



The role of agri-environmental programs in grassland conservation and environmental protection

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INTRODUCTION

After becoming a member of the European Union Poland implemented agri-environmental schemes as a tool of proper, environmentally friendly management). In the first period (2004-2007) 7 different packages of Agri-environmental Schemes (AES) were available and since 2007 a new version of this program, including 9 packages, has been offered to farmers



THE AIM OF STUDY

The aim of this paper was to analyze agri-environmental programs which have been realized in North-Eastern part of Poland (Podlaskie voivodship) since 2004. A special attention was paid to the reasons of choosing specific packages by farmers

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Podlaskie voivodship has been chosen for this study as it is the region of Poland with a percentage of grassland, in total area of agricultural land, higher than average (35 % in comparison to 20 % in Poland). This area has also a rather extensive agriculture and high environmental value.

In the first stage of study, in 2007 110 questionnaires were sent to farmers in all communes of Podlaskie voivodship. Farmers had been selected by random (one single farm for each commune) and the basic question was if they were generally interested in agri-environmental scheme (AES) for 2004-2007

In the second stage of our study, questionnaires were sent only to 126 randomly selected farmers who decided to join the program and sign the environmental agreements for the years 2007-2013.

RESULTS

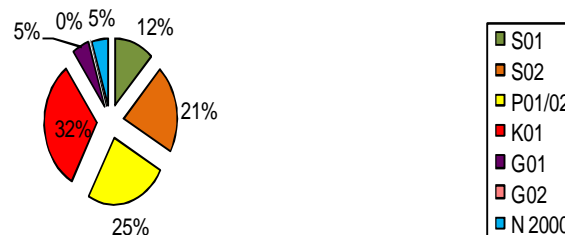
On the frame of agri-environmental program 4736 applications were sent (4,5% of all farmers). The most popular package was K01 and P01+P02 (Table 1).

Table 1 The number of applications for different packages of AEP in Podlaskie voivodship

Number of applications	S01	S02	P01	P02	K01	K02	G01	G02	N	Total
(2004-2007)	89	690	1394	136	2376	3	48	-	-	4738
(2007-2013)	288	955	2058		1121	2	124	54	131	4733
Total (2004-2013)	377	1645	3452		3497	5	172	54	131	9333
%	4.1	17.6	36,9		37.5	0,1	1.8	0.6	1.40	100

S01 sustainable agriculture
 S02 organic farming
 P01 extensive meadows
 P02 extensive pastures
 K01 soil and water protection
 K02 buffer zones
 G01 protection of local animal breeds
 G02 protection of local plant cultivars
 N – Natura 2000

Figure 1 The percentage of different packages chosen by the 126 farmers interviewed in Podlaskie voivodship in the frame of 2007-2013 Agro-environmental Scheme



CONCLUSION

- ✓ During the first step of Agri-environmental Scheme (2004-2007) farmers were not very interested in participation in this programme (4.3 % of total farmers population in Podlaskie voivodship and 6.6 % of tested farmers)
- ✓ The most attractive package was "Soil and water protection but in second period of AFS the measure "Extensive grassland" seems to be also attractive for farmers