

FUNCTIONING OF THE DIRECT SUBSIDIES SYSTEM IN POLAND AND OTHER EUROPEAN UNION COUNTRIES

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Abstract. The aim of the paper was to present the functioning of the direct subsidies system in Poland. Given the profitable nature of this instrument the particular attention has been paid to the disposal of funds received by agricultural producers in the region of Warmia and Mazury in the form of subsidies. There is no doubt that the direct payments represent an important aid instrument supporting agriculture within the frameworks of the first pillar of the Common Agricultural Policy. The survey revealed that subsidies have significantly contributed to the improvement of financial condition of farms. Funds received in the form of direct payments have been mainly spent on financing current expenditures and to purchase means of production used in the farms (72.88%).

Key words: direct payments, CAP, agricultural producer

INTRODUCTION

Support of Polish agriculture through the direct subsidies influences clearly not only the growth of the production value but, first of all, the income of the agricultural entrepreneur. In 2004, as a result of starting the direct subsidies, the incomes of farmers increased more than twice and then, during the consecutive years that increase was around 3.0% per year as compared to 2004. The faster increase of revenues than the costs of production was a positive phenomenon from the perspective of Polish farmers. It had its source in, e.g. technological progress and substituting the more expensive means of production with the cheaper ones, as well as the progressing structural transformations and increased market production [Wigier 2007].

Direct subsidies represent the major part of the EU budget, which is assigned to support the agriculture (in 2006 – 69%, 2000 – 61%) [Indicative... 2007]. At the same time these play an important role in the EU agriculture in creating and stabilising the revenues. In the entire EU-27, in 2007, their share in creating farmers' income was 60,9%. In the EU-15 it was higher (62.7%) than in the EU-12 (51.7%) [Poczta and Siemiński 2008].

Direct support, among others from the direct subsidies, the Rural Development Plan (RDP), the Sectoral Operational Programme (SOP), which generates in Poland almost 50.00% of the farmers' income, is still significantly lower compared to the countries of the old "fifteen" where in some years it represents even 100.00% of the revenues obtained, which means that without the subsidies income would not be generated and the farmers from those countries would record losses. The fact is important that currently there is no country in the EU in which the share of direct subsidies is not decisive for the volume of revenues obtained [Poczta i Siemiński 2008, Wilkin 2009].

The aim of the paper was to present the functioning of the direct subsidies system in Poland. Given the profitable nature of this instrument the particular attention has been paid to the disposal of funds received by agricultural producers in the region of Warmia and Mazury in the form of subsidies. This paper presents the information obtained through the survey conducted in 2008 amongst randomly selected farms which had been covered by the system of direct subsidies. The subjective scope of the research included 295 farms. Questions focused mainly on the distribution lines of the financial measures taken in the form of direct payments for 2008 and the impact of these measures on the financial condition of the farm.

EVOLUTION OF THE DIRECT SUBSIDIES INSTRUMENT

In the European Union countries the direct payments became an important instrument for farmers' income support within the frameworks of the Mac Sharry's reform of 1992 and next they were retained within the frameworks of the consecutive reforms of the Common Agricultural Policy – Agenda 2000 and Luxembourg Agreements [Kisiel et al. 2008].

The level of payments was determined on the base of the yield, area under crops and heads of livestock during the base period, i.e. it was diversified depending on the production type. Compensational subsidies (called so during the reform of 1992) are considered the first step of the CAP towards separation of support from production. Currently, the direct payments are aimed at supporting the incomes of agricultural producers. Separating them from the structure and volume of production (so-called *decoupling*), that took place during the reform of Luxembourg serves increasing the market position of the farmers and as a consequence leaves to them more freedom as concerns the decisions on what, how and for whom to produce. This means substitution of the majority of current direct payments, specific for the individual types of agricultural production with the Single Payment Scheme (SPS) independent of production or the single regional payment. Payments in the current form represent a significant simplification in servicing the CAP, from the perspective of both the agricultural producers and the administration. As a consequence, the subsidies are now to secure increase in com-

petitiveness of the agricultural sector in both the EU and outside it and strengthen the EU position in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) [Bajek et al. 2007].

The other elements of the CAP reform related to the subsidies include: the reduction of the direct payments (the so-called modulation) in large farms and allocation of the funds obtained in that way to rural development, coupling receipt of payments with the duty of satisfying certain standards by the farms – the so-called cross-compliance principle, changes in the markets of: milk, cereals, high-protein plants, starch potatoes, dry fodder, renewable energy sources, the financial discipline mechanism of decreasing the direct payments in the situation of exceeding the set cup of expenditures for the CAP and increase of the role (scope and level of support) for rural development [Kowalski 2006].

Award of support within the direct subsidies scheme within the entire EU is based on the *Integrated Administration and Control System* – IACS. The IACS is the key tool for control of expenditures within the frameworks of the *European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund* (EAGGF). This is the system for distribution and control of aid to the farmers allowing them receipt of the direct payments within the frameworks of the CAP. This is a voluntary system at the same time necessary to receive subsidies to production [Członkowsstwo Polski... 2003].

The CAP reform of 2003 introduced fundamental changes to the farmers' support methods in the European Union. The so-called Single Payment Scheme (SPS) was introduced, which substituted the majority of the earlier direct payments specific for individual types of agricultural production. The EU-15 countries implemented the SPS during the years 2005-2007¹.

The EU-15 countries had the choice of the methodology according to which they would establish and compute the payments within the SPS model. They could apply the historical SPS model (called the single payment per farm), i.e. eligibility to the payments based on the reference quotas and number of hectares under cultivation during that period for each individual farm or the regional model (single regional payment) where for all the farmers in the identified regions the regional rates of payments per hectare are applied, identical for all the lands and differentiated between land under green use and other lands eligible to the payments. This introduces a certain redistribution of subsidies among farmers. Until now, no EU Member State opted for implementation of the pure regional model [Kowalski 2006, Krzyżanowska 2006].

In many countries of the "old" Union the mixed model is applied according to which a part of the payment received by the farmer is the payment made according to the historical model while the rest is paid according to the regional base. Within the frameworks of the mixed model the fixed and the variable character is identified. The variable character is characterised by the situation that during the individual years the share of payment per farm in the total amount of payment decreases to the benefit of the regional payment up to the moment of total transition to the regional payment [Bajek et al. 2007]. The SPS direct payment models effective in the EU-15 countries are presented in Table 1.

Among the old Union countries, the majority (10 countries) opted for the historical model. The mixed system represents a combination of payment per farm and regional payment. That system was chosen by seven countries, however, four of them applied

¹ <http://www.arimr.gov.pl/index.php?id=88&id1=0&id2=0> [dostęp: 3.01.2009]

Table 1. Choice of payment by the EU-15
Tabela 1. Wybór systemu płatności przez kraje UE-15

Country Kraj	The model of system of direct payments Model systemu jednolitych płatności bezpośrednich
Austria – Austria	historical – historyczny
Belgium – Belgia	historical – historyczny
Denmark – Dania	mixed variable – mieszany zmienny
Great Britain – Wielka Brytania	mixed variable – mieszany zmienny
Finland – Finlandia	mixed variable – mieszany zmienny
France – Francja	historical – historyczny
Germany – Niemcy	mixed variable – mieszany zmienny
Greece – Grecja	historical – historyczny
Ireland – Irlandia	historical – historyczny
Italy – Włochy	historical – historyczny
Luxembourg – Luksemburg	mixed variable – mieszany zmienny
Netherlands – Holandia	historical – historyczny
Northern Ireland – Irlandia Północna	mixed variable – mieszany zmienny
Portugal – Portugalia	historical – historyczny
Scotland and Wales – Szkocja i Walia	historical – historyczny
Spain – Hiszpania	historical – historyczny
Sweden – Szwecja	mixed fixedconstant – mieszany stały

Source: Bajek et al. [2007].
Źródło: Bajek i in. [2007].

the mixed variable model while Northern Ireland, Luxembourg and Sweden the mixed fixed model.

Among the new Member States only Malta and Slovenia implemented the SPS system in 2007 and had not applied the SAPS system. Those countries decided to implement the single payment system per farm [Latruffe and Davidova 2007]. The remaining new Member States (including Poland) apply the simplified system of direct payments and as a consequence they have slightly different conditions as concerns direct payments compared to the EU-15. This applies to the level of subsidies awarded and the system of applying them. The new Member States of the EU could make a choice between the standard system and the area payment system. The standard system is the system of payments applied by the countries of the old EU-15. Polish government, in the interest of Polish agriculture, opted for the simplified area payment system proposed to the candidate countries by the EU countries with the transitory system for implementation of the direct payments. In Poland, the system of area payments consists of the *Single Area Payment Scheme* (SAPS) and the *Complementary National Direct Payments* (CNDP). The SAPS is a simplified system of the Union direct payments to agri-

cultural lands implemented as the financial support to the area indifferent of the agricultural activity conducted coupled with the yearly increase in its level up to the level applied by the Member States belonging to the EU-15 group. The single area payment scheme is 100% financed from the EU budget. The complementary payment covers, among the others, the complementary area payment to the area under the selected crops (until 2006 financed from the national budget and the Rural Development Programme, as of 2007 of the national budget funds only) and to hops cultivation (financed 100% from the national budget) [Zawojńska 2008].

Poland, within the frameworks of the simplified system, managed to achieve through the negotiations the funds for subsidies for Polish farmers at the level of 25.00% of the full value of the payments functioning in the Member States of the European Union in 2004, 30.00% in 2005, 35.00% in 2006 and 40.00% in 2007. During the following years those amounts are to increase at 10.00% a year to reach 100.00% of payments in the EU-15 countries after 9 years from the accession (i.e. in 2013) (Table 2).

Table 2. Scheme to the full amount of direct payments (%)

Tabela 2. Schemat dochodzenia do pełnej wysokości płatności bezpośrednich (%)

Year Rok	The basic amount of subsidy (products not covered by the support of the EU, ie: potato, fodder, beet, vegetables, fruits etc.) Podstawowe wysokości dopłat (produkty nie objęte wsparciem w UE, tj.: ziemniak, burak pastewny, warzywa, owoce i in.)	Payments supported by the funds to rural areas development and the state budget (the products covered by the support of the EU, namely: cereals, oilseeds, high protein, tobacco, hops, potato starch and the production of beef, milk and sheep) Dopłaty wsparte ze środków na rozwój wsi oraz budżetu państwa (produkty objęte wsparciem w UE, tj.: zboża, rośliny oleiste, wysokobiałkowe, tytoń, chmiel, ziemniak skrobiowy oraz produkcja wołowiny, mleka i owiec)
2004	25.00	55.00
2005	30.00	60.00
2006	35.00	65.00
2007	40.00	70.00
2008	50.00	80.00
2009	60.00	90.00
2010	70.00	100.00
2011	80.00	100.00
2012	90.00	100.00
2013	100.00	100.00

Source: Bilans korzyści... [2003].

Źródło: Bilans korzyści... [2003].

The Union has also applied complementary support elements to the basic levels of subsidies. From that system Polish farmers receive subsidies that are dependent on the cultivated area of the farm, but they must produce food covered by subsidies in the

European Union. Those subsidies will be financed from the national funds and a part of the funds allocated to rural development. Already as of 2007, Poland supplemented the level of subsidies by 30% of the full subsidy amount above the level appropriate for a given year, which will result in shortening the period for achieving the full level of the direct subsidies by three years that is until 2010 [Członkostwo Polski... 2003].

During the years 2007-2008, Poland used the option of extending the functioning of the SAPS system and according to the Community legislation in force, as of 2009, it should implement the target system of direct payments – SPS [Krzyżanowska 2006]. However, the European Commission expressed its consent for Poland to apply the simplified system until 2012. The SPS payment that we are to introduce gradually as of 2013 is separated from the structure and volume of production. Receiving that payment then will not be linked to conducting specific production but dependent on compliance by the farmers with numerous requirements concerning maintenance of the farm land according to the good agricultural practice consistent with environment protection and the fundamental management requirements².

The above-mentioned requirements form the mechanism referred to as the *cross-compliance*. It means coupling the level of direct payments received with satisfying the specific requirements by the beneficiaries. Those requirements were divided into three areas:

- A encompasses identification and registration of livestock and issues of the environment protection,
- B encompasses public health, animal health, reporting of certain diseases and health of plants,
- C covers the animal welfare issue.

In Poland, as in the new Member States, the requirements of cross-compliance will be implemented gradually. As of 2009, the Area A requirements started to be effective while the requirements of Areas B and C will be implemented as of the beginning of 2011 (with possible shifting of Area C implementation as of 2013). In case of the EU-15 countries the *cross-compliance* instrument has been implemented gradually as of January 2005.

According to the accepted principles, in Poland the national rate per hectare is computed yearly by dividing the year financial envelope by the area of agricultural land maintained according to the good agricultural practices. The basic year financial envelope is the sum of the direct payments specified in the Annex to the Council Regulation (EC) 1259/1999 to which the Member State is eligible on the base of the production limits granted for a given year and the level of the direct payments applied during the given year [Załącznik... 1999]. The rate of the complementary payments for the individual crops is determined yearly by means of the Regulation by the Council of Ministers considering the agreements with the European Commission (among others concerning the preferred directions of agricultural production) assumptions for the budget act for a given year and liabilities of Poland according to the international treaties. The level of the direct payments during a given calendar year is determined as the product of the declared by the agricultural producer and positively verified by the ARMA area of agricultural land and the individual crops and payment rates per 1 ha of land [Kisiel et al. 2008].

² <http://www.arimr.gov.pl/index.php?id=88&id1=0&id2=0> [dostęp: 3.01.2009].

Direct subsidies play the major role in supporting farmers' incomes [Pocza 2008] despite their lower level in Poland than in the EU-15 countries. During the initial five years of the integration the farmers obtained from them the support amounting in excess of PLN 37 billion (Table 3).

Table 3. Payments carried out the ARiMR in 2004-2008* campaigns (mln PLN) – by the state on 31.03.2009

Tabela 3. Płatności realizowane przez ARiMR w kampaniach 2004-2008* (mln zł) – według stanu z 31.03.2009 roku

Specification Wyszczególnienie	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2004-2008
The single area payment Jednolita płatność obszarowa (JPO)	2 853.4	3 159.7	3 880.1	4 240.1	4 506.3	18 639.6
Supplementary area payment – other plants Uzupełniające płatności obszarowe (UPO) – inne rośliny	3 486.7	3 528.9	3 914.8	2 761.7	2 424.3	16 116.4
Supplementary area payment – hop Uzupełniające płatności obszarowe – chmiel	2.3	2.0	2.1	2.1	2.0	10.5
Supplementary area payment – payment livestock Uzupełniające płatności obszarowe – płatności zwierzęce	–	–	–	797.1	674.4	1 471.5
Supplementary area payment – energy payments Uzupełniające płatności obszarowe – płatności energetyczne	–	0.8**	1.7**	12.4	3.1	18.0
Supplementary area payment – corn payment Uzupełniające płatności obszarowe – płatność cukrowa	–	–	401.4	462.4	459.3	1 323.1
Separate payments for fruit and vegetables Oddzielna płatność z tytułu owoców i warzyw	–	–	–	–	21.8	21.8
Interim payment of soft fruit Przejściowa płatność z tytułu owoców miękkich	–	–	–	–	39.7	39.7
In total Razem	6 342.4	6 691.4	8 200.1	8 275.8	8 130.9	37 640.6

*Single area payment and additional payment (other plants, hop, livestock, energy, Horn) and a separate payment for fruits and vegetables and interim payment of soft fruit.

**Payments of willow plantations and thornless rose, used for energy purposes in 2005 and 2006 were financed from the national budget.

Source: Marks-Bielska and Babuchowska [2009].

*Jednolita płatność obszarowa i płatności uzupełniające (inne rośliny, chmiel, zwierzęce, energetyczne, cukrowa) oraz oddzielna płatność z tytułu owoców i warzyw i przejściowa płatność z tytułu owoców miękkich.

**Dopłaty z tytułu prowadzenia plantacji wierzby lub róży bezkolcowej, wykorzystywanych na cele energetyczne w 2005 i w 2006 r. finansowane były z budżetu krajowego.

Źródło: Marks-Bielska i Babuchowska [2009].

The importance of the direct payments in the determination of the economic situation of farmers' families is indicated by, e.g. the relations between the number of farms, the number of registered producers (the registration is necessary for application for the subsidies) and the number of applications filed. The largest numbers of applications are filed in the voivodships with the most comminuted structure of agriculture [Chmielewska 2007].

The number of applications accepted by the ARMA in 2005 was higher by over 83.00 thousands than in 2004, which indicates the wider interest of the farmers in that form of supplementing their incomes. In 2006, a minor decrease in the number of applications filed in all voivodships (with the exception of Warmińsko-Mazurskie) was recorded, which resulted from organisational problems (the ARMA printed the applications too late and farmers received them shortly before the deadline for filing) as well as intensification of the control of farms applying for subsidies. During the consecutive years the number of applications filed decreased although in 2009 it was larger than in 2004 (Table 4). That decrease results first of all from transfer of farms by the farmers

Table 4. The number of applications for area payments in 2004-2009 campaigns

Tabela 4. Liczba złożonych wniosków o przyznanie dopłat obszarowych w kampaniach 2004-2009

Voivodship Województwo	The number of submitted and pending applications Liczba złożonych i rozpatrywanych wniosków					
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Dolnośląskie	61 459	63 195	62 160	60 992	59 132	58 098
Kujawsko-pomorskie	69 303	70 190	69 491	68 620	67 518	66 641
Lubelskie	173 373	186 035	185 253	184 377	181 541	179 639
Lubuskie	20 342	21 516	21 379	21 164	20 596	20 242
Łódzkie	127 818	134 567	133 175	131 673	129 072	127 212
Małopolskie	131 907	142 869	140 344	137 964	132 824	128 419
Mazowieckie	207 851	223 438	221 580	219 791	214 439	210 961
Opolskie	30 539	30 551	29 860	29 321	28 718	28 215
Podkarpackie	119 279	131 511	130 110	128 172	124 397	121 703
Podlaskie	80 675	84 691	84 299	83 572	82 628	82 009
Pomorskie	39 091	40 668	40 271	39 957	39 146	38 622
Śląskie	52 978	56 702	55 485	54 455	52 223	50 477
Świętokrzyskie	92 108	97 212	95 980	94 923	92 397	90 237
Warmińsko-mazurskie	41 864	44 093	44 129	43 869	43 098	42 825
Wielkopolskie	122 592	126 042	125 085	124 171	122 893	121 885
Zachodniopomorskie	29 191	30 348	30 013	29 644	28 636	28 251
Total Razem	1 400 370	1 483 628	1 468 614	1 452 665	1 419 258	1 395 436

Source: http://www.arimr.gov.pl/pliki/67/1/0/pb_1229.pdf [access: 15.03.2009].

Źródło: http://www.arimr.gov.pl/pliki/67/1/0/pb_1229.pdf [dostęp: 15.03.2009].

in exchange for the structural pension. Some of the farmers opted for afforestation of the arable lands and they also do not apply for award of the payments.

THE USE OF DIRECT PAYMENTS BY POLISH AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS ON THE EXAMPLE OF WARMIA AND MAZURY

In the warminsko-mazurskie voivodeship there are more than 52 thousand farms, which in total occupy over 971 thousand hectares. According to survey conducted amongst 295 farms of different size, the largest share (40.34%) had farms between 5-19.9 hectares while the smallest share represented farms by size 100-299.9 hectares (1.02%) and with the area exceeding 300 hectares (0.68%). The share of other categories of farms by size was as follows: 1-4.9 ha – 11.19%, 20.0-49.9 ha – 31.18%, 50-99.9 ha – 15.59%.

More than 27% of farmers participating in the survey responded that despite the financial aid they had received their overall financial situation had not changed. However, 72.59% of the respondents have recorded the positive impact of the CAP instrument. A slight change has been noticed by 45.56% of farmers, whilst the remaining 27.03% described this impact as significant, which prominently influenced on the improvement of the financial situation of farms.

Analysis of the same survey in accordance to the structure of the farm area reveals that the owners of small farms (1-4.9 hectares) have not recorded the significant change following the receipt of direct subsidies, which only slightly influenced on the financial condition of their farms (45.24%). Quite opposite view was presented by the owners of large farms, who have always assessed the impact of this financial aid as positive.

Any economic operator, including a farm, needs investment in order to develop and secure itself a stable position in the modern market economy. The level of investment in the Polish farms is relatively low. The reason might be passive approach of farmers or on the other hand lack of own financial resources to invest. Once the Polish farms have been included in the direct payments scheme, this has given the opportunity to improve the economic situation and thereby increase the level of investment in this group of operators.

Analysis of funds distribution, which have been obtained in the form of direct subsidies, reveals that these were mostly used for investments. Almost 40% of farmers participating in the survey spent their subsidies on development of their farms, while only 15.93% decide to purchase a land (Fig. 1).

The vast majority of direct payments were spent on purchase of means of production (72.88%) and to finance current expenditures (71.53%).

According to the analysis of funds distribution undertaken by agricultural producers and with consideration of the size of their farms, there can be observed significant differences in spending (Fig. 2). Decision to spend subsidies on purchasing land was usually made by owners of farms ranging in size 20.0-199.9 hectares. In other groups this response was given relatively rarely. The owners of farms ranging in size 5.0-49.9 hectares more often declared spending their funds on repayment of existing loans.

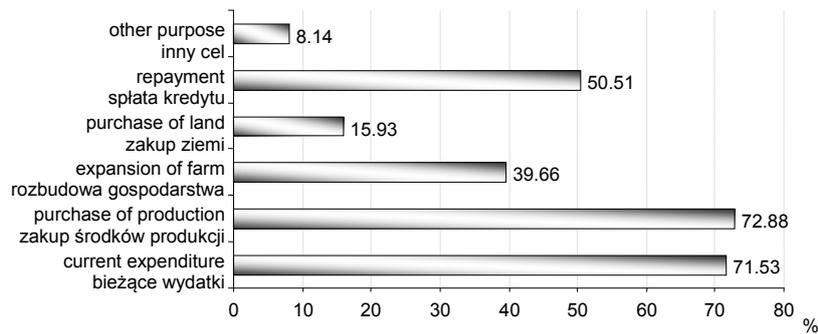


Fig. 1. The use of direct payments in 2008 (respondents were allowed to select more than one answer)

Source: Prepared on the test results, n = 295.

Rys. 1. Wykorzystanie płatności bezpośrednich za 2008 rok (badani rolnicy mieli możliwość zaznaczenia więcej niż jednej odpowiedzi)

Źródło: Opracowanie własne na podstawie wyników badań, n = 295.

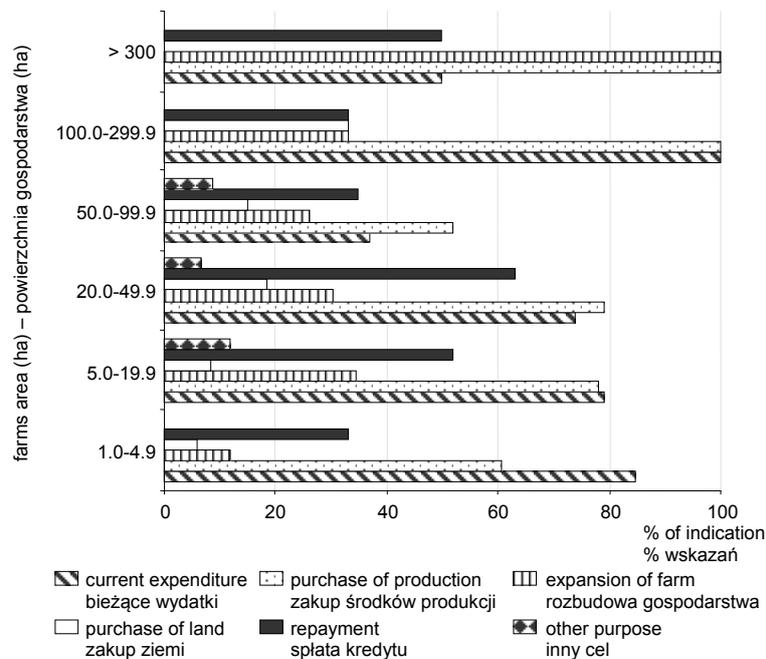


Fig. 2. The use of direct payments for 2008 by size of farms (respondents were allowed to select more than one answer)

Source: prepared on the test results, n = 295.

Rys. 2. Wykorzystanie płatności bezpośrednich za 2008 rok według wielkości gospodarstw (badani rolnicy mieli możliwość zaznaczenia więcej niż jednej odpowiedzi)

Źródło: opracowanie własne na podstawie wyników badań, n = 295.

CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that the direct payments represent an important aid instrument supporting agriculture within the frameworks of the first pillar of the Common Agricultural Policy. By assumption they allow increasing the incomes of farmers without the necessity of increasing the prices for agricultural products. During the initial five years of Poland's membership in the EU, Polish farmers obtained support in the form of direct payments exceeding PLN 37 billion.

The survey revealed that subsidies have significantly contributed to the improvement of financial condition of farms. Funds received in the form of direct payments have been mainly spent on financing current expenditures and to purchase means of production used in the farms (72.88%).

The European Union is facing the necessity of introducing changes to the Common Agricultural Policy that are conditions by the WTO pressure and result from the need to reform the agriculture. The initial changes were noticed during the last years. They manifest through successive limitation of expenditures on instruments supporting agricultural production (pillar I) and increase of the funds allocated to development of not-urbanised areas (pillar II). For those purpose two new funds, the European Agricultural Fund and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) were established.

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FUNKCJONOWANIE SYSTEMU DOPLAT BEZPOŚREDNICH W POLSCE I W INNYCH KRAJACH UE

Streszczenie: Celem opracowania było zaprezentowanie funkcjonowania systemu dopłat bezpośrednich w Polsce. Szczególną uwagę zwrócono na środki, które otrzymują producenci rolni w województwie warmińsko-mazurskim. Płatności bezpośrednie stanowią ważny instrument pomocy wspierania rolnictwa w ramach pierwszego filaru wspólnej polityki rolnej. Badanie wykazało, że dotacje w istotny sposób przyczyniły się do poprawy kondycji finansowej gospodarstw. Dopłaty były głównie przeznaczane na finansowanie bieżących wydatków i zakup środków produkcji w gospodarstwach rolnych (72,88%).

Słowa kluczowe: płatności bezpośrednie, WPR, producenci rolni

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