



БЮЛЕТЕНЬ

УКРАЇНСЬКИЙ ЦЕНТР
ЗАСОБІВ І РОЗВИТКУ

FALL/WINTER 1991



Farmer Exchange Program at URDC

March 1990 marked the passage of land reform legislation which for the first time since the revolution allows the private ownership of land in Ukraine. An increasing number of farmers are taking advantage of this opportunity, but they lack training and experience in the management of private family farms. Ukrainian Canadians, on the other hand, have a century of expertise in this type of farming.

A generous grant from the Geneva-based **Karl Popper Foundation** (obtained with the assistance of Dr. Bohdan Hawrylyshyn) has allowed URDC to introduce the **Canada-Ukraine Farmer Exchange Program**. Over the next two years, 70 independent farmers from Ukraine will be placed with Canadian farm families. Through the course of their six-month placements, they will learn

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Yaroslav Rodych, Nadine Skitsko (right), and her daughter Michelle.

Canada Meets Ukraine

On September 30, 1991, URDC's Marie Lesoway interviewed Canada-Ukraine Farmer Exchange participants Nadine Skitsko and Yaroslav Rodych. (Rodych has been with the Skitskos for two months). The interview took place on the Skitsko family farm near Bruderheim.

Eddy and Nadine (nee Gudzan) Skitsko are fourth-generation Ukrainian Canadians who have been farming for 21 years. Together with their children Shanon (16) and Michelle (14), they farm ten quarter-sections (1600 acres) of land, manage a 32-head feeder cow/calf operation, and operate a 200-head feed lot. In addition, Eddy currently has a full-time job away from the farm and Nadine (a registered nurse by profession) raises her own chickens and finds time to take an active interest in local politics.

The Skitskos' interest in the Canada-Ukraine Farmer Exchange program stems from their love of their Ukrainian heritage and their desire to pass this on to their children. Both Nadine and Eddy speak Ukrainian, and both of their children are currently enrolled in the Ukrainian bilingual program at Lamont. Even so, preserving the language is not easy, and the Skitskos welcomed the farmer program as a way to keep Ukrainian alive within their own family circle.

Already, there have been benefits. Shanon has decided to continue his Ukrainian studies as a direct result of Yaroslav's visit, and both Shanon and Michelle are using Ukrainian more and learning it better. For his part, Yaroslav would like to learn English.

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Canada Meets Ukraine

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Nadine has found him some English as a Second Language materials, and the whole family helps him practise his new vocabulary.

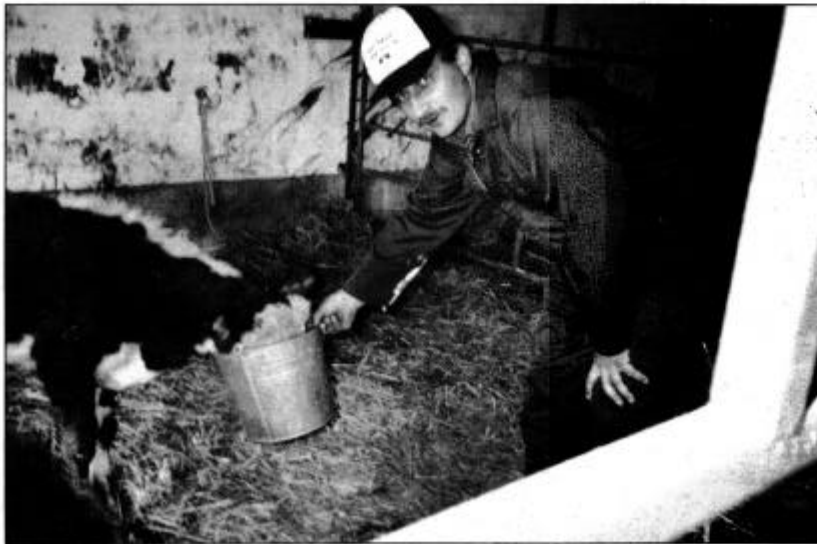
Fields Far From Home

Yaroslav Rodych (31) is an agronomist who hails from *Krakovets', Iavoriv's'kyi Raion, L'viv's'ka Oblast'*. He holds a five-year diploma from L'viv's Institute of Agriculture. He has six years of farming experience, including five years as the chief agronomist on a collective farm in his area. Yaroslav is married with two sons, aged 3 and 5.

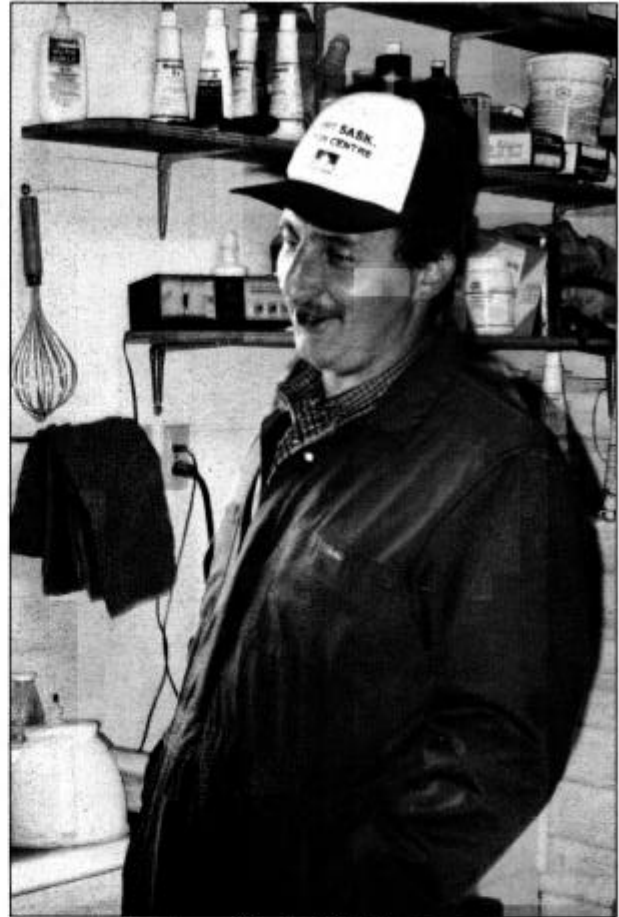
Since early 1991, Yaroslav has worked as an independent farmer. He owns a ten-hectare farm on which he planted his first crops of barley, buckwheat, flax, and potatoes this spring. He has six head of cattle, and raises chickens, geese, ducks, and pigs both for domestic consumption and for the marketplace.

With the recent pronouncement of the Ukraine Act, Yaroslav plans to take on an additional 90 hectares of land. He also hopes to mechanize so that he can increase the efficiency of his operation. This year, he had to rent a tractor and disc cultivator from the local *kolhosp* (collective farm) at a cost of 90 rubles. He is on a waiting list to buy a tractor of his own, and says that with the current price system, it would not be unrealistic for him to pay for it within three years.

Although the work is hard ("...руки терплять, бо приходиться багато робити руками"), Rodych feels



Chore time



Yaroslav Rodych

strongly that it is possible to make a living from the land. ("Земля дає основне багатство при любі країні.") L'vivshchyna, for example, is so populous that there is less than a hectare of land per person. As a result, there is a great demand for food products, and these are currently in short supply.

Трактор є трактор...

When asked how farming in Canada differed from that in Ukraine, Rodych replied, "Трактор є трактор, і в Канаді і на Україні." Yaroslav has had no trouble adapting to Canadian technology. Although there are minor variations in the details, the mechanical processes are the same. Rodych likes the labor-saving mechanization of all aspects of the Canadian farming operation—from preparing hay and straw, to harvesting grain. ("Людині приходитьися тільки

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сидіти за кермом.”) He especially enjoys operating the Skitskos' bobcat.

Canada differs from Ukraine in the scale of farming that is most efficient. In Western Ukraine, at least, it will not be possible to have farms as large as those in Canada. The Ukraine Act currently restricts the size of private farms to 100 hectares (250 acres), but even if this were not so, it would not be practical for a single farmer to cultivate the food crops (vegetables and fruits) that are in highest demand if he had to manage a huge farm.

Rodych is very impressed with the farm service sector in Canada, and marvels that the Skitskos can simply pick up the phone and have a supply of diesel fuel delivered right to their door. Feed for cattle, building materials, spare parts, fuel, tools and machinery are all easily accessible here. (“В Канаді інакше, бо ферми склалися історично, вони вже перейшли весь той період. Вже все готове й все, що треба для ферми, то годин п'яти і собі зробити.”) Rodych is very interested in how the Canadian economy is structured, and marvels that such necessities are accessible to his hosts even though they never carry cash.

In Ukraine, even if a farmer had the money to buy them, many goods are simply not available. On the other hand, the Canadian economy and geography provide their own constraints. “Everything is in its place,” and there is no room for bargaining. (“В нас фермер то бізнес може зробити, по-лівому, а

тут бізнес зробити, то вже тяжко.”) The economics of farming differ as well. In Canada, there is lots of production to feed a small population, while in Europe, there are lots of people to feed, and a different monetary system.

Although the standard of living in



Yaroslav Rodych on the Skitskos' bobcat

Canada is higher, Rodych feels that European (and Ukrainian) agricultural standards are superior, particularly in the area of cultivation and crop management. For example, the Skitskos typically work the land once in the spring, plant their wheat, and get a reasonable return per acre. To get a comparable return in Ukraine, it is necessary to cultivate the land at least three times during the growing season, and to control plant

diseases and insect pests. Rodych feels that if Canadian farmers practised this type of crop management, their yields per acre would be much higher. But in Canada, chemicals, fertilizers, and labor are costly, while the final product sells very cheaply. The economy itself prevents good management because it is expensive, and there is no return on the investment.

Family structures are different in Canada. In Ukraine, young married couples cannot make a living without financial help from their parents. They have no choice but to live within their extended families. This, however, has its own advantages. Children have the love, support, and attention of the older generation at a time in their parents' lives when having a job and making a living are of utmost concern. The older people take care of things at home while the younger ones work for a paycheque. The elders, in their turn, are cared for within the family circle if they are ill or disabled, and are given a proper burial.

“Pluses” All Round

Yaroslav Rodych feels that the benefits of the Canada-Ukraine Farmer Exchange program are enormous, and that it is nothing short of a miracle that such an experience is now available to farmers in Ukraine. The program provides an opportunity to earn much-needed western currency, but more importantly, it provides firsthand experience with new and different ways of doing things. This has been invaluable. (“...що побачити по телевізору, що

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previous page*

почути по радіо чи від когось, то є одне. А що бути на місці, і всьо то попробувати своїми руками, попрацювати біля того, то є дуже велике значення... Сам коли ти попрацюєш, ти бачиш, як воно зроблено...")

Rodych acknowledges that much of what he has seen in Canada will be directly applicable to his own farming operation. For example, he is taking blueprints of a Canadian metal shed back home with him. He has learned the importance of staying out of debt. He also intends to introduce Canadian-style cattle-raising practises on his farm ("...бо і просто, і вигідно, і легко"). The Skitskos keep 200 head of cattle outdoors year-round. They have no need for electricity, and although they provide feed and water, they do not have to spend time cleaning the barn or providing fresh bedding—time-consuming manual operations that are currently the way things are done in the average small barn in Ukraine. Rodych can only speculate about why "outdoor" cattle management is not

practiced in Ukraine, especially since the climate there is milder than in Canada. Perhaps it is because this is how things were done historically. Perhaps it is because in a closed society, there are no new models and no new ideas—and this is why exchange programs are of such enormous benefit. ("Іхати треба, іхати треба любому, тому, що ми не знаєм який той світ.")

Yaroslav plans to share his experiences



The feed lot

The farmer exchange program has had benefits on all sides. Nadine Skitsko says that she is surprised and delighted at how much she and her family are learning from their Ukrainian guest on a variety of levels, from farming practice to family relationships.

and his new insights with anyone who asks him, and will recommend participation in the program to his colleagues in Ukraine. He will make a presentation about his experiences to the L'viv association of independent farmers on his return home.

The farmer exchange program has had benefits on all sides. Nadine Skitsko says that she is surprised and delighted at how much she and her family are learning

from their Ukrainian guest on a variety of levels, from farming practice to family relationships. Some of the learning is taking place in unexpected ways. Yaroslav has reminded the Skitskos "як у сім'ї (треба) жити." Nadine feels that the family unit is stronger in Ukraine, and that the custom of many generations living together adds to the cohesiveness of the family. Baba used to live with them, and the Skitsko children learned many important things from her. Urbanization and societal pressures force today's Ukrainian Canadian families to live "independently," and this is often at the expense of a strong extended family.

Nadine hopes that their experiences in Canada will give the visiting Ukrainian farmers encouragement, energy, and the conviction that "they can do it." They have all the skills, the drive, and the intelligence to make excellent independent farmers. They don't need to come here to learn, but simply to observe the differences, and the Canada-Ukraine Farmer Exchange program provides them with this opportunity.

Yaroslav recommends that English instruction be a part of the exchange program in the future. He hopes that future programs will allow participants to observe the whole farming operation, from seeding to harvest. He also recommends that a more formalized training component be included in subsequent programs, particularly in the sphere of economics and farm management.



Farmer Exchange

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farm management through "hands-on" work experience and training workshops. The success of the program will have a significant impact on the future of private farming in Ukraine and on Ukraine's ability to produce a stable supply of quality agricultural produce.

Twenty farmers from Ukraine have now been placed on farms in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. Their stay in Canada will give them practical know-how about single-family farming. But just as important, it will give Ukrainian Canadian farm families an opportunity to speak Ukrainian and to learn in a very personal way about the homeland their grandfathers left a century ago.

For further information about the Canada-Ukraine Farmer Exchange, please contact program coordinator Bohdan Chomiak at (403) 483-4340.

Farming in Ukraine

In March of 1990, Ukraine passed a Land Act which allows for the long-term lease of land to private farmers. In the spring of 1991, the *Zakon Ukrainy* (Ukraine Act) was passed, allowing private ownership of up to 100 hectares, 50 of which can be classified as cultivable. (One hectare equals approximately 2.5 acres).

Land is not for sale in Ukraine, but is currently allotted to independent farmers through government authorities. Farmers who take on private land are eligible for bank loans at reduced rates, exempt from taxes for a period of three years, and permitted to buy farm fuel, seed grain and other commodities at "state" prices that are considerably below consumer rates. They are also given priority for equipment

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Canada-Ukraine Farmer Exchange

The participants in the 1991-1992 exchange program represent three regions of Ukraine and three provinces of Canada.

Ukraine

From *L'vivs'ka Oblast'*,
Petro Borovets

Yosef Dzhek

**Mykhailo Fedorchak/
Petro Lozynsky**

Stepan Hirny

Bohdan Hnat

Evtakhy Kovalyk

Mykhailo Liakhovsky

Yaroslav Maiovets

Ihor Mishchatyn

Yaroslav Olishchuk

Yaroslav Rodych

Yaroslav Voronovsky

From *Ivano-Frankivs'ka Oblast'*,
Ivan Futko

Mykola Kozaruk

Volodymyr Semeniuk

From *KHersons'ka Oblast'*,
Mykhailo Havreliuk

Petro Humeniuk

Viktor Pohrebny

Ivan Shcherbyna

Canada

Steve Zarusky
(grain and cattle farm)

Smoky Lake, Alberta

Stan Skubleny

St. Michael, Alberta

Bill Peshko

(dairy farm)

Invermay, Saskatchewan

Andy Smycniuk

(bee-keeping operation)

Invermay, Saskatchewan

George Popowich

Athabasca, Alberta

Bev and Larry Pilipow

Fenwood, Saskatchewan

John Woloshek

Fisher Branch, Manitoba

Ernest Humeniuk

(grain, cattle and hog farm)

Innisfree, Alberta

Bill and Connie Sernowski

Pelly, Saskatchewan

George Popowich

Athabasca, Alberta

Nadine and Eddy Skitsko

(grain and cattle farm/feed lot)

Bruderheim, Alberta

Allan Glowa

Fenwood, Saskatchewan

Dwayne Kalinsky
(grain and cattle farm)

Iron River, Alberta

Dave Woywitka

(mixed farm/grain and cattle)

Legal, Alberta

Stanley Faye

(seed farm)

Wishart, Saskatchewan

John Burek

Arborg, Manitoba

Bill Urusky

(seed and poultry farm)

Arborg, Manitoba

Dale Emerson

Eaglesham, Alberta

Gerald Hill

Hairy Hill, Alberta

Farming in Ukraine

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purchases such as tractors.

Despite these incentives, there has not been an overwhelming demand for free land. Yaroslav Rodych attributes this to the fact that people are still afraid. There is still no law that guarantees one's right to own land. Although things are changing, the old constitution remains in place, and the old laws are still valid. ("...за землю, Сибір був.")

Support systems are not yet in place for independent farmers, although farmer associations now exist in 16 of the 25 regions (*raiony*) of Ukraine. The *L'vivs'ka Asotsiatsiia Fermeriv*, the first of its kind, was established in February, 1991, and has a membership of over 250. A national association of Ukrainian farmers was established soon after.

The *L'vivs'ka Asotsiatsiia Fermeriv* sponsors regular meetings at which issues such as fertilizer, seed, gathering the harvest, and marketing it with maximum efficiency are discussed. It was through this organization, its counterpart in *Ivano-Frankivs'k*, and Dr. Oleh Isichko in *KHerson* that the Canada-Ukraine Farmer Exchange program was announced, and qualified candidates selected. Participants were chosen on the basis of their education and farming qualifications. Completion of technical college, or "technicum," was a minimum requirement. Another requirement was that program participants be farmers who actually worked on their own land.

As of July 1, 1991, there were 1,013 private farms in Ukraine. These encompass 18,115 hectares of land and employ 2,390 independent farmers. Private farms currently operate in all but the Chernihiv region of Ukraine.

In *L'vivshchyna*, there are 190 private farms, encompassing 1,788 hectares of land and employing 502 farmers.

In *Ivano-Frankivs'k*, there are 100 private farms, encompassing 642 hectares and employing 220.

In *KHerson*, 12 private farms encompass a total of 515 hectares and employ 27.

Awards! Awards! Awards!

November 30 is the application deadline for the 1991-1992 round of URDC awards. \$500 awards are available in each of the following categories:

- educational exchanges
- film and video arts
- museum programs
- performing arts
- writing.

Application forms and guidelines are available through our office.

You are invited...!

Phase 2 of URDC's centennial photography project is now complete. Check for your invitation to the official launching of **Mosaica: Photographic Explorations**. (Centennial Library, November 26, 1991).

Staff Notes

Summer was a busy and creative time for all of us at URDC.

Bohdan Chomiak's Art Smart company presented a new line of furs at Moda '91.

Alice Chumer's Millennium Choir closed the National Opening Ceremonies of the Centenary of Ukrainians in Canada.

In addition to preparing URDC's centennial photography collection for publication, **Rena Hanchuk** (our summer STEP student) shone as the Mistress of Ceremonies at this year's Ukrainian Day. Rena leaves us once more to resume work on her Education degree at the University of Alberta.

Tracey Kozlov has been spending her "every working moment" preparing a Ukrainian-English/English-Ukrainian dictionary of agricultural terms for publication.

Marie Lesoway launched her freelance "Writing Management" consulting company with the production of a brochure for the Ukrainian Canadian Congress: Alberta Provincial Council.

Roman Petryshyn received an award for community service from the federal Ministry of Culture and Multiculturalism.

Lida Somchynsky premiered her new play, *Waltzing with Myself*, at this year's Fringe.

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