CHANGES OF SPECIALIST AND QUALIFIED EMPLOYEE DEMAND IN AGRARIAN SECTOR OF LITHUANIA

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In the sphere of agrarian sector, it is essential to combine the country’s and regions’ economies and companies’ interests which disclose the necessity to supply each activity area with employees of required quantity and qualifications. As the competitiveness of agricultural labour power is increasing, it is especially important to prepare specialists and qualified employees of agrarian sector and to forecast their demand.

The article discloses the identification of factors determining the change in the number of specialists and qualified employees and the tendencies of the change in their demand in agrarian sector of Lithuania.

Key words: agrarian sector, employee, specialist.

Introduction

Statistical data show big inadequacy in labour supply and demand in agriculture and other related activities (Klupsas, 2003; Pocius, 2008). The possibility to balance the supply and demand has been impeded by the fact that wagework is often unattractive and low-paid in agriculture. The situation in agriculture is peculiar because of relative excess of employees – the latter are moving from the agrarian sector to other spheres of activity: construction, industry and service. However, according to statistics, even in 2005 the lack of employees in different agricultural specialities was obvious. In the process of rapid territorial migration of workforce, an increasing threat to the absolute majority of small economic activities, including agriculture, in the regions of the country affected by the lack of workforce due to unequal distribution of work resources, such as big economic centres of the country, esp. Vilnius, which ‘absorb’ workforce from small territories, not mentioning the fact that the existing situation is also affected by external migration (Pocius, 2008).

The object of investigation – specialist and qualified employee demand in agrarian sector of Lithuania.

The aim of investigation – to anticipate the tendencies in change of specialist and qualified employee demand in agrarian sector of Lithuania.

The aim is achieved by the accomplishment of the following task:

1) to identify the factors determining the change in number of specialists and qualified employees in agrarian sector of Lithuania.

2) to predict the changes in demand for specialists and qualified employees in agrarian sector of Lithuania.
Methodology of investigation – the methods of investigation used in the work: the analysis of scientific literature, synthesis and generalization, logical abstraction, inquiry and expert evaluation.

Agrarian sector’s demand for human resources during the investigation has been understood as demand for what kind of specialists and qualified workers with particular knowledge, abilities and skills are necessary for the enterprises and organizations operating in the sector and its infrastructure.

Prognoses for the specialists and qualified employees for the needs of our country’s agrarian sector are substantiated with the statistics on the number of employees in the institutions of agricultural and rural development sub-sectors as well as with the experimental prognoses for the development of these sectors.

Importance of the qualitative changes of the potential of agricultural human resources

In modern knowledge and information society labour activity changes become more complicated and very often the decisions made have considerable significance not only upon the members of labour organizations but upon the external environment of these organizations as well. So, requirements for the employees’ competence increase and change as well (Burton, 2001; Smith, 2008).

Rapid information technologies development in the world causes new relationship where human's creative skills, intellectual capital, high qualification, professionalism in the new economic century have ruling sense. Changes in demand of labor market caused rapid increase necessity for new knowledge and high professional qualification. Education influences not only employment of inhabitants, but also life quality and state development in the future. Professional choice questions, career development are an uninterrupted process during which human uses information about himself/herself, surrounding environment, economic development in order to choose employment sphere and after it definite profession (Libkovska, 2008).

Employees are required to constantly improve, i. e. to broaden and consolidate knowledge as well as to form abilities. The following factors are considered to be the main props of the European knowledge: educated people, the system of education (especially higher education and a lifelong learning system), the system of new knowledge and technology creation as well as the system of spread-investigation and technological development and innovation as well as every kind of international cooperation.

Knowledge is everything: next society will be knowledge-based society. Knowledge will be the main resource and „knowledge employees“ will be the dominating „labour force“. Knowledge-based society is characterized by the following characteristics:

1) no borders, knowledge moves even more quicker and easier than money;
2) increasing mobility through available-to-everyone formal training;
3) every employee becomes the owner of „implements of production“, i. e. a knowledge owner, his head becomes the main labour implement (Drucker, 2004).
One of the main purposes of Europe, as the knowledge-based society, is the endeavours of social welfare to democratically manage in societies and safely get along with each other. The European knowledge-based society is being established as an educated and constant, lifelong self-training, creating, innovative, spreading-knowledge, tolerant and open-to-changes one. Human capital is an investment into human resources for education, professional training, health service as well as for scientific research and construction works. Expenses are made when expecting future benefit. It is the most valuable resource of modern society, even more important than natural resources or material values. Here we want to emphasize that human capital, and not factories, equipment or production resources is the keystone of competitive ability, economic growth and efficiency (Bagdanavičius, 2002; Leonienė, 2008).

The importance and principles of the investments into human resources as well as the role of knowledge (used by individuals) in the life of society substantiated by the majority of foreign and native authors (Schultz, 1998; Krisčiūnas, 2006; Česynienė, 2005; Keršienė, 2004; Vasiljevienė, 2004 and others). The concept of human capital is widely used when substantiating investments into the secondary and higher education, on-the-job education, as well as into the preschool training within the family, health service and information on the labour market for unemployed and new specialists. The theory of human capital is the base for many achievements of modern science of economics, on which basis it is possible to explain the differentiation of wages according to age and professions, unequal distribution of unemployment according to the levels of qualification, regulation of the activity of professional unions, as well as the distribution of resources for science, education and professional training. Human capital mostly consists of educational and health service expenses. Even the most important is their social function: the social disunity of social members decreases; peoples’ life becomes more diverse. The development of Lithuania, as small and open economic country, having no large amounts of natural, energetic and human resources, in the future will more and more appeal to the knowledge and not to the industry or services acquiring much capital or raw materials.

Insufficient education of rural inhabitants impedes the economic progress in the rural areas of our country. In rural areas the number of employed inhabitants with higher or further education made up 17 per cent during the period of 2003–2007, whereas in towns the number of educated people made up 35–39 per cent (Lietuvos…., 2008).

**Prognoses and the condition of the training of agrarian sector’s specialists and qualified workers**

It is important to ensure the correspondence between supply and demand for workforces in quantitative as well as qualitative respect in order to solve the problem of inhabitant employment effectively. Thus, it is essential to anticipate not only general quantity of workforce but also qualification. The necessity to anticipate the number of specialists and qualified employees and their professional structure may be substanti-
ated by the fact that precise perspectives of employee structure development are essential to know (Haplikas, 2008). In order to determine the tendencies of the changes in specialist and qualified employee demand in the agrarian sector the regularities of agriculture and its human resource development in our country as well as in other EU countries should be considered.

At the moment, the demand for qualified specialists and workers is continuously increasing in the country’s labor market. As the demand for employees with low qualification or without it is decreasing, the education, professional preparation and personal features of the majority of rural population do not correspond to the increasing demand of market economy. In Lithuanian village, the lack of qualified workforce is becoming more and more evident, esp. the lack of young employees and those having high education in agriculture. Nearly 70% of agriculturists do not have special professional education, and those having it are still lacking knowledge in technology and management, and their specialisation does not correspond to new agricultural requirements. A predominant contingent of elderly people is not active enough in seeking to re-qualify the workforce. The professions needed in agriculture and rural sector are of low attractiveness (Narušytė, 2008; Specialistų..., 2008). The system of professional training is not developed enough in the countryside and it does not guarantee the accessibility and continuation of education. Few specialists of high qualification work in agriculture, forestry and hunting – only about 5% of employed have high education. Workers qualified or unqualified, having obtained their professions from primary or secondary education are the predominant ones (Klupšas, 2007). In recent years, less and less graduates from agricultural institutions of high education are looking for a job with the help of labour exchange. This discloses the fact that the majority of graduates find their jobs themselves. Most graduates from agricultural economics, management, accounting, finance and veterinary studies apply to labour exchange. It is known that while people who graduated from above-mentioned studies wait for offers from labour exchange, they look for a job themselves quite actively, which is the reason why they later cancel job search contracts. A general number of graduates from the studies of higher education and registered in labour exchange has also a tendency to decrease. Every year, the graduates from agricultural institutions of high education registered in labour exchange show lower and lower activeness in job search independently (Adamoniene, 2004).

The change of specialist and qualified employee demand will be conditioned by various factors in the future. As competition is becoming more intense in Lithuania as well as in other EU countries, farms will become stronger and the number of such farms will decrease. Therefore the demand for specialists of agriculture, farm leaders and qualified employees will also decrease. On the other hand, considering the fact that nowadays farmers use the consultancies of qualified specialists too little, the demand for qualified consultants with high education will increase in the nearest future. This tendency is substantiated by the demand for consultancy service and the requirements to consultants which have increased in recent years. Each time the consultation process is unique and inimitable, thus a consultant should have good communication skills, professional knowledge, be an
expert and partner to a client, apply analytical method of solution, be persistent, reliable, honest, innovative and apply modern methods of work (Lietuvos žemės ūkio ..., 2008; Lietuvos kaimo..., 2008). In the perspective, the demand for specialists with high qualification and qualified employees in agrarian sector will be also increased by the creation of foreign or half-foreign capital farms, the number of which is also getting bigger. In Lithuania, there is high percentage of farmers of pension age and of five years to pension age. The EU supports according to the scheme of hastened retirement conditions a fastened alienation of farms to young generation. This increase the demand for qualified specialist education. The tendencies of variation development in the activities of farm and village inhabitants influences the increase in the demand for specialists and qualified employees in marketable experimental agriculture, other village businesses and alternative activities. The demand for specialists with high qualification in the spheres of administration, farming and village community consultancy has increased because of the common EU policy of agriculture and the realisation of EU regional and rural development means since the entrance of Lithuania to EU. Later this demand may possibly remain stable in agriculture, while it may increase in other spheres of rural development. The demand for specialists and qualified workforce in agricultural business will be necessary because of the increasing competition in internal market as well as in EU and other international markets. Thus, considering the above-mentioned factors, the demand for specialists and qualified employees in agriculture and other alternative rural activities will decrease till 2010, and later it will increase.

This tendency is substantiated by the results of the sociological research which reveals that the majority of agricultural subjects are expanding the volume of their activity, create new work positions and improve quality characteristics of business organisations’ personnel as the economy of the country is becoming stronger. In this process, the demand for specialists and qualified employees and professional requirements to them are increasing. The most important requirements from the employers in order to possess a certain position are: high qualification, personal features, additional and social skills (Adamoniene, 2003). In the process of training specialists and qualified employees in agrarian sector, it is essential to consider the opinion of respondents that graduate from agricultural institutions of high education often lack knowledge in economics, law, foreign languages and management, while of higher education – management, psychology, law and foreign languages. Graduates from schools of professional training often lack knowledge in law, speciality, computer science and psychology.

The institutions of agricultural education should constantly analyse the demand in changing agricultural, social and other spheres of human life, anticipate the dynamics of specialist and qualified employee demand and supply suggestions in their perspective plans of development as to the training of good and qualified specialists. This would influence a more optimised reconstruction of their structure, education programmes and the composition of personnel. The analysis of the migration of these specialists in labour market is very important in the process of anticipating the demand for specialists of agriculture. The performance of this
analysis is impossible by the means of continuous inquiry, while the results of selective inquiry may be unreliable because of the lack of the possibilities to determine the sample of the analysis and find respondents that would correspond to the requirements of the inquiry. Solving this problem, it is essential to perform as much actions of the monitoring of specialist migration in work market using information and communication technologies automatically. The data accumulated in the databases of SODRA, labour exchange, Migration Service, as well as in the registers of Legal Persons, Agriculturalists‘ farms and Agriculture and Rural Business may be used for the analysis and monitoring of specialist migration in labour market. Data of other sources may also be used, for example, the data of general census of agricultural population as well as the results of graduate inquiry (Radzevinius and others, 2003).

The necessity of the prognoses of the number of the specialists, employees and their professional structure can be substantiated by the fact that it is important to know even more precise perspectives of the development of the rate of the employees’ number. Occupied employees are the creators of material values. Besides, the objective evaluation of the perspectives of our country’s economy and situation in labour market depends upon the accuracy of the prognoses on the number of specialists. In order to effectively solve the problems of the employment of future specialists, this problem is very important one. The prognoses of the demand for such specialists must be useful for the formation and correction of the objective labour market policy, as well as for the increase in the efficiency of the implements of labour market.

From the labour market viewpoint, agriculture, forestry, pisciculture and rural development are a multi-component sector and it is not only economical, but social, environmental and cultural one encompassing many multi-purpose sub-sectors connected with rural development, broadly speaking. It is possible to single out the following horizontal agricultural and rural development sub-sectors (Radzevinius, 2008):

1) agriculture;
2) infrastructure of agricultural occupation;
3) forestry;
4) pisciculture of inland waters;
5) rural tourism;
6) alternative energetics;
7) handicraft industry;
8) infrastructure of agriculture and rural development;
9) public administration of agricultural and rural development.

According to the results of the investigations carried out by the scientists from the Lithuanian University of Agriculture, demands for the training of the specialists and qualified employees of all sectors were determined. Every year, till 2013, 1831 specialists with university education, 578 specialists with non-university education and 3174 specialists with professional education will be necessary for the rural development and agriculture. The total yearly demand for the training – 5583 specialists and qualified workers. The total admittance demand
(due to the „wastage“ of pupils and students or some other reasons) should be by 1.37 times higher and should reach 7645 pupils (Radzevcius, 2008).

Present amounts of the training of agricultural specialists and qualified employees significantly differ from the prognosis for the period of next five years (Table).

Table. The average number of accepted graduates and those who finished agrarian sector study programs as well as future prognoses (Radzevcius, 2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The average of the years 2005–2006</th>
<th>Professional training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University studies</td>
<td>Non-university studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepted</td>
<td>Finished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2300</td>
<td>1411</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Prognoses for average of the the years 2011–2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demand for the acceptance</th>
<th>Demand for the training</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2277</td>
<td>1777</td>
<td>765</td>
<td>578</td>
<td>4526</td>
<td>3174</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

So, the amounts of the training of the agricultural and rural development specialists and qualified employees (in comparison with present amounts of their training) should be increased both in the field of higher education and professional training during the period of next five years.

Conclusions

1. The changes in specialist and qualified employee demand in agriculture are conditioned by the following issues: the concentration of agricultural production, increasing competition among agricultural subjects, increasing demand for consultancy services, education of rural population, professional training, a lack of correspondence between the education, professional training and personal features of rural population and the increasing needs of market economy, the increasing creation of farms with foreign or half-foreign capital, EU support considering the scheme of fastened retirement of agriculturalists, the variation of rural activities and other factors.

2. The general tendency of the fluctuation in the demand for agricultural specialists and qualified workers is such that the number of working places requiring educated, qualified specialists and workers will increase. The highest demand will be for the qualified workers from the lowest agricultural link. The number of graduates of the agricultural, forestry, piscicultural and rural development study programs in the years 2011–2013 should be increased (in comparison with the average of the years 2005–2007), respectively: university studies – by 26 per cent, non-university studies – by 88 per cent, professional training – by 310 per cent.
References


SPECIALISTŲ IR KVALIFIKUOTŲ DARBUOTOJŲ POREIKIO POKYČIAI LIETUVOS AGRARINIAME SEKTORIJE

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Santrauka

Agrarinio sektoriaus srityje būtina suderinti šalies, regionų ir įmonių ekonominius interesus, kuriuose reiškiasi būtumas aprūpinti visų rūšių veiklą reikiamu skaičiumi ir reikiamos kvalifikacijos darbuotojais. Ypač svarbu, didinant žemės ūkio darbo įmonių konkurenčingumą, rengti žemės ūkio specialistus ir kvalifikuotus darbininkus ir prognozuoti jų poreikį.

Straipsnyje identifikuoti šalies agrarinio sektoriaus specialistų ir kvalifikuotų darbuotojų skaičiaus kitimą lemiantys veiksmai, nustatytos agrarinio sektoriaus specialistų ir kvalifikuotų darbuotojų poreikio kitimo tendencijos.

Raktiniai žodžiai: agrarinis sektorius, darbuotojas, specialistas.