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## **MEDIA SOURCES OF INFORMATION AND THEIR USE BY THE INHABITANTS OF RURAL AREAS**

Key words: mass media, the Internet, press, radio, television, agriculture, rural area

**ABSTRACT.** The aim of the study was to investigate, which source of information about rural areas and agriculture village inhabitants prefer the most and how their choice has evaluated over the years. The literature on the subject, Statistics Poland reports (GUS reports) and “The Polish countryside and agriculture” reports issued between 2012 and 2018 were used to in this study. A min., 1,500 respondents from Poland took part in each and every empiric study, but in 2018 sampling was applied. The authors of the article used the comparative method to elaborate on the results of the study regarding the policy on media and information targeted to village residents. Research shows that, in the years 2012-2018, farmers’ and village inhabitants’ interests in new mass media-the Internet grew significantly, whereas their interests in television or radio broadcasts decreased. It has also been pointed out that the trend to read daily press and specialized papers increased. Village inhabitants (not a farmer) preferred daily press and journals, whereas farmers chose specialised press. In the future, it would be appropriate to extend the research by detailed information of online sources of information. It seems that farmers more often use Twitter or Facebook than dedicated online services as the quickest way to gain knowledge. Therefore, governmental entities should also invest in these communication channels and take care of content, updated information and graphic layout.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Nowadays, information and knowledge are key factors, which besides traditional manufacturing factors, decide about the socio-economic development of rural areas. Currently, up-to-date and easily accessible information is a sought-after, intangible asset of the information society. The term “information” is closely related to the following concepts: data, knowledge, knowledge management, education and communication, but may not be interchangeable [Jelonek 2011, Łęgowik-Małolepsza et al. 2017]. Ricky W. Griffin says that information is data presented in a way that carries meaning [Griffin 2000, p. 676]. According to Ewy Jaski, data are facts or terms represented by figures or a description [Jaska 2009]. In contrast categorized and compared data linked in a wise way, making it useful for a particular subject, gain meaning and quality and become information for a particular subject. Information is data that reach the subject, while knowledge is the data about the world collected by the subject [Jaska et al. 2016, p. 450]. Knowledge is then the

practical use of information and its advantages are reflected in its appropriate application.

In the current socio-economic situation, the farmer works more as a manager than a technologist. Therefore, the farmer uses management and marketing skills to a greater extent than technological skills [Krzyżanowska 2013]. The agricultural producer needs to be up-to-date regarding market information, is required to interpret the news in a correct way and react appropriately to feel comfortable on the market [Ciupał 2013]. One of the most important sources of information is mass media, namely: radio, television, the press and the Internet. It carries out a variety of functions but the most vital one is of informative character [Jaska 2013]. Nowadays, the most popular source of information is the Internet, since it gives the opportunity to access information about the market quickly and enhance contact with clients, suppliers and coworkers [Janc 2013]. To use online information, it is i.a. necessary to have convenient access to it. In 2017, in Poland, the rate of households that had an Internet connection was lower by 5 p.p. (percentage points) than the European Union average. In first place was the Netherlands and the difference between Poland and the Netherlands was about 16 p.p. In 2018, 81% of Polish households in rural areas had a computer, so it is 7.4 p.p. more than in 2014, whereas 63.5% of people used one on a regular basis (increase of 8.7 p.p. comparing to 2014). Connection to the Internet was present in 82% of Polish households in 2018 and the rate increased by 10.5 p.p. comparing to 2014. Nevertheless, the same households rarely had access to broadband networks and, in 2018, the rate amounted to 76.2% [GUS 2018, p. 115-128]. Residents of rural areas used the Internet to check their mailbox to send and receive e-mails (51.1%), for social networking purposes (45.8%) and telephoning (29.5%) [GUS 2018, p. 142-143]. It is vital to highlight that access to an Internet connection in rural areas is increasing but still not all of households have one.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

The aim of the study was to investigate, which source of information about rural areas and agriculture village inhabitants prefer the most and how their choice has evolved over the years. The literature on the subject, Statistics Poland reports (GUS reports) and “The Polish countryside and agriculture” issued in 2012-2018 were used to create this paper. The research called “The Polish countryside and agriculture” has been carried out since 2011 on behalf of the Polish Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Agency for the Restructuring and Modernisation of Agriculture, the Agricultural Property Agency, the Agricultural Market Agency (since 2018 the National Centre for Rural Development/ Krajowy Ośrodek Wsparcia Rolnictwa) and the Agricultural Social Insurance Fund. A minimum of 1,500 respondents from Poland took part in each and every empiric study, but in 2018 there were 1,550 people, including 893 farmers and 657 non-farmers. The method applied was random sampling. The authors of the article used the comparative method to elaborate the results of the study regarding the policy on media and information targeted to village residents.

## RESULTS

One of the aspects of the studies called “The Polish village and agriculture” carried out in the years 2012-2018 was the policy on media and information targeted to farmers and village residents [M. Trajer, M. Trajer 2017]. Table 1 shows the preferences of the farmers’ choice on mass media and the evaluation of their choice over the years.

Increasing interest in new mass media, called the Internet, was observed in the years 2012-2018 among village residents and farmers. This is most probably due to the fact the Internet was more accessible for them and the information that could be found there was up-to-date and extensive. Moreover, the wide range of information that the Internet possesses is free of charge, whereas daily or specialised press is fully paid [Krzyżanowska 2012]. Analysis stipulates that the most important source of information concerning changes in rural areas and agriculture as well as subvention possibilities was the Internet, not only for farmers but also non-landowners. At least that was the answer of 2/3 of respondents, 2/5 of answers regarded television and 1/3 of respondents chose the radio. The increase of interest in the Internet may be explained by the generation change also observed in villages. For many young farmers the Internet is a natural environment that provides information regarding market changes in agriculture, weather forecasts or subvention possibilities. In the years 2012-2018, the respondents’ interest in daily and specialised press increased. Village residents were more likely to read daily press and journals, whereas farmers chose specialised press. The further concern of the study was to investigate, which of the programme channels were preferred by farmers and considered the most important source of information for them. The data concerning this matter were presented in Table 2.

Table 1. The media information sources on changes in rural areas and agriculture and subvention possibilities

Specification		Media information sources [%]					
		2012	2013	2014	2016	2017	2018
Television	farmers	59.0	51.0	45.0	48.0	51.0	41.0
	nonfarmers	50.0	41.0	33.0	57.0	59.0	38.0
Radio	farmers	38.0	26.0	21.0	13.0	13.0	35.0
	nonfarmers	34.0	20.0	14.0	15.0	13.0	33.0
The Internet	farmers	19.0	13.0	18.0	30.0	24.0	64.0
	nonfarmers	12.0	10.0	14.0	33.0	29.0	49.0
Daily press/ Journals	farmers	15.0	10.0	13.0	13.0	17.0	23.0
	nonfarmers	14.0	10.0	5.0	16.0	21.0	25.0
Specialised press	farmers	11.0	5.0	11.0	20.0	20.0	31.0
	nonfarmers	3.0	2.0	1.0	2.0	12.0	19.0

\* The respondent could choose more than one answer

Source: own study based on MARD reports [MRiRW 2012-2018]

Table 2. Television as a source of information about EU-subvention for the development of agriculture and rural areas based on farmers’ opinions

Programme channels	Television as a source of information [%]				
	2013 N = 445	2014 N = 392	2015 N = 445	2016 N = 372	2017 N = 350
TVP 1	76.0	70.0	47.0	48.0	27.0
TVP 2	21.0	21.0	5.0	7.0	4.0
TVP Info	20.0	19.0	14.0	3.0	2.0
TVN 24	13.0	13.0	-	4.0	2.0
POLSAT	13.0	8.0	7.0	3.0	11.0
TVN	11.0	11.0	3.0	3.0	6.0
TVP Regionalna	-	7.0	20.0	5.0	3.0
Regional channels	-	-	-	-	26.0
Others	-	-	4.0	27.0	30.0

\* The respondent could choose more than one answer

Source: own study based on MARD reports [MRiRW 2013-2017]

In 2013-2017, farmers’ interest in the national public television broadcaster decreased in favour of regional channels or POLSAT – a commercial television broadcaster. The farmers’ preferences regarding radio stations are presented in Table 3.

The chart states that farmers listened to the following radio stations in 2017: RMF FM, Program 1 Polskiego Radia, Radio ZET and Radio Maryja (Radio Maryja known as one of the religious radio stations in Poland). It has been observed that interest in Radio Maryja and RMF FM grew in the years 2013-2017 and the broadcasts of Program 1 Polskiego Radia fell. Farmers also willingly used websites and online services. Table 4 contains the details.

In 2017 farmers mostly chose the following websites: the Agency for the Restructuring and Modernisation of Agriculture ([www.arimr.gov.pl](http://www.arimr.gov.pl)) and the Polish Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development ([www.minrol.gov.pl](http://www.minrol.gov.pl)). The respondents also used online services i.a. [www.farmer.pl](http://www.farmer.pl), [www.agrofakt.pl](http://www.agrofakt.pl), or [www.portalrolniczy.pl](http://www.portalrolniczy.pl). The importance of websites and online services will increase systematically and will become an essential source of information for farmers, since these mediums enable the farmer to access information in a quick, convenient and cheap way, and the news is delivered globally and is generally available. The fact that online services such as: Onet.pl or Interia.pl have become less popular over the years is because these services barely devote the columns to agriculture and rural matters. Another objective of the study was to find out which specialised press titles were preferred by farmers. The results of the analysis are shown in Table 5.

In 2017, 12% of farmers responded that they chose specialised press as a source of information about EU-subvention for the development of agriculture and rural areas. The most frequently mentioned titles were: “Rolniczy Przegląd Techniczny” (21.0%),

Table 3. Radio as a source of information about EU-subvention for the development of agriculture and rural areas based on farmers' opinions

Radio broadcaster	Radio as a source of information [%]				
	2013 N = 223	2014 N = 182	2015 N = 89	2016 N = 119	2017 N = 90
Radio ZET	35.0	22.0	14.0	13.0	13.0
RMF FM	18.0	24.0	11.0	6.0	28.0
Program 1 Polskiego Radia	15.0	47.0	36.0	28.0	16.0
Radio Maryja	5.0	5.0	5.0	7.0	13.0
Radio Elka	9.0	3.0	3.0	-	-
Radio ESKA	-	6.0	2.0	2.0	-
Program 2 Polskiego Radia	-	-	1.0	8.0	-
Local radio station	-	-	25.0	8.0	10.0
Others	18.0	12.0	4.0	32.0	28.0

\* The respondent could choose more than one answer

Source: own study based on MARD reports [MRiRW 2013-2017]

Table 4. Websites and online services as a source of information about EU-subvention for the development of agriculture and rural areas based on farmers' opinions

Websites and online services	Websites and online services as a source of information [%]				
	2013 N = 112	2014 N = 156	2015 N = 147	2016 N = 231	2017 N = 160
www.wp.pl	18.0	7.0	8.0	2.0	-
www.onet.pl	15.0	13.0	3.0	7.0	-
www.arimr.gov.pl	13.0	2.0	19.0	24.0	14.0
www.farmer.pl	7.0	4.0	29.0	9.0	8.0
www.krus.gov.pl	6.0	-	2.0	-	-
www.minrol.gov.pl	4.0	4.0	2.0	13.0	6.0
www.arr.gov.pl	4.0	-	1.0	5.0	3.0
www.interia.pl	3.0	3.0	2.0	-	-
www.agrofakt.pl	-	-	-	7.0	4.0
www.portalrolniczy.pl	-	-	-	6.0	4.0
Others	30.0	67.0	34.0	27.0	61.0

Source: own study based on MARD reports [MRiRW 2013-2017]

Table 5. Specialised press and online services as a source of information about EU-subvention for the development of agriculture and rural areas based on farmers' opinions

Title	Specialised press and online services as a source of information [%]			
	2014 N = 92	2015 N = 167	2016 N = 161	2017 N = 135
Tygodnik Rolniczy	25.0	5.0	6.0	-
Top Agrar Polska	17.0	17.0	5.0	7.0
Poradnik Rolniczy	16.0	22.0	17.0	7.0
Agro Serwis	7.0	8.0	-	-
Farmer	-	14.0	12.0	4.0
Nasza Rola	-	-	5.0	3.0
Rolniczy Przegląd Techniczny	-	-	-	21.0
Hoduj z głową	-	-	-	21.0
Przedsiębiorca Rolny	-	-	-	14.0
Nowoczesna Uprawa	-	-	-	6.0
Others	35.0	35.0	55.0	17.0

Source: own study based on MARD reports [MRiRW 2014-2017]

“Hoduj z Głową” (21.0%) and “Przedsiębiorca rolny” (14.0%). Other ones were: “Poradnik Rolniczy” (7.0%), which in 2015 won first place in the ranking obtaining 25% of responses and the magazine “Top Agrar Polska” (7,0%), which took second place in 2015. It is worth mentioning that the weekly magazine “Tygodnik Rolniczy” was the most important source of information for farmers in 2014 and in 2017 was not even mentioned by any of the respondents. Undeniably, the biggest advantage of specialised press as a source of information is the fact that it is printed, so it is permanent and the reader may go back to the title anytime.

### SUMMARY

The development of agriculture and rural areas, as well as other branches, depends to a greater extent on modern technology. That, in return, requires specific skills and knowledge from the users.

Nowadays the broadest and also perpetual source of information is the Internet. Farmers were also likely to use the Internet to gain more information about EU-subvention for the development of agriculture and rural areas. In the years 2012-2018 farmers and village residents were more likely to choose this medium. This is probably due to the fact that the Internet was more accessible to them and the information that could be found there was extensive and up-to-date. The generation change might also serve as an explanation as youth uses the Internet on a daily basis. Moreover, the wide range of information that the Internet possesses is free of charge, whereas daily or specialised press is fully paid.

In the years 2012-2018, the respondents' interest in daily and specialised press increased. The village residents were more likely to read the daily press and journals, whereas farmers chose specialised press. Traditional sources of information such as: press, radio and television are losing their importance in favour of new and modern media, which gives the opportunity to interact and actively participate in the information society.

In the future, it would be appropriate to elaborate on research with detailed information on online sources of information. It seems that farmers more often use Twitter or Facebook than dedicated online services as the quickest way to access knowledge. Therefore, governmental entities should also invest in these communication channels and take care of content, updated information and graphic layout.

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## MEDIALNE ŹRÓDŁA INFORMACJI I ICH WYKORZYSTANIE PRZEZ MIESZKAŃCÓW OBSZARÓW WIEJSKICH

Słowa kluczowe: źródła informacji, internet, prasa, radio, telewizja, rolnictwo, obszary wiejskie

### ABSTRAKT

Celem badań było rozpoznanie tendencji zmian dotyczących preferencji mieszkańców wsi w zakresie wykorzystywania medialnych źródeł informacji o rozwoju rolnictwa i obszarów wiejskich. Wykorzystano literaturę przedmiotu, dane GUS i raporty „Polska wieś i rolnictwo” przygotowane w latach 2012-2018. Badaniami empirycznymi każdorazowo objęto minimum 1500 osób z terenu całej Polski, przy czym w 2018 roku próba badawcza liczyła 1550 osób, w tym 893 rolników i 657 nierolników. Dobór próby do badań miał charakter warstwowo-losowy. Do opracowania wyników badań, dotyczących polityki medialno-informacyjnej skierowanej do mieszkańców wsi, wykorzystano metodę porównawczą. Z przeprowadzonej analizy wynika, że w latach 2012-2018 wyraźnie wzrosło zainteresowanie zarówno rolników, jak i mieszkańców wsi nowoczesnym źródłem informacji, jakim jest internet, natomiast spadło zainteresowanie audycjami emitowanymi przez radio i telewizję. Odnotowano również tendencję wzrostową w zakresie czytelnictwa zarówno prasy codziennej, jak i specjalistycznej. Nierolnicy preferowali prasę codzienną i dzienniki, natomiast rolnicy prasę specjalistyczną. W przyszłości zasadne wydaje się rozszerzenie badań o szczegółowe zestawienie internetowych źródeł informacji. Wydaje się, że rolnicy coraz częściej korzystają nie tylko z portali branżowych, ale i z Twittera i Facebooka, poszukując tam szybkiego dostępu do informacji. W związku z tym instytucje rządowe powinny w coraz większym stopniu rozbudowywać te kanały komunikacji, dbając nie tylko o ich zawartość merytoryczną, aktualność prezentowanych treści, ale i stronę graficzną.

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