

The state and current problems of pig rearing in Poland

Summary

The article presents changes in the pig population in Poland, which led to a drastic decrease from 18.1 million head in 2007 to 10.8 million head in 2019. One of the most important of these changes has been the decrease in the unit profitability of live pig production, due to the fact that the costs of labour in the national economy and the means of production for agriculture have increased faster than the selling prices of agricultural products. Herd size decreased only on small-scale farms. In the years 2007-2016, when the total pig population decreased by 34.2%, in smaller herds (up to 200 head) it decreased by 63.4%, while in herds of more than 200 head it increased by 36.1%, which did not compensate for the loss in smaller herds. Farmers running small-scale farms who were unable to increase their size gave up pig farming. As a result, the number of pig farms decreased by 76.5%, from 701,700 in 2005 to 164,000 in 2019. The concentration of pigs on Polish farms is very low. In 2016 it averaged 69 head and significantly differed from the size of herds in Western European countries, i.e. from 467 head (Spain) to 3,090 (Denmark). It was noted that pig farms are becoming increasingly specialized, including those specializing in the production of piglets and fattening based on piglets and purchased weaners. Fattening by contractors is playing an increasingly important role. Barriers to larger-scale rearing of pigs were also identified. The most important of these include administrative barriers associated with investing in buildings for pigs and the opposition of rural residents.

KEY WORDS: pig farms, pig population, competitiveness, specialization, contract fattening