



IN MEMORY OF PROFESSOR ZYGMUNT WOJTASZEK
(1929-2021)

Professor Zygmunt Wojtaszek was born on October 1, 1929 in the village of Dzierzkowice, in the Kraśnik Lubelski powiat. He came from a peasant family. He graduated from the Junior High School of Humanities and the High School of Rural Economics in Lublin. From 1949 to 1954, he pursued higher education at the Faculty of Agriculture of Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin (Zootechnical Engineering), and at the Faculty of Agriculture of the Warsaw University of Life Sciences (Master's degree in Agricultural Economics). From 1955 to 1956, he studied at the State Economic Institute in Moscow, and from 1957 to 1959 he was a doctoral scholarship holder at the Department of Economics and Farm Organization of the Warsaw University of Life Sciences.

In 1960, the Council of the Faculty of Economics and Agriculture of the Warsaw University of Life Sciences conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Agricultural and Forestry Sciences for the thesis entitled *Typy produkcyjne oraz typowe i przodujące gospodarstwa rolnicze Północnego Mazowsza (Production Types, Typical and Leading Farms in the Northern Mazovia)*, and in 1966 he received a Postdoctoral Degree in agricultural sciences, in the field of agricultural economics, on the basis of his postdoctoral dissertation entitled *Kierunki gospodarstw indywidualnych w Polsce Centralnej (Directions of Individual Farms in Central Poland)* and a general positive evaluation of his academic achievements. He completed his doctoral thesis under

the supervision of Professor Ryszard Manteuffel. It was published in its entirety by PWRiL in 1961. After obtaining his PhD, he completed a 6-month production internship on farms in the United Kingdom. He was awarded the academic title of Associate Professor of Agricultural Sciences in 1976 and Full Professor in 1992.

Professor Wojtaszek began his professional career in 1949, combining it with his studies. He worked as a district agronomist in Konopnica near Lublin, then as an economic inspector at the Voivodeship Board for the Peasant Self-Help Union in Lublin, and, once transferred in 1953 to the Warsaw University of Life Sciences for his master's degree, at the Department of Economics and Farm Organization (then called the Department of Planning and Organization of Socialist Agricultural Enterprises). From 1967 to 1970 and from 1975 to 1976, he led postgraduate studies in the field of economics and organization of agricultural enterprises at the Faculty of Economics and Agriculture of the Warsaw University of Life Sciences. From 1971 to 1974, he worked as an FAO expert in Mongolia. There, he established the Institute of Farm Organization and Accountancy at the Central Agricultural Personnel Improvement Centre, and prepared 19 Mongolian specialists to teach. From 1977 to 1992, he was the head of the Institute of Economics and Organization of Agricultural Production at the Department of Economics and Farm Organization, and from 1992 to 1993, he was the head of this Department.

Professor Zygmunt Wojtaszek was also professionally active outside the Warsaw University of Life Sciences in various agricultural institutions and organizations. From 1954 to 1955, he served as an advisor at the then Central Institute of Agriculture, and from 1958 to 1960, he worked at the Agricultural Prospective Plans Department of the Planning Commission of the Council of Ministers and, by correspondence and led the Agricultural Counselling Center at the Warsaw University of Life Sciences. He was appointed a member of scientific councils and expert groups in central and regional organizations. From 1959-1964 and from 1980-1984, he was a deputy member of the Supreme Committee of the United People's Party. From 1978-1990, he participated in the work of various commissions at the Ministry of Science and Higher Education.

Professor Zygmunt Wojtaszek was twice (1976-1980 and 1984-1987) a member of Senate of the Warsaw University of Life Sciences, as well as of many Senate and Faculty Committees. He was honored with many awards and distinctions (including the Medal of the National Education Commission, the Knight's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta, and the Golden Badge "For Services to Warsaw Voivodeship"), as well as awards from the Minister of Science and Higher Education and the Rector of the Warsaw University of Life Sciences.

The academic achievements of Professor Zygmunt Wojtaszek

Professor Zygmunt Wojtaszek's academic achievements are impressive, both in terms of their subject matter, range of research topics, and number of publications. Professor Wojtaszek has over 260 publications from 1954-1999 to his name, including 70 monographs, studies, dissertations, and scientific communications, as well as 16 textbooks and academic books.

The professor's scientific publications cover many issues but he was most interested in microeconomic issues, in the field of economics and the organization of individual and cooperative farms, as well as in the economics of agricultural production. His first work, written jointly with Professor H. Romanowski (at Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin), concerned the methodology of organizing a cooperative farm. His subsequent interests revolved around the regionalization of agricultural production. On the basis of information on soils, agriculture area structure, communication networks, the location of agricultural industry plants, population centers, etc., he defined economic regions. He developed a method with a fixed sequence of determining individual parameters, starting from the need for manure fertilization, through determining the necessary area of structure-forming plants, the maximum area of sugar beet and rapeseed cultivation, taking into account the area of grasslands, to determining the stocking density of animals.

His subsequent works concerned the typology of farms from the point of view of natural and economic conditions, production type, and economic efficiency. As a result of his research, he created a qualification system of farms' production conditions that facilitates analysis and improvement of organization, and intensification of agricultural production. This system became the basis for extensive discussion among agricultural economists, especially in the Committee for Agricultural Economics of the Polish Academy of Sciences and was introduced to many textbooks on the organization and economics of farms.

Professor Zygmunt Wojtaszek defined the notion of a typical farm and a model farm, and proved the usefulness of farm typification for regionalization of agricultural production. He also introduced the method of analogy used by the agricultural service to improve the organization of farms.

In the 1950s, he analyzed the origins of the grain unit used in the analysis of agricultural economy, and popularized it in Polish literature. The professor's article entitled "Jednostki zbożowe i inne miary wartości produktów gospodarstwa rolniczego" ("Grain Units and Other Value Measures for Agricultural Products"), published in *Zagadnienia Ekonomiki Rolnej* (No. 5, 1958), was particularly important in this respect.

In the early 1960s, the professor developed a system of classification of individual farms according to the line and versatility of production, which he published in his postdoctoral dissertation. This system won widespread acclaim and is still used in economic and agricultural research.

Another issue taken up by Professor Zygmunt Wojtaszek was the productivity and profitability of individual farms with different lines of production. As a result of thorough research, he indicated the conditions under which farms with different production types achieve the best economic results. An important work in this regard is professor's monograph entitled "Produkcyjność i dochodowość gospodarstw indywidualnych o różnych kierunkach w Polsce" ("Productivity and Profitability of Individual Farms with Different Production Types"), published in *Roczniki Nauk Rolniczych* (in 1968, Vol. 78, Issue 4).

Research on the size of individual farms was also important. Professor Wojtaszek synthesized measures that could be used in the evaluation of farm size and presented them in his work "Zagadnienie wielkości gospodarstwa indywidualnego

w Polsce” (“Size of Individual Farms in Poland”), published in 1970 in *Zeszyty problemowe Postępów Nauk Rolniczych* (1970, z.102). The professor was also engaged in improving methods of organizing and reorganizing individual farms. His results in this area were presented, among others, in the book entitled *Programowanie produkcji roślin oleistych (Programming Oilseeds Production)* (Zakład Wyd. CRS, 1975). He also repeatedly dealt with the issues of economic calculation and accounting. For instance, he analyzed the possibility of using different accounting systems on individual farms. In the paper entitled “Zasady organizacji gospodarstwa indywidualnego za pomocą metody planowania programu” (“Rules for Organization of Individual Farms through Program Planning”, published in *Nowe Rolnictwo* No. 10 of 1967, he introduced the category of direct income. In the 1990s, as a result of adjusting the economic categories used in Poland to those of the EU, it was replaced by the term “direct surplus”.

In the 1970s, Professor Wojtaszek commenced research on the course and efficiency of the process of transforming multilateral farms into specialized ones. He developed a simplified account of production profitability in specialized farms. A summary of these issues was presented in a book, written under the supervision of the professor, entitled: *Kierunki specjalizacji gospodarstw indywidualnych (Specialization Types of Individual Farms)*, published by PWRiL in 1980. However, it is worth mentioning here that the issue of specialization appeared in the professor’s papers already at the beginning of the 1960s, after his return from his internship in the United Kingdom and the USSR.

In the 1980s, Professor Wojtaszek conducted research on the links between agriculture and technical and social infrastructure. He found that rural infrastructure usually did not have a positive influence on the desired directions of agricultural development. He included his observations in this respect in the article (with J. Kupidurski) entitled “Gospodarka rolna w gminach i wsiach o różnym poziomie infrastruktury” (“Agricultural Economy in Municipalities and Villages”), published in *Roczniki Nauk Rolniczych* in 1988 (Serie G., Vol. 85, Issue 1).

At the end of the 1990s, the professor dealt with the problems of farms located in regions with predominantly low-fertility soils. Two papers in this area are particularly noteworthy: “Gospodarka rejonów rolniczych z przewagą gleb nisko urodzajnych – stan obecny i perspektywy” (“Economy of Agricultural Regions with Predominantly Low-Fertility Soils – Current State and Future Prospects”), commissioned by the Committee for Agricultural Economics of the Polish Academy of Sciences, and “Granica opłacalności użytkowania rolniczego gruntów marginalnych” (“Break-Even Point of Marginal Land Use”), prepared under a grant from the State Committee for Scientific Research and published by the Institute of Agricultural and Food Economics in 1998. The professor demonstrated the benefits and losses resulting from the exclusion of the most barren soils from agricultural use. He analyzed the costs of their non-agricultural use, e.g., through afforestation, use for recreational purposes, or the creation of landscape parks. He also argued that even on marginal lands there are farms which achieve cost-effectiveness equal to or even higher than the national average.

Professor Zygmunt Wojtaszek was the organizer and leader of several research teams, dealing with the development of agricultural cooperatives in Poland.

He conducted an analysis of the positive and negative phenomena in a cooperative economy as well as the determinants of its development.

Among the professor's publications are also elaborations on issues, such as: mechanization and work efficiency in agriculture, dissemination of progress in the field of economics and farm organization, distribution of agricultural production in Poland, sowing and global production versus final production structures, cost and production records, grain production in agricultural cooperatives, measures for evaluating management objectives, quantity and quality of labor force on individual farms and State Agricultural Farms, farm analysis, the place of economic and agricultural sciences in Poland, and many others. However, he mainly tried to fill in the gaps in the methodology of analysis and evaluation of farm organization, and in the terminology used. It is a little-known fact that in his paper on the history of development of agricultural economics in Poland, Professor Wojtaszek encouraged the Swedish scientist, Josef Nou, to study the original papers of Polish scientist, Professor Juliusz Au, published in German. As a result, in his work entitled *Studies in the Development of Agricultural Economics in Europe* (published in Uppsala in 1967), J. Nou presented Professor J. Au's scientific position in new light and concluded that his research was a pioneering contribution to the development of a new direction of economic and agricultural sciences on a European scale.

Professor Zygmunt Wojtaszek as a teacher and educator

An important part of Professor Wojtaszek's work was the education of academic staff and students. Under his supervision, seven people completed and defended their doctoral theses, namely: Stanisław Dawid, Andrzej Zadura, Janusz Heller, Bogdan Klepacki, Andrzej Zawadzki, Krzysztof Lachowski, and Jerzy Kupidurski. One of the Professor's doctoral students went on to receive a postdoctoral degree and the title of Professor of Economics. The professor had 28 "academic grandchildren" (one person – Sławomir Juszczak – obtained the title of Professor of Economic Sciences, and nine persons in total were awarded postdoctoral degrees) and 8 "academic great-grandchildren". The professor served twice (1978-1982 and 1995-1999) as the head of full-time doctoral studies conducted at the Faculty of Economics and Agriculture of the Warsaw University of Life Sciences. Both times he achieved great success, with over 90% efficiency rates. A few of his students from this period went on to receive the title of Professor of Economic Sciences (Bolesław Borkowski, Marian Podstawka, Henryk Runowski) or a postdoctoral degree (Stanisław Bagiński, Hans na Dudek, Iwona Kowalska, Wojciech Pizło, Elżbieta Szymańska, Ludwik Wicki) and they play an important role in Polish agricultural economics.

Professor Wojtaszek was also a valued reviewer of 32 doctoral and 12 postdoctoral theses and of 9 proceedings for the conferment of the academic title of professor. Between 1986 and 1989, he chaired the commission for the evaluation of doctoral theses and dissertations at the institutes under the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Food Economy. He also contributed to the development of agricultural economists, as a long-term member of the Committee for Agricultural Economics of the Polish Academy of Sciences (1968-2012), a member of the Scientific Council of the Institute of Soil Science and Plant Cultivation (IUNG)

(1988-1991) and the Institute of Agricultural and Food Economics (1991-1999). For 12 years (1966-1978), he was a section editor of *Zeszyty Naukowe SGGW*, and for 30 years (1969-1999) he was the editor-in-chief of *Roczniki Nauk Rolniczych Seria G. Ekonomika Rolnictwa*. From 1976-1990 (14 years), he was a member of the Editorial Board of *Zagadnienia Ekonomiki Rolnej*. He was also an advisor to many people preparing their doctoral and post-doctoral theses and papers for publication. It can be concluded that the professor actively influenced, co-created and directed the development of economic and agricultural sciences in Poland.

His work as a teacher and educator consisted mainly of courses, which the professor began to teach in 1951 at the Faculty of Agricultural Economics and the Faculty of Agriculture of the Warsaw University of Life Sciences. These included subjects, such as: Selected Issues in the Economics and Organization of Agricultural Farms, Economics of Farm Departments and Branches, Economics and Organization of Production in Individual Peasant Farms. Under his supervision, about 170 students of these faculties completed their master's theses. He was also a lecturer of post-graduate studies in Economics and Organization of Agricultural Enterprises.

As a lecturer, the professor was always meticulous. He took teaching very seriously and treated his students as partners. He prepared curricula for many subjects and co-developed study plans at the Faculty of Agricultural Economics. He wrote a number of papers for teaching purposes, e.g. on farm organization design, technology and production profitability, and the advisory work of agricultural instructors. The most famous was the professor's academic book entitled *Koszty i kalkulacje (Costs and Calculations)*, one of the most frequently reissued teaching aids in the 1970s. The professor not only wrote his own academic books, but also encouraged his colleagues to do the same. He significantly contributed to the creation of a nationally acclaimed teaching aid, namely, *Zbiór zadań z ekonomiki, organizacji i rachunkowości gospodarstw rolnych (A Set of Tasks from the Fields of Economics, Organization and Accounting of Farms)* and *Encyklopedia ekonomiczno-rolnicza (Encyclopedia of Agriculture and Economics)*.

Professor Wojtaszek devoted a lot of time to his assistants. He made efforts to provide them with housing and trips to study abroad. I do not know anyone else who would spend several hours a day with his assistants, young academics, for many years. Together with the then master's graduates S. Kuźniarska-Olszewska and R. Łacki, and later A. Zawadzki, we became acquainted with the latest trends in science and politics, we debated the methodology and results of our research, but also became familiar with the professor's experiences of working in Mongolia, building houses, etc. In those conversations, he brought us closer to the scientific achievements of his teachers and colleagues, which he knew well and to which he advised us to refer more extensively. We could clearly sense that he was influenced by professors, such as: H. Romanowski, S. Antoniewski, F. Dziedzic, S. Ignar, Z. Grochowski, and particularly R. Manteuffel, who was usually the first reader of the professor's works, and who promoted his important academic achievements in the economic and agricultural literature.

A distinctive feature of the professor's personality was his persistence in pursuing his own way of thinking, and maintaining his own, usually deeply held, views. As a result, he stuck to his views even when they were not popular or even well-

received. The professor's obstinacy and consistency were evident, not only in his personal matters, but also in very important political or economic issues.

Another feature of professor's character was his friendly criticism. Whenever he did not agree with someone's views, he never concealed this, regardless of the consequences. When working with the professor, it was important to be able to listen to his views, even if they were not in line with our expectations, and then to analyze them calmly, and make use of them in our own research work and publications.

Professor Wojtaszek was characterized by unquestionable reliability in his research. As a microeconomist, he checked every figure, and analyzed the correctness of his conclusions. He showed this reliability not only as a researcher, but also as a teacher and a person.

Among the other virtues of the professor, it is worth highlighting the fact that he was able to identify important research problems and predict which ones would be important in the future. He often pointed out to us various fields of research interest which at that time seemed irrelevant to us, our colleagues, so we did not take them up, and after several years it turned out that we had wasted an opportunity to develop a specific niche. In many cases, the professor's scientific ideas were ahead of the current needs of science and practice.

As the head of the Department of Economics and Organization of Agricultural Production, he endeavored to develop close collegial relationships. He was one of the last professors to invite his colleagues privately to his home in Warsaw, or to his allotment in Podgórczyce near Góra Kalwaria, where he organized group meetings that brought us all together and cemented the team. Perhaps, this was one of the reasons for the scientific success of this group. It is worth noting that in the Department led by Professor Wojtaszek, there were four employees (W. Józwiak, B. Klepacki, J. Lewandowski, and H. Runowski), who were granted the academic title of Professor of Economic Sciences.

After his retirement in 2000, he started work at the College of Business and Entrepreneurship in Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski. He remained with that college for the next 18 years. He published one academic book on his own (*Podstawy ekonomiki i rozwoju obszarów wiejskich (The Basics of Economics and Development of Rural Areas)*) and another in co-authorship (*Zarys analizy ekonomicznej przedsiębiorstwa (An Outline of Economic Analysis of an Enterprise)*). He taught a number of subjects, such as: Agricultural Economics, Methods of Evaluating Economic Projects, Economic Analysis, Agribusiness, Economics of the Environment and Natural Resources, and Graduate Seminars. In Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski, he was the advisor of 250 bachelor's and master's degree holders. In total, counting all bachelor's degrees, master's degrees and doctorates at the Warsaw University of Life Sciences and the College of Business and Entrepreneurship, he supervised around 430 university students.

The professor passed away on January 27, 2021 in Warsaw, at the age of 91, surrounded by a large and loving family – his wife Wanda, three children, and eight grandchildren.

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