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## **AGRARIAN TRANSFORMATIONS IN THE TERRITORY OF POLAND BEFORE AND AFTER INTEGRATION INTO THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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**Abstract.** This article presents problems in agrarian transformations, especially related to the number and area structure of farms in Poland before accession into the European Union. It presents consecutive stages of agrarian transformations in the territory of Poland, starting from the period of partitions at the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century, till economic transformation and integration of Poland into the European Union. In historical perspective, it may be stated that there is a close relationship between agrarian transformations, and the level of economic development and socio-political system in our country. These relations are bilateral in nature, i.e. they are interdependent. Agrarian transformations observed after 2004 are evident, however, they did not bring Poland any closer to the level of leading EU Member States.

**Key words:** agrarian structure, significance of land, farm structure, economic transformation, integration

### **INTRODUCTION**

Diversity in the area of private farms, referred to as agrarian structure, is important in understanding economic processes from historical point of view. Within the last twenty years, farm concentration was determined by: shifting labour resources from agriculture to highly efficient economy sectors, increasing labour efficiency in agriculture and implementing technical progress (mechanization, specialization).

Unfavourable agrarian structure affecting farm efficiency has been the weakness of Polish agriculture for centuries. This structure mainly depends on history of the country

and region, and it results from political, as well as socioeconomic relations. Its condition and spatial diversity result from interaction of natural conditions, mainly related to land or price of land, but it is also significantly related to anthropogenic conditions, i.e. political and economic past [Marks-Bielska et al. 2006]. Evolution of agrarian structure takes place under influence of many factors related to agriculture, which are not only endogenous, but also exogenous. Changes occurring within the scope of production capacity in agriculture, as well as in other sectors are important.

Agrarian structure is an expression including many elements. One of them is the area structure, and the other ones include ownership structure in agriculture, or size of involved production means, or production volumes [Wilkin 1986]. The area of the farms and their area structure is influenced by turnover of the arable land, which depends on political, economic, legal and administrative, as well as demographic factors. "Flow" of land takes place as a result of sales, lease, transfer to the successor, inheritance or gift.

Purpose of this article is to present tendency of changes in the number and structure of farms in Poland until 2011. It has been presented in historical perspective for better recognition of tendency within the scope of agrarian transformations, which are taking place in Poland.

## SIGNIFICANCE OF LAND IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

In classical theory of economics, there are three basic factors in agricultural production: land, labour and capital. Relationship between the respective factors creates a curve of production capabilities of the farm, which affects the level of obtained income. These factors define economic situation, which directly influences development possibilities of a given farm [Klepacki 1997].

Visualizing relations and possible relations between the respective production factors is presented in the form of the so-called production triangle (Fig. 1).

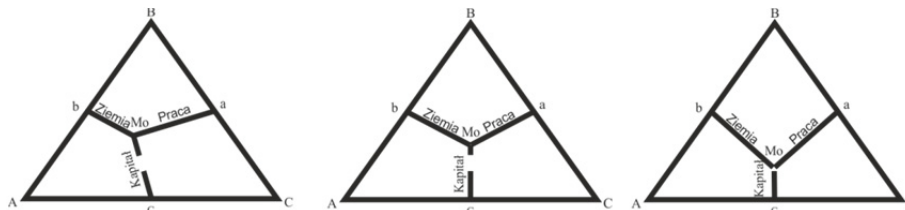


Fig. 1. Production triangle and the central point of equilibrium  
Source: own elaboration based on Woś and Tomczak [1983].

Rys. 1. Trójkąt czynników produkcji oraz środkowy punkt ich równowagi  
Źródło: opracowanie własne na podstawie Woś i Tomczak [1983].

Presenting relations in form of equilateral triangle results from the fact that the sum of distances of perpendicular segments connecting any point inside with the edge of the triangle is always the same [Herlemann and Stamer 1963]. Woś and Tomczak [1983] define optimum proportion between factors. According to aforementioned authors, it is

achieved if marginal revenues are equal for all three factors. Changing price in one of them affects changes in proportions between land, labour and capital, which results in shifting the point of equilibrium ( $M_0$ ) (Fig. 1). Modelling suitable relations in production factors is possible by substitution process (one means of production may be replaced by increased supply of other means with maintaining constant effect of production) and by changing organisation of the farm. Aforementioned equilibrium model of production factors includes reasons and conditions influencing development of agricultural production and its intensification. Currently, the theory of economics specifies an additional, fourth production factor, which is management [Klepacki 1999]. Technology, knowledge, etc. are also referred to as factors.

Land in agriculture, comparing to other economic sectors, plays a special role<sup>1</sup>. As a production factor, it determines existence of the agricultural production, it has been created without human labour, and it is a gift of nature. Manteuffel [1979] emphasized that land has no value in general terms, which is created as a result of the objectification of human labour. Exchangeable value and land value are connected with its value-in-use. It plays two roles in agricultural economy: it is a means and an object of labour. It is a place, where buildings are erected etc., i.e. it is the base for any devices and economic activity. It is a material, which is processed by human labour in order to create agricultural products [Ekonomika...1983].

Special characteristics of land, as the means of production, in contrast to labour and capital, include: immovability, non-multipliability, indestructibility<sup>2</sup> [Kierul 1980]. Within the production process, it is the most stable expenditure, because it cannot be produced in any dimension. Other expenditures, as well as production and economic effects of farming, usually refer to land, because changes in organisation and production economics in private farms mostly depend on the area of owned agricultural land [Woś and Tomczak 1983].

Agriculture evolved over thousands of years, and it led to changes in significance of land. Above all, these changes included adaptation of cultivation and animal raising to natural conditions. In historical process of transformations, farmers were changing natural environment to larger and larger extent. At the beginning, people fulfilled their needs with gathering. Land was a source of food created by nature. Transition from gathering to the first forms of agriculture facilitated creation of sedentary communities. Over time, humans started producing food in deliberate and organized manner due to introduction of hoe-farming and burning techniques. Farming included planning of land use for adequate area of cultivation in order to produce such amount of food, which was necessary to fulfill own needs [Pytkowski 1976].

Transition to the so-called Iron Age was connected with continuous technological progress and increased importance of agriculture. At the beginning, a wooden plow was used for land cultivation. Iron tools were gradually introduced and improved, and increased population density, as well as facilitated plant production [Strużek 1966].

Importance of land changed as a result of fall of the family community, development of private ownership and development of territorial community. These changes led to transition to feudal economy. In the territory of Poland during early feudal period (10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> century), production organisation was based on single family farms typically hold-

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<sup>1</sup> Aeroponics and hydroponics are of marginal significance.

<sup>2</sup> Adamowski [1977] additionally indicates spatial nature of land.

ing the area of approximately 15-20 hectares. Amount of held land defined economic situation and social prestige of the family. As a result of socioeconomic transitions, the society was divided into feudalists, owning large area of land and a group of subordinate peasants characterized by various level of wealth. Since mid 12<sup>th</sup> century feudal granges became a dominating form of land ownership (30-60 hectares). Land was a source of wealth and social prestige for large landowners.

In Poland, dynamic increase in colonization of rural areas took place from 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> century due to growing area of agricultural land resulted from clearing forests and introducing plow with an iron plowshare. Since 15<sup>th</sup> century, Polish economy entered manorial period. The main characteristic of the grange period was socage, i.e. labour obligations for the benefit of the estate, which differed in terms of time. Within this period, basic production factor included land, because production mainly increased by expanding the area of agricultural land in granges. At the end of 16<sup>th</sup> century, the grange farms accounted for approximately 30% of the arable land. The smallest granges of the small nobility had the area of 1 fief (approximately 16 hectares), and the area of the largest ones amounted to a few dozen fiefs. Average property in Poland comprised 3.6 fiefs belonging to granges and 4.5 fiefs held by peasants [Jeziński and Leszczyńska 1997].

After a dynamic development of the manorial system in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, which was driven by a boom in crop export, in 17<sup>th</sup> century, negative effects of this type of economy occurred. Crash in crop export contributed to development of large latifundia resulted from decline of lesser and middle nobility. Large farms required more labor, so peasants became more burdened with socage, which led to many rebellions of peasants at the beginning of 18<sup>th</sup> century.

The situation was gradually changing as a result of exchange of socage into rental charge. Farms for rent defined changes in agriculture despite the fact that these farms were still operating in the feudal system. Incurring rental charge introduced money-goods system in rural areas, which occurred before enfranchisement [Noniewicz 1996].

## **TRANSFORMATIONS IN AGRARIAN STRUCTURE WITHIN THE PERIOD OF PARTITIONS**

Period of partitions relates to significant changes in Polish agriculture. Agricultural system occurring as a result of the enfranchisement reforms conducted in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was characterized by economic domination of large ownership and at the same time, large number of the small farms and lackland housing [Mieszczankowski 1983]. Due to different conditions regarding Polish land within the period of partitions, the enfranchisement reforms were initiated in different years: in 1807 in the Prussian Partition, in 1848 in the Austrian Partition and in 1864 in the Russian Partition. As a result of transformations, the abolition of socage took place, the peasants obtained personal freedom and ownership right to land they were using.

Evolution of the agrarian structure was running in different manner, which deepened regional differences in the territories of three partitions. Within the whole territory of Poland, strong polarization in the area structure was noticeable (Fig. 2). Within the territory of the Grand Duchy of Posen (The Prussian Partition) it was noticeable to the

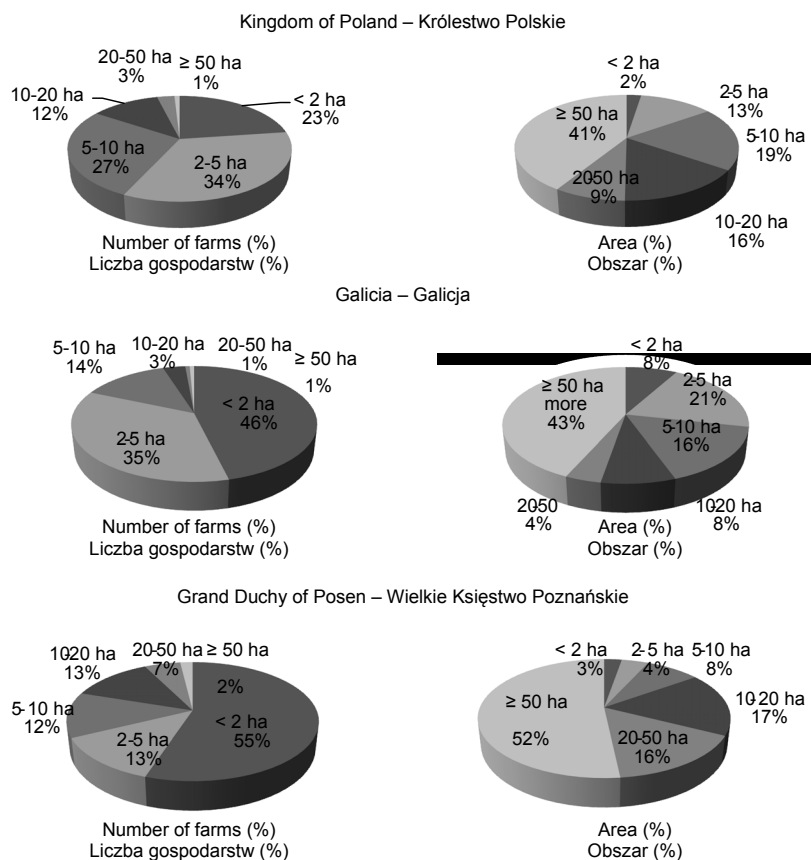


Fig. 2. Agrarian structure of Polish land during the partitions at the beginning of the twentieth century

Source: own elaboration based on: Kieniewicz [1983].

Rys. 2. Struktura agrarna na ziemiach polskich w okresie zaborów na początku XX wieku

Źródło: opracowanie własne na podstawie: Kieniewicz [1983].

largest extent. The farms with the areas up to 2 hectares constituting 55% of total number of the farms were holding only 3% of the area of agricultural land. On the other hand, the largest farms with the area exceeding 50 hectares were holding 52% of the area of agricultural land, constituting only 2% share in total number of the farms. The most significant fragmentation in farms existed in Galicia (The Austrian Partition). The farms with the area up to 5 ha of the agricultural land constituted 81% of total number of the farms, and included only 29% of the area of the agricultural land. High prices of land, which occurred within this period, resulted from the high demand for land among farmers and should be interpreted as a reason for fragmentation. Consequently, slow transfer of land from the large farms to the small ones took place.

## AGRARIAN STRUCTURE WITHIN INTERWAR PERIOD

According to Mieszczankowski [1983], agrarian structures transformations after regaining independence by Poland were influenced by four basic processes: systematic decrease in large agricultural ownership, its slow transformation into capitalist farms, fragmentation of the farms as a result of an intensive increase in number of small farms and half-proletarian farms, increase in number of medium-sized farms and maintaining their position in the agrarian structure.

Within interwar period, there was a significant share of economically backward regions in Poland, despite presence of medium-developed industry. In 1921, approximately 75% of population lived in rural areas, and by 1939, this percentage decreased only by approximately 5%. Approximately 63% of professionally active population made a living by farming. Agricultural population constituted over 80% of professionally active rural population [Bański 2007]. Process of plotting of the grange land in 1921-1938 was conducted slowly, and purchase of land was a significant burden for the farms. There was no alternative, so this situation led to “hunger for land” and it was necessary to prefer buying the grange land (usually of poor quality) over consumption, i.e. giving up decent life.

Due to worsening of economic conditions in the Second Polish Republic, significant restrictions in emigration from the rural areas abroad or in move of the poor from the rural areas to the cities, despite plotting and liquidation of servitudes, average area of the farm deceased from 5.69 ha (1921) to 5.0 ha (1938).

## PERIOD OF SOCIALIST ECONOMY

Transformation to the socialist economy after the Second World War significantly influenced perception of land by the society. The most important policy of the government included collectivization of agriculture in order to create agricultural enterprises and reduction of private agriculture. Within the period of socialism, the agricultural sector was functioning based on three forms of ownership:

- State Agricultural Enterprises (PGR) – directly supervised by the state,
- Productive Cooperatives (SP) – in majority under influence of the state,
- Private farms – private, but also under influence of the state in form of regulations related to conditions of farming.

As a result of conducted economic transformations, importance of land as a source of income significantly decreased. Developing industry made employment possible and allowed social advancement. Development of social contacts, modernization processes and opening rural areas resulted in loss of special importance of land perceived by the rural population. The farm gradually started to play ancillary functions for the family working there [Podedworna 2001].

In the area structure of the private farms in 1950-1960, share of the largest farms decreased by 1.3% (Fig. 3). It resulted from an intensive collectivization of agriculture, in form of a battle with so-called kulaks. Within this period, private ownership of land was negatively perceived. However, the farmers continued to stay in their farms and their stubbornness was one of the reasons to discontinue collectivization [Podedworna 2001].

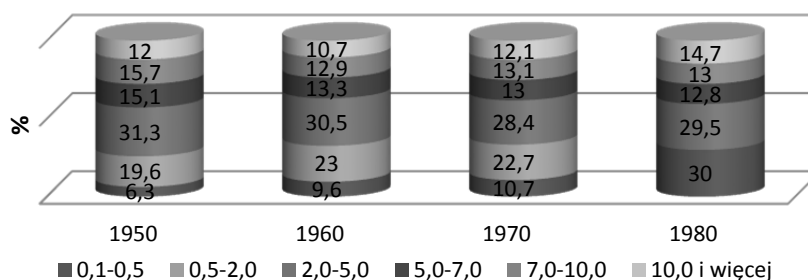


Fig. 3. Structure of private farms by the area groups in 1950-1980

Source: own elaboration based on: Rocznik Statystyczny [1973], Rocznik Statystyczny Rolnictwa i Gospodarki Żywnościowej [1978, 1986]. In 1980, total number of farms was provided in the groups of 0.1-2.0.

Rys. 3. Struktura gospodarstw indywidualnych według grup obszarowych w latach 1950-1980

Źródło: opracowanie własne na podstawie Rocznika Statystycznego [1973], Rocznika Statystycznego Rolnictwa i Gospodarki Żywnościowej [1978, 1986]. W roku 1980 podano łączną liczbę gospodarstw z przedziałów – 0,1-2,0.

In 1950-1970, there was a significant increase (by over 8%) in share of the smallest farms (0.1-2 ha) in the area structure. This phenomenon among “farmer-workers” resulted from increasing significance of having two professions. The additional work in industry allowed leading a decent life, even in case of owning insignificant area of land in the farm.

Importance of land evolved, and patrimony became a burden for young people, who preferred building their future somewhere else. Land was not the only source of social prestige anymore. Its importance as a source of economic benefits decreased. Previously common cult of land disappeared.

### IMPORTANCE OF LAND AFTER ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

In 1989, transformation from the centrally managed economy to market economy took place. Importance of land, as well as manner of its management changed. Approach of the farmers to ownership of the farms became more professional. More and more often, the farms were treated as enterprises focused on making profit, which encourage to treat land in instrumental way.

As a result of reforms after 1989, land ownership took on a new light. At the beginning of the 1990s, earning abilities of the farmers worsened, resulting in increased importance of the land as security. It is demonstrated in increased number of small farms. A tendency occurred to sell out land, which did not generate income, but constituted burden for the owner, because for example registration of the farmers, who had farms with more than 2 ha of land, as unemployed was not allowed.

Some of Polish farmers continued to demonstrate “attachment to land”, because it meant a significant importance for them. More and more users of the arable land in Poland did not identify themselves as professional farmers. The rural social structure includes more and more persons, who were farmers from legal point of view, because they had a suitable area of the arable land, but they treated village as a place of residence. The next group included “absent owners” – i.e. persons, who were connected with the village only by ownership of the arable land, which was treated as the capital investment [Marks-Bielska 2010].

#### **CHANGE IN NUMBER OF THE FARMS AND STRUCTURE OF LAND USE WITHIN THE PERIOD BETWEEN ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION AND INTEGRATION INTO THE EU**

Changes in number and structure of the farms in 1990-2004 resulted from systemic transformation, which took place in Poland within this period. It led to radical changes in majority of life areas, not only in economic and political, but also in social context.

Polish agriculture before 1989 was characterised by high share of private ownership comparing to other sectors of the economy. Therefore, reforms conducted in agriculture were of specific nature. At the beginning, administrative method of establishing food prices was discontinued and limitations in purchasing and trade of the agricultural products were eliminated and subsidies were liquidated.

According to Wyszowska [2000], the main purpose of transformation in agriculture was to drive towards effective use of the production potential by limiting role of the state in farm management. Transformation within the scope of ownership structure was conducted in two aspects. It was intended to provide improvement in the area structure in reference to fragmented private agriculture. On the other hand, it included conducting restructuring of the state-owned property by its privatization in order to improve economic and production situation of agriculture.

Ownership transformation of the farms resulted in significant changes in use structure of the arable land. In 1990-2004, the area of agricultural land decreased by 2393 thousand hectares (Table 1). Private farms dominated at the beginning of a systemic transformation in use of the arable land. In 1990, private sector held over 81% of agricultural land, and by the year 2004, its share increased by over 14 percentage points. Share of the private farms systematically increased (by nearly 12 percentage points) in the structure. By the year 1995, the area of agricultural land used by the private sector increased by 2023 thousand hectares. Within the next couple of years, decrease by 1666 thousand hectares took place, reaching the level close to the same level as it was in 1990. Until 2000, private farms increased area of agricultural land by 1228 thousand hectares. Within the next couple of years included in the analysis, decrease (by 1139 thousand hectares) occurred in agricultural land, which was similar to private sector, and it reached the same level as it was in 1990.

At the beginning of transformation, the state-owned farms held nearly 19% of total area of agricultural land. Within the next couple of years, limitation of state ownership took place for the benefit of non-nationalized sector. Until 1995, the highest dynamics of this process occurred. The area of agricultural land within the nationalized sector

Table 1. Changes in the area and structure of agricultural land by group members in 1990-2004  
 Tabela 1. Przemiany w powierzchni i strukturze UR według grupy użytkowników w latach 1990-2004

Item Wyszczególnienie		Area and structure of agricultural land in the following years Obszar i struktura UR w latach					
		1990	1993	1995	2000	2002	2004
Total Ogółem	thous. ha tys. ha	18 720	18 642	18 622	17 812	16 899	16 327
	%	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Private sector Sektor prywatny	thous. ha tys. ha	15 230	16 056	17 253	16 747	15 966	15 587
	%	81.36	86.13	92.65	94.02	94.48	95.47
including private farms w tym gospodarstwa indywidualne	thous. ha tys. ha	14 228	14 602	15 205	15 456	14 858	14 317
	%	76.00	78.33	81.65	86.77	87.92	87.69
Public sector Sektor publiczny	thous. ha tys. ha	3 490	2 586	1 369	1 065	933	740
	%	18.64	13.87	7.35	5.98	5.52	4.53

Source: own elaboration based on data of the Central Statistical Office [GUS].  
 Źródło: opracowanie własne na podstawie danych GUS.

decreased by 2121 thousand hectares, which resulted in limitation of its share by over 11%. Within nine years, the area of agricultural land was limited by another 629 thousand hectares, and its share in total area of agricultural land decreased by nearly 3%.

Transfer of land from nationalized to non-nationalized sector was the most significant effect of liquidation of the State Agricultural Enterprises through their privatization. The Agricultural Property Agency of the State Treasury, transformed into the Agricultural Property Agency in 2003, took over 4706 thousand hectares in total in 1992-2003. Structure of land taken over by the Agricultural Property of the Treasury was dominated by land obtained from 1666 previous State Agricultural Enterprises (nearly 80% of the area). Land coming from the State Land Fund constituted nearly 13%, and remaining land accounted for 7% (Fig. 4).

Allocation of land belonging to the resource the Agricultural Property of the Treasury may have had various forms (Fig. 5). The first one was permanent use. In 1992-2003, the Agricultural Property Agency of the State Treasury allocated 1673.6 thousand hectares, out of which over 82% of land was sold, which means that it was the main form of conducted privatization. Remaining land was permanently transferred to the users with the following forms of allocation: charge-free handover (15.2%), in-kind contribution into companies (0.9%), and other transfer form (1.8%).

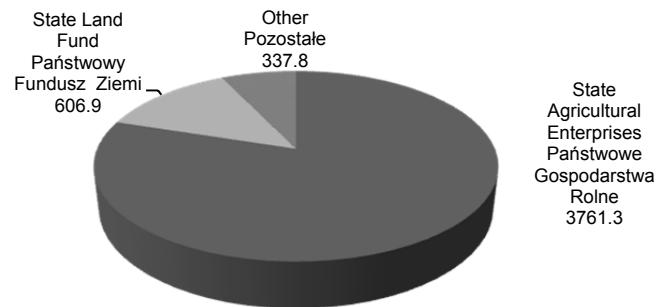


Fig. 4. Land taken over by the Agricultural Property of the Treasury, 1992-2003 (thous. ha)

Source: Rocznik Statystyczny [2004].

Rys. 4. Grunty przejęte do Zasobu Własności Rolnej Skarbu Państwa w latach 1992-2003 (tys. ha)

Źródło: Rocznik Statystyczny [2004].

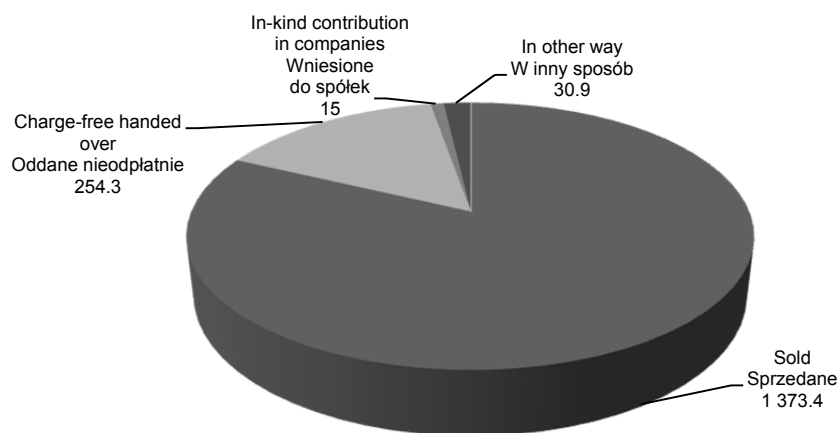


Fig. 5. Land allocated to the Agricultural Property of the Treasury in 1992-2003 (thous. ha)

Source: Rocznik Statystyczny [2004].

Rys. 5. Grunty rozdysponowane do Zasobu Własności Rolnej Skarbu Państwa w latach 1992-2003 (tys. ha)

Źródło: Rocznik Statystyczny [2004].

The second form was temporary operation of land from the resources of the Agricultural Property Agency of the State Treasury in form of lease, administration and setting land aside. A lease was dominating method in 1992-2004 (Fig. 6). This form facilitated obtaining significant area of agricultural land due to convenient manner of land use without necessity to involve relatively large amount of financial means. Within the

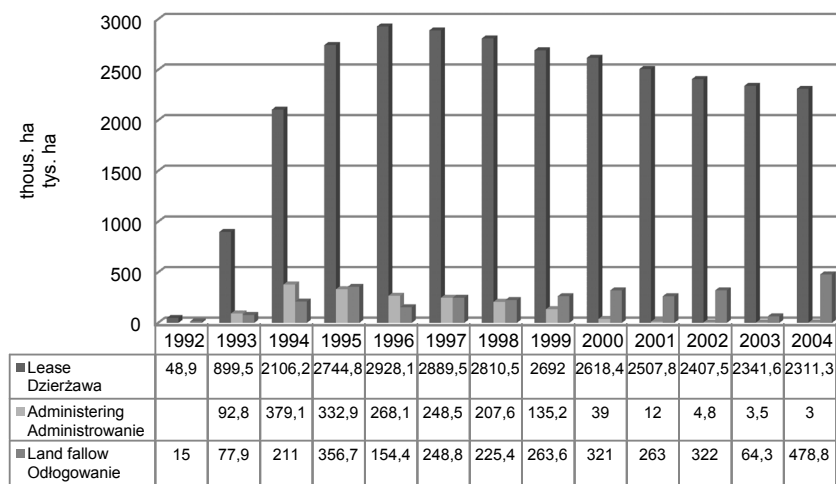


Fig. 6. Forms of temporary use of land owned by the Agricultural Property Agency of the State Treasury in 1992-2004

Source: own elaboration based on reports regarding operations of the Agricultural Property Agency of the State Treasury in 1993-2005.

Rys. 6. Formy zagospodarowania czasowego gruntów Zasobu Własności Rolnej Skarbu Państwa w latach 1992-2004

Źródło: opracowanie własne na podstawie raportów z lat 1993-2005 z działalności AWRSP.

initial operations of the Agricultural Property Agency of the State Treasury until 1996, rapid growth of leased area of agricultural land was noticeable, and then (since 1997) – downward trend.

In 1993-1999, administration was an important form of managing property belonging to the Agricultural Property Agency of the State Treasury. It meant handing over some part of the property for managing within a specified period under the agreement. Decreasing importance of administration during last couple of years resulted from other forms of allocation for majority of the real estates, and this form was applied to land “returning” after lease before another allocation.

Influence of nationalized ownership on agrarian structure in Poland depended on region of the country. The State Agricultural Enterprises were mainly located in the west and north part of Poland. In 1998, the largest share of land belonging to the State Agricultural Enterprises, exceeding 50%, occurred in the following previous provinces: Olsztyn Province, Koszalin Province, Elbląg Province and north-west part of the Suwałki Province. Approximately 60% of land of the State Agricultural Enterprises was located in 1/4 of provinces. In contrast, in 17 previous central and southern provinces, as provided by Olko-Bagieńska et al. [1992], the area of land included in the State Agricultural Enterprises did not exceed 5% of total agricultural land.

Operations of the Agricultural Property Agency of the State Treasury influenced gaining momentum by the land market. Dzun [2009] provides information confirming influence of the land obtained after liquidation of the State Agricultural Enterprises on

changes in agrarian structure. In 1990-1996, over 291 thousand private farms increased their areas by acquisition of the land (104 thousand), as well as by its lease (138 thousand), and this land came from the Agricultural Property Agency of the State Treasury. In 1996, land was leased by over 105 thousand farms, including 103.3 thousand of private farms, 317 state-owned farms, 280 cooperative farms, 838 private companies and 54 foreign entities coming from the Agricultural Property of the State Treasury.

Structure of Polish private farms before transformation was characterised by significant fragmentation. The main purpose of the reforms after 1989 was to improve the agrarian structure in order to adapt the farms to reality of market economy. For a long time, agrarian transformation of Polish agriculture have included two tendencies. On the one hand, decrease in number of the farms was visible, and on the other hand, polarization of the area structure was noticeable. Aforementioned rules are confirmed by data presented in Figures 7 and 8.

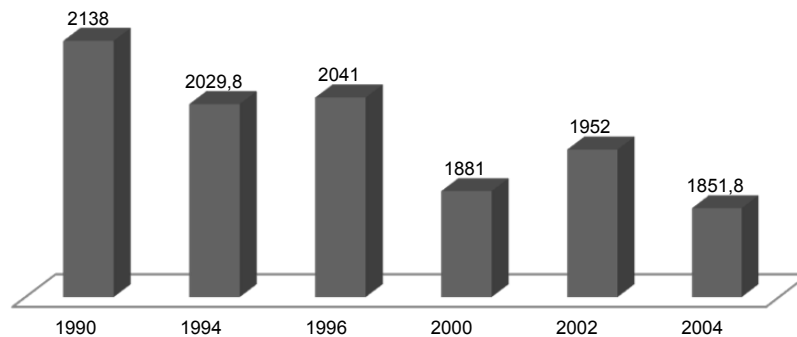


Fig. 7. The number of individual farms in 1990-2004 (thous.)

Source: own elaboration based on: Rocznik Statystyczny Województw [1996-2002], Rocznik Statystyczny [2004].

Rys. 7. Liczba indywidualnych gospodarstw rolnych w latach 1990-2004 (tys.)

Źródło: opracowanie własne na podstawie Rocznika Statystycznego Województw [1996-2002], Rocznika Statystycznego [2004].

In 1990-2004, total number of private farms decreased by 286.2 thousand. The largest number was liquidated in 1990-1994, 1996-2000, as well as from 2002 to 2004. Initial limitation in number of private farms may be related to difficult situation in agriculture within the first years of transformation. Since 1994, interest in investing in farms and increasing their area clearly elevated due to beneficial situation for agricultural production in 1993, as well as due to improved profitability in agricultural production [Dzun 2009].

In reference to the area of agricultural land within the whole analyzed period, the farms from the range of 2-5 ha of agricultural land were dominating in the structure of the farms. Their share were systematically reduced from 35% in 1990 to 32% in 2004, despite decrease in their number by as many as 156.6 thousand. Within the studied period, number of the farms from the group with the smallest area (1-2 ha) increased by

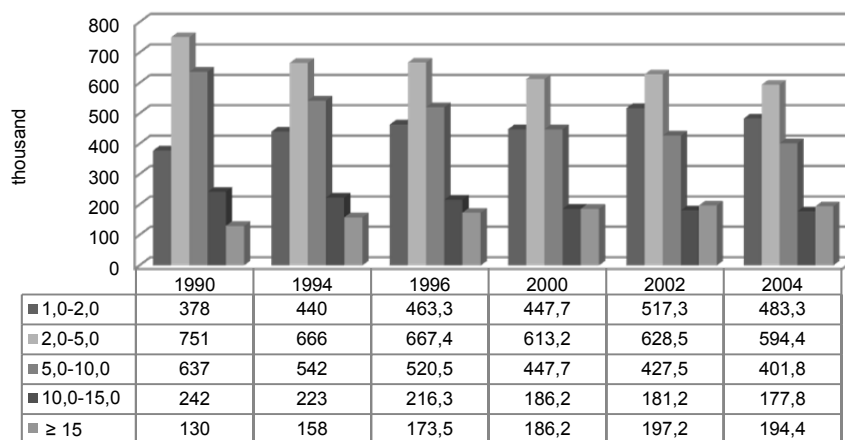


Fig. 8. Changes in the number of the private farms by the area groups of agricultural land in 1990-2004

Source: own elaboration based on: Rocznik Statystyczny Województw [1996-2002], Rocznik Statystyczny [2004].

Rys. 8. Zmiany w liczbie gospodarstw indywidualnych według grup obszarowych UR w latach 1990-2004

Źródło: opracowanie własne na podstawie Rocznika Statystycznego Województw [1996-2002], Rocznika Statystycznego [2004].

105.3 thousand, which influenced significant increase in their share in total number of the farms from nearly 18% (1990) to over 26% (2004). Increase in their number resulted from acquisition of the farms in order to obtain the right to use cheap insurance in KRUS, as well as to use new farms for non-agricultural purposes (recreation, construction).

As a result of transformation, downward tendency in number of the farms clearly occurred in the group classified as traditional farms. The largest decrease was recorded within the range of 5-10 ha (by 235.2 thousand, over 8%). Decrease in number (by 64.2 thousand), but less significant than decrease in share (by 1.72%) were recorded in the group of 10-15 ha. The farms with the largest area of agricultural land (above 15 ha), systematically increased share (from 6% to nearly 11%) by increasing their number by 64.4 thousand (Table 2).

Among the farms with the largest area of agricultural land, increase was recorded after 1996 in reference to number of the farms in all area groups, but the largest within the ranges of (30-50 ha) and above 50 ha (table 2). Share of the farms out of these area groups increased by 5% and 6.37%, respectively. Number of the farms with the area of 20-30 ha increased by 6.74 thousand, however, their share decreased by as much as 11.37%. This situation resulted from privatization of large state-owned farms.

Table 2. Private farms above 20 ha by the area groups, 1996-2004

Tabela 2. Gospodarstwa indywidualne powyżej 20 ha według grup obszarowych w latach 1996-2004

Area group Grupa obszarowa		Change in number of private farms within the following years Zmiany liczby indywidualnych gospodarstw w latach		
		1996	2000	2004
Total Ogółem	thous. – tys.	84.16	101.88	113.94
	%	100	100	100
20-30 ha	thous. – tys.	55.67	62.21	62.40
	%	66.14	61.06	54.77
30-50 ha	thous. – tys.	19.60	27.02	32.22
	%	23.28	26.52	28.28
> 50 ha	thous. – tys.	8.90	12.65	19.31
	%	10.58	12.42	16.95

Source: own elaboration based on: Rocznik Statystyczny Rolnictwa [2004].

Źródło: opracowanie własne na podstawie Rocznika Statystycznego Rolnictwa [2004].

## TRANSFORMATIONS IN LAND MANAGEMENT AFTER ACCESSION OF POLAND INTO THE EUROPEAN UNION

Accession of Poland into the European Union on 1 May 2004, preceded with a few years of adaptation, significantly influenced change in condition of running business operations in agricultural and food industry sector, as well as the whole market environment [Żak 2012].

Transformations in agricultural and food management were influenced by phenomena directly or indirectly resulted from accession of Poland into the EU. Opening markets of other EU member states was significantly important for Polish agriculture. It allowed exporting Polish food to markets of considerably richer countries, including nearly 0.5 billion consumers, previously protected with duty system. At the same time, Polish agriculture started to face strong competition at uniform EU market. Lower production costs and lower prices of majority of agricultural and food products in Poland provided comparative advantages and significant grow in export.

Including Polish agriculture into the Common Agricultural Policy facilitated directing significant funds in order to support development of agricultural areas and to accelerate economic development focused on eliminating differences between Poland and EU member states.

Under conditions of common globalization, as well as quickly growing competitiveness, it is mainly required that the farm has a suitable area, which will ensure profit level, which is satisfying for the farmer. This situation in Poland and in other EU member states leads to focusing the state policy on reducing number of the farms and increasing their average area [Żak 2011]. Increasing production scale by increasing the area of agricultural land usually generates higher income.

Changes initiated on 1 May 2004, triggered improvement of the agrarian structure in Polish agriculture. Analyzing transformations, which took place in land management in 2005-2011, a few rules have been established. Within the studied period, systematic downward tendency in number of the farms was noticeable, and this number decreased by 479 thousand (Fig. 9).

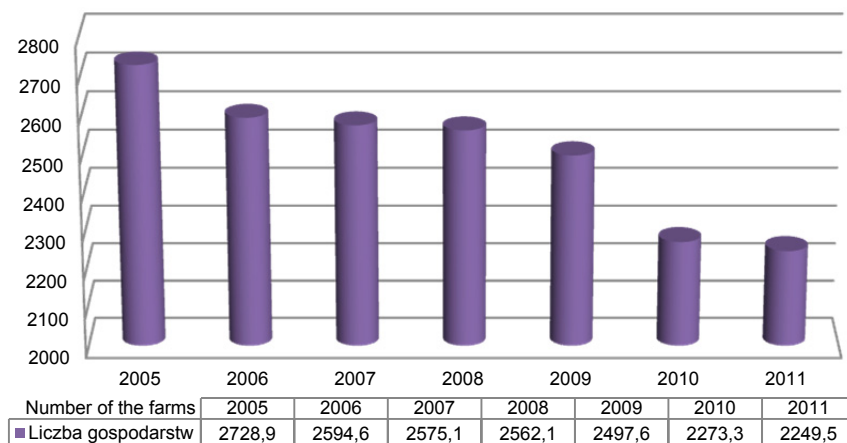


Fig. 9. Changes in number of the farms in 2005-2011 (thous.)

Source: own elaboration based on: Statistical Yearbook [2005-2009].

Rys. 9. Zmiany w liczbie gospodarstw rolnych w latach 2005-2011 (tys.)

Źródło: opracowanie własne na podstawie Rocznika Statystycznego [2005-2009].

Within the period 2005-2011, domination of the smallest farms was noticeable in number of the farms by the area groups of agricultural land (Fig. 10). As a result of liquidation of nearly 349 thousand farms with the area of agricultural land not exceeding 1ha, their share decreased from 34.69% to 26.58%. Reasons for this situation should be seen in the system of the direct farming subsidies, which did not include the farms in this area group.

Within the studied period, the farms with the area ranging from 1 to 5 ha were the most numerous in structure of the farms. Despite decrease in their total number by 76.7 thousand, increase of their share took place from 37.82% to 42.47%.

In 2005-2011, share of the farms from the area groups above 5 ha increased in total number of farms. Farms within ranges of 5-10 ha and 10-20 ha constituted the highest number of the farms in this group. At the end of the studies, increase of their share was noticeable and it reached the level of 15.20% and 10.35%, respectively. The farms from other groups accounted for nearly 5.5% in total, and their share insignificantly increased (by nearly 1%). Within 7 years of studies, number of the farms demonstrated variable tendencies. Increase in number of entities were recorded only in two groups of the farms with the largest areas. The most significant increase, by 5.3 thousand, occurred in the group above 50 ha, and number of the farms in the group of 30-50 ha increased only by 800 farms. Fall in number of farms occurred in remaining area groups.

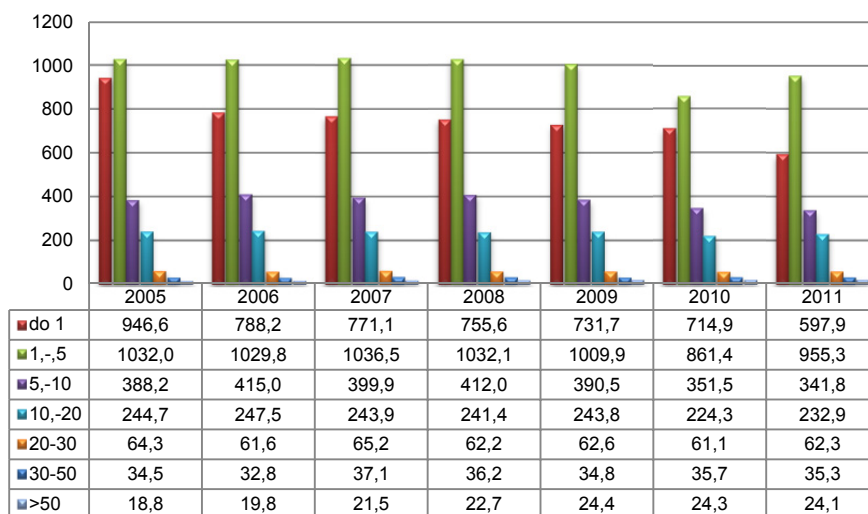


Fig. 10. Changes in number of the farms by the area groups of agricultural land in 2005-2011

Source: own elaboration based on Rocznik Statystyczny [2005-2009].

Rys. 10. Zmiany w liczbie gospodarstw rolnych według grup obszarowych użytków rolnych w latach 2005-2011

Źródło: opracowanie własne na podstawie Rocznika Statystycznego [2005-2009].

Until 2011, the area of agricultural land in Poland decreased by 464 thousand hectares comparing to the first year after accession into the European Union (Table 3). Changes initiated by political system transformation, which were focused on limitation of public sector for the benefit of private ownership, were continued in 2005-2011. Land belonging to the state-owned farms were not significant in agrarian structure, and its share was systematically falling and it constituted only 4.16% in 2005, and 2.92% in 2011.

Transformations in land management in Poland after accession into the European Union were characterized by i.a. dominating significance of private sector in agricultural land structure. Decrease in share of public sector resulted from its privatization and transfer of land to non-nationalized farms. Private farms concentrated vast majority of agricultural land. Systematic growth of their share is noticeable, so they accounted for approximately 90% of the whole agricultural land in 2011.

Table 3. Changes in the area and structure of agricultural land by the groups of users in 2005-2011

Tabela 3. Przemiany w powierzchni i strukturze UR według grupy użytkowników w latach 2005-2011

Item Wyszczególnienie		Changes in the area and structure in the following years Zmiany w powierzchni i strukturze w latach						
		2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Total Ogółem	thous ha tys. ha	15 906	15 957	16 177	16 154	16 120	15 503	15 442
	%	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Private sector Sektor prywatny	thous ha tys. ha	15 244	15 343	15 608	15 618	15 607	14 936	14 991
	%	95.84	96.15	96.48	96.68	96.82	96.34	97.08
including private farms w tym gospodar- stwa indywidualne	thous ha tys. ha	14 005	14 139	14 418	14 442	14 453	13 660	13 892
	%	88.05	88.61	89.13	89.40	89.66	88.11	89.96
Public sector Sektor publiczny	thous ha tys. ha	662	614	569	536	513	567	451
	%	4.16	3.85	3.52	3.32	3.18	3.66	2.92

Source: own elaboration based on data of the Central Statistical Office [GUS].

Źródło: opracowanie własne na podstawie danych GUS.

## CONCLUSIONS

1. In historical perspective, it may be stated that there is a close relationship between agrarian transformations, and the level of economic development and socio-political system in Poland. These relations are bilateral in nature, i.e. they are interdependent.

2. Social and economic transformations in Poland, which started in 1989, significantly influenced agriculture. Especially liquidation of the State Agricultural Enterprises [PGR] and weakening of the agricultural cooperatives [RSP] as well as radical change of agricultural market, contributed to significant changes. Due to systemic transformation, it was necessary to perform many transformations in Polish agriculture. Agrarian transformation was one of the most important changes.

3. Within the period of socialist economy, a tendency was observed to limit the area of the land owned by private sector for the benefit of nationalized sector, which was mainly state-owned. After economic transformation, state-owned sector was limited for the benefit of individual farms. Therefore, it may be stated that political assumptions for transformation regarding land ownership have been executed.

4. After accession of Poland into the European Union, there is a clear trend towards improvement of the agrarian structure. Interrelation was observed between change in the number of farms and their area. Number of the farms with the area below 30 ha was reduced, but number of entities with the largest area increased. Observed agrarian trans-

formations are evident, however, they did not bring Poland any closer to the level of leading EU Member States.

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## **PRZEMIANY AGRARNE NA TERENACH POLSKICH PRZED I PO INTEGRACJI Z UNIĄ EUROPEJSKĄ**

**Streszczenie.** W opracowaniu przedstawiono problematykę przemian agrarnych, zwłaszcza zmian w liczbie i strukturze obszarowej gospodarstw w Polsce przed akcesją z Unią Europejską. Ukazano kolejne etapy przemian agrarnych na ziemiach polskich, od okresu zaborów na początku XX wieku, aż do transformacji gospodarczej oraz integracji Polski z Unią Europejską. Z perspektywy historycznej można stwierdzić, że istnieje ścisły związek między przemianami agrarnymi, a poziomem rozwoju gospodarczego oraz systemem społeczno-politycznym naszego kraju. Powiązania te mają charakter zwrotny, to znaczy są współzależne. Zaobserwowane zmiany agrarne po 2004 roku są widoczne, jednakże nie spowodowały w znaczącym stopniu przybliżenia Polski do poziomu czołowych krajów UE.

**Słowa kluczowe:** struktura agrarna, znaczenie ziemi, struktura gospodarstw rolnych, transformacja gospodarcza, integracja

*Accepted for print – Zaakceptowano do druku: 14.11.2013*

*For citation – Do cytowania: Klepacki B., Żak A., 2013. Agrarian transformations in the territory of Poland before and after integration into the European Union. J. Agribus. Rural Dev. 4(30), 95-113.*