

had said. The peasants had plenty of land: every man had twenty-five acres of communal land given him for his use, and anyone who had money could buy, besides, at a ruble and a half an acre, as much good freehold land⁶ as he wanted.

Having found out all he wished to know, Pahom returned home as autumn came on, and began selling off his belongings. He sold his land at a profit, sold his homestead and all his cattle, and withdrew from membership in the village. He only waited till the spring, and then started with his family for the new settlement.

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As soon as Pahom and his family reached their new abode, he applied for admission into the council of a large village. He stood treat to the Elders and obtained the necessary documents. Five shares of communal land were given him for his own and his sons' use: that is to say—125 acres (not all together, but in different fields) besides the use of the communal pasture. Pahom put up the buildings he needed and bought cattle. Of the communal land alone he had three times as much as at his former home, and the land was good wheat land. He was ten times better off than he had been. He had plenty of arable land and pasturage, and could keep as many head of cattle as he liked.

At first, in the bustle of building and settling down, Pahom was pleased with it all, but when he got used to it he began to think that even here he hadn't enough land. The first year he sowed wheat on his share of the communal land and had a good crop. He wanted to go on sowing wheat, but had not enough communal land for the purpose, and what he had already used was not available, for in those parts wheat is sown only on virgin soil or on fallow land. It is sown for one or two years, and then the land lies fallow till it is again overgrown with steppe grass. There were many who wanted such land, and there was not enough for all, so that people quarreled about it. Those who were better off wanted it for growing wheat, and those who were poor wanted it to let to dealers, so that they might raise money to pay their taxes. Pahom wanted to sow more wheat, so he rented land from a dealer for a year. He sowed much wheat and had a fine crop, but the land was too far from the village—the wheat had to be carted more than ten miles. After a time Pahom noticed that some peasant dealers were living on separate farms and were growing wealthy, and he thought:

"If I were to buy some freehold land and have a homestead on it, it would be a different thing altogether. Then it would all be fine and close together."

6. **freehold land** privately owned land that the owner can lease to others for a fee.

Literature

in context Geography Connection

Agricultural Vocabulary

The following terms used in agriculture will help you understand "How Much Land Does a Man Need?"

acre: a unit of land, equal to about 43,560 square feet

fodder: feed for farm animals, usually chopped stalks and leaves of grain plants mixed with hay

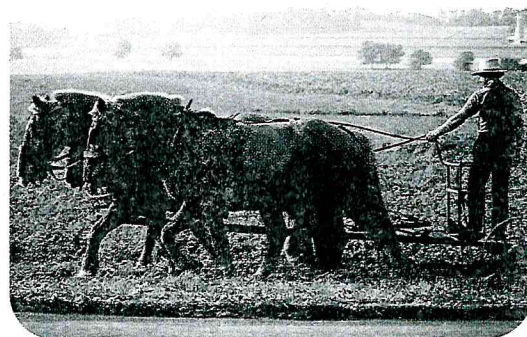
sow seed: to scatter seed over the ground, such as in a field, to grow crops

make hay: to cut and dry grass and other plants, such as clover or alfalfa, for fodder

harvest: the crop that is gathered

fallow land: land that is plowed and left unplanted during the growing season

flax: plant whose fibers are used to make textiles, especially linen



arable (ar' ə bəl) *adj.* suitable for growing crops

fallow (fal' ō) *adj.* plowed, but not planted

✓ Reading Check

What information does the stranger who comes to visit give Pahom?