

# The Year 2006 in ARMA

## Summary of Implementation of Support Programmes for the Agricultural Sector

The Agency for Restructuring and Modernisation of Agriculture (ARMA) is a key institution implementing support programmes for agriculture, agri-food processing and rural development. Aid instruments implemented by the Agency have a wide scope and reflect the needs of agriculture, food processing and the rural population.

In 2006, as in previous years, the most important area of ARMA's activity was the implementation of tasks related to the function of a paying agency and implementing authority, namely:

- tasks related to the mechanisms of the Common Agricultural Policy;
- tasks following from the implementation of Operational Programmes for 2004-2006 financed from the Structural Funds.

Moreover, the Agency continued the implementation of SAPARD, state aid instruments and took measures aimed at preparation for the next programming period 2007-2013.

The scale of projects implementation resulted in a considerable increase in the transfer of funds for food economy, as compared to the previous years. The aid provided by ARMA covered about 1.5 million beneficiaries, who benefited from various support instruments implemented in 2004-2006.

### Common Agricultural Policy

Direct payments are a major instrument of support for agricultural producers. Therefore, an important task of ARMA is to increase the ef-

fectiveness of service provided to beneficiaries and to ensure efficiency of the process of effecting payments. By the end of 2006, the Agency implemented two full campaigns concerning direct payments – 2004 and 2005. On 15 March 2006, ARMA launched the 2006 campaign. Agricultural producers were provided with personalised application forms, together with the instructions for filling these forms and graphic annexes (maps). In 2006, 1,468,614 applicants submitted applications for direct payments to agricultural land.

Under the 2006 campaign, the Agency, building on the lessons learnt in previous years, made a great organisational effort to streamline the system of effecting payments. Thanks to that, in the first 31 days after the launch of the process of effecting payments, 712 thousand beneficiaries received over PLN 3.5 billion. This amount was 3.6 times higher than it was in the analogous period of the 2005 campaign and as much as 6.3 times higher than in the 2004 campaign. As part of single and complementary payments under the 2006 campaign, 39% of the estimated total amount of payments was paid out by 31 December 2006. As part of single area payments, in 2006, a total of PLN 4.1 billion of EU funds was paid out. Under the 2005 campaign, it was PLN 2.6 billion and under the 2006 campaign – PLN 1.5 billion.

Similarly to previous years, agricultural producers (within the meaning of the provisions on direct payments) could

submit applications for payments to agricultural land on account of plantations of willow (*Salix* sp.) or thornless rose (*Rosa multiflora* var.) used for energy purposes. In 2006, 512 applications, covering the area of 6 751.65 ha, were lodged. In total, the applicants received funds amounting to PLN 1.4 million.

As a result of the reform of the EU market in sugar effective from 1 July 2006, it was the first time a sugar payment had been introduced as a compensation for the loss of beetroot growers' revenue. The number of applications for the increased payment totalled 61,956, including 61,886 applications accompanied by cultivation contracts.

As part of the Common Market Organisation for fruit and vegetables, ARMA took certain actions in the market in fresh fruit and vegetables, and well as in the market in fruit and vegetable preserves. By 31 December 2006, the status of a provisionally recognised producer group was granted to 59 producer groups, while the status of a recognised fruit and vegetables producer organisation to 7 producer organisations. Most entities of this kind operate in the Lubuskie, Kujawsko-pomorskie and Wielkopolskie voivodships. 21 applications were submitted to ARMA Regional Offices for financial aid for funding of the operational fund, 21 decisions granting such aid were issued, and payments amounting to PLN 1.3 million were effected. 81 payments were effected for covering the costs relating to the establishment of

a producer group and carrying out administrative activities, totalling PLN 9.1 million.

### Structural funds

As part of Structural Funds in 2004-2006, agriculture and rural development benefited from the Sectoral Operational Programme *Restructuring and Modernisation of the Food Sector and Rural Development for 2004-2006*. The programme was launched on 16 August 2004. The process of accepting applications for all measures was completed in the first quarter of 2006.

By 31 December 2006, over 62 thousand applications amounting to nearly PLN 8 billion were submitted, which accounts for 143% of the financial limit; nearly 44.5 thousand agreements were concluded covering PLN 5.3 billion, which accounts for 95% of the financial limit.

In 2006, ARMA effected payments for projects undertaken in 2004 and 2005. 15.5 thousand payments were effected totalling PLN 1.5 million. 96.8% available funds have been contracted to date. In total, under the SOP *Restructuring...* by 31 December 2006, payments were made for the amount of PLN 2.6 billion, i.e. almost 47% of the financial limit available for the Programme in 2004-2006.

● Under Measure 1.1 *Investments in agricultural holdings*, 14,240 payments totalling PLN 1.25 billion were effected, which accounts for 53% of the available financial limit.

● Under Measure 1.2 *Setting up of young farmers*, 14,151 beneficiaries received pay-

ments totalling PLN 707.6 million, which accounts for nearly 100% of the available financial limit. The last payment was effected in August 2006.

- Under Measure 1.5 *Improving the processing and marketing of agricultural and fishery products*, 490 payments totalling PLN 408 million were effected, which accounts for 23% of the available financial limit.

- Under Measure 2.1 *Restoring forestry production potential*, 20 payments totalling PLN 18.5 million were effected, which accounts for 39% of the limit.

- Under Measure 2.4 *Diversification of agricultural activities and activities close to agriculture to provide multiple activities or alternative incomes*, over 2 thousand payments totalling PLN 131.6 million were effected, which accounts for 32% of the limit.

- Under Measure 2.6 *Development and improvement of technical infrastructure related to agriculture*, over 1.5 thousand payments totalling PLN 50 million were effected, which accounts for 32% of the limit.

- Under Measure 3 *Technical assistance*, 162 payments totalling PLN 6.8 million were effected, which accounts only for about 7.5% of the limit.

All measures of the Programme enjoyed great interest of the beneficiaries.

#### **Rural Development Plan (RDP) 2004-2006**

The measures provided for in *SOP Restructuring...* are complemented by the measures of the Rural Development Plan aimed at increasing the competitiveness of agricultural holdings, adjusting them to EU standards, as well as at sustainable development

of rural areas. The RDP instruments comprise two groups of measures. The first group is made of the so-called accompanying measures of the Agricultural Policy. The second group includes instruments proposed by the European Community in the Treaty of Accession aimed to tackle Poland-specific problems, such as: support for semi-subsistence farms, support for producer groups, adjusting agricultural holdings to the EU standards.

The funds allocated to the RDP 2004-2006 implementation totalled nearly EUR 3.6 billion, including EUR 120 million transferred to financing the increased number of applications accepted under SAPARD. On 16 November 2006 the Agency finally completed the process of accepting applications for aid under RDP 2004-2006.

From 1 January to 31 December 2006, 3 million payments were effected totalling PLN 6.5 billion (including PLN 800 million on account of early retirement). As part of the remaining measures, the following payments were effected in 2006:

- PLN 472 million was paid out for support of semi-subsistence farms;

- over 700 thousand farmers benefiting from aid on account of support for agricultural activities in less favoured areas (LFA) received PLN 1.7 billion;

- PLN 266 million was paid out for agri-environmental projects and increasing animal welfare;
- by 2004 under RDP, 25 thousand ha of poor quality land was afforested; in 2006, under the afforestation programme, nearly 5.5 thousand payments were effected totalling PLN 132.4 million;

- beneficiaries benefiting from aid for adjustment of holdings to the EU standards were paid PLN 1.5 billion;

- In 2006, 32 agricultural producer groups obtained PLN 5.7 million for covering the costs of establishment and operation of the group.

#### **State aid**

State aid continues to be an important form of supporting the food economy.

In 2006, ARMA continued application of subsidies to interest on loans extended in 1994-2005. Also subsidies to interest on newly extended loans were granted under the existing credit lines notified to the European Commission as existing aid. The credit lines which to a considerable extent increase the competitiveness of agricultural holdings and adjust the agri-food sector to EU requirements were deemed to be a priority. These priority credit lines are as follows:

- KZ – for purchase of agricultural land;

- MR – for establishing or furnishing an agricultural holding by persons who have not attained the age of 40;

- BR – for implementation of investment projects covered by programmes of a specific industry;

- GR – for purchase of agricultural real estates intended for establishing or furnishing a family farm;

- NT – for implementation of investment projects in the field of new technologies for production in agriculture;

- IP – for implementation of investments projects in agriculture, agri-food processing and services for agriculture;

From 1 January to 30 November 2006, banks extended 2, 267 investment loans with ARMA subsidies to interest

amounting to PLN 2.4 billion and 83,738 operating loans and disaster loans amounting to PLN 992 million. Moreover, the actions of ARMA in the area of state aid supported the agri-food sector through granting sureties and guaranties of bank loan repayment, financial support for the activity of entities engaged in the collection of animal carcasses, processing them into meal, as well as transport and burning of this meal, financial aid for establishing and supporting administrative activity of agricultural producer groups, payment of equivalents for aid for afforestation carried out in 2002-2003.

#### **SAPARD**

In 2006, ARMA completed the implementation of the SAPARD programme. By the end of 2006 (under Measures 1, 2, 3 and 4), 23,227 payments were effected totalling nearly PLN 4.5 billion.

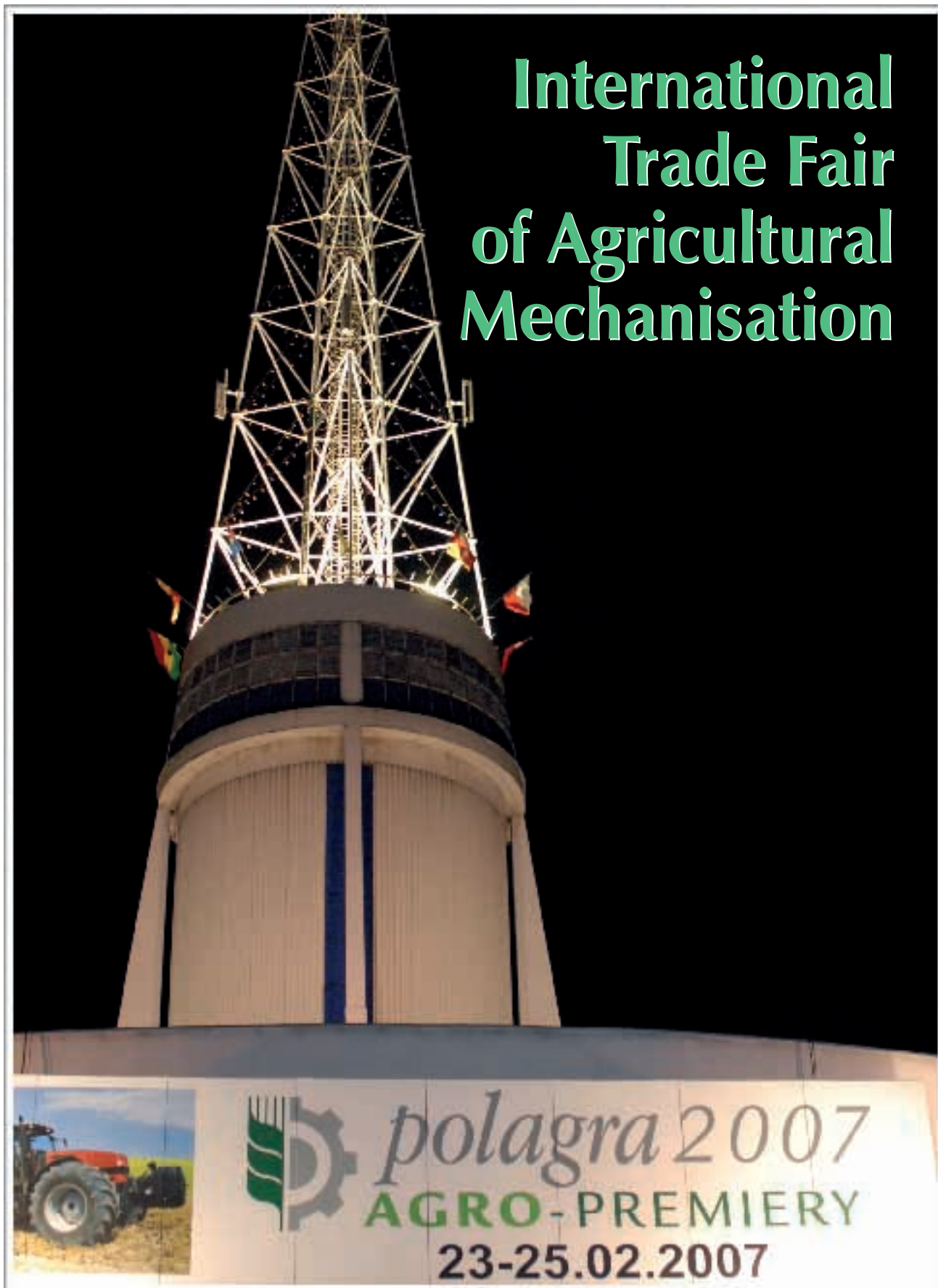
Apart from considerable financial and material outcomes, the Programme achieved and important educational goal, which has been bearing fruit during the implementation of subsequent aid programmes.

#### **New programming period 2007-2013**

An important element of ARMA work in 2006 was the preparation of the new programming period 2007-2013 and the implementation of the Rural Development Programme. At that time, ARMA, as a paying agency, will be responsible for handling the funds allocated to Poland as part of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

*Operation Analysis and Development Department  
Agency for Restructuring and Modernisation of Agriculture*

# International Trade Fair of Agricultural Mechanisation





The Polagra 2007 AGRO-PREMIERY Trade Fair of Agricultural Mechanisation is the newest Polish fair addressed to the agricultural sector. The new fair is a result of modernisation of events organised by the Poznań International Fair and its idea originated directly from the tradition of the Polagra-Farm Fair, which is known worldwide.

Andrzej Lepper, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development took part in the opening ceremony.

At the International Trade Fair of Agricultural Mechanisation Polagra 2007 AGRO-PREMIERY, over 120 exhibitors from 7 countries presented their products.

22 of the Fair exhibitors proposed novelties. These included new models and versions of tractors and harvesters. Most of the new technological solutions concerned economic use of equipment: modern engineering solutions are found, e.g. in hydraulic systems, fuel consumption has been reduced and at the same time, the power and torque have been raised,

exhaust fumes emission has been reduced. Furthermore, the issue of increasing the tractor operation convenience was not passed over: visitors to the Fair could also watch luxury cabs equipped with electronic controls and xenon headlights to facilitate work after dark.

There were also new models of ejectors, sprayers, rigid platforms, soil aeration equipment, spraying machines, seed drills, grippers, spreaders, rakes, graders, presses, mowers, briquette presses, load trailers and slur-

ry tankers. Anything that may be of use at a modern farm could be found there.

The novelties evidence the rapid computerisation of Polish rural areas. Navigation systems enabling military precision and accuracy of farm equipment operation (essential for parallel movement), software for plant production handling having both the function of field files and GPS information: land register maps, ortophotomaps or temperature measurement systems for cereal silos intended for small consumers,

will make work more effective at many farms.

Polagra 2007 AGRO-PREMIERY was created as a place of business meetings for the producers of farm machinery and equipment, as well as of sub-assemblies and spare parts, chemical agents, of laboratory and control and measurement systems and equipment. Also companies providing financial, leasing and insurance services presented their offers at the Fair.

The AGRO-PREMIERY Fair offers everything an agricultural producer may need before starting work in the field.

Since professional knowledge and consultancy are as necessary for contemporary agriculture as technical and technological solutions, a number of seminars, trainings and workshops were open to visitors of the Polagra 2007 AGRO-PREMIERY Fair. A series of meetings was devoted to agri-energy. The possibilities to use domestic agricultural raw materials for the production of biofuel were discussed at the Forum of Agricultural Raw Materials Producers.





Andrzej Lepper, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, has visited the SIA Agricultural Fair upon invitation of Dominique Bussereau, Minister of Agriculture of the French Republic. The fair was held in the first days of March in Paris. The Polish Deputy Prime Minister was accompanied by Marek Zagórski, Undersecretary of State in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

At a working meeting, the Polish and French ministers of

agriculture discussed issues related to WTO negotiations in the area of agriculture. They were completely unanimous on these issues. The talks covered also the possibility of French support for the Polish application for the introduction of antidumping measures in imports of frozen strawberries from China. Minister Dominique Bussereau ensured Minister Lepper that France would support the Polish position on this issue. The problem of different attitudes of EU Member States

## Visit at the SIA Fair in Paris

to the definition of vodka was also discussed at the meeting. Deputy Prime Minister Andrzej Lepper presented the Polish proposition of this definition. Minister Bussereau stated that France was flexible in that respect and it was possible to cooperate so as to develop a common position.

Both parties agreed that risk and crisis management instruments should be introduced in the remaining part of the CAP reform concerning the organisation of the market in fruit, vegetables and wine. Andrzej Lepper emphasised that if such instruments had been introduced earlier, they could have been used to mitigate the consequences of the ban on import introduced by Russia and Ukraine.

The Polish Deputy Prime Minister invited the French Minister of Agriculture to visit Poland during the Polagra Fair or at another mutually convenient date.

The head of the Polish Ministry of Agriculture took part in the meeting of all ministers of agriculture present at the fair and in the fair inauguration attended by the President of the French Republic, Jacques Chirac.



## Poland at BioFach Trade Fair

More than 2,100 exhibitors from over 70 countries visited the world's largest organic trade fair in Nuremberg, Germany. They offered

a wide spectrum of organic food. This year BioFach fair's offer was extended by the exhibition of cosmetics and skin care products, as well as by the

largest exposition of organic wines. All products presented during the fairs must have certificates that comply with the EU Regulation on organic food or they must meet IFOAM (International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements) accreditation requirements.

Polish offer was presented at several stands. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development organised its own stand within the framework of a promotional campaign "Ecology". The space arranged in the form of an orchard gave Polish exhibitors an opportunity to establish commercial relationships, present their prod-

ucts and consult international experts on organic food.

The principal object of exhibition were fruits and vegetables. A sort of a little "teahouse" was arranged under real plum trees. Polish hospitality and openness attracted visitors' attention. One could taste organic apples, fruit jams, apple chips and pickled cucumbers. Also, traditional methods of sauerkraut preparation and juice squeezing attracted a great deal of interest.

The Polish stand was visited by Mr. Marek Zagórski, the Secretary of State at the Ministry, who was a guest of BioFach 2007 trade fair.





# Study Visit to Germany

On 27 February-1 March 2007, Sebastian Filipek-Kaźmierczak, Undersecretary of State at the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, paid a study visit to Germany. The Undersecretary was accompanied by representatives of the Polish Pig Breeders, the Wielkopolska Chamber of Commerce, the Polish Chamber of Commerce "Polskie Mięso" and the Ministry staff – pork market experts.

The aim of the visit was to get familiarized with the functioning of the pork market in Germany.

The Polish delegation visited the Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Con-

sumer Protection (BMELV) in Bonn where it was acquainted with the organizational structure of the Ministry and its powers.

The Polish delegation also held talks with representatives of the following authorities:

- Interessengemeinschaft der Schweinehalter Deutschlands e.V. in Damme (German Pig Breeders and Producers Association) founded in 1988. The organisation has 12,000 members, including 200 producers under the age of 30. The members of this organisation are professionals that have specialized in the production of piglets and pigs for fattening. The



producers make use of the advisory and intermediary services offered by the association. The Polish delegation also visited a production plant Josef Gr.Austing GmbH & CoKG in Damme, which produces fodder and compound feedingstuff for pigs.

- Agricultural Association (WLV) in Munster – almost 98% of farmers living in Germany are members of this association. The association

concludes annual agreements with larger companies, under which it commits to purchase all produced animals.

- Tönnies Fleisch – plants specializing in slaughter and meat cutting, with three slaughterhouses, in which annually around 10 million pigs are slaughtered. In these plants the meat is cut, finished products and half-products are produced and packed.

# Study Visit to France

On 11-15 February 2007, Sebastian Filipek-Kaźmierczak, Undersecretary of State at the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, paid a study visit to France. The Undersecretary was accompanied by representatives of the Polish Pig Breeders and Producers Association

"POLSUS", the Association of Polish Butchers and Coldcuts Producers, the Wielkopolska Chamber of Commerce, the Polish Chamber of Commerce "Polskie Mięso".

The aim of the visit was to get familiarized with the functioning the pork market in France.

The Polish delegation visited the French Ministry of Agriculture to acquaint themselves with its organisational structure and tasks, including food safety control, environment and natural landscape protection as well as agricultural education.

The Polish delegation also held talks with representatives of the following authorities:

- Office de l'Élevage, public agency involved in risk analysis, technical and advisory support for the industry, cooperating with Institut Technique du Porc as regards recording data on the population of pigs, buying-in prices of pigs and selling prices of pig carcasses, their

trade value and production profitability;

- Institut Technique du Porc (IFIP), involved *inter alia* in economic analyses, breeding and rearing techniques, genetics, meat technology, and keeping a database for the purposes of pork breeding;

- Pork exchange, selling around 270 thousand pig carcasses a week;

- The EUROPIG slaughterhouse, killing 6 thousand pigs a day, owned by a producers' co-operative;

- UNIPORC QUEST, responsible *inter alia* for the control of carcass marking and classification;

- INAPORC – inter-industry pork organisation.



# Polish Exhibitors at the International Green Week in Berlin

Possibility to taste Polish products, friendly atmosphere, performances and complete information on Polish agriculture and products of the agri-food industry – is the shortest description of the Polish stand during the International Green Week "Grüne Woche" held on 19-28 January in Berlin.

The International Green Week is the largest exhibition for the food industry, agriculture and horticulture in Germany. Polish entrepreneurs have presented their export offers and performed market testing of their selected products at the fair.

Cheese, yoghurts, cold cuts, meat, fruit and vegetables, juices and fish, bread and honey were the main attractions of this year's exhibition prepared by Poland.

Stands of Polish exhibitors made an impression because of their modern design and friendly personnel. Companies were presented at regional stands of Wielkopolska, Dolny Śląsk, as well as of the Łódź and Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodships. Representatives of local government authorities assisted in promotion of the tourist values of the regions and in presentation of places attractive for foreign tourists.

Polish products won recognition both among con-



sumers and food industry representatives, importers, wholesalers and retailers.

It has already become a tradition of the International Green Week that the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development has its own stand to exhibit products awarded the PDŻ – "Poznaj Dobrą Żywność" Try Fine Food quality mark. The stand provides visitors with information on Polish agriculture and agritourism. In total, products of 40 agri-food companies were on display at the fair.

The exhibition was accompanied by symposia, seminars and forums. The 14<sup>th</sup> East-West Agricultural Forum "Agriculture and Bioenergy – The Lights will go out without Agriculture" was very popular this year

and served as an excellent forum for the exchange of views on the use of biomass for the production of energy.

The International Green Week 2007 was visited by Andrzej Lepper, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, who attended the opening ceremony and held a series of talks with Ministers of Agriculture of other States, including Alexey Gordeyev, Minister of Agriculture of Russia, Yuriy Melnik of Ukraine, Eskil Erlandsson of Sweden, and Horst Seehofer from Germany. The talks concerned the future of the Common Agricultural Policy as well as problems with the trade in agri-food products.

At the Polish stand, Andrzej Lepper played host

to Markos Kyprianou, EU Commissioner, who stated that the European Union spares no efforts to solve problems in trade with the Russian Federation, as it is an issue between the European Union and the Russian Federation, and not between Poland and Russia.

The Polish Minister of Agriculture was assured by Commissioner Marianne Fischer Boel that any problem of one of the Member States is a problem of the whole European Union. "A dominant view in the entire European Union is that all the 27 States are equal and none of them should be treated worse than the other States", stressed Andrzej Lepper at the meeting with the Commissioner.







# Warsaw Meeting of the Regional Advisory Council for the Baltic Sea

A meeting of the Executive Committee of the Regional Advisory Council (RAC) for the Baltic Sea took place at the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development on January 24, 2007.

The legal basis for the establishment and functioning of Regional Advisory Councils is Council Regulation (EC) no 2371/2002 of December 20, 2002 on the conservation and sustainable exploitation of fisheries resources under the Common Fisheries Policy. On the basis of this regulation, the Council of the European Union issued a Decision of July 19, 2004 *establishing Regional Advisory Councils under the Common Fisheries Policy*, as a result of which the following Regional Advisory Councils were established: for the Baltic Sea, for the Mediterranean Sea, for the North Sea, for north-western waters, for south-western waters, for pelagic stocks and for high seas/long distance fleet. Four of them are functioning: the ones for the Baltic Sea, for the North Sea, for north-western waters and for pelagic stocks. They play the role of an advisory authority for the EU Fisheries Commission, the European Commission, the European Parliament, ACFA and the administrations of particular member states as well as regional fisheries organisations.

The RACs' purpose is to involve the interest groups

in the process of taking decisions under the Common Fisheries Policy. It is the basic pillar of the Common Fisheries Policy reformed in 2002 and it is a key factor as regards effective implementation of this policy. The strengthening of good fisheries management contributes to fishermen's better compliance with the rules of the Common Fisheries Policy and to better observation of the rules of creating the Common Fisheries Policy.

Each RAC consists of a General Assembly and an Executive Committee. The General Assembly appoints an Executive Committee consisting of twenty-four regular members coming from the member states. The Executive Committee manages the RAC's work.

The participants of the meeting of the RAC Executive Committee, which was held in Warsaw, were the following: representatives of the fisheries sector in the Baltic countries, a representative of the European Union, the 1st Secretary for Agriculture, Environment and Consumer Protection of the German Embassy in Poland, scientists from the institutes of the concerned member states as well as representatives of organisations, institutions and offices with which the Fisheries Department of the Polish Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development is in co-operation.

One of the significant decisions taken in Warsaw was the appointment of a Pole – Ewa Milewska – from the WWF to the position of deputy president of the Executive Committee. During the discussion, the results of the work of the Working Group for the demersal species were presented. An important element of the meeting was the discussion on salmon and sea trout management. The working group dealing with this issue is to present the final recommendation on salmon management in the Baltic Sea. The content of the recommendation is to be finalised during the next meeting of the working group and then it is to be submitted to the members of the General Assembly and accepted by the Executive Committee in Stockholm. During the discussion on the RACs' approach to salmon management, the representative from Poland referred to the negative consequences of limiting the use of driftnets in the light of the provisions of the Commission Regulation (EC) no 2187/2005 of December 21, 2005 *for the conservation of fishery resources through technical measures in the Baltic Sea, the Belts and the Sound, amending Regulation (EC) No 1434/98 and repealing Regulation (EC) No 88/98*. The representative emphasised the fact of launching in

Poland in 2006 a programme of monitoring the by-catch of whales, which was carried out by the Sea Fisheries Institute in active co-operation with Polish fishing amateurs, as unequivocally presenting the influence of driftnet catch on the number of porpoises. The Polish representative referred to the regulation provision on the total withdrawal of drifting gillnets (driftnets) from fisheries as an element of the porpoise population protection. The entering into force of the ban on the use of driftnets by the Polish fishermen at the beginning of 2008 is going to have adverse effects of economic-social nature for the group of people who fish with the discussed tools and therefore, the results of the programme of monitoring the by-catch of porpoises are so significant for the future of the Polish driftnet fisheries.

During the meeting, the Polish Fishermen Association submitted an application for the membership in the Regional Advisory Council for the Baltic Sea. Their membership will be confirmed at the next meeting of the General Assembly if none of the Baltic member states voices reservations.

Additional information on the course of the meeting can be found on the RAC's website at:

<http://www.bsrac.org>

Department of Fisheries, MARD

# Flavourful, Gourmet Fish, Clean Waters and... Picturesque Surroundings

Magnificent lakes, rushing streams and meandering rivers constitute Poland's lushness. The overwhelming majority of these water reservoirs has clean waters and creates perfect conditions for farming various species of gourmet freshwater fishes. The Agency for Restructuring and Modernization of Agriculture, after Poland's EU accession, multiplied financial resources available for various forms of assistance in the fisheries sector. To what extent do we use this possibility? Let us take a look at several fish farms.

## Carp, amur, pike and... picturesque forests

Traditions of fish farming in the neighbourhood of Niemodlin (Opolskie Voivodship) date back to the 16th century. They have been taken up by the Fish Farm Niemodlin. The farm with the area of more than 700 ha is situated in Opole and Tułowice Forests. Ponds are grouped in six complexes, one more beautiful than the other. All of these inter-forest water bodies are located in a dense complex of charming and lush Niemodlin Woods.

The farm has been specializing in breeding and farming of carps for many years. Full three years' farming cycle is maintained, i.e. from natural sprawling, breeding of stocking material and production of commercial fish for marketing. In addition to the above-mentioned, the following species are farmed: amur, silver carp, bighead carp, pike and tench making the company's

offer more diverse. Cereal grains are used for feeding fish and thus they may compete for the title of eco-product.

The biggest breakthrough in production took place in 2005. At that time the Fish Farm Niemodlin, making use of support schemes of the ARMA, modernized fish storehouse and constructed modern "fish catchery" making it possible to catch commercial carp quickly (circa 20t/ha) and without stress.

Due to these investments, the following were achieved:

- swelling and water disposal equipment was renovated and cleared;
- burdensome, manual fish catching was eliminated, carps are directly transported from fish warehouses to an outlet pipe leading to a catching ground. Fish catching and loading is partly automated, which enhanced condition and quality of fish.
- weighing and loading is done inside the "fish catchery", thus to a significant extent the influence of atmospheric conditions was eliminated (freezing of fish, icing of weighing boxed, etc.). In addition to this, electric winding equipment accelerated all activities connected with weighing and loading
- sanitary and veterinary conditions of sales have also improved.

In short, an incredible progress was made. There are more flavourful fish of even better quality and the most burdensome activities have been taken up by the most modern equipment.

## From fry to... African catfish

Fish Farm owned by Mr Piotr Gabriel in Żelkówko has been specializing both in breeding of stocking material of Salmonidae family, i.e. smolt, sea trout and salmon, for the purposes of restocking the Baltic as well as the production of rainbow trout fry sold to breeders of commercial fish. During years to follow, breeding of African catfish was started in a small re-circulation circuit. Next, when the possibilities to make use of the EU funds became real, decision was taken to further develop production of African catfish.

Support was granted in the framework of the Sectoral Operational Programme "Fisheries and Fish Processing 2004-2006" under measure "Breeding and Farming (Aquaculture)". The purpose of this undertaking was to boost production capacities by equipping the constructed premises with machinery and to purchase stocking material.

"Investment consisted in modernization of the existing inventory building and adapting it for the needs of African catfish breeding by installing two independent re-circulation circuits," says Mr

Piotr Gabriel. "Each circuit consisted of water inlet pipe, pools for fish farming, collective pipe disposing waste waters to purification system. After purification, waters are re-circulated to inlet pipe and transported to production pools. Temperature of +26°C is maintained."

"In the framework of this investment, water purification equipment was bought, i.e. micro-sieves for mechanic disposal of suspension and bio blocks purifying water biologically to the extent making it possible to reuse it as well as other technical equipment steering water circulation in the production circuit," explains Piotr Gabriel. "In addition to this, the heating system was modernized in the framework of the projects, which enhanced the system's efficacy reducing the use of energy per product unit. Stocking material for the first production cycle was co-financed in the amount equal to assumptions made in the project.





The whole investment was concluded in 2005 and made it possible to increase the production of African catfish by 300%.

### Modern form of salmon

AQUAMAR Production and Commercial Company is a firm which was established as a result of ownership transformations of the State-owned Fish Farm in Miastko. Currently, it has the total area of 250 ha, employs 30 people and covers the following counties: Bytowski, Czluchowski, Słupski and Szczecinecki.

It makes use of springs of the Brda and Wieprza rivers. Waters in these rivers are of unique cleanliness. They originate from such natural water reservoirs as lakes, the majority of which have 1st class water purity and some have waters unique at European scale with no electric conductivity.

The company farms trout, salmon, brook trout, Atlantic salmon, Siberian sturgeon, sterlet, carp, tench, broad-fingered crayfish, narrow-clawed crayfish, signal crayfish and breeds fry of trout, salmon, sea trout and whitefish. It also has got fish hatchery for all species of Salmonidae and pike. AQUAMAR has at its disposal specialized vehicle fleet for transportation of fresh fish and it makes projects of premises where fish and crayfish are farmed as well as other inland fisheries equipment.

AQUAMAR is one of beneficiaries of the Sectoral Operational Programme "Fisheries and Fish Processing 2004-2006" under measure "Breeding and Farming (Aquaculture)". A project implemented within the frame-

work of this Programme is entitled "Modernization of a centre for Salmonidae family fish farming BOŻANKA I". Its implementation will make it possible to transform a 30-years' old centre situated in a river channel into a modern salmon farm equipped in water re-circulation and purification systems. Investment is very costly, so its realization from own resources would be impossible or would last many years. Works were divided into stages (I stage – purification system, II stage – ponds) and with the EU funding it will be possible to reconstruct the centre in a short period of time. It will improve the environment, clear the Bożanka River and facilitate the work of people.

Following the activation of the next edition of the SOP "Fisheries and Fish Processing 2007-2013" with the EU funding the company intends to rebuild ponds in its premises in Pasięka, close to Miastko.

### Waters affluent in fish... that taste delicious

The Fish Farm Przyborów, owned by Mr Marian Tomala for 5 years, remembers different times, since it has more than a century's tradition. It covers the area of 300 ha. It uses 52 fish ponds from 0.4 ha to 30 ha. Total water surface equals 260 ha.

The farm is far away from urban and industrial agglomerations, in ecologically clean environment, on the area of 5 counties: Brzeski, Krakowski, Miechowski, Proszowicki and Tarnowski. Water in ponds comes from sources with high quality parameters and of the highest purity. Farm has got its own fish warehouses in the following towns: Książ Wielki,

Plawowice, Rudy Rysie. From these warehouses fish are transported and marketed before the Christmas period.

The company specializes in the production of royal carp. It hatches its own carp through natural sprawling. All carp is fed top quality cereal feed. For this reason it may be called ecological. Together with carp, also the following plant-feeding fish is produced: white amur, silver carp and bighead carp. This fish becomes ever more popular due to high quality white meat and unique taste.

Moreover, the farm develops production of such predator fish as catfish, pike, pike-perch and perch. Because of the increasing demand for these species it is planned to increase their production and soon start their processing. Also the production of such species as tench, crucian, roach or sturgeon seems to be beneficial. Demand for these species increases from year to year. The Polish Angling Association and owners of special fishing grounds are their main recipients.

It is worth adding that the Fish Farm Nieborów carries out the production by means of fully closed cycle. It maintains its own spawners providing for a natural spawning. As a consequence, the company obtains alevins, and fry and subsequently during following seasons – parr and finally commercial fish. Total quantity of fish obtained during one season amounts to circa 190 tons, including 140 tons of commercial carp, 30 tons of parr and circa 10 tons of fry. The remaining species account for more than 10 tons.

With a view to maintaining complete fish production, the farm has fodder ware-

houses, buildings with social utilities and tractors with trailers, necessary equipment for performing various activities on the farm as well as preparing feed for fish.

The Fish Farm Przyborów also has its specialized vehicle fleet used for transportation of fish, i.e. 5 trucks with isothermal pools approved for use by county veterinary services according to up-to-date provisions. It also has got two other cars, Volkswagen Transporter and Citroen C-15.

It is worth mentioning that during the last few years the company of Mr Tomala realized all major investments thanks to the EU co-financing. From 2004 to 2005 the company received funding from the SAPARD Programme and in 2006 – 40% co-financing from the Sectoral Operational Programme for the purchase of Mercedes Axor 2540, grain crusher, pneumatic conveyor, three combustion mowers, three combustion saws, tractor-mower and sludge combustion pump.

It should also be underlined that Marian Tomala does not only run a fish farm but also carries out popularization activities. He is, among others, the founder and member of the Association Promoting Fisheries and Fish Products and member of the Polish Fisheries Association and Fish Producers Association.

He will soon activate agri-tourism activities. His guests may not only stay at a beautiful manor house from the 2nd half of the 19th century with a picturesque park in Przyborów, not far away from Brzesko-Okocim but also make use of special fishing ground with waters affluent with fish.

A. Radzewicz

# Tiger with... Salmon in Coat of Arms

SUEMPOL is a family company of Mr and Mrs Sieciński from Bielsk Podlaski. The company is one of the biggest producers of smoked salmon imported from Norway and Alaska (USA) and at the same time a company which develops dynamically winning the most attractive markets for its products. A real tiger with... salmon in its coat of arms.

It was in 1989 that Urszula and Edward Sieciński, pioneers on the Polish market, established a company specializing in the processing of... prawns.

"If it had not been for a certain coincidence, SUEMPOL would not have started the production of salmon," says the company's president. "A German company was looking in Poland for a firm that would be interested in the production of salmon for the German market. The German partner offered us to take up his machinery and part of salmon consumers. In less than half a year, we had our plant ready for salmon production. It indeed was quite a challenge for me too. We had to start everything almost from scratch: sources supplying us with the best possible raw fish, foreign outlets, etc. Before we chose the right partners we had to travel virtually the length and breadth of Norway. In search of the superior quality products we also came as far as Alaska. We have been laboriously building up the network of consumers on the German market. From the very beginning of our adventure with salmon we have been striving to strengthen SUEMPOL trademark.

"Today, company promoters are proud that our products keep on winning new markets and are highly competitive", underlines the company president. "We are currently launching an offensive on the German market (we already have our business registered there). And incidentally, it is not us but our German competitors who are interested in initiating talks about the common prices policy. We have bought 20% of shares in a Norwegian partner company producing salmon for us and 100% of shares in a company marketing salmon from Norway. Owing to our specialized vehicle fleet we are supplied with fresh salmon from northern Norwegian fjords. After processing, the salmon is vacuum-packed on trays or in modified atmosphere and delivered smoked – cold or hot – to the ever growing number of foreign and domestic consumers".

"It should be added that raw fish processed by SUEMPOL is carefully selected. It originates from the northern part of clean Norwegian fjords and is delivered by reliable, permanent suppliers. Our salmon is of the highest, Superior, quality. Salmon is imported to Bielsk Podlaski fresh. The product is transported in chip ice by our own means of transport. By eliminating trans-shipment the product is guaranteed to keep fresh and is transported without delay to a processing plant".

As a result, the Siecińskis' products are unparalleled. On all markets the prod-

ucts from Bielsk Podlaski are traded under recognizable trademark and successfully compete with other foreign and domestic suppliers. It is so not only in Germany but also in the Netherlands, Belgium and Denmark. Due to considerable demand for SUEMPOL products on the German market, a subsidiary with trade offices in Wismar and Gutersloh was established in 2002. 20 people are employed there and the subsidiary has its own logistic centres throughout Germany. It delivers products to major networks and reputed restaurants.

Monika Siecińska-Jaworska, who is in charge of the company, studied the German language. She has been working in the company since 1989 when it was established by her father – Edward.

Under her leadership and support of her father responsible for investments as well as her husband Arkadiusz, professional lawyer and manager, SUEMPOL underwent transformation from a company processing shrimps to a modern, effectively managed enterprise recognized as one of the biggest Polish and European producers of smoked salmon.

Production in SUEMPOL, employing currently 356 people and equipped with modern machinery as well as its own specialized vehicle fleet, is carried out under strict veterinary supervision according to HACCP (since 1999) and International Food Standard (as the first one in this branch of business and the fourth in Europe the

company introduced the system in 2003).

Circa 85% of the total production is exported, mainly to Germany (commercial company Suempol Deutschland has been set up in 2002) as well as to the Netherlands (Suempol Netherlands), Belgium, Denmark and France.

SUEMPOL products are distinguished for their unique taste thanks to a specific technological process. They do not contain food colouring agents or preservatives. Salt is the only fixating agent. SUEMPOL products are labelled with the recommendation of Prof. Religa's Foundation for Cardiac Surgery Development and advised in prevention of heart diseases. The unsaturated omega-3 fatty acids contained in salmon prevent arteriosclerosis, embolism and thrombus formation.

SUEMPOL was awarded many important prizes and distinctions (among others Agro Poland Euro Quality, Mercurius Gedanensis Polish, 2004 Export Leader, nomination for the "Poland Now" title).

The company's offer includes: sliced smoked salmon, marinated salmon with lemon, marinated salmon with dill, marinated salmon with asparagus and marinated salmon Mexican style. In 2005 these products were granted the PDŻ – "Poznaj Dobrą Żywność" Try Fine Food quality mark. This information is particularly valuable for consumers and foreign recipients of the company's products.

A. Radzewicz





## GROT – Company with... Soul

While other processors wish to obtain as many final products as possible from each kilogramme of meat, Józef Grot from Starowa Góra near Łódź, the founder of a meat processing plant Zakład GROT, has always found quality and perfect taste most important, which is why he remained faithful to the traditional way of meat processing.

He started his activity in the meat industry in 1990 in a very cautious way, that is with a typical small meat production company. At that time, he and his partner employed only five people who were highly skilled professionals in butchery and meat processing. They processed few porkers weekly but provided products which differed in every respect from those commonly offered by big suppliers.

Nowadays, GROT, although it is not one of the biggest meat processing plants in Poland, does matter on the Polish market and wins more and more consumers month by month not only in the area of Łódź but also on the most prestigious and demanding markets like that of the capital

city of Warsaw. The company employs around 400 people.

"We have never sought the favours of supermarkets because our key development strategy is to sell the majority of our products in our own-brand shops", says Mr Grot, the co-owner of the GROT company. "We now slaughter 4,300 porkers monthly in our slaughterhouse. We have a cutting line of chicken with the capacity of 700 chicken per hour and we also own a modern company with finished culinary products as well as a meat processing plant. Still, we do not satisfy the consumer demand for our products although they are a

little more expensive than the average ones."

"The products of the GROT company have a very good reputation", says Iwona Rudnicka, engineer acting as the company's proxy for the quality management systems ISO and HACCP. "Our offer for customers includes exceptional, the so-called Old Polish products, such as Old Polish ham, robbers' smoked bacon, farmhouse ham as well as the so-called *home made* products, made without nitrates, such as home made ham, loin of pork etc." GROT own-brand products, which all have an adjective grotowski derived from the

company's name GROT, have been known for years for their high quality and unforgettable taste. These include ham, sirloin, pâté.

Józef Grot has developed his company slowly and with deliberation. In 1990, he took the first loan for the construction of his first plant. After 12 years on the market, he implemented his largest investments with the means obtained from pre-accession SAPARD Programme. Thus, he built a new plant and thoroughly modernized the old one, receiving the return from the Agency for Restructuring and Modernization of Agriculture in the amount of



50% of the costs incurred. Apart from that, he continued to modernize the back office of his company.

He has also opened the GROT Inn (for 120 people) serving traditional Polish meals and the own-brand shop, situated next to the Inn, which sells over 150 high quality GROT products at a wholesale price which is 25-49% lower than the retail price.

The company invests in its employees and creates a friendly atmosphere favoring their development and qualification improvement. At present, six persons among the managerial personnel broaden their knowledge pursuing post-graduate studies and many others learn foreign languages.

Stables with 12 saddled horses have also been created. The employees and their families can practice horse riding with an instructor free of charge while the price for anybody else willing to try horse riding amounts to PLN 20.

The GROT company takes the future seriously and plans another production undertakings.

"We want to make the most of the opportunities created by the new EU prospects for the years 2007-2013", says Józef Grot. "We do not expect miracles though. The level of meat processing in our company is so high that we fill all the guests from the EU countries visiting Starowa Góra with

admiration. In future, we want to focus on two investment directions. The first refers to even better adjustment of our products and semi-products to the market needs. The other one, to which we want to allocate much more money, consists in adjusting the potential of the former Agricultural Production Cooperative in the village of Kalino to our company's future strategy (GROT company has bought the property of the mentioned cooperative and is in the process of including it into the construction of a new future strategy within the scope of feedstock management). At present, we buy raw products of animal origin from almost 30 farmers

specializing in the fattening of pigs and holding the EU certificates. In the coming years, we plan to keep 700-750 breeding ewes in our plant in the village of Kalino and as far as hybrid sows of high meatiness are concerned, we will give them to our contractors with whom we have concluded contracts. In future, we will continue to process only raw materials of known origin, produced according to the Code of the Best Agricultural Practice but with even better quality parameters. The company will also try to enter the European markets. Therefore, we encourage all our readers to try the products of the GROT company.

*A. Radzewicz*

## Pigs with Highest Quality Mark

About a million Polish farmers breed pigs, if also those, who fatten several porkers a year for their own family needs, are taken into account. Despite this, there are very few farms like the one run by Ewa and Janusz Linka from Szadek (Łódzkie voivodship). The farm does not produce slaughter material; it specialises in sows and boars pedigree breeding exclusively. It produces 1,300 sows and about 500 boars a year.

"Our stud has started-up from purchasing 12 sows and a boar of Polish Large White pedigree. Its aim was to produce breeding sows. The beginning turned out to be very encouraging," recollects Janusz Linka. "Above all, we succeeded in protecting our herd against numerous diseases that threatened pigs' health. And this was

already a significant success, because it is health that guarantees the success of any stud. All animals introduced to the herd in our farm must go through the quarantine and at the same time they are examined for the presence of different diseases. Comprehensive veterinary prevention measures help us to avoid losses resulting from treatment or death of animal".

"Breeding work, based mostly on offspring and siblings checks, strict selection of young animals and high herd rotation of up to 40% sows headage per year, is an elaborate work that requires inquisitiveness, intuition, strong belief in genetic progress, as well as responsibility. But when I began to obtain championship prizes, I felt really satisfied with the results of my work, to which

I devoted myself entirely. As the only holding in the world, we train the boars to a phantom and sell the semen thus collected with a seal of approval that guarantees fertility. This is the thing to be proud of, isn't it? I visited almost all western European countries in which the most important pedigree

breeding farms (studs) are located, and none of them uses such a method", continues Mr Linka.

"Our basic herd remains at the same level for more than ten years", says Mrs Ewa Linka. "Since the establishment of our stud, we maintain two pig breeding herds – Polish White







Zwisłoucha and Polish Large White. We have 200 sows and 20-25 boars – the herd of these two pedigrees is of perfect quality. In order to further improve fattening and slaughter parameters we continue to systematically improve the domestic pedigrees and boars imported from Sweden, Denmark, Finland, England, Germany and even Canada. We also use the best foreign breeding animals from the Animal Breeding and Functionality Station.”

It is also worth mentioning that in the recent years the lists of best Poland's boars in specialist periodical "Trzoda Chlewna", among 30 best breeding boars of the Polish White Zwisłoucha pedigree, mention at least 10 boars from our stud. The situation is similar, as regards the Polish Large White pedigree – 8-10 of 20 best breeding boars are from our piggeries. Our achievements in the field of pedigree pig breeding are a result of close cooperation with the former animal breeding and insemination stations in the whole country, the National Research Institute of Animal Production in Kraków,

the Experimental Animal Production Plant in Rososz, Polish Pig Breeders and Producers Association "POLSUS" and other veterinary institutions of higher education", Mr Linka stresses. Permanent cooperation and contact with experts from these breeding and research institutions and the appropriate feeding regime, as well as guaranteeing the optimal inventory and health conditions allowed us to succeed in producing breeding material of highest genetic quality. The regular purchasers of our sows and boars are state and private pedigree pig breeding stations,

large production farms and numerous individual farmers from all over the country. Moreover, we keep impeccable records of our operations, which guarantees conformity”.

"This specific documentation system is run with the help of the POLSUS experts," Mrs Linka adds. "The experts in pig feeding have also been very supportive, as our fodder for pigs of all ages is produced on the spot under close computer-aided monitoring and on the basis of prescriptions prepared by the best experts on feeding pedigree sows and boar."

We should also add that the holding run by Mr.

and Mrs. Linka is a modern 120-hectare facility. As far as plant production is concerned, the growers, as animal farmers, are not only good craftsmen, but also creators. Each year they allot 15 hectares of land for seed vegetables and 25 hectares for eligible cereals. For their achievements Mr. and Mrs. Linka received in 1998 the title of the National Master of "Agro-League". The following year they received the prestigious Economic Prize of the President of the Republic of Poland. In 2006 they were chosen the "Agricultural Businessmen of the year".

A. Radzewicz



# Use of Subsidies for Scrapping of Fishing Vessels by Their Beneficiaries

The financial mechanisms of the Sectoral Operational Programme "Fisheries and Fish Processing 2004-2006", which implements the objectives of the European Union Common Fisheries Policy, resulted in a considerable reduction of the Polish fishing fleet on the Baltic Sea. By the end of 2006 the owners of about 500 units from among 1,200 fishing vessels and boats, which previously caught, inter alia, cod, sprat, herring and salmon, decided to permanently cease fishing activities of their fishing vessels. The reduction of the number of vessels was achieved mainly through scrapping and to a lesser extent due to transfer to non-Member States or through the reassignment of vessels (e.g. for tourist purposes).

PLN 436.4 m was allocated to SOP measures relating to the reduction of the fishing fleet. By the end of 2006 shipowners applied for premiums equal to PLN 423.9 m for the withdrawal of vessels – scrapping (Measure 1.1), i.e. 97.1% of the financial limit. 422 contracts for the amount of PLN 375.2 m. (86% of the limit) were signed and PLN 311.8 m was paid (73.6% of the limit) within that period.

The use of these resources by the beneficiaries was an interesting fact. Research was carried out within a group of beneficiaries who submitted applications concerning Measure 1.1 by the first half of 2006. The research demonstrated that the professional situation of the respondents varied significantly and was the following: about 1/3 of the

respondents was unemployed at the time of the test, 1/5 of them retired (which means that the total of over 50% of persons previously employed in fisheries was professionally inactive). After the restructuring in question, only 1/4 of fishermen continued their profession, and about 1/5 took jobs in other business/economy sector (Chart 11, page 60).

The Programme Beneficiaries allocated the resources granted for scrapping to various purposes. The research demonstrated that the average of about 40% of resources granted for scrapping were intended for savings, and about 30% for investments and 30% for consumption (Chart 12, page 60).

The structure of expenditure was the following: savings (39%), consumption expenditure (30%), investments (29%) and debt repayment (2%) (Chart 13, page 60).

The data presented indicate that nearly 1/3 of the resources were allocated to investments, including the purchase of immovable properties, tourism (hotel trade) and modernisation of existing fishing vessels.

Cutters and fishing boats were modernised to a far greater extent, nevertheless financial aid under SOP "Fisheries and Fish Processing 2004-2006" for the modernisation of vessels is granted only for projects relating to the improvement of work safety and hygiene and the quality of fisheries products, whereas it is impossible to obtain aid for the purchase, replacement or repair of fishing vessel engines or fishing gear, which

would meet the expectations of fisheries. The needs of owners of fishing vessels are centred around modernisation of engines. This results from the fact that engines used on fishing cutters are obsolete and characterised by considerable fuel consumption. As a result, the majority of projects implemented are those which mainly relate to the replacement of vessel equipment.

One of the companies, which benefited from the premium for scrapping fishing vessels and invested in the modernisation of other fishing units, is the Fishing and Fish Services Company (PPIUR) "Szkuner" from Władysławowo. Investments under the modernisation of existing fishing vessels contributed, inter alia, to the improvement of the quality of fish raw material. Equipping holds with cooling fittings (cooled holds) ensures the maintenance of high technological value of the raw material and facilitates spending more days at sea. As a result the shipowners obtain higher prices for the raw material delivered, the quality of which is also influenced by investments in improvement of the sanitary conditions (e.g. application of a high-pressure washer which improves hygiene and thus the end quality of the raw material) and facilitated transport of fish on the vessel (applying belt conveyors, fish grading machines). Installing a network fish finder indirectly influences the improvement of caught fish quality, because information from the network fish finder allow to determine the amount of fish in the net, and to haul it in in good condition.

The second group of modernisation investments consists of projects aimed at improving the safety level and hygiene at work on fishing cutters – e.g. conversion of hulls and installing navigation devices, as well as equipping units with rescue facilities for the crew members. Due to the fact that a fishing vessels must meet all the basic sailing security requirements, keeping standards which enable a unit to set to sea is one of the main costs of cutter maintenance. Therefore, the possibility of investing in this respect was assessed by shipowners as substantial assistance in maintaining and improving safety standards of work at sea.

It seems that the resources obtained by fishermen as a premium for scrapping fishing vessels were allocated to investments to an insufficient extent. It might have been influenced by the limitation of possibilities to carry out more serious investments on the functioning cutters as well as the decisions of many fishermen to retire. The opinion among the fishermen that fishing activities are not profitable, inter alia, due to the increasing cost of fuel and decreased catch limits with the decreasing prices of popular Baltic Sea species – herring and sprat – is of equal importance.

*Department of Fisheries  
Agency for Restructuring and  
Modernization of Agriculture*

1) On the basis of the report of the European Consulting Centre of the evaluation of the Sectoral Operational Programme "Fisheries and Fish Processing 2004-2006"



Sheep's Milk Cheese (Bryndza podhalańska) is one of the most famous cheeses from the Tatra mountains. It is also the second Polish product, which has applied to the European Commission for registration of protected designation of origin (PDO). The showpiece of the Tatra mountains and Podhale region will now be able to reach an even greater number of quality food admirers and gourmets.

### The history of bryndza podhalańska

The rich tradition and significance of bryndza podhalańska is testified by mentions in literature, ordinances of noble landowners and orders of kings. The earliest information concerning bryndza

is dated from 1527. There are also numerous fragments in books that confirm the use of bryndza as means of payment, as well as one of elements of rents (1683). Also, literature provides many descriptions of production methods, as well as information on prices in different years. Cheese production was an indispensable element of sheep grazing in the Podhale region throughout centuries. Shepherds, who had been moving with sheep to mountain pastures, used to spend there several months a year. During this time, they had been

eating, almost exclusively, sheep milk and sheep milk products. The knowledge of methods of bryndza production has been passed from one generation to another and it became an art, the secrets of which are known only to producers from the region. Thanks to the combination of natural factors, special skills and preservation of the traditional formula it is possible to make this extraordinary cheese.





## Traditional method of production

The name "bryndza" is derived from Romanian word *brinze*, which was taken from Valachian shepherds, who grazed their sheep on the mountain pastures. Its production was related to migration of Valachian tribes, which reached Poland, moving along the Carpathian range. Because the wave of Valachian settlement covered the entire western part of the Carpathian range, the shepherd culture – including cheese production – was presumably the same in the whole area, with slight local differences. Written sources from 1924 ("Wierchy". The year-book devoted to mountain people) contain the following description of bryndza production: The first stage of bryndza production is similar to this of *osypek* (smoked ewes' cheese). The mass of fresh cheese is put into "grudka" (a lump of cheese in a piece of linen cloth), hanging on the shepherds' chalet wall for a period of eight hours, until it drains completely, and then cheese is put on a special shelf, so-called "podysar", where it ferments for a period of two weeks. When the shepherds have sufficient amount of bryndza to

give it out to farmers, they send a message to the village concerning the term of receipt. The senior shepherd pays the farmers, using bryndza, or *grudka* cheese; the remaining amount is used to produce *osypek* cheese for himself and to pay his co-shepherds.

## Extraordinary place of origin

The quality of final product is influenced by, among others, a rich and varied vegetation of the area. It includes many species, which are characteristic only for Podhale region, and which form the growth of local meadows, pastures and mountain pastures. The terrains, in which bryndza podhalańska is produced, are among the cleanest not only in Poland, but also in the entire Europe. The area covers four National Parks. In the north, there is Gorzański National Park, in the south – Tatrzński National Park, in the west – Babiogórski National Park and in the east – Magurski National Park. The fifth one, Pieniński National Park, similarly as Tatrzński, is located in the very heart of the bryndza production area.

## Special taste of the cheese

A sheep milk of "Polska Owca Górska" (Polish Mountain Sheep breed) is

properties not only to the method of production, but also to natural conditions. A specific vegetation of the Tatra mountains and Podhale region, where the sheep are grazed, has a very important influence on the final quality of sheep milk used for bryndza production.

## Unique features of bryndza podhalańska

Bryndza podhalańska is a soft rennin cheese. Its surface is flat or slightly convex, sometimes slightly cracked. Its shape is not strictly defined – it depends on package. Bryndza podhalańska has a rather uniform, paste-like texture, but it also can be slightly grainy or lumpy. The cheese has a piquant, salty taste, sometimes sharp or sour.

The mutual influence of extraordinary natural and human factors, unique properties of the region – its vegetation and fauna, as well as the production method, documented as early as in the 16th century determine the unique value of the cheese, which for many years has been admired by regional and traditional cuisine lovers both in Poland and abroad.

The information on the possibility of buying *osypek* and bryndza podhalańska cheeses can be obtained from the Regional Sheep and Goats Breeders Association.

# Regional Product: Ewes' Milk Cheese

used for bryndza podhalańska production. If necessary, it may be complemented with cow milk of "Polska Krowa Czerwona" (Polish Red Cow breed). "Polska Krowa Czerwona" is a domestic cattle breed, obtained in Poland. The local sheep race is closely related to history and tradition of Podhale region and its population. The cheese owes its exceptional

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Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development





## Unforgettable Holiday

Warmia and Masuria, situated in North-Eastern Poland, are among the most attractive tourist, recreational and scenic regions of our country.

Diversified landscape, numerous lakes, large area covered with forest, many nature sanctuaries and monuments, very rich and interesting flora – are among the attractions of this part of Poland.

Warmia and Masuria are called a "Land of a Thousand Lakes". However, the number of lakes is higher – there are about 2,000 lakes in the region. In the vicinity of lakes numerous tourist and holiday resorts are located, such as: Mikołajki, Giżycko, Węgorzewo, Ruciane-Nida and Stare Jabłonki. Several kilometre-long water routes, resulting from connecting rivers and lakes, are an unusual attraction of the area. Among the most popular waterways are: the Elbląg Canal, the Krutynia Route and the Great Masurian Lakes Trail.

Large forest complexes, such as Piska Forest, Borecka Forest and part of Romnicka Forest, unique in Europe, attract tourists with their environmental and scenic values. Here one can encounter a roe deer, a stag, a wild boar, a wolf, a badger, an otter, a beaver and admire the magnificent bison. Several birds of rare species live in the forests, such as black grouse, capercaillie, golden eagle, lesser spotted eagle, black stork, cormorant, swan, common crane, grebe, heron and wild duck.





Among protected animal species that live here are: bat, mountain hare, beaver, edible dormouse, wolf, otter, Eurasian lynx, bison, cormorant, eagle owl, short-eared owl, European roller and European pond terrapin.

102 nature reserves and 6 scenic parks, housing over 2,200 monuments of nature, were established to protect unique plant and animal species.

Warmia and Masuria are also a paradise for canoeists, who can follow numerous trails, such as on the Krutynia, the Uka or the Wel river.

In winter, skiing fans can practice their skills on ski slopes with ski lifts in Gołdap, Mrągowo or Lidzbark Warmiński.

Numerous monuments of architecture add appeal to the place. Castles of the Teutonic Knights in Biskup, Olsztyn, Nidzica and Lidzbark Warmiński are among old fortifications still in good state today.

There are also gothic churches in the region. The

most interesting examples of such architecture are the Cathedral in Frombork, the collegiate church in Dobre Miasto and wooden churches in Wieliczka, Ostrokół and Lubawa. The Marian sanctuary in Święta Lipka is a baroque jewel.

The beautiful Warmia-Masuria land offers to visitors around 10 thousand accom-

modation places, ranging from apartments to traditional cabins and camping sites, in over 1,000 agrotourist holdings.

Such holdings attract families with the standard they offer and with individual approach to visitors' expectations. Apart from the beauty of nature, there are other attractions in such

lodgings and it is the hosts who create places that are beautiful, friendly, and full of ideas for active leisure. Agrotourist lodgings are scattered near the lakes, in forests and in picturesque villages.

Tourist yearning for open space, for the view of a lake, for the smell of a bonfire and for the taste of freshly fried pike will find here everything they need. In the morning boats and kayaks will appear on the lakes. Canoeing down the Krutynia river, as well as diving is becoming quite fashionable nowadays. Fans of diving will find the Piłakno lake very attractive, with its crystal-clear water the temperature of which reaches 26 centigrade during warm summers. The lake, 60 meter deep, whose water is clear down to 12 meters, conceals an old village on oak stilts, dating back to the 2nd century B.C.

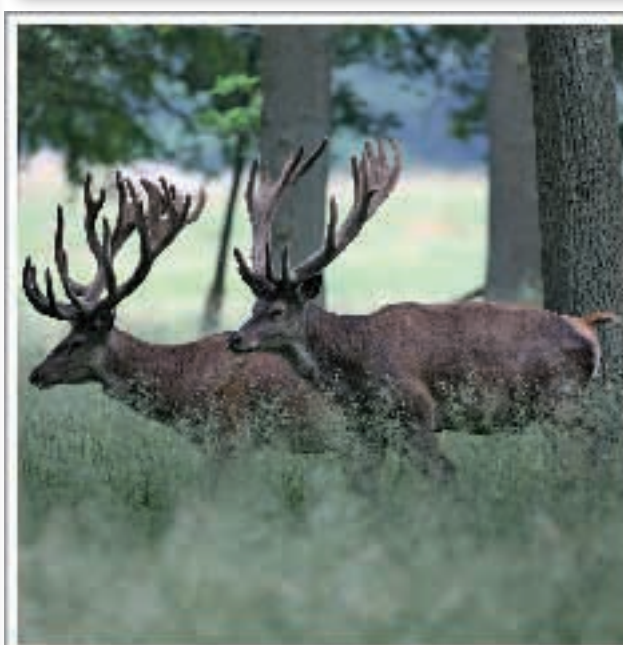
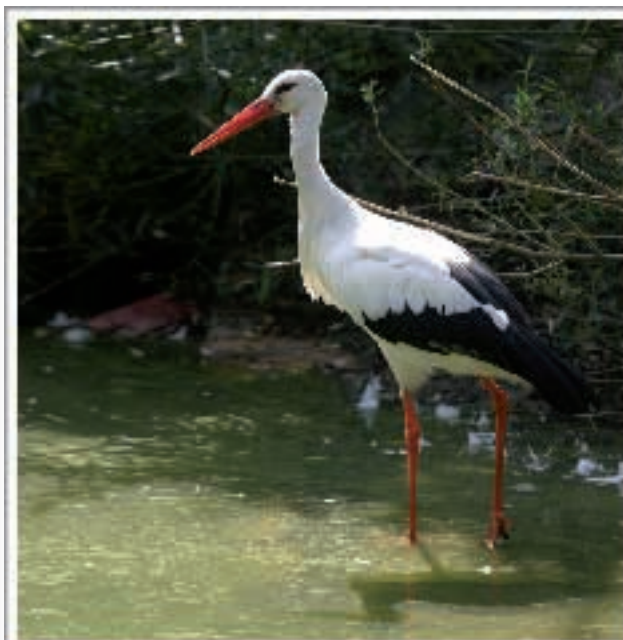
Warmia and Masuria are also a paradise for anglers. The angling season starts on 1 June and lasts till the end















of November. An angling permit is required for each lake. Such a permit can be purchased in every angling shop. The species that are most frequent in the lakes include spike, perch, European whitefish and tench. In the rivers sea trout and barbel dominate. There are as many as 40 fish species living in the region. The clear, transparent water makes it possible to see with the naked eye flocks of small fish that frolic about, as well as big spikes swimming by with dignity. The lake and river

shores are well developed – there are many piers and passes.

The Warmia and Masuria land offers also horse riding, for example in the Zielony Koń ranch in Bobrowski Las and Pindorówka ranch in Maradki. Tourists come here not only to angle and horse-ride. Mushroom pickers are also attracted by morels, boletus, chanterelle, suillus and other wild mushrooms.

Mushrooms are often used in the traditional cuisine of the region. Among traditional dishes tasting fish

dishes of all kinds are a must – fried fish, fish baked with vegetables and smoked fish. Fresh fish can be bought directly from the fishermen, it can also be smoked on the site.

Ladies serve excellent country sausage and fantastic cakes.

In spring, young nettle soup is on the menu, in summer chanterelles in creme and scrambled eggs with suillus mushrooms reign.

Many of agrotourist holdings enjoy the status of organic farms. The vegetables

served there come from traditional garden, the excellent fruit preserves and aromatic home-baked bread are made according to old, traditional recipes.

We invite you to spend your holiday in the beautiful and hospitable Warmia-Masuria land. Lodgings and holiday sites can be found on the following websites: [www.zielonemazury.pl](http://www.zielonemazury.pl) and [www.agropturystyka.pl](http://www.agropturystyka.pl)

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