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Studies in Agricultural Economics

Volume 116, Number 1

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Foreword

The 'theme' of this issue of *Studies in Agricultural Economics* is the European Rural Development Network (ERDN, www.erdn.eu). The ERDN was set up in 2002 to bring together the efforts and competencies of various research institutions, mainly located in eastern central and south eastern Europe, through jointly conducted work on the state and the paths of transformation of rural areas, and especially farming, in the region, in the perspective of the anticipated enlargement of the European Union (EU) and its future policies.

The ERDN is coordinated by the Institute of Agricultural and Food Economics - National Research Institute in Warszawa and encompasses the leading research centres in the region. The network goes from strength to strength, and its annual autumn conference is now well established. Agricultural economists are strongly represented but the ERDN appreciates that one of the main features of rural development is its complexity, and therefore the network includes scientists with a broad range of competences.

Several members of the Editorial Board of *Studies in Agricultural Economics* have actively participated in the work of the ERDN over the years and it therefore seems appropriate to publish a thematic issue of the journal that would showcase the research competences of the network. The idea was favourably received and this issue includes contributions from Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Hungary and Poland.

The study of local land markets in western Germany by Margarian shows that there is a complex relationship between farmers' strategies, their general attitudes and farm development dynamics. This result implies (a) that the specific conditions in local land markets can contribute to a regional differentiation of farm development strategies, and (b) that the observed differences result from path-dependent development and reflect rational considerations rather than irrational behaviour or exogenous cultural differences.

The first of two papers looking at the possible impacts of Common Agricultural Policy reform focuses on small ruminant farming in Austria. Through the use of farm models and an analysis of the Austrian Integrated Administration and Control System data sets, Hambrusch identifies redistribution effects resulting from the implementation of an area-based payment scheme instead of the Single Farm Payment Scheme in favour of less extensive farm management systems. By contrast, Ivanov and Sokolova model crop production in Bulgaria in the period 2013-2017 in the con-

text of the policy changes. The areas of maize and sunflower may increase, while those of wheat, barley and rapeseed will remain static or slightly decline. There is a positive growth trend in the projected yields for all five crops but prices per tonne will fall.

The next two papers address labour market issues. Unay Gailhard and Kataria analysed the determinants of labour force transition to inactivity in the German labour market. They found that, although education level and marital status both influenced the transition to inactivity during the global economic crisis (2008-09), the effects in rural and urban areas were different. The interaction of individuals with institutional settings was also a contributory factor. Rakowska's study on unemployment trends in Poland since the start of the global economic crisis shows that the highest unemployment rates continue be amongst females in rural areas. In the most problematic LAU 2 regions the combination of the lower mobility of many women and the remoteness from the main employment centres is the main cause of high unemployment rates.

The paper by Katona Kovács demonstrates why the focus of actions in rural areas has to be changed from funding to learning. Using the why-how-what approach, the author firstly argues that human and social capital are the most important resources for enhancing the development of rural regions, and then describes some actions which are already putting the focus on learning in rural areas.

Learning and innovation have been major factors in the transformation from mass production to a genuine rural experience economy in the Villány wine region in Hungary. This process unfolded over a period of 25 years or more. Kovács firstly identifies its five distinct phases and discusses the general and specifically local factors that can be implicated in it.

Finally, a short communication from Krammer and Heijman reports that the spending of visitors during the Christmas Festival 'Magisch Maastricht' in 2012 supported the creation of approximately 400 new jobs in Maastricht, mostly in the wholesale and retail sector.

It is a pleasure to be able to promote awareness of the ERDN through *Studies in Agricultural Economics* and I hope that readers will take an active part in future ERDN activities.

Andrew Fieldsend Budapest, March 2014

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Conference report

Global Forum and Expo on Family Farming

Budapest, 4-6 March 2014

Family farming plays a central role in achieving global and local food security, as well as in ensuring the sustainable use of natural resources. In order to raise the profile of family farming and smallholder farming, to reposition family farming at the centre of agricultural, environmental and social policies in the national agendas by identifying gaps and opportunities, and to promote a shift towards a more equal and balanced development, the United Nations (UN) declared 2014 as the International Year of Family Farming.

As a key event for the International Year, the Ministry of Rural Development of Hungary, in cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), organised a *Global Forum and Expo on Family Farming* that was held in Budapest on 4-6 March 2014.

The Forum addressed four main subjects: (1) The role of family farms in contributing to local and global food security; (2) Family farming and the three dimensions of sustainability – harmonising the social, environmental and economic aspects; (3) Key challenges and opportunities for agricultural investments in family farming; and (4) The role of women and young farmers in family farming.

By covering these issues in an integrated manner, combining policy, scientific, financial-economic and governmental approaches, the Forum contributed to the global dialogue and debates on policies and programmes that affect family farming at national, regional and local levels. The main policy discussions of the Forum were conducted through plenary sessions, a Ministerial roundtable that focused on subject (1) above, and three concurrent panel discussions that addressed subjects (2) - (4).

Parallel to the Forum, the Expo provided an opportunity for the family farmers of the participant countries to introduce their activities to Forum participants and the general public.

At the closing plenary session a Closing Summary document was presented and the wording of this was as follows:

"Initiated by the Government of the Philippines and the World Rural Forum, the UN General Assembly declared 2014 as the International Year of Family Farming. Against this background, the FAO and the Hungarian Ministry of Rural Development organised a Global Forum to identify the various political, policy, business and social elements that play a role in the complex environment in which family farms operate. The overall objective was to find ways in which economies and communities could benefit from the values that family farms represent in food production, management of natural resources, biodiversity, human relations and the preservation of cultural heritage.

The main findings of the two day event, which emerged from the ministerial roundtable and the three parallel panel discussions, are the following:

Even if family farms differ to a large extent from region to region, they have values that all nations share and challenges that all nations need to tackle. Most smallholder farms are family-based and make a significant contribution to global food and nutrition security. However, family farms and the countries in which they operate are diverse in many ways and the solutions offered for them should be tailored for this diversity.

Farmers need a high enough income to maintain their rural livelihoods and not to move to urban areas in the hope for a better life. To this end, a decent price for their produce and services needs to be obtained.

Limited access to land and other natural resources, knowledge, education and financing are seriously hindering family farming development globally. Best practices of coping mechanisms should be widely disseminated.

Co-operation could offer access to investment, technology and markets, making family farming viable. An enabling environment, including clear and simple legislation and a proper taxation system, is crucial for the development of co-operatives and farmers' organisations. Socially responsible partnerships with civil society organisations and with the private sector can play an important role in the promotion of co-operation.

Women are the backbone of family farming but their large contribution is not duly recognised in terms of income earned and access to productive resources and assets. If both women and men have adequate access to productive resources, rural societies can become more resilient. Hence, women's meaningful participation in decision making processes should be enabled. We should continue raising awareness of the role of women in family farming management and promote women's equal access to land, credit, education, technology, networks and decision-making processes.

Youth are increasingly losing interest in agriculture and are migrating away from rural areas in search for job opportunities in other sectors. In order to provide young farmers with adequate livelihoods, appropriate income, targeted policies, programmes and projects are essential.

The common ground among the views expressed reflects the key position that family farms occupy in sustainable agriculture. Since we all want our agrarian systems and rural networks to be sustainable, we must strive to support family farms.

Economic sustainability is essential for family farming. Viable farming helps to keep young people on the farm. We also need pragmatic co-operation and responsible actions from different stakeholders: especially government, business, farmers and civil society.

Environmental regulations should take into account the measured and internalised positive and negative externalities of different types of family farming. Traditional family farming strongly contributes to environmental sustainability. New environmental challenges should be answered by participative research, knowledge transfer and life-long learning.

The social sustainability of family farming is based on the next generation's willingness to take part in farming and the society valuing the culture behind traditional family farming".

Extended summary

KESZTHELYI Szilárd and MOLNÁR András

Results of Hungarian FADN Farms 2012

The Hungarian Farm Accountancy Data Network (FADN) consists of 1,599 individual and 388 corporate sample farms. These farms are representative of the approximately 106 thousand commercial Hungarian agricultural producers in terms of farm type, economic size and legal form. The Research Institute of Agricultural Economics (AKI) is responsible for the collection of micro-economic data on the costs and incomes of these. The results are published annually by AKI and may be downloaded in Hungarian or English from the AKI website (www.aki.gov.hu) or requested in printed form from aki@aki.gov.hu.

The publication begins with a short introduction about the general context and the purpose of the publication, definitions of the economic terms and indicators used, and a description of the method of deriving the balance sheet and income. The profitability and the change in assets in the agricultural sector as a whole are then described, the factors influencing the income situation of individual and corporate farms are separately highlighted, the effect of subsidies on profitability is discussed, and a comparison is made of the results of individual and corporate farms. Following this the development of land prices and rental fees across the different FADN regions of Hungary are reviewed, and a narrow international comparison limited only to financial indicators is made. Attention is then paid to the application of environmental indicators in the FADN context, and the publication concludes with a short overview on the small farms below the sampling threshold level. The book is supplemented by a comprehensive set of tables that introduce aggregated FADN farm data broken down by legal form, region, type of farming and economic size.

The main findings are as follows. Since the 2009 financial crisis the profitability of the agricultural sectors has been continuously growing, although the pace of growth in 2012 has slowed down substantially, and differentiated between farm types. Profit before taxes of individual farms has risen by 6 per cent and of corporate farms by 7 per cent. The net value added has stagnated. Below average crop yields have been balanced by favourable crop prices. In the livestock sector the average prices of animal products have also exceeded those of the previous year. Gross production value and production costs per hectare increased by 5 and 6 per cent respectively in the case of individual farms, while for corporate farms both figures rose by 2 per cent.

An important element of favourable profitability is that accumulated 2011 stocks were sold at 2012 high prices. In terms of net value added, pig producers have increased their profits the most, by 48 per cent. Greenhouse vegetable farms managed to expand their profit levels by 25 per cent, and the profits of poultry producers and field vegetable farms increased by about 10 per cent. By contrast, arable crop producers and dairy farms experienced stagnating profit levels. The profits of cattle and sheep rearing together with fruit growing farms shrank by about 10 per cent while those of mixed farms and vine producers fell by 25 and 32 per cent respectively.

Investments per hectare – regarding all farms – amounted

to HUF 76.7 thousand while the amount of subsidies attached to investments stood at HUF 4.9 thousand per hectare. The value of investments decreased by 4 per cent and the amount of investment subsidies by 11 per cent. The drop is without question related to the substantially (13 per cent) reduced investments into buildings. Investments into machinery on the contrary grew by 3 per cent. Despite this setback net investments (gross investments less depreciation) were HUF 14.7 thousand per hectare higher; meaning that technological development and rejuvenation have continued. Investment intensity was the highest in the case of pig and poultry farms which is the result of development programmes initiated earlier.

The structure of financing the businesses changed considerably in 2012; businesses moved towards self-financing. Profits generated in previous years have been reinvested in the sector. The equity of farms has increased by 15 per cent, while the amount of liabilities fell by 6 per cent and interest costs declined by 27 per cent. This, under favourable conditions, shows considerable potential in the financing of agricultural businesses.

The increase of land prices continued in 2012. The price of arable land went up by 12 per cent – well above the inflation rate - to HUF 601 thousand per hectare. Land rental fees grew even more, by 17 per cent. On average farmers had to pay HUF 36.3 thousand to rent one hectare of arable land in 2012. Based on the data of 2012 we can conclude that farms cultivating partly on Nitrate Vulnerable Zones used slightly less nitrogen and achieved lower yields. There are significant regional differences in nitrogen use, which mostly follow the profitability as well. However, in Heves and Nógrád counties, contrary to general correlation between nitrogen use, wheat yield and profitability witnessed in other NUTS 3 regions, the less profitable farms used larger amounts of nitrogen but produced lower yields. This suggests that some farms use inappropriate practices and/or they experienced higher than average rates of natural disaster(s).

This was the first year that farms below the economic threshold were also selected for the purpose of rural development issues. Despite the fact that these households are producing a certain share of their own foodstuffs, a sizeable amount of their incomes are spent on food. The average share spent on food is 29 per cent but, because of the specific nature of the produced foodstuffs, in the case of crop producers this share is higher (34 per cent) while for livestock keepers it is lower (25 per cent).

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- Reference to a chapter in an edited book. Mettam, G.R. and Adams, L.B. (1999): How to prepare an electronic version of your article, in Jones, B.S and Smith, R.Z. (eds), Introduction to the Electronic Age. New York: E-Publishing, 281–304.

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