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## LANDOWNERS' ACTIVITIES AIMED AT IMPROVING THE ECONOMIC CONDITION OF RURAL FARMS IN THE YEARS 1918–1939 (ON THE EXAMPLE OF KIELCE VOIVODESHIP)

**Abstract:** Large landownership was one of the main market players in the interwar period. It was a specific enterprise, legally and economically separated. It had its own organisational structure, human, financial and material resources. It carried out production and commercial activities with the aim of making a profit. The number of landowners in Kielce Voivodeship was estimated at 711, and together with their family members they made up a collective five times that number. The landowners were entrepreneurs, who coped with the economic reality with more or less success. The list of landowners was headed by owners of large estates – the Myszkowski, Drucki-Lubecki, Wielopolski, Łubieński, Czartoryski, Radziwiłł, Potocki, Tarnowski and Zamoyski families. However, farms consisting of a single manor, with an area of 180–300 ha, predominated. Apart from a small group of farm owners who wasted their fortune, the landowners were attached to the land and wanted to keep it in good economic condition. Owning a farm entailed responsibility for it. It obliged the owner to manage it properly and not leave it to its fate. My aim is to characterise the activities of landowners as entrepreneurs aiming to improve the economic condition of their property. I have in mind modernisation, which manifested itself in modern technical procedures, mechanisation, selective crop-animal production and the industrialisation of landed estates

**Keywords:** landowners, landed property, modernisation, agriculture, inter-war Poland

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## INTRODUCTION

The term rural farm meant farming, forestry, horticulture, seed, livestock, beekeeping and fishing. Their component parts were industrial plants and craft workshops. The holder of a farm was considered to be the owner, user, lessee (Dz.U. 1934, No. 94, item 841). In terms of size and ownership, farms were divided into landed estates and peasant farms. A landed estate, in statistical terms, had at least 50 ha of total area. It was a specific enterprise that was governed by certain rules:

each manor served first and foremost as an institution with a specific internal structure, with which people working for the owner as well as for their own livelihood were associated. [...] was managed [E. Słabińska: it] by the owner [...] with a team of co-workers (Nurkowski, 2000: 47).

The landed gentry community was not homogeneous. With regard to the place occupied in the hierarchy (i.e. according to the criterion of social prestige), it was divided into aristocracy, heirs of the noble tradition, leaseholders and nouveau riche (whom I have omitted; Markowski, 1993: 24, 26–27, 31, 45–46). Existing sources give different numbers of landed estates and their owners. A data verification carried out by Mieczysław B. Markowski has showed that in 1939 there were 711 owners of estates of more than 50 hectares in the Kielce Province (Markowski, 1990: 75). The entire community consisted of approximately 3,500 people making their living off agriculture (Markowski, 1993: 16; Roszkowski, 1986: 34–35). Landowners were concentrated in the districts of Jędrzejów, Miechów, Opatów, Pińczów, Sandomierz and Stopnica (54.4% of the community in 1931; Markowski, 1990: 33).

The list of estates was opened by the Myszkowski estate with its seat in Chrobrze. In the interwar period, it comprised estates in the Pińczów, Jędrzejów and Miechów districts, with a total area of 8400 ha. It was the property of Aleksander Erwin Wilhelm Julian Maria Count Wielopolski, Margrave of Mirów Gonzaga Myszkowski of Chrobrze, then his son Zygmunt Konstanty. Kazimierska estate, managed by Leon count Łubiński with its seat in Kazimierza Wielka in Pińczowski district, was inferior to it in size, with a total area of 970 ha [APK, OUZ, 4472: 1–2; Przeniosło, 2008b: 347; 2010: 151; Kozaczka, 1996: 16, 25).

Duke Aleksander Drucki-Lubecki, lord of Bałtów, Duchess Ludwika Czartoryska, owner of Ojców, Duchess Maria Ogińska, who left her

Rogów estate for the use of her son-in-law, Count Karol Skórzewski, had his estates in Kielce Province. Duke Mikołaj Radziwiłł owned Staszów estate, which was taken over (after the death of his wife Róża Radziwiłł née Potocki) by his sons: Krzysztof, Artur and Maciej. Ferdinand Radziwiłł owned Oksa-Chyczca estate, which was taken over by his son Janusz. In addition, he acquired Nagłowice manor, which passed to Ferdinand's grandson, and Charles' son, Michał Radziwiłł (Majcher-Ociesa and Markowski, 2014: 9, 29, 44; Radziwiłł, 2008: 24; *PSB*, 1987: 215).

The owners of large landed estates were the three Potocki families boasting the title of count: Henryk Potocki – owner of Chrzastów (Przeniosło, 2008a: 242), August Potocki – of Moskarzewo, Władysław Potocki of Parzymiech. Zygmunt cnt. Broel-Plater owned Białaczów estate, which was taken over by his son Ludwik after his death. Juliusz cnt. Targowski owned Winiary estate, Juliusz cnt. Tarnowski Końskie estate, which was taken over by his sons. Alfred count Wielopolski had the estate of Kurzelów, Jan count Zamoyski – the estate of Trzebień-Magnuszew; Franciszek Ksawery count Pułowski – the estate of Czarkowy; Karol count Raczyński – the estate of Żłoty Potok; Stanisław count Rey – the estate of Sieciechowice. The title of baron was held by Adam Zdzisław Heydel of Brzóza, Artur Reyski of Drzewica and Zdzisław Horoch of Bokszyce (Markowski, 1993: 34; *PSB*, 1961: 497; 1962–1964: 1; 1988–1989: 32). They did not hold a title, but they were owners of estates larger than those held by aristocratic families: Paweł Popiel of Kurozwęki, Michał Karski of Włostów, Stefan Wielowieyski of Lubcza, Zbigniew Dobiecki of Łopuszno (APK, UWK I, 19486: 20, 35–36; APK, UWK I, 19468: 59; APK, OUZ, 727: 12; APK, OUZ, 2693: bp. *Opis majątku Kurzelów*; Gadecka, 2010: 242; Oettingen U. 2008: 209; *PSB*, 1986: 418–419; Skórzyńska, 1994: 28). Most estates, however, belonged to the group of single-farms with an area of 100–300 ha, mostly around 180 ha (Slaski and Thugutt, 1988: 127).

Apart from a small group of rural farm owners who wasted their fortune, the landowners were attached to the land (especially the paternal estate), wanted to farm it, keep it economically sound and pass it on to their heirs. Those who had “sat” on their family manors for generations:

were characterised by [...] attachment to the farm they owned, which they treated as the family workshop, enabling the education of their children and a prosperous but modest existence, and consequently passing on this family workshop, as well managed as possible, to the next generation (Slaski and Thugutt, 1988: 127).

The great value a rural farm had for them is evidenced by “the struggle to maintain it continued throughout the inter-war period” (Gałka, 1997: 27). Owning a farm entailed responsibility for it. It obliged the owner to manage it properly and not leave it to its own fate (Gałka, 1997: 27). Undoubtedly, the way to keep the property in good economic shape was to modernise it.

The main factors influencing the economic structure and economic condition of estates were natural conditions and access to markets. Undoubtedly, the financial liabilities of estate owners “projected very negatively on the financial condition of the farm” and hindered modernisation, sometimes made it impossible (depending on the types and size of debt) (Tymowski, 1988: 90). Unfavourable influences were cyclical changes (short periods of prosperity and long slumps), (usually) unfavourable financial, tax and price policies of the state for agriculture (especially limited access to investment credit, excessive taxation, underpricing of food products).

There is a view in the memoirs that the middle landed gentry was more open to novelty:

The landed gentry, especially the middle landed gentry, was characterised by maintaining their leading role in the progress and development of Polish agriculture by way of increasing yields and especially the production of stock material of livestock and crops. The vast majority of the then landowners took an active part in social work in the area of organisation and development of agricultural clubs and other organisations aiming to raise the cultural and economic status of rural society (Tymowski, 1988: 290).

A deeper analysis of the sources shows that the size of the landed estate and the structure of land use tended to influence which areas of economic activity the landowners invested in, considering them as priorities. Undoubtedly, landowners with agricultural education, endowed with energy and passion for agricultural work saw the need to modernise their farms to a greater extent.

The landowners, apart from isolated cases, were aware of the need for agricultural education and continuous expansion of knowledge. If even in the older generation the scientific preparation for farming was questionable, positive changes are noticeable in the younger generation. It is worth quoting Juliusz Targowski's opinion here:

In previous generations parochialism, or even philistinism, among landowners was still a common phenomenon, but already among my generation [E. Słabińska: opinion refers to the 1930s] a very large percentage of farmers had a higher education or at least a secondary vocational school (Targowski, 1997: 98).

An overwhelming part of the young generation chose agricultural faculties in order to take over family estates or lease a farm in the future (Kruczkowska, 1988: 318). They legitimised themselves with diplomas from higher and secondary agricultural schools. They chose domestic universities (especially the Jagiellonian University and the Warsaw University of Life Sciences) or foreign universities. After finishing their school education, they undertook an apprenticeship in a model estate (Targowski, 1997: 51–52).

Marian Falski's research on the social origins of young people studying in Poland in the school year 1935/36 is helpful in confirming this regularity. It showed that out of 100 students recruited from "larger owners in agriculture" (i.e. whose parents owned a farm of more than 50 ha) graduating from public school, 26.8% were sent to secondary schools and vocational courses and 70.7% to general secondary schools, which provided a start to higher education. Graduates of general secondary schools of the larger owners in agriculture usually opted for the agricultural faculty (Falski, 1937: 31, 41, 57–58). They tried to implement the knowledge they had acquired at school, in practice on model estates and gained from the professional press and scientific literature on their own farm.

Success in modernising rural farms cannot be attributed only to men. More often than not, women, especially those with an agricultural background, were highly accomplished in poultry breeding, orcharding and vegetable growing; less often did they specialise in areas considered 'manly', e.g. crops, horse breeding, forestry, etc. Female landowners took over their husbands' duties when they were absent from the estate or involved in social affairs. A few ran the farm themselves.

Educated landowners attached importance to the proper selection of administrative personnel. The administration of the estate was in the hands of professionals, namely people with higher or secondary agricultural education or practitioners (Radziwiłł, 2008: 105). There was a clear division of responsibilities and accountability to the owner (Nurkowski, 2000: 41).

Landowners, regardless of the size of the rural farm they owned, drew income from it from many sources. Those who were professionally suc-

cessful were convinced that the economic condition of the estate could be improved by specialising production (Tymowski, 1988: 291). This was usually arrived at by trial and error (Slaski, 1988: 197). If production was profitable, it was continued by subsequent generations. In addition to this priority production, landowners used every opportunity to earn money, which seemed obvious in the conditions of the changing economic situation (Nurkowski, 2000: 42).

## DIRECTIONS FOR MODERNISATION

Modernisation of the landed estates took place on several levels. It consisted of:

- the introduction of modern technical measures (e.g. land reclamation, crop rotation, deep ploughing);
- mechanisation;
- artificial fertilisation, use of plant protection products;
- introducing new crops and breeding alongside traditional ones;
- refinement of plant varieties and breeds;
- taking care of the state of the livestock (proper feeding, veterinary care, animal housing facilities);
- using the results of research conducted at agricultural experiment stations;
- the development of nurseries for cereals, sugar beet, fruit trees and vegetables;
- development of pedigree breeding of cattle and horses, rearing of horses, fish ponds;
- using selected seeds;
- having licensed breeding animals;
- supervision by agricultural inspectors (by Kielce Chamber of Agriculture) of crop and animal production;
- participating in shows and competitions and winning prizes and awards;
- membership of breeders associations;
- maintaining rational forest management;
- developing industry in landed estates;
- restricting Jewish agricultural products trade brokering;
- participation in social work aimed at raising the agricultural culture in the countryside.

The aforementioned activities were initiated in early capitalism, continued in the interwar years and gained a larger group of supporters. Due to the vast subject matter, I will limit my consideration to selected areas of agro-culture.

Agricultural culture manifested itself in the mechanisation of the land-  
ed farms. The estates were supplied with modern machinery and equipment appropriate to the production profile and size of the farm. On large estates oriented to cereal production, in addition to traditional agricultural machinery, there were mechanically driven machines: motor ploughs, tractors, locomotives – electric threshers and steam threshers. German and English agricultural machinery was valued, e.g. the German Sack seeder, the Lanza tractor and the English threshing locomobile. Although they were expensive, they served for many years and used parts could be bought (APK, WBFR, 76: 3; Gałka, 1993: 150).

Table 1. Number of machines per 1,000 ha of agricultural land in 1921

Machinery and equipment	Kielce	Poznań
motorised ploughs, tractors	0.5	0.4
conventional ploughs	52.9	53.7
locomotives – threshers	2.4	2.8
steam threshers	2.1	2.6
horse threshers	3.9	1.9
horse treadmills	5.8	4.3
reapers, bundlers, mowers	14.4	13.1
potato diggers	2.8	3.7
in-row and broadcast seed drills	9.3	7.4
fertiliser drills	2.4	3.8

Source: Barciński (1931: 85).

Comparing Kielce with Poznań in terms of the supply of agricultural machinery, the situation was favourable. From the analysis of the surviving archival ensembles of large property, it is most often recorded that

the supply of equipment is “complete”. On smaller farms, the level of technisation varied. Manors in typically agricultural districts were best equipped. When necessary, landowners borrowed machinery to carry out field work. The problem was that due to cheap labour the machines were not used rationally. Krzysztof Mikołaj cnt. Radziwiłł confessed:

I, for example, owned a set of 2 locomotives and a steam plough, which I never used because labour was cheaper. I remember, for example, that a day's wage for a farm labourer, which he desperately wanted, was then just as much as was given to a city porter for moving suitcases from a railway station to a carriage (E. Słabińska: refers to the years of the Great Economic Crisis) (Radziwiłł, 2008: 113).

Changes were taking place in crop and livestock production. Cereals occupied the largest cultivated area. Fertile soils were suitable for growing wheat, while other soils were suitable for other cereal crops. In order to increase crop yields, the landowners introduced selected varieties of cereals. The agricultural experiment stations selected varieties suitable for the natural conditions in Kielce Province.

Usually the landowners supplied themselves with selected cereal seeds grown in the state-owned experimental farms known as the Agricultural Culture Centres in Sielc (Pińczowski district) and Zdanów (Sandomierski district). The origins of the Agricultural Experimental Station and Ognisko Kultury Rolnej (agriculture culture social club) in Sielc can be traced back to Experimental Field in Kazimierza Wielka, formed by a group of landowners from the Pińczów and Miechów districts in 1912. The Experimental Field was established on an area leased from the state. It was used to conduct experiments with sugar beet seeds. In 1921, the management of the Experimental Field, in agreement with the District Agricultural Society in Kazimierza Wielka, enlarged the leased area and transformed it into an experimental plant and reproduction farm based in Sielc. The Agricultural Experimental Establishment and Reproductive Farm in Zdanów was established in 1926 on land leased by the Sandomierski Regional Council (*Sprawozdanie...*, 1934: 37).

There were also private breedings of selected cereal seeds for sale. In the 1930s they were run by, among others the Kleszczyński brothers (Bogusław, Edward and Józef) in the manors of Skrzyszowice, Polanowice, Radziemice and Jakubowice (Miechowski county), Włodzimierz Dobrzański in the manor of Budziszowice (Pińczowski county), Teofil Szańkowski in Wierzbno manor (Miechowski district), Stefan Jacobson in Kruków manor (Sandomierski district), Kazimierz Roguski in Koszyce



manor (Opatowski district) and Józef Targowski in Czyżów manor (Opatowski district) (*Sprawozdanie...*, 1934: 34; 1936: 44–45).

Some landowners ran experimental plots on their estates for seed reproduction, with good results. In 1936, Tadeusz Bukowski, owner of Cieszkowy estate (Pińczowski district) recorded his achievements in his memoirs: “this year’s barley was qualified by merchants in Katowice (according to a sample) to the first brewing class” (Nurkowski, 2000: 41).

The fertile soils were also used for the cultivation of sugar beet. Under the agreement with the sugar factory, the grower was obliged to plant selected seeds. Some growers purchased them (often through the sugar factory) at selection seed breeding stations in Kielce and Lublin provinces. In Kielce Province, the largest number of recipients was Public Limited Seed Breeding Company “Udycz”, which operated a seed station in Kwasów (Stopnicki district) (Nurkowski, 2000: 160; APK, OUZ, 4472: 7). The productivity of crops in Sandomierz district, where selected seeds were used, was the highest in the country (Roszkowski, 1986: 183). Sandomierz district was slightly inferior to Miechowski, Opatowski and Pińczowski districts (Barciński, 1931: 108).

The largest sugar beet plantations were located in Pińczowski, Miechowski, Opatowski, Sandomierski and Kozienicki districts (Roszkowski, 1986: 108). The leading planters included landowners: Aleksander Wielopolski from Chrobrze (Pińczowski district), the Łubieńscy from Kazimierza Wielka (Pińczowski district), the Morstinowie from Kobylniki (Pińczowski district), Pławowice and Kowary (Miechowski district), Stanisław and Wanda Thugutt from Nagorzany (Pińczowski district), the Dembiński from Góry and Michałów (Pińczowski district), Stefan Ciszewski from Morska (Pińczowski district), the Slaski family from Skoczów, Ciuślice, Broniszów and Turnawiec (Pińczowski district), Andrzej Deskur from Sancygniów (Pińczowski district), Michał Karski from Włostów (Sandomierski district), then his son Szymon (Oziębłowski and Przybyszewski, 1995: 163–164). The largest supplier of beet to “Łubna” sugar factory in Kazimierza Wielka (Pińczów district) was Aleksander Wielopolski (7.2% of the total amount of raw material accepted by the sugar factory; Oziębłowski and Przybyszewski, 1995: 163). Sugar beet cultivation was a lucrative occupation and therefore passed from father to son. The interests of the larger growers were represented by the Union of Associations of Sugar Beet Growers in Warsaw. Its purpose was to exchange experience, training and, above all, to keep an eye

on common interests (maintaining beet prices at a profitable level; Łoś, 2005: 187; Roszkowski, 1986: 183–184).

Orchards were developing in the districts of Sandomierz, Opatów, Miechów, Pińczów, Kozienice, Radom and Opoczno. Many orchards were looked after by instructors from Kielce Chamber of Agriculture, who provided guidance on tree care, disease, pest control and fruit storage. Nursery farming was developing. In 1933/34 there were 135 private and self-government nurseries in Kielce Province (these were only a few; *Sprawozdanie...*, 1934: 39, 42–43, 47). From the report of instructors of Kielce Chamber of Agriculture, we learn that

in terms of the quality of the goods, only a dozen or so nurseries are more or less well run. [...] This is because they are professionally managed and have commercial goods, reliable, varietally clean, unmixed and quite nice (*Sprawozdanie...*, 1934: 50).

In the 1930s, owners of fruit nurseries with selected material included such as among others, in Konecki district Władysław Tarnowski (Końskie Wielkie estate), Stanisław Tarnowski (Końskie estate), in Miechów district Adam Gorczyński (Majkowice estate), in Opatów district Józef Wroński (Grochocice estate), in Opoczno district Szczesny Libiszowski (Mroczków Gościnny estate), Maria Kobylańska and Samuel Kobylański (Rusin estate), in Pińczowski district Jan Slaski and Bronisław Gałczyński (Broniszów estate), in Sandomierz district Andrzej Karski (Górki estate), in Stopnica district Maciej Radziwiłł (Słupia estate), in Włoszczowski district Zygmunt Glinka (Mękarzów estate) (*Sprawozdanie...*, 1935: 51; 1936: 50–51; 1937: 48–50; 1938: 53–54).

Particularly noteworthy are the fruit tree nurseries established in 1922 by Jan Slaski in Broniszów and Czarnocin (Pińczów County). Initially the nurseries were small, but over time they increased in area and plant assortment. In 1928, Slaski established a partnership with Bronisław Gałczyński. He was an enthusiast of horticulture, visited many model orchards in Western Europe, participated in world horticultural conventions and was a forerunner of new ideas in the reconstruction of the backward Polish orchard industry. Responsibilities were divided in the company in such a way that Slaski was in charge of plant breeding, while Gałczyński ran trading point in Piaseczno near Warsaw. After studying foreign horticultural literature, mainly American, English and Russian, Slaski developed the theoretical basis for modern nursery production. At his nursery in Broniszów, he grew semi-trunk and dwarf fruit trees,

which were intended to replace the high-trunk trees commonly planted in Poland at the time. Slaski also imported new varieties of trees from abroad (Slaski, 1988: 210).

In the 1930s Slaski expanded the company's infrastructure. He built so-called "mother plants" for reproduction, imported from all over the world. He established plant protection product factories and apparatuses for spraying trees. He built modern plant storages, a packing house, a large building for business offices, flats for employees, a hotel for businessmen, a horse railway leading to the narrow-gauge railway line in Miechów, stretched a telephone line to Kazimierza Wielka, and established a post office in the area of Broniszów. In time, the nurseries in Broniszów and Czarnocin "took a leading place in the country" (Slaski, 1988: 197-199, 208).

From 1917 Slaski published articles on agricultural subjects, and from 1922 he promoted horticulture in the press. He published catalogues of trees grown in his nurseries from 1929. Slaski cooperated with many agricultural organisations. In the above activities, he was supported by his wife Felicja née Grodzińska. In addition, she kept a home orchard consisting of dwarf apple trees, various varieties of plums, cherries, and a sizable plantation of peaches, the fruit of which was specially packaged and sold to Cracow. The aforementioned estate was the only orchard business in the Kielce Province operating on such a large scale (Slaski, 1988: 198-199, 208).

Vegetable-growing developed in the districts of Radom, Stopnica, Pińczów, Miechów, Iłża, Sandomierz and Kozienice. In addition to traditional crops, lesser-known crops such as strawberries, asparagus, melons, watermelons and rhubarb were introduced. In some estates, vegetables were grown in greenhouses. Melon production on a larger scale was developed by Felicja Slaska in Broniszów (*Sprawozdanie...*, 1934: 50; Slaski, 1988: 208).

Landowners were interested in horse breeding. Breeding of horses half-bloods belonged to the tradition. In 1928, in Kielce Voivodeship, there were 68 English and Arabian horse farms. Noteworthy is the breeding of half-bred Anglo-Arabian horses in Nagorzany (Pińczów County), which was founded by Wanda Thugutt, sister of Bohdan Thugutt and co-owner of the estate (Thugutt, 1988: 237). Licensed specimens belonging to her were purchased by individual clients and state stud farms e.g. in Kozienice and Sambórz, mostly for reproductive purposes. The owners of model studs were also Zofia and Ludwik Byszewski at Słupia estate

(Włoszczowski county), Stanisław Gajewski at Gębarzów estate (Radom county), Jerzy Grodziecki at Pogwizdów estate (Miechowski county), Bogusław Kozłowski at Łowina estate (Jędrzejowski county), Zygmunt Leszczyński at Kaliszany estate (Opatów county), Anna Schütz at Biała Wielka estate (Włoszczowski county) (*Sprawozdanie...*, 1937: 68).

In the 1930s there was increased interest in the breeding of repair horses, for the needs of the army, given that it brought considerable profits. The owners of stables in the district of Iłża were Bogdan Rauszer (Pakosław estate), Władysław Kotkowski (Łomno estate), in the district of Jędrzejów: Stanisław Borkowski (estate Lipno), in Miechowski district: Jerzy Grodziecki (Pogwizdów estate), in Olkusz district: Feliks Gaszyński (Gołyszyn estate), in Opatów district: Wincenty Reklewski (Mirogonowice estate), Waclaw Targowski (Sarnia Zwola estate), Wanda Jankowska (Bodzechów estate), Maria Ośniałowska (Chocimów estate), Roman Cichowski (Słaboszowice estate), in Pińczów district Bronisław Wesołowski (Złota estate), Leon Łubieński (Kazimierza Wielka estate), Tadeusz Morstin (Kobylniki estate), Maria Tiede (Kopernia estate), in Sandomierz district Szymon Karski (Włostów estate) and in Włoszczowa district Antoni Sikorski (Raszków estate). During sprees organised to sell animals, shows and competitions, landowners received cash prizes, medals and congratulatory letters for the best specimens, which were funded by the Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform and the Ministry of Military Affairs (*Sprawozdanie...*, 1935: 65; 1936: 65; 1937: 67; Barciński, 1931: 117).

Cattle breeding was dominated by dairy, with cows of the lowland black and white and Polish red breeds. These breeds were recommended by Kielce Chamber of Agriculture. Their advantages were high milk and fat yields. In the 1930s the best results regarding milk yield were achieved by owners of cowsheds: Jan Wiktor Borkowski in Boleścice estate (Jędrzejów County), Ludwik Czaplński in Sycyna estate (Kozienice County), Zygmunt Leszczyński in Kaliszany estate (Opatów County), Witold Morawski in Miławczyce estate (Pińczowski County), Zygmunt Glinka in Kamień estate (Radom county), Adam Niwiński in Niedźwice estate (Sandomierski county), Michał Popiel in Wójcza estate (Stopnica county), Ignacy Wierusz-Kowalski in Ojsławice estate and Cecylia Borkowska in Kwilina-Kossów estate (Włoszczowski county) (*Sprawozdanie...*, 1934: 66; 1935: 59; 1936: 60; 1937: 58).

The estates had specimens of dairy cattle, which were awarded prizes at agricultural exhibitions for the highest milk and fat yields. They were

given names to accentuate their uniqueness. The best specimens were in the barns of the aforementioned – Jan Wiktor Borkowski, Zygmunt Glinka and Bogusław Kleszczyński in Skrzyszowice estate (Miechowski district), Leon Łubieński in Kazimierza Wielka estate (Pińczowski district), Stanisław Gajewski in Gębarzów estate (Radom district) and Juliusz Targowski in Winiary estate (Sandomierski district) (*Sprawozdanie...*, 1934: 66; 1935: 59).

As we learn from the report of Kielce Chamber of Agriculture, there was “a serious amount of breeding material in Kielce Voivodeship” (*Sprawozdanie...*, 1934: 65). The landowners ran pedigree cowsheds of the lowland black and white breed. In the 1930s known were the farms of the above-mentioned Ignacy Wierusz-Kowalski and Cecylia Borkowska, as well as those of Jerzy Różycki at Opatkowice Murowane estate (Jędrzejów county), Jerzy Grodziecki at Pogwizdów estate, Teofil Szańkowski in Wierzbno estate, Adam Szańkowski in Kępie estate (Miechowski district), Aleksander Steinhagen in Lipie estate (Częstochowa district) and Krzysztof Radziwiłł in Sichów estate (Stopnicki district) (*Sprawozdanie...*, 1937: 55). The barns were looked after by inspectors of Kielce Chamber of Agriculture. They gave owners advice on lighting, ventilation, equipment, arrangement of livestock in the building, cleanliness of the building and livestock.

The landowners were involved in poultry breeding. Although it was not the main source of income, it was quite profitable. In the 1930s, breeding of reproductive hens of zielononóżka kuropatwiana (green legged partridge) and rhode island red breeds was carried out by: Eugenia Domańska in Prymusowa Wola manor (Opoczyński County), Eugenia Kunicka in Łaziska manor (Radom County), Maria Walewska in Kowala manor (Stopnicki County), Maria Gajewska in Gębarzów manor (Radom County), Zofia Linowska in Ziemblisce manor (Pińczowski district), Maria Eplerowa in Kacice manor (Miechowski district), Jadwiga Cybulska in Sielec manor (Pińczowski district) (*Sprawozdanie...*, 1935: 78–79; 1936: 78; 1938: 76).

Tadeusz Bukowski ran an embryonic breeding farm of green-legged hens, ‘Pekin’ ducks and ‘Pomeranian’ geese in Cieszkowy estate (Pińczowski district). The breeding of ducks, as we learn from the memoirs of the owner of the estate, in the local population “aroused admiration with its size and tasty meat” (Nurkowski, 2000: 42). The “Pomeranian” geese were “twice as big as the local peasant ones”. “Rural housewives were ready to pay any price for giving up at least a few eggs for propagation” (Nurkowski, 2000: 42).

Kielce Province stood out in the country in pond farming, thanks to its favourable natural conditions. In 1912. The Fishery Department of the Central Agricultural Society created an experimental station in Ruda Maleniecka (Konecki County) with its own spawning grounds and breeding ponds. In the inter-war period it was the largest facility of its kind in the country (Barciński, 1931: 120).

By 1930, of the eight exemplary stocking centres in the country, as many as two were located in Kielce Province – the aforementioned fish farm owned by Stanisław Froelich (or Frejlich) in Ruda Maleniecka and the fish farm in Nagłowice (Jędrzejów County) owned by Michał Radziwiłł, where pike-perch was bred (Barciński, 1931: 120; *Sprawozdanie...*, 1938: 97).

In 1934, the Board of the Estates of Duchess Ludwika Czartoryska, together with the Cracow Angling Sport Association 'Wędzisko', started to build a stocking centre in Ojców (Olkusz County), fed by the Prądnik river. In the following years it was expanded and modernised. Trout were bred in the ponds. This breeding was supervised by Kielce Chamber of Agriculture. In 1935, trout fingerlings were caught in the ponds for the first time, which were stocked into the Prądnik and Raba rivers and sold to private farms. In the same year, the stocking centre, as a model in Poland, was visited by representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture and Agricultural Reforms and the Provincial Office in Kielce. The production of trout as stocking material was also conducted by Karol Raczyński's farm in Złoty Potok (Czestochowski district) (*Sprawozdanie...*, 1935: 78–79; 1936: 78; 1938: 76).

When talking about fish farming, it is important to consider it from different aspects. There were typical farms which, thanks to their location near natural bodies of water, specialised in fish production. Józef Felicjan Adam Helbich, owner of the Konary estate (Radomski district), established fish ponds covering an area of around 200 ha, using water from the Radomka river and Krynica pond. Michał Bronisław Grodzieński created ponds in Oblasy estate (Kozienice county) with an area of 18.5 ha fed by the Dobrzyca river. Helena Augusta (or Augustyna) Brandt, owner of Orońsko manor (Radomski county) had ponds with an area of 66.3 ha on the Oronka river (APR, SPR, 5: 37; APR, SPR, 9: 2, 38, 58, 71; APR, SPR, 10: 1, 8; APR, SPR, 11: 34, 84–85).

Fish ponds were also established in large landed estates, although fish farming was not the primary source of income. It is worth quoting here a fish farm in Staszów estate with an area of 119 ha "duly arranged and in full productivity" (APK, OUZ, 4472: 5).

In addition, garden ponds were being converted for breeding purposes. The extensive method of reducing the water level by selecting the larger specimens and leaving the smaller ones behind was being abandoned. The ponds were now stocked, mostly with carp. Regularly, in November, water was drained from the pond and all specimens were selected. Tadeusz Bukowski claimed that from a pond in Cieszkowy manor (Pińczowski district) with an area of only 0.25 ha of water table, the average yield of fish was 200–220 kg, so 800–880 kg per ha, “which, compared to the price and a good yield of wheat, gave a profit five times higher” (Nurkowski, 2000: 42). This was “a very serious income in the landed estate considering that the least usable parts of the estate were occupied for the installation of ponds” (APR, SPR, 11: 34).

Significant incomes were earned by forest owners. In Kielce Voivodeship they were predominantly owned by landowners. In 1928, 88.5% of the total area of forests was owned by landowners with an area of 50 ha or more (including 12% for farms of 50–1000 ha and 76.5% for farms of over 1000 ha). Maintaining rational forest management, i.e. felling trees, replenishing tree loss, shooting game, was the duty of the owners of forest holdings under the legislation. The main source of income was the sale of timber, even during the great economic crisis. Landowners, in order to save their indebted estates, decided to cut down the forest or sell the land. Pure profit from the sale of timber from 1 ha of state forests in the area of State Forestry Directorate in Radom amounted in 1925 to PLN 19.61 (Barciński, 1931: 142–143).

There were several exemplarily managed forest complexes in Kielce Voivodeship. For example, it was written about the forests of the Staszów estate that they were managed “in an exemplary and economical manner under the careful care of qualified technical and administrative staff” (APK, OUZ, 6615: 3). Towards the south-east of Kielce, lay Szczecno estate belonging to Ludwik Mauve, a landowner of German origin,

an estate on six thousand morgens of forest. The management was exemplary, not a single pine tree was ever cut down “on the left” (without permission). *Recht ist recht* (Jerzmanowski, 2003: 192).

Even before the First World War, game husbandry was undertaken in Myszkowski estate by Aleksander Wielopolski. He understood it as a complex process involving protection of game, feeding in winter, maintaining a hunting service responsible for feeding and protecting game against pred-

ators and poachers. He managed breeding of game animals in Chroberz (approx. 3000 ha) and Książ Wielki (approx. 1200 ha) game reserves. He took measures to increase the population of roe deer, hares, transient fowl (which had no permanent habitat on his estate) and pheasants. His interest in deer breeding was due to the fact that it did not require a large financial outlay. It was framed in a multi-annual management plan based on a reliable deer inventory. The documentation provided supporting material for the preparation of selection plans by shooting. Wielopolski populated the reviers with pheasants from two pheasantries – in the vicinity of Książ Wielki and Chroberz (Pińczów County). He took special care of partridges. During the winter they were not only intensively fed, but also trapped. At the end of the 1930s, there was an aviary at pheasantry in Zwierzyniec near Książ Wielki, where partridges caught during frosts and heavy snows were placed and released in spring.

Aleksander Wielopolski was a forerunner in establishing permanent sites among fields and forests for small game and transient birds called mid-field remizas. A remise was an area where vegetation was trimmed to serve as a shelter for hares, wild rabbits, pheasants etc. during winter. Animal feed was placed on the vegetation.

Aleksander Wielopolski drew knowledge and inspiration for making changes to his hunting farm from reading and experience. He studied foreign literature and press concerning game animals. He shared his experiences in the pages of the magazine "Łowca Polski" (Nowak, 2011: 201, 203–208, 215).

An expression of the modernisation of landed estates was their industrialisation. Activities in this direction were undertaken in early capitalism and continued in the interwar period. According to statistics, there were few industrialised estates in Kielce Province. The 1921 census showed the existence of 388 agro-industrial establishments, including 4 sugar factories. According to the 1923 census of industrial plants in landed estates, there were only 280 plants in 162 out of 967 estates (i.e. 16.7% of estates) (Markowski, 1990: 82; 1993: 104; Majcher, 2010: 1–4, 8–10). In 1924, 385 establishments were recorded (*Rocznik Statystyczny...*, 1925: 9). The vast majority of landowners were not engaged in non-agricultural activities on their estates. An analysis of archival sources shows that establishments existed in almost every large and many medium-sized estates. In the former there were even several of them. In Myszkowski estate there were (in 1935): 2 sawmills (one had a category VI industrial certificate), 2 motor mills (category VII certificate), a distillery (category VI certificate) (APK,



AOM, 845: 2). In Bałtów estate were located (in 1932): 2 water mills, a sawmill and a distillery (APK, WBFR, 78). In Staszów estate there were (in 1926) a sawmill, 2 mills, a distillery, a potato flakes drying plant, 2 brickyards, mechanical workshops, a tile factory, lime kilns (APK, OUZ, 4472: 5). A complete source of information on industrial establishments in the landed estates in 1923 and 1925 are the censuses of the landed estates, which have been published (APK, OUZ, 4296; Majcher-Ociesa and Markowski, 2014).

Landowners developed plants representing only certain branches of manufacturing undoubtedly guided by: interest in this type of activity, financial possibilities, the scale of profitability of production. The largest plants in the estates of the later Kielce Province were established at the end of the 19th century. As a result of legal and organisational transformations, they became public limited companies, which were modernised thanks to the accumulated capital. Within the meaning of the Industrial Law of 1927, these were already typical industrial enterprises.

This group included sugar companies (see: Słabińska, 2010). Landowners started sugar factories with a view of processing their own raw material. "Częstocice" sugar factory was founded by Count Henryk Łubieński in 1826, owner of Kazimierza Wielka estate. It was the first sugar factory in the Congress Kingdom. The idea of "Łubna" Sugar Factory was conceived by Count Henryk Łubieński and established in 1845 by his nephew and heir to his estate Kazimierz. In 1976, a twin to "Łubna", "Szreniawa" sugar factory appeared. "Włostów" sugar factory was established on the initiative of Michał Karski, owner of Włostów-Kurów estate in 1913. The sugar factory in Rytwiany was built by Adam Potocki, and his widow, Róża Potocka, brought it as a dowry to Maciej Radziwiłł. In 1925 the sugar factory burnt down and was finally liquidated (APK, UWK I, 19486: 21; Tomecki, 1976: 21; Markowski, 1990: 84; 1993: 91, 94; Oziębłowski and Przybyszewski, 1995: 30–32, 38, 42, 218; Radziwiłł, 2008: 24, 95). When sugar factories were transformed from individual ownership into public limited companies, the raw material producers placed their capital in shares. For them, "sugar factories were, as it were, an extension of the productive activities of farms" (Czuchryta, 2008: 132). Over time, landed capital gave way to bank-industrial capital, but it was not entirely displaced.

Originally, "Częstocice" and "Łubna" sugar factories were small plants with primitive manufacturing technology and techniques. They were an integral part of larger landed estates. "Łubna" was located on a small area. The factory was a wooden shed equipped with simple techni-

cal equipment, surrounded by the same ancillary buildings. It had an abysmal transport connection. Share capital was invested in modernisation. Modernisation went in several directions simultaneously: the factory site was enlarged, wooden buildings were replaced by brick ones and modern equipment was added. By the end of the 19th century, "Łubna" sugar factory had mostly brick buildings, a direct telephone line was installed between "Łubna" and "Szreniawa", electric lighting was installed (but it was only after the war that electricity began to be used as a source of power for machinery and equipment), and steam-driven machinery became widespread. In the interwar period, almost the entire production process was mechanised. The sugar factory, through connections to narrow- and broad-gauge railway network, gained cheaper and faster access to growers and consumers (Oziębłowski and Przybyszewski, 1995: 110, 123–125, 211; Żarnowski, 1999: 155–156; Czuchryta, 2008: 103–104). In 1925, a report by District Labour Inspector wrote about the sugar factory: "[E. Słabińska: the sugar factory] by extraordinary outlays of money has been thoroughly rebuilt and adapted to the latest requirements" (*Inspekcja...*, 1927: 107). "Gazeta Cukrownicza" of 1926 assessed its equipment as exemplary.

Similar transformations were taking place at "Częstocice" sugar factory (APS, Częstocice, 137). "Szreniawa" and "Włostów" sugar factories, on the other hand, were modern factories at the time of their construction, and in the interwar period innovative solutions went into them on a par with "Łubna" and "Częstocice" (Oziębłowski and Przybyszewski, 1995: 49). Originally, workers were recruited from among the peasants. Over time, specialists began to be employed as technical staff (Kręgiel, 1987: 97). Undoubtedly, a factor hindering the development of the sugar industry in Kielce Province was the centralisation of this industry. The sugar cartel set such a low quota for them that local enterprises did not fully utilise their production capacity.

Sawmills can be considered relatively modern enterprises. In 1928 there were 107 such sawmills in Kielce Voivodeship. These were usually steam sawmills, employing 5–10 workers, but electric sawmills were also established, consisting of several sawmills, which had a complete timber processing machine and employed a larger number of workers. For example, at Jaskrów estate (Częstochowa County), which belonged to Cyprian Apanowicz, there were 31 labourers and 4 white-collar workers. The sawmill processed raw material from the estate (15% of the total turnover) and purchased it (Barciński, 1931: 145–146; APK, WBF, 76: 3, 9). Undoubtedly, factors hindering the development of this form of entrepre-

neurship in the landed estates were the underdeveloped railway network, the shortage of rolling stock (wagons) and the great fluctuation of prices for raw material.

Other agro-industries (e.g. distilleries, water mills, etc.) were usually primitive establishments of a more artisanal nature (i.e. VII–VIII category of industrial certificates) or small-scale industries (i.e. VI category of industrial certificates), which employed a few dozen workers recruited from among local peasants. They are referred to in the sources as establishments “of an agricultural nature”. The development of some of them was difficult or even impossible for reasons beyond the control of the landowners. Let us take the example of distilleries. In 1928, there were 44 distilleries in Kielce Province, of which only 3 were of an industrial nature, despite favourable conditions for the development of this branch of production. They processed raw material (potatoes) from their own production, and only 13% was purchased. Spirits production was only 40–50% of the distilleries’ capacity. The inhibiting factors were too low a purchase quota and low prices paid by the spirit monopoly (APK, WBFR, 78: 3, 9).

On smaller estates, processing was geared towards selling to local residents, sometimes outside Kielce Province. Landowners cooperated, for example, with restaurants and colonial shops in Małopolska (e.g. in Kraków, Chorzów), to which they supplied fruit and vegetable preserves, cheeses, pork products, small animals killed during hunting, clothing – processed clothes from their own “sheep farms”, etc. (Slaski, 1988: 197; Nurkowski, 2000: 42).

Minerals were present on some landed estates. The extraction of raw material and processing brought considerable profits, but required considerable financial outlays. In the archival sources we find many examples of nouveau riche (mostly Jews) who made a fortune by building modern industrial plants on the basis of the local raw material. For the most part, however, the extraction plants were primitive. Usually owners limited themselves to mining and processing for the manor or decided to sell the land with the resources. In the estate of Zygmunt Broel-Plater of Białaczów, in Bliżyn (Konecki County), there were sizable deposits of iron ore. It was mined in a primitive way in a few shafts, smelted in a wood-fired blast furnace, and small articles for household needs were produced in the foundry and mechanical workshops. According to the owners of such factories, the main reason for stopping at primitive production methods was the competition from Ostrowiec, Starachowice and other steelworks, which were modern enterprises, and the lack of funds for mod-

ernisation. Zygmunt Broel-Plater sold Bliżyn manor to Towarzystwo Handlowo-Przemysłowe Józef Zeydler i Spółka SA. The company enlarged and modernised the enterprise (APK, OUZ, 6813: 1, 3).

## CONCLUSIONS

A village farm was a specific kind of an enterprise, legally and economically separate. It had its own organisational structure – it was managed by the owner or a board appointed by him and people worked for the owner and for their livelihood. In addition to human resources, it had financial and material resources e.g. land, industrial plants, buildings. It carried out production and commercial activities for profit. Some rural farms specialised in a particular branch of production and were therefore called agricultural, forestry, seed, livestock, beekeeping, fish farms, etc. Others developed into several branches of production, one of which was a priority.

In Kielce Voivodship there were 711 owners of estates with an area of over 50 hectares in 1939. The list of estates was opened by manors with an area of several thousand hectares and closed by farms with an area of approximately 50 hectares. The majority of estates, however, consisted of a single farm with an area of 100–300 hectares, mostly around 180 hectares. Apart from a small group of rural farm owners who wasted their fortunes, the landowners were attached to the land, wanted to farm it, keep it economically sound and pass it on to their heirs.

Specialisation and modernisation of the rural farm was a prerequisite for making a profit. Modernisation took place on several levels. It consisted in the introduction of modern technical procedures, mechanisation, selective plant and animal production, industrialisation. The landed gentry of Kielce Voivodship undertook such measures.

The estates received modern machinery and equipment appropriate to the production profile and size of the farm. When necessary, landowners borrowed machinery to carry out field work. The problem was that the machines were not used rationally due to the cheapness of labour.

Progress was being made in crop and animal production. The largest area of crops in Kielce Voivodship was occupied by cereals, smaller by root crops, fodder crops and industrial crops. Usually, landowners sourced selected crop seeds, grown in state and private experimental farms. Some landowners kept experimental plots on the estates for seed reproduction, for their own use.

Orchard farming was an important source of income. In orchards, established for commercial purposes, landowners planted selected varieties of trees and shrubs. In the interwar period, interest in nursery farming increased. In fruit and vegetable nurseries, the landowners bred varieties adapted to Polish natural conditions and characterised by a high productivity. They also experimented with new assortments, taking inspiration from orchards in Western European countries. Jan Slaski was an aficionado of orchards and horticulture, who visited many model orchards in Western Europe, took part in world horticultural conventions and was a forerunner of new ideas in the reconstruction of the backward Polish orchard industry. He founded a modern nursery of fruit trees, which attracted buyers from all over the country. He shared his knowledge in the specialist press.

Landowners were interested in horse breeding. Tradition included the breeding of English and Arabian horses and Anglo-Arabian half-breeds. In the inter-war period, the interest of the landowners in breeding repair horses increased. During the sprees organised to sell the animals, shows and competitions, the landowners received cash prizes, medals and letters of congratulation for the best specimens. Landowners also ran stud farms.

Cattle breeding was dominated by dairy. Landowners bred selected breeds of cows. Some estates had specimens of dairy cattle that were awarded prizes at agricultural exhibitions for the highest milk and fat yields. They were given names to emphasise their uniqueness. The landowners also ran herd barns.

Landowners established fish ponds in estates located near rivers or provided with water reservoirs. In Ojców, which belonged to Ludwika Czartoryska, a trout stocking centre was established and expanded in the interwar period. In the 1930s it was one of the most modern in the country. In 1935, it was visited by representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform.

The landowners specialised in poultry farming. Although this was not a lucrative occupation, it helped to feed the household budget and gain recognition in the rural environment.

Large revenues were earned by forest owners. Money earned from the sale of timber in its raw state or processed in sawmills was often used to rescue failing estates. Aleksander Wielopolski owned a hunting farm. He took knowledge and inspiration from foreign literature and implemented them on his estate. He shared his experiences in the specialist press.

A manifestation of the modernisation of landed estates was their industrialisation. The landowners had taken steps in this direction in early capitalism and continued to do so in the interwar period. Industrial plants were located in a small number of estates in Kielce Voivodeship. Processing industry, which was based on plant and animal production on the estates, predominated. Minerals were present in some manors. The extraction of raw material and processing brought considerable profits, but required considerable financial outlays. Therefore, the owners usually leased them out.

It is not possible to discuss the dynamics of the changes taking place and the scale of modernisation of land estates in Kielce Voivodeship due to the incompleteness of sources. Estates in the typically agricultural districts of Miechów, Pińczów, Jędrzejów, Stopnica, Sandomierz, and parts of Opatów and Iłża dominated.

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