

AGRICULTURE IN MEZŐHEGYES (1989-2009)

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Abstract: The average area of land per holding was 20,6 ha in 2000, it is considered as a big area of land comparing to the county's average (8,92 ha). However, I have to mention that the distribution of the lands was not even at all between the holdings, 71,7% was cultivated independently by the Állami Ménesbirtok Zrt of Mezőhegyes. 754 holdings tilled the soil in the remaining land. Thus, the area of land per holding was indeed 5,8 ha which does not show such a favourable situation. In the earlier times the land was even more fragmented. Between 1994 and 2000 the number of private holdings decreased by 54,9% in the settlement (while by 40,5% in the county). Technical development, production management with computers caused decrease and reduction in the labour force. Unemployment is an everyday phenomenon. In spite of these facts the sugar factory prospered economically in the examined some decades. The „Fémipari Szövetkezet” („Metal Industrial Co-operative”) was the second largest factory of Mezőhegyes after the sugar factory. The economic difficulties forced it to mobilize its working reserves. These changes determined the social mobility of the population.

Furthermore, a natural reduction in the birth rate characterized this period. Consequently, the change in the social sphere, reduction in the number of population must have been caused by alterations in the economic sphere on one hand, and by the natural reduction on the other hand. The economic change affected the infrastructure, as well. The sugar-beet was transported especially by train, what is more, transportation by train to the factory in Mezőhegyes was the most significant one in the region. As the time went by transportation on roads became more and more important besides the railway. The sugar factory polluted the environment at a certain degree. This way the economic sphere changed the natural sphere, too. The Mezőhegyesi Ménesbirtok Zrt saw the definitive solution in privatisation, which they accomplished in an one-turn procedure, on the road of an open application. Shares of Ménesbirtok Zrt in 85,5% became property of Határhaszon Rt., 13% are the employee's share and 1,5% are the ordinary share of Ménesbirtok Rt. The company has known profitable financial years behind itself since privatization.

Key words: number of resident population per 100 ha, number of farmsteads, the average land per farmstead, branches depending on each other, structure of the livestock

INTRODUCTION

From the point of view of agricultural production Mezőhegyes has good conditions. Its area is dominated by the chernozem-type grounds. For example, both meadow-chernozem and the calciferous ground of the plain provide an excellent base for field growing of plants. The value of the area in gold crown is the highest of the seven regions here, in South Plain (CZAGÁNY L. 2009). Comparing it to the fields of the neighbouring settlements, the one of Mezőhegyes has the highest gold crown-value. It is 33,95 in Battonya, 37,5 in Mezőkovácsháza and 34,57 in Tótkomlós.

The climatic conditions can be considered favourable, though summers can be droughty, while there is the possibility of frost in winter (GURZÓ I. 1991).

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Data in connection with agricultural companies were provided by the general agricultural register of KSH for the year 2000, other information was given by the Csongrád

County Management of KSH. I applied the interview technique while examining cause-and-effect interdependence.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The number of resident population per 100 ha is 41 which is low not only comparing to the county's average (95 people) but it can be regarded so even in the neighbouring settlements: in Mezőkovácsháza this value is 113 people, in Medgyesegyháza 62, in Tótkomlós 55, while in Battonya it is 44 people. It is due the facts that Mezőhegyes has a relatively wide administrative area and the number of population is low.

In the settlement the number of farmsteads was 755 in 2000, which is 1,2% of the farmsteads of Békés county, 743 out of which was private one. The average land per farmstead is 20,6 ha which can be considered as large one on the county's scale (8,92 ha). However, I have to add that this area was not evenly distributed among the farmsteads, 71,7% was cultivated by the Mezőhegyesi Állami Ménesbirtok Rt of that time. The other 754 holdings farmed on the remaining area. Thus, in reality the land per farmstead was 5,8 ha which does not indicate such a favourable situation.

In earlier times the area was even more fragmented, since the number of private holdings decreased by 54,9% in the settlement between 1994 and 2000 (while by 40,5% in the county). We have to take into consideration the lifestyle of farms, farmsteads as a possible form of farming (GÁLNÉ HORVÁTH I. 2009).

The number of those who work in private holdings decreased by 50,6% (as compared to the values of 1994), while the number of family members working in private holdings decreased by 26,5% - these values in the county are 40,1% and 30,6%. The number of constant employees in the private holdings increased by 14 times, whereas it decreased by 36,3% in the county.

It is the biggest problem that the majority of workers in these private holdings do not have any agricultural qualifications (RUDL J. 2009).

In Mezőhegyes the number of private farmsteads working with biaxial tractors increased by 3 times between 1994 and 2000. At the same time in Békés county the number of private holdings increased only by 1,5 times, as an average. The number of farmsteads working with trucks decreased by almost 42% in Békés county. It is easy to understand since the expenses of maintenance of trucks grows with time. Whereas the number of private holdings working with trucks increased by 1,5 times in Mezőhegyes.

In 2000 the total area of lands was 12.681 ha which is 6,9% of Békés county. 9.828,7 ha out of this area was plough-land, 2,8 ha orchard and 526,5 ha forest. The area which was not cultivated was 791,8 ha. Only 0,034 of the total area (54,2 ha) was rented which seems to be a fairly low value. I used the interview technique to find its reasons. In 2000 the Mezőhegyesi Állami Ménesbirtok Rt of that time cultivated the significant part of the lands of Mezőhegyes. These lands are still owned by the state even today, so the state firm cultivated area in possession of the state. The remaining areas were owned by private owners and which were rented only in a very insignificant measure since most of the owners cultivated them with or without their competence.

Pig and cattle-stock of the agricultural companies is approximately 10% of the county's total value, whereas more than the half of the county's horse-stock was in Mezőhegyes in 2000.

In 2000 56,43% of the livestock of Mezőhegyes was cattle. The proportion of the cattle-stock is high as compared both to the county's average (37,9%) and to the neighbouring settlements. Only 10,62% of the livestock in Tótkomlós was cattle, while this value was 21,5% in Battonya and 33,38% in Mezőkovácsháza. The reason for this is that one of the main

profiles of the Mezőhegyesi Állami Ménesbirtok Rt was cattle-breeding. It ran three cattle-breeding establishments (in farmsteads number 39, 57 and 11) and finally the one in farmstead number 11 became a model dairy-farm.

Within the Ménesbirtok company the different branches were built on each other. The cattle was fed with the secondary product of sugar-making. The pigs were fattened with the fodder produced by the branch of cultivation. The pig and cattle-breeding establishments ensured the necessary organic manure for the fields. The beet potash from sugar-making was used to meliorate the decalcified grounds. We should remember the importance of logistic processes (GÁL J. 2008).

Pigs give 37,04% of the total livestock of Mezőhegyes which lags behind the county's average (41,78%). Quality is very important in producing pork which probably needs a lot of expenses (NÁBRÁDI A. 2007).

4,02% of the livestock is horse, which value exceeds the county's average (3,15%). Horse-breeding has great traditions in the settlement since the Nonius breed originates from here. In 2000 besides horse-breeding, pig and cattle-breeding were also significant which are traditionally done in the farmsteads even today.

CONCLUSIONS

Changes in the industrial structure and winding-up of the local food-processing industry had an important influence on the economic sphere, as a whole. The unemployed labour who were not able to find work locally migrated. Mainly those chose this solution who had higher professional or trade qualifications. It would be worth examining this stream of know-how in the future (GÁL J. 2006). The third sector and partly the agriculture employed the majority of the labour who stayed in the settlement. A lot of commercial enterprises have been established with small capital, moreover, due to the agrarian privatisation, the number of self-employing forced entrepreneurs has increased (RUDL J. 2009).

In Mezőhegyes the number of registered enterprises was 321 in 2001: 69 (21,5%) were joint, while 252 (78,5%) were individual enterprises. This kind of distribution of the forms of enterprises was similar in the county, too. In Békés county 26,2% of the enterprises were joint and 73,8% was individual.

In the highlighted 18 settlements of Békés county the number of enterprises really running was less by 9% comparing to the registered ones, what is more, it decreased by 2,2% by 2006.

The territorial density of enterprises decreased from 2,06 pieces/km² to 2,02 pieces/km². The interviews threw light on its reasons. In this period of time the neighbouring towns, for example Végegyháza and Medgyesegyháza, ensured more favourable conditions for enterprises in connection with the payment of the local industrial tax and it reduced the number of enterprises in Mezőhegyes. At the same time, their number increased by 6,3% in the county. The proportion of the joint enterprises decreased by 0,5%, while the number of individual ones increased by 0,5% which was higher than the county's average by 5,8%.

Regarding the number of registered enterprises per 1000 inhabitants, Mezőhegyes occupied the 13th place in 2001 on the list of the 18 settlements examined by me. In 2006 only the 16th. In both cases it lagged behind the county's average with its 321 and 314 registered enterprises. Both in 2001 and 2006 Békéscsaba had the most registered enterprises per 1000 inhabitants, while Szarvas was the 2nd one, Gyula the 3rd and the 4th one Orosháza. In both examined years Mezőhegyes preceded Battonya, Vésztő and Dévaványa, too.

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