

Perceptions of subsidies in Pogány-havas region

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The topic of our research is small scale family farming after the EU accession, its requirements on human, physical and financial resources, and the role of farming support schemes in it. The research area are the municipalities of the Pogány-havas region.

Focus group interviews served as method, we wanted to find out what farmers, experts and decision makers think about the present situation and future of farming of the area as well as the advantages and disadvantages of the agricultural support schemes from the point of view of the special circumstances of the area. We organised three focus group discussions during September 2011, one with 8 farmers from the Csík area, one with 6 farmers from the Gyimes area and one with 9 experts from county level organisations dealing with agriculture, rural development as well as under-secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

Based on the analysis of the interviews we identified different empirical types, which hypothetically could be extended to a wider range of farmers in the region.

Both farmers and experts enumerated only a few advantages of the current subsidy system. Disadvantages were discussed during the analysis related to the flow of information, administrative problems, compliance of the rules, and structural difficulties.

Based on the interviews we discussed suggestions for solutions to the problems which were identified during the study. One part of suggestions could be implemented easier in short term, before

the end of this programme period. Another category of them are long term suggestions, which could be implemented in the next period (2014-2020). Suggestions can be classified by the level of decision about them (local, regional, national, European). Farmers formulated expectations toward organizations, institutions independent from them, but we can find some factors which can be modified by farmers to improve their own situation. We presented the mentioned suggestions in five groups: cooperation, information acquiring, sale, the modification of subsidies (amounts, announcements), the modification of rules, the reform of the vocational training.

The presentation concentrates on disadvantages of the subsidy system based on perceptions of farmers and experts. The author tries to focus on the main suggestions for handling the identified difficulties.