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## AGRICULTURAL LAND AS A PUBLIC GOOD

*The aim of this article is to discuss the multifunctionality of agricultural land and its importance. A monographic method has been employed to elaborate on the research subject. A perusal of the relevant national and foreign literature has confirmed that agricultural land is a specific good with characteristics of both private and public goods. Agricultural land is a unique type of public good, a finding that supports the claim that a division of goods into strictly market and public ones is an excessive oversimplification. The so-called “mixed goods” (including substantive ones) which are shaped by the interplay of market forces, as well as the interests of groups and the state occupy an important position. The goods regarded to have positive external effects or a particular value to society are supported by the state or by economic entities (e.g., specific instruments of the Common Agricultural Policy). The unique importance of agricultural land as an asset with both public and market characteristics stems not only from its particular features, but also from the fact that it provides space for the achievement of public interest. Agricultural land plays many important roles that are essential not only to food producers, for whom it is the base of agricultural production, but also to the entire society.*

**Keywords:** agricultural land, public good, multifunctionality of the land

**JEL codes:** A11, D74, Q15

### Introduction

The theory of economics mostly deals with private goods, which can be divided, sold at a particular price, or consumed by the buyer in any amount – depending on the preferences and financial limitations. By purchasing private goods, buyers acquire the right of ownership, which they may decide not to share with anyone. This is a characteristic of most goods for which the price of exchange can be set in the market<sup>1,2</sup>. What follows from this definition is that agricultural land in capitalist countries with free market economies has the features of a private good. However, as pointed out by Wilkin<sup>3</sup>, agricultural land has almost never – and in no political system – been treated as a purely market good, even though the scope of market regulation regarding this asset has changed. Agricultural land has a strong connection to various values (cultural, social, sentimental, political, etc.), which endow such land with a public role.

The theory of public goods constitutes an element of the theory of public choice, which operates within the scope of institutional economics. The pioneers of the public good concept include economists who raised the subject of the objective and scope of the

<sup>1</sup>M. Jakubowski: Dobra publiczne i dobra wspólne, [in:] J. Wilkin (ed.), Teoria wyboru publicznego. Wstęp do ekonomicznej analizy polityki funkcjonowania sfery publicznej, Scholar, Warszawa 2005, p. 159.

<sup>2</sup>A. Kargol-Wasiluk: Zakres i struktura dóbr publicznych we współczesnej gospodarce na przykładzie państw UE-27, [in:] J. Wilkin (ed.), Jakość rządzenia w Polsce. Jak ją badać, monitorować i poprawiać, Scholar, Warszawa 2013, p. 120-133.

<sup>3</sup>J. Wilkin: Ziemia rolnicza jako dobro wielofunkcyjne, Konferencja z cyklu Debaty o rozwoju wsi – ewolucja struktury, ram instytucjonalnych i sposobów wykorzystania ziemi rolniczej w Polsce w latach 1989-2016, IRWiR-PAN, Warszawa 19.06.2017.

state's expenses and taxation (including D. Hume, J. Stuart Mill, A. Pigou, R. Musgrave, E. Lindahl, E. Sax and K. Wicksell). P. Samuelson<sup>4</sup> is thought to be the author of the term public good. The first attempts to define or determine public goods were made in classic economics<sup>5</sup>. The ordinary understanding of public goods assumes that they are financed from public sources. Also, the types of such goods are well-defined. However, observations of the reality lead to the conclusion that the scope and structure of public goods change along with the maturity of the market economy and the state of civil society. Such differences follow from the promoted policies and the implemented vision of the state and also from common needs reported by the citizens<sup>6</sup>.

The public good is a type of good that has two basic, economic characteristics: 1) is non-competitive, i.e., when it enters the market, it can be consumed (used) by another person without incurring additional cost; 2) is non-excludable, i.e., potential consumers (users) of the public good cannot be excluded from its consumption (use)<sup>7, 8, 9</sup>.

Economic theory distinguishes four basic types of goods: private, common, exclusive, and public. The criteria of this taxonomy are competitiveness, non-competitiveness (the consumption of a non-competitive good by one individual does not negatively affect the consumption by other individuals), exclusivity, and non-exclusivity. As rightly pointed out by Czyżewski<sup>10</sup>, when agricultural land is concerned, it is important to consider competitive goods (goods of competitive and non-exclusive characters are the so-called "common goods") because an increase in the consumption of the natural environment's utility can adversely affect its remaining utility on merit goods due to the multifunctionality of agriculture and its basic production factor (i.e., land).

## Research methodology

The aim of this article is to demonstrate the multifunctional significance of agricultural land and to review this asset not only as a production factor, but – most of all – as a public good, particularly because this role has gained increasing importance in economic practice. The monographic method employed in this research allows us a) to focus on a specific object and ensure longer contact with the studied social reality, b) to make a detailed analysis of the studied phenomenon, c) to demonstrate both the current actual situation and the previous background through an analysis of various, converging documents, d) to implement an interdisciplinary approach to the research process<sup>11</sup>. Both a descriptive and graphic presentation of facts and data has been used.

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<sup>4</sup> P.A. Samuelson: A Pure Theory of Public Expenditure, *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, 36/1954, p. 387-389.

<sup>5</sup> A. Smith: *Badania nad naturą i przyczynami bogactwa narodów 2*, [translated by. A. Prejbisz, B. Jasińska], Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2007, p. 16-18.

<sup>6</sup> A. Kargol-Wasiluk: *Zakres i struktura...*, 2013, *op cit.*, p. 125.

<sup>7</sup> D. Baldock, K. Hard, M. Scheele: *Dobra publiczne i interwencja publiczna w rolnictwie*, Europejska Sieć na Rzecz Rozwoju Obszarów Wiejskich, 2010, [www.enrd.ec.europa.eu](http://www.enrd.ec.europa.eu) (access: 06.06.2022).

<sup>8</sup> J.M. Buchanan: *The Demand and Supply of Public Goods*, Rand McNally, Chicago 1968, p. 7.

<sup>9</sup> J.G. Head: *Public Goods and Public Policy*, *Public Finance*, 17/1962, p. 197-219.

<sup>10</sup> A. Czyżewski: *Ziemia i jej renty w nowym paradygmacie rozwoju rolnictwa*. IX Kongresie Ekonomistów Polskich, PTE, Warszawa, 2013, p. 58-59.

<sup>11</sup> J. Sztumski: *Metoda monograficzna, jej zalety i niedostatki*, *Górnośląska Wyższa Szkoła Handlowa w Katowicach. Zeszyt Naukowy Katedry Socjologii i Psychologii*, 25/2004, p. 7-16.

## Multifunctionality of agricultural land

Agricultural land has many functions which place it within public goods (or resources for the production of such goods), which may include food security, conservation of production resources (soil)<sup>12,13,14,15</sup>, impact on the natural environment, or location of investment (Figure 1).

Private functions	Public functions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– object of ownership</li> <li>– production factor (food production)</li> <li>– source of income</li> <li>– location of work and residence</li> <li>– developing emotional ties to the location of work and residence</li> <li>– individual cultural and symbolic value</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– food security</li> <li>– energy security</li> <li>– conservation of production resources (soil)</li> <li>– impact on the natural environment</li> <li>– dissemination of tradition and culture (customs, rituals connected with land)</li> <li>– biodiversity</li> <li>– aestheticization of the terrain</li> <li>– agricultural landscape</li> <li>– foundation of national/regional culture, cultural identity</li> <li>– location of public investment</li> </ul>



**Public policies:** agricultural, rural development, environment protection, landscape management, energy, etc.

**Figure 1. Functions of agricultural land and regulatory policies**

Source: based on J. Wilkin: Ziemia rolnicza... 2013, *op.cit.*

What unites private and public functions is the adherence to the principles of sustainable development. The surety of food security, cultivation of folk traditions, preservation of cultural heritage, and management of the rural landscape are some of the elements contributed by the agricultural sector to the sphere of social continuity, together with the basic production factor (i.e., land)<sup>16</sup>.

In the classification of economic goods drawn up by economists, agricultural land does not have a clear attribution. It is hard to consider it a purely private or public good. In free market economies (including Poland's), agricultural land is mostly a private good subject to market transactions. Trading in agricultural land is limited due to state interventionism. This is why we do not regard it as "a purely market good". Many non-market and non-commercial goods, which are vital to society, are generated on private agricultural land. This asset is strongly linked to the country's national culture, its natural and architectural landscape, the operation and development of rural areas, and the generation of

<sup>12</sup>M. Podstawka: Grunty marginalne w Polsce, *Bibliotheca Fragmenta Agronomica*, Olsztyn 1998, p. 310.

<sup>13</sup>R. Marks-Bielska, S. Bielski: Wzrost roli rolnictwa w zapewnieniu bezpieczeństwa energetycznego kraju, *Więś i Rolnictwo*, 4/2013, p. 150.

<sup>14</sup>D., Milczarek-Andrzejewska, J. Wilkin, R. Marks-Bielska, A. Czarnecki, A. Bartczak: Konflikty o ziemię rolną – perspektywa ekonomiczna, *Gospodarka Narodowa*, 3 (304)/2020, p. 5.

<sup>15</sup>S. Bielski, R. Marks-Bielska, A. Zielińska-Chmielewska, K. Romanekas, E. Šarauski: Importance of Agriculture in Creating Energy Security – A Case Study of Poland, *Energies*, 14/2021, p. 2465.

<sup>16</sup>E. Majewski: Trwały rozwój i trwałe rolnictwo – teoria a praktyka gospodarstw rolniczych, Wydawnictwo SGGW, Warszawa 2008, p. 6.

industrial materials – including energy resources<sup>17</sup>. Agricultural land is an important element of an economic and ecological system. In the economic classification of goods, it can therefore be regarded as “a mixed good” (the so-called “merit good”).

Czyżewski<sup>18</sup> demonstrated that the welfare of the natural environment and rural areas can be regarded as a common good (i.e., a good not attributed to specific entities, so it is not transferable). Thus, natural resources are utilized on a “first come, first served” basis, and the cost and benefits of such use are hard to evaluate and attribute to specific users objectively. An attempt at their evaluation incurs high transaction costs. However, an omission of such evaluation generates transaction costs *ex-post* (incurred in removing adverse effects of unsuitable use of resources or the budget redistribution of rent, which agriculture “lost” for the sake of other sectors).

Aside from water, natural resources, fauna and flora or landscape, land belongs to the elements of the natural environment. Land, as a natural resource, has an important role, constituting a system of supporting life, a set of natural values, a base of natural resources, and an environment playing an important part in assimilation processes. These functions make the foundation of the biological existence and the economic activity of humanity, and their continuation should be a superior imperative for every man<sup>19</sup>. This aligns with the definition construed by Costanza<sup>20</sup>, regarded as “a milestone in the development of ecological economics”. In his view, sustainability is a correlation between man-managed economic systems and larger, dynamic – but slowly changing – ecological systems in which the existence of humanity may last forever, human individuals may prosper, and human cultures may thrive. This must be achieved while maintaining the effects of human activity in such limitations so as not to destroy the diversity, complexity and ecological functions of life-supporting systems.

The emergence of an ecological barrier has an impact on the agricultural economy through changing price relations following the theorem of the scarcity of goods. The most important factor is the limited area of land which can be used for farming. Around 1.5 billion ha (around 35% of the Earth’s land surface) is dedicated to agricultural production (farmlands, meadows, and pastures). This area is ever-decreasing due to wind and water erosion, as well as the salinity of irrigated soil. Statistics show the loss of soil to the extent threatening the sustainable fertility in one-third of agricultural land and deterioration of approximately half of pasture areas into semi-desert and desert areas because of the overly intensive use (grazing)<sup>21</sup>.

European farming occupies approximately 40% of the land surface, which has an enormous effect on the state of the environment in rural areas and the possibilities of its use. Entirely natural areas do not occupy much space in Europe, so the quality of the environment depends to a large extent on the manner of agricultural land management. A well-managed soil has a good structure, optimal organic content, and resists water and wind erosion. Most agricultural practices impact the functionality of soil. Soil can be protected through the use of suitable manners of farming<sup>22</sup>. Farming typical of a peasant

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<sup>17</sup>J. Wilkin: Ziemia rolnicza – dobro wielofunkcyjne, *Więś i Rolnictwo*, 1 (162)/2014, p. 114.

<sup>18</sup>A. Czyżewski: Ziemia i jej renty..., 2013, *op.cit.*, p. 59.

<sup>19</sup>E. Majewski: Trwały rozwój ..., 2008, *op.cit.*, p. 13.

<sup>20</sup>Costanza (ed.): *Ecological Economics: The Science and Management of Sustainability*, Columbia University Press, New York 1991, p. 17.

<sup>21</sup>J. St. Zegar: Przesłanki nowej ekonomii agrarnej we współczesnym świecie, [in:] A. Grzelak, A. Sapa (eds), *Agroekonomia w warunkach rynkowych. Problemy i wyzwania, Zeszyty Naukowe*, Wyd. Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego w Poznaniu, 150/2010, p. 11-28.

<sup>22</sup>D. Baldock, K. Hard, M. Scheele: *Dobra publiczne...*, 2010, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

society used to preserve the natural fertility and often led to an increase in nutritional content levels. Rational farming contributed to pro-ecological activities, which allowed maintaining an important, limited land supply in good condition for future generations, in line with what we now recognize as principles of sustainable development. In conjunction with the intensification of agriculture, soil quality<sup>23</sup> very often deteriorated, and its legal protection became necessary.

Farming activities may cause positive external effects<sup>24</sup> (outsider benefits, like fertilization of soil) or negative outsider effects<sup>25</sup> (outside costs, e.g., soil erosion through wrong agricultural practices). In both of these effects, there is a need for internalization of external effects, which involves allowing the benefits or outside costs – following from the operation of a unit – into the economic account. To address this need, ecological and agricultural policy instruments are used in the form of direct legal regulation (environmental standards binding in the cross-compliance principle in The CAP), as well as economic regulation (economic instruments stimulating the benefits and limiting the outside costs to the environment)<sup>26, 27</sup>.

Farmers make direct use of natural resources in production processes. Inadequate production practices in farming may adversely impact soil, surface and underground waters, and air. Inappropriate use of industrial means of production (like chemical fertilizers and pesticides) may negatively affect many ecosystems, leading to the loss of natural fauna and flora, and disturbance in the water economy or microclimate. On the other hand, farmers operating within the market economy are obliged to act in accordance with social needs and, at the same time, to maximize their goals through production and economic effects in a competitive environment. The realization of productive and economic objectives in

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<sup>23</sup>In Poland, soils are characterized by low quality. This is mostly due to the type of parent rock, where 70% are light clay and heap sands, extensively sorted by glacial waters. This textural composition and its diversity in the soil profile entail the low capacity of the soil to retain and store water, and this in turn results in low yields and high variability. Apart from the natural qualities of soil, another factor which defines the agricultural usefulness of soil is its fertility, shaped by farming practices, where rational agricultural technologies influence the soil's reaction, content of macro- and micronutrients, and content of organic matter (More on this question: J. Kuś, M. Matyka: Zróżnicowanie warunków przyrodniczych i organizacyjnych produkcji rolniczej w Polsce. Z badań nad rolnictwem społecznie zrównoważonym, [in:] J. St. Zegar (ed.), Wybrane zagadnienia zrównoważonego rozwoju rolnictwa, IRWiR-PIB, Warszawa 2013, p. 47-70).

<sup>24</sup> External effects (*externalities*) – outcomes of economic activity which do not have an adequate reflection in the calculation of costs and effects of economic activity, and which concern the so-called “third persons”, not parties to the contract. They are examples of market failures.

<sup>25</sup> The specific character of agriculture arises from the fact that agricultural production generates both positive and negative consequences to the natural environment. For example, as regards soils, farming contributes to soil degradation and erosion; on the other hand, it preserves soil fertility and prevents erosion. It is worth underlining that the environment is not affected negatively by agriculture per se, but by certain agricultural technologies (J. St. Zegar: Przesłanki nowej ekonomii agrarnej we współczesnym świecie, [in:] A. Grzelak, A. Sapa (eds), Agroekonomia w warunkach rynkowych. Problemy i wyzwania. Zeszyty Naukowe. Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego w Poznaniu, 150/2010, p. 15-16).

<sup>26</sup>A. Harasim: Ocena rolnictwa i obszarów wiejskich jako źródła dóbr publicznych w ujęciu regionalnym. Wybrane problemy produkcji rolniczej z uwzględnieniem aspektu dóbr publicznych, *Studia i Raporty IUNG-PIB*, 43 (17)/2015, p. 129-130.

<sup>27</sup>A. Harasim: Zagadnienie dóbr publicznych związanych z rolnictwem i obszarami wiejskimi. Wybrane problemy produkcji rolniczej z uwzględnieniem aspektu dóbr publicznych, *Studia i Raporty IUNG-PIB*, 43 (17)/2015, p. 139.

farming does not always go along with the interest of the environment and general society<sup>28, 29</sup>.

The principles of the rational management of agricultural land as the basic production asset were laid out by Tomczak<sup>30</sup> as follows:

- preservation of farmland in particular, that of higher quality, to the largest possible extent for the production of food and as a resource for future generations
- protection of farmland against the deterioration of its productive capacity through agrotechnology, regulation of water relations, anti-erosion measures, etc.
- treatment of agricultural land as an important element of domestic natural resources and domestic production potential.

Soil belongs to the basic elements of agricultural production, playing many important roles such as the production of biomass, stabilization of chemise and filtration of contaminations (sorption), conversion of chemical content and water storage, provision of conditions for biodiversity, accumulation of organic carbon, protection of geological and archeological heritage, and physical and cultural environment for human activity. For agriculture, the productive value of the soil is essential as it provides plants with rooting space and allows them to store nutrients and water. Many ways of the economical use of Earth's surface may lead to the loss of organic matter or properties which allow life and growth of desired crops. One of the most common environmental threats to the development of agriculture in Poland is the degradation of organic matter<sup>31</sup>. Farmers should apply such agrotechnological measures that will reduce and, even more importantly, prevent such negative consequences of an unsustainable balance of organic matter in the soil. Negative effects impacting soil include erosion, soil mass movements, loss of organic carbon, contamination with toxic substances (e.g., heavy metals or salt), closing of soil pores, and soil compaction.

These hazards result from agricultural and non-agricultural activities. In extreme cases, the intensification of degrading processes may lead to the total loss of a soil's functions as a habitat, production means or water retention site, which means its exclusion from agricultural use<sup>32</sup>.

Because farmers use a substantial part of the agricultural production environment, they have a major impact on shaping it. It is, therefore, desired that the external effects of the agricultural use of land be positive. The progressing degradation of soil caused by

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<sup>28</sup> E. Gajos, K. Prandecki: Rolnictwo a afekty zewnętrzne, [in:] K. Prandecki, E. Gajos (eds), *Z badań nad rolnictwem społecznie zrównoważonym* (40). Rynkowe i instytucjonalne metody internalizacji efektów zewnętrznych. Monografie Programu Wieloletniego (2), IERiGŻ-PIB, Warszawa 2017, p. 17-35.

<sup>29</sup> J. Góral, W. Rembisz: Produkcja w rolnictwie w kontekście ochrony środowiska, *Roczniki Naukowe Ekonomii Rolnictwa i Rozwoju Obszarów Wiejskich*, 104, 1/2017, p. 7-21.

<sup>30</sup> F. Tomczak: *Gospodarka rodzinna w rolnictwie. Uwarunkowania i mechanizmy rozwoju*, IRWiR-PAN, Warszawa 2006, p. 202.

<sup>31</sup> All organic compounds aside from undecomposed parts of plants, animal remains and live microorganisms, which are in soil. The presence of these substances in soil is crucial for the proper growth of plants. Maintaining a good balance of organic matter in soil is considered to be a significant indicator of proper management in agriculture, which takes into account environmental requirements. In order to maintain the balance of organic substance in soil, the two most common measures are organic fertilization and an adequate crop rotation system with break crops. Maintaining a positive balance of organic substances is one of the basic principles of the sustainable development of agriculture (K. Prandecki: *Zagrożenia środowiska pochodzenia rolniczego jako skutek efektów zewnętrznych* [in:] K. Prandecki (ed.), *Z badań nad rolnictwem społecznie zrównoważonym* (32). *Efekty zewnętrzne i dobra wspólne w rolnictwie – identyfikacja problemu*, IERiGŻ-PIB, Warszawa 2015, p. 73).

<sup>32</sup> S. Krasowicz, W. Oleszek, J. Horabik, R. Dębicki, J. Jankowiak, T. Stuczyński, J. Jadczyński: *Racjonalne gospodarowanie środowiskiem glebowym Polski*, *Polish Journal of Agronomy*, 7/2011, p. 44.

intensive farming forces us to search for and develop new agricultural techniques to facilitate soil protection and biodiversity. According to Smagacz<sup>33</sup>, modern land cultivation, apart from promoting the volume and stability of yields, should also create conditions to maintain soil fertility and limit the adverse impact of agriculture on the natural environment.

The soil environment provides opportunities for agricultural production and satisfaction of nutritional needs, forage, raw materials for industry, and energy resources. The principles of common agricultural policy and international conventions oblige their parties to limit the hazards to the natural environment and its elements (including the soil). Rational management of the soil environment in Poland is a strategic objective and necessity<sup>34</sup>.

“Soil functionality” belongs to environmental public goods generated by agriculture. Maintenance of well-functioning soil and improvement of the quality of water are considered priority goals. Regarding the functionality of soil, approximately 50% of areas in the Rural Development Program are thought to need measures to reduce soil erosion<sup>35</sup>.

In the European Union, a substantial part of the public support for agriculture allocated under the Common Agricultural Policy is increasingly often treated as remuneration for the production of public goods and services or mixed goods, considered important to society but inadequately priced or not rewarded by the market. Non-commercial goods resulting from the use of land and farming have become the basis of so-called “social legitimacy” of the public support of agriculture<sup>36</sup>. Shortcomings of the market allocation and the lack of automatic remuneration for the provision of socially desired goods create the perspective for solutions within the agricultural policy<sup>37</sup>. As demonstrated by Daniłowska<sup>38</sup>, farmers may intentionally target the production of specific public goods as the basic product or an external effect, which may entail a shift in the technology of cultivation or a change in the manner of land use, or even abandonment of farming.

On the basis of his research<sup>39</sup>, Czyżewski indicated adverse effects of public goods in rural areas, including a larger gap in farming land value (as the difference between the discounted value of income and the market value and price). Much volatility in agricultural land prices was attributed to non-production factors (broadly understood environmental utility and location). However, it is not the outlays on public goods from the Common Agricultural Policy that capitalized on the price of land; the price was driven by specific non-agricultural utilities (*amenities*).

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<sup>33</sup>J. Smagacz: Uprawa roli jako element zrównoważenia środowiskowego produkcji roślinnej. Wybrane problemy produkcji rolniczej z uwzględnieniem aspektu dóbr publicznych, *Studia i Raporty IUNG-PIB*, 4 (17)/2015, p. 89-101.

<sup>34</sup>S. Krasowicz, W. Oleszek, J. Horabik, R. Dębicki, J. Jankowiak, T. Stuczyński, J. Jadczyński: *Racjonalne...*, 2011, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

<sup>35</sup>D. Baldock, K. Hard, M. Scheele: *Dobra publiczne...*, 2010, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

<sup>36</sup>J. Wilkin: *Ziemia rolnicza...*, 2014, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

<sup>37</sup>A. Czyżewski, P. Kułyk: *Dobra publiczne w koncepcji wielofunkcyjnego rozwoju rolnictwa: ujęcie teoretyczne i praktyczne*, *Problemy Rolnictwa Światowego*, 11 (26)/2011, 2, p. 23.

<sup>38</sup>A. Daniłowska: *Koncepcja dóbr publicznych a rolnictwo*. *Prace Naukowe Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego we Wrocławiu, Agrobiznes 2014 Problemy ekonomiczne i społeczne*, 360/2014, p. 250.

<sup>39</sup>B. Czyżewski: *Kierat rynkowy w europejskim rolnictwie*, Wydawnictwo PWN, Warszawa 2017, p. 168.

## Conclusions

Agricultural land is a particular good, which combines the elements of both private (e.g., object of ownership, production factor (food production), source of income, location of work and residence, developing emotional ties to the location of work and residence, individual cultural and symbolic value) and public goods (e.g., food security, energy security, conservation of production resources (soil), impact on the natural environment dissemination of tradition and culture, biodiversity, the aestheticization of the terrain, agricultural landscape, the foundation of national/regional culture, cultural identity, location of public investment). It has many important functions, essential not only to food producers, as the basic production factor in agriculture, but also to general society. Agricultural land is a specific example of public good, which makes it evident that the division of goods into private and public ones is an oversimplification. The so-called "mixed goods" (including substantive ones desired by society and produced in the common interest of its members)<sup>40</sup>, which result from an interplay of market forces, group interests and state interests, are equally important; they are attributed to produce positive external effects (e.g., maintaining soil in good agricultural condition, biodiversity) or a particular value to society and, as such, they are supported by the state or economic entities (e.g., through specific instruments of the Common Agricultural Policy). The unique importance of agricultural land as a resource with both market and public characteristics follows not only from its specific features, but also from the fact that it creates the space for achieving public objectives.

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## Ziemia rolnicza jako dobro publiczne

### Streszczenie

Celem niniejszego artykułu jest wskazanie wielofunkcyjności znaczenia ziemi rolniczej. Do opracowania podjętego problemu badawczego wykorzystano metodę monograficzną. Na podstawie krajowej i zagranicznej literatury przedmiotu potwierdzono, że ziemia rolnicza jest szczególnym dobrem, posiadającym cechy zarówno dóbr prywatnych, jak i publicznych. Ziemia rolnicza jest szczególnym przykładem dobra publicznego. Na przykładzie ziemi, potwierdzono pogląd, że klasyfikacja dóbr na czyste rynkowe i publiczne jest nadmiernym uproszczeniem. Ważne miejsce zajmują tzw. dobra mieszane (w tym merytoryczne), które są efektem oddziaływania sił rynkowych, interesów grupowych i państwa. Te dobra, którym przypisuje się pozytywne efekty zewnętrzne lub szczególną wartość dla społeczeństwa są przez państwo, lub ugrupowania gospodarcze wspierane (np. przez określone instrumenty wspólnej polityki rolnej). Szczególne znaczenie ziemi rolniczej jako zasobu o cechach zarówno dóbr rynkowych, jak i publicznych wynika nie tylko z jej specyficznych cech, lecz także wiąże się z faktem, że jest ona miejscem realizacji celu publicznego. Ziemia rolnicza pełni wiele ważnych funkcji, istotnych nie tylko dla producentów rolnych, stanowiąc podstawowy czynnik produkcji w rolnictwie, lecz także dla całego społeczeństwa.

**Słowa kluczowe:** ziemia rolnicza, dobro publiczne, wielofunkcyjność ziemi

**Kody JEL:** A11, D27, Q15

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