

A NEW LOOK AT THE AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT

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The present progress of economic and politic state of affairs in West and East Europe allow to hope for an increase in significance of the co-operative societies' movement and its part in organising of social welfare. A specific feature for the alternative co-operative societies is the lack of unchanging division of duties, posts and special lines. The new forms of co-operative movement are importance in the process of development of agriculture and rural regions.

Keywords: co-operative movement, agriculture, new forms of co-operative.

Introduction

The changes that have been taking place in Poland over the past several years had caused harm to the co-operative economy and had also inflicted major social damage on the co-operative movement. Recently, growing interest to cooperatives, particularly in rural areas, is observed. Thus, various farmers' associations, including marketing co-operatives, can play an important role in traditional agriculture like in Poland and Lithuania. Cooperative seems to be the most flexible form of organization of economic activity. Presently many attempts to combine traditional and new approaches to agricultural and rural cooperation are observed in European Countries – new members of European Union (EU).

The aim of the work – is to presenting new forms of agricultural co-operative movement and their importance in the process of development of rural regions.

The object of the investigation – agricultural and rural co-operative.

The subject of investigation – agricultural and rural co-operative movement in European Countries.

Investigation methods - The debate over the role of cooperatives in transition economies has proceeded largely at the level of many theories and concepts. However the significance of modern cooperation in agriculture and rural economy is not fully recognized. This work aims to fill a part of this gap. In the paper specific features of the new approached are analyzed. Critical review of forms and new concepts of farm cooperatives, and also of forms of cooperative societies presented. Based on these discussion the role of cooperative units and the provision of social assistance in rural areas is showed.

Investigations and their results

New types of co-operatives' organisations, such as new co-operatives or alternative co-operatives are coming into being to being now. Basically, they arise out of the conventional co-operatives' structures and apply simplified organisatio-

nal solutions. The co-operative societies' solutions in the particular spheres of economy and social life may prove worthwhile and more rational alternative of the privatisation (Prestoff, 1990).

Creating new cooperative organizations called "new generation cooperatives" (NGCs) is becoming popular in the United States. They start with an offensive business strategy aimed at gaining income and profits for members from cooperatively-owned processing plants and jointly-owned production units. More than 100 of these new enterprises have been formed since 1991 in the two states of Minnesota and North Dakota, and farmers' investment in starting these businesses as approaching \$2 billion (U.S.) by late 1995 (Egerstrom, 1996).

Among the motives that guided the founders of new co-operatives, the below four categories may be distinguished as energising to action (Stryjan, 1991):

1) The social ties shaped on the ground of the neighbour's community or common interests, which induce making inquires after forms of common actions to develop those interests and/or improve the community living conditions;

2) Unsatisfied social necessities or problems that urge aggregation into informal groups on people of similar conditions of life to take commonly arranged actions (e.g. a joint arrangement of childcare centres to compensate lack of kindergarten);

3) Motivations to act and arrange a life according to systems of hold ideological values and outlook upon life and world (e.g. associations for ecological food production);

4) Needs for creating possibilities for practising a profession, establishing or keeping up a job site and earning source through taking over a enterprise or founding a manufacturing co-operative, service group, etc.

The manufacturing and servicing associations make a most abundant group among the total alternative co-operatives, thereby they are the most differentiated as regards the organisational forms, the action lines and the social circles of members.

The co-operative associations or the clubs for common purchases arose from the joint necessities, as well. They found their followers in Germany as organisations for neighbours' or workers' self-aid (Hahn, 1988) and also in the US and Sweden, too (Andersson, 1988).

Conclusions

Presented in this paper considerations confirm the opinion that one of the most important elements conditioning the present economic development in agriculture and in rural areas are increasing and improving cooperation as a movement, and also as economic units.

The experience of the EU countries in this field should be of inspirational example for implementation in Poland, especially when an increase in importance of new forms of co-operative movement for the solution of social problems both in the country and agriculture is expected in the today development of economic situation.

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NAUJAS POŽIŪRIS Į KOOPERACIJOS JUDĖJIMĄ ŽEMĖS ŪKYJE IR KAIME

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Autoriai tyrė žemės ūkio kooperatyvų plėtros ypatumus ir naujus kooperatinių organizacijų tipus, kurie plėtojami skirtingai negu tradicinės kooperatinio judėjimo struktūros. Jos yra labai populiarios ES šalyse. Ypač tos, kurios savo veiklą derina su gyventojų socialinės gerovės sukūrimu. Straipsnyje pateikiami tokios veiklos pavyzdžiai, taip pat aptariami institucijų ir socialinių sistemų ryšiai

Raktiniai žodžiai: kooperatinis judėjimas, naujos kooperatyvų formos, žemės ūkis.