

Changes in pro-social and economic policy in the area of social insurance of farmers, in selected aspects of statutory and programmatic activities

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Abstract

The economy of European countries has undergone significant changes after a breakthrough period – the end of World War II. The ubiquitous and all-powerful “free market” and its rules had to be modified and adapted to the new conditions that existed in Europe. These changes have been and still are carried out through European directives and in the course of top-down imposed measures. Therefore, in this new economic structure, we deal with a collision of uncontrolled natural production and trade processes with an interference of the “interventionism” of the superior institutions.

The aim of this article is to present programmatic solutions of an economic and social nature based on legislation and institutional activities as well as to justify their application in the light of economic laws and theories that developed at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, gaining dominant importance in today’s economic reality. The authors of the following publication attempted to evaluate the effects of applied legal regulations and government programs supporting market and production processes on the basis of selected examples in the field of agricultural policy.

An interesting approach to the above-mentioned issues deals with mutual correlations between the intentional institutionalised action of the state in this area and the processes included in economic theories, the rules of which were attempted to be recognized and defined by world-renowned scientists, called the “free market game”.

Moreover, the authors of this thesis, basing on the already available results, have presented a forecast regarding the effect of applying a peculiar state interventionism understood in this

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way, implemented point-wise, which in the Polish economic area of the agricultural industry is an innovative solution. So far it has not been practiced.

The observation method, taking into consideration the analysis and logical construction method based on the analysis method as well as criticism of literature, has been used in the thesis. The research problem consists in assessing the impact of particular solutions used as interventions in the agricultural sector on the level of production, the capabilities of manufacturers, and the general condition of society.

Key words: state interventionism, KRUS (Agricultural Social Insurance Fund), economic theories, social insurance of farmers.

Introduction

Outstanding world-renowned economists, studying and analyzing global processes and trends of economic development, as a domain in which they carry out specialized research, adopt “something”, which we can define as the general “transactional space”.

Milton Friedman presents such a model in his scientific works on economic development, for example, in the publication “A theory of the consumption function”. He defines this space as a “free market”, where the basic and most important factor defining it in a practical dimension is that “a transaction will never take place if both parties do not benefit from it”¹. This approach allows for a comprehensive representation of the space vectored by mutual relations of not only an economic but also social nature. In this space, each manifestation of operation and manufacturing or service impact can be treated as a measurable transaction between individual elements – its entities. In this way, it is easier for authors of scientific works, centres generating appropriate legal regulations, as well as participants in all transactions, to follow all factors relevant to the processes taking place here, evaluate their impact, as well as predict the best solutions for the future. This domain – transactional space – for the last few decades, which is emphasized by all authors referring to this topic (such as M. Friedman, A. Smith, Z. Bauman, A. Aldridge, J. Keynes, B. Mróz), on the one hand has been shaped by technological and scientific development, and on the other hand by population growth and systematic growth in consumption. The

1. M. Friedman, *A theory of the consumption function*, Martino Publishing 2015; Obserwator finansowy.pl, *Friedman: siła wolnego rynku, który wróci*, <https://www.obserwatorfinansowy.pl/tematyka/makroekonomia/trendy-gospodarcze/friedman-sila-wolnego-rynku-ktory-wroci/>, access 25.03.2022.

mutual interaction of these determinants is the underlining cause for the creation of an autonomous or regulated mechanism determining the satisfaction of individual needs of all entities participating in economic and social life.

This mechanism is referred to by A. Smith as the “invisible hand of the market”², the operation of which results from the behaviour of all participants of the free market game. The most important effect of this action is to shape the relationship between demand, supply, and the price of individual articles, whether in the global or local (transactional) space. The level of these relations and the time course of the processes that create them, directly determine the income and the level of material, and ultimately also the social development of individual countries as well as connected economic areas.

Due to the fact that the global market is becoming increasingly globalised, and its determinants are common, as confirmed by the scientific works of the above-mentioned authors, it can be stated that the resident-citizen model, currently a member of almost all communities in individual countries – has become established around the world. It is a model that was created at the turn of the 1920s in the United States and generated a new social attitude – consumerism.

Today, it is a common phenomenon conducive to development processes, creating and promoting individual and structurally developed entrepreneurship, and thus acting pro-socially in the long term. This social paradigm, expressed by desiring goods, power, and prestige, is also a driving force for technological and propaedeutic changes in political systems and social organisms. These changes generate progress in the above-mentioned areas, if undesirable or even socially harmful phenomena can be eliminated from the transaction space. In this case, consumerism becomes one of the most important attributes of the entire society, not its selected or limited part.

In practice, in the functioning of state organisms, this system – called by M. Rothbard the free market economy³ – co-exists and intertwines with the socio-political system, which constitutes its basis of resources and means, as well as basic legal regulations, i.e. the system of liberal democracy.

This relationship results in both mutual benefits and obligations, and what is more – also threats. Therefore, it is extremely important to analyze the entire economic and social space, taking into consideration state and local conditions as well as the intervention of decision-making centres in the ongoing economic process at the appropriate time, because – as A. Smith, M. Friedman and M. Rothbard argue,

2. A. Smith, *Badania nad naturą i przyczynami bogactwa narodów*, Warsaw 2012.

3. M. Rothbard, *Ekonomia wolnego rynku, Wykład akademicki*, Vol. 1, Fijorr Publishing 2007.

as well as shown by the historical experience based on the economic processes of various countries – free-market liberalism left outside the control of the state tends to drift towards neoliberal, radical and anti-social capitalism, thus polarizing the society and contributing to the increase of differences in income.

The voice of economic realism

While an outstanding theorist – economist Milton Friedman, basing mainly on the processes and statistical data of a large socio-political organism, namely the United States, was able to introduce and promote free-market and liberal development theories based on the non-intervention of the state as optimal conditions for the growth of consumption, in the countries of the European Union, and even more so in Poland, a “transaction space” followed solely by free-market principles would be a destabilizing factor. Adopting such an approach, especially in the area of agricultural economy, would lead to an abrupt impoverishment of this social group and a violation of economic and political balance, as well as the principle of social justice as a basic principle guaranteed by the constitution. The area for this analysis, the Polish agri-food sector is characterized by completely different “parameters” than those on which were used by the promoters of the so-called “invisible hand of the market”, i.e. an uncontrolled free market game excluding any state intervention in this space.

While in the United States the number of rural population never exceeded 20% of the total population (taking into consideration the fact that each number of the unemployed people in agriculture could be a result of natural migration to industrial centres), in Poland it constituted the majority or, as it is nowadays, almost half of the country’s population, and migration opportunities were and still are small. At the end of 2020, the rural population amounted to 15,359.9 and 1,317 out of which were engaged in agricultural activity. The efficiency of this kind of activity is based on a small acreage of farms with an average area of 11.04 ha, including the largest number of farms in the group of 1–5 ha of agricultural land⁴. Whereas nowadays, for example, in the United States, 4% of farmers (in relation to the entire population) run agricultural holdings on an average area of 190 ha⁵.

The two above-mentioned facts already oblige the national agricultural policy to adopt the following assumptions:

4. GUS, *Powszechny Spis Rolny 2020. Raport z wyników*, <https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/rolnictwo-lesnictwo/psr-2020/powszechny-spis-rolny-2020-raport-z-wynikow,4.1.html>, access 28.03.2022.
5. Wikipedia, *Gospodarka Stanów Zjednoczonych*, https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospodarka_Stan%C3%B3w_Spojenie, access 25.03.2022.

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- flexible introduction of free market doctrines;
- taking into consideration systematic support for modernisation investments, increasing production capability;
- introducing statutory solutions for these purposes;
- introducing programmes to achieve these goals;
- creating conditions for the development of consumption needs of farmers and residents of rural areas – such a large part – of the total population of the Polish population;
- creating a national economic situation as a result of increasing both economic production in particular sectors and consumption potential in individual occupational and social groups;
- promoting those market mechanisms that contribute to increasing exports by shaping free market mechanisms, such as the price and quality of Polish products;
- optimizing the benefits of duty-free policies with the countries of the EU.

As we can see, these assumptions constitute a flexible combination of elements of the “market game” with proper program regulations, i.e. “state interventionism” based on the current analysis of processes, market needs and social conditions. These regulations are aimed at broadening the base of social impact by increasing the production and consumption capability of the rural population. Therefore, there was a need to set targets for the adoption of quantitative and valuable measures to verify their achievement. The state has followed the path of in-depth diagnostics in this area and focused a strong, own agenda on key directions of agricultural production.

This agenda, based on free-market assumptions, provided for: (1) increasing the production potential, (2) modernizing the means of production, (3) increasing the purchasing power of the rural population, (4) de-escalation of disproportions in the standard of living while simultaneously strengthening integration processes, so one can say – “solidarity in the name of reason of state”.

Selective implementation of support as a material arguments and test for social security

This wide range of activities has been divided into two types of interactivity, i.e. static and dynamic activities, conducted through pro-development and modernization programs, based on:

- Agency for Restructuring and Modernisation of Agriculture,
- new statutory regulations applied mainly by the Agricultural Social Insurance Fund,

- supporting activities, including administrative and structural activities carried out by the National Centre for Agricultural Support and Agricultural Advisory Centres,
- EU funds raised for the implementation of the Rural Development Programme (RDP).

A typical static activity that initiated a pro-social line of changes in the income situation of the rural population was the introduction of maternity allowance in the amount of PLN 1,000 for a period of 12 months for people – mothers⁶, i.e. a total of PLN 12,000, starting from January 1, 2016. This solution replaced the existing one-time childbirth and maternity allowance paid in the amount of PLN 3,521.80.

A compilation of these amounts clearly shows that the support in this direction has quadrupled, and thus the consumption capacity of beneficiaries in terms of this support has also quadrupled, and in fact it happened overnight. Therefore, we deal not only with an action that is pro-social, but also indirect pro-market. Simultaneously, along the axis of dynamic activities, in order to illustrate the synergies of these two forms of support, it is possible to observe a systematic increase in the amount of co-financing for a group of young applicants, determined to associate their professional future with the profession of a farmer. The so-called “Bonus for a young farmer”⁷ was raised from PLN 100,000 in 2016–2018 to PLN 150,000 in 2020, and then to PLN 200,000 in 2021 and to PLN 250,000 today⁸. During this time, the purchasing and consumption capacities of the young farmer in terms of means of production have become over two and a half times higher.

However, it is obvious that nothing protects a manufacturer against a decrease in actual income like using modern, rich machinery and production infrastructure in the production process. These two actions coming from two different areas of support prove that the solutions adopted by both the legislator and the institutions implementing the RDP programs on behalf of the state interfere very strongly with the possibilities and financial status of farmers. Overnight, they enable the purchase of expensive infrastructure in order to increase production and result in an abrupt increase in consumption capacity.

6. Art. 4 i 20 Ustawy z 24 lipca 2015 r. o zmianie ustawy o świadczeniach rodzinnych oraz niektórych innych ustaw, Dz. U. 2015 poz. 1217.

7. ARiMR, *Premie dla młodych rolników*, <https://www.gov.pl/web/arimr/premie-dla-mlodych-rolnikow3>, access 28.03.2022.

8. MRiRW, *Sprawozdania roczne z realizacji PROW 2014–2020*, <https://www.gov.pl/web/rolnictwo/spra-raportowania-roczne-z-realizacji-prow-2014-2020>, access 28.03.2022.

Achieving set goals

A number of solutions and regulations have been presented below, the total effect of which resulted in an increase in agricultural production in individual, selected production profiles and which did not violate or, on the contrary, supported free market processes. Therefore dynamic solutions were introduced, which continue to be the case, resulting, on the one hand, in a higher production effect and, on the other hand, in an increased revenue generated by a larger volume of manufactured products. Simultaneously, static solutions were introduced systematically, also taking into consideration the conditions of the pandemic. These solutions, serving as aid, were aimed at increasing the material resources placed at the disposal of a farmer – citizen or increasing the current amount of benefits (also in the sense of increasing the possibilities and level of income of farmers and their family members). Indirectly, these activities also statically increased the national level of consumption, so they were a significant factor that supports the development of other sectors of the economy also eliminating the effects of the pandemic.

Due to the already mentioned fragmentation and small area of the statistical farm, Polish farmers are looking for such production profiles that bring a higher income from 1 ha, so that the economic effect of farming is greater despite the small acreage they possess. For example, in the Płoński powiat they focus on soft fruits, preferably strawberries. Here, more than 2 thousand farmers out of 8 thousand people running agricultural activities decided for this type of production. However, these crops are extremely labour-intensive and require a large number of hands to work, especially during the harvest period. In order to meet the above-mentioned needs and thus guarantee the necessary amount of workforce for these crops, the government introduced a statutory regulation creating the possibility of including harvest workers, also foreigners, in the KRUS social insurance⁹.

In the Płoński powiat, the number of such insured persons reached about 13 thousand during a year, and within the area of operation of PT KRUS in Płoński, it oscillated in the range of 5,700 persons (data for 2018)¹⁰. The structure of the insured persons is presented below.

9. Art.1, art. 3, art. 6–7, art. 11, art. 36, art. 37 i art. 40 Ustawy z 13 kwietnia 2018 r. o zmianie ustawy o ubezpieczeniu społecznym rolników oraz niektórych innych ustaw, Dz. U. 2018 poz. 858.

10. Own studies based on statistical data of PT KRUS unit in Płoński.

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Table 1. Number of insured residents at 30th June 2018

Specification	Total	Contributory Fund (on request)	Pension Fund (on request)	Pension Fund (mandatory)	Contributory Fund and Pension Fund	Including persons insured on request
Total including:	1,269,032*	12,503*	11,323*	3,927*	1,218,191*	132,192*
farmers	750,114	6,514	2,454	3,594	737,552	84,897
spouses	336,884	2,071	1,184	333	333,296	26,366
home-dwellers	151,433	1,184	172	–	147,343	20,929
harvesting helpers	30,601	2,734	–	–	–	–

*The data take into account the number of people subject to pension insurance upon request in connection with receiving nursing benefit or special care allowance under the Act of November 28, on family benefits or care allowance under the Act of April 4, 2014 on determining and paying carer's benefits for which the commune head, mayor, or the president of a city pays contributions for pension insurance.

Source: KRUS, *Kwartalna informacja statystyczna za II kwartał 2018 roku, KWARTALNA_INFORMACJA_STATYSTYCZNA_II_kw_2018.pdf* (krus.gov.pl), access 31.03.2022.

The above-mentioned regulation is an example of a static solution that turns directly into a strong action making the production of soft fruit more dynamic. This action was aimed at stopping the downward trend in the above-mentioned production, which was evident in 2013–2017, and then reversing it. The decrease in production in these years was caused, among other things, by the lack of hands to work. After these statutory regulations entered into force, it was possible to increase the cultivation area and maintain the level of production¹¹, as shown in the tables below.

Table 2. Cultivation area, crops and harvest of strawberries in 2014–2020

Specification	Unit	Year						
		2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Area of the cultivation	thousand ha	52.7	52.1	50.6	49.6	49.0	49.7	50.1
Crops	tonne/ha	3.8	3.9	3.9	3.6	4.0	3.6	3.4
Harvest	thousand tons	203	205	197	178	196	177	170

Source: KOWR, *Polska czołowym producentem truskawek w UE*, <https://www.kowr.gov.pl/uploads/pliki/aktualnosci/Polska%20czo%20wym%20producentem%20truskawek%20w%20UE.pdf>, access 30.03.2022.

11. GUS, *Wynikowy szacunek głównych ziemiopłodów rolnych i ogrodnicych w 2021*, https://stat.gov.pl/files/gfx/portalinformacyjny/pl/defaultaktualnosci/5509/5/20/1/wynikowy_szacunek_glownych_ziemioplodow_rolnych_i_ogrodnicych_w_2021_r..pdf, access 30.03.2022.

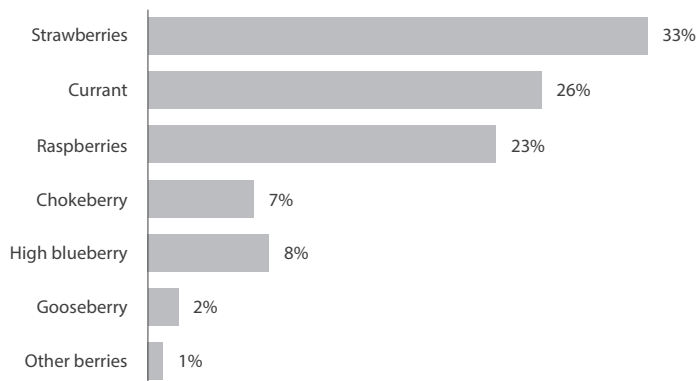
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Table 3. Area of strawberry cultivation in the Płońsk powiat in 2020 (in ha)

Commune	TERYT	Agricultural Land	Strawberry
Baboszewo	142003	11,667.22	23.47
Czerwińsk nad Wisłą	142004	10,746.72	4,407.13
Dzierżąźnia	142005	8,657.35	114.77
Joniec	142006	3,630.63	120.77
Naruszewo	142007	11,027.79	1,430.21
Nowe Miasto	142008	4,920.43	8.18
Płońsk	142009	8,615.29	176.72
Płońsk miasto	142001	228.71	
Raciąż	142010	17,092.24	16.12
Raciąż miasto	142002	473.56	
Sochocin	142011	6,231.64	53.70
Załużki	142012	7,559.24	1,519.43
mazowieckie		90,850.82	7,870.50
POLSKA		14,255,059.23	37,748.28

Source: ARiMR, Powierzchnie upraw w gminach, <https://Rejestrupraw.arimr.gov.pl/>, access 6.04.2022.

Figure 1. The structure of berry fruit harvest in Poland in 2020



Source: KOWR, Polska czołowym producentem truskawek w UE, <https://www.kowr.gov.pl/uploads/pliki/aktualnosci/Polskaczolowym%20producentem%20truskawek%20w%20UE.pdf>, access 30.03.2022.

On October 1, 2019, another static activity positively significantly changed the standard of living of people who cannot take care of themselves due to the total

inability to live independently – health condition¹². The income and thus the consumption possibilities of these people increased by a maximum of PLN 500 per month – as an addition to the pension or disability benefit. In 2019, in the Płońsk powiat alone, a total of about 1 thousand¹³ applications were accepted and processed, granting the amounts of benefits provided for by the Act.

Good examples of dynamic activities directly affecting market parameters in the years 2014–2020 are: (1) the “Investments restoring agricultural production potential” program, which allows obtaining up to PLN 300 thousand¹⁴; (2) the “Modernisation of agricultural holdings” program with the amount of co-financing in the range of PLN 500–900 thousand¹⁵; (3) the “Supporting small agricultural holdings” program with the so-called economic viability up to EUR 13 thousand – here the amount of aid in the form of a bonus was PLN 60 thousand¹⁶ (130 farmers benefited from it only in the Płońsk powiat); (4) the “Investments preventing the destruction of agricultural production potential” program – a subsidy up to PLN 100 thousand¹⁷; (5) the “Bonus for the start-up of non-agricultural activities” program – co-financing PLN 150–250 thousand¹⁸; (6) the “Development of entrepreneurship and agricultural services” program¹⁹ – possible co-financing up to PLN 5 million. These are only selected examples from a very rich pool of introduced solutions of a dynamic nature, i.e. directly affecting the production and economic condition of individual agricultural holdings. In order to better illustrate the manner in which the industry perceives these activities, one can add that, for example, for two activities introduced into the “free industry market”, the “Bonus for a young farmer” program and the “Support for investments in the processing, marketing, and development of agricultural products” program, in 2020, contracts

12. Art. 18 pkt. 1–4 Ustawy z 31 lipca 2019 r. o świadczeniu uzupełniającym dla osób niezdolnych do samodzielnej egzystencji, Dz. U. 2019 poz. 1622.

13. Own study based on statistical data of PT KRUS unit in Płońsk.

14. Program Rozwoju Obszarów Wiejskich na lata 2014–2020, Dz. U. 2019 poz. 431, Dz. U. 2020 poz. 1530 oraz Dz. U. 2021 poz. 1479; ARiMR, *Inwestycje odtwarzające potencjał produkcji rolnej*, <https://www.gov.pl/web/arimr/inwestycje-odtworzajace-potencjal-produkcji-rolnej>, access 31.03.2022.

15. MRiRW, *Modernizacja gospodarstw rolnych*, <https://www.gov.pl/web/rolnictwo/modernizacja-gospodarstw-rolnych>, access 31.03.2022.

16. Świętokrzyski Ośrodek Doradztwa Rolniczego w Modliszewicach, *Restrukturyzacja małych gospodarstw – nabór 2021 – premia 60 tys. zł* (video), <https://www.sodr.pl/main/aktualnosci/WIDEO-Restrukturyzacja-malych-gospodarstw-nabor-2021-premia-60-tys.-zl/idn:1884>, access 31.03.2022.

17. Świętokrzyski Ośrodek Doradztwa Rolniczego w Modliszewicach, *Inwestycje zapobiegające zniszczeniu potencjału produkcji rolnej – wystartował nabór*, <https://www.sodr.pl/main/aktualnosci/-Inwestycje-zapobiegajace-zniszczeniu-potencjalu-produkcji-rolnej-wystartowal-nabor/idn:2117>, access 31.03.2022.

18. ARiMR, *Premie dla młodych rolników*, <https://www.gov.pl/web/arimr/premie-dla-mlodych-rolnikow3>, access 28.03.2022.

19. Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, *Rozwój usług rolniczych – rozwój przedsiębiorczości*, <https://www.gov.pl/web/rolnictwo/rozwoj-uslug-rolniczych-rozwoj-przedsiębiorczości>, access 30.03.2022.

were signed on a national scale for PLN 2.2–2.8 billion. In total, the Polish government allocated about PLN 19.6 billion in 2020 to these and many other assistance activities in this sector of the economy²⁰, and it should be remembered that 36% of the above-mentioned amounts are national funds. Of course, the instruments of the common agricultural policy of the European Union – introduced on the basis of the “European Rural Development Fund”, as well as funds from the “European Cohesion Policy” are oriented to particularly support the profitability and resilience of smaller agricultural holdings – up to 50 ha of land, and we have 97% of such holdings in our country.

A special example, where “governmental intervention in the market” bore the hallmarks of the so-called “stage wisdom”, and simultaneously it was a very desirable economic factor that had the value of prevention, consisted in the “governmental assistance program addressed to farmers particularly affected by the COVID-19 crisis” finally implemented in December 2020²¹. Only in the Płoński powiat, 1,400 farmers out of a total of 7,400 people engaged in agricultural activity, which accounts for approximately 19% of the entire occupational group in this area, benefited from this program, implemented by the ARiMR. The program was adapted to the production profile of virtually every agricultural holding and provided, among others, from PLN 5,100 to PLN 20,200 co-financing for domestic cattle breeding, depending on the size of the herd. There were also payments for pigs in the amount of from PLN 4,900 to PLN 23,800 at a herd size of 21–201 as well as aid intended for sheep, goat, poultry or, for example, producers of decorative plants in unheated foil tunnels or in greenhouses in the amount of up to PLN 30,000²².

In addition to the above-mentioned issues, with the same purpose and the same value of prevention; however, directed mainly at the environmental and social level, there was a parallel introduction of a number of static activities, e.g. granting a farmer remaining in quarantine on suspicion of contracting COVID-19 an allowance equivalent to ½ of the minimum wage for work, which constituted support in the amounts of PLN 1,300–1,505 in the years 2020–2022²³. This shows a correct

20. MRiRW, *Program Rozwoju Obszarów Wiejskich 2014–2020 (PROW 2014–2020)*, <https://www.gov.pl/web/rolnictwo/-program-rozwoju-obszarow-wiejskich-2014-2020-prow-2014-2020>, access 30.03.2022.

21. Rozporządzenie Ministra Rolnictwa i Rozwoju Wsi z 24 sierpnia 2020 r. w sprawie szczególnych warunków i trybu przyznawania oraz wypłaty pomocy finansowej na operacje typu “Pomoc dla rolników szczególnie dotkniętych kryzysem COVID-19” under the action “Wyjątkowe tymczasowe wsparcie dla rolników, mikroprzedsiębiorstw oraz małych i średnich przedsiębiorstw szczególnie dotkniętych kryzysem związanym z COVID-19” covered by the Rural Development Program for the years 2014–2020, Dz. U. 2020 poz. 1467.

22. ARiMR, *Informacja*, <https://www.gov.pl/web/arimr/informacje-20>, access 31.03.2022.

23. Art. 31yz3 Ustawy z 2 marca 2020 r. o szczególnych rozwiązaniach związanych z zapobieganiem, przeciwdziałaniem i zwalczaniem COVID-19, innych chorób zakaźnych oraz wywołanych nimi sytuacji kryzysowych, Dz. U. 2020 r. poz. 374 ze zm.

level of mobilization of the state for activities with not only a financial dimension, but also trust or even sympathy for its administration, which leads to the aforementioned broadening of the social impact base for all interventionist solutions in the national space. The same character in the above-mentioned directions is evident, for example, in the medical benefit for COVID-19 introduced on March 8, 2020 and increased by 50%²⁴ and the care allowance introduced on March 31, 2020 for parents who have to take care of a child due to inactive educational institutions²⁵ during the pandemic. On a national scale, this is illustrated in the table below.

Table 4. Allowances paid by KRUS during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020

	Allowances for compulsory quarantine, epidemiological surveillance or hospitalisation	Care allowances	Medical benefit (U07)
Number of days		5,522,737	30,475
Number of benefits	25,978	145,458	3,024
Number of people	25,405	96,529	3,068
Amount of benefits in PLN	33,771,400.00	178,991,016.77	458,151.00

Source: KRUS, *KRUS w liczbach 2018–2020*, www.krus.gov.pl/fileadmin/moje_dokumenty/obrazki/Dokumenty/wydarzenia_2021/Broszura_statystyczna_2020_PLcz.pdf, access 31.03.2022.

An extremely important protective value, indicating at the same time a very rapid adaptation of the endangered economic functions to the current situation, was using a protection for farmers conducting additional business activity, which was also made possible for them from January 1, 1997²⁶, and extended from May 2, 2004²⁷, as a step significantly improving the financial condition of agricultural holdings. In the Płońsk powiat, the number of such optional activities amounted to about 600 in 2021, i.e. almost 9% of the industry population. At this point, it should be emphasized that the applicants for this solution may conduct their business activity, based on a very favourable insurance rate in KRUS – in the amount of PLN 108 per month. These people could, on the basis of the above-mentioned Covid Act, similarly to all

24. Rozporządzenie Ministra Rolnictwa i Rozwoju Wsi z 19 marca zmieniającego rozporządzenie w sprawie określenia wysokości jednorazowego odszkodowania z tytułu wypadku przy pracy rolniczej lub rolniczej choroby zawodowej oraz zasiłku chorobowego, Dz. U. 2020 poz. 486.

25. Art. 1 pkt. 4 Ustawy z 31 marca 2020 r. o zmianie ustawy o szczególnych rozwiązaniach związanych z zapobieganiem, przeciwdziałaniem i zwalczaniem COVID-19, innych chorób zakaźnych oraz wywołanych nimi sytuacji kryzysowych oraz niektórych innych ustaw, Dz. U. 2020 poz. 568.

26. Art. 2 Ustawy o zmianie ustawy o ubezpieczeniu społecznym, Dz. U. 1996 nr 124 poz. 585 i nr 155 poz. 771.

27. Ustawa z 2 kwietnia 2004 r. o zmianie ustawy o ubezpieczeniu społecznym rolników oraz o zmianie niektórych innych ustaw, Dz. U. 2004 nr 91 poz. 873.

those running business activity in other areas of the economy, benefit from many assistance measures, e.g. co-financing in the form of:

- PLN 5,000 of non-refundable loan²⁸;
- PLN 1,300 received for three subsequent months, at a decrease in income by 30% during two comparable months year-on-year;
- PLN 1,700 received for three subsequent months, at a decrease in income by 50% during two comparable months year-on-year²⁹,
- subsidies for an employee employed by a farmer running business activity in the amount of 50% of that person's gross wages and up to 30% of the costs of that person's insurance in ZUS (Social Insurance Institution)³⁰.

As it can be seen in the statistics of entries in the CEIDG (Central Register and Information on Economic Activity), these favourable conditions allowed to maintain the number of additional business activities operating in rural areas. In this way, they successfully defended themselves against the crisis, as the number of liquidated and suspended companies with different profiles according to PKD (Polish Classification of Activities), e.g. in 2020 was 44, and in 2019, i.e. before the pandemic – 42³¹. So it was virtually at the same level of natural rotation concerning the existence and functioning of companies.

Moreover, in accordance with the above-mentioned analysis from 2020, PT KRUS Płońsk issued 70 decisions for newly established companies, and farmers – growers in the Płońsk powiat on the basis of preferential KRUS insurance, i.e. PLN 194 per month (health and social) – they reported and hired, as previously mentioned, the number of about 13 thousand helpers during harvest. Of course, the economic effect of all activities listed as examples of interference in the “free market” was much greater and multiplied to the surface of the entire country. It can be noted that it resulted in a 7% increase in the export of Polish agricultural products – comparing 2020 to 2019, which shows a permanent upward trend. On a macro scale, it contributes to increasing or maintaining the level of GDP. Even though, the GDP showed a 3.2% decrease in 2020 – a very difficult period of the pandemic, socio-market restrictions, and global collapse, this value was still lower

28. Art. 15zdz Ustawy z 31 marca 2020 r. o zmianie ustawy o szczególnych rozwiązaniach związanych z zapobieganiem, przeciwdziałaniem i zwalczaniem COVID-19, innych chorób zakaźnych oraz wywołanych nimi sytuacji kryzysowych oraz niektórych innych ustaw, Dz. U. 2020 poz. 568; Komunikatu Komisji – Tymczasowe ramy środków pomocy państwa w celu wsparcia gospodarki w kontekście trwającej epidemii COVID-19, 2020/C 91 I/01, Dz. Urz. UE C 91I z 20.03.2020, p. 1. The assistance programme for this form of support is SA.56922 (2020/N).

29. Ibidem, Art. 15zdc.

30. Ibidem, Art.15zdb.

31. Own studies based on statistical data of PT KRUS unit in Płońsk.

than, for example, in Germany and low enough so that we can talk about maintaining all the parameters that shape the characteristics of the market. The data confirming the maintenance of the state's economic condition at a good level was and still is a very low unemployment rate oscillating around 6–6.5%. The above-mentioned indicators are due to the fact that Polish people chose an active role of the state in the economy, which means specific projects and activities modifying the “free market”.

As a result of such a controlled approach, the state always has the opportunity to repair the dysfunctions of economic processes and maintain the cohesion of all economic relations. It is precisely this cohesion that depends on whether the consumption and social needs of the society are maintained on a macro, micro, or negative scale. When consumption, production, and the so-called “social” values reach critical levels, the state enters a phase of economic regression, which in turn leads to social crises. Due to the above-mentioned issues, a correction in shaping economic relations became necessary. This is both a requirement as well as a natural development of all functions of theoretical market control. This correction is always implemented by a specific action.

A good example of a social accent in statutory interventionism was, among others, introducing on October 1, 2015³² changes in the Act on social insurance for farmers providing those farmers who, for random reasons, were forced to take care of a disabled family member, in addition to the care benefit, also the possibility of continuing insurance in KRUS with a contribution paid by a local self-government authority. Such people at the purely “free-market” level would not be able to deal with the situation, neither in material terms nor the physical processes concerning their work activities.

Such an approach, characterized by a top-down correction, is presented by the European Commission, introducing a support disposition for free markets to the provisions of the Rural Development in force in 2021–2027, which “ (...) should be carried out by including existing support programmes in the strategic plan of the Common Agricultural Policy. Member States will have the opportunity to design operational programmes, otherwise known as sectoral interventions, also for other sectors. These could be all sectors of agriculture, from cereals and meat to seeds, live plants, soft fruit and trees³³”. The strongest element of this operational programme is to provide all those engaged in agricultural activity with the so-called direct surcharge, payable for a ha, and additionally granting – as a supplementary surcharge – a subsidy for unfavourable

32. Art. 1–4 Ustawy z 5 sierpnia 2015 r. o zmianie ustawy o ubezpieczeniu społecznym rolników oraz ustawy o systemie ubezpieczeń społecznych, Dz. U. 2015 poz. 1506.

33. Świętokrzyski Ośrodek Doradztwa Rolniczego w Modliszewicach, *Ekoschematy – nowe propozycje w płatnościach bezpośrednich na lata 2021–2027*, <https://www.sodr.pl/informacje-branzowe/index/Ekoschematy-nowe-propozycje-w-platnosciah-bezposrednich-na-lata-2021-2027/idn:1541>, access 6.04.2022.

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farming conditions, i.e. with natural constraints (ONW), also for a ha³⁴. The unit rates of these surcharges are for 2021 at the level of 487.62 PLN/ha – an area surcharge paid together with an extra surcharge in the amount of 184.54 PLN/ha. ONW surcharges in the first lowland zone amounted to PLN 179/ha: in zone II – PLN 264/ha, while in the upland and mountain areas they were in the range of PLN 450–750/ha³⁵.

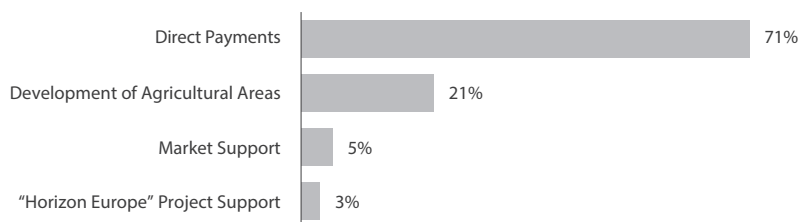
It should also be noted that they have increased significantly in recent years. Our farmers receive direct surcharges at a level higher than 90% of the EU average. As we can see in the new financial perspective of the Common Agricultural Policy for 2021–2027, which is presented in the summaries and diagrams attached below, the amounts – state intervention in the market – in this case allocated to direct payments and the Rural Development Programme (RDP) – amount to a total of over EUR 30 billion for our country. Moreover, this external, financial interference in the market looked similar in 2007–2013 and 2014–2020.

Table 5. Agricultural funds for Poland from the EU budget (EUR billion, current prices)

Specification	2007–2013	2014–2020	2021–2027
Direct payment	15.222	21.148	21.239
RDP	13.399	10.941	9.225
Total	28.621	32.089	30.464

Source: Świętokrzyski Ośrodek Doradztwa Rolniczego w Modliszewicach, Ekoschematy – nowe propozycje w płatnościach bezpośrednich na lata 2021–2027, <https://www.sodr.pl/informacje-branzowe/index/Ekoschematy-nowe-propozycje-w-platnoscjach-bezposrednich-na-lata-2021-2027/idn:1541>, access 6.04.2022.

Figure 2. Allocation of EU funds for 2021–2027

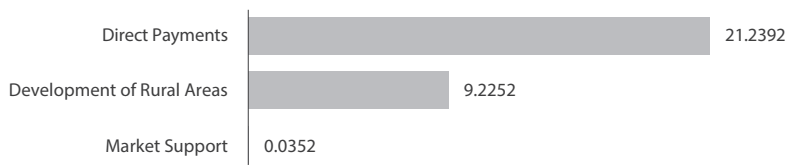


Source: Świętokrzyski Ośrodek Doradztwa Rolniczego w Modliszewicach, Ekoschematy – nowe propozycje w płatnościach bezpośrednich na lata 2021–2027, <https://www.sodr.pl/informacje-branzowe/index/Ekoschematy-nowe-propozycje-w-platnoscjach-bezposrednich-na-lata-2021-2027/idn:1541>, access 6.04.2022.

34. MRiRW, Płatności ONW, <https://www.gov.pl/web/rolnictwo/platnosci-onw1>, access 7.04.2022.

35. Ibidem.

Figure 3. Allocation of EU funds in Poland in 2021–2027 (EUR billion, current prices)



Source: Świętokrzyski Ośrodek Doradztwa Rolniczego w Modliszewicach, *Eco schemes – new proposals regarding direct payments for 2021–2027*, <https://www.sodr.pl/informacje-branzowe/index/Ekoschematy-nowe-propozycje-w-platnoscjach-bezposrednich-na-lata-2021-2027/idn:1541>, access 6.04.2022.

This involvement of the state, along with properly shaping the “VAT tax” in the area of agricultural production at 5–8%, with the possibility of deducting it from a 23% VAT rate (currently reduced to 7% due to the pandemic) occurring in terms of means of production, e.g. fuel, as well as a solution introduced by KRUS on January 1, 2022³⁶, consisting in creating VAT accounts for people who use this form of taxation, in order to allow deducting contributions paid for the social insurance of farmers in KRUS, as an additional form of relief and financial support. This procedure is meant to contribute to creating a larger group of farmers – entrepreneurs. Each of the above-mentioned interventionist activities regarding this area was thoroughly analysed in the field of forces and reactions of the “free market” and based on relevant acts and prognostic indications before being introduced. It is also being reviewed in the course of its activities in a broader context.

Milton Friedman himself would probably take advantage of such a modification of his own theories today concerning his apotheoses on the free market, especially since the precursor of this idea and his personal teacher, Friedrich von Hayek³⁷, an Austrian economist also claimed that “ (...) markets are always controlled by someone”. Referring to this from today’s perspective and observing the economic development of these markets in particular industries and production categories, we can assume that Milton Friedman would not oppose to the state being this “someone”. After all, who could negate the programmatic assumptions of support for agricultural production, carried out especially in order to maintain the level of prices of agricultural products at a level appropriate to the purchasing power of consumers?

36. KRUS, *Od 1 stycznia 2022 r. zmieniły się zasady regulowania składek KRUS przez rolników będących płatnikami podatku VAT*, <https://www.krus.gov.pl/arttykul/rolniku-jezeli-jestes-platnikiem-podatku-od-towarow-i-uslug-vat-to-od-dnia-1-stycznia-2022-r-zmienia/>, access 7.04.2022.

37. M. Seymour-Smith, *100 najważniejszych księzek świata*, Warsaw, Media Publishing House, 2001, p. 470.

There is no agricultural production area where this impact wouldn't work as a growth factor as well. The amount of the specification payments added to the area payments, e.g.: payment for legumes for the so-called grain 685.70 PLN/ha grain, payment for starch potatoes 1,210.32 PLN/ha, payment for sugar beets – 1,547.13 PLN/ha, payment for strawberries 1,313.93 PLN/ha, payment for flax – 558.70 PLN/ha, payment for hop – 2,087.75 PLN/ha³⁸. Therefore, the matter lies in the properly shaping mutual relations and the industry “reality” of production, in a manner beneficial for the manufacturer, and thus also for the market. This is the meaning of: (1) for example, the amounts of agricultural fuel surcharges in the wide range of production process, currently in the amount of PLN 110 per hectare of agricultural land and PLN 40 for cattle units, calculated in the so-called large conversion units³⁹; (2) enabling people who run agricultural activity to obtain additional revenues under the mandate contract, provided that the monthly revenues are not exceeded in the amount of the minimum wage⁴⁰ – currently PLN 3,010.00, while it should be added that this amount was systematically increased from the level of 50% of the national minimum remuneration⁴¹ applicable until December 30, 2016. Therefore, if we would perceive all these processes like Friedrich von Hayek, who wanted to treat the overall phenomena occurring in the contemporary economy as a process of discoveries that occur in the space of the “free market”, and saw economic progress as always taking place on the way of trials and errors, then broadly agreeing with the characteristics presented by the scientist, it would be necessary for us to notice from today's perspective that it is simply all about making as few errors as possible. What changes; however, is only the means and methods of eliminating these errors – created in the free “transaction space”, which aim at protecting it as a whole.

An excellent example of this consists in protective measures against climatic phenomena and natural disasters that have become more and more frequent nowadays. In this field, the “government-union coordinator” has shown and continues to show extremely effective and generous support. Only in 2018–2019, approximately PLN 2.4 billion was allocated to offer assistance for losses caused by drought and flood, and the rates of compensation granted, in accordance with

38. MRiRW, *Wysokość płatności bezpośrednich stosowanych w 2021 r.*, [https://www.gov.pl/web/rolnictwo/wysokosc-płatności-bezpośrednich-stosowanych-w-2021-r](https://www.gov.pl/web/rolnictwo/wysokosc-pлатności-bezpośrednich-stosowanych-w-2021-r), access 11.04.2022.

39. MRiRW, *Zwrot podatku akcyzowego*, <https://www.gov.pl/web/rolnictwo/zwrot-podatku-akcyzowego>, access 12.04.2022.

40. Art.1 Ustawy z 21 października 2016 r. o zmianie ustawy o ubezpieczeniu społecznym rolników, Dz. U. 2016 poz. 2043.

41. Art.2 Ustawy z 23 października 2014 r. o zmianie ustawy o systemie ubezpieczeń społecznych oraz niektórych innych ustaw, Dz. U. 2014 poz. 1831 ze zm.

EU regulations on public aid, ranged from PLN 500 to PLN 1,000/1 ha, depending on the size of the area where they occurred, as well as it depended on the percentile estimates of losses specified in the protocols drawn up by municipal commissions. These amounts were distributed to farmers in the ARiMR procedures⁴². The amount of public aid to the agricultural sector, granted in various forms and by various entities in 2016–2018, while showing an upward trend in the above-mentioned activity, is presented below.

Table 6. Public aid granted in the agricultural sector in 2016–2018

Amount of granted state aid	Year			
	2016 (in million PLN)	2017 (in million PLN)	2018 (in million PLN)	% Change (2018/2017)
Agricultural sector				
budget	12.936	10.932	21.509	196.75
liabilities	815.557	962.497	1,146.240	118.72
liabilities	1,228.191	1,298.192	2,031.938	156.52
Fishing sector				
budget				–
liabilities	1.605	0.000	0	0
expenditures				–
Horizontal aid				
Agriculture and Fisheries				
liabilities		5.659	5.125	90.56

Source: Minister Rolnictwa i Rozwoju Wsi, *Sprawozdanie o pomocy publicznej udzielonej w sektorze rolnictwa lub rybołówstwa w Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w 2018 r.*, <https://www.gov.pl/attachment/3f417748-2020-4b0b-a3d3-7c5f11863661>, access 12.04.2022.

KRUS was also active here in the aid aspect, granting both public aid and de minimis aid to farmers affected by the unfavourable aura by remitting due contributions together with interest for quarters during which unfavourable conditions affecting the crops occurred.

42. MRiRW, *Pomoc suszowa na hektar*, <https://www.gov.pl/web/rolnictwo/pomoc-suszowa-na-hektar>, access 12.04.2022.

Table 7. De minimis aid in agriculture⁴³ granted in 2018

Name of the granting entity	Amount in euro
Local self-government units (commune head, mayor, city president)	8,991,702.19
Marshals of voivodships	1,541.05
Voivodes	13,230.21
District starosty, including employment agencies	521,648.84
Tax Offices	10,540,689.22
Veterinary Inspectorates	8,099.60
Voivodeship funds for environmental protection and water management	409,161.39
President of the Agency for Restructuring and Modernisation of Agriculture	57,108,425.19
Director-General of the National Centre for Agricultural Support	479,386.90
President of the Agricultural Social Insurance Fund	385,139.26
President of the State Fund for Rehabilitation of the Disabled	935,819.05
President of the Social Insurance Institution	20,325.79
Regional Directors for Environmental Protection	14,202.17
other: Voluntary Labour Corps, associations of communes	75,117.17
TOTAL	79,504,488.03

Source: Minister Rolnictwa i Rozwoju Wsi, *Sprawozdanie o pomocy publicznej udzielonej w sektorze rolnictwa lub rybołówstwa w Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w 2018 r.*, <https://www.gov.pl/attachment/3f417748-2020-4b0b-a3d3-7c5f11863661>, access 12.04.2022.

The level of de minimis aid granted by individual state authorities and institutions in 2018, also addressed to the agricultural sector is presented above.

Of course, this contributed to generating positive progress in the development of rural areas.

Summary

In the course of this thesis, on selected and presented examples, in a polemic with authors of economic theories, those who were elaborating this publication proven the legitimacy of the adopted assumptions, both on the basis of statutory and programmatic solutions. A characteristic feature of all global economies, including

43. De minimis aid in agriculture referred to in Commission Regulation (EU) No 1408/2013 of 18 December 2013 on the application of Article 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de minimis aid in the agricultural sector, Dz. Urz. UE L 352 z 24.12.2013 ze zm., p. 9.

ours, is the fact that each member of individual societies is both a manufacturer and a consumer.

Therefore, in its interventionism the state has the task of favouring the manufacturer and promoting the consumer. It should be stated, on the basis of the presented data and the authors' analysis path, that the solutions implemented at the state level in the Ministry of Agriculture were implemented in the Polish "free market transaction space" with the greatest practical effect. Therefore, if we understand the "free market" the way M. Friedman does – as one of the emanations of the system of liberal democracy, the current management practice in the Polish agricultural industry confirms that indeed "democracy is the search for the best solutions, provided that they are sought after"⁴⁴.

The multiplicity of EU-government programmes and activities, intertwining with all important paths relevant to the "free market", constitutes the basis of today's Polish and European economic "prosperity". This symbiosis predicts positive economic and social progression. It can be said that it is the third stage of the theoretical basis for the development of modern economic organisms.

After the stage of monetarism and the "invisible hand of the market" according to M. Friedman and A. Smith, shaping taxes and the purchasing power according to J. Keynes, we are currently in the phase of flexible, programmatic correction of shortcomings involving earlier stages. This modification – of the "transaction space", as the authors of this publication have proven, is successful, so the forecasts for the future are positive and indicate the intention to maintain such a course in the economic policy of all EU countries.

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44. Obserwator finansowy.pl, *Friedman: siła wolnego rynku, który wróci*, <https://www.obserwatorfinansowy.pl/tematyka/makroekonomia/trendy-gospodarcze/friedman-sila-wolnego-rynku-ktory-wroci/>, access 25.03.2022.

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