

CONDITIONS UNDERLYING THE REGIONAL DIVERSITY OF THE AREA STRUCTURE OF FARMS IN POLAND

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Abstract. The aim of this study has been to identify the conditions underlying the regional diversity in the area structure of farms in Poland. There are many causes of such diversity, including historical reasons, the state transformation (understood as an institutional change), availability of farmland previously owned by state farms in each of the Polish provinces, integration with the European Union (agricultural policy, also as part of the CAP), and the multifunctional use of farmland (as a production factor, a wildlife asset, a cultural and symbolic value of the landscape). In 2014, a more 30% of agricultural land in Poland was in larger farms (over 50 ha in size). However, the number of such farms is growing, which is a positive development. In the context of the amended Act on shaping the agricultural system, it can be predicted that changes in the area structure of farms will proceed towards improvement, especially by land lease agreements.

Key words: farm, area structure, farmland turnover, farmland lease, Agricultural Property Agency, Agricultural Property Stock of the State Treasury

INTRODUCTION

Most of Poland's territory and a large percentage of her population are connected with agriculture. One of the key elements affecting the dynamics of positive changes in agriculture is the shape of the agrarian structure [Kukuła 2010]. In turn, a key element within the agrarian structure¹ is the area structure of farms [Marks-Bielska and Babuchowska 2012], as the size of a farm is the major factor that determines its production potential.

¹ Many authors equate the concept of an agrarian structure with the area structure. However, the author of this paper believes this is gross simplification because the area structure is a narrower term than the agrarian structure. This question was raised in the paper Marks-Bielska and Babuchowska [2012], in which the following definitions were reviewed and revised: agrarian structure, area structure and – the broadest one – agricultural system.

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The size of a farm entails certain economic considerations for the farmer. These include: the level of production and revenues, labour efficiency, opportunity to implement modern production techniques and technologies, intensity of farm management, organization of production etc. The size of farms and consequently the area structure are shaped under the influence farmland turnover².

For agriculture to attain its economic and production goals, what matters it is not just the volume of farmland resources owned by individual farmers but, even more importantly, how the available farmland is allocated within the structure of farms. It is crucial to build the right links between land resources and other production factors (capital and labour) [Majchrzak 2015].

One possible obstacle to the concentration of farmland is the exclusion of land from agricultural use. This is a global trend arising above all from the economic development. Poland's accession to the EU has accelerated the loss of farmland resources [Wilkin 2014], for instance due to the growth of infrastructure. This trend is also attributed to the urban sprawl over rural areas surrounding large cities [Milczarek-Andrzejewska and Zawalińska 2015].

Polish agriculture is characterized by regional diversity, manifesting itself especially as differences in the acreage between farms. The Polish farmland market is composed of two segments: private market and state market (the Agricultural Property Stock of the State Treasury, which is managed by the Agricultural Property Agency³). The two markets merge with each other. In particular, the Agricultural Property Agency is granted increasingly more rights to intervene in the private market of agricultural land.

The purpose of this study has been to identify differences in the area structure of farms between Polish provinces, to point up changes occurring with time and to determine the underlying causes of such changes.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The source material were statistical data from the Central Statistical Office of Poland (GUS), especially the ones from agricultural censuses, reports of the Agricultural Property Agency, the report of the Institute of Agricultural and Food Economics – the National Research Institute titled *The agricultural land market in Poland – the current situation and outlook*, and several legal regulations (e.g. Act on the management of Agricultural Properties Stock of the State Treasury, Act on the formation of agricultural system). The basic range of temporal analysis took years 1996–2010 (agricultural census data). In order to more fully outline the situation also refer to the earlier period (before the political

² Turnover of agricultural land – change of the subjects who use the land, regardless of a change in the ownership of the land. It comprises all transfers of land between farms and sectors in agriculture, with the help of such forms as: transfer to the successor, sale, lease, donation, inheritance [Marks-Bielska 2010].

³ The Agricultural Property Agency (the Polish acronym ANR) is a state legal person, a trust institution to which the State Treasury delegated the execution of the ownership right and other rights in rem. The ANR acts on the basis of the Act on the Management of the Agricultural Property Stock of the State Treasury and the Act on the Formation of Agricultural System.

transformation) is shown a historical conditions changes in the structure of farms. Uses available data characterizing the current situation on the market state. To solve the identified research problem, a monographic method was employed, in which the problem of the agricultural land market in Poland was described. Within the chosen research method, a research technique was applied which allowed the author to review documents, literature and statistical information so as to collate descriptive as well as quantitative information about the analyzed subject. The research paper also contains tables with descriptions as well as graphic presentations of the data.

FACTORS SHAPING THE AREA STRUCTURE OF FARMS IN POLAND

There are many causes of the regional diversity between farms in Poland regarding their area structure. The following can be mentioned: historical reasons⁴, the state transformation (considered to be an institutional change) [Milczarek 2002, Marks-Bielska 2010], integration with the European Union (the agricultural policy in Poland conducted as part of the CAP), and the multi-functional use of agricultural land (a production means, a wildlife asset, cultural and symbolic values) [Marks-Bielska 2010].

The area structure of Polish farms is shaped under the influence of transformations concerning the ownership rights to the land previously managed by state farms. Apart from other conditions (historical, natural), quite big differences in the acreage of state-owned farmland in the past between individual regions of Poland explains the existing regional differences in the acreage of farms. Thus, the largest farms are found in the northern and western parts of Poland, where most of state-owned farms used to be situated.

The data gathered during the last *General Agricultural Census* [2010] show that the average size of an individual farm in Poland increased from 6.59 to 7.93 ha, i.e. by 1.34 ha. There is a tendency to enlarge farms, mostly by land purchase or lease. Meanwhi-

⁴ Three different economic systems developed over the partitioned Polish territories, based on the models of each partitioning empire. The emancipation from serfdom which took place in the Prussian partition in the early 19th century resulted in the formation of a strong group of large farms and a numerous group of small farms. Medium-size farms became less numerous. The situation developed differently in the Austrian partition, where the emancipation from serfdom petrified the existing fragmentation into small farms. In the Russian partition, emancipation from serfdom without redemption payments and not "sharing" between landless peasants meant that the share of medium-size farms (as well as the ones holding 10–20 ha of land) increased. The inheritance law prohibited division of farms into smaller ones than 3.36 ha. The independent Polish state proclaimed in 1918 was composed of three parts, each with a different agrarian structure. Relatively small changes were instituted during the interwar years. The agricultural reform put into force in 1944 partitioned nearly 200 thousand ha of manorial farmland in the western and northern territories incorporated to Poland after WW2. Thus, in the regions of Lower Silesia, north-western Pomerania as well as Warmia and Mazury, large estates formerly owned by German landowners were converted to state-owned farms. The flow of land to the state sector was one of the events which caused differences between regions in Poland following WW2. Individual farmers most rapidly lost their farmland in northern Poland and in some parts of Wielkopolska; in southern and central Poland the share of the private sector has always been high (about 90%) and has hardly changed. More: Bożek and Bogocz [2012, pp. 23–25].

le, the regional diversity in the area structure of farms in Poland continues to exist. Many smaller farms are found mostly in the south-eastern provinces of Poland, while larger farms are situated in the northern part of the country. According to the Census of 2010, the smallest farms were in the following provinces: Małopolskie (3 ha), Podkarpackie (3.23 ha), Śląskie (3.37 ha) and Świętokrzyskie (4.59 ha). The biggest average size of a farm was determined in the provinces: Zachodniopomorskie (22.58 ha), Warmińsko-mazurskie (18.74 ha), Pomorskie (15.77 ha) and Kujawsko-pomorskie (14.33 ha) [Marks-Bielska and Babuchowska 2012].

The early years of the state transformation in Poland, despite the liberalization of land turnover, did not accelerate the improvement in the farms' area structure. There were several reasons, but according to Szemberg [2011], the following were crucial ones: the continuing recession in agriculture, a crisis on the labour market, changes in the agricultural market (limited demand, high quality expectations, problems selling excess production outputs, completion of food exports), which made farmers feel uncertain about the prospective development of their farms. Two contradictory trends appeared within the agrarian transformations – towards fragmentation and towards concentration. The trend towards concentration was stronger but the creation of new, small farms weakened the effects of land concentration. Some farmers divided their farmland, others donated some to family members who had lost sources of income. Farmland, even a small share of it, had to provide users with at least the minimum of existence. Consequently, in 1988–1996, the share of farms sized from 1 to 2 ha increased by 14% (56 thousand), while about 126 thousand farms (6%) were dissolved. The number of farms holding between 2 and 15 ha of farmland decreased, while the number of farms with more than 15 ha of land increased (by 44 thousand, i.e. 34%). This, however, translated into a small increase in their share, from 6 to 8.5%, and had an almost negligible effect on the structural system of farms. In the whole system of individual farming, an increase in the acreage of a farm was incomparably small and equaled just 0.8 ha (from 6.2 to 7 ha).

The results of changes in the area structure of farms were different in the macroregions distinguished by Szemberg [2001], which represent different agrarian structure types (Table 1).

Most farms, 36% (a rise by 2.2% between 1996 and 2010), were found in the central-eastern macroregion. These farms comprised 28.8% of agricultural land (4% more than in 1996), which proves that the area structure in this macroregion had deteriorated. The southern macroregion also experienced a decrease in the number of farms (by 3.1%) and in the share of the total area of agricultural land (by 2.5%). The north-western macroregion presented an 1% increase in the number of farms and a 6% increase in the share of agricultural land between 1996 and 2010, which demonstrates an improvement in the area structure in this macroregion.

According to Poczta and Siemiński [2008], the biggest disadvantage of the area structure in the Polish agriculture is that the majority of agricultural land resources is still held by small and very small farms. Maśniak [2007] underlines that because of the strong fragmentation of farms in Poland, some concentration of agricultural land could distinctly affect the scale of production and improve the economic position of agricultural producers.

Table 1. Share of farms and agricultural land in macroregions

Macroregion Type of structure	Provinces included in a given macroregion	% of farms		% of agricultural land	
		1996	2010	1996	2010
Central-western medium-size farm structure	Mazowieckie, Łódzkie, Lubelskie	33.8	36.0	32.3	28.8
Southern / small-size farm structure	Opolskie, Śląskie, Świętokrzyskie, Małopolskie, Podkarpackie	36.2	33.1	20.4	17.9
North-western / structure with the dominance of large farms	Dolnośląskie, Lubuskie, Wielkopolskie, Kujaw- sko-pomorskie, Zachodniopomorskie, Pomorskie, Warmińsko-mazurskie, Podlaskie	30.0	31.0	47.3	53.3

Source: Marks-Bielska [2010] after Szemberg [2001].

The data in Table 2 reveal the process through which the smallest farms (1–2 ha) were strengthened in 1990–2005. In 2008, the share of this group of farms to the total number of farms with more than 1 ha in area decreased by 1.4%. The decreasing tendency in this area group of farms continued. In 2010, it reached 21.9% in the number of farms. Until 2008, the number of farms within the 2–5 ha and 5–10 ha area groups had increased, but afterwards it remained on nearly the same level until 2010. Over the whole time period analyzed (1990–2010), there was a distinct increase in the share of the largest farms (15 ha and over), both in their number (from 6.1 to 12.6%) and the concentration of agricultural land (% share of agricultural land in 1990 was 20.2 but rose to 57.1% in 2010). The rise in the average agricultural land acreage occurred in larger farms (over 15 ha), from 20.9 ha in 1990 to 62.3 ha in 2010. Small changes appeared in the group of farms holding 1–15 ha of farmland between 1995–2010, while the biggest ones took place in the group of farms with 2–5 ha of farmland; the average area of agricultural land in that group of farms in 1990 was 3.3 ha, compared to 3.5 ha in 2010, while in the 10–15 ha group it changed from 12 ha in 2005 to 12.1 ha in 2010. These farms are a potential land supply market.

The Lorenz concentration coefficient (K_L)⁵ is measure which helps to present synthetically the nature of changes in the use of agricultural land. This indicator takes into account the division of agricultural land between farms of different sizes. It describes the process of changes in the use of farmland more precisely than the average acreage of a farm [Maśniak 2007].

⁵ It is calculated according to the formula [Ostasiewicz et al. 1999]: $K_L = 1 - \frac{1}{5,000} \cdot \sum_{i=1}^k \frac{u_{ski} + u_{ski-1}}{2} \cdot g_i$,

where: u_{ski} – cumulated percentage of area of agricultural land in the area group of farms, g_i – percentage of the number of farms in area groups of farms. The value of the index K_L is within the interval of $0 < K_L < 1$. It assumes the value 0, when there is no concentration (each farm has the same area of agricultural land) and 1 at total concentration (one farm has all the agricultural land available) [Maśniak 2007].

Table 2. Individual farms with an area of over 1 ha of agricultural land, divided between area groups of farms

Years	Total	Of the area of arable land (ha)				
		1–2	2–5	5–10	10–15	15 and over
% share of farms						
1990	100.0	17.7	35.1	29.8	11.3	6.1
1995	100.0	21.0	33.7	26.6	10.7	8.0
2000	100.0	23.8	32.6	23.8	9.9	9.9
2005	100.0	25.1	32.8	21.8	9.4	10.9
2008	100.0	23.7	33.4	22.8	9.1	11.0
2010	100.0	21.9	33.3	22.5	9.7	12.6
% share of agricultural land						
1990	100.0	4.2	18.7	34.5	22.4	20.2
1995	100.0	4.7	17.1	28.1	19.1	31.0
2000	100.0	4.8	14.7	23.6	16.6	40.3
2005	100.0	4.7	13.9	20.3	14.9	46.2
2008	100.0	4.4	13.9	20.6	14.1	47.0
2010	100.0	3.3	11.1	16.4	12.1	57.1
Average area of agricultural land per farm (ha)						
1990	6.3	1.5	3.3	7.2	12.4	20.9
1995	6.7	1.4	3.3	7.1	12.1	26.9
2000	7.2	1.4	3.2	7.1	12.1	29.3
2005	7.6	1.4	3.2	7.1	12.1	32.4
2008	7.8	1.4	3.2	7.1	12.1	33.6
2010	9.8	1.5	3.5	7.1	12.1	62.3

Source: The author, based on Maśniak [2007], *Agriculture in 2008* [2009] and data of the Central Statistical Office of Poland (GUS).

The data comprised in Table 3 show that there was an increase in the concentration of agricultural land in privately-owned, individual farms in all Polish provinces between 1996 and 2002. In whole Poland, the concentration coefficient rose by 0.088. Between the years 2002 and 2007, no tendency towards farmland concentration was detected. The analyzed coefficient practically remained the same. In 2010, relative to 2002, an increase in the land concentration coefficient was observed (0.058 for the whole country). The underlying reason was the higher concentration of agricultural land in all Polish provinces.

The relatively weak concentration of farmland in the analyzed time period may have been caused by the implementation of instruments of the Common Agricultural Policy, which do not support farmland concentration. These instruments include direct payments, structural pensions, or actions taken to create new farms by young farmers. Sometimes, owners of small businesses, often run single-handedly, purchase some farmland to be able to pay lower contributions to the Farmers' Social Insurance Fund (KRUS) instead of the general Social Insurance Fund (ZUS), thereby lowering the costs of operating their companies. One of the conditions to become a farmer in the sense of being eligible to pay social contributions to KRUS is to own no less than 1 equivalent ha of agricultural land.

Table 3. The agricultural land concentration coefficient in private individual farms with an acreage of more than 1 ha, in Polish provinces, from 1996 to 2010

Specification	1996	2002	2007	2010
Dolnośląskie	0.597	0.652	0.639	0.710
Kujawsko-pomorskie	0.461	0.532	0.530	0.588
Lubelskie	0.386	0.428	0.468	0.494
Lubuskie	0.634	0.689	0.663	0.744
Łódzkie	0.372	0.435	0.442	0.457
Małopolskie	0.338	0.369	0.378	0.446
Mazowieckie	0.401	0.473	0.473	0.496
Opolskie	0.531	0.617	0.629	0.705
Podkarpackie	0.365	0.387	0.408	0.508
Podlaskie	0.047	0.452	0.460	0.476
Pomorskie	0.553	0.617	0.588	0.672
Śląskie	0.363	0.494	0.393	0.589
Świętokrzyskie	0.349	0.399	0.402	0.436
Warmińsko-mazurskie	0.503	0.605	0.590	0.650
Wielkopolskie	0.430	0.548	0.541	0.615
Zachodniopomorskie	0.664	0.705	0.665	0.740
Poland	0.437	0.525	0.517	0.583

Source: the author, *Agrarian Transformations 2002* [2003], *Statistical Yearbook of Agriculture and Rural Areas 2008* [2009] and data of the Main Statistical Office (GUS) in Poland.

Entrepreneurs most often bought the required minimum amount of agricultural land to create a farm.

According to Zegar [2009], one can expect a more rapid elimination of less efficient farms among the ones that now produce agricultural products for the market, which can occur irrespective of the CAP instruments which deaccelerate it. The decisive factors in this regard are macroeconomic conditions.

As highlighted Zegar [2003], the transfer of farmland between farms is the most significant issue regarding transformations in the area structure of agricultural land. The rate of these transformations will depend on the demand and supply of agricultural land and on the agricultural policy in this scope.

The structure of farming inherited after the previous state systems in Poland is characterized by excessive fragmentation of farms. In 1989, barely 25% of farmland belonged to larger in area, collective farms. Subsequently, mainly based on these farms, large-scale private farms were established. Most of the farmland, however, is still owned and used by small farmers. In Poland, just 30% of agricultural land is found in larger farms (over 50 ha in area), while in many other EU countries this percentage is as high as 80–90% [Wilkin 2016].

As demonstrated by Baer-Nawrocka and Poczta [2016], significant changes took place between 2002 and 2014 in the area structure of farms in Poland. They include: a decrease in the number of farms (over 1 ha of agricultural land) by 29.3% (by 57 thousand farms), reduction of the number of farms possessing 1–2 ha of agricultural land, a large

decline in the number of farms (by over 27%) within the ranges of 2–5 and 5–10 ha of agricultural land, which in 2014 used 2.1% of agricultural land compared to 35% in 2002, and the smallest loss of farms in the group possessing 20–30 ha of agricultural land, as well as an increase in the number of farms having over 30 ha of agricultural land (the highest increase in absolute terms was noted in the group of farms having 50–100 ha of agricultural land, where the area of farmland used by these farms grew by 76%, i.e. by 631 thousand ha), a decrease in the area of farmed agricultural land in the group of the largest farms (over 100 ha of agricultural land) by 427 thousand ha (i.e. by 12.2% between 2002 and 2014). The share of the largest farms (over 100 ha of agricultural land) in the total farmland in Poland remained unchanged, i.e. approximately 21%.

The turnover of land is regulated by law. By the force of the latest amendment to the Act on the Formation of agricultural system, which entered into force on 30 April 2016, the state's intervention in the agricultural land market in Poland is stronger. The changes made by the amendment regard such issues as: suspending any sale of farmland from the Agricultural Property Stock of the State Treasury for five years since the above amended act came into effect, preference given to lease as a form of use of agricultural land owned by the State Treasury, sustained right of pre-emption guaranteed to the Agricultural Property Agency, both on the private market (individual farmers) and on the equity market of commercial law partnerships which own agricultural properties (the right of pre-emption can also be exercised by a lease who is an individual farmer) and, in order to prevent speculative purchase of land, a legal prohibition was passed stating that an agricultural property cannot be sold or given to another subject without a court permission for 10 years since its purchase (excluding the Agricultural Property Agency and local government units), while the land buyers can only be individual, private farmers⁶.

The provisions of the amended Act on the formation of agricultural system have led to a situation where the principal way of managing state farmland is by leasing it. Most popular are long-term lease contracts, for over 10 years, which should enable rational planning of agricultural production. Land parcels shall be leased by tender bids organized by the Agricultural Property Agency. The bidding sessions can be entered only by individual farmers who want to enlarge or to create family-run farms (i.e. up to 300 ha of acreage).

The Agricultural Property Agency can allocate over 100 thousand ha of agricultural land for lease, most of it in the following provinces: Zachodniopomorskie, Warmińsko-mazurskie, Dolnośląskie and Lubuskie. Currently, it leases over 1 million ha, i.e. 73% of the total acreage of agricultural land comprised in the State Treasury Agricultural Property Stock⁷.

The author believes that the policy conducted in Poland with regard to land lease as an institution is incoherent and ambiguous. It is difficult to foresee whether this form of

⁶ An individual farmer – a natural person who is the owner, perpetual usufructuary, sole owner or leaseholder of agricultural properties with qualifications in agriculture, who has personally been running a farm of an area of no more than 300 ha (a family farm) for at least five years living in the village, in an area which is situated one of the agricultural property belonging to the farm, and leading through this period personally to the farm.

⁷ <http://gospodarstwopolska.pl/?gclid=CNfbpKqeu80CFQsNcwodE3QOia> (accessed: 07.07.2016).

land management will be supported by the Polish government, or if it is only a transient form of land use, which will lead to a complete transformation of the land ownership rights (land purchase). The intentions and provisions of the amended Act on Shaping the Agricultural System (e.g. discontinuation of the sale of land from the State Treasury Agricultural Property Stock) seem to suggest that land lease will continue to gain importance in the Polish agriculture. On the other hand, by the force of the Act on the management Agricultural Property Stock of the State Treasury amended in 2011, about 30% of the agricultural properties with an area of over 429 ha have been gradually excluded from lease agreements. Moreover, the Polish agricultural law lacks a separate act that would regulate the issue of agricultural land lease. The expected revenues to the state budget have forced the Agricultural Property Agency to sell more and more hectares of farmland.

Beside market transactions, the ownership right to land can be transferred to another subject through a non-market contract (between family members). The most common examples are when agricultural properties change hands by being donated, inherited or transferred by annuity agreements etc. In contrast to market turnover, which contributes to a more rational form of agricultural structures, the land turnover between family members preserves the existing situation. However, data from the relevant notary records prove that for the past few years such agreements done between family members have had a lesser importance in the overall transformations of land ownership and use in Polish agriculture. Among the forms of non-market land turnover, the dominant one is by donation, which corresponds to about 1/3 of all contracts done outside the market [Sikorska 2015].

The supply of farmland in Poland, due to the substantial cultural and symbolic values assigned to it in our country and therefore the unwillingness of Polish individual farmers to sell their land, has been mostly composed of the farmland which belongs to the State Treasury Agricultural Property Stock since the onset of the transformation of the Polish agriculture. As of 31 December 2014, the APA had sold 2,608.5 thousand of ha of land (i.e. 55% of the total acreage of farmland incorporated by the State Treasury Agricultural Stock). Most of the land was sold in the provinces: Warmińsko-mazurskie and Zachodniopomorskie, which is where most of farmland had been taken over from dissolved state farms.

The current policy regarding the turnover of agricultural real estate properties as well as the diminishing acreage of farmland remaining in the State Treasury Agricultural Property Stock and managed by the APA seem to suggest that transactions on the private market are going to gain importance. The supply party on this market will be composed of both farmers who have farmed land for generations and investors who have purchased farmland so as to gain measurable profits from its sale. Land prices have been rising dynamically over the last few years and no other investment could ensure such a high capital return as the investment into land. It seems to be a realistic prediction that the number of lease agreements as well as the acreage of leased farmland in the private market will increase. The author's earlier study [Marks-Bielska 2010] shows that lease contracts are very common in Poland, but they are often informal and there are no statistical data illustrating this subject. The acreage of land actually farmed by particular farmers (including informal lease agreements) is much higher than the declared one (statistically verified).

CONCLUSIONS

The number of the largest farms, with more than 50 ha of farmland, has been growing steadily in Poland. Most of such big farms are in the northern and western provinces of the country. It is also in those parts of Poland that the desirable changes in the area structure of farms occur most rapidly. This results from the past situation in the north and west of Poland, where there were many state-owned farms, which typically covered large areas. The slowest rate of transformation in the area structure of farms is noted in south-eastern Poland, where very small farms are prevalent and the number of big farms is negligibly small. This regional diversity in Polish agriculture seems to persist as it is rooted in distant past, when Poland had been partitioned by three neighbouring empires.

In 2014, just 30% of agricultural land in Poland was in farms larger in size (over 50 ha), while in many other EU countries with a similar structure of production assortment (mostly western and northern EU members), this percentage is as high as 80–90%.

The following factors have a decisive influence on the area structure of farms in Poland: availability of farmland (acreage of farmland available to farmers), historical conditions, the state transformation, integration with the European Union, multi-functional use of agricultural land the agricultural policy conducted in the area of rational management of agricultural land. In the context of the provisions of the amended Act on the formation of agricultural system, it can be expected that transformations of the area structure of Polish farms will proceed towards its improvement, especially with the help of land lease agreements, but for this expectation to come true it is necessary to give actual support to lease as a form of land management, for instance in the implemented agricultural policy. It seems reasonable to prepare, pass and implement an Act on agricultural lease, which would protect the rights of both leases and land owners. Lease as a form of land management has proven to function well in many countries, especially in Western Europe, but also in our southern neighbours, and given an adequate policy it has a good chance to develop in Poland and thereby to contribute to a better area structure of Polish farms.

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UWARUNKOWANIA ZRÓŻNICOWANIA TERYTORIALNEGO STRUKTURY OBSZAROWEJ GOSPODARSTW ROLNYCH W POLSCE

Streszczenie. W pracy podjęto próbę określenia uwarunkowań zróżnicowania regionalnego struktury obszarowej gospodarstw rolnych w Polsce. Przyczyn tego zróżnicowania jest wiele. Można do nich zaliczyć m.in: uwarunkowania historyczne, transformację ustrojową (traktowaną jako zmiana instytucjonalna) i dostępność popegeerowskich gruntów w poszczególnych województwach, integrację z Unią Europejską (prowadzona polityka rolna, m.in. w ramach wspólnej polityki rolnej), wielofunkcyjność ziemi rolnej (czynnik produkcji, dobro przyrodnicze, wartość kulturowa i symboliczna). W Polsce w 2014 roku tylko 30% użytków rolnych znajdowało się w gospodarstwach obszarowo większych (powyżej 50 ha). Pozytywny jest fakt, że rośnie liczba tego typu gospodarstw. W kontekście zapisów znowelizowanej ustawy o kształtowaniu ustroju rolnego przewidywać można, że przemiany struktury obszarowej będą zmierzały w kierunku jej poprawy, szczególnie na bazie dzierżawy.

Słowa kluczowe: gospodarstwo rolne, struktura obszarowa, obrót ziemią rolniczą, dzierżawa rolnicza, Agencja Nieruchomości Rolnych, Zasób Własności Rolnej Skarbu Państwa

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