporting states in all goods, Iowa sends almost \$3.5 billion worth of goods overseas each year. These annual agricultural exports put Iowa second only to Illinois.

Iowa State University, in Ames, only 35 miles north of Des Moines, is internationally famous for its agriculture, veterinary medicine, and engineering research. The university has pioneered major advances in nuclear energy and developed thousands of new uses for agricultural products.

II.

But there has always been more to it than soil and crops. People and ideas have also been central to the emergence of Iowa as an agricultural leader.

Since before the turn of the century, Des Moines and central Iowa have been centers for agricultural thinking, research, and publishing. The names of Henry Wallace, a Vice President of the United States, Dante Pierce, and Edwin T. Meredith have been household words in the agricultural world. At an early time, they wrote with vision and courage,

"An Essay on the 80's Des Moines: A World Food Center for the Nation," November 26, 1982 (Pg. 4)

and discussed crop rotation, seed selection, better farming methods, and everything bearing on farming in their papers and publications, the Iowa Homestead, Wallace's Farmer, and Successful Farming. Meredith was appointed Secretary of Agriculture in 1920 by President Woodrow Wilson. Wallace was the father of one secretary and the grandfather of another -- Henry C. Wallace, appointed in 1921, and Henry A. Wallace, in 1933. Another legendary Iowan who was a U.S. Secretary of Agriculture was James ("Tama Jim") Wilson, who was first appointed in 1897, and served as secretary under three Presidents of the United States.

Iowa's leadership stance in agriculture was summarized in language that reads almost like poetry to me in a 1938 book published by the Federal Writer's Project:

"... (T)he real Iowa to the majority of Americans is the great central region, with Des Moines as its focal point: an expanse of fertile farmland, originally prairie, across which the State's own river flows. Here are the corn and wheat fields, the characteristic white houses, big red barns and tall silos; and, at regular intervals, grain elevators and church spires dominating the little towns. It is from this area largely that the State's agricultural prestige is derived.

So there has always been abundant inspiration and energy to match the abundance of Iowa's land.

This inspiration and energy are abundant to this day.

Some recent examples:

*Item: Winter Beef Expo, only six years old, but already this annual show and auction sale of purebred beef stock has grown into an agricultural event of national prominence and international promise. Last February's show in Des Moines drew sellers and buyers from 20 states and Canada. Attendance topped 25,000. More than \$1.5 million in seed stock changed hands.

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*Item: Although gasohol's future seems to go up and down, plans are still on the drawing board for the construction of the world's largest gasohol plant on the outskirts of Des Moines.

*Item: The Peoples Republic of China (the "mainland Chinese") has agreed to make what is believed to be its first direct investment in the United States -- the purchase of a vacant Des Moines meat packing plant for use as an Oriental meat canning site.

*Item: Living History Farms, just outside Des Moines, where people can see first hand the evolution of U.S. farming, has become a national attraction.

III.

So there you have some evidence, a dab of history, and a few current items.

The remarkable thing, I think, about the richness of Iowa's land and her agriculture is the vast ignorance among many of us about agriculture's awesome power and its hold on our destiny. Most Americans, I'm afraid, hold an artificial and inaccurate cliched-vision of American agriculture -- the picturesque family farm with its muddy hog houses and its back forty of corn. This old-fashioned cliché obscures the vast potential of Iowa agriculture. Today the Iowa potential is world-wide -- and it extends to Iowa's cattle in Japan, her grains in Russia, her gasohol from Maine to California, and her corn sweeteners in Coca Cola literally all around the globe.

This modern image is a long, long way from the old image of the muddy hog house and the back forty.

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IV.

Let me shift gears now from a review of Iowa's leadership role in agriculture to a brief review of some of the fundamental questions I see emerging these days.

I believe we are now in a time of intense questioning.

We in Iowa are moving beyond myopia and cliched thinking into a time of intense questioning about fundamentals. For Iowans, perhaps this time of questioning began with Pope John Paul's visit to Des Moines three years ago. Today, I believe, there is a changing attitude in Iowa toward agriculture, a kind of questioning and concern for the long-range issues facing U.S. agriculture. As background to the questioning, there are at least four key points which are emerging into public consciousness:

1. We know agricultural exports are large already -- and growing;
2. In fact, the demand for grains and oilseeds overseas is likely to increase dramatically in the next decade;
3. This greatly enlarged demand for food will put unprecedented pressure on our land and our production capabilities;
4. Agricultural land is a scarce national resource, and public concern is being aroused over the land's proper management.

This sets the stage for a series of maddening, difficult questions for which there are precious few answers. And in all of this I must remark upon the remarkable extent to which we in Iowa have had to gear our thinking internationally. I know from readership studies of our own newspaper, The Des Moines Register, that Iowa readers have a deep interest in

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what happens abroad. Our lives are affected -- our economic well-being is influenced -- by how the Russians react to unrest in Poland, what Brazil does with its corn and soybean production, how the EEC adjusts its farm price policies.

So this is a time of questioning:

On domestic food price policy. That is, is adequate food a basic right of every citizen? Should government play a role in holding down prices to farmers for raw food products? If so, does the government have a role or responsibility in putting a cap on food processing, distributing, and merchandising costs?

On consumer diets. What is government's role going to be in trying to guide consumers' diets? In Iowa, for example, it makes a big difference to farmers whether consumers are encouraged to eat red meat or pasta products.

On government regulation. How much can and should the government regulate pesticides, land use, labor, and soil erosion?

On international matters. What is our national policy on other countries' restrictions on access to and prices in foreign markets? What is a proper national policy on extending credit or donating commodities? What is our national policy on self-help and technology transfer?

And, finally, perhaps the biggest question of all:

Should food become an instrument of foreign policy, and, if so, is food going to be used as a reward or will it be withheld as punishment?

So these are some of the fundamental questions that are on our minds and on our editorial pages in Iowa just now.

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There are precious few answers. But I believe there is a key which can lead us to some answers. I would like to close my remarks by suggesting this key to you for further thought.

V.

There has always been abundant inspiration and human energy to match the abundance of Iowa's land. I believe the key to some of the questions lies in human inspiration.

Perhaps the most celebrated case of inspiration we have in Iowa is the life of George Washington Carver, the man who made big news from the little peanut long before anyone ever heard of Jimmy Carter.

Born in a log cabin as a slave in Missouri, young George Washington Carver came to Iowa in the 1880s, where he enrolled as an art student at Simpson College. By 1894 Carver had graduated from Simpson as well as Iowa State College with a doctorate in agriculture, becoming the first black graduate of the college and its first black faculty member. Carver taught Henry Wallace his first college botany course, and later moved to Alabama's famed Tuskegee Institute, where, in a humble laboratory, Carver found hundreds of uses for the peanut and for the sweet potato -- and in the process helped redeem the South from the tyranny of one-crop agriculture.

Years later Carver acknowledged that he made the greatest of all his many discoveries on a college campus in Iowa. At the end of an illustrious career Carver said, and I quote:

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"I discovered at Simpson College that I was a human being."

As for myself, I have confidence that some latter-day "human beings," perhaps latter-day George Washington Carvers studying on one of our campuses somewhere (perhaps even in Iowa), hold the keys to the great questions we are all pondering these days. I believe, in particular, that Des Moines and Iowa have a legitimate claim to a special role as a leader in both national and international agriculture -- as an agri-business center for the nation.

Thank you for your time and attention.

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Diplomatic Farmers: Iowans and the 1955 Agricultural Delegation to the Soviet Union

PEGGY ANN BROWN

ON A BALMY SEPTEMBER EVENING in 1955, 1,500 people crowded into a high school auditorium in Sioux City, Iowa, to hear Whiting farmer Herb Pike describe his recent visit to the Soviet Union. Pike had been part of a 12-member U.S. delegation that had just spent 32 days traveling nearly 10,000 miles across the Soviet Union to inspect Soviet farms while 12 Soviet officials were touring U.S. farms. Pike’s Sioux City talk was the first of more than a hundred lectures he would give over the next several years. Recalling the Soviets’ friendly welcome, Pike assured his audience that he had seen neither starving people nor preparations for war—chief concerns of Americans fearful of Soviet aggression.

Under Josef Stalin’s regime, few Americans had traveled to the Soviet Union since World War II. With the Soviet premier’s death in March 1953, Soviet leaders, especially Communist Party chairman Nikita Khrushchev, had begun to promote a policy of “peaceful coexistence.” As a result, more Americans were able to obtain visas. In 1953 and 1954, 101 private American citizens received permission from the Soviet government to travel to the Soviet Union; the number increased to several hundred in 1955, and by 1959 had climbed to 10,000. President Dwight Eisenhower viewed Soviet interest in exchange visits

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favorably, but State Department secretary John Foster Dulles was reluctant to promote cultural ties, concerned that Soviets would have a propaganda advantage.¹

More than Winston Churchill’s “riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma,” the Soviet Union aroused fears of nuclear war and the spread of Communism. Soviet support for North Korea in the Korean War, coupled with Senator Joseph McCarthy’s charges of Communist influence in the United States, continued to affect American opinion of the Soviets. Yet, as the massive, mysterious nation began to emerge from its self-imposed isolation, many Americans were eager to know and understand its people and policies.

The 1955 agricultural delegations were designed to contribute to such mutual understanding. News reports of the agricultural exchanges, and lectures by Pike and his fellow delegates—including four Iowans—provided contemporary images of the Soviet Union. In speeches throughout Iowa and across the country, the delegates shared observations, opinions, and photographs and boasted that they had shown their hosts that Americans did not have horns—an expression Soviets had repeatedly used about themselves to welcome the delegation. Their talks offered firsthand insights on the closed country and helped generate more hopeful interest in the Soviet Union and its people, as did the simultaneous tour of U.S. farms by 12 Soviet officials. Historian Walter L. Hixson calls the 1955 agricultural delegations “a breakthrough in East-West exchange.”² J. D. Parks adds that although “no one assumed . . . that exchanging two dozen farmers was going to bridge the ideological gap separating the two nations . . . it was a start, and a promising one.”³

1. U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955–1957*, vol. 24, Soviet Union, Eastern Mediterranean, Document 94, NSC 5508/1, Statement of Policy on Admission to the U.S. of Certain European Non-official Temporary Visitors Excludable Under Existing Law, March 26, 1955, <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v24/d94>; Irving R. Levine, *Travel Guide to Russia* (Garden City, NY, 1960), 13; Walter L. Hixson, *Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture, and the Cold War, 1945–1961* (New York, 1997), 103–5.

2. Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*, 104.

3. J. D. Parks, *Culture, Conflict and Coexistence: American-Soviet Cultural Relations, 1917–1958* (Jefferson, NC, 1983), 145.

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THE IMPETUS for the agricultural exchange was a *Des Moines Register* editorial by Lauren Soth on February 10, 1955. Soth was responding to a January 25 speech by Nikita Khrushchev before the Central Committee of the Communist Party in which he had praised the U.S. feed-livestock economy.⁴ Khrushchev disputed studies that claimed that “only a narrow belt . . . of the Soviet Union was suitable for corn growing.” He asserted that by increasing corn production in the Ukraine and elsewhere, and by launching the New Lands program in Kazakhstan and Siberia, the Soviets could increase feed for livestock, following the U.S. “corn-hog” model.⁵

Writing in what he later called “an idle and somewhat sportive mood,” Soth invited Russians to Iowa for “the lowdown,” promising to hide none of the state’s “secrets.”⁶ In turn, Iowans could visit the Soviet Union to share their farming know-how. Soth claimed no diplomatic authority but thought such visits had the potential to ease tensions. He doubted that either the Soviets or the U.S. government would allow such visits, even if they would make sense. To Soth’s surprise, Khrushchev was interested. A Tass correspondent stationed in New York had cabled Soth’s editorial, reprinted in the *Christian Science Monitor* on February 19, to Moscow. Two weeks later, Ambassador Charles Bohlen wired Secretary Dulles that *Agriculture* (the Soviet Union Ministry of Agriculture newspaper) supported the exchanges.⁷

Caught off guard the following day at a press conference, President Eisenhower responded affirmatively when asked if he supported a visit by Russians to inspect Iowa’s corn and hogs.

4. Lauren Soth, “If the Russians Want More Meat,” *Des Moines Register*, 2/10/1955; idem, “Let the Russians Come to Iowa,” 3/2/1955.

5. “Soviet Plans to Copy U.S. Corn Economy,” *New York Times*, 2/4/1955.

6. Lauren Soth, “A Little Editorial—Big Results,” Lauren K. Soth Papers, RS 16/03/54, University Archives, Special Collections, Iowa State University Library, Ames (hereafter cited as Soth Papers). It was common practice in 1955 to refer to all residents of the Soviet Union as “Russians”; where this article refers to “Russians” (as in the March 2, 1955, press conference with Eisenhower below), that is the term that was used by participants.

7. Telegram, Bohlen to Secretary of State, 3/1/1955, Central Decimal File 032 (Tours), Dept. of State, Record Group 59, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD (hereafter cited as NA).

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Reiterating his position that Russians did not want war any more than Americans, Eisenhower concluded that he “couldn’t imagine anything better than to have . . . their agricultural people visit our agricultural people.” By asking the question, Fletcher Knebel, a reporter for Cowles Publications, the company that published the *Des Moines Register*, had compelled the president to end the official silence on the proposed Soviet visit.⁸

The State Department was less enthusiastic than Eisenhower about Soth’s invitation. At the same time, Ambassador Bohlen warned that Soviet newspapers were labeling the State Department’s reticence as proof that the real Iron Curtain existed in the United States, not in the Soviet Union.⁹ Given these circumstances, State Department officials advised that the time was psychologically ripe for an exchange, if the *Des Moines Register* agreed to sponsor the Soviets’ visit and an exchange could be ensured.¹⁰

On March 10 the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs formally requested the U.S. view of an agricultural exchange, citing its support.¹¹ Behind the scenes, State Department officials worked to resolve the difficulties involved in such a project. When the Attorney General rejected the *Des Moines Register* as sponsor, the State Department approached Iowa State College (ISC), which agreed to help with technical arrangements.¹² Finally, on

8. Eisenhower predicted entry problems for the Soviet visitors given current immigration regulations; the 1952 Immigration and Nationality Act, also called the McCarran-Walter Act, required fingerprinting of all private citizens from Communist countries. “The President’s News Conference, March 2, 1955,” The American Presidency Project, www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=10424. It is unknown whether Knebel ambushed the president on his own or at the Cowles’ direction.

9. Telegram, Bohlen to Secretary of State, 3/3/1955, NA.

10. Memo, Robert Murphy to the Under Secretary re Visit to the United States of Soviet Corn-Hog Specialists, 3/8/1955, NA. Writing to an associate, Soth complained, “As I expected, the cautious boys in the State Department are carefully saying nothing and sounding as though they are afraid of the idea.” Soth to Robert E. Kennedy, Chief Editorial Writer, *Chicago Sun-Times*, 3/3/1955, Soth Papers.

11. Translation of Soviet Note No. 21, 3/10/1955, NA.

12. James H. Hilton, president, Iowa State College, to John Foster Dulles, 3/31/1955, NA. In 1959 ISC became Iowa State University. To date, I have not been able to locate any information on why the Attorney General rejected the *Des Moines Register* as a sponsor.

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April 22, the State Department instructed the American Embassy in Moscow to inform the Soviets that a farm delegation could enter the United States during the summer. The one caveat was that the Soviet delegates must agree to submit to the fingerprinting required under U.S. law for non-official visits.¹³ Less than two weeks later the State Department revised its position on fingerprinting. Embassy staff had convinced Washington that, given the importance of the exchange, an alternative should be offered: if the Soviets were unwilling to comply with the U.S. policy, the government could authorize official visas and eliminate the need for fingerprinting. Eager to study U.S. farming firsthand, the Soviets agreed to send only officials, eliminating the need for fingerprinting but confirming American cynics' views that the Communist government would never allow real farmers to visit the United States.¹⁴

PUBLIC RESPONSE to Soth's proposal reflected the range of popular opinions on the Soviet Union, with Americans intrigued by or fearful of (or both) a visit by Communists. Newspapers across the country carried wire stories about the exchange, often reporting that Soth had originated the idea. Most commentators focused on the Soviet visit to the United States, mentioning the American delegation only in passing, if at all. Individuals soon queried government agencies for details and volunteered their services as delegates.

To some Americans, Khrushchev's praise of America's corn and hogs merely obscured the agricultural crisis facing the Soviet Union. To them, Soth's suggestion was thus irresponsible—sharing farm knowledge was akin to aiding an enemy who would become stronger and hence more of a threat. Although concerns over another world war—trending upwards since World War II—had dropped slightly by early 1955, 64 percent of Americans believed that there would be a major war with the

13. Telegram, Herbert Hoover Jr., Acting Secretary of State, to American Embassy, Moscow, 4/22/1955, NA.

14. See, among other communications, telegram, Walworth Barbour, Department of State, to the American Embassy, Moscow, 5/3/1955, NA. These arrangements saved the Soviets the need to protest the fingerprint requirement, which applied to citizens but not to government officials.

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Soviet Union “sooner or later.” At the same time, more than half of respondents familiar with the Soviet term “peaceful co-existence” thought it was a good policy for the United States. In the two years since Stalin’s death, many Westerners sensed a slight thaw in the Cold War.¹⁵

Soth’s proposal reflected that optimism: knowledge of Iowa’s good life, he wrote, “can only benefit the world and us. . . . It might even persuade [the Soviets] that there is a happier future in developing a high level of living than in this paralyzing race for more and more armaments.”¹⁶ Soth and others repeatedly reassured naysayers that American agricultural expertise was already freely available to Soviets through journals and technical bulletins.

Newspapers and magazines weighed in on the value and feasibility of the exchanges. To the *Washington Post*, “an invitation to the Russian farmers, who have already indicated willingness to come, would seem to be imperative to enlightened diplomacy.” The *New York Times* reflected on the Iron Curtain label flung at the United States by Soviets and advised admitting the farmers.¹⁷ The *Des Moines Register* proclaimed, “No Iron Curtain Needed Around Iowa,” speculating that State Department underlings feared the taint of Communism should they support the tour.¹⁸

For Iowans, the debate had an immediacy that surpassed any abstract musings in the national press. The Soviets were coming to their towns, farms, and front porches. In the *Marion Sentinel*, former *Cedar Rapids Gazette* editor Verne Marshall complained of American gullibility, calling the proposal impressive “only to those who still believe the Communists will not bite the hand that feeds them.” A week later *Gazette* publisher Ralph Young fired back that farmers might make better

15. George Gallup, *The Gallup Poll: Public Opinion, 1934–1971*, vol. 2, 1949–1958 (New York, 1972), 1300, 1304.

16. Soth, “If the Russians Want More Meat.”

17. “Let the Farmers Come!” *Washington Post*, 3/3/1955; “Soviet-American Exchanges,” *New York Times*, 3/4/1955.

18. “No Iron Curtain Needed Around Iowa,” *Des Moines Register*, 3/4/1955. The fear was rooted in charges that “the State Department has been said to have been infiltrated by Communists,” an obvious reference to Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy’s hunt for Communists.

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diplomats than Washington insiders and that a firsthand view of American freedom and standards could be a powerful incentive for change.¹⁹ For the *Waterloo Courier*, offering technical assistance to Soviet farmers was akin to providing strategic war materiel. Parsing the implications, it concluded that such assistance could be justified “only on the grounds that the more personal and friendly contacts there are among people the less the likelihood of war.” The *Cedar Rapids Gazette* was similarly unimpressed. Blaming collectivization for destroying farmers’ pride, it judged the visits futile until Soviets agreed to restore free enterprise.²⁰

By April 29, Soth could count 42 editorials from across the country supporting his proposal and 4 against. In 113 letters-to-the-editor collected by Soth, the percentage of unfavorable responses was higher but still less than half. Out of 56 received to date from Iowans, only 16 opposed the exchange and 7 were neutral.²¹ Emotions ran high in the letters. Correspondents voiced concerns about the potential harm of allowing Communists into the country. To some, food was “as much a weapon as munitions.”²² The trip was called a propaganda trap, and Soth was variously dumb, naïve, or treasonous. Writers either worried about Soviet spies or advised others “not to be afraid of their own shadows.” A national Gallup poll found that 62 percent of midwesterners thought a Russian delegation to the United States was a good idea, compared to 55 percent across the country; among U.S. farmers, support dropped to 49 percent.²³

Eisenhower and the departments of State and Agriculture soon heard from constituents. Farmers from North Carolina, Texas, Washington, and Oklahoma, among other states, were eager to join the delegation. Most wrote directly to Dulles or

19. Verne Marshall, “Current Comment,” *Marion Sentinel*, 3/17/1955; Ralph Young, “The Publisher’s Notebook,” *ibid.*, 3/24/1955.

20. “Russians Eye Corn-Hog Cycle,” *Waterloo Courier*, 3/15/1955; “They Won’t Use Our Key,” *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, 3/19/1955.

21. “April 29, 1955 Tally of Responses to Russian Farmer Exchange Proposal,” Soth Papers. Soth does not identify the newspapers included in his count.

22. See, for example, L. S. Forrest, “Reader Opposes the Plan; Says Food Is a Weapon,” *Des Moines Register*, 3/4/1955.

23. “The Gallup Poll: Russian Farmer Visits Favored,” *Washington Post*, 4/17/1955. Gallup does not define the term *midwesterner*.

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Secretary of Agriculture Ezra Taft Benson, although some requests were passed on by members of Congress. By mid-May, State Department officials reported that the number of citizens expressing interest far exceeded the number of anticipated delegates.²⁴ Protestors also chimed in, concerned about Soviets entering the United States. A petition signed by several hundred Cedar Rapids residents protested the potential for “espionage and . . . endanger[ment].” A *New Yorker* worried that farm visits would be the “the perfect opportunity for them to leave us a legacy of bacteria which would ruin our crops and soils” and suggested instead sending technical materials “by the car load.”²⁵

THE STATE DEPARTMENT repeatedly emphasized that the American delegation to the Soviet Union would have no official status. To underscore the point, the department announced that a nongovernmental committee would choose the delegates — effectively removing itself from political pressure as well as the thankless job of sifting through letters.²⁶

In early June the Agriculture and State departments asked land-grant colleges and national farm organizations to nominate potential delegates.²⁷ Colleges were asked to identify their best candidates, detailing their qualifications and justifying their inclusion. Nominees should be competent in specific areas, such as wheat, corn, livestock, irrigated cotton, soils, agricultural machinery, or agricultural research. Additional qualifications included analytical ability; farming experience; good

24. “Many U.S. Farmers Ask to Make Trip to Soviet,” *New York Times*, 5/14/1955. Reports of the number of applicants ran as high as 600.

25. Marie Vitek, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, to Herbert Hoover Jr., 3/25/1955, NA; Diane Smith, Lynbrook, NY, to President Eisenhower, 4/1/1955, NA.

26. Telegram, Secretary of State to the American Embassy, Moscow, 5/19/1955, NA.

27. Nominations were solicited from the National Farmers Union, National Grange, National Council of Farmers Cooperatives, and the American Farm Bureau Federation. True D. Morse, Acting Secretary of Agriculture, to James Patton, president, National Farmers Union; Herschel D. Newsom, master, National Grange; Homer L. Brinkley, executive vice president, National Council of Farmers Cooperatives; and Charles Shuman, president, American Farm Bureau Federation, 6/3/1955, Foreign Relations 5, Entry 17, Record Group 16, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

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physical condition; and being native-born American with “sober, mature, and well-balanced personalities.” The yet-to-be-named selection committee would not discriminate on the basis of color, creed, or ethnic origin and was interested in “various age groups from different economic strata.” Nevertheless, because the trip would be unofficial, delegates would be expected to pay their own costs, estimated at the time at \$2,500 (approximately \$20,000 in today’s dollars).²⁸

Three weeks later the Agriculture Department (USDA) announced the selection committee: J. Stuart Russell, farm editor, *Des Moines Register*; Homer L. Brinkley, executive vice president, National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, Washington, D.C.; and Russell I. Thackrey, executive secretary, Association of Land-Grant Colleges and Universities, Washington, D.C. They met in Washington, D.C., on June 21 and 22 to make their selections. Soth had already begun lobbying the Agriculture Department for an all-Iowa contingent. His editorial had specifically suggested sending Iowa farmers, and he believed the exchange could be a showcase for ISC faculty.²⁹

On June 22 the State and Agriculture departments jointly announced the delegation. The committee selected Soth; Herbert W. Pike, farmer, Whiting, Iowa; John Marion Steddom, farmer, Grimes, Iowa; Ralph Ainslee Olsen, farmer, Ellsworth, Iowa; Charles J. Hearst, farmer, Cedar Falls, Iowa; W. V. Lambert, dean of the College of Agriculture, University of Nebraska; D. Gale Johnson, associate professor of agricultural economics, University of Chicago; Asa V. Clark, farmer, Pullman, Washington; Ferris Owen, farmer, Newark, Ohio; John M. Jacobs, farmer, Phoenix, Arizona; and J. M. Kleiner, distributor of agricultural products, Nampa, Idaho. Despite the apparent geographical diversity of the selected delegates, five resided in

28. News Release (6/2/1955) and Draft Memo (6/1/1955) from Cannon C. Hearne, Director of Foreign Training, Foreign Agricultural Service, to College Contacts (Deans) on Foreign Agricultural Affairs, Soth Papers. A similar document in Charles J. Hearst Papers, MS 3, Special Collections, Iowa State University Library, Ames (hereafter cited as Hearst Papers), mentions the desirability of geographic diversity and Russian language ability.

29. Lauren Soth to Gwynn Garnett, Director, Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations, USDA, 6/1/1955, Soth Papers.

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Iowa and four more had an Iowa connection by birth, education, or both. With international experience and past service as the Department of Agriculture's research director, Lambert was appointed to lead the delegation.³⁰

The five Iowa delegates had spent most of their lives in the state. Soth, age 44, had been born in Sibley. After earning a bachelor's degree in agricultural journalism from ISC in 1932, he taught at the college for 14 years and received a master of science degree in agricultural economics in 1938. Soth served as an army major in Korea and the Philippines during World War II. By 1955 he had been working as an editorial writer for the *Des Moines Register* for seven years and had been promoted to editor of the editorial pages the previous year.³¹

Charles Hearst had already participated in one international agricultural mission. In 1947 he had toured Europe with an Iowa Farm Bureau group investigating the food situation and the Marshall Plan's potential to address war-torn countries' needs.³² Hearst, 51, lived near Cedar Falls all his life, farming Maplehearst, the family's 580-acre cattle-hog farm. He graduated from Iowa State Teachers College and had served as county Farm Bureau president and a member of the county board of education.

After graduating with a degree in animal husbandry from ISC in 1923, Ralph Olsen returned to his hometown of Ellsworth to raise hogs and cattle on 940 acres. Olsen, 54, was an active proponent of cooperatives. In 1955 he was director of a local grain marketing cooperative and president of both a regional cooperative soybean processing association and the Iowa Institute of Cooperatives.³³

30. State Department Press Release, 6/22/1955, NA. The committee did not select any women for the delegation despite female applicants and support for their inclusion by *Farm Journal* women's editor Gertrude Dieken. *Farm Journal*, 3/26/1955.

31. The June 22, 1955, joint news release provided brief biographical statements on each of the delegates. Additional information on Soth is from *Current Biography 1956* (New York, [1956?]), 594-95.

32. "Farm Group Backs Aid-to-Europe Idea," *New York Times*, 9/2/1947; "Food as 'Weapon' For Peace Urged," *ibid.*, 12/16/1947.

33. Frank Robotka, ISC, to J. K. Stern, American Institute of Cooperation, 6/14/1955, Ralph A. Olsen Papers, RS 21/7/55, Special Collections, Iowa State University Library, Ames (hereafter cited as Olsen Papers).

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The 1955 American agricultural delegation to the Soviet Union. From left to right: John Jacobs, Herb Pike, Julius Kleiner, Asa Clark, Lauren Soth, Marion Steddum, Ferris Owen, W. V. Lambert, Gale Johnson, William Reed, Charles Hearst, and Ralph Olsen. From J. Marion Steddum Papers, RS 21/7/65, Special Collections, Iowa State University Library.

Also a leader in farm organizations, delegate Marion Steddum, 53, raised a thousand hogs per year on his 400-acre farm near Granger. Steddum had been named an Iowa Master Swine Producer in 1943 and was president of the Iowa Swine Producers Association. In 1922 he had completed a two-year agricultural course at ISC. He had spent seven years working for the USDA on barberry eradication in Iowa.³⁴

Whiting native Herb Pike farmed 700 acres of the family farm, producing corn, hogs, and soybeans. Pike, 44, had studied at ISC, earning a bachelor's degree in agriculture (1933) and a

34. The State Department announced Steddum's inclusion in a separate news release "due to a delay in getting his confirmation." State Dept. Press Release, 6/24/1955, NA. See also Herb Plambeck, "J. M. Steddum . . . Master Farmer—Master Pork Producer," *Wallaces' Farmer*, 3/8/1980, photocopy in J. Marion Steddum Papers, RS 21/7/65, Special Collections, Iowa State University Library, Ames (hereafter cited as Steddum Papers).

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master's degree in economics (1939). Before his stateside service in World War II, he had worked as a farm manager and an insurance company appraiser. Like Steddom, he had earned distinction as an Iowa Master Swine Producer.³⁵

The Iowa connection ran strong among the other delegates. D. Gale Johnson, 39, the University of Chicago professor, had been born in Vinton. Both his bachelor's and doctorate degrees in agricultural economics were from ISC, where he had taught from 1938 to 1944. Arizonan John Jacobs, who turned 58 during the tour, was originally from Johnson County, Iowa; and Lambert had taught genetics at ISC from 1923 to 1936.

On July 6, the USDA announced the final delegate, William E. Reed, 43, dean of the School of Agriculture at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College in Greensboro. A Louisiana native, he had earned a master's degree in soils science at ISC in 1941 (and a doctorate from Cornell University). Reed was the only African American delegate. By 1955 he had served as a Foreign Service Officer in Liberia.³⁶

The delegates had less than a month to prepare for their July 12 departure. The farmers in the group finished mid-summer chores and made arrangements for the rest of the season. Delegates applied for passports and Soviet visas. Lambert flew to Washington to finalize the itinerary while delegates debated which type of camera was best and whether they would even be allowed to take photographs (they were).

On July 11 and 12 the delegation gathered in Washington for briefings with officials from the State and Agriculture departments. While such discussions were not unusual for international travelers, a news conference was out of the ordinary, as was the vodka toast at the Soviet embassy – the latter a fore-

35. *Monona County, Iowa: Monona County History* (1982), 371.

36. Agriculture Department, Press Release, 7/6/1955, Hearst Papers. Reed's inclusion was most likely the result of a conversation between American Embassy Chargé d'Affaires W. N. Walmsley and African American journalist William Worthy, who was visiting Moscow. Worthy recommended that the delegation include a Negro, as he was often asked about the "race problem" in the United States; Telegram, Walmsley to Secretary of State, 6/28/1955, NA. As dean of a land-grant college, Reed had nominated a local Farm Bureau employee, but the committee instead asked him to participate. Interview by D. W. Colvard, 2/14/1980, William and Mattye Reed Collection, Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington, DC.

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shadowing of what soon would become routine. Pledging that the delegates would keep their eyes and minds open and their “ears unplugged,” Lambert listed the delegation’s goals for reporters. Its primary objective was to evaluate Soviet agriculture – its progress, techniques, potential, research, and marketing. The remaining goals – meeting and sharing with Russian farmers and planting “a few seeds of understanding and good will” – would become equally important.³⁷

In Washington the group was joined by two journalists. The State Department had originally argued that reporters’ presence might restrict American access. Reporters wanted in, however, and NBC broadcaster Irving R. Levine forced the issue. Levine prowled the halls of the State Department, determined to get approval. Stonewalled, he sent a telegram to Khrushchev; the party chairman okayed his visa before State had even authorized the exchanges. Once Levine’s success was known, the State Department approved Moscow-based correspondents from the *New York Times*, the International News Service, and the United Press, and the Soviets acquiesced.³⁸

The second U.S.-based journalist was farm broadcaster Herbert Plambeck from WHO-Des Moines. In May Plambeck had begun lobbying the State and Agriculture departments to be included in the delegation. Disappointed to be excluded, he applied for a visa as a correspondent. On July 7, he wrote in his journal that he had “given up on the idea,” but the next day recorded a hectic schedule as he learned that his visa had at last been approved.³⁹ (Soth, who wrote occasional articles during the trip, participated as a delegate and waited until after the tour to prepare in-depth commentaries.)

On July 12 the twelve delegates – plus Levine and Plambeck – traveled to New York to catch a flight to London. From there they flew to Helsinki and then on to Moscow for the start

37. “Farmers List Objectives of Russians Visit,” *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, 7/13/1955.

38. Moscow-based American reporters covering parts of the tour were Charles Klensch (International News Service), Kenneth Brodney (United Press), and Welles Hangen (*New York Times*).

39. Herbert Plambeck, Journal, Herbert Plambeck Papers, RS 21/7/42, University Archives, Special Collections, Iowa State University Library, Ames (hereafter cited as Plambeck Papers).

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of their 32-day tour. Arriving in the Soviet capital, they spent a few days visiting the usual tourist sites: the All-Union Agricultural Exhibition, Bolshoi Ballet, and a nearby collective farm. Over the next five weeks, the delegates would visit Soviet regions that had been closed to Westerners for more than a decade.

THROUGHOUT MAY AND JUNE, U.S. and Soviet officials had negotiated the Americans' itinerary in the Soviet Union. The American delegates wanted to visit the Ukraine, the Kuban, Uzbekistan, and the new lands area of Kazakhstan and western Siberia, and the Soviets agreed to include those regions in the itinerary. The Soviets also gave permission for Horace J. Davis, an economic officer and agricultural specialist at the American embassy in Moscow, to accompany the group. (Prior to the delegation's tour, Davis had seen only one farm, a collective near Moscow.) Soviet officials repeatedly assured the embassy that delegates would be allowed to see what they wanted to see.

With Intourist, the Soviet travel agency, making transportation and accommodation arrangements, embassy staff requested enough surface travel to allow close observations. Background briefings had familiarized delegates with the differences between the state and collective farms and machine tractor stations they would visit. In 1955 the Soviet Union had 89,000 collective farms, averaging 15,300 acres each. Created from consolidated estates and peasant farms after the 1917 Russian Revolution, the collective farms paid workers based on the success of crops; equipment was shared by neighboring collective farms and stored and maintained by the country's 9,000 machine tractor stations. The 5,000 state farms averaged 38,100 acres and paid workers a flat salary.⁴⁰

On the evening of July 18, the delegates left Moscow by train for the eastern Ukraine. Arriving at Kharkov in the early afternoon, they were met by several thousand cheering residents. Lambert greeted the crowd with words that would be repeated throughout the tour: "This exchange of delegations is the beginning of stronger friendship and an interchange of ideas between

40. "The Farm System in the Soviet Union," attachment, Horace J. Davis, Attaché, American Embassy, Moscow, to John M. Steddom, 9/15/1955, Steddom Papers.

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Delegation head W. V. Lambert accepts a welcoming gift of bread and salt at a Soviet farm. Women in the background stand ready to present bouquets to each of the delegates. Photo courtesy of Julie Pike McCutcheon.

our two great countries.”⁴¹ Delegates began the pattern they would follow in each region: visits to state and collective farms as well as to a factory, park, or research institute. Everywhere they went friendly crowds shouted warm greetings and pressed close to see their first Americans.

At the Lenin’s Course Collective farm outside Kharkov, women farm workers gave delegates floral bouquets, a friendly gesture that proved mandatory at each of the nearly three dozen farms the delegates visited. Opening ceremonies often included the presentation of a salt cellar and a loaf of bread, traditional welcoming gifts for important guests. While look-alike bouquets and oversized bread loaves indicated that the gatherings might be less than spontaneous, the delegates and other western observers believed that the friendly curiosity was genuine.⁴²

41. “Russians Cheer U.S., Kharkov Greets Americans with Heroes’ Welcome,” *New York Times*, 7/20/1955.

42. After a similar welcome outside Krasnodar, Levine observed workers climbing into trucks for the 30-mile trek back to their factory; he concluded

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The delegates proved courteous guests, sitting down to massive meals and toasting peace, friendship, their hosts, and even reporters. The Soviets often provided mealtime entertainment. Perhaps not surprisingly after a dozen toasts, the hosts and guests serenaded each other—the Soviets singing the “Volga Boatmen” and the Americans offering “Home on the Range” and the “Iowa Corn Song.” Despite hours spent socializing, the delegates took detailed notes on each of the farms and research institutes they visited.

Their next stop was the Dnieper River hydroelectric station near Zaporozhe and a look at farms irrigated by the plant. The delegates then flew to Odessa, a northern Black Sea port. Arriving in a storm, they were thanked by the welcoming party for bringing the rain, a worker adding, “This will help our harvest, and I mean corn.”⁴³

In Odessa the group spent several hours at the All-Union Lysenko Institute of Plant Selection and Genetics. The Americans linked Trofim Lysenko’s theories on heredity to Soviet difficulties to produce hybrid corn varieties. Lysenko had argued that heredity could be altered by “educating the plant” to grow in a new environment, thus allowing certain species to become more suitable to Soviet conditions (a view that meshed well with Stalin’s theories). Although Lambert thanked the institute for its “important research,” he told staffers that U.S. botanists had rejected these theories.⁴⁴

On the 8,500-acre Budenny Collective Farm outside Odessa, the delegates inspected their first workers’ homes. The small sandstone buildings were clean and neat but lacked floors or in-

that their enthusiasm was genuine even if their appearance was not impromptu. Script draft beginning “The unique tour of the American farmers,” undated, Irving R. Levine Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

43. Welles Hangen, “Americans Cruise Dnieper,” *New York Times*, 7/24/1955. A year later, Hangen would be expelled from the Soviet Union ostensibly for taking photos of the same dam that the American delegates had photographed. “Soviet Union Orders Times Man Expelled,” *New York Times*, 11/20/1956.

44. Welles Hangen, “Lysenko Theories Used,” *New York Times*, 7/27/1955; “American Delegation Visits Around Odessa,” *Baltimore Sun*, 7/27/1955; Lauren Soth, “Soviet Farm Research Is Bent to Fit Theories,” *Des Moines Register*, 8/26/1955.

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The American delegation gathers for a typical lavish luncheon banquet at a Soviet farm. Delegation head W. V. Lambert (in glasses) sits at the head of the table. Photo courtesy of Julie Pike McCutcheon.

door plumbing. After a big midday meal, they visited a family who proudly displayed their home. Because the women had prepared dinner, the delegates felt obligated to eat again. They then returned to Odessa for a farewell meal presented by the Ukrainian Ministry of Agriculture.⁴⁵

The unrelenting hospitality began to take its toll. The combination of too much food and alcohol caused upset stomachs that confined some delegates to their hotel rooms. The lengthy midday meals also cut into the time available to inspect the farms. Joking at first about expanding waistlines, delegates soon complained to the Soviet officials accompanying the tour.⁴⁶

45. Ralph Olsen to Genevieve, Blanche, Neil, and Etta, 7/27[?]/1955, Olsen Papers.

46. Olsen's recitation of a Ukrainian dinner is typical: "caviar from sturgeon and salmon, two kinds of sardines and three other kinds of fish, cold roast beef, chicken, cheeses, tomatoes, cucumbers, hard-boiled eggs, onions, two kinds of bread, butter . . . pastry with ground beef . . . clear hot soup . . . broiled beef filet and small buttered potatoes . . . ice cream and a fancy three-layer burnt sugar cake." Ralph Olsen, "Here's Bill of Fare that Faced Americans in Russia," *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, 8/3/1955.

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A reprieve from the excessive banqueting came as the delegates sailed across the Black Sea from Odessa to Novorossisk. Along the way they stopped at Yalta, site of the 1945 meeting between Stalin, Churchill, and Roosevelt. There they spotted anti-American billboards depicting Uncle Sam ready to wage atomic warfare, which the Soviets nervously allowed them to photograph. Ten thousand cheering people jammed the docks at Novorossisk as the delegation tried to disembark. The delegates conceded that they were beginning to feel “more like heroes than plain dirt farmers.” The group was intent on focusing on the farms and avoiding the prolonged meals, which were estimated to have taken up a third of their time.⁴⁷

Treated to another lengthy lunch—complete with champagne—at a vineyard near Novorossisk, the delegates were in no mood for another grape farm the next day. As Horace Davis reported later, the Soviets always gave excuses for why itinerary changes were impossible. On July 31, Soth and Johnson faced down their Soviet handlers, determined to choose which farms they would see. They were finally allowed to split into two groups—one going to the champagne vineyard and the other allowed to make two unscheduled visits to farms between Novorossisk and Krasnodar. Their surprise forays revealed farms less successful than the others they had toured.⁴⁸ At Krasnodar, a crowd estimated at 10,000–20,000 met the delegation. They again split into two groups to maximize their observations.

As the group explored farms in the North Caucasus foothills area, agriculture took priority, with the delegates happily munching sandwiches between visits. Freed from the niceties imposed by previous farms’ hospitality, they began to ask more questions and speak freely about the shortcomings they witnessed. Observations often focused on the farms’ large workforces. To farmers used to working the land with the aid of one

47. Kenneth Brodneý, “Russians Greeting Touring U.S. Farmers Like Heroes,” *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, 7/30/1955; “Yanks Tire of Vodka, Get Champagne,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 7/31/1955.

48. Foreign Service Despatch, Horace Davis Report 1 on the U.S. Agricultural Delegation’s Tour of the Soviet Union, 11/22/1955, NA; “Americans in Soviet Rebel at ‘Too Much Food, Drink,’” *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, 8/1/1955; Welles Hanger, “Americans Rebel at Banquets, Make Foray to 2 Soviet Farms,” *New York Times*, 8/1/1955.

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American delegates examine corn at a Soviet farm. Left to right: Gale Johnson, two farm workers, Lauren Soth, and Marion Steddom. Photo courtesy of Julie Pike McCutcheon.

or two hired men, the sight of dozens of workers in the fields proved curious. They were also both amazed and disturbed by the large number of women engaged in heavy labor on farms and in factories.⁴⁹

After visiting Stalingrad and farms in the Volga Valley region, the delegation flew to central Asia. Near Tashkent, Uzbekistan, they visited irrigated cotton farms just 200 miles from China's border. With their tour coming to an end, the group flew to Alma Ata in Kazakhstan. Despite efforts to shorten time in the western regions to allow for more study of the new lands, the delegates were allotted only a few days there. One group explored farms in Akmolinsk, while the other headed to Rubisovsk in Siberia, where the delegates likened workers to

49. Plambeck reported that at least 60 percent of the farm laborers they had seen were women, owing both to labor policies and the loss of working-age men during World War II. Herb Plambeck, "U.S. Visitors to Soviet Union See Many Women Laborers," *Christian Science Monitor*, 8/17/1955.

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America's western pioneers. While voicing concerns about the area's climate and low rainfall, the delegates concluded that the virgin lands could produce the grains crops Khrushchev desired.

The flight back to Moscow was more than 1,300 miles. There the delegates presented their observations and recommendations to Soviet agriculture officials. Among their concerns was the excessive use of farm labor and lack of incentives for workers. Specific suggestions included planting sorghum and legumes rather than corn in areas of insufficient rainfall, and using terracing and contour plowing to combat erosion. Rural adult education, particularly for women, was stressed as a means to improve living conditions and family and home management. Not surprisingly, the delegates encouraged future exchanges of farmers, scientists, technical specialists, and students.⁵⁰

Soth also reiterated the delegates' grievances. Sweetening his criticisms, he complimented Soviet hospitality and arrangements that had allowed them to see the country's major agricultural regions. Soth again complained about the fixed schedule. He reminded the officials that they had failed to provide the promised statistical information necessary to better appraise the visited farms as part of the whole system. One petulant Soviet official claimed that the tour was not an "ironclad one that you had to follow blindly." Speaking extemporaneously, the minister of state farms offered a few rough agriculture statistics, admitting that 1955's grain harvest was expected to fall short of its goals. He accepted the Americans' criticisms and promised that if they returned in two years "they would find that many of their suggestions had been implemented."⁵¹

After visiting 25 collective farms, 9 state farms, 4 machine tractor stations, 2 hydroelectric plants, and assorted factories and research institutes, the delegates were ready to head home. They had gathered information on Soviet agriculture in regions usually off limits to Westerners and had successfully served as goodwill ambassadors.

50. Welles Hangan, "Soviet Discloses Secret Farm Data," *New York Times*, 8/21/1955; Horace J. Davis, reporter, "The U.S. Agricultural Delegation's Tour of the Soviet Union. VI. Notes on Miscellaneous Agricultural and Non-Agricultural Installations Visited," Foreign Service Despatch from American Embassy, Moscow, to the Dept. of State, 3/23/1956, NA.

51. Ibid.

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AS THE AMERICANS concluded their journey, the Soviet officials' U.S. tour was also winding down. Their travels had taken them from Iowa to Nebraska, South Dakota, Minnesota, Illinois, Michigan, and California. Headed by First Deputy Minister of Agriculture Vladimir M. Matskevich, the group included experts in economics, scientific research, and farm machinery, as well as officials representing state and collective farms and machine tractor stations. They were—in the words of *New York Times* reporter Harrison Salisbury, recently returned from six years in Moscow—some of the “most influential men in the Soviet Union.”⁵²

ISC officials were determined to show the Iowa way by taking the Soviets to family farms. For two weeks, the Soviet delegation toured farms around the state. They ate meals with farm families, inspected their fields and livestock, and, in Jefferson, slept in families' homes and attended their churches.

Unspoken parallels between the delegations appeared in the press—as much a factor of human nature as journalistic zeal. Curious, cheering crowds met the visitors. Charles Hearst tried out a tractor in Pereshchepino while Aleksandr Ezhevski drove one in Polk County. The “Iowa Corn Song” and “Volga Boatmen” were heard in the Ukraine and in Cedar Rapids. Russians tried on Indian headdresses in South Dakota; Americans modeled silk robes in Kazakhstan. Meals were a central motif in stories of both delegations: in the United States, picnic suppers of fried chicken, mashed potatoes, and lemonade replaced the lavish banquets washed down with vodka served to the American delegates.

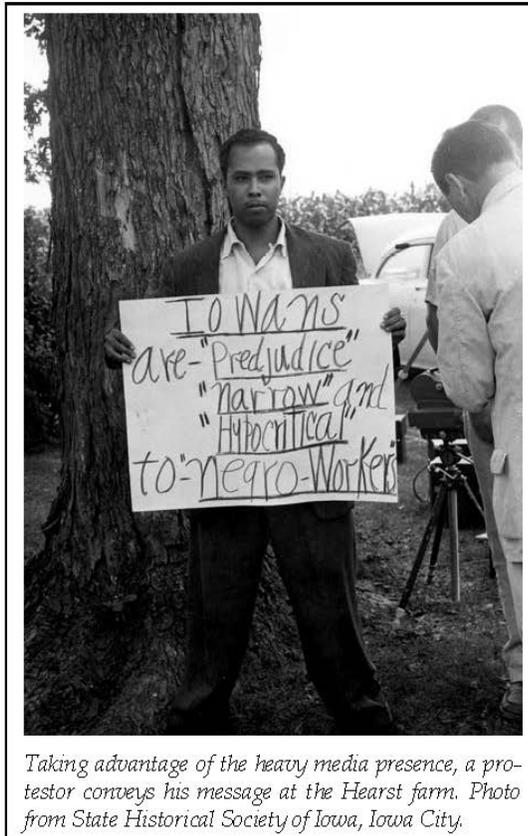
Differences emerged, too. Obliging guests, the Soviets could change their schedules at will and break off on separate expeditions. American journalists outnumbered the Russian delegates eight to one in Iowa; only five reporters followed the Americans in the Soviet Union, although the group's numbers swelled with Soviet press, officials, interpreters, and Intourist staff.

Throughout their stay Soviets commented on American friendliness and hospitality. Unlike their counterparts, they came face-to-face with protestors—one picketing their visit, another protesting Iowa racism—their presence reinforcing the freedoms the Soviets' hosts were heralding. Likewise, the absence of State

52. “Who They Are,” *Des Moines Register*, 7/19/1955.

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Taking advantage of the heavy media presence, a protestor conveys his message at the Hearst farm. Photo from State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City.

and Agriculture department employees—with the exception of interpreters who were, unfortunately, unfamiliar with agricultural terms—underscored the independence of American farmers.

Matskevich later commented in a Soviet journal that the Soviet officials had come to learn about hybrid corn, machinery, and livestock production. Delegates saw practices they would apply to Soviet agriculture, such as hybrid seed and hog production and labor-saving devices. Declining to detail American shortcomings, he attributed U.S. advances to its escape from the ravages of war. What made the deepest impression, he said,

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were the farmers and researchers themselves: “ordinary men and women of America who want peace . . . to pool experience, to do business.”⁵³

THE AMERICAN DELEGATES returned home as minor celebrities. Wire service reports had ensured that their photos, stories, and quotes would run in both national and small-town newspapers (often coupled with news of the touring Soviets). Fresh from their trip, Ralph Olsen and Gale Johnson appeared on the televised *American Forum*, interviewed by then Assistant Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz and Hershel Newsome of the National Grange. Lambert was grilled on *Meet the Press*. The top story was the delegates’ finding that there was no agricultural crisis in the Soviet Union. Reporters questioned the validity of such a conclusion based on a short guided tour; the delegates remained steadfast in their assessment. They also acknowledged their primary role as goodwill ambassadors. Pike endured an in-depth inquiry by *U.S. News and World Report* interviewers, whom he met in Berlin before returning home. The September 19 issue of *Life* ran an eight-page feature on the exchanges, including delegates’ photos and Lambert’s critique.⁵⁴

During the tour, several Iowans had sent home dispatches describing their adventures. Affiliating with wire services offered a way to begin to recoup the tour’s high costs, which ultimately averaged \$3,000 per delegate. Hearst reported for the Associated Press, earning \$300 for two stories. Pike authored his own stories during the tour for KVTV in Sioux City, sending letters and Polaroid pictures by airmail to the station.⁵⁵

Once home, the delegates were swamped with lecture requests. Talks included their slides of the tour, supplemented by

53. “Vladimir Matskevich on American Agriculture,” *News – Soviet Review of World Events*, 11/1/1955, translated in Foreign Service Despatch from the American Embassy, Moscow, to the Dept. of State, 11/12/1955, NA.

54. “What’s Wrong with Russia’s Farms as an American Farm Expert Saw It,” *U.S. News & World Report*, 9/2/1955, 28-31, 80-89; “How to Ease Russia’s Food Crisis,” *Life*, 9/19/1955, 164-71, including Lambert’s assessment, “The Chief U.S. Delegate.”

55. Cy Douglas, Chief, AP Des Moines Bureau, to Hearst, 7/1/1955, Hearst Papers; Scrapbook, “Window on the West, the Herbert Pike Lectures sponsored by KVTV,” Pike Papers.

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photographs and a film provided by the Soviets. Lambert distributed a film produced by the University of Nebraska that he sometimes used in lieu of personal appearances. As private citizens, the delegates could speak their minds, using their own experience, education, and knowledge to interpret what they had seen. The State Department distributed background information but did not try to directly influence what the delegates reported. Lest the delegates forget, however, State Department fact sheets repeatedly stressed that the Communist Party dictated all policies as the Soviet Union's "master, teacher, and supervisor."⁵⁶

Everyone—local farm bureaus, colleges, churches, Kiwanis and 4-H clubs, state and national associations—wanted to hear from the delegates. Altogether, the Iowa delegates presented more than a thousand lectures over the next several years. Their schedules reveal nearly daily entries for speeches around Iowa and into neighboring states. The delegates assured listeners that they saw no impending food crisis or preparations for war. Emphasizing their friendly reception, they showed slides of the people and farms and explained how Soviet agriculture functioned.

"Communism seems to be working for them even if I don't like it," declared Marion Steddom on his return home. As head of the Iowa Swine Producers Association, Steddom was in high demand with swine farmers and county and state associations. By July 1956, he had given 168 lectures in 16 states. In his journal, Steddom had reflected on the damage war had done in the Soviet Union and its impact on the Soviet people. On July 27 he wrote, "Wherever we go in Russia the same questions by the man on the street, do you think there is going to be another war? War has an even more terrible meaning for the people of Russia than it has for the people of [the] United States (if that is possible). War has been a reality. Cities blown to pieces, whole communities evacuated. People leaving all their personal possessions to the invaders. Families separated and perhaps never reunited."⁵⁷

56. "The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics," attachment with letter from Horace J. Davis, Embassy Attaché, Moscow, to John M. Steddom, Granger, Iowa, 9/15/1955, Steddom Papers.

57. Allan Hoschar, "Gives Views on His Visit to U.S.S.R.," undated/unattributed newspaper clipping, Steddom Papers; Marion Steddom to the Internal Revenue Service, 7/25/1956, Steddom Papers; Marion Steddom, Journal, pages following 7/27/[1955], Steddom Papers.

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Unashamedly opening his lectures with “a little flag waving,” Ralph Olsen spoke of his gratitude at being an independent farmer and for having the opportunities he and his audience shared. Olsen reported that curiosity had driven his decision to participate; he would have given his right arm to participate but “instead saved his arm and paid \$3,000.” In his *American Forum* appearance, Olsen reiterated that the Russians did not have a current food shortage. He spoke admiringly of the Soviet education system’s ability to easily disburse information to young people, although he assured his interviewers that he was not enthused by its other aspects. As he became further removed from his interaction with the Soviet people, Olsen became more critical. Describing the individual plots of land provided to farmers, he reported that many did not take advantage of them – either from transportation difficulties, time constraints, or because “the workers are just plain lazy.”⁵⁸

Another prolific speaker among the Iowa delegates was Charles Hearst. His wife, Gladys, fielded invitations during his absence, notifying correspondents that September lectures had been scheduled before he left; by September, he was booked through February. Hearst’s audiences ranged from Iowa farm bureaus, Rotary clubs, and extension offices to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce World Affairs Forum and an agricultural meeting of the American Bankers Association. A member of the chamber’s Foreign Policy Committee, he spoke of his concern that the small Communist Party could dictate policy when so many people were friendly toward America. “Of course the places we visited were carefully selected and advanced preparations made,” lectured Hearst. “But no government, no matter how tyrannical or despotic can order and get the kind of friendly curiosity . . . that we received so often.” He detailed farms they visited – with particular attention to the corn crops – as well as workers’ assignments, salaries, and housing.⁵⁹

58. Ralph Olsen, “Tulsa Talk 1955,” Olsen Papers; Transcript, *The American Forum*, “Farming in Russia,” 9/4/1955, Olsen Papers; Ralph Olsen, Speech transcript, untitled, begins “I would like to give you my impressions . . .”, Olsen Papers.

59. Charles Hearst, “Russian Trip,” with notation “typescript copy of the handwritten speech,” Hearst Papers.

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American delegates Ralph Olsen, Herb Pike, and Charles Hearst examine corn at the Elichia Lenin Collective. Photo courtesy of Julie Pike McCutcheon.

A day after leaving the Soviet Union, Herb Pike shared his experiences in a wide-ranging *U.S. News and World Report* interview. Despite having just completed six weeks of intense travel, Pike gave detailed and thoughtful responses to a range of questions requiring both observation and opinion. The editors repeatedly asked about the food crisis and war preparations, but Pike did not take the bait. He conceded that the Soviets' diet was monotonous but saw no one undernourished. To Pike, the farms' regimentation was reminiscent of his time in the army: everybody following orders and too many bureaucrats. Impressed with the progress being made, he saw that the people lacked the individual freedoms that "'decadent' Capitalism"

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American delegate Herb Pike, dressed in a robe and hat from Uzbekistan, shows the route delegates followed in their tour of the Soviet Union's agricultural regions. Photo courtesy of Julie Pike McCutcheon.

allowed and advised promoting democracy by emphasizing citizens' rights.⁶⁰

Pike wrote about his experiences for the *Town Journal* and *Doane's Agricultural Digest* and lectured throughout the Midwest. His views remained consistent over the next several years in speeches and articles. Pike spoke passionately about the need for young people to pursue challenging coursework, particularly in light of a Soviet system that rewarded similar efforts. Two years before the reaction to *Sputnik* revitalized American science education, Pike urged students to take courses in physics, engineering, and foreign languages.⁶¹

60. "What's Wrong with Russia's Farms," *U.S. News and World Report*, 9/2/1955, 28; Herb Pike, "Russia was an eye-opener," *Town Journal*, Sept. 1955, 32-33, 88-89.

61. Pike, "Russia was an eye-opener"; Herb Pike, "Special Report on Farming in Russia," *Doane Agricultural Digest*, 9/15/1955; Speech transcripts, Pike Papers.

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Like Pike, Lauren Soth immediately reflected on the tour experience in the press. In 12 hard-hitting articles penned in West Berlin and wired to the *Des Moines Register*, he detailed Soviet agriculture's progress and shortcomings, interactions with Soviets, the country's poor sanitation and safety, lack of consumer goods, women workers, Communism, and thought control. Soth pulled no punches in his close scrutiny of Soviet life. Perhaps to overcome the relative lightheartedness of his original editorial or out of frustration at being denied free movement, he provided detailed assessments that are unrelenting in their criticism: the Soviet workers' paradise as a "cruel jest"; the importance of remembering Soviet brutalities in the face of glad handing; the "paralyzing sameness" of proffered entertainment; "the machinery of party indoctrination and control . . . in fine working order." In later speeches and articles, Soth continued to provide in-depth analyses of Soviet agriculture and life but toned down some of his harsher observations. Outlining shortcomings ranging from inefficiencies and lack of incentives to outdated theories and long-distance decision-making, he emphasized the importance of sharing American know-how and its potential influence on the Soviet system. Soth's tour articles appeared in *Chemurgic Digest*, *The New Republic*, and the *Illinois Banker*, among others.⁶²

In 1956 Soth won the Pulitzer Prize for Editorial Writing for his invitation to the Russian farmers. Some correspondents and newspapers continued to voice their disapproval of the exchange, however. Among the backhanded compliments was the *Mason City Globe-Gazette's* response: "We have a limited enthusiasm for anything which seems to be providing a crutch to history's illest-odored political philosophy, Communism. But that doesn't detract a whit from our pride in the honor Lauren Soth has brought to our state."⁶³

62. Lauren K. Soth, "The Soviet Drive for Better Food," *Chemurgic Digest*, November 1955, 4-5; Lauren K. Soth, "Fam Life in the USSR," *The New Republic*, 9/26/1955, 17-20; Lauren K. Soth, "Americans See Russian Farms," *Illinois Banker*, May 1956, 12-13.

63. "Honor for an Iowan," *Mason City Globe-Gazette*, undated news clipping, Soth Papers.

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Broadcasting from London on the return trip to the United States, Herb Plambeck reported that the group had “a million memories” of the “fast, rugged, sleep-defying trip.” He took seriously his role as a representative of farm reporters, offering films and broadcasts to stations around the country on his return. By December 1955, Plambeck reported, he had shared tapes with more than a thousand radio stations, given 85 talks to an estimated 45,000 listeners, and written articles for *Kiwanis International* and various farm publications.⁶⁴

AS THE AMERICANS toured Moscow, Eisenhower met in Geneva with British Prime Minister Anthony Eden, French Prime Minister Edgar Faure, and Soviet Premier Nikolai Bulganin; Khrushchev was part of the Soviet entourage, his active presence signaling his growing importance. On the agenda were German reunification, disarmament, atomic energy, and cultural exchanges. Propelled by the “spirit of Geneva,” the leaders debated the issues to be ironed out by their foreign ministers in an upcoming meeting. In October and November they reconvened in Geneva. Again the subject of East-West contacts was raised. On October 31 Secretary of State Dulles announced that the United States would no longer require special validation to travel to the Soviet Union; with a passport and visa, Americans were free to visit behind the Iron Curtain. A day later the Soviets proposed a second agricultural tour of the United States. Because the Soviets knew that it would be impossible for the U.S. government to organize a second tour in one week as proposed, State Department officials believed that the Soviets wanted to make the U.S. government appear to be “blocking popular demands” by U.S. citizens for increased exchanges. The State Department thus instructed the Geneva contingent to use the request to illustrate the “difficulties of hit and miss programs.”⁶⁵

For the many Americans who volunteered their services or suggested similar exchanges, the 1955 agricultural delegations offered hope that peaceful coexistence could be a reality as they

64. Herb Plambeck, “To Whoever May Be Interested,” n.d., Plambeck Papers.

65. Memo, State Dept. to the American Embassy, Geneva, 11/2/1955, NA. With the end to U.S. controls on American travel, the trickle of tourists to the Soviet Union increased to 2,000 by 1956. Levine, *Travel Guide to Russia*, 13.

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connected with Soviets through professional interests. Others were simply intrigued. Physicians, plumbers, businessmen, chambers of commerce, and Tupperware Party hostesses proposed trips before controls were lifted. Among those who traveled to the Soviet Union in the fall of 1955 was Roswell Garst of Coon Rapids. First Deputy Minister of Agriculture Vladimir M. Matskevich, who had headed the Russian delegation to the United States, had been impressed with Garst's 2,300-acre farm and invited him to visit the Soviet Union. Garst sold hybrid corn seed to the Soviets and met with Khrushchev, who would later visit Garst's farm in 1959.⁶⁶

Horace Davis, the embassy attaché, believed that the information gathered on farms and machine tractor stations was “highly significant,” although “knowledge of the overall” agricultural system remained small.⁶⁷ In six detailed confidential reports released over the next eight months, he reviewed his and the delegates' many pages of notes. Both Davis and the embassy praised the caliber of the American group. Among the delegation's successes was their “favorable impression” on Soviets and “superb job selling America and the American way of life.” Weighing the pros and cons, the embassy concluded that the exchange had been worthwhile from an American standpoint.⁶⁸ The delegation had seen regions that had been closed to most Westerners since World War II.

While the State Department shared Davis's reports with the FBI and CIA, anecdotal evidence suggests that the CIA may have taken an active role in intelligence gathering during the tour. NBC reporter Irving R. Levine always suspected that there was at least one CIA plant in the group.⁶⁹ A 1956 letter from Marion

66. Curiously, Khrushchev's son ignored the July–August 1955 American agricultural delegation in a 1999 *American Heritage* article and references only Garth's October 1955 visit to the Soviet Union as the U.S. response to Soth's editorial. See Sergei Khrushchev, “The Cold War Through the Looking Glass,” *American Heritage* 50, no. 6 (1999), 34–38, 40, 42–46, 49–50. On Khrushchev's visit to Garst's farm, see Stephen J. Frese, “Comrade Khrushchev and Farmer Garst: Summit in an Iowa Cornfield,” *Iowa Heritage Illustrated* 85 (2004), 146–53.

67. Memorandum, Horace J. Davis to Chargé d'Affaires, 9/21/1955, NA.

68. Foreign Service Despatch from the American Embassy, Moscow, to the State Dept., 3/25/1956, NA.

69. Irving R. Levine, “Russia I,” unpublished article, 2001, author's collection.

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Steddom to the Internal Revenue Service may confirm his assumption. Steddom asked the IRS to allow a tax deduction for costs incurred as a delegate, citing his contributions to his country and the losses he took during harvest season. Although he could not divulge the details, he wrote that he and others were asked to collect vegetation “daily for later chemical analysis in order to determine the location of the places where Russia was testing the atom bomb.”⁷⁰ A recollection by Pike’s daughter may corroborate Steddom’s story. Nine years old in 1955, she distinctly recalls that before her father left, an important visitor from Washington arrived at their Whiting farmhouse in a two-seat convertible—a rare sight in the rural town of 700—for a private meeting with her father. Later she learned that the visitor had asked him to collect for analysis flower samples from the bouquets presented at each farm.⁷¹

A first-person CIA report on the delegation’s observations, dated September 23, 1955, was delivered to the White House on November 4.⁷² Although the report is anonymous, the opening paragraphs nearly match the lead of Gale Johnson’s September 4 *New York Times* magazine article. Whether someone plagiarized Johnson’s article or he wrote the report himself is unknown.⁷³

70. [Marion Steddom] to the IRS, 7/26/1956, Steddom Papers. FOIA requests to the CIA and IRS to confirm Steddom’s claim have thus far been unsuccessful. However, a recently released document indicates early CIA interest in the delegation. Memorandum of Conversation, 3/14/1955, NA.

71. Julie Pike McCutcheon, telephone interview with author, 8/1/2011.

72. “Observations on Agriculture in the Soviet Union,” 9/23/1955, attachment to memorandum from [redacted] to Gabriel Hauge, administrative assistant to the president, White House Office, Dwight D. Eisenhower Records as President, White House Central Files, 1953–61, CREST database, NA.

73. In March Johnson had broadcast a “pessimistic appraisal” of Khrushchev’s corn-planting program for Radio Liberty, an anti-Communist radio station sponsored by the American Committee for Liberation from Bolshevism; a 1971 U.S. Senate investigation confirmed that the committee had been covertly funded by the CIA for the past 18 years. *New York Times*, 3/14/1955, 4; *ibid.*, 1/24/1971, 1. The CIA report also includes paragraphs identical to those in another article by Johnson: “Observations on the Economy of the U.S.S.R.,” *Journal of Political Economy* 64 (1956), 185–211. Johnson continued teaching at the University of Chicago until 1998, authoring more than 300 books and articles. For Johnson’s contributions to economics, see John M. Antle and Daniel A. Sumner, eds., *The Economics of Agriculture*, vol. 1, *Selected Papers of D. Gale Johnson*, and vol. 2, *Papers in Honor of D. Gale Johnson* (Chicago, 1996).

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Ultimately, the delegation's importance rests not with the specific information collected but with the insights delegates provided to a curious, if nervous, American public. Like themselves, the Soviets met by the delegates desired peace and personal interactions. In speeches throughout the country, the Iowa delegates provided a new awareness of the Soviet Union for Americans hungry for reassurance as well as facts. The delegates' assurances that Russians did not have horns helped spark a growing interest in what was behind the Iron Curtain, and their tour proved an early step in establishing East-West contacts. Three years later, in 1958, the United States and the Soviet Union signed the Lacy-Zaroubin Agreement, which formally covered media, scientific, cultural, and tourist exchanges.

Analyzing the exchanges between U.S. and Soviet scientists, performers, and educators that followed Stalin's death, historian Yale Richmond writes that such contacts must be given credit for contributing to the collapse of the Soviet Union.⁷⁴ As one of the earliest exchanges, the 1955 American agricultural delegation to the Soviet Union helped pave the way for future contacts and formal agreements between the two nations.

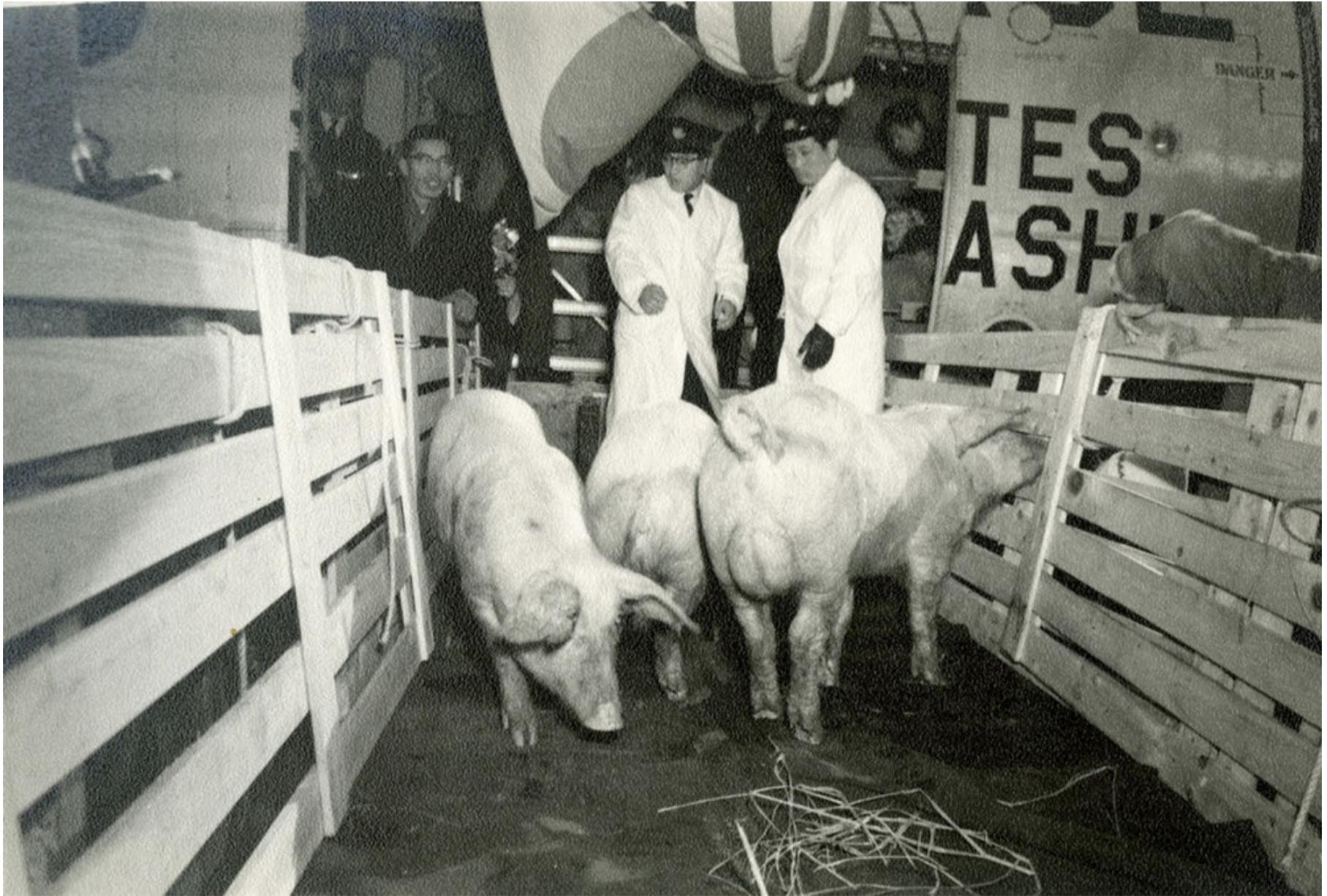
74. Yale Richmond, *Cultural Exchange and the Cold War: Raising the Curtain* (University Park, PA, 2003), 1-2.

"Food for Freedom" Church Women United Letter, 1966

FOOD FOR FREEDOM

- RECOGNIZING the relationship between the great increase in world hunger and the growth of the world population;
- RECALLING the resolution of the Board of Managers of United Church Women of April 1964 regarding the renewal of Public Law 480;
- MINDFUL of the mandate of the General Board of the National Council of churches' resolution on world hunger of June 1965; and THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE BOARD OF UNITED CHURCH WOMEN, in session March 29, 1966, *and United C. W. of Iowa meeting for annual session June ~~20-22~~ 1966,*
- URGE support for legislation which will change emphasis from surplus foods' disposal to production of agricultural products for world need;
- CALL for a separation of humanitarian use of food, as distinct from the political and cold war considerations of American foreign policy;
- REQUEST that adequate funds be appropriated to help meet immediate nutritional needs in famine areas;
- ENCOURAGE United Church Women to communicate these views at once to their Congressmen and Senators, particularly to members of the Senate and House Committees on Agriculture.

Iowa Hog Lift to Japan, 1959



Goepfinger, Walter, Iowa State University, 1959. [Courtesy of Iowa State University Special Collections](#)

S.2250: Congressional Tribute to Dr. Norman E. Borlaug Act of 2006, December 14, 2006 (Pg. 1)



PUBLIC LAW 109-395—DEC. 14, 2006

CONGRESSIONAL TRIBUTE TO
DR. NORMAN E. BORLAUG ACT OF 2006

S.2250: Congressional Tribute to Dr. Norman E. Borlaug Act of 2006, December 14, 2006 (Pg. 2)

120 STAT. 2708

PUBLIC LAW 109–395—DEC. 14, 2006

Public Law 109–395
109th Congress

An Act

Dec. 14, 2006
[S. 2250]

To award a congressional gold medal to Dr. Norman E. Borlaug.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

Congressional
Tribute to
Dr. Norman E.
Borlaug Act
of 2006.
31 USC 5111
note.

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Congressional Tribute to Dr. Norman E. Borlaug Act of 2006”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds as follows:

(1) Dr. Norman E. Borlaug, was born in Iowa where he grew up on a family farm, and received his primary and secondary education.

(2) Dr. Borlaug attended the University of Minnesota where he received his B.A. and Ph.D. degrees and was also a star NCAA wrestler.

(3) For the past 20 years, Dr. Borlaug has lived in Texas where he is a member of the faculty of Texas A&M University.

(4) Dr. Borlaug also serves as President of the Sasakawa Africa Association.

(5) Dr. Borlaug’s accomplishments in terms of bringing radical change to world agriculture and uplifting humanity are without parallel.

(6) In the immediate aftermath of World War II, Dr. Borlaug spent 20 years working in the poorest areas of rural Mexico. It was there that Dr. Borlaug made his breakthrough achievement in developing a strand of wheat that could exponentially increase yields while actively resisting disease.

(7) With the active support of the governments involved, Dr. Borlaug’s “green revolution” uplifted hundreds of thousands of the rural poor in Mexico and saved hundreds of millions from famine and outright starvation in India and Pakistan.

(8) Dr. Borlaug’s approach to wheat production next spread throughout the Middle East. Soon thereafter his approach was adapted to rice growing, increasing the number of lives Dr. Borlaug has saved to more than a billion people.

(9) In 1970, Dr. Borlaug received the Nobel Prize, the only person working in agriculture to ever be so honored. Since then he has received numerous honors and awards including the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the Public Service Medal, the National Academy of Sciences’ highest honor, and the Rotary International Award for World Understanding and Peace.

S.2250: Congressional Tribute to Dr. Norman E. Borlaug Act of 2006, December 14, 2006 (Pg. 3)

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(10) At age 91, Dr. Borlaug continues to work to alleviate poverty and malnutrition. He currently serves as president of Sasakawa Global 2000 Africa Project, which seeks to extend the benefits of agricultural development to the 800,000,000 people still mired in poverty and malnutrition in sub-Saharan Africa.

(11) Dr. Borlaug continues to serve as Chairman of the Council of Advisors of the World Food Prize, an organization he created in 1986 to be the “Nobel Prize for Food and Agriculture” and which presents a \$250,000 prize each October at a Ceremony in Des Moines, Iowa, to the Laureate who has made an exceptional achievement similar to Dr. Borlaug’s breakthrough 40 years ago. In the almost 20 years of its existence, the World Food Prize has honored Laureates from Bangladesh, India, China, Mexico, Denmark, Sierra Leone, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

(12) Dr. Borlaug has saved more lives than any other person who has ever lived, and likely has saved more lives in the Islamic world than any other human being in history.

(13) Due to a lifetime of work that has led to the saving and preservation of an untold amount of lives, Dr. Norman E. Borlaug is deserving of America’s highest civilian award: the congressional gold medal.

SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.

(a) PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.—The President Pro Tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives are authorized to make appropriate arrangements for the presentation, on behalf of Congress, of a gold medal of appropriate design, to Dr. Norman E. Borlaug, in recognition of his enduring contributions to the United States and the world.

(b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For the purpose of the presentation referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary of the Treasury (in this Act referred to as the “Secretary”) shall strike a gold medal with suitable emblems, devices, and inscriptions, to be determined by the Secretary.

SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.

Under such regulations as the Secretary may prescribe, the Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in bronze of the gold medal struck under section 3 at a price sufficient to cover the cost thereof, including labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses, and the cost of the gold medal.

SEC. 5. STATUS AS NATIONAL MEDALS.

(a) NATIONAL MEDAL.—The medal struck under this Act is a national medal for purposes of chapter 51 of title 31, United States Code.

(b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of section 5134 of title 31, United States Code, all duplicate medals struck under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic items.

SEC. 6. AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS; PROCEEDS OF SALE.

(a) AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS.—There are authorized to be charged against the United States Mint Public Enterprise Fund, such sums as may be necessary to pay for the cost of the medals struck under this Act.

S.2250: Congressional Tribute to Dr. Norman E. Borlaug Act of 2006, December 14, 2006 (Pg. 4)

120 STAT. 2710

PUBLIC LAW 109-395—DEC. 14, 2006

(b) PROCEEDS OF SALE.—Amounts received from the sale of duplicate bronze medals under section 4 shall be deposited in the United States Mint Public Enterprise Fund.

Approved December 14, 2006.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—S. 2250:
CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 152 (2006):
Sept. 27, considered and passed Senate.
Dec. 6, considered and passed House.

○

Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev Visits Iowa, September 23, 1959



Courtesy of State Historical Society of Iowa, 23 September 1959

“Vilsack Commemorates 50th Anniversary of the Iowa ‘Hog Lift’ in Yamanashi” Article, April 8, 2010 (Pg. 1)

Vilsack Commemorates 50th Anniversary of the Iowa “Hog Lift” in Yamanashi

Posted by acampbell in [Food and Nutrition Trade Research and Science](#)
Apr 08, 2010

During the third day of his visit to Japan, Agriculture Secretary Vilsack had another packed day – starting with a successful bilateral meeting with his Japanese counterpart, and concluding with a series of events commemorating the 50th anniversary of a 1959 ‘hog lift’ in which Iowa farmers sent 36 hogs to Yamanashi, Japan.

Prior to traveling to Yamanashi, Secretary Vilsack met with the Minister of Agriculture Hiroataka Akamatsu to discuss a wide range of agriculture topics of interest to both the United States and Japan. During their meeting, they discussed science-based solutions to U.S. beef and beef products and global food security. Additionally, Vilsack reiterated the United States’ commitment to achieving an ambitious and balanced conclusion to the Doha Round and his belief that a Doha success can be achieved if all major economies—including Japan—are willing to come to the negotiating table.

Vilsack said, “This [beef] issue remains a high priority for the United States and the U.S. objective remains a framework that is consistent with science and international standards. Minister Akamatsu and I concluded our meeting by confirming that the U.S. - Japan bilateral relationship in agriculture is a strong and positive one and vowed to continue in this direction.”

On the heels of his meeting with Minister Akamatsu, Secretary Vilsack boarded a train traditionally used by the Emperor for a scenic two hour ride to Kofu in the Yamanashi Prefecture for the 50th Anniversary Celebration of the now-famous “hog lift” – when generous Iowa farmers sent a group of 36 hogs to Yamanashi after Japan’s hogs were nearly wiped out by a major typhoon. Three years after the hogs’ arrival, the original hogs had multiplied to more than 500. Vilsack had previously traveled to Japan to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the event.

Upon arrival in Kofu, the Secretary, his wife, and the rest of the U.S. delegation were greeted by local elementary school children singing and playing traditional Japanese taiko drums – an event that included Yamanashi Governor Shomei Yokouchi and other Prefecture officials.

“Vilsack Commemorates 50th Anniversary of the Iowa ‘Hog Lift’ in Yamanashi” Article, April 8, 2010 (Pg. 2)

Secretary Vilsack then paid a visit to the Yamanashi Prefectural Museum of Art where he participated in a tree-planting ceremony of an oak tree—Iowa’s official state tree—on the grounds of the museum to mark the 50th anniversary. In his dedication, Secretary Vilsack stressed the importance of the diplomatic bond that had been formed between the United States and Japan as a result of this event, noting that just as the tree planted today will continue to grow stronger roots and larger branches, so too would the relationship between Japan and the U.S. grow more solid over the next 50 years of friendship and cooperation.

Later that evening, Vilsack offered congratulatory remarks at the 50th anniversary ceremony where he celebrated the sister-state relationship that has been formed between Iowa and Yamanashi and how this reminds us of the benefits of cooperation and trade. After the traditional breaking of the sake barrel to begin the festivities, Iron Chef Yukio Hattori presented an award to the winners of contest to come up with the best recipe using products grown in Iowa and Yamanashi.



Secretary Vilsack (second from the left) joined (l-r) U.S. Ambassador Roos, Iowa Governor Bill Northey, Yamanashi Governor Shomei Yokouchi, and the Speaker of the Yamanashi Diet to plant an oak tree—Iowa’s official state tree—on the grounds of the Yamanashi Prefectural Museum of Art to recognize the longstanding friendship between the two states and countries.

“Vilsack Commemorates 50th Anniversary of the Iowa ‘Hog Lift’ in Yamanashi” Article, April 8, 2010 (Pg. 3)



Secretary Vilsack joined Japan and Iowa leaders to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Iowa Hog Lift to Yamanashi, Japan