

# An institutional approach to the implementation of agricultural and rural development policy in Poland

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The paper presents an institutional framework for implementing agricultural and rural support policy in Poland and evaluates Government executive agencies through a general review of their performance and a case study of two EU paying agencies: the Agency for Restructuring and Modernization of Agriculture and the Agricultural Market Agency.

The survey across Poland was conducted in 2006–2007 on a total of 200 respondents. The Likert scale questionnaires were used to obtain data regarding selected attributes of the agencies' governance and performance.

The results of the survey indicate that in farmers' perception (i) both agencies generally do not differ in the quality of provided services from other governmental offices; (ii) their overall performance was on average positively evaluated by farmers; (iii) farmers generally have confidence in the agencies; (iv) the agencies are perceived as contributing to the European integration; (v) they are resistant to pressure from political parties and interest groups and represent mainly Polish farmers' interests; (vi) they spend public money quite efficiently. Additionally, no important differences in the evaluations made by small and big farmers were found.

**Key words:** governance, agricultural agencies, policy implementation, Poland

## INTRODUCTION

An effective institutional framework for implementing agricultural and rural development policy is a key to the full implementation of national and EU-supported programmes. In recent years, wide-ranging transformation efforts in the state administration in Poland have been undertaken. The transfer of competences from the ministry level to newly created agencies, including those sector-specific, was one of the most significant developments in the administrative structure.

In many countries, autonomous or semi-autonomous organizations operating outside ministerial departments are the basic elements of the administrative system. Some countries (e. g. Sweden, Germany, Norway) have long traditions of using agencies responsible for performing operational tasks, whereas other countries (e. g. United Kingdom, Netherlands) have launched comprehensive agency reforms over the last decades (James, 2001; Pollitt, Talbot, 2004; Bach et al., 2005; Jann, Döhler, 2007).

Agencies in numerous countries have been given more decision-making autonomy in managing financial and human resources, implying that they should be governed by focusing on organisational outputs and outcomes rather on than input factors, such as budget and personnel regulations (Talbot, 2004; Lægheid et al., 2006).

Politically, government or state agencies might be perceived as a method of revitalising the legitimacy of public institutions in the eyes of citizens as voters, clients and taxpayers. Moreover, the delegating functions to the agencies might be seen as a step towards lessening the political influence of parties on their activities.

In policy terms, the creating of agencies might be regarded as a way of rationalizing policy by specifying its clear goals and the means of its delivery. Agencies that are clearly tasked for each major area of policy delivery can improve the allocative efficiency of the system.

In the context of EU integration, the public administration policy of a nation state, in principle, is the domain and competence of the respective member state. However, as the management of EU funds is often a responsibility shared by the European Commission (EC) and the member states, the latter were required to designate the authorities and bodies (called paying agencies) empowered to incur expenditure. They could have been authorized as such only if certain authorization criteria (including the design of an administrative organization) laid down in EC regulations were satisfied.

As the relevant research by other academics in Poland is rather small, the ambition of this paper is to explore the branch of national-level or government agencies responsible for the execution of the agricultural and rural development

policies in Poland. Two paying agencies are examined: the Agency for Restructuring and Modernisation of Agriculture (ARMA) and the Agricultural Market Agency (AMA).

A governmental agency, like other alternative modes of public governance structures (markets, hybrids, firms, regulation) (Williamson, 1975; Williamson, 1985), might be well suited to some transactions and poorly suited to others. However, it is widely considered that governmental agencies, by nature, are highly inefficient and ineffective in their functioning (Picot, Wolf, 1994; Goodsell, 2004), at least in relation to a hypothetical ideal.

Consequently, we hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 1: Polish government agricultural agencies are imperfect as they undergo a political pressure and are incompetent.

The structure of the paper is as follows. First, we briefly sketch the methodology we use. Second, we provide some existing definitions of governance and good governance. Third, we present the institutional framework of agricultural policy and rural development policy in Poland, focusing on two government agencies. Next, we describe the obtained results and their implications. Finally, we draw conclusions.

## METHODS

From a theoretical perspective, this research is based on a strong institutionalist ground. It focuses on the theoretical foundations of institutions and (good) governance. Empirical study is designated to analyse the attitudes of customers (clients) of two paying agencies towards their performance, roles, image and other selected aspects.

The primary data for this study were collected through a structured questionnaire and in-depth semi-structured interviews undertaken from December 2006 to January 2007 with 200 individual farmers. To select the attended number of 200 respondents, a proportional quota sampling technique was applied. A quota was set reflecting farm geographical location and size by area, based on 2002 Agricultural Census data. As a result, the number of respondents from each of 16 provinces was 12 to 13. Finally, only interviews with those farmers who were customers of both agencies were completed. Interviewees were assured that their responses and comments would remain confidential.

The questionnaire tried to capture the differences in perceptions between smallest (<3 ha UAA, N = 77) and biggest farmers (>10 ha UAA, N = 54). So, we hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 2: There is no difference in the perception of the government agencies' performance by smallest and biggest farmers.

The agencies' performance was measured using the 10-point Likert-type scale in which respondents were asked to rate their agreement to each statement from 1 to 10 (10 = strongly agree and 1 = strongly disagree).

The second source of data was the ARMA and the AMA official documents such as annual reports, press statements,

etc. These documents give a certain indication of the agencies' tasks and performance over time. Additionally, the EU documents were used as a source for research.

## GOOD GOVERNANCE AND AGENCIES

Since public policy is implemented in and by government agencies, they are a good place where the model of good governance should be promoted.

The terms "governance" and "good governance" have many different definitions by economists, political scientists and other social scholars as well as by various stakeholders.

For example, according to O'Brien (2003), governance is the way in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for the public good. Democratic governance is characterized by the institutions that are accountable, transparent and responsive to the people they serve.

Kaufman and Kraay (2008) define governance as the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised for the common good. This includes, among others, the economic dimension, namely the government's capacity to effectively manage its resources and implement sound policies.

The concept of an institution embodies a variety of elements: formal and informal rules of behaviour, ways and means of enforcing these rules, procedures for mediation of conflicts, sanctions for breaching the rules, and organizations supporting market transactions (North, 1994; World Bank, 2002). Institutions operate and are studied at multiple levels – from world systems to subunits within organisations (Olsen, 2007).

Governance means the allocation of responsibility for decision-making and policy delivery across government departments, levels of government, and public and private actors. Governance involves interaction between formal institutions and those of civil society.

Referring to the approach taken by the United Nations Committee for Development Planning, one of attributes of good governance is a professionally competent, capable and honest public service which operates within an accountable, rule-governed framework and in which the principles of merit and public interest are paramount (United Nations, 1992).

From the perspective of the World Bank (1994), good governance is epitomized by predictable, open and enlightened policy-making, a bureaucracy imbued with professional ethos acting in furtherance of the public good, the rule of law, transparent processes, and a strong civil society participating in public affairs.

The European good governance principles proposed in its White Paper (Commission of the European Communities, 2001) include: openness (institutions should work in an open manner); participation (the quality and effectiveness of policies depend on ensuring wide participation);

accountability (institutions must explain and take responsibility for what they do); effectiveness (policies must be effective and timely and deliver what is needed on the basis of clear objectives) and coherence (policies and actions must be coherent and easily understood).

For the European Commission (2008), governance concerns the state's ability to serve the citizens. The way government agencies carry out public functions, manage public resources and exercise public regulatory powers or, more generally, the quality of public administration is the major issue to be addressed in this context.

Why is governance important? Good governance (in government agencies) can ensure that services attain quality standards, are affordable and promote cost effectiveness.

In this paper, we look at governance by and in the agencies from the perspective of their customers. The predictor of customers' perspective is farmers' assessment of the different attributes of the agencies.

### INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK OF AGRICULTURAL POLICY AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Over the decades, the Common Agricultural Policy as a whole has become very multifaceted and bureaucratic. Central decisions concerning the course of the policy are taken by the EU Council of Ministers for Agriculture and the European Commission.

However, before accession, each present member state of the EU had its own farm support policies. Some of them remain as a supplement to existing EU aid schemes.

The Commission has overall responsibility for implementing the EU budget. Nevertheless, it shares the management of the implementation of EU policies with member states, particularly for agricultural and structural policies (Figure).

The majority of spending involves shared management between the Commission and member states. Only accredited paying agencies are entitled to receive Community funding in respect of the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)<sup>1</sup>. Paying agencies shall only be accredited by member states if they comply with certain minimum criteria (control environment, internal control activities, information and communication, and monitoring) established at the Community level.

Nine out of the ten states that accessed the EU in 2004 (EU-10) – Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Slovenia and Slovakia – have established only one paying agency. Only Poland has chosen to operate separate agencies for handling market measures and rural

development measures. As concerns the countries that became EU members in 2007, in Romania there are two paying agencies, while in Bulgaria there exists one such agency.

Agricultural agencies in Poland were established in the first wave of the agencification process<sup>2</sup> in the early 1990s when the Polish first governments of the post-Communist era applied international role models in order to make the public administration more effective, efficient and accountable.

The Agricultural Market Agency (AMA) was the first agency in the country, dedicated to the agricultural industry. It was set up in 1991 to conduct state intervention in agricultural markets in Poland. The agency's main goals included domestic market stabilisation and agricultural income protection. In 2004, the AMA became an EU accredited paying agency. Since then, it has been responsible for the implementation of the Common Agricultural Policy schemes whose purpose is to stabilise agricultural markets and boost the competitiveness of farm products on the domestic and Community market. The AMA has offices in 16 administrative regions (provinces) of the country and co-operates with more than 500 thousand beneficiaries of the EU and national funds. In 2008, the agency's full-time equivalent employees numbered to 1320 (annual average).

The agency's main tasks are to administrate foreign trade schemes, including issuing import and export licences and paying export refunds; supervise over the production under quota systems (milk, sugar); make payments to eligible quota holders or producers (starch, tobacco, hemp and flax); co-operate with institutions and operators involved in food distribution to most deprived persons in the Community; intervention purchase and sale of agricultural products; grant aid for private storage of agricultural and food products, and transfer financial support for producers in the framework of national schemes and *de minimis* aid for the agricultural sector. Additionally, the agency's duty is to co-operate with other paying agencies and other member states' institutions; participate in the work of the EU institutions; provide expert assistance to the EU candidate and third countries as well as to conduct market analyses.

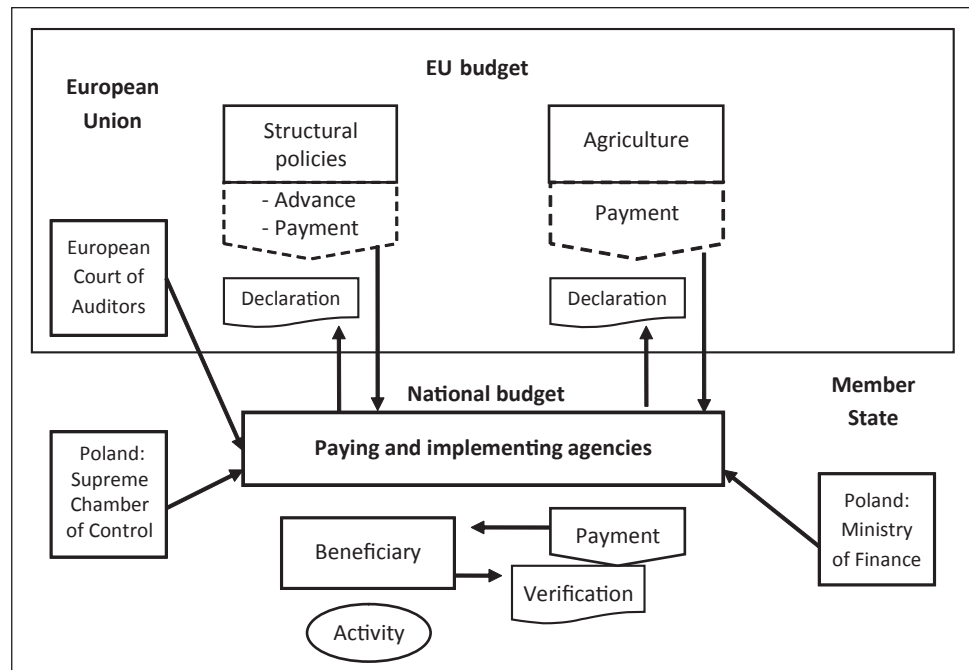
In 1991, the Agricultural Property Agency of the State Treasury (since 2003 the Agricultural Property Agency) entrusted with tasks pertaining to shaping farm territorial structure and privatisation of former state owned farms was created. We do not describe this agency in much detail as it is not a paying agency.

The Agency for Restructuring and Modernization of Agriculture (ARMA) started its operation in 1994 with the

<sup>1</sup> During the period 2000–2006, both agricultural and rural policy in the EU was financed from the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF).

<sup>2</sup> Agencification is regarded as: (i) delegation and devolution of many functions of the government to public bodies that are not legally and financially incorporated into ministries, (ii) the separation of policy formation from its implementation (Shapiro, 1997). Agencification is based on a quite simple idea of the classical distinction between policy formation and policy implementation.

**Figure.** Arrangements for implementing the EU budget within shared management between the Commission and member states  
*Source:* Authors's own compilation.



mission to support the acceleration of structural changes in agriculture and rural areas. In the pre-accession period, the ARMA was the single paying agency dealing with the EU agriculture and rural support in Poland, acting as a paying agency for SAPARD. In August 2004, the agency was conditionally accredited by the Minister of Finance as the national paying agency for the EAGGF. It received the first full accreditation as a paying agency for the EAGGF in January 2006. In October 2008, the agency obtained permanent accreditation for payments under the Rural Development Programme (for Poland) for 2007–2013. Within the national programmes, the ARMA has channelled the preferential loans to farmers.

The ARMA has offices in 16 provinces and in 314 local administrative units (poviats). In 2008, its total full-equivalent staff (excluding those on temporary contracts) amounted to about 11550 persons who served over 1.42 million applications for area payments for 2008. Except making rural payments, the agency carries out rural inspections (on-the-spot checks) and livestock records.

The ARMA played a vital role in the institutional system of the Sectoral Operational Programme “Restructuring and Modernisation of the Food Sector and Rural Development” (2004–2006) as an implementing institution and final beneficiary. As a final beneficiary, it was responsible for the payment of the national and EU funds to projects, the implementation of these projects, the legal, technical and economic supervision and audit of finished projects.

The ARMA and the AMA operate within a complex legislative framework of national and community acts and are accountable to both national and supranational (EU) institutions. The agencies have a legal personality of their own as well as their own statutes established by the regulation of the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development. Their

activities are supervised by the same Minister. The Ministry of Finance is in charge of EU financial flows, an accrediting body, and a certifying body responsible for the validation of expenditure accounts.

The certifying body (Ministry of Finance – the Bureau for International Treasury Relations, KPMG – pre-accreditation audit) performs an external audit on the accounts of the paying agencies. The commission bases much of its assurance as to legality and regularity of the accounts on the basis of these audits. Additionally, in terms of agency auditing, Poland has a specialised audit office (Supreme Chamber of Control – NIK) empowered to exercise a wide-ranging control of the revenue and expenditure of the state. The NIK focuses on financial management issues and the proper use of public money by the agencies. Sejm (the lower chamber of the Polish parliament) can order the NIK to carry out audits on its behalf.

The agencies are managed by a single top executive. The directors (presidents) of the agencies are appointed by the Prime Minister on the proposal of the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Minister of Finance.

Paying agencies in Poland manage two new funds in the fields of rural and agricultural policy (EAFRD and EAGGF) that are passed to them through both EU and national budgets. Both agencies are clearly specialised on the operations and are not involved in policy formulation, in spite of the role they play as advisors to the relevant minister. The AMA can be characterised as a regulatory and executive agency, whereas the ARMA performs mostly executive functions. They, as executive agencies, have the common characteristic of performing mainly an “instrumental” role at the service of the delivery of policies formulated by the national government and the EU.



Both agricultural agencies meet the Talbot's definition of an "agency" (Talbot, 2004), i. e. they are organizations that are at arm's length from the main hierarchical "spine" of central ministries; they carry out public tasks at a national level, are staffed by public servants (not necessarily "civil servants"), financed (in principle) by the state budget or under scrutiny of the state, and are subject to public / administrative law procedures.

Politically, the surveyed agencies could be regarded as a way of enhancing the legitimacy of public institutions in the eyes of the increasingly sceptical and detached public. In policy terms, the agencies can be seen as a rational method for the specifying the policy goals, means by which the policy is effected, as well as its outcomes. In administrative (managerial) terms, the agencies could be considered as less bureaucratic, performance- and customer-oriented organisations with officials who are accountable to the central national (Parliament, Government) and EU institutions, avoiding, thus, the diffusion of responsibility. Finally, in economic terms, the government agencies are not profit-seeking organizations and are not, most likely, managed by the logic of the private sector, but they can be viewed as an organizational mode that minimizes the transaction costs of implementing national and European policies. By creating specific agencies for selected areas of policy delivery, the allocative efficiency of the public spending may be improved.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Characteristics of survey respondents

Analysis of the respondent characteristics revealed that a large proportion (64%) of the farmers were aged 40 years and over, and that almost half of them (45%) had achieved a high-school degree or higher educational level, indicating that the study group was moderately young and well educated.

The survey respondents were predominantly male (70%). Of all the respondents, approximately 63% had been operators (managers) of the agricultural holding for more than 10 years, and 80% had been staying in farming over 10 years.

Regarding the farm size, 32% respondents farmed less than 3 hectares of utilised agricultural area (UAA) and 33% had operated farms larger than 10 hectares of UAA. The highest proportion (60%) of the farmers perceived themselves as commercial producers. Respondents were asked to identify the type of schemes they applied for and benefited from. As regards the ARMA, direct area payments (90%) and Less Favoured Areas Support Scheme (21%) were most commonly indicated, whereas in the case of the AMA those included intervention buying-in of cereals by the agency (35%) and the milk quota scheme for individual producers (32%). Only a small percentage of survey respondents (respectively 5% and 11%) believed that the financial condition of their farm did not depend on the activities of the ARMA and the AMA.

The results have shown that farmers' view of their own farm economic situation was quite optimistic. However, a relatively small proportion of the farmers (32%) perceived the situation of their farm as either good or very good.

Farmers most frequently had contacted the agencies twice annually (ARMA – 31%, AMA – 30%) and quarterly (ARMA – 31%, AMA – 27%). The main source of information about activities of the agencies were nation-wide channels of state television (38%), self-government at the lowest administrative level (35%) and informal channels of communication, e. g. family, neighbours (32%).

### Farmers' opinions: What do the agricultural agencies do and how they do it?

The respondents' perceptions of the roles and ways of conduct of each agricultural agency were measured by asking farmers several questions about the agency's key responsibilities and attributes (Table).

This research found no strong proof for the hypothesis that Polish government agricultural agencies are imperfect as they suffer political pressure and are incompetent. To verify this hypothesis, sample farmers were asked about their belief whether agricultural agencies are associated with political parties and interest groups having a stake in their maintenance and activity. Such involvement might indicate the existence of the "agency capture" phenomenon (Stigler, 1971).

Only as much as 6% of all respondents strongly agreed that both the AMA and the ARMA are under control of the political parties. On the other hand, the average scores for this item above 5.5 suggest that respondents' perception of the political pressure on the agencies harms the image of the Government and should be taken into consideration by politicians. At the same time, a relatively low percentage of sample farmers strongly agreed with the statement that the agencies opposed the influence of interest-groups (ARMA – 5%, AMA – 8%), but the mean scores were high again.

According to the survey, most respondents (AMA – 49%; ARMA – 69%) believed that both agencies primarily represented the interests of farmers. However, the second and the third rank group of respondents have indicated that the agencies have put their own interest above farmers' interest or else have represented mainly the interests of Polish Government.

Farmers expressed the opinion that both agencies effectively performed their role in encouraging the development of Polish agriculture (the most frequently indicated attribute) and shaping positive attitudes towards Polish farmers in the EU.

The way the agencies managed public money was assessed quite well with the average 6.4 for each agency. In the case of both agencies, almost two thirds of surveyed farmers gave scores of 6–10 for this item, but only 7% of respondents evaluated it at 10 points. Regrettably, every one of

Table. Farmers' evaluation of the selected aspects of agricultural agencies' operation in Poland: mean scores and standard deviations

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements? The agency...	Agency	Total respondents		Smallest farmers (<3 ha)		Biggest farmers (>10 ha)	
		m	SD	m	SD	m	SD
1. Is vital in the development of Polish agriculture	ARMA	7.4	1.96	7.4	2.14	8.0	1.58
	AMA	7.2	1.93	7.2	1.97	7.5	1.92
2. Meets the expectations of farmers	ARMA	6.7	2.08	6.6	2.19	7.2	1.82
	AMA	6.3	2.08	6.1	2.09	6.5	2.07
3. Has a positive impact on attitudes towards Polish farmers in the EU	ARMA	7.0	2.01	6.8	2.09	7.7	1.96
	AMA	6.8	1.78	6.8	1.87	6.9	2.08
4. Offers high level services to farmers	ARMA	7.1	1.88	7.1	1.89	7.3	1.76
	AMA	6.7	2.09	6.6	2.16	6.8	2.14
5. Provides reliable information about EU programs	ARMA	7.1	2.26	7.2	2.16	7.3	2.18
	AMA	6.6	2.34	6.7	2.26	6.6	2.45
6. Has a competent president / director in office	ARMA	6.9	1.78	6.7	1.82	7.3	1.89
	AMA	6.6	1.92	6.6	1.88	6.5	2.14
7. Has professional employees	ARMA	7.2	1.81	7.2	1.81	7.7	1.71
	AMA	7.0	1.75	6.9	1.68	7.1	1.92
8. Employees respect regulations and processes	ARMA	7.1	2.11	7.1	2.20	7.7	1.85
	AMA	7.1	1.98	7.0	2.05	7.5	2.04
9. Manages public money effectively	ARMA	6.4	1.77	6.5	1.84	6.5	1.66
	AMA	6.4	1.94	6.4	1.89	6.5	1.97
10. Is resistant to different interest group pressures	ARMA	5.9	2.22	5.8	2.28	6.0	2.36
	AMA	6.1	2.24	5.9	2.32	6.1	2.28
11. Is affected by political party dominance	ARMA	6.1	2.32	5.6	2.28	6.6	2.29
	AMA	5.9	2.35	6.0	2.35	5.9	3.39
12. Is worthy of trust	ARMA	7.1	1.81	6.9	1.75	7.5	1.83
	AMA	6.6	1.92	6.5	1.8	7.0	1.84

Notes. The range for scores was 1–10 with 10 = strongly agree and 1 = strongly disagree. Mean scores equal to or above 5.5 for each response item were regarded as influential; m – mean scores; SD – standard deviation of the mean.

Source: Author's own research.

three farmers in the sample felt that national and EU funds were not being spent where and how sample farmers would like to see this money spent.

As scores in Table for items focusing on good governance attributes (4–8) show, the agencies have provided the farmers and rural community with delivering high quality services and reliable information. In respondents' perception, the agencies have management executives with the right skills and the professional staff which operates within the rule-governed framework. All the mentioned items received the mean ratings of 6.5 or higher, thus indicating that sample farmers were satisfied with these aspects.

Looking at scores for item 12, it appears that the agencies received political support from the surveyed farmers in terms of trust. In response to this question, trust scores of 6 and higher were given by 68% of respondents in the case of the AMA and by 77% in the case of the ARMA.

The coefficient of variation (CV), which is the ratio of standard deviation to the mean, for the scores ranged from 19.8% to 57.5%, indicating a low to moderate variability.

As the most important aspects of service provided by the agencies, the majority of respondents indicated claims payment on time (AMA – 64%; ARMA – 69%) and keeping promises by the agency (AMA – 56%; ARMA – 63%).

There is some evidence that both agencies were perceived by respondents as providing services of higher or the same quality relative to services afforded to the citizen by other Government offices. Such perception was shown by 84% of respondents against 5% of those with the opposite view, with additional 11% of respondents being undecided.

Of the respondents that mentioned the need to improve to the service, the majority listed the following: fewer formalities, more and better information and a simplified procedure of form filling. They also suggested making personal contacts with the agencies' staff more accessible (more

service desks – ARMA) or more decentralized (opening local, i. e. poviats, offices – AMA).

In order to verify the second hypothesis, individual items on the smallest farmers' scale and the perception of the biggest farmers were compared. Scores for all 12 items (Table) showed no significant difference between the two groups. Responses from the two groups were significantly and highly correlated ( $r = 0.86$ ). Moreover, the scores for the scale as a whole were significantly correlated with the scores for the smallest farmers ( $r = 0.96$ ) and for the biggest farmers ( $r = 0.94$ ).

Generally, the poorer marks obtained from the smallest farmers might suggest that their perception of the agencies delivering agricultural and rural support reflects, to some extent, their feelings of injustice (dissatisfaction) resulting from the unequal distribution of the EU support as most of the CAP money goes to the largest, richest farmers (Zawojska, 2007).

## CONCLUSIONS

1. In Poland, there are two main Government agencies performing highly specific tasks in implementing national and European agricultural and rural development policies: the Agricultural Market Agency and the Agency for Restructuring and Modernisation of Agriculture. Both are accredited paying agencies which, according to the principle of shared management of the EU budget, are in charge of accounting for all payments under schemes financed from the European agricultural funds.

2. Users of the services provided by the government agencies or the policies' beneficiaries may play an important role in evaluating the agencies, for example, through surveys of perceptions and experiences that indicate what is successful or not and what should be changed.

3. In spite of the general impression that government agencies are inefficient and ineffective, our respondents, in general, positively evaluate the two agencies under study, indicating their satisfaction with the agencies they were dealing with. Results also suggest political support from the surveyed farmers in terms of confidence in the agencies.

4. In the eyes of surveyed farmers, the agencies have quite well accomplished their goals such as promoting the development of Polish agriculture and creating positive attitudes by the Europeans towards Polish farmers. Against expected results, according to the obtained scores, the agencies have not been under a strong pressure of political parties and interest groups. In respondents' opinion, they have first of all represented Polish farmers' interests.

5. The agencies were scored high on the scale of good governance attributes, such as service and information quality, abiding the rules and regulations as well as professionalism of the staff and the competence of the directors. Among the needed improvements, most frequently indicated

by the respondents were: reduction of formalities, improving information, simplification of the form filling procedure.

6. Both small and big farmers on average held similar opinions on selected issues concerning agricultural agencies. However, slightly less favourable scores were given by the smallest farmers.

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## INSTITUCINIS POŽIŪRIS Į ŽEMĖS ŪKIO IR KAIMO PLĖTROS POLITIKĄ LENKIJoje

### Santrauka

Straipsnyje apibūdinama Lenkijos paramos žemės ūkiui ir kaimo plėtrai institucinė struktūra ir valstybinių institucijų vertinimas pagal jų vykdomą veiklą pateikiant pavyzdžius apie dvi mokėjimo agentūras: Žemės ūkio restruktūrizavimo ir modernizavimo agentūrą ir Žemės ūkio rinkos agentūrą.

Tyrimas visoje Lenkijoje buvo atliktas 2006–2007 metais. Tyrime dalyvavo 200 respondentų. Likerto skalės tipo anketos buvo naudojamos renkant duomenis ir atsakymus pagal atrinktus specifinius agentūrų kompetencijos ir veiklos aspektus. Tyrimo rezultatai rodo, kad, ūkininkų nuomone, (i) abi agentūros iš esmės nesiskiria pagal teikiamų paslaugų kokybę nuo kitų valstybinių institucijų; (ii) vidutiniškai ūkininkai bendrą jų veiklą vertino teigiamai; (iii) iš esmės ūkininkai pasitiki agentūromis; (iv) manoma, kad agentūros padeda integruotis į Europą; (v) agentūros yra nepriklausomos nuo politinių partijų bei suinteresuotų grupių spaudimo ir iš esmės atstovauja Lenkijos ūkininkų interesams; (vi) jos gana efektyviai panaudoja valstybės lėšas. Be to, nenustatyta esminių skirtumų tarp smulkiųjų ir stambiųjų ūkininkų pateiktų vertinimų.

**Raktažodžiai:** valdymas, žemės ūkio agentūros, politikos įgyvendinimas, Lenkija