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THE ROLE OF EUROPEAN UNION SUBSIDIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ORGANIC FARMING IN POLAND – AN EXAMPLE OF PODLASIE REGION

Key words: Common Agricultural Policy of the European Union, EU subsidies, organic agriculture, programme of the development of rural areas

Summary

A very dynamic development of organic farming has been observed in Poland in the last few years. This system has particularly intensively developed since 2004, i.e. since Poland's accession to the European Union. The development manifests itself in increasing number of organic farmers, food processing companies and the area of organic farmlands in Poland.

The objective of the study was to assess the impact of EU aid to the development of organic farming in Poland. In addition, I have tried to assess the effectiveness of the aid. Analysis was based on secondary materials and research carried out in 30 randomly selected organic farms in Podlaskie voivodeship. The study showed that agri-environmental program – one of the activities of European Union's Common Agricultural Policy to promote environmentally friendly farming – was a powerful driver in the development of organic farming in Poland. Beneficiaries of the agri-environmental programme, which subsidises organic farming, are still increasing in number. 700 thousand farmers benefited from the RDP programme in the previous funding period (2004–2006). Payments amounted 2.3 billion PLN in the agri-environmental program for 2007–2013 (data as of 31st Oct. 2012).