

Pacific Institute of Geography
Far Eastern Branch
Russian Academy of Sciences

The Russian Far East (RFE): 400 Years of Mastering

Vladimir Karakin

Vladivostok, 2009



Goals of the Study

Studying of the history of mastering of geographical space of RFE now is of interest due to:

- general historical and cognitive point of view,
- analysis of changes in patterns of geographical space (land cover),
- geopolitical projections,
- experience of agricultural use of the territory that can be implemented in designing of effective types of land-use for today and in the future.

The last one is the most interesting to us.

Designing of effective types of land-use for today and in the future

It is the most interesting goal for us because of:

- Future acuteness of food problem in NEA will dominate over energy and other resource problems.
- Growing food problem in the region and in the Russian Federation as a whole will demand expansion of agricultural land-use in RFE.
- At present agricultural potential of RFE is underestimated and underused.

Main Periods in the RFE Mastering

- 1. Northern Imperial 1620-1867
- 2. Southern Imperial 1848-1922
- 3. Soviet 1922-1990
- 4. Contemporary 1991 – till now

1st Period (1)

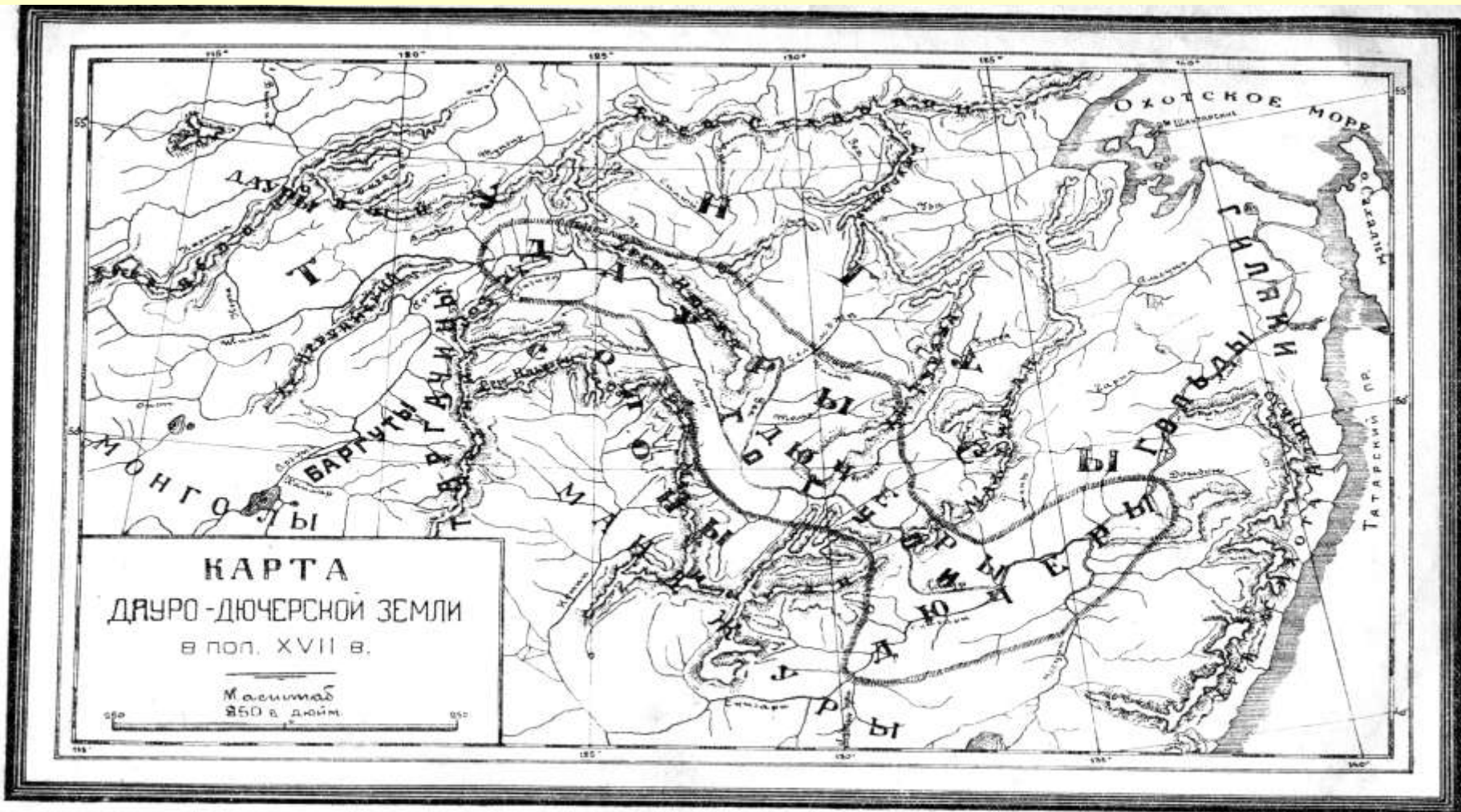
The Northern Imperial Period continued from the beginning of the 17th Century (foundation of Yakutsk Town in 1632) till 1867 (sale of Alaska in 1867, and shifting of interests of the Russian Empire from the northern spatial axis Yakutsk-Okhotsk-Petropavlovsk Kamchatskii-Russian America to the south of the Russian Far East).

1st Period (2)

- Period - 250 years, till 1867.
- Area - 7.2 million sq. km. including:
 - Northern RFE - 5.5 million sq. km.
 - Alaska - 1.7 million sq. km.
- Arable lands - 50-60 thousand hectares
- Population (at the end of the period) about 320 thousand people, including 90% of local indigenous people.

1st Period (4)

Unsuccessful Experience of Mastering “Dauro-Ducherskaya Lands” in 1640-1689



1st Period (5) - Meaning

- Formation of Asia boundaries of the Russian Empire in natural borders.
- Creation of the partner system of relations with native people aimed at keeping of their traditional nature management, in first turn, of the hunting grounds.
- Development of the taiga nature management and land use model.
- Experience of introduction of agriculture in the north of RFE.

1st Period (6) - Problems

- 1. Loss of Yakut traditional agriculture because of shifting of mastering activities towards the south.**
- 2. Stagnation of the Russian taiga nature management.**
- 3. Loss of experience of land-use on Dauro-Ducherskaya Lands.**

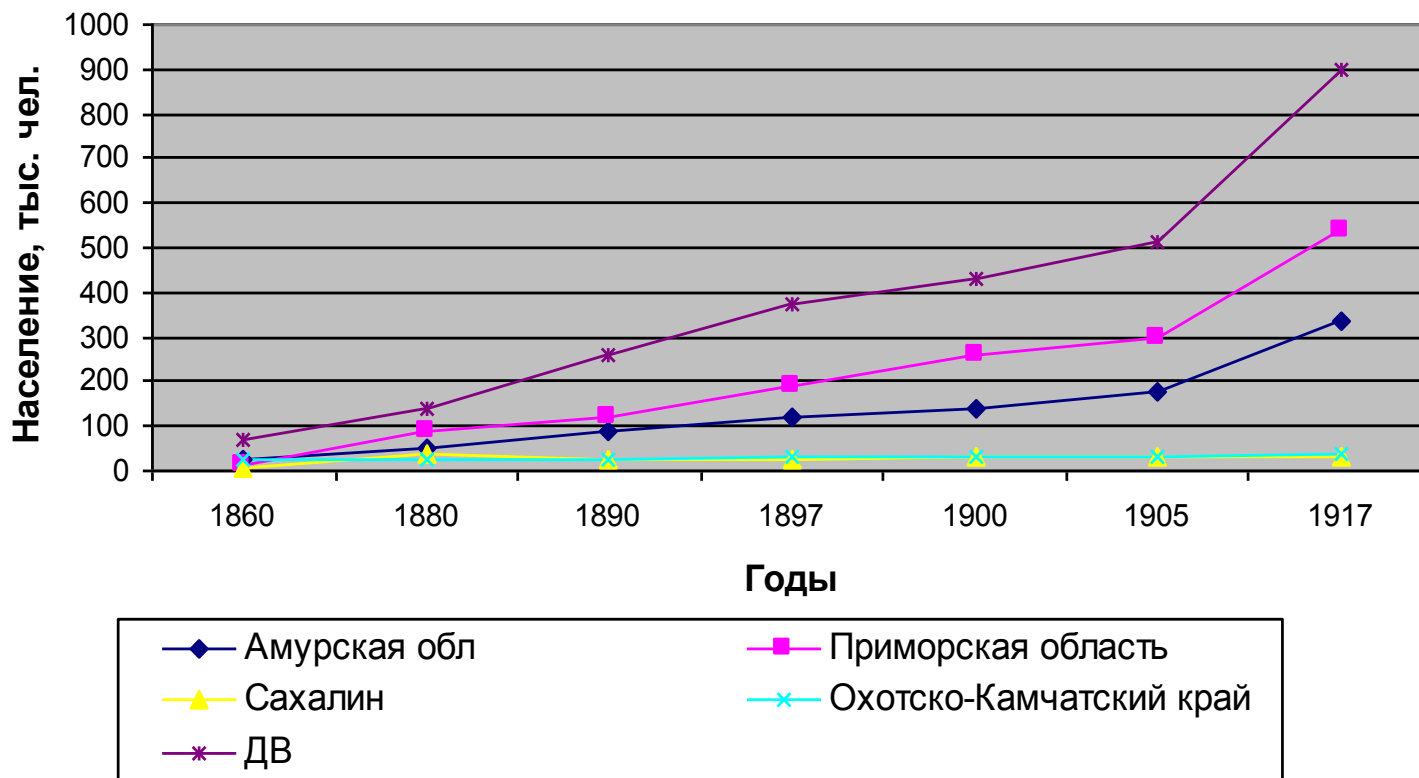
2nd Period (1) - Southern Imperial

- **Period - 1848 - 1922 (74)**
- **Area - 1.05 million sq. km.**
- **Population grew from 40 thousand people to 1 million.**
- **Arable lands expanded from 10 thousand hectares to 0.5 million hectares.**

2nd Period (2)

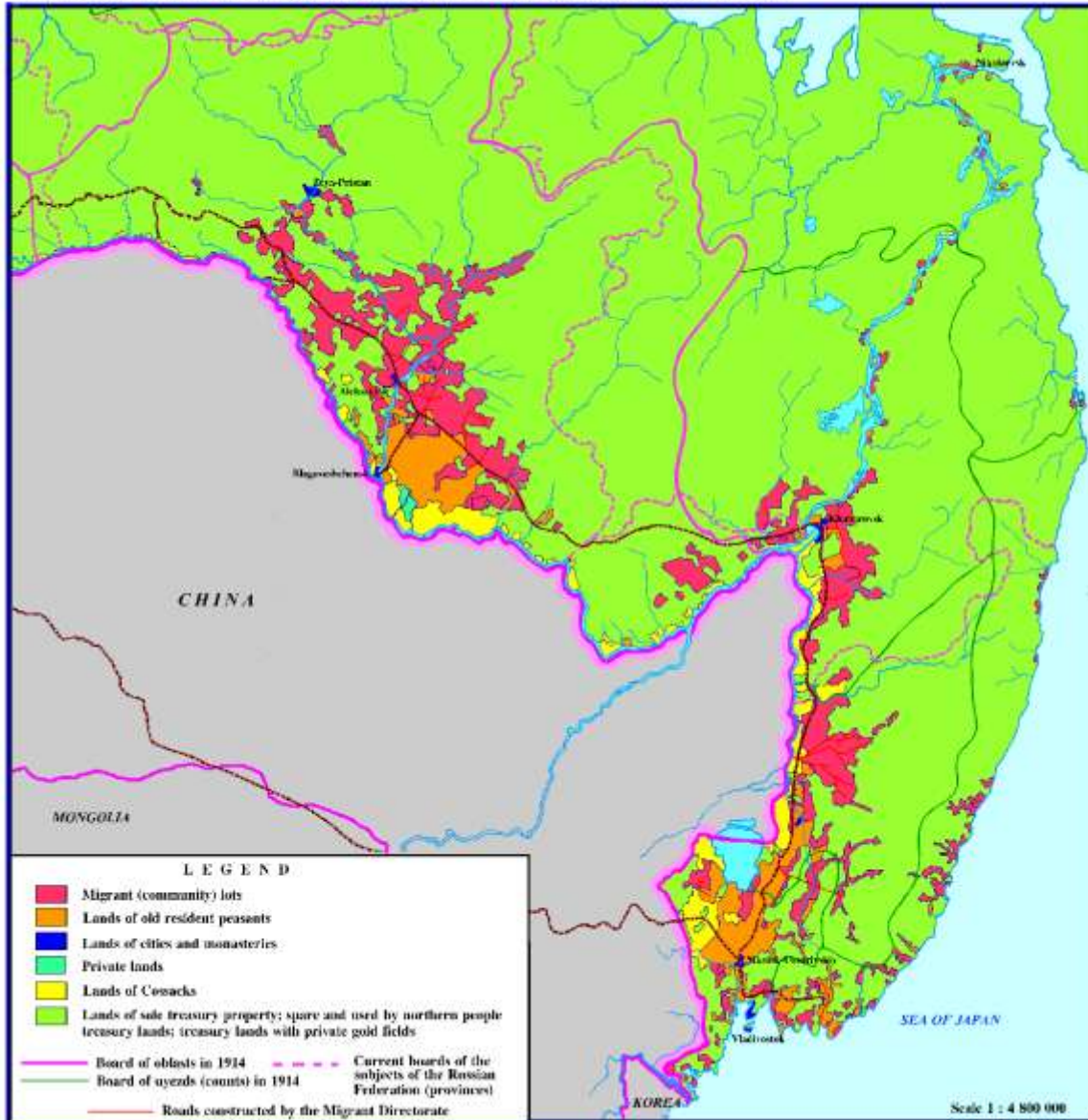
Dynamics of Population

Динамика населения ДВ 19 век - начало 20 века



Note – without Yakutia and Russian America

LAND USE IN AMURSKAYA AND PRIMORSKAYA OBLASTS IN 1914



Source: "Atlas of the Asian Russia", St. Petersburg, Published by the Migrant Directorate, 1912. Scale 1 : 3 300 000

2nd Period (3)

Land-use in Amurskaya and Primorskaya Provinces in 1914

2nd Period (4) - Meaning

From the point of view of land use and nature management, this Period is important because of:

- Creation of basic territorial structure of the region's mastering.**
- Territorial cores of agriculture founded in the end 19-th Century remained as agricultural centers in RFE in the 20th Century and till now.**
- Initial inventory of natural resource potential on the vested territory, and understanding of specific features of land resources and natural conditions which determine vital activities there.**
- Understanding of necessity of creation of regional model of nature (agricultural) management.**

2nd Period (5) - Problems

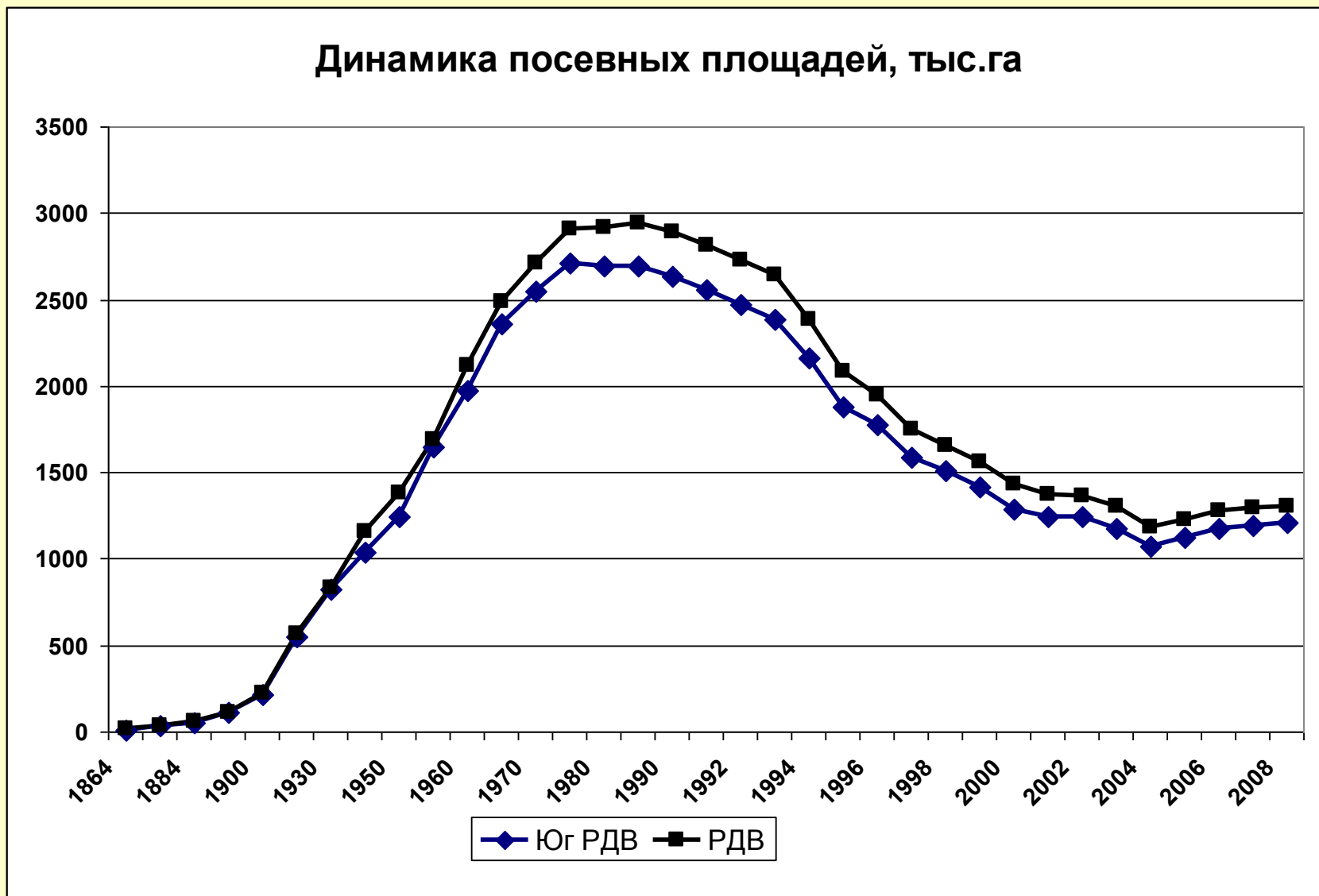
1. Loss of time (1848-1882) for beginning of agricultural development.
2. Incompleteness of the phase of **free** agricultural colonization of the territory because of establishment of the Soviet power in RFE in 1922.

3rd Period (1) - Soviet

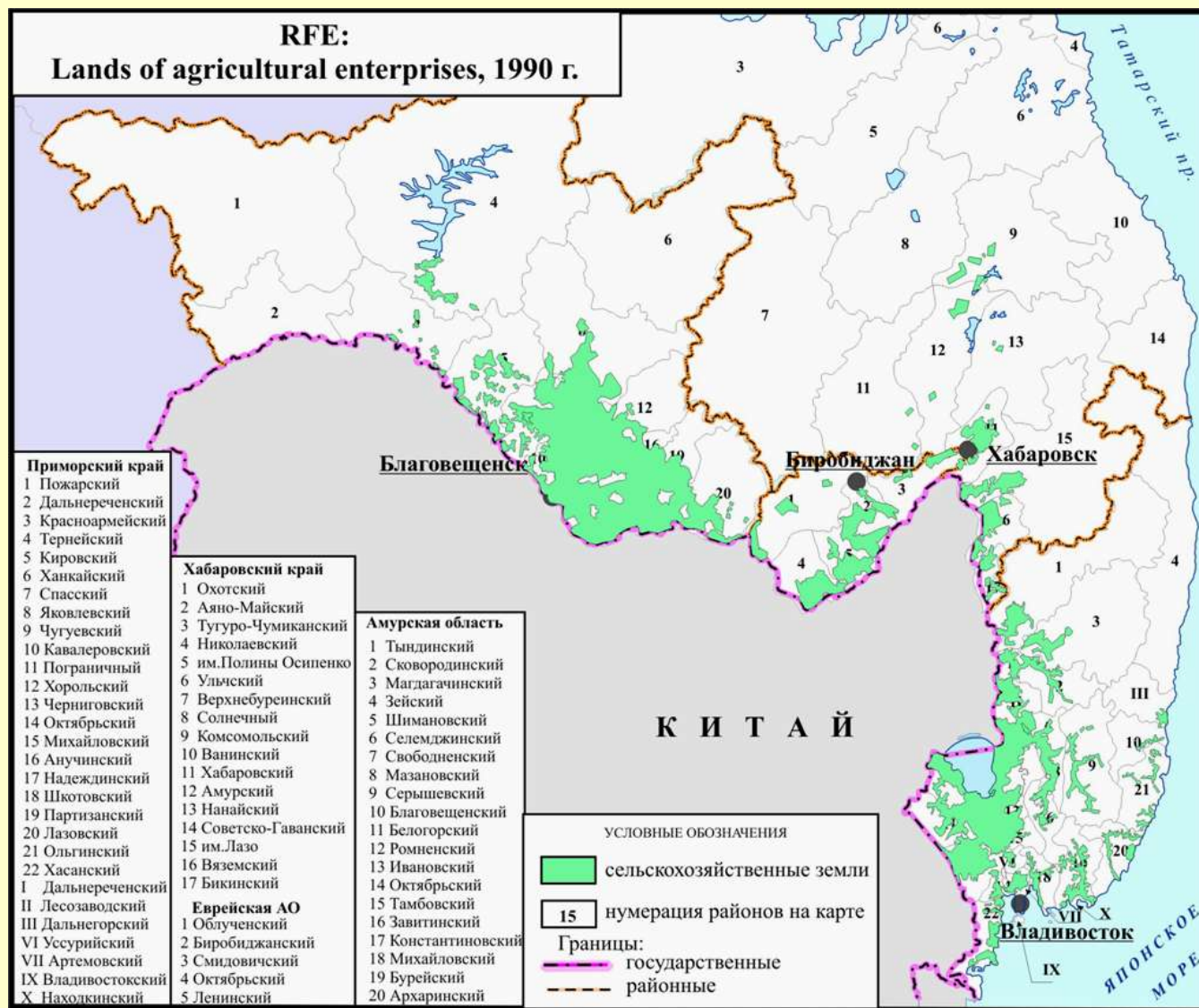
- Period - 1922-1990 (72)
- Area - 6.2 million sq. km.
- Population grew from 1 million to 8 million people.
- Arable lands expanded from 0.5 million hectares to 3 million hectares.

3rd Period (2)

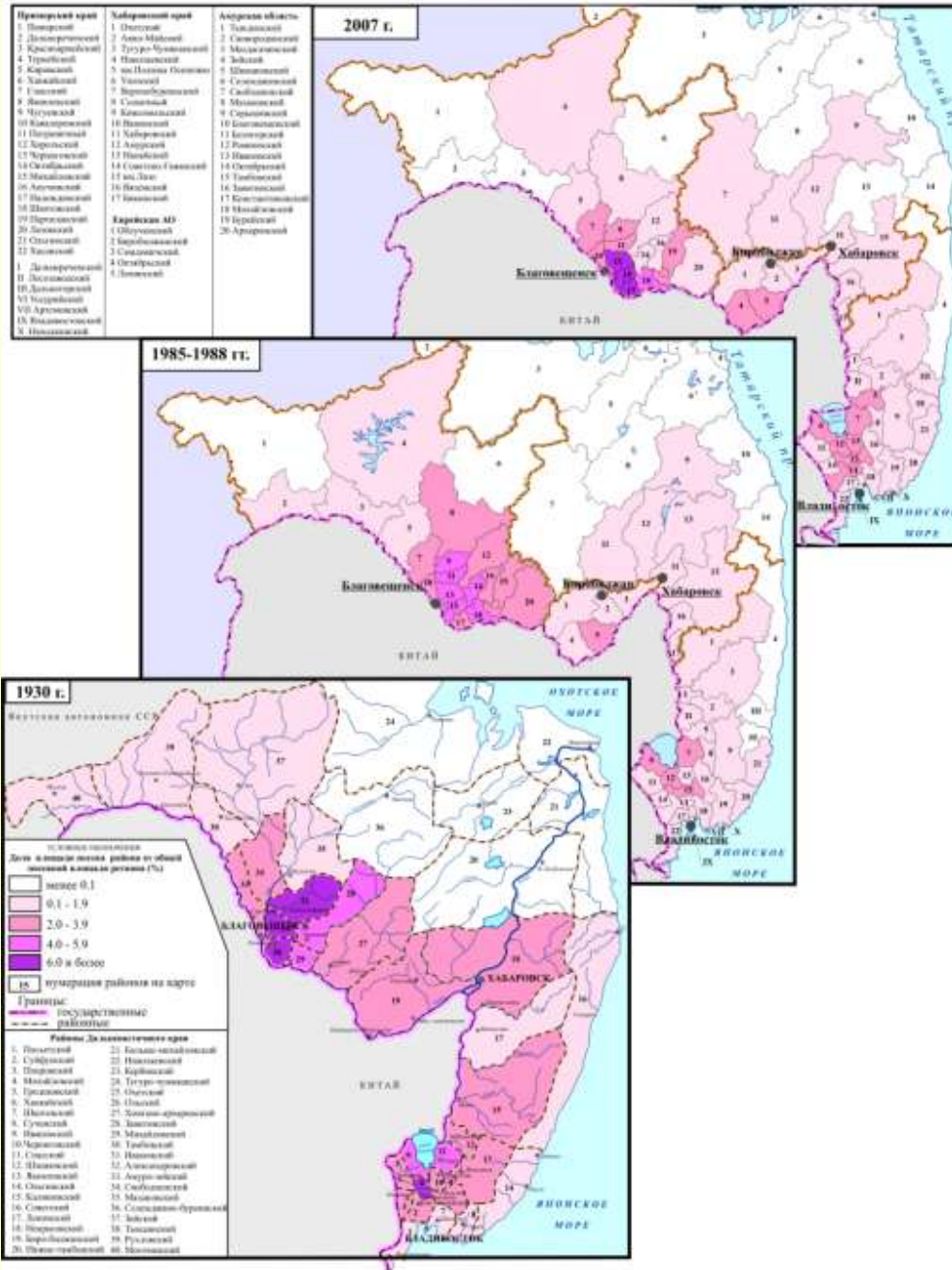
Dynamics of Sown Areas in RFE, x1000 1864-2007



3rd Period (3) Lands of Agricultural Farms in the South of RFE in 1990



Доля площади посева района от общей посевной площади региона (юга ДВ)



3rd Period (4)
Changes in Sown Areas in the Southern RFE
1930-
1985-
2007

3rd Period (5) - Meaning

- 1. Large-scaled development of the region.
- 2. Creation of engineering infrastructure of agricultural land-use:
 - **Roads,**
 - **Meliorated lands,**
 - **Settlements.**

3rd Period (6) - Problems

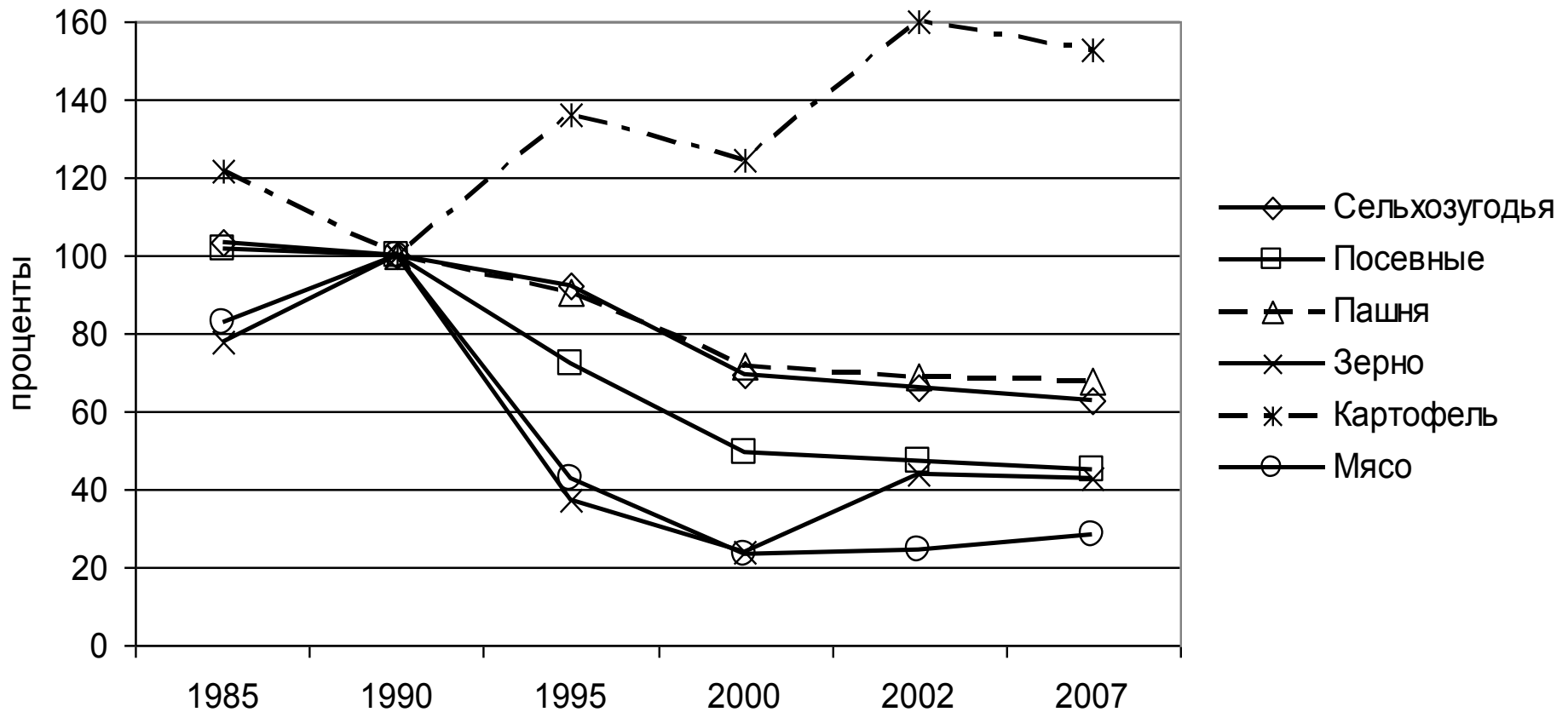
- Ineffective model of agricultural land-use and nature management
- Land State property

4th Period (1)

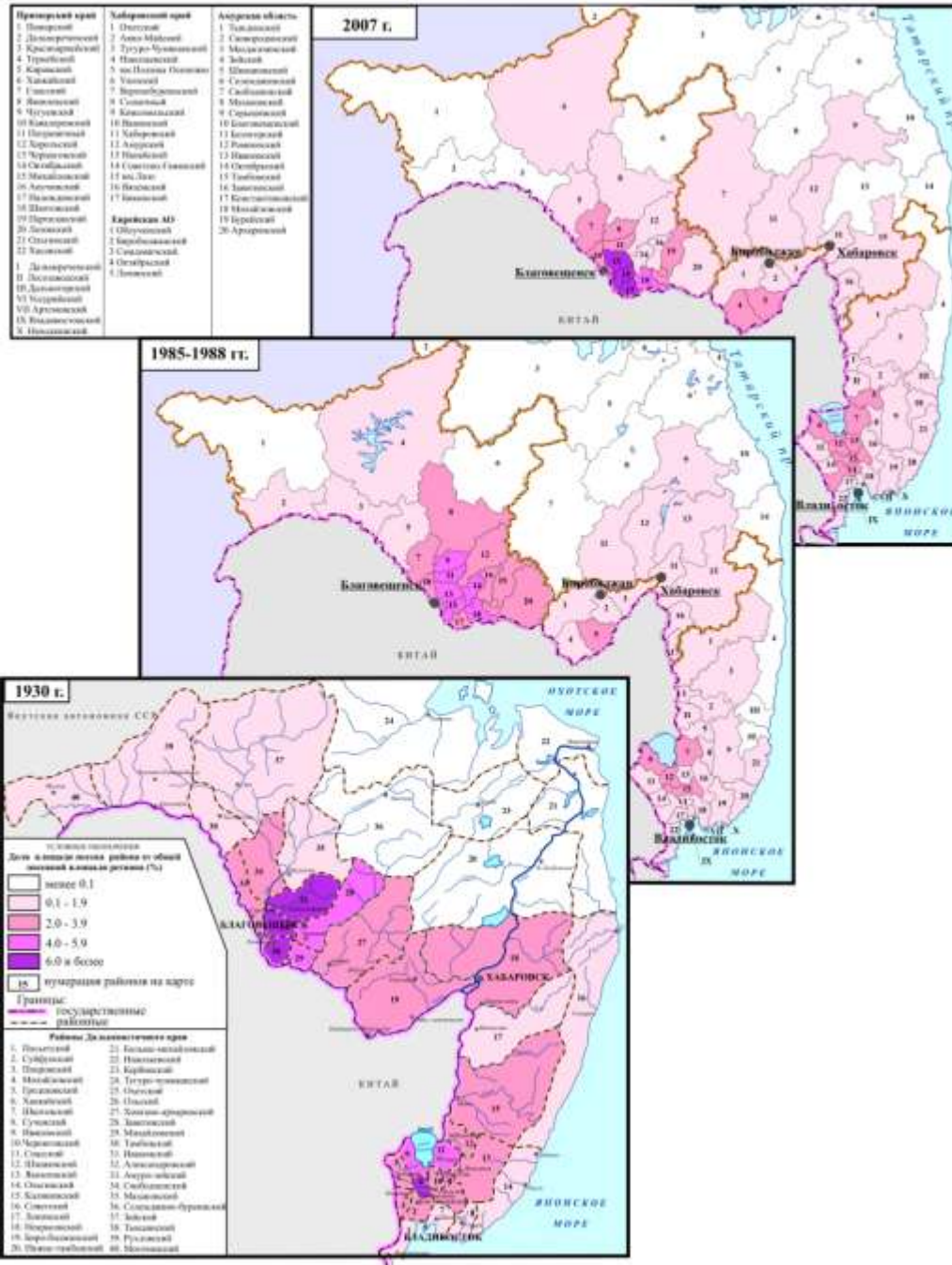
Contemporary Period after 1990

- Loss of cultivated areas
- Loss of population
- Destruction of infrastructure
- Attempts to remain “old” model of agricultural land-use and nature management
- Hampering of land reforms

4th Period (2) The dynamics of agricultural lands and agricultural product output in the RFE. 1985-2007



Доля площади посева района от общей посевной площади региона (юга ДВ)



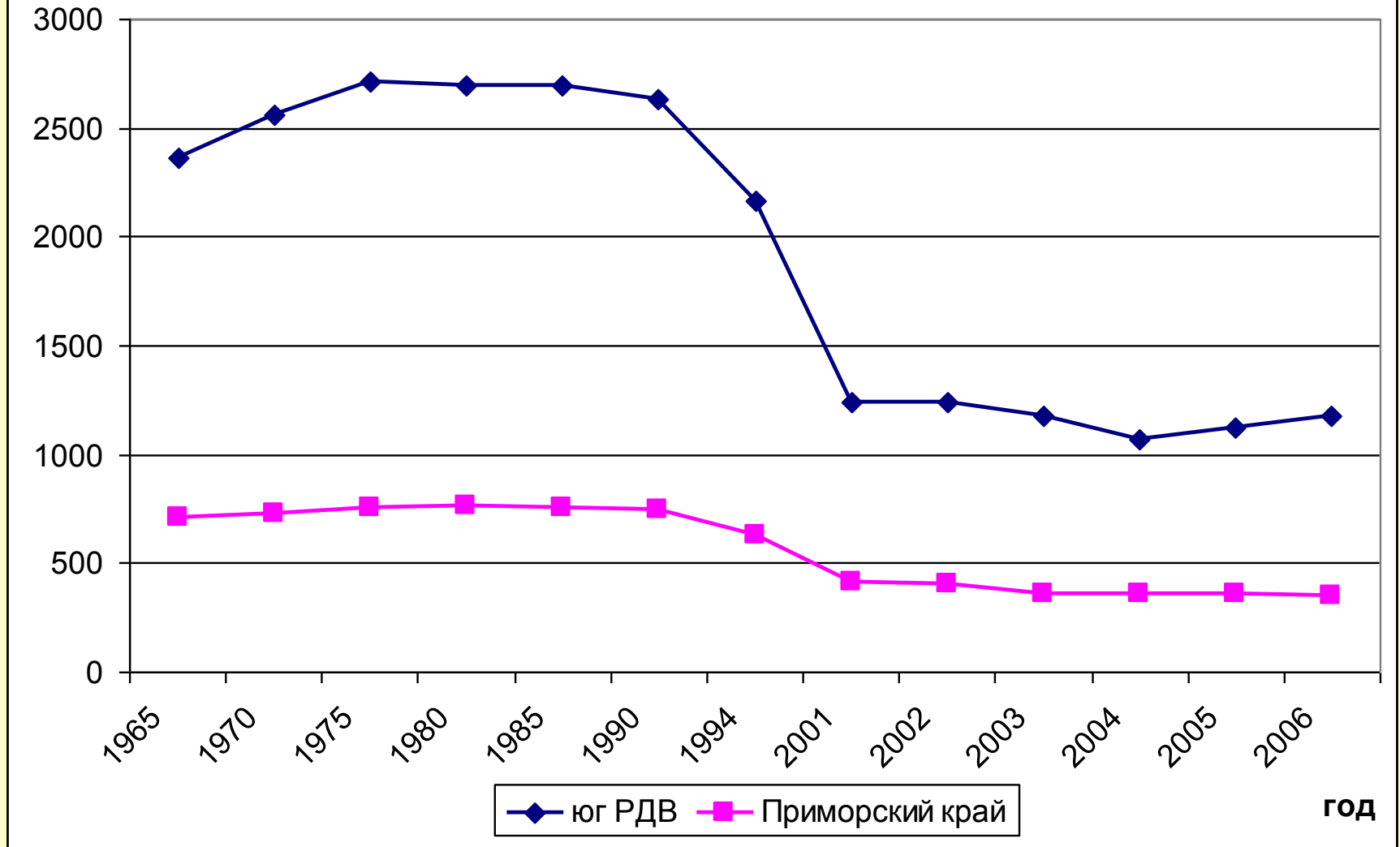
4th Period (3)
Changes in Sown Areas in the Southern RFE
1930-
1985-
2007

4th Period (4)

Sown Areas in All Farms, x1000 ha

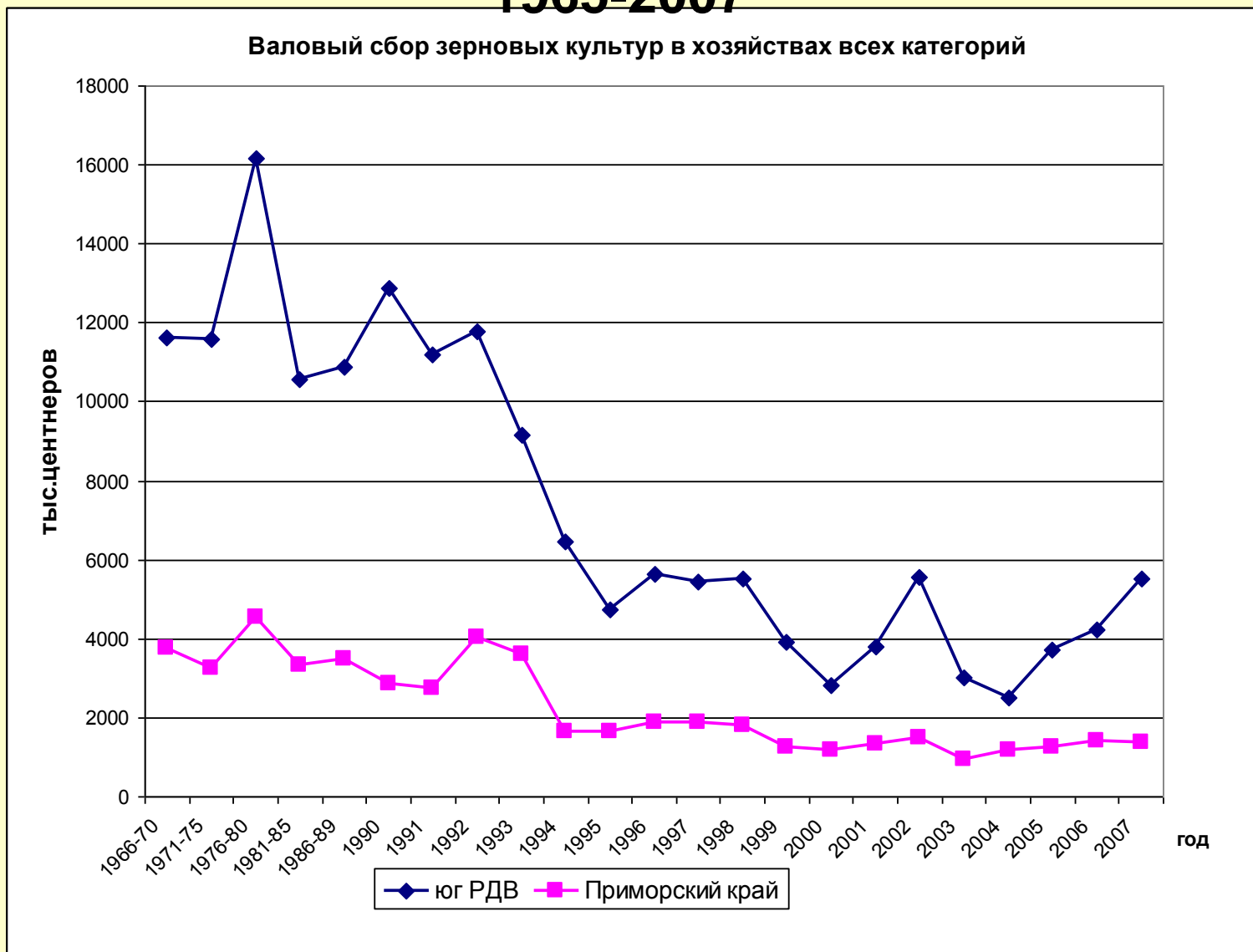
1965-2007

Посевные площади всех с/х культур в хозяйствах всех категорий,
тыс.га



4th Period (5)

Gross Harvest of Grains by all Farms, x100 tons 1965-2007



In Conclusion to the Future

- **RFE is “doomed” to develop own agricultural land-use further.**
- **The latter will be successful only under the following:**
 - **New organizational and technological model of agricultural land-use in the region.**
 - **New State RFE land policy.**

Thanks

СПАСИБО

