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# AGRÁRGAZDASÁGI KUTATÓ INTÉZET

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No. 52

ACTUAL PROBLEMS IN AGRICULTURAL POLICY IN HUNGARY

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POLICIES OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND MEAT  
PRODUCTION IN HUNGARY

By

Gyula Varga - Mrs. Magda Némethi - Tamás Ujhelyi

1. General considerations in production policies and objects of development

The growth of animal husbandry during the past 30 years has steadily outstripped that of agriculture as a whole. The volume of the output of animal products has increased to 226, /average of 1951-1955 = 100/ while the performance of plant production has reached 164. The relatively balanced growth is demonstrated by the indices of the annual average increase of the output /percent/:

in the years 1956 to 1960	3,7
in the years 1961 to 1965	2,3
in the years 1966 to 1970	2,8
in the years 1971 to 1975	4,1
in the years 1976 to 1980	3,8

As a result of the growth pace which has exceeded that of agriculture as a whole the share of animal husbandry in the total output has risen to 47-49 percent in the eighties. The progress has been significant in respect of the pig branch yielding the largest quantities of meat, while poultry keeping has taken the second place taking into account meat output as well /see Table 1/.

The growth of animal husbandry is the result partly of extensive farming, partly of increasing yields. At present, the needs in meat are met at a level of about 135 to 138 percent, while the figure for milk needs is 100-105 percent and that of egg needs is 110-120 percent /see also Table 2/.

The authorities in charge of agriculture have considered the satisfactory food supply as a fundamental task at all times. They make continuous efforts to expand exports of meats to the greatest possible extent /including live and breeding animals as well as fertile eggs/. A comprehensive summary of these efforts as reflected by the medium-range development objectives is offered hereunder:

- In respect of cattle breeding we intend to maintain the cattle stock, to increase the milk yield per cow by 350 litres, and to maintain the existing volume of meat output. These targets facilitate a 7-8 percent increase of milk output, a 11-13 percent rise of milk product output, as well as a division of beef output between exports and domestic supply. The ratio of domestic consumption of beef to exports has been 55:45 percent in the eighties. Cattle keeping is on the increase in large-scale farms while it will probably decline in small-scale farms.

- We endeavour to achieve a 7-8 percent increase in respect of pork output between 1980 and 1985. The bulk of the expansion will be the result of the activity of large-scale farms, viz. mainly the increment by sow as well as the 10 percent increase per day in the weight of the porkers. Meat consumption will rise to a small extent only, in line with the change in the standard of living, the increase being mainly due to poultry consumption. Export targets are the following: rise by 10-15 percent and those of precessed products by more than 40 percent while we envisage a 15-20 percent decline in the export of live animals.

- A 9-10 percent expansion is envisaged for the period 1980 to 1985 in respect of poultry breeding, the target being valid for the output of meat as well as of eggs; however, the output of fertile eggs is planned to expand by 30 percent. Exports and domestic consumption will expand to almost identical extents. Within exports the share of products of higher value and produced more efficiently will increase /fertile eggs, chopped chicken products, goose-liver, feather, large poultry/.

- According to our plans sheep-farming will make considerable progress, the objects being to expand exports of meat and milk products, and to decrease wool imports to some extent. In Hungary there is little demand for mutton.

- There is little domestic demand for hare-meat but it is a relatively important export item. We intend to achieve a 30 percent increase of its output. The output of fish, in great demand at home and in foreign markets, will expand by 25 percent.

The fodder base of animal husbandry is based on domestic production; about 600 thousand tons of fodder of high protein content are being imported. We are making efforts to avail ourselves of the

existing resources to a greater extent than hitherto, by decreasing the specific fodder needs and a better utilization of by-products and waste for the purpose of fodder. Protein imports will stagnate while domestic protein resources will be expanded by about 35 percent. Conservation and storage of fodder will be emphasized through energy saving devices. The authorities in charge of agriculture stimulate the employment of such devices by special arrangements.

## 2. Production policies, objectives in consumption, economic management of production

We intend to determine the growth rate of the output of animal husbandry in such a way that the latter should keep abreast with the expansion of plant production. Further aims are to ensure that the utilization of protein fodders should not enhance the dependence on imports, and that the output of animal husbandry should be sufficient to meet domestic consumer needs and to expand rentable exports. Satisfaction of domestic consumer needs is an important element of standard of living policies. Efforts to expand exports should be considered as a requirement equal in importance with the satisfaction of domestic consumer needs, or it may even take precedence over the latter in case of necessity. Export serve to establish balance in respect of foreign economic relations.

The Hungarian authorities avail themselves of the so-called indirect methods or economic stimulate /prices, subsidies, credit and interest policies, taxation/ with a view to influencing agricultural enterprises /producers/, the objects being to achieve the desirable growth rate, production structure, and efficiency. The principal requirements to ensure the working of the indirect management system are the following: independence and equality of enterprises, the uniform producers' price system, a balanced supply in respect of the agricultural means of production and of foodstuffs. The means of production should be made available by the producers' market while the foodstuffs should be obtainable in the retail trade.

In addition to socialist large-scale farms Hungarian agricultural policies are paying particular attention to the stimulation and support of small-scale farmers, too. The latter play an important role in respect of animal husbandry, in fact this role surpasses the average. It is our intention to safeguard this role in the future, in respect of



production as well as of marketing of commodities.

a/ Price policies

Production policies of agricultural authorities are focussed on stabilization efforts and on maintaining an adequate rentability level of production. Price policies and price levels have important part to play in the aforesaid. The bulk of animal products are sold at prices fixed by the authorities. Just as the prices of feed and fodder compounds the prices of animal products are announced in advance, at the beginning of each farming year.

Prices fixed by the authorities relate to slaughter cattle, live and chopped pig sold on contract as well as to milk sold in the same way. It is forbidden to charge prices other than those fixed by the authorities.

Protecting or minimum prices are valid for piglets, slaughter calf also suitable for keeping, poultry, egg, as well as for slaughter pig and cattle not sold on contract. Parties may agree to charge and pay prices higher than those stated as minimum prices. Protecting prices exist primarily on the piglet market with large turnover. As a means of intervention in the market the state endeavours to influence the maximum price as well, with a view to protecting small-scale farmers engaged in purchasing piglets and in fattening pigs for marketing purposes. /Large-scale farms are fattening mainly piglets produces by them/.

Free prices are charged for slaughter sheep, horses whether for slaughter or domestic purposes, foal, goat, as well for pig and slaughter cattle unsuitable for selling on contract.

Overcharges are generally added, or may be added, to the basic prices of animal products. Such overcharges conform to different criteria. They are as follows:

- export overcharge pending the quality of the slaughter animal,
- quantity overcharge pending the volume of sales effected by the enterprises,
- season overcharge dependent on the time of scale,
- contract overcharge spreading over years connected with the sales of small-scale farmers, pending the expiry of their contracts for selling products.

The above-mentioned overcharges are not valid for the production of eggs.

The producers receive the overcharges as well as the basic prices from the enterprise engaged in selling or processing of the products purchased. Large-scale farms operating under adverse conditions obtain price support or subsidies acting as prices after their sales of animal products; these subsidies amount to 6-14 percent of their income from sales.

b/ Non-price measures

There are several forms of measures which are not expressed in prices and aim at assisting some of the farming methods or at stimulating the implementation of the desirable policies in structure. The following may be mentioned:

- exemption from taxation is granted to small-scale cattle keeping, and abatement of taxes is conceded to small-scale farmers producing certain animal products,

- large-scale farms are granted exemption from taxation in respect of animal keeping performed on behalf of state authorities /e.g. veterinary hygiene quarantine and related services, allotment of intervention nature granted for animal keeping, etc./,

- small-scale farmers are granted cow keeping funds in each year with a view to offsetting their efforts to decrease their stock or to slowing down this process which could not be halted for years. The small-scale farmers concerned receive 2500 Forints per cow, but if they keep two or more cows they get 6000 Forints per cow /in case they undertake to keep the animals for the duration of four years/. In order to offset stock decreasing efforts of small-scale farmers the large-scale farms receive funds to stimulate augmentation of cattle stock suitable for meat production; the amount is 20000 Forints per cow,

- the most important non-price stimuli relate to interest and credit policies. The rule is to grant credits to large-scale farms with a duration between 5-8 years and the rate of interest is 11-13 percent; however, credits of 5-year duration and with a 2-4 percent allowance in interest may be obtained for the purposes of poultry keeping development, for buildings in pig and cattle keeping, for manure handling establishments in farms carrying out keeping functions, as well as for modernizing fodder farming and food processing,

- besides large-scale farms also small-scale farmers may apply for development credits for the purposes of purchasing base material in animal husbandry and fodder, the maximum amount being 50000 Forints, duration 5 years, interest 8 percent. Small-scale farmers are being assisted also by measures enabling them to purchase on credit breeding animals in the pig and cattle branches,

- large-scale farms receive direct investment subsidies for developing the cattle branch and pig keeping. Large-scale farms may apply for non-refundable state subsidies amounting to 30 percent of the establishment costs of dairy-farms and 35 percent of the building costs of pig-farms,

- a world should be said of the fund the purposes of which is to equalize the world market price fluctuations of protein fodders imported. The same applies to the measure whereby the state undertakes to carry temporarily the burden of a certain portion of the price increases of the imported energy, allowing time to the enterprises concerned to adapt themselves to changed conditions.

### 3. Measures in economic policy relating to the turnover of animals and meat

The turnover of breeding and live animals is free from restrictions. Large-scale farms and small-scale farmers are entitled to interchange freely live animals among themselves. The only exception is the slaughter cattle which can be marketed only according to the prescriptions of the authorities concerned, including the slaughtering of cattle which can be carried out exclusively on slaughter-houses designated or possessing permit.

The turnover freed from restrictions may be divided into two groups, viz. the so-called organized trade and the free market.

- The first category covers all products sold by the producer to the utilizer or processing enterprises as well as to the exporter company concerned through the medium of sales contracts, at fixed prices, and taking into account the specific price subsidies. The following items are sold on the organized market: slaughter pig, milk, poultry meat, as well as sheep and hare the bulk of which are being exported, and finally wool.

- The free trademarket is operating according to the demand and

supply. The following items are sold on the free market: eggs, piglets among small-scale farmers, further slaughter pigs, live poultry, and liquid milk. The turnover of the last three items is of marginal importance.

The classification of slaughter cattle, sold according to the prescriptions of the authorities, as well as that of slaughter animals and animal products, marketed on the organized market, takes place on the basis of certain standards laid down by branches:

- the slaughter cattle is being graded at first by age, sex, and weight categories, thereafter the following classes are distinguished within the framework of the said categories: extreme, class I, II, III. There is a 20 percent difference between the prices of the products classified in class "extreme" and in class III. Agricultural producers are granted export premia on slaughter cattle exports if the foreign price exceeds the average,

- the milk is permitted to be marketed only in accordance with the stipulated cleanliness degree and after, the supervisory organs have stated that it is void of tuberculosis. The basic producers' price of milk relates to 3,6 percent fat content, the price is proportionately higher or lower in case of other fat contents,

- granting of slaughter pigs is essentially identical, whether they are marketed for domestic use or are exported. Grading takes place to a decreasing extent for live animals and to an increasing extent for chopped half-pigs. In respect of chopped pigs the grading according to the four classes depends on the weight and on the proportion of fat. There is a difference of 30 percent in the producers' prices of products classified under the two extreme quality classes,

- in respect of poultry products several prescriptions in veterinary hygiene and quality criteria characterizing the physical state of the animal are in force, and also weight is considered. Four quality classes are being distinguished. Eggs are being graded under seven quality classes. Special quality criteria are in force in respect of the sale and price determination of goose-liver.

The changes in producers' prices are illustrated in Table 3.

#### 4. Consumption and consumer price policies

The bulk of animal products are marketed in retail trade at fixed and controlled consumer prices. In view of the fact that a balance has come to prevail during the past years between the demand of the population and the supply at given prices, there is no need for special controls. Taking into consideration production costs the government determines from time to time the level of consumer prices.

Fixed consumer prices of the bulk of meats, milk and milk products are below actual costs. Thus, consumer prices enjoy state subsidies, the source of which is the budget. The extent of such subsidies has been lowered in the past period, and we plan to carry out similar measures in the future, in conjunction with the policies aimed at safeguarding the standard of living. Tables 4 and 5 give an account on the consumption and the consumer prices. The data reveal that consumption rose vigorously mainly until 1975, and also that despite the significant rise of consumer prices since that time the demand has continued to increase, a fact that is due to the expansion of incomes.

No subsidies are granted to the consumer prices of shelled eggs, egg powder, liquid eggs, goose-liver, lard; a 34 percent subsidy is granted to the consumer price of cattle carcass meat and 22 percent to that of pig carcass meat, meat produce enjoy a 23-33 percent price subsidy. In addition to an average of 30 percent consumer price subsidy of poultry meat<sup>x/</sup> a 35 percent price subsidy is granted in respect of tinned animal products. In line with our family and social policy considerations the highest consumer price subsidies are granted to liquid milk and milk products, their extent ranging from 33 to 96 percent.

The above-mentioned consumer price subsidies of animal products whose extent is significant are driving the demand of the population in the direction of the so-called organized trade and the retail trade network selling the said products. The free market is being supplanted and the black market eliminated. Thus, the state is in a position to control the consumption and the consumer price level.

Given substantial exports there is seldom an excessive supply in these products. It may be overcome partly by means of increased propaganda or seasonal price reduction of tinned food etc. The subsidies

<sup>x/</sup>The subsidization of poultry meat sales, in excess of the average, serves to direct consumption toward items which may be produced cheaper.

of consumer prices have significantly contributed to the decline of subsistence farming in respect of animal products. However, important economic interests are tied up with the maintenance of the said farming.

## 5. Policies and measures in foreign trade

### a/ Export policy

Hungarian foreign trade policies are based on the broadening of cooperation with socialist countries and on the expansion of economic relations with capitalist countries ensuring mutual advantages. In respect of developing countries we make efforts to expand trade and cooperation as far as our resources allow us to do so.

Considerable proportions of the output of each important branch of animal husbandry are being exported. Hence, our export policy is closely related to policies of animal husbandry and meat production. Breeding and production policies as well as the planned domestic consumption determine the strategy, proportions, and priorities of the development of meat production as a whole as well as its part elements, the branches of cattle, pig, sheep, and poultry. The aforesaid as well as production potentialities and opportunities serve to outline and plan the quantity and structure of the exportable live animals, meats, and meat products. Of course, policies of production and exports act in both directions, in that production determines exports and export policy is of fundamental importance in determining development objectives of production. The exploration of potential markets is of decisive significance when shaping the extent and conditions of exports.

The order of magnitude of commodities meant for export as well as the system of economic requirement in exports are laid down in the medium-range /five-year/ planning documents. World market demand is changing frequently and to a significant extent in respect of the products turned out by branches producing for export. Under such circumstances export policies, aiming at ensuring the sales of commodities, pay particular attention to consultations with socialist countries with a view to agreeing on the plans, as well as to long-range marketing agreements. A general principle of export policy is to ensure that the rentable sales opportunities be exploited to the fullest possible extent in all countries irrespective of their socio-economic systems.

Exports take place within the framework of the general system of regulators in foreign trade, in line with our international obligations

/membership in COMECON, obligations in respect of GATT/. In Hungary no customs duties, taxes or allowances therefrom, are applied to diminish income from exports.

Exports to socialist countries take place on the basis of annual agreements and coordinated five-year export targets. Nevertheless, exports are effected as and when required, too. The agreements stipulate the quantities, the detailed commodity structure, the terms of delivery, and the prices. Long-range agreements are in force with certain socialist countries too /e.g. the agreement with the Soviet Union for the delivery of cereals and meat in return for energy sources and raw materials/.

There are no special actions and methods for disposing surpluses. In order to promote exports the marketing system is employed, taking into consideration the characteristics of live animals, meat and meat products, as well as of the export markets /e.g. general or specialized international exhibitions and displays contribute to exports of meat produce/.

b/ Import policy

In general, imports are designated for making up deficiencies in output only, or for buying certain products /for example, breeding stock/.

Imports are regulated by the system of customs duties laid down in the Trade Tariff. It contains three columns:

- the duties included in column I are preferential, applicable to products from certain developing countries;

the duties included in column II may be extended to countries enjoying most-favoured-nation treatment;

- the duties enumerated in column III are of penal character, and relate to countries which discriminate against Hungarian commerce.

Veterinary and meat hygiene rules respecting imports are established according to the prescriptions and recommendations of international organizations, in close cooperation with them. The appropriate organs of the exporter countries have to furnish reliable evidence to the effect that no sickness or disease determined by animal species have occurred in the districts where the premises of the exporting enterprises are located. A network of domestic quarantine has been established to serve imports of breeding stock. There are no common enterprises with exporters to Hungary.

## 6. International assistance

Hungarian experiences in animal husbandry and meat industry are made available to developing countries within the framework of foreign trade with them, with a view to assisting them in working out development plans. We make available the elements and requirements of breeding in a coordinated form, i.e. as a production system /equipment for animal husbandry, breeding material, fodder preparation equipment, etc./, so as to assist the said countries in developing an efficient animal husbandry.

International assistance takes place primarily in education and in certain special fields, for example fishery.

/Export missions to developing countries; education and training activities of the Tempered Fishery in Százhalombatta/.



Table 1

Growth of output of principal animal products,  
1961 to 1980

Products	1961- 1965	1966- 1970	1971- 1975	1976- 1980	Out of 1976- 1980 com- pared to 1961- 1965 /%/	Annual average growth rate, % between 1961-65 and 1976-1980
	1 0 0 0    t o n s					
Slaughter animal						
/1000 tons/						
Cattle	256	307	324	337	132	1,9
Pig	524	692	968	1108	212	5,1
Sheep	27	35	35	44	163	3,3
Poultry	184	238	317	426	232	5,8
Cow's milk /new/ /million hecto- litres/	15,0	16,4	16,9	22,1	147	2,6
Hen's egg /millions/	2046	2787	3521	4475	219	5,4
Wool /1000 tons/	9,6	10,3	8,3	10,6	110	0,7
Honey /1000 tons/	5,3	7,0	8,5	10,4	196	4,6
Fish-meat /1000 tons/	15,9	20,0	21,3	22,6	142	2,4

Source: Yearbook of Agricultural Statistics, 1980,  
Budapest, Central statistical Office, 1981,  
and previous volumes

Table 2

Principal indicators of animal husbandry

	I n y e a r			Output of 1975 as per- centage of that of 1970	Output of 1980 as percentage of that of 1970
	1970	1975	1980		
Output of slaughter cattle					
per cow, kg	435	482	433	110,8	89,8
per inhabitant, kg	31,4	35,9	30,7	114,3	85,5
Output of slaughter pig					
per sow, kg	1202	1763	1647	146,7	93,4
per inhabitant, kg	66,9	101,8	110,0	152,2	108,1
Output of slaughter sheep					
per inhabitant, kg	3,6	3,4	4,0	92,9	117,6
Output of slaughter poultry					
per inhabitant, kb	27,2	33,7	43,4	123,9	128,8
Milk output					
per cow <sup>x</sup> / litre	2187	2411	3557	110,2	147,5
per inhabitant, litre	158	168	231	106,3	137,5
Egg output					
per layer, piece	113	144	151	127,4	104,9
per inhabitant, piece	317	380	409	119,9	107,6
Wool					
per sheep, kg	4,3	4,2	4,1	97,7	97,6
per inhabitant, kg	0,9	0,8	1,1	88,9	137,5

<sup>x</sup>/ Figures from 1975 relate to milking cows and to those of double utilization /average

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Statistical Service.  
Agriculture, food industry, forestry 1970-1980, Budapest, 1981

Table 3

Average producers' prices of live animals and principal  
animal products between 1970 and 1980

Product	Unit	1970	1975	1980	Index of price change 1980/1970 %
Slaughter cattle	Forint/ kilogramme	24,82	31,94	38,07	153,4
Slaughter calf	"	34,40	29,84	34,87	101,4
Slaughter pig	"	23,81	24,34	33,27	139,7
Piglet	"	27,93	29,11	38,25	136,9
Slaughter sheep	"	25,90	40,62	61,88	238,9
Slaughter poultry	"	23,62	24,27	33,44	141,6
Cow's milk	Forint/ litre	4,08	5,51	6,21	152,2
Wool	Forint/ kilogramme	66,02	70,55	94,77	143,5
Egg /edible/	Forint/ piece	1,35	1,26	1,52	112,6

Source: Central Statistical Office, Manual of Agricultural  
Statistics, 1981

Table 4

Per capita consumption of animal products

Product	Y e a r					Index of change %	
	1960	1965	1970	1975	1980	1980/1960	1980/1970
Meats, total	47,6	51,6	57,6	70,5	71,7	150,6	124,5
Of which:							
pork	24,7	27,3	29,8	41,4	40,2	162,8	134,9
beef	9,1	9,4	10,1	7,4	9,6	105,5	95,0
harslet	2,4	2,6	2,6	3,1	3,0	125,0	115,4
poultry-meat	9,3	11,0	14,2	15,2	18,0	193,5	126,8
Fish	1,5	1,6	2,3	2,8	2,1	140,0	91,3
Milk and milk product	143,6 <sup>a/</sup>	132,4 <sup>a/</sup>	109,6	125,0	166,1	.	151,6
Egg	160,0 <sup>b/</sup>	188,0 <sup>b/</sup>	13,7	15,0	17,7	.	129,2
Fat	21,0 <sup>c/</sup>	19,7 <sup>c/</sup>	27,7	28,5	30,5	.	110,1
of which butter	.	.	2,1	1,8	2,0	.	95,2

a/ litre, including butter

b/ piece

c/ excluding butter

Source: Mrs. L. Némethi - Gyula Varga: Consumption and prospective needs respecting animal products. Research Institute of Agricultural Research, Budapest, 1972. p. 23.  
 Agriculture and Food Industry 1971-1975. Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Statistical Service, Budapest, 1976 and 1982.  
 Statistical Yearbook, 1980, Central Statistical Office, Budapest, 1981.

Table 5

Consumer prices of principal animal products between 1970 and 1980

Forints

Item	Unit	1970	1975	1980	Price index % 1980/1970
Pork, spare-rib	kg	34	34	60	176,5
Pork, leg without bone	kg	39	39	78	200,0
Beef, roast meats with bone	kg	30	30	56	186,7
Chicken /drawn, pre-cooled/	kg	37	37	45	121,6
Chicken /chopped, breast, leg/ average	kg	48	48	63	131,3
Duck /roast/	kg	29	29	42	144,8
Sausage	kg	36	36	56	155,6
Cold meat	kg	48	48	66	137,5
Salami, sliced	kg	100	100	180	180,0
"Gyulai" sausage	kg	80	80	126	157,5
Minced meat, in 1/5 canister		7,50	7,50	10,80	144,0
Consumer milk, 2,8 % fat content, in satchel	litre	3,60	5,0	6,0	166,7
Sour cream	litre	21	25	28,50	135,7
Yoghurt	2 dl	1,90	2,0	2,40	126,3
Cheese, portsalut	kg	40	46	53	132,5
Egg	piece <sup>a/</sup>	1,60	2,10	2,20	137,5
Butter, in 10 decagrammes packing	kg	50	60	60	120,0
Lard, in crate	kg	20	20	24	120,0
Smoked bacon	kg	30	30	36	120,0

a/ Average annual retail price whose level exceeds the market price by 20-30 percent.





