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# Studies in Agricultural Economics

Volume 115, Number 2

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Magyar  
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Európai Mezőgazdasági Vidékfejlesztési Alap:  
a vidéki területekbe beruházó Európa



DARÁNYI IGNÁC TERV

A projekt a Magyar Nemzeti Vidéki Hálózat Elnökségének értékelése és javaslata alapján, az Európai Mezőgazdasági és Vidékfejlesztési Alap társfinanszírozásában, a Nemzeti Vidékfejlesztési Program Irányító Hatóságának jóváhagyásával valósul meg.

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## Foreword

The Europe 2020 strategy of the European Union (EU) is focused on delivering growth that is: *smart*, through more effective investments in education, research and innovation; *sustainable*, thanks to a decisive move towards a low-carbon economy; and *inclusive*, with a strong emphasis on job creation and poverty reduction<sup>1</sup>.

Amongst recent developments on this subject, two have had a special influence on this thematic issue of *Studies in Agricultural Economics*.

Firstly, the EU's Rural Development Policy for the programming period 2014-2020 will have six priorities that are intended to ensure a focused contribution of the Rural Development Programmes towards the attainment of the Europe 2020 targets. These are:

- Fostering knowledge transfer in agriculture, forestry and rural areas;
- Enhancing the competitiveness of all types of agriculture and enhancing farm viability;
- Promoting food chain organisation and risk management in agriculture;
- Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems dependent on agriculture and forestry;
- Promoting resource efficiency and supporting the shift towards a low carbon and climate-resilient economy in the agriculture, food and forestry sectors;
- Promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas.

Secondly, the Regional Studies Association European Conference that was held in Delft, the Netherlands, in May 2012 included several contributions that explored smartness, sustainability and inclusiveness in rural areas in a broader regional context. Five of the papers in this thematic issue originated from presentations made at that conference.

The first three papers in this issue look at different aspects of the flow of knowledge in rural areas, an important contributor to 'smartness'. Fröhlich *et al.* surveyed German school children and found that most lack an understanding of the impact of agriculture on the environment. They conclude that agricultural education in Germany does not adequately teach modern agricultural practices or the importance of modern agricultural challenges.

From their study of local self-governmental authority

websites in Mazowsze in Poland, Owsński *et al.* identified dramatic differences in the extent of 'local networks', as quantified by local website links, and proposed that an important determinant is the broadly conceived culture, including the 'smartness' aspect. An analysis by Nemes and High of Hungarian AKS institutions is the third contribution. It examines the most important current trends and problems limiting the effectiveness of the current AKS institutions and introduces the concept of LINSAs and its relevance in the Hungarian context.

The next three papers address the topic of 'sustainability' in rural areas. Fieldsend reviewed the influence of factors that affect labour supply, and those that affect enterprise and economic dynamism, on rural employment potential. He recommends that a regional development strategy must include a specific 'Rural Renaissance' component if regional economic resilience is to be achieved.

The limited contributions to supply and social life, and the weak economic viability of many village shops in Germany, are shown by Küpper and Eberhardt. Permanent public and civic support is required to sustain many small shops in small villages. Travnikar and Juvančič look at the impact in Slovenia of EU funding disbursed under the measure *Modernisation of agricultural holdings*. Their results confirm a positive relationship between farm investment support and agricultural labour productivity. Differences in labour productivity between different farm types are also demonstrated.

'Inclusiveness', in terms of community engagement in rural areas, is the subject of the final two papers. Go *et al.* show how embedded governance, which builds on social capital, guided by institutional policy, enabled three villages in the province of Trentino, Italy, to pull together their resources within the frame of one networked destination formation. Finally, the impact of LEADER on improving 'smart' places is discussed by Pollerman *et al.* From the findings of the evaluation of Rural Development Programmes in Germany they conclude that LEADER focuses on establishing preconditions for innovation and not on implementing innovations themselves.

The theme and purpose of this issue of *Studies in Agricultural Economics* are consistent with the aims of the Hungarian National Rural Network (MNVH) action plan. These are, namely, the social and economic development of the countryside, and to develop inter-regional and international relationships in a practice-oriented manner.

**Andrew Fieldsend**  
Budapest, May 2013

<sup>1</sup> EUROPE 2020: A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. COM(2010) 2020 final. Brussel: European Commission.

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**BÍRÓ Szabolcs and SZÉKELY Erika**

### **Opportunities to increase employment in agriculture in the rural areas of Hungary**

Agroeconomic Book, published 2012

In Hungarian agriculture, which plays an important role in rural employment, the signs of gradual restructuring can be seen. In the last decade the rural areas of Hungary – apart from showing significant regional and sectoral divergences – could be characterised by high unemployment levels and long-term structural unemployment, low levels of qualifications, wages below the national average, an increasing number of people applying for social benefits and also by ‘invisible incomes’ linked with tax evasion and black and grey employment. By analysing the labour market of rural areas and the agricultural sector as well as the opportunities and the ways of increasing employment in agriculture we concluded that regarding from the view of the national economy. Most importantly, the

market-based employment can be made economically more viable, but an increase in the economic and social activity of the population in a disadvantageous position is also needed to encourage their integration into the labour market, and this can be achieved through socially-based employment creation. Increased employment in rural areas cannot be based exclusively on primary agricultural activities. Constant growth can be ensured only by developments that are better adjusted to the demands of the economic environment and by stabilising the entire food chain. In rural areas that are in the most disadvantageous situation in terms of social and economic conditions, the emphasis should be placed on the self-supply and subsistence functions of agriculture.

**VÁGÓ Szabolcs (ed.)**

### **Hungarian Food and Agricultural Statistics 2011**

Agroeconomic Information, published 2012

The publication provides information on the results achieved in 2011 in agriculture, forestry and food industry. We assured the comparability of time-series in connection with the pocketbooks published in the recent years. Besides the national and branch indicators and data, the principal agricultural data are also given in details by counties. The

international data are suitable to demonstrate the main trends. The published data are compiled on the basis of the publications of the Central Statistical Office, EUROSTAT, the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and the Research Institute of Agricultural Economics.

**MÁCSAI Éva, KUJÁNI Katalin, JUHÁSZ Anikó, HAMZA Eszter and GYÖRE Dániel**

### **The current performance and opportunities of farm-direct sales in the food supply chain in Hungary**

Agroeconomic Study, published 2012

The study examined alternative, direct to consumers sales channels of farmers in the fruits and vegetables, wine and dairy sectors. Our study showed that the new Hungarian legislation relating to farmers' direct sales from 2010 improved the farmers' opportunities. The main benefits of direct selling were: daily income (cash flow); increased profitability; a direct trust relationship with consumers; and reduced dependence on the buying power of retailers. The main limiting factors of direct sales were: geographical and social limitations on demand; demand fluctuates so it is dif-

icult to plan; increasing competition in this form of sales; the legal requirements and economic conditions of direct sales are investment-intensive; the administrative burdens are numerous and costly; it is a time consuming and labour-intensive activity; and farmers were mistrustful of co-operation. Our analysis showed that farmers direct sales in different sectors had common advantages and disadvantages, thus it is possible to work out a comprehensive programme to support the development of short food supply chains within the framework of the Common Agricultural Policy.

ISÉPY Anett, MÁNDI-NAGY Dániel, NÉMETH Noémi and STUMMER Ildikó

## Experiences of the EU school milk and school fruit schemes in Hungary

Agroeconomic Book, published 2012

The goals of the school milk and school fruit schemes in Hungary are to stabilise the market and to provide children with healthy products, so encouraging healthy dietary habits and to improve their health and quality of life. The purpose of our study was to describe and to evaluate the school milk and school fruit schemes, to introduce the reader to the legislative background and to describe developments in actual payments in Hungary and in the European Union. We intended to answer the following questions: firstly, why do the schools participate in the scheme and, secondly, what is the experience gained. We can conclude that the preliminary expectations of the schools participating in the school milk and school fruit schemes and covered by the survey were not

met. The reason is that the goals of the schemes can only be reached in the longer term since the effects of the school milk and school fruit on the dietary habits and consumption can only be seen later. On the basis of our analysis we can make the following recommendations: the school fruit scheme should be expanded, consumption of school milk should be encouraged, the accompanying measures should be enlarged and extended also to the school milk scheme, the parents should be included in the accompanying measures, the schemes should be disseminated in disadvantaged regions, the efficiency of transportation should be increased and the administrative burden should be reduced. Finally, we have also determined the possible directions of further research.

FEKETE Géza and KISS György (eds)

## Production data for the major Hungarian food products, 2011

Agroeconomic Information, published 2013

This publication presents data, for a wide selection of products, on the production costs and sales income of the food processing industry in 2011 compared to the previous year. Firstly, the price changes for the major food product groups are briefly summarised and, secondly, tabulated data for individual food products are presented. These data show that in 2011 the production costs of meat products generally increased. This is true for all products as the manufacturers aimed to compensate for their growing production costs with some increases in sales prices. For a number of meat industry products the increase in the sales price did not compensate

for the increase in the production cost in 2011, so the profits were lower. In the poultry, dairy, milling and baking industries, as well as in the production of pasta products, increases compared to the previous period in raw material costs, and more or less in total production costs too, can be observed. The results usually varied between products within sectors, with the exception of the milling industry, for example, where improved results were associated with all of the products for which data are presented. A positive example is pasta production, where all of the presented products again generated a profit, as in the previous year.

TANÍTÓ Dezső, LÁMFALUSI Ibolya, TÓTH Kristóf, PÉTER Krisztina, FELKAI Beáta Olga and VARGA Tibor

## The effects of changing the value added tax on agricultural and food products in Hungary

Agroeconomic Book, published 2013

According to agricultural associations, fair market players and professional assessments the black market has increased greatly in the Hungarian agri-food sector, causing huge moral and financial losses for the honest players in the economy and for the state budget. The dominant opinion is that one of the main drivers of the spread of the black market in the sector is the high rates of value added tax (VAT) applied to agri-food products, which damage the competitive position of the sector and destroy market relationships and social moral. To overcome these negative implications a considerable reduction in the VAT rates is needed, at least in the case of the basic food products. The analysis of the Hungarian situation as well as the review of practices across

the European Union (EU) shows that VAT rates are too high in Hungary in comparison to VAT rates in other EU Member States and the domestic economic conditions. Consequently this study examines the possibilities and effects of a reduction in VAT rates for food products in the light of international experiences and national possibilities. Our conclusion is that in the case of basic food, which accounts for 50 per cent of total food consumption, the government should reduce the VAT rate. Taking into account EU VAT regulations, internal budgetary constraints and favourable economic effects, we consider a reduction of the preferential VAT rate to 9-14 per cent to be feasible, assuming that the standard VAT rate remains unchanged at 27 per cent.



**RADÓCZNÉ KOCSIS Terézia**

## **The market prospects for some promising fruit species (walnut, pear, apricot, cherry)**

Agroeconomic Study, published 2012

This study begins by presenting an overview of the problems, risks, employment, and cost and income ratios of walnut, apricot, pear and cherry production in Hungary. It describes the trends in the uses of these products, especially the potential for fresh consumption in Hungary and for Hungarian exports. It also reviews global and European Union production and trade, and the main import markets of these species. The potential for the development of production in these sectors, based on the market demand, conditions and commercial organisations, was assessed. The Hungarian market is small and price sensitive, and the solvent demand is low because of the indebtedness of the population. Therefore more attention should be given to the European market. The export of almost all products is presently concentrated in only

2-3 foreign markets. The external market situation of walnut is more favourable than that of the other three species. Hungarian washed walnuts with shells is a special premium product and exports account for 7-10 per cent of Hungarian production. Part of the production is exported to retail stores abroad and this category is promising because the store sales are continuously growing. The main market for Hungarian pears is Finland but, additionally, Hungary should penetrate the eastern European market. For Hungarian exports to be more competitive, storage capacity should be further developed and winter varieties should be planted. World production of sweet cherries has grown continuously in the past ten years. Exports of Hungarian cherries are also increasing and the main markets are Russia, Germany and Austria.

**KEMÉNY Gábor, VARGA Tibor and FELKAI Beáta**

## **The effects of weather risks on micro-regional insurance costs and yields in Hungarian agriculture**

Agroeconomic Book, published 2012

The research examined the territorial differentiation of damage to wheat, maize, barley, sunflower seed, rapeseed, grape and apple production caused by drought, heavy rain and spring frost. The investigation evaluated the territorial differences in the effects of weather on agricultural production and found that there are extremely high differences in the probabilities of damage in different micro-regions. Therefore the design of agricultural insurance products should be based

on different absolute deductibles and different insurance premiums for micro-regions. Furthermore, it was found that within a micro-region individual producers face a very high diversity of risks which implies that in the long term only a *bonus-malus* system developed for individual agricultural producers can mitigate different risks, and that this can be the basis of a well performing risk management system that is suitable for a wide risk community.

**JUHÁSZ Anikó and WAGNER Hartmut**

## **An analysis of Hungarian agri-food export competitiveness**

Agroeconomic Study, published 2012

The main purpose of our study was to provide an overview of the export growth trends in the Hungarian agri-food sector over the last decade and to identify the obstacles hindering the sector's development. We used constant market share (CMS) analysis to break down the changes in export growth into components. Almost without exception, the increasing market size accounted for most of the export growth. The commodity (composition) and competitiveness effect aspects produced varied results and were not so positive. This showed that the Hungarian export structure was less adaptive to changes in demand in the target export markets. Our results also showed that for western European Union (EU) member states the national technical regulations

density rankings (calculated from the TRIS database) were nearly the opposite of the trade logistics efficiency (cost, duration and document number) rankings. In other words the 'old' EU member states have developed a competitively operating service sector of foreign trade logistics and at the same time created an efficient safety net of regulations controlling the import of products that could harm the interests of society (mainly addressing public health, sanitary and phytosanitary risks). Confirming the recommendations of the study, a similar analysis for the Eastern EU member states showed that in both areas (logistics efficiency and the effective use of legal protection) there is still a lot that can be learned from the 'old' member states.

## Studies in Agricultural Economics

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