THE PUBLIC AGRICULTURAL ADVICE IN POLAND AFTER ACCESSION TO THE EUROPEAN UNION

Julian Kalinowski

Wroclaw University of Environmental and Life Sciences
Institute of Economics and Social Sciences

The aim of the research was to present the agricultural advice meaning on the rural area in Poland after accession to the EU. The detailed research referred to the Lower-Silesian Centre of Agricultural Advisory in Wroclaw. There was descriptive method and also comparative horizontal and vertical method used. There was pointed that the agricultural advice is an important factor of the agriculture development and rural areas.

Key words: agricultural advice, advisory services, evaluation of advisory effects.

Introduction

Agricultural advice organizations have both in Poland and other countries, various organizational and legal statuses. They differ in forms of their activities financing as well as the scope of farmers' influence on their functions. According to that we can distinguish such forms of advisory services (Drygas, 1996; Kania, 2001; Krosny, 2001):

- public,
- of agro-food raw materials departments industries,
- of companies manufacturing and trading in agricultural means of production,
- self-government,
- of union organizations and trade associations of producers,
- of foundations, associations, institutions connected with agriculture,
- specialist.

---

8 This study was prepared as part of Ministry of Science and Higher Education's research project entitled "Significance of advisory services at farms' changes after 2004" no. N N112 237835 carried out by Institute of Economics and Social Sciences at Wroclaw University of Environmental and Life Sciences.

9 In Poland to the self-government advisory services offering agricultural advice belong Voivodship Chambers of Agriculture. These are organizational units of agricultural self-government, their actions are autonomous and independent, partly funded by the government. They take the initiative to ensure proper functioning of the agricultural produce market. They represent farmers in different institutions, organizations and companies connected with agriculture and similar fields. Their main tasks are: conducting analyses, evaluations and polls concerning agriculture and food industry, providing agrarian market, promoting ecological awareness among the villagers, promoting the export of agricultural products, taking actions supporting improvement of agrarian structure, supporting unions and associations of agricultural producers, advisory and educational activities, cooperation with foreign agricultural organizations (Ustawa..., 1995).

10 In Poland such units as: Seed Companies, State Plant Health and Seed Inspection Service with 16 voivodship units, Chemical-Agricultural Stations, Animal Breeding and Insemination Centers and veterinary clinics are in charge of specialist agricultural advice.
Of all the advisory services listed above, in Poland public agricultural advice is still the most important. It turned out particularly important for the village and agriculture modernisation process in years 1990-2004 – in the system transformation and the EU structure integration. At the regress of the former public adult education as well as non-school forms the public agricultural advice was activated. This was the only rural institution that according to its power and means took new challenges in the market economy. The advice faced the local society needs breaking the passive and discouraged attitudes and activating farmers’ business operating and other rural citizens [Duczkowska –Małysz, 1998]. Moreover its significance results from objective and universal character of promotional and advisory activity, mostly free of charge.

**Aim of work, materials and method**

The aim of this presentation is to present the role and significance of public agricultural advice in rural areas of Poland within the European Union reality.

Detailed research has been conducted in the south-western region of Poland. The research area includes Lower Silesia; activity of Lower-Silesian Centre of Agricultural Advisory (DODR) in Wroclaw, its organization and advisory products analyzed. Source materials were collected with the usage of 2008 and 2009 annual programs of activities and reports of DODR in Wroclaw.

Moreover, data concerning farmers’ assessment of Wroclaw's DODR functions were used. They were obtained during research project "The importance of advisory service in farm's changes after 2004" conducted by the author of this article in 2008 in the Institute of Economics and Social Sciences of Wroclaw University of Environmental and Life Sciences. Questionnaire of the interview with 200 farmers from Lower Silesia was the research tool. The selection was not random. Farmers' selection criterion was based on their usage of advisory services and active cooperation with Wroclaw's DODR as well as their agreement to participation in the research. Their farms had to be bigger than 1 ha of agricultural land and evenly distributed over the area of the voivodship.

While working on research materials a descriptive method and horizontal and vertical comparative analyses were used.

**Organization and tasks of public agricultural advice in Poland**

There are different definitions of agricultural advice in the literature. Part of the terms, especially those earlier, narrows advisory influence down only to productive aspects and economics and organization of farms. Nowadays agricul-
tural advice has a bit broader sense. It is the result of observed evolution of the agricultural advice institution in the direction of broadly defined rural counseling. Advisory services are more and more directed towards market, their diversification is aimed at strengthening farmers' position on the market. Advisory product includes actions for multifunctional and stable development of rural areas, takes into consideration care of natural environment and challenge connected with globalization and international integration. Many researchers believe that in the highly developed countries the scope of agricultural advice is to a lesser degree concerned with aspects of production because of the extent of agriculture organization, thus becoming rural and agro-environmental advice. On the other hand, for the countries that build their market economy, the most important is the creation of the efficient agricultural counseling system. To its tasks belong supporting the process of agricultural production streamlining and prudent, legitimate and harmonious utilization of means of production reserves as well as effective support for restructuring and modernization of the agricultural sector (Kalinowski, 2009).

Act establishing units for agricultural advice from 22 October 2004 (Ustawa…, 2004), which entered into force on 1 January 2005, provides for organization and tasks of agricultural advice and gives legal entity to the units of public agricultural advice, at the same time, enabling them to render some advisory services for a payment.

Fig. The administrative division of Poland to voivodships with the location of public agricultural advice units (Charakterystyka..., 2010)
According to this Act the units are: the Centre for Agricultural Advice (CDR) in Brwinowo and its departments in Poznan, Krakow and Radom. These centers supervise and coordinate 16 Voivodship Centers of Agricultural Advisory (WODR) that on the county level are represented by County Teams of Advisers (PZD). They provide advices on agriculture, rural development, agricultural markets and rural households (WGD) with the aims of improving the level of agricultural incomes, supporting sustainable development of rural areas and improving the level of professional qualifications of farmers and other inhabitants of rural areas. When so-called Competence Acts that transferred some responsibilities and tasks of government offices and institutions to self-government bodies came in force, as of 1 August 2009 WDRs have become self-government legal entities, subject to regional councils (Ustawa…, 2009).

Public Councils of Agricultural Advice are present at all the CDRs and WODRs, they constitute consultative-advisory bodies of advice units directors. Their main task is to give an opinion on the annual plans of action of advice units and reports on these actions. Councils consist of representatives of: Minister of Agriculture (CDR), Voivode and Marshal of the voivodship (WODRs), agricultural chambers, trade unions of farmers, universities of agricultural sciences and research-development units, marshal convention and post-secondary schools.

The 2004 Act establishing units for agricultural advice, aside from assigning them typical tasks connected with technology, economics and organization of agricultural production, imposes on WODRs obligations that have broader scope and are to stimulate all the citizens of rural area, trigger their enterprise and innovation, letting them gain new abilities and knowledge that contribute to the increase in human resources and social capital at the rural areas. To such actions one can include: 1) giving training courses (on the subject of enterprise in rural areas, modernization of rural households, applying for financial help from European Union or other foreign or domestic organizations, ecological agriculture, promotion of local and regional products), 2) activity within the scope of raising professional qualifications of farmers and other citizens of rural areas, 3) providing help to farmers and other citizens of rural areas within the scope of compiling documentation necessary to obtain means from UE funds or other foreign or domestic funds, 4) promoting methods of agricultural production and eco-friendly way of life, 5) taking actions for preservation of cultural and environmental heritage of countryside, ecological and functional organization of households, 6) promoting development of farm tourism and tourism in rural areas and promoting countryside as an attractive place for leisure, 7) cooperation in carrying out tasks resulting from agro-environmental programs.

The important element of 2004 Act is the article 5, item 2 that lists subjects, entities, institutions and organizations with which units of agricultural advice should cooperate while carrying out their tasks. This enhances the potential of advisory in identifying problems and needs of the clients and creates favorable conditions for advisory tasks.
Functioning of Lower-Silesian Centre of Agricultural Advisory in Wroclaw

In the Lower Silesia region the Lower-Silesian Centre of Agricultural Advisory in Wroclaw is responsible for public agricultural advice. Wroclaw's DODR's advisory service has typical two-level character, described by reference books. Counties constitute the first level – 188 agricultural advisors are employed in 26 County Teams of Advisers; they are so-called field advisors, being in a direct contact with farmers and other advisory clients. Voivodship constitutes the second level, with 46 specialists (advisors above field advisors) who are in charge of more general, atypical tasks that go beyond the tasks of field advisors and concern information activities and cooperation with external institutions and training field advisors and citizens of rural areas.

Wroclaw's DODR's activity results from advisory and educational needs of farmers and other citizens of rural areas. These needs were growing and causing the increase in advisory tasks of Wroclaw's DODR. Since 1990 (the beginning of system transformation) to 2004, before joining the European Union, Poland was driven by social and economical changes of transformation period and, to a greater and greater degree, processes of integration with the EU as well as market liberalization, the appearance of competitive imported agrarian products, suspension of the activities or reorganization of previously operating purchasing centers and subjects providing agriculture with means of production and rendering its services.

Since Poland was granted membership of the European Union in 2005, Wroclaw's DODR has oriented itself to helping advisory clients with raising available EU funds according to accepted by government Rural Development Programs. One could also observe growing significance of the need of multifunctional and stable rural areas development, ecology and environmental preservation and improvement of quality of life in rural areas to the form of advisory service.

Data presented in the table 1 are the example of the above statements. It contains a comparison of the structure of synthetically presented subjects of training courses and seminars realized in Lower Silesian Voivodeship before and after the accession to the UE.

Before joining the EU as much as 80% of all the subjects concerned the issues of integration with the EU (e. g. Common Agricultural Policy, SAPARD funds, agro-environmental activity, agrarian markets in the EU, and the like). However, in 2009 a share of subjects connected with the EU, though reduced in favor of other, was still over 50%. This proves the existence of substantial needs of farmers and other citizens of rural areas in this respect. They result from the constant need of modernisation of agriculture and the countryside and the willingness of advisory clients to use EU funds for this purpose.
Table 1. The structure of subjects of methods of group advisory service (training courses, seminars) realized in 2003\textsuperscript{12} and 2009 by Wroclaw's DODR (%)\textsuperscript{13}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Specification</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Plant production</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Animal production</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Economics and organization of farms</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Ecology and environmental preservation</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Producers groups</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Small enterprises in rural areas</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Integration with the EU</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>EU funds, direct subsidies, less-favored areas (ONW), agro-environmental activity and Nature 2000, Polish Rural Development Program (PROW) 2007-2013, good agricultural practice, cross compliance, norms of agricultural production.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>52.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Rural household (social matters and living conditions)</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Other issues</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The whole of advisory service rendered by Wroclaw's DODR in 2009, resulting from duties defined in 2004 Act, was provided using such methods as (DODR in Wroclaw, 2007; DODR in Wroclaw, 2010):

- 1346 training courses and seminars (with 24877 participants), their subject includes table 1;
- 403 demonstrations with 7458 participants;
- direct advice service through giving 159174 individual advices (24.7% connected with technology of production, 24.1% concerning PROW, direct subsidies and ONW, 13.4% concerning economics, marketing, enterprise, additional (alternative) sources of income and forms of teamwork, 13.3% concerning good agricultural practice and cross compliance, 12.0% concerning ecology and environmental protection, 3.7% concerning WGD and H4 clubs);
- other activities belonging to the direct advice service (assessing disaster losses in 2475 activities, preparing 1618 opinions and estimations, organization of 412 displays/fairs, harvest festivals, media activity);
- 23673 paid services, concerning mainly (85.5% of all the paid services) issues connected with PROW 2007-2013, ONW and area subsidies.

Realization of advisory tasks of Wroclaw's DODR took place in the vast area of Lower Silesian Voivodeship. There are 169 districts here, with the large number of individual farms (82836 in 2002, 74961 in 2003, 74218 in 2008) having considerable acreage of agricultural land (794726 ha in 2002, 785970 ha in 2003, 760560 ha in 2008). Because of a stable tendency to a decrease in employment of agricultural advisers in the country as well in the analyzed voivodeship (in 2003 in

\textsuperscript{12} In 2003 centre of agricultural advisory in Wroclaw was called RCAEDARA in Wroclaw (RCDRRiOW in Wroclaw).

\textsuperscript{13} source: self-reported data based on Wroclaw’s DODR’s data
Wroclaw's DODR there were 325 advisers, in 2008/09 – 234) the scope of consultancy is growing. It is illustrated by the table 2.

Table 2. The scope of influence of Wroclaw’s DODR (Charakterystyka..., 2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Number of districts falling to 1 adviser</td>
<td>0,52</td>
<td>0,72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Number of farms falling to 1 adviser</td>
<td>230,6</td>
<td>317,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Agricultural land area falling to 1 adviser (ha)</td>
<td>2418,4</td>
<td>3250,3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The increase in the scope of advise and the appearance of new advisory tasks especially in the period of integration and after the accession to the EU has been and still is a challenge for agricultural advisers, which they try to meet. Advisory personnel of Wroclaw's DODR is characterized by professional attitude towards giving agricultural advices, experience and knowledge of specificity of needs and problems of farmers and other advisory clients. The fact that 90% of all the specialist and 75% of field advisors got higher education ensures high qualifications of DODR's employees equals their work experience - on average 13.3 years for specialists and 11.9 years for field advisors. The importance and significance of Wroclaw's DODR's influence on farmers and other citizens of rural areas of the voivodship are indicated by the results of research conducted in 2008 in Lower Silesia that confirm that public advice service is highly regarded by its clients. On the basis of interviews with 200 farmers and their families, cooperation of farmers with DODR advisers received highest scoring results - 4.3 pt (scale 1 to 5, 1 meaning very bad and 5 meaning very good). The next were: veterinary clinics 4.0 pt, Seed Companies 3.9 pt, banks 3.8 pt, district offices 3.7 pt, government agencies 3.7 pt, Voivodship Inspectorate of Plant Health and Seed Inspection 3.6 pt.

Conclusions

1. In Poland activity of public units of agricultural advice is a very important element of agriculture and rural areas development. The functioning of Lower-Silesian Centre of Agricultural Advisory in Wroclaw is an example of such actions.

2. Advisory product offered to Lower-Silesian farmers and other citizens of rural areas includes a whole range of training courses, seminars, displays and direct advisory. To the advisory influences, apart from issues connected with agricultural activities, like technology of production, economics and organization of farms, belong also more general issues, contributing to the increase in human resources and social capital at the rural areas.

3. Chief assets of public units of agricultural advice that create favorable conditions for their functioning are: status and tasks established by the law, most services free of charge, good distribution in the area (voivodships and districts) that allows to identify thoroughly advisory needs, qualified and experienced advisory personnel, highly regarded by the clients, cooperation with different subjects on local and supralocal level.
Literatura

13 Ustawa z dnia 23 stycznia 2009 r. o zmianie niektórych ustaw w związku ze zmianami w organizacji i podziale zadań administracji publicznej w województwie. (Dz. U. z 2009 r. Nr. 92, poz. 753).

ŽEMĖS ŪKIO KONSULTAVIMAS LENKIOJE PO ĮSTOJIMO Į EUROPOS SĄJUNGOS

Julian Kalinowski
Vroclavo Aplinkos ir gamtos mokslų universitetas
Ekonomikos ir Socialinių mokslų institutas

Santrauka


Raktiniai žodžiai: žemės ūkio konsultavimas, konsultavimo paslaugas, konsultavimo poveikis.