

Russia's Unknown Agriculture



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Household Production in
Post-Socialist Rural Russia

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Basing their findings on four years of research during which they studied rural districts drawn from a variety of contrasting regions of European Russia, the authors discuss the place of rural households in Russia's agri-food production system. They show that far from being solely concerned with 'survival' household plots in contemporary Russia are increasingly used to produce crops and livestock products for the market. In the book they describe the rich variety of forms that small and independent farming takes today from highly localised clusters of cucumber or tomato producers to specialization in crop or animal husbandry at a higher spatial scale or associated with particular ethnic groups. The authors systematically examine the influence on past and present practices of distance and the environment, the state of the large farm sector, local customs, and ethnicity on what households produce and how they produce it often using case studies of people they have met (plot holders, farmers, local officials) to illustrate their point. They criticise the tendency of the household production to be treated as the agricultural 'Other' in post-Soviet Russia and argue with the right incentives it has the potential for further development.

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