OPPORTUNITY FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND BIODIVERSITY PROTECTION IN RURAL AREAS – SPATIAL MANAGEMENT AND FORESTRY

GOSPODARKA PRZESTRZENNA I LEŚNICTWO SZANSĄ WZROSTU GOSPODARCZEGO I OCHRONY BIORÓŻNORODNOŚCI TERENÓW NIEZURBANIZOWANYCH

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SERVICE COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES AS A PART OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE MARKET OF RURAL AREAS

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ABSTRACT

The sustainable development of the state is impossible without the stabilization of the socioeconomic situation in rural areas, in particular, in the production and social spheres. The development of rural areas provides the support for all agricultural producers, regardless of their sizes, types of ownership and management, and creating a competitive environment.

The service cooperatives are being considered by us as an instrument of stabilizing and increasing the efficiency of commercial activity and competitiveness, reducing uncertainty and risk of the functioning in market conditions. The process of creation and development of service cooperatives are also being considered through the prism of their influence on their social development of rural areas, villagers' property rights, conservation and improvement of land fertility, and ecological safety.

Providing food safety is directly connected to the agricultural sector of economy, the sustainable development of rural areas and the effective production of agricultural products. The experience of some developed countries proves that sustainable development of a state is impossible without stabilizing the socioeconomic situation in the rural areas, particularly in the production and social spheres.

In the history of the Ukraine the inhabitants of villages and the peasants were the reliable and the most important foundation on which the state relies. It is well-proven by science, that the level of development of a country depends directly on the corresponding indices of the agrarian economical sector. A village not only provides the state with raw materials and food, but it remains being a carrier and a sustainer of material, cultural and moral values, and traditions of past generations and the Ukrainian mentality.

We examine the development of rural areas as a system, which creates and controls the natural biological cycles, protects and proceeds the fertility of soil and natural resources, optimizes the usage of resources in agrarian enterprises, reduces the usage of nonrenewable resources, provides a stable profit to the rural population, applies possibilities for family and public farming and minimizes harmful impact on health, safety, nature, quality of water and environment.

We examine the concept of „sustainable development of rural areas" as a complex, since not all types of activities in a village are directly related to agriculture. Moreover, those types of activities which are not directly connected with rural and forest economy receive subsequently a further development, including the forming of a socioeconomic self-developing rural system. This system must be original, able to counteract the anthropogenic overloading and destruction of landscapes, provide the maintenance of cultural values, long-lasting use of all natural resources for agriculture, local industry, handicrafts, trades, tourism, recreation and other fields of economical activities, which improve the villagers' life.

The processes of transformation, taking place during the last decades in the Ukraine, sharpened particularly the existing problems and caused new problems of rural development. Changes in ownership patterns, appearance of new subjects of country side management and other factors of influence on its development made the socioeconomic researches in separate regions of rural areas actual ones. The role of private farms changed as a result of the reformation of the economy of the agrarian sector. Under economical unstable conditions they held an outstanding economical and social value, as they contributed significantly to the solution of the problem of unemployment of the rural population, supported the food safety in the Ukraine and influenced the most important part of the peasants' way of life.

According to the current legislation of Ukraine, private farming is an economical activity, which is conducted without creation of a juridical person by an individual physical person or by persons which are related to each other and live together. Its purpose is the satisfaction of the personal necessities by production, processing and consumption of agricultural products, realization of their surpluses and granting of services using the private farm property, including the field of rural ecotourism.

According to data of the State statistics committee of the Ukraine from January 1, 2010, the number of households, which own land for private farming, amounted to 4.8 million, among them 3.5 million of farms retaining cattle and birds, and 199.6 thousand of them having in their private property agricultural machines. The total area of land amounts to 6630 thousand hectares, thereby 873.8 thousand hectares having a special designation for building, maintenance of dwellings and farm buildings. 2974.2 thousand hectares are designated for the personal farming, 2712.2 thousand hectares for the production of agricultural commodities, among them 351 thousand hectares are leased. The total quantity of cattle amounts to 2976.3 thousand, among them 2054.6 thousand of cows, and pigs amount to 3256.3 thousand. Thus, the production on the private farms is ineffective and unprotected on the competitive markets of agricultural production up to the present.

Worldwide experience shows that the sustainable social and economical development of rural areas is impossible without state support to the social sphere and development of the market infrastructure of the villages and support of both agricultural and non-agricultural activity in the rural environment, enlarging the labor market and the development of self-government processes in the rural environment with the purpose to activate the human potential. The realization of this task is only possible under the condition of social development of each settlement using socioeconomic cooperation, in other words the creation of service cooperative societies. The various social interests, which embrace the retail trade, building, the repairing and equipping of houses and other farm buildings, etc. can be realized by cooperation. However, for the effective functioning of the cooperatives it is necessary to define the property relations and protect the property rights, which are decided at the state level, to realize their financing and to attract investments, including foreign ones.

An agricultural service cooperative is a non-profit organization that belongs to the agricultural commodity producers and is managed by them according to democratic principles. It gives to its members the services, which their farms need, not intending to receive an own income, but

to increase the income of the farm members. The cooperatives are functioning based on the Ukrainian Law „About the agricultural cooperation".

During the last years the process of creation of service cooperatives was notably activated. This fact is explained by the beginning of cooperative forms menage development process and realization of objective necessity of shallow agricultural commodity producers association under the conditions of a growing competitive market, the approval and realization of the „State special purpose program for supporting the development of agricultural service cooperatives in the period to the year 2015". According to data of the ministry of agrarian policy from January, 1, 2010, 645 service cooperatives are officially registered, being 30 % more than at the same period of 2009.

The reviving and formation of service cooperatives in the agrarian sector belongs to the perspective directions of development of the national economics and is one of the objective terms of overcoming the crisis phenomena. In addition, agricultural service cooperatives execute important social functions, compensating the unfavorable consequences of transformation of the economical market. On this stage it is fundamentally important to make use of the advantages of cooperatives of such type, which have the unique possibilities for a social revival and development of rural communities.

However, the process of formation and activation of cooperatives in rural communities takes place with considerable difficulties, caused by a number of objective and subjective reasons. Among these problems are an insufficient normative-legal base in the sphere of cooperation, an insufficient provision of the cooperatives with material, technical, financial and informative resources, a low level of economic and legal knowledge of members of the cooperatives and a limited assortment of services and inopportuneness of their allocation. Moreover, the sales activity is not enough developed.

One of the possible strategies to develop cooperatives in rural communities is to make the cooperatives and their associations participating in the forming of vertical marketing systems, which will help to minimize their dependence on market mediators. In particular, suppliers, processing enterprises and traders will assist to the enterprises of the cooperative sector. As a result the competitiveness will increase.

First of all, an economically reasonable service cooperative strategy foresees the optimization of its directions of productive activity. The improvement of the productive structure and planning of activities of cooperatives in rural communities must be carried out based on economical-mathematical modeling. Its purpose is the determination of productive activity directions optimal correlation. The optimization model allows taking into account the requirements of the members and proprietors of the cooperative association concerning services and the possibilities of the cooperative to satisfy these necessities.

The further development of cooperatives in rural communities is closely related to the forming of a reliable and high-quality consulting system. The realization of this task will contribute to the development of regional agricultural consulting services.

Thus, the problem of realization of sustainable development of rural areas is a long-term task. For its realization it is necessary to accept and realize the regional and local programs of socioeconomic

development of rural areas, which are directed towards the increase of employment and income of the rural population, the development of local self-governments and the encouragement small businesses in rural areas and their integration in cooperative structures.

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