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Agronomic Meetings as a Means of Modernization of Agriculture in Ukraine in the Early Twentieth Century (as Exemplified in Poltava Region)

Abstract. The aim of the research is to determine the reasons, form, content and consequences of such a social phenomenon as agronomic meetings (the practice of which was quite common in the southwestern regions of the Russian Empire in the early 20th century, in particular in Poltava region) for the socio-economic development of the country. **The research methodology** is based on the principles of scientificity, historicism, authors' objectivity, regionalism, as well as the use of general scientific methods such as analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction and specific historical ones, namely, historical-genetic, historical-comparative and historical-systemic methods. **The scientific novelty** of the research is characterized by the fact that on the basis of the analysis of little-known historical sources, the authors for the first time in national historiography have analyzed the publications of Poltava provincial zemstvo, as well as publications of local agricultural societies, including magazines "Khutorianyn" and "Bulletin of South Russian Animal Husbandry" in terms of the content and consequences of agronomic meetings set up by local public activists aimed at the modernization of agricultural production, which was particularly topical during the implementation of Stolypin's agrarian reform. The importance of the mentioned meetings was: to involve a wide range of people relating to the agrarian sector in the discussion, among them were not only practitioners, but also well-known theorists from university professors; to disseminate the ideas formulated during the relevant meetings in media, in the process of consultations provided by local agronomists, lectures and conversations with the illiterate population. Along with the analysis of the content of agronomic meetings, the authors paid attention to their socio-economic reasons and consequences, which, above all, enables to understand this process in a holistic way, taking into account all the circumstances that directly or indirectly affected the meetings held by the local agricultural society and Poltava provincial zemstvo. **Conclusions.** As a result of the research, it was concluded that such a method of the modernization of crop production and animal husbandry as agronomic meetings with participation of not only public figures from among local agricultural societies and zemstvo figures, but also representatives of central authorities of Poltava province.

Keywords: Poltava provincial zemstvo, agricultural society, crop production, animal husbandry, agrarian sector, agronomic meetings.

Problems related to the modernization of all sectors of the national economy, including agriculture, were, are and will be relevant for any country. Although the process of

market economy formation in modern Ukraine has not been completed yet, the theory and practice of the modernization of agricultural activities in our native land after the removal of serfdom in 1861 and the implementation of reforms in the latter half of 19th – early 20th centuries are of great interest to those who have a direct or indirect relationship to the agrarian sector of the economy. Ukrainian, as well as foreign historiographies of agrarian relations in Ukraine in the latter half of 19th – early 20th centuries, have accumulated a large amount of relevant literature, which analyzed the reasons, content and socio-economic and political consequences of the changes in agriculture in the given period. The fundamental works on the outlined topic belong to the following Ukrainian authors: A.I.Kozachenko[1], T.O.Sharavara[2], P.P.Panchenko, I.H.Kyrylenko, V.A.Verhunov[3], V.M.Samorodov, S.L.Kyhym[4], O.M.Krasnikova[5], M.A.Yakymenko[6] and others. Foreign historians also contributed to the study of modernization processes in Russian Empire of the19th – early 20th centuries, among them H.Roger[7], D.Atkinson[8], W.Lincoln[9] and others.

However, all the above-mentioned authors did not focus on the problems that were directly related to the research topic chosen by them. In some cases they refered to almost exclusively the socio-political and organizational and legal activities of zemstvos[10] or publishing activities and participation of Poltava agricultural society in the modernization of livestock industry, the intensification of land husbandry and crop production[11], or the characterization of financial and credit relations in agriculture of Left Bank Ukraine in the latter half of 19th – early 20th century[12]. The latest research papers of national authors reveal the content and consequences of Stolypin's agrarian reform in Poltava region, including the aspects related to the socio-economic reasons for the growth of agricultural efficiency in Poltava region in 1906–1917. The authors of the published monograph "Agriculture of Left Bank Ukraine in the Context of Agrarian Reforms of 1861–1917"[13] made a comparative analysis of the efficiency of agricultural production in the provinces of Left Bank Ukraine and the respective regions of the Right Bank and South of Ukraine, which gave ground to speak about the advanced positions of Poltava province on a number of indicators in comparison with other provinces of Ukraine (yields of rye, wheat, oats, barley, buckwheat and millet). Zemstvo and Poltava agricultural society had a great merit in this. Regarding the meaningful "Agrarian History of Ukraine" edited by P.P.Panchenko, I.H.Kyrylenko

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[1] *Козаченко А.І.* Земське самоврядування в Полтавській губернії (1864–1920 рр.). – Полтава, 2009. – 208 с.

[2] *Шаравара Т.О.* Реформи і контрреформи другої половини XIX – початку XX ст. в Російській імперії: історіографія. – К., 2011. – 487 с.

[3] *Панченко П.П., Кириленко І.Г., Вергунов В.А.* Аграрна історія України: Еволюція соціально-економічних відносин. – К., 2014. – 536 с.

[4] *Самородов В.М., Кигим С.Л.* Полтавське сільськогосподарське товариство (1865–1920 рр.): історія, звитяги, першопостаті. – Полтава, 2015. – 160 с.

[5] *Краснікова О.М.* Фінанси і кредит у сільському господарстві Лівобережної України (друга половина XIX – початок XX ст..): історико-економічне дослідження. – Полтава, 2018. – 232 с.

[6] *Якименко М.А.* Кредитна система сільського господарства України в умовах аграрних реформ другої половини XIX – початку XX ст. // Український історичний журнал. – 2017. – №2. – С.64–75.

[7] *Rogger H.* Russia in the age of modernization and revolution: 1881–1917. – New York, 1983. – 323 p.

[8] *Atkinson D.* The end of Russian land commune: 1905–1930. – Stanford (Cal.), 1983. – 457 p.

[9] *Lincoln W.B.* In wars dark shadow: The Russians before the Great War. – New York, 1983. – 557 p.

[10] *Козаченко А.І.* Земське самоврядування в Полтавській губернії (1864–1920 рр.).

[11] *Самородов В.М., Кигим С.Л.* Полтавське сільськогосподарське товариство (1865–1920 рр.): історія, звитяги, першопостаті.

[12] *Краснікова О.М.* Фінанси і кредит у сільському господарстві Лівобережної України (друга половина XIX – початок XX ст.).

[13] *Якименко М.А., Макарець С.В., Краснікова О.М.* Сільське господарство Лівобережної України в умовах аграрних реформ 1861–1917 рр. – Полтава, 2020. – 250 с.

and V.A.Verhunov, it should be noted that the absence of reference to sources limits the format of its use as a scientific source.

The general state of the agrarian sector in the economy of Russian Empire, including its Ukrainian region, at the turn of 20th century drew concern among not only dogged critics of the tsarist government from the radical parties of the time, but also among the entourage of Emperor Nicholas II. The reason for this conclusion was a special government commission created in 1901, the task of which was to study the state of "welfare" of the rural population in the central chornozem provinces of the then existing state. The obtained results shocked even those who for many years had praised both the essence of the reform of 1861 and its main consequences, which, at one time, was the focus of Chernihiv researcher V.M.Shevchenko[14]. According to the published results of the work of the mentioned commission, it is evident that from 1861 to 1900 the area of land received by the underprivileged estates during the reforms of the 1860s decreased more than twice: from 4,4 dessiatinas per male capita up to 1,9 dessiatinas of land for Ukraine as a whole, and from 3,0 dessiatinas on the Left Bank and from 3,3 dessiatinas up to 1,7 dessiatinas on the Right Bank and from 6,9 dessiatinas up to 2,7 dessiatinas in South of Ukraine[15]. These figures were very far from the officially recognized norm of land provision in 5 dessiatinas for each male person, i.e. about 15 dessiatinas to the then existing average peasant family[16].

The direct consequence of unsatisfactory land provision of the majority of rural estates was malnutrition and health problems, as evidenced by the growing proportion of army recruits who did not receive a clean bill of health, in particular from 1874 to 1883 (about 13.6%) and from 1884 to 1893 (about 17%)[17]. Both in Poltava and in all other central chornozem provinces at the turn of 20th century the rural poor were on a level of survival. "Sire!" the peasants of one of the settlements of the state wrote addressing the tsar on November 23, 1905. "We have no land at all! This is our first and most urgent need… We have to work for landlords with the whole family all summer and part of winter. The product of our labor is entirely in favor of the landlord… And there is no help for us anywhere, there is no way out of this difficult situation"[18]. Sympathizing with the disadvantaged part of Poltava village, the members of the local agricultural society and deputies of Poltava provincial zemstvo under the influence of the famous agrarian riots of 1902 and 1905 decided to intensify their activities, the ultimate goal of which was to increase crop production and livestock husbandry efficiency in both large and small farms.

One of the ways to intensify agricultural production in the early 20th century was various meetings with the participation of those who were directly or indirectly relevant to this. The examples were the so-called "Special meeting on the needs of the agricultural industry in 1902–1904" and the activities of the "Local committees" of the mentioned meeting, where the most topical problems of a certain region were discussed with the formulation of proposals (in the relevant resolutions) for changes in certain aspects of the agricultural policy in the country[19]. Poltava agricultural society,

[14] *Шевченко В.М.* Становище селянства Лівобережної України в кінці XIX – на початку XX ст. // Український історичний журнал. – 1982. – №9. – С.71–78.

[15] Материалы высочайше учреждённой 16 ноября 1901 г. комиссии по исследованию вопроса о движении с 1861 г. по 1900 г. благосостояния сельского населения среднечерноземных губерний сравнительно с другими местностями Европейской России. – Ч.1: Разработано Департаментом окладных сборов. – Санкт Петербург, 1903. – С.30.

[16] Высочайше утверждённое Положение о переселении малороссийских казаков, однодворцев и прочих казённых поселян для поступления в Кавказские казачьи линейные войска и полки // Полное собрание законов Российской империи. Собр. 1-е. – Т.VII. – Санкт-Петербург, 1835. – №5630. – С.640.

[17] Материалы высочайше учреждённой 16 ноября 1901 г. комиссии по исследованию вопроса… – С.31.

[18] Российский государственный исторический архив (РГИА). – Ф.408. – Оп.1. – Д.34. – Л.154.

[19] Труды местных комитетов о нуждах сельскохозяйственной промышленности. – Т.XXXII: Полтавская губерния. – Санкт-Петербург, 1903. – 830 с.

established in 1865 and accumulated considerable experience in the practical use of the latest achievements in agronomic and zootechnical science, focused on finding out the most effective ways to solve the problems of the agrarian sector of the country's economy. During the sessions of the local committee on the needs of the agricultural industry (February 17–21, 1903) Poltava agricultural society held an agronomic meeting devoted to the topical issues of theory and practice of crop production and animal husbandry. The meeting was chaired by a member of the board of Poltava agricultural society, a provincial agronomist P.M.Dubrovskyi, who also represented the Department of Land Husbandry of the imperial government. Among those present were: members of the board of the society, existing members and corresponding members of this public organization and a group of invited persons who were not members of the society. The total number of participants reached 43 people, among them there were 23 agronomists. The participants discussed the tasks of small agricultural societies in the villages of that time, the state of demonstration fields and the tour of Dukes of Mecklenburg-Strelitsky's Karlivka estate (advanced in terms of organization of production), which had dairy and breeding cattle, as well as agricultural machinery and mechanisms, milling, starch and oilseed processing industries[20].

The meeting determined that the following measures should be urgent in connection with the modernization of agricultural production: a) opening of a trading warehouse of various machines and mechanisms in societies; b) the opportunity to sell bread, tobacco and other products in bulk with the help of a society; c) the opportunity to rent large areas of land with the subsequent transfer of their small plots by members of a society for a fee; d) the opportunity of societies to have rental stores of machines and mechanisms; e) to intensify the consultative activity of agronomists among the population, including introduction of new tools, grain seeds, garden plants, etc.[21]

Meanwhile, the socio-economic situation in the empire continued to worsen, which, in the end, resulted in the well-known anti-government demonstrations of 1905–1907. Poltava agricultural society responded immediately to the workers' and peasants' uprising through advancing demands on the government to solve the most pressing socio-economic problems, namely, the need to expand political rights of the empire's citizens and the agrarian problem, the solution of which was demanded by millions of the rural poor[22].

The next meeting of representatives of agricultural societies was held on June 11–13, 1907, that is, during the active implementation of Stolypin's legislation. The meeting was chaired by the Vice-President of Poltava agricultural society and, at the same time, zemstvo agronomist P.P.Hanko. The participants were not only representatives of small, so-called small-district societies, but also the government agronomist (V.Ya.Demianenko), the inspector of agriculture of the Land Husbandry Department (V.M.Diakov), the government instructor of dairy farming (Ya.O.Kiper), the director of Poltava experimental field S.F.Tretiakov and the provincial agronomist Yu.Yu.Sokolovskyi. The most critical problem in the discussion was the assistance to small agricultural societies in land lease. The problem was that the price of leased land was directly dependent on its area: the larger it was, the lower the value of one dessiatina of the land was. Yu.Yu.Sokolovskyi mentioned a positive example in this regard – the experience of Zhabkiv society in Lokhvytsia uyezd, which had leased about 400 dessiatinas of land from a local landowner. To share this positive experience with other districts of Poltava region, the secretary

[20] Труды третьего агрономического совещания (17, 18, 21 февраля 1903 г). – Полтава, 1904. – VIII. – С.69.

[21] Там же.

[22] Труды Полтавского общества сельского хозяйства по аграрному вопросу. – За сентябрь 1905 г. – май 1906 г. – Полтава, 1906. – С.256.

of Nadezhdyn society M.P.Pysarenko proposed to work out a standard text of the leasing agreement, but with the view to the existence of leasing agreements of various content, the meeting rejected M.P.Pysarenko's proposal[23].

During the years of Stolypin's agrarian reform, the local zemstvo became more and more actively involved in the organization of agronomic meetings, and in 1909 it also decided to hold a corresponding meeting, in which more than 60 people took part. The reports made in the meeting testified to the strong determination of the representatives of Poltava zemstvos to promote modernization processes in a particular region of the empire in the context of new government policy on the agrarian issue. Thus, in his report, zemstvo agronomist Yu.Yu.Sokolovskyi analyzed the form and content of the advanced training courses for uyezd and district agronomists held in the province. The need to hold periodic competitions in the province for the best samples of tools for surface tillage was substantiated by a member of the provincial council V.S.Kiianitsyn in his report, and Myrhorod uyezd agricultural scientist and active participant in the cooperative movement M.O.Savchenko-Bilskyi shared his experience in organizing educational agricultural courses for the adult population in winter. Some speakers pitched the idea of establishing a secondary agricultural educational institution for women in the province (following the example of Italy) and transforming Poltava horticultural school into a gardening training school, which was done in 1912 (later Agrarian and Economic Professional College of Poltava State Agrarian University was founded on the basis of the gardening training school)[24].

Aiming to radically improve the training of agronomists, in 1909 Poltava zemstvo, with the support of the local state administration, again, as in 1894, asked the government for permission to open an agronomic institute in Poltava[25]. In the Russian State Historical Archive (St. Petersburg city) we found a letter from the Chief Governor of Land Management and Land Husbandry O.V.Krivoshein addressed to P.A.Stolypin, from which we learn about the support of the above idea by 139 deputies of the State Duma. O.V.Krivoshein did not deny the benefits of the agronomic institute "for South of Russia", but due to the fact that similar proposals had been received by the government from Kharkiv agricultural society, Katerynoslav and Lubny zemstvos, he replied that the final decision "should not be rushed", although Poltava residents planned to give 80 dessiatinas of land to the agronomic institute and donate 300 000 rubles for the construction of this institution[26]. Taking into account that such an educational establishment had been opened only in the city of Voronezh, the response of Catherine II to the request of Hetman K.Rozumovskyi to open a university in the city of Baturin is mentioned in this connection. The Empress's answer was unequivocal, "Colonial peoples are forbidden to have universities"[27].

The mentioned meeting approved the program proposed by the head of the Statistical Bureau of the provincial zemstvo H.H.Rotmistrov on the content of agronomic courses planned in the region. The proposals of the director of Poltava experimental field S.F.Tretiakov, formulated by him in the program of further work of the institution headed by him, were also approved. For Poltava region, as well as all central chornozem provinces of the then existing state, such components of the program as tillage and soil

[23] Второе совещание представителей сельскохозяйственных обществ при Полтавском обществе сельского хозяйства 11–13 июня 1907 г. – Полтава, 1907. – 157 с.

[24] Полтавська державна аграрна академія: 100 років звершень / За ред. А.А.Кочерги, М.М.Опари, В.М.Писаренка, В.М.Самородова, М.А.Якименка. – Кам'янець-Подільський, 2020. – 352 с.

[25] *Кулябко-Корецький Н.Г.* Об устройстве в городе Полтаве высшего учебного заведения // Журналы заседания Полтавского сельскохозяйственного общества за 1894 г. – 1895. – №3/4. – С.1–15.

[26] РГИА. – Ф.381. – Оп.47. – Д.350. – Л.22.

[27] Полтавська державна аграрна академія: 100 років звершень. – С.20.

fertilization, rotation of field plants, ways of their sowing, use of new for Poltava region fodder plants (vetch, clover, corn, mohar, sorghum) were particularly topical. A program of short-term agricultural courses for the population was presented to the participants; it included such issues as general and private land husbandry, horticulture, basic knowledge of the physics of human environment, the most important information in botany and zoology[28]. The 1910 census of households program was also approved in this meeting.

After receiving a number of favorable reviews on agronomic meetings of 1907 and 1909, Poltava provincial zemstvo held a regular agronomic meeting in November 1912. The participants analyzed the state of agricultural production in the province, formulating a number of new ideas, some of which received mixed reviews by such respected agronomists as S.F.Tretiakov and Yu.Yu.Sokolovskyi. It was one of the most representative meetings, among those held not only by agricultural societies and local zemstvos of most provinces of the central chornozem region of the empire, but also by a local state administration body such as land management commissions of the Principal Directorate of Land Management and Land Husbandry. Thus, the meeting was attended by: nine representatives of the provincial administration, eight – the Department of Land Husbandry of the Principal Directorate of Land Management and Land Husbandry, seven representatives of uyezd zemstvos, 59 uyezd and district agronomists of Poltava province, three – representatives of provincial and uyezd agricultural societies. The heads of agricultural schools, which as of 1912 functioned in Poltava province, were also invited to discuss the basic problems of the agricultural sector of the region's economy. One of the key questions discussed by the participants of the meeting was the interrelation of the problem of agronomic assistance to small peasant and Cossack farms and their reorganization on "rational", as stated in the relevant resolution of the meeting, principles in the context of implementing the policy of the central government on the arrangement of individual farms and vidrub farms (with a plot of land allocated to the peasant on the rights of personal property without dislocating the house on it)[29].

It should be noted that in both national and foreign historical and economic literature there is a widespread view of the number of individual farms established in Poltava region on the eve of the famous social upheavals of 1917, which seemed to be twenty-six thousand three hundred and sixty-four, that is less than in Kyiv province, where economists counted 39 874 farm yards[30]. This figure is based on official reports on the results of land management in the empire as of January 1, 1917. However, authors usually do not take into account the peculiarities of Poltava and Chernihiv provinces, the former Hetmanshchyna, with its age-old traditions of the Cossack estate, which, according to the relevant imperial law up to and including 1917, belonged to a separate social group of agricultural producers. The 1906 census of households in Poltava province recorded 1 183 860 people of both sexes, or 44% of the Cossacks to all residents of the region[31]. As for the number of farm yards, out of 9359 settlements in Poltava region in 1906, i.e. before Stolypin's reforms, about 90% in the census was recorded as farm yards, not villages (Agriculture of Russia in the 20th century, 1923:12). In Horoshyn volost of Khorol uyezd, the 1910 census recorded 92 settlements, of which there were two villages and one town, while the other 89 (96,7%) were marked as farm yards[32].

[28] Журналы агрономического совещания при Полтавской губернской земской управе 1909 г. – Полтава, 1909. – С.48.

[29] Отчёт о деятельности Полтавского общества сельского хозяйства за 1912 г. – Полтава, 1913. – С.31.

[30] *Лось Ф.Є.*, *Михайлюк О.Г.* Класова боротьба в українському селі: 1907–1914. – К., 1976. – С.42.

[31] Статистический ежегодник на 1915 г. – Полтава, 1919. – С.59.

[32] Отчёт по 2-му агрономическому участку Хорольского уезда Полтавской губернии за 1914 г. – Хорол, 1915. – С.11.

When discussing the problem of agronomic assistance to small farms, the question about the organizational principles of operation of such farms came up. The attempt of V.Vasylenko, a member of the board of Poltava agricultural society, to propose a plan for the organization of an exemplary land-poor farm, which was published in 1907 in "Journals of Konstiantynohradsk Agricultural Society", was not supported by members of the meeting because of high cost of the project. Meanwhile, V.Vasylenko's project was quite interesting. In modern economic terms, it was nothing more than a business plan, the content of which was that for four landless farms zemstvo leased 16 dessiatinas of land, buying 4 horses and the necessary equipment for 545 rubles. According to V.Vasylenko's calculations, such a farm could annually provide each member of the society with products totalling about 100 rubles[33]. The desired analysis of the peasant-Cossack farm was made by the economist O.Matysen in three regions of Poltava area: north-western, central and southern. The author of the research compared the results with similar middle-class farms in Katerynoslav province. The conclusion of this research, published in 1914 in the magazine "Khutorianyn" in a separate brochure, was that only the farm with 8–9 dessiatinas of land and the corresponding equipment in the specific historical conditions of Poltava and a number of neighboring provinces in the early 20th century could count on a deficit-free budget[34].

The object of discussion was the idea of using the available funds of cooperative credit societies to lease large areas of land. If the former agronomist did not consider it possible to use cooperatives for the lease of agricultural land, the latter questioned this idea, although the traditions of credit cooperatives had a long history in Poltava region[35]. One of the fervent advocates of cooperative lease was the local cooperator N.P.Stefanovskyi. "A credit society", the speaker said, "can to some extent settle such a pressing issue as lease"[36]. The report of an agronomist T.P.Yeremenko aroused considerable interest, he had drawn the audience's attention to the low availability of long-term credit for the majority of unprivileged estates, in his opinion, the efficiency of agricultural production directly depended on this credit. Confirming his idea about the need to take urgent measures to improve crop production and livestock husbandry, the speaker mentioned specific facts about the state of the agricultural sector in the Russian Empire, including its Ukrainian region: in England and Denmark, the owner receives an average of 800 rubles from a dessiatina of land, whereas "our peasant receives 300 rubles from 6 dessiatinas", or 50 rubles from a dessiatina[37]. Answering the audience's questions about the priority of certain cooperative associations, a member of the meeting V.V.Marhorin came to the conclusion about the obvious advantages in improving the efficiency of land husbandry of agricultural associations but not credit ones. To promote "improving the economic well-being of peasants", said V.V.Marhorin, the direct "participation of agronomists in the work of credit unions"[38] is needed.

The discussion on the activities of small cooperative credit during Stolypin's reforms had a significant public resonance, as evidenced, in particular, by the attention to this problem of such a prominent scientist and civic figure as professor M.S.Hrushevskyi. In early 1910, his note was published in the newspaper "Selo" with the eloquent title:

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[33] *Василенко В.И.* Об организации образцового малоземельного хозяйства // Журналы Константиноградского сельскохозяйственного общества. – Вып.XXXXXV / IV и V. – Константиноград, 1907. – С.83.

[34] *Матисен А.* Опыт учёта крестьянского хозяйства в связи с его улучшениями. – Полтава, 1914. – С.52.

[35] *Якименко М.А.* Кредитна система сільського господарства України в умовах аграрних реформ другої половини XIX – початку XX ст. – С.64–75.

[36] Журналы агрономического совещания при Полтавской губернской земской управе 1909 г. – С.64.

[37] Там же. – С.65.

[38] Там же. – С.84.

"From the Life of Peasant Societies". The author admired the activities of such associations in Poltava region, so he covered in detail the work of Bohdanivskyi and Karlivskyi loan societies. If the former focused its activities on sales on preferential terms, i.e. by instalments for high-performance machines and mechanisms, such as triers for cleaning of grain, seed drills, graders and a number of other new tools, the latter acted as an intermediary between sellers and buyers of agricultural products, not allowing buyer-ups of bread to "play the fool with grain farmers". Now buyer-ups "have to pay for peasant bread more than 2–3 kopecks per pood"[39].

A separate resolution of this meeting approved the practice of holding both general provincial and uyezd agricultural exhibitions of various content[40]. In 1912, for example, with the support of zemstvo, 5 exhibitions were held in uyezd towns of Poltava region and 37 ones in rural settlements, i.e. closer to those for whom they were actually held, namely: to small agricultural producers, because according to the 1897 census only 14% of rural residents from among the privileged estates could read and write. "At exhibitions", one of zemstvo agronomists wrote in 1914, "each visitor learns about something new, where and under what conditions it can be obtained"[41].

Thus, thanks to the efforts of agricultural societies and local zemstvos, as of 1913, 72 agronomists were already working in the province[42]. Their activity on the dissemination of knowledge, together with a number of other factors, directly influenced the increase in yields of major crops, as well as the quality of animal husbandry, which was published in the magazine "Khutorianyn" in 1914[43]. The figures on the yield of the main grain crops before the agronomic meetings (1891–1900) and after them (1901–1910) are quite significant in this sense. If during the first of these decades in small farms, which gave the lion's share of their products to domestic and foreign markets, the yield was 48 poods per a dessiatina of land, in the second decade, the yield increased by 14,6%. More striking was the difference in the yield of large farms, which had both better soil and adequate financial resources. Their yield in the second of the mentioned decades exceeded the indicators of the first decade by 24,2%. In absolute terms, the yield increased from 62 to 77 poods[44]. Comparing the yield in Poltava province with similar territorial and administrative regions of Ukraine at that time, we state that there is no significant difference between them, which was explained, with some exceptions, by the same socio-economic conditions of farming in the presence of similar but not identical attention to the agrarian sector of the country's economy from the local zemstvo. Thus, the average yield in landlords' estates for 1901–1916 in Poltava region was 77 poods from a dessiatina against 76 poods in the three provinces of Right Bank Ukraine. If we talk about farms of unprivileged estates, their yield in Poltava region, as well as in other neighbouring provinces of Ukraine, ranged from 50–60 poods. It should be noted that the average yield in the provinces of the European part of the Russian Empire was 38 poods from a dessiatina[45]. On the eve of the First World War, the best samples of fodder and industrial crop seeds,

[39] *Грушевський М.* З життя селянських товариств // Село: Українська народна ілюстрована газета. – 1910. – 27 травня. – №21.

[40] Журналы агрономического совещания при Полтавской губернской земской управе 1909 г. – С.85.

[41] *Зенченко Т.В.* Для чего устраиваются выставки по сёлах. – Полтава, 1914. – С.17.

[42] Отчёт Полтавской губернской земской управы за 1911 г. – Вып.I. – Полтава, 1912. – С.79.

[43] *В.Н.Д.* Обзор мероприятий по агрономической организации в Полтавской губернии за 1913 г. // Хуторянин. – 1914. – №14/15. – С.440–445.

[44] Статистическое бюро Полтавского губернского земства: Изменения в хозяйственной жизни населения Полтавской губернии по данным переписей 1900 и 1910 гг. – Полтава, 1913. – С.10.

[45] *Якименко М.А.*, *Макарець С.В.*, *Краснікова О.М.* Сільське господарство Лівобережної України в умовах аграрних реформ 1861–1917 рр. – С.131.

as well as haymowers, harvesters, corn vans, iron plows of various modifications and even tractors[46] could be bought in the warehouses of zemstvos and agricultural societies both for cash and on credit, the participants of agronomic meetings[47] repeatedly spoke about that. In the early 20th century a number of events at the general provincial level was also held to improve the quality of animal husbandry. Thus, in 1909, the "Bulletin of Southern Russian Animal Husbandry", edited in Poltava, published a plan of measures to improve the conditions of cattle breeding, developed by such a well-known expert in zootechnics as professor I.Popov. The main content of this plan was the idea of using a variety of cattle breeds, including their Western European representatives such as Simmental and Schwyz breeds, in the peasant-Cossack farms of the region[48]. The latter had been brought from the canton of Schwyz in Switzerland. Another well-known zootechnical expert, professor L.Kuleshov, proposed to promote the improvement of animal husbandry by expanding the area of forage crops, the yield of which could be used for year-round keeping livestock in stalls[49]. The plan of a provincial zootechnician S.S.Dekonskyi also deserved attention, it was focused on improving the breed of grey Ukrainian cattle by selecting the best samples for reproduction and scientifically grounded control over the feeding of young animals[50]. The publications in the collections of agricultural articles of the editorial staff of the magazine "Khutorianyn" were of purely educational nature. Thus, the first collection contained nine articles in which reputable agricultural experts published their recommendations on quality plowing, application of organic and mineral fertilizers for relevant crops, sowing density, methods of seed cleaning and more. In each issue the following rubrics were offered: 1) How to increase the yield of cereals? 2) How to increase the amount of feed in large and small farms? The authors gave their recommendations on the cultivation of perennial grasses, annual plants and on issues related to food conservation. Also, legal consultations can be found in these collections, for example, on the content of tax legislation, which underwent a number of fundamental changes during Stolypin's reforms[51].

However, one should not think that during the years of Stolypin's agrarian reform, which is widely praised by some scientists, the main problems in Poltava region regarding the efficiency of crop production and livestock husbandry were solved. Thus, despite the eviction of about 2 million rural residents from Poltava province at the turn of the 20th century, the intense activity of land banks and, accordingly, the expansion of the land area of underprivileged estates, the number of peasants who did not have farm land did not decrease, but, on the contrary, increased even more: from 59 083 people in 1889 to 70 042 people in 1910, which was about 17% of all inhabitants of Poltava village[52]. In the same way as before, animal diseases such as anthrax, malleus, foot-and-mouth disease, rabies, sheep pox, tuberculosis, swine fever and others, which killed thousands of animals, continued to spread in Poltava region[53].

An unstandard explanation of the problems in agricultural production on the eve of the World War I was found by T.G.Semenkova, a professor at the Academy of Finance under the Government of Russian Federation. In her opinion, the reasons for the problems in the agrarian sector of tsarist Russia in the era of Stolypin's reforms were not only due to

[46] Отчёт инспектора сельского хозяйства в Полтавской губернии за 1910 г. – Санкт-Петербург, 1912. – С.33.

[47] Державний архів Полтавської обл. – Ф.1007. – Оп.1. – Спр.1. – Арк.70.

[48] *Попов И.* Предполагаемый план мероприятий по массовому улучшению крупного рогатого скота в Полтавской губернии // Вестник южнорусского животноводства. – 1909. – №35. – С.698.

[49] *Кулешов П.* Государственные общественные мероприятия по улучшению скотоводства // Там же. – №25. – С.515.

[50] *Деконский С.С.* О методах улучшения серого украинского скота в самом себе // Хуторянин. – 1905. – №10. – С.191.

[51] Первый сборник сельскохозяйственных статей (Календарь «Хуторянина» на 1909 г.). – Полтава, 1909. – С.154–158.

[52] Статистический ежегодник Полтавского губернского земства на 1912 г. – Полтава, 1913. – С.38.

[53] Обзор Полтавской губернии за 1913 г. – Полтава, 1915. – С.7.

the inconsistency of the policy of P.Stolypin's government, but mainly due to the inertia of peasants… The tragic mistake was that "Stolypin" did not taken into account the ability of the majority of peasants to manage a household properly and work well on one operation in a large farm, but they were unable to understand the laws of commercial farming… Reforms were progressive in nature, but agriculture was being rebuilt in a new way extremely slowly, because it was resisted by both landlords and peasants[54]. The reader can draw only one conclusion from the above idea: the tsarist government, both during and after Stolypin's time, was not directly related to the existing problems in various spheres of agricultural production, including, of course, land scarcity and landlessness of the main part of direct producers, which, according to the authors, does not line up with reality.

The conclusion is obvious: it is due to the intensification of public organizations such as agricultural societies (325 societies in Poltava region as of 1917), state administration and local government in the early 20th century managed, in the end, to significantly affect the efficiency of agriculture. However, success under certain conditions could have been much more remarkable. The reason for this conclusion is that the majority of latifundists (about 70%) did not run their own farms, they thought it was more profitable to lease their land to small producers, who due to lack of adequate financial resources continued to till the leased and not properly fertilized own and leased land with archaic tools such as a scratch plough (oralo) or a wooden plough (sokha).

It should be emphasized that the frequency of holding agrarian meetings in Poltava region and the content of their educational programs are impressive. Agronomic meetings of other regions of sub-Russian Ukraine are not properly covered in historiography. Considering the prospects of further research of agrarian sector modernization in the economy of Ukraine in the late 19th – early 20th century, according to the authors of this article, it would be advisable to make a comparative analysis of modernization processes in the regions of Left Bank, Right Bank and Southern Ukraine in order to clarify their specifics, which will be helpful for further generalizing papers on the history of our Motherland of that historical period of time, which some researchers rightly call the era of free enterprise.

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[54] *Семенкова Т.Г.* Пётр Столыпин о роли финансов и банков // Финансы. – 1996. – №8. – С.57.

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Агрономічні наради як засіб модернізації сільського господарства України на початку XX ст. (на прикладі Полтавської ґубернії)

Анотація. Мета дослідження полягає в тому, щоб з'ясувати причини проведення, форму, зміст та наслідки для соціально-економічного розвитку країни такого суспільного явища, як агрономічні наради, практика яких була досить розповсюдженою в південно-західних реґіонах Російської імперії початку XX ст., зокрема на Полтавщині. **Методологія** спирається на принципи науковості, історизму, авторської об'єктивності, реґіоналізму, а також на використання як загальнонаукових (аналіз, синтез, індукція, дедукція), так і конкретно-історичних (історико-генетичний, історико-порівняльний, історико-системний) методів. **Наукова новизна.** На основі аналізу маловідомих широкому загалу історичних джерел автори вперше у вітчизняній історіографії проаналізували видання Полтавського ґубернського земства, а також публікації місцевого сільськогосподарського товариства, зокрема у журналах «Хуторянин», «Вестник южнорусского животноводства», із погляду змісту й наслідків організованих місцевими громадськими активістами агрономічних нарад, головною метою яких була модернізація сільськогосподарського виробництва, що стало особливо актуальним під час здійснення столипінської аграрної реформи. Важливість згаданих нарад полягала у залученні до обговорення широкого кола дотичних до аграрного сектору осіб, серед яких були не лише практики, але й відомі свого часу теоретики з числа університетських професорів; у розповсюдженні у пресі сформульованих у ході відповідних нарад ідей, у процесі консультацій місцевих агрономів, лекцій і бесід із неписьменними верствами населення. Поряд з аналізом змісту агрономічних нарад автори приділили увагу висвітленню соціально-економічних причин та наслідків їх проведення, що передусім дає змогу усвідомити цей процес комплексно, з урахуванням усіх обставин, які прямо чи побічно впливали на проведення нарад як місцевим сільськогосподарським товариством, так і Полтавським ґубернським земством. **Висновки.** У результаті проведеного дослідження зроблено висновок про неабияке значення такого способу модернізації рослинництва і тваринництва, як агрономічні наради, в яких активну участь брали не лише громадські діячі з числа представників місцевих сільськогосподарських товариств та земців, але і представники органів влади Полтавської ґубернії.

Ключові слова: Полтавське ґубернське земство, сільськогосподарське товариство, рослинництво, тваринництво, аграрний сектор, агрономічні наради.