

## An Attempt to Determine the Time Worked on an Individually Owned Farm

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An individual farm, understood as a family farm, is a complicated organism with a number of particular features, social and economic, which do not appear in other forms of farming. In an individual farm the work of the manager cannot be entirely separated as an activity confined to and performed by a definite person. It is closely connected with the physical work and is carried out not only by the formal owner of the farm but also by other members of his family. On a peasant farm it is impossible to separate the managerial work from the rest of the work on the farm. In practice management and physical work go together. The farmer takes a decision and simultaneously implements it or thinks out another decision.

For these reasons, on the basis of records, it is possible to separate only that part of the managerial work which can be measured in time. For instance, there will be such work as the purchase of fertilizers, the selling of products, the arranging of administrative matters in the office etc. And even in these cases there is work (part of the time worked) which cannot be put in the *strictu sensu* managerial category. Take the case of selling a given product. The time spent on this embraces a number of operations, such as transportation, reloading, agreement on price, obtaining payment, waiting etc. Thus, in this case too the farmer carries out both tasks—the managerial and the physical work.

The problem as a whole is obviously complicated and difficult. But that does not mean that attempts should not be made to investigate it and to determine more exactly the time spent on managerial work, even if it is based partly on conventional presuppositions. In fact, we have made such an attempt. The aim was to determine how much time was devoted to managerial work on individually owned farms, and to find out if it could be separated by means of records of all the operations performed on the farm.

The investigations were carried out on 35 farms located in 3 adjacent villages of the Łowicz district. Communication and soil conditions as well as the intensity level of these farms were similar. Records were kept in time-sheets during the 1965-1966 period but only in selected months (January, May, July and October). The diaries where the data were recorded were kept by the farmers themselves, after being instructed previously and supervised during observation periods. The records embraced the times of beginning and finishing all the work performed on the farms by the family members and the hired workers. The problem which interested us, namely the managerial work, was isolated by summarizing all operations which were recorded in time and which were directly connected with the management or running of the farm processes. The summarized results were calculated, first for all the farms investigated together, and then separately for the 5 following size groups: 2-5 ha. (3 farms), 5-7 ha. (7 farms), 7-10 ha. (9 farms), 10-13 ha. (6 farms), 13 ha. in size (3 farms). The aim, and the limited size, of this paper do not allow a detailed discussion about the techniques used for calculating and presenting all the results obtained, so I shall limit myself to a synthetic discussion of the results without explaining methods and assumptions.

On the average of all farms investigated, the time spent on managerial work singled out in the way I described comprised about 10% of all the time worked in the farms. This comprised, on average, 630 hr per farm, ranging from 774 to 612 hr, and 155 hr per ha. of agricultural land on farms of 2-4 ha., and 42 hr on farms of more than 13 ha.

The distribution of work in particular quarters of the year varied: most of the hours were used in winter (204 hr) which comprised one-third of all the managerial work per farm. In autumn it comprised 162 hr, in summer 150 hr and in spring the smallest amount of time, 124 hr. In this managerial time the farmer, the housewife and the family members participated. The hired workers, however (with very few exceptions), did not. Obviously the farmers did the greatest share of this kind of work, and this was true of all the size-groups of the farms. It comprised on average about half (363 hr), i.e. from 64 hr/per ha. in the group of farms of 2-5 ha. up to 21 hr /per ha. in farms of more than 13 ha.

The share of housewives and members of the family comprised about one-fifth of the managerial time but the proportion varied according to the seasons of the year and the size-groups of the farms. Calculating it in another way we can say that the families on these farms devoted on average over 2 hr daily to managerial work (on the 280 working days in the year). During this time the time input of the farmers comprised about 1.5 hr. Calculated in terms of full days (8 hr) it is easy to see that on average almost 80 days per farm were used annually, varying from 70 up to 100 depending upon the size of the farm.

These results, presented thus partially, demonstrate that the time spent on managerial work which can be isolated as such is quite considerable on individually owned farms. It is a result of the organizational features of the farms in question (many-sided production) and, perhaps, of the fact that marketing cooperatives and local administration are insufficiently developed. These institutions could take over from the farmer a number of functions which he is still performing personally.