

The Authority of a Manager of a Socialist Agricultural Enterprise

Z. DOWGIAŁŁO

College of Agriculture, Szczecin, Poland

The manager's authority is one of the conditions of efficiency of a socialist agricultural enterprise*. Its importance is due to the character of agricultural production, which is different from that of industry. This difference is due to a need for continuous adaptation to variable conditions of work, to difficulties of forecasting and of planning labour schedules as well as to the wide dispersal of the places of work. Also of importance is the fact that the manager lives, as a rule, within the area of the enterprise, so that the details of his private life are familiar to the crew.

If a given social group headed by the manager supports him or has confidence in him, this would make for efficient operative management, since there would seldom be time for arguing, particularly while production was in progress.

A significant element in the notion of authority is the interrelation between the bearer and the receiver of authority, i.e. in some way a subject of authority. This interrelation between the two groups is due to subordinating one to the authority of the other. The notion of authority changes along with the transformation of social relations and the socialization of the means of production.

In a socialist enterprise the authority of management is still one of the basic factors in the social obligations in the organized life of the crew. However, in the socialist system of management, the bearer of authority is not just the manager alone, but also the crew, who are entitled to participate in taking decisions (concerning e.g. outlining development trends

* According to F. Engels, those are wrong who think that the organization of production would be possible without authoritative management. In his opinion, if the organization of socialized production is to be efficient, it must be subject to the decisions of an elected manager or to an authoritative decision taken by a majority of voices (Marx K. and Engels F., Selected Works, "On the question of authority"). Moscow (1955).

or the work arranged for the enterprise), which were taken collectively, but the carrying out of which is based upon the principle of a single operating management. It implies the right of the crew to participate actively in determining production tasks*.

There is formal authority and personal authority. The former constitutes the position of management and is concerned with the right to take decisions which regulate the behaviour of other people. A characteristic example of formal authority is the possibility of applying sanctions if a subordinate fails to follow the decisions taken by the superior authority.

A manager's personal authority depends on the particular quality of his character, his intellectual abilities, his knowledge and experience. Given these he enjoys the allegiance and confidence of the crew. Also, the way he deals with the people in the district and conducts his personal life is appreciated by the crew, and this affects his authority and the esteem in which he is held. Another source of his personal authority is the work he does as well as the efforts he makes for the benefit both of the enterprise and of the crew, which give evidence of his feeling of responsibility. A manager should respect the workers' ambitions and acknowledge their efforts to win the professional prestige connected with their qualifications and experience over the years. The acknowledgment of these aspirations will win the manager the authority he needs and contribute to higher organizational efficiency in the enterprise and to better work by the crew.

With the modernization and technical progress of the enterprise the workers' skills increase, and the manager's personal authority grows as does its influence in the proper adjustment of human relations within the enterprise. It can be said that the manager's high personal authority should be one of his basic qualities. Investigations show that, in the opinion of the managers, if they are to win authority over the crew, it is important that they should listen carefully to the opinions and proposals of the crew, while avoiding any subjectivity or partiality. In addition to professional qualifications and organizational abilities, they must have a high moral attitude and enthusiasm for the tasks to be undertaken. On the attitude and authority of a manager depends his ability to galvanize the crew into working on the objectives of the enterprise. A degree of independence in the enterprise and the method of its administration, by widening the rights of the crew and the management, can contribute very much to creating conditions for increasing the authority of the manager.

* T. Kotarbiński recommends that the management system should support the attempts of workers to develop creative initiative and to gain satisfaction from the results of their own work. In his opinion these interrelations should be linked together in such a way that A would be subordinated to B in one respect and B subordinated to A in another. This recommendation could be given effect to in the socialist management system. Kotarbiński T.; Principles of Good Work, Łódź (1946).

Below are listed the circumstances which can depreciate the manager's authority. They are quoted from the data of an inquiry among state farm managers:

(1) Incompetence of manager or his lack of interest in the production of the farm.

(2) Unreliability, breaking of promises.

(3) Inconsistency, lack of firmness in management.

(4) Injustice in workers' estimation, lack of objectivity, favouring of selected people.

(5) Excessive familiarity towards crew, giving ear to gossip and detraction, involvement in intrigues.

(6) Excessive hauteur, coolness, lack of cordiality, malevolence.

(7) Lack of confidence in particular workers, putting upon the "underdog", excessive fussiness.

(8) Position of a "good uncle", tolerance of a lack of discipline in carrying out orders*.

* Comp. Dowgiałło Z.; Authority of state farm manager in the light of an inquiry carried out among the managers, *Problemy Naukowe Organizacji i Kierownictwa w Rolnictwie*, No. 1 (1966).