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## WORKING AND LIVING CONDITIONS OF AGRICULTURAL POPULATION IN THE LIGHT OF EMPIRICAL STUDIES

### 1. INTRODUCTION

A characteristic feature of every economic development is appearance or existence of various disequilibriums and disproportions. They concern also the populations's living standards, and they are most often visible in the spatial cross-section, in comparisons between towns and villages and between socio-professional groups. In Poland, there are most evident and increasingly more often underlined differences in quality of life between the urban and rural population, to the disadvantage of the latter. They refer primarily to the following spheres: working conditions, housing situation, population's incomes access to education and culture, health care and socio-welfare benefits and development of technical-economic infrastructure (L. Ostrowski 1985). This situation has multiple consequences, which have their economic and social dimensions. The experience shows that living standards and agricultural production are closely interrelated. Throughout the entire postwar period, needs of the rural population had been approached exclusively in production categories. Successive economic crises, especially the economic slump in the early eighties along with political and social changes accompanying it caused that a seemingly banal truth, namely that farm production similarly to any other work is not

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a goal in itself began to reach slowly the social consciousness. Farm production is an instrument of realizing farmers' aspirations concerning their living conditions. Penetration of the urban life style, impact of demonstration effect and of social imitation in the countryside stimulate aspirations of the rural population, and especially of the young generation. Possibilities of fulfilling these aspirations at the present time or in the foreseeable future motivate peasants' orientation in relation of production. They also shape the social prestige of the farmer's work. Underestimation of socio-economic problems of the village may carry a threat of a weakening production activity of farmers, increased outflow of young people, depopulation of villages, and aggravation of social inequalities.

The paper presents findings of the empirical studies carried out on the sample of 782 private farms in 1986, and concerning working and living conditions of the agricultural population<sup>1</sup>. The employed method of a questionnaire survey allowed to obtain information of two kinds. The first kind of information was of an objective character and it characterized chosen elements of living and working conditions of the agricultural population. The second kind included subjective opinions and views of the population on these conditions. A limited size of the present paper does not allow to discuss all results of the studies<sup>2</sup>. Hence, our attention will be focussed on an attempt to answer the following questions:

- Does there exist any differentiation of working and living conditions among the agricultural population?
- Which endogenous factors (in relation to a farm) determine this differentiation?
- How does the agricultural population evaluate working and living conditions in the countryside in comparison with those in the town?
- Is there a dissonance between the present living standards and farmers' aspirations in this field?

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<sup>1</sup> The countryside is inhabited by 40% of Poland's population, with the agricultural population constituting a half of the rural population. (Statistical Yearbook of Agriculture and Food Economy 1986, GUS, Warsaw, in Polish).

<sup>2</sup> All results of the studies are presented in the paper by J. Dietl, B. Gregor, A. Kopias (1988).

## 2. METHOD

The conclusions presented here have been formulated on the basis of generalizations ensuing from the analysis of empirical material gathered in the course of field studies conducted in 1986 among farmers by means of the questionnaire interview technique. They encompassed 3 purposefully chosen rural administrative communes: Glogowek (Opole Administrative Province), Kowal (Wloclawek Adm. Province), and Wiskitki (Skierniewice Adm. Province). They differ from one another in the level of agro-culture and in effects of agricultural production. The Glogowek Commune belongs to a small group of microregions with the best developed agriculture in Poland. It is characterized by a high intensity and marketability of production. Its level of mineral fertilization is over twice higher than the average rate for Poland. It has four times more tractors per 100 farms. Yields per 1 ha (e.g. almost 45 quintals of four main grain crops) exceed by 60% corresponding indices for the country, and the number of farm animals per 100 ha (mainly hogs) is twice higher here. The agricultural production effects in this commune do not depart from effects scored by agriculture in highly developed countries.

The remaining two microregions differ considerably from the Glogowek Commune. Kowal represents a little higher and Wiskitki equal or even lower level of development of agriculture than the national average.

Within these administrative communes, farmers were random chosen for the sample. It contained 782 farmers working on farms over 2 ha in area, which constituted 21% of such farms in all three communes.

Taking into account a relatively big number of farmers encompassed by the sample, way of their choosing, big similarity from the viewpoint of main characteristics (e.g. size of farms) to the structure of a general aggregation, preparation and form of conducting the studies (with participation of interviewers), we are convinced that generalizing value of obtained results surpasses the area of observations.

The obtained empirical material characterizing selected elements of living and working conditions, as well as subjective opinions of the farmers were analyzed in a cross-section of over ten characteristics (independent variables). They included: region of the studies (criterion of space) and characteristics of

an agricultural farm, persons managing it (respondents) and a family. On the basis of previous experience, the basic taxonomic characteristics were taken to be: region of the studies (rural administrative commune, village), size of farm in acreage of arable lands, and age of person managing a farm.

To examine existing statistical correlations between analyzed magnitudes (dependent variables) and independent variables there was used the chi-square test<sup>3</sup>, while C. Pearson's measure was applied to determine the strength of correlation<sup>4</sup>. Apart from determining statistical correlations between variables attempts were also made, wherever it was necessary, to answer a question: "Is differentiation of Y (dependent variable) according to X (independent variable) statistically significant?" For this procedure, there was utilized the text in the form of value F<sup>5</sup> and significance level p.

For the sake of brevity of the paper we shall not quote estimated statistical measures in its text. However, they always constituted a basis for our analysis.

### 3. WORKING CONDITIONS

It is an extremely difficult task to identify working conditions in agriculture, because they are affected by many circumstances being of endogenous and exogenous character in relation to a farm. Among exogenous factors, a basic role is played by:

- potential of labour factor (which is determined not only by quantity but also by quality of labour) in relation to land factor;
- capital-labour ratio, and thus equipment of farms with machines and equipment replacing or facilitating human work;

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<sup>3</sup> Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test is especially useful in social sciences, where there is usually examined a correlation of two variables measured on nominal scales. The essence of this test and conditions of its application can be found in the work by H. M. Blalock (1977).

<sup>4</sup> This measure is based on chi-square. It assumes values from 0 to 1. In order to attain comparability of estimated C. Pearson's measures, with different degrees of freedom, there was performed standardization dividing the values of the obtained measure by its theoretically maximum upper limit (with a given number of rows and columns).

<sup>5</sup> Characteristics of F test are discussed, among others, in the book ed. by Cz. Domański (1979).

- degree of labour-intensity of agricultural specialization realized on a farm;
- organization of work on a farm.

Exogenous determinants include, first of all: farmers' access to hired labour and production services, and effectiveness of the functioning of institutions providing services for agriculture.

It is also necessary to take into account close relationships between working and living conditions of the agricultural population. That is mainly due to the fact that in the Polish conditions the dwelling place of a peasant family is also a farmer's place of work, and hence it is difficult to separate the production sphere from the household.

In our studies, we restricted our attention to the most important - in our opinion - elements affecting working conditions. They were: labour resources and their skills, access to hired labour, equipment of farms with tractors and agricultural machines, and availability of production services. Here are some conclusions afforded by the performed analysis:

1. There was confirmed a hypothesis about prevailing difficult but simultaneously highly differentiated working conditions among farms. The labour potential estimated in conversion units was quite substantial (25 units per 100 ha of arable lands) although it was found to be a little lower than the country's average (27 units). At the same time, the labour factor, in the respondents' opinions (52%) constituted one of basic constraints to production growth. Numerous causes account for this situation. We shall point only at three circumstances. Firstly, there were discovered major disproportions in allocation of labour. In every third farm under survey the number of labour conversion units per 100 ha was below 20 and in every fifth farm - higher than 50. Quite significant differences in this index were recorded within particular rural communes and characteristics of farms. In the Wiskitki Commune, being agriculturally least developed, it was almost twice higher than in the Kowal Commune. It was found to be diminishing progressively along with growth in size of a farm. The ratio of this index between extreme area groups of farms (i.e. 2-5 ha and over 20 ha) was found to be 6:1. Undoubtedly, labour surpluses exist mainly in small farms (below 5 ha). In almost a half of these farms, the potential of labour factor per 100 ha was exceeding 60 conversion units. On the other hand, in bigger farms (above 20 ha) this index was lower than 30, and in 52% of them - lower than 10.

Secondly, a predominant part of farmers do not have appropriate professional qualifications. Only one-fourth of the respondents had a higher than primary school educational background<sup>6</sup>, and 30% had completed an agricultural school or course. Thirdly, the level of work mechanization continues to be insufficient. Moreover, there was not discovered a distinct relationship between labour potential and equipment of farms with machines. This is an unfavourable phenomenon, because it testifies to lack of substitution between capital goods and labour. It is a result of a fragmentary character of mechanization (absence of mechanization of entire production cycles), as well as small labour mobility (limited possibility of emigrating to towns or taking additional work outside agriculture).

It was found that only every tenth farmer was expressing an opinion about labour reserves on his farm. The share of such farmers was higher in the case of small, biprofessional farms with universal (non-specialized production).

There was recorded a big demand for external labour. Almost every third farm (in the area group over 20 ha - 60%) was hiring labour (mainly during periods of intensified agricultural activities)<sup>7</sup>. It was very difficult to find such labour, which was mainly due to absence of the labour market in agriculture.

2. The studies revealed a relatively big number of tractors in the sample of farms. 70% of farms were found to have one or more tractors at their disposal. Statistically, there were 93 tractors per 100 farms, which was over 2.5 times more than the national average. Simultaneously, major spatial disproportions were revealed here: from 127 tractors per 100 farms in the administrative commune of Glogowek to 57 in the Wiskitki Commune.

The accepted taxonomic characteristics were significantly differentiating the number of possessed tractors. The area of a farm was, of course, the main determinant. In the group of farms between 2 and 7 ha in area there was one tractor for each two farms; on the other hand, in the group of farms over 20 ha in area the ratio was exactly opposite (two tractors per one farm).

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<sup>6</sup> There could be observed a correlation between the level of agriculture and education of the farmers in cross-section of administrative communes. In Glogowek, the share of farmers with higher than primary education reached 35% as compared with 18% in Wiskitki. The national average is a little over 10%. See: J. Rajtar (1984).

<sup>7</sup> The studies conducted by the Institute of Agriculture Economics and Food Economy show that 22% of farms used hired labour in 1984, on the average during 30 days in a year. See: A. Szemberg (1988).

The majority of tractors were characterized by their high degree of wear. Almost every third tractor came from its withdrawal from use in socialized farms.

Despite a relatively big number of tractors, a big part of all the farms under survey continued to feel an acute shortage of them. Almost every fourth farmer expressed his desire to purchase it in the first priority. That concerned, first of all, regions with the smallest number of tractors and farms from 5 to 10 ha in area. The recorded demand corresponded in terms of quantity to one-fourth of the number of possessed tractors. Taking into account the present supplies of tractors it will take 7 to 8 years to satisfy the estimated demand.

In comparison with tractors, the farms were relatively poorly equipped with agricultural machines. Quite a big part of the farms possessing a tractor did not have the most important complementary machines. Shortages in equipment of farms with agricultural machines constitute also one of the main barriers to growth of production (54% of the respondents).

3. The studies confirmed a huge demand for agricultural services. Atomization of private farms and shortages in supply of agricultural equipment cause that many farmers have very limited possibilities of choice between purchasing a machine and utilizing it in the form of a service. Hence, a high 92% of the farms under study were purchasing agricultural services<sup>8</sup>. The farmer's situation on the market in question is highly unfavourable because we are dealing with a monopoly in agricultural services (they are provided exclusively by cooperatives of agricultural circles). In the opinion of the respondents, farmers are exposed to unpunctuality and bad quality of such services. There were also recorded instances (which must arouse indignation) of refusal to accept an order from a farmer or failure to execute an ordered service.

Simple but, simultaneously, highly effective forms of mutual provision of mechanization services among farmers have not been developed on any bigger scale. According to the respondents, popularization of this solution would be promoted by: improves equipment of farms with machines, better supply of spare parts for agriculture, as well as improvement of interhuman relations.

<sup>8</sup> Mass demand for agricultural services is recorded in all regions of Poland. Among services most commonly utilized are those connected with harvesting of grains and other crops, plant protection and mowing of grass. See: B. Gregor (1987).

A half of the farmers were found to use services provided by the private handicrafts sector. Unlike in the case of services rendered by socialized centres, there was obtained a fully positive evaluation of quality and punctuality of services offered by this sector. However, they are not equally accessible in different regions of Poland. This refers especially to blacksmith services and repairs of agricultural equipment. Only building services were found to be in a satisfactory supply in rural areas. A vast majority of the respondents were in favour of expanding services offered by the private handicrafts sector. Over a half of them expressed a conviction that in their villages or neighbouring villages there would be persons willing to perform such services provided favourable conditions and climate for their development were created.

#### 4. LIVING CONDITIONS

The studies covered two elements of the population's living conditions apart from incomes. They were housing conditions and possession of consumer durables. Housing conditions were characterized by: age of a building, its state of repair, number of rooms (in relation to number of persons in a family), and its equipment with basic amenities (water-supply system, bathroom, central heating, water-flushed lavatories, and gas). In the studies on possession of consumer durables there were taken into account 14 items, and namely: black and white or colour TV set, refrigerator, freezer, washing-machine (mechanical and automatic), vacuum-cleaner, floor-polisher, tape-recorded, motor-cycle, passenger car, sewing-machine, photo camera. The following are some conclusions based on the analysis of empirical material:

1. The studies fully confirmed a common conviction about less favourable living conditions of the agricultural population in comparison with the non-agricultural population. Housing conditions in rural areas are worse. And although the structure of many buildings according to age is similar (every third residential building was erected before 1945, and 27% of them after 1970) their state of repair is not very satisfactory. In 48% of residential buildings it was evaluated as good. However, every seventh building was fit only for a capital repair. The index of the number of persons per one room was also less favourable. In the households under survey, and also among rural families all

over Poland, it was by 20% higher than in towns, and it amounted to: 1.26, 1.18, and 1.02 respectively.

Although these differences gradually diminish there continue to exist major disproportions in equipment of households in rural and urban areas with basic amenities. It should be added, however, that the situation in this area in the households under survey was more favourable than that in rural households of the entire country. 73% of the farms had the water supply system (as against 55% of all rural households in Poland), 65% (41%) had a bathroom, 44% (37%) a water-flushed lavatory, and 51% (31%) central-heating. There was discovered a relationship between the level of agriculture and housing conditions of the population. They were much better in microregions with a high level of agriculture. Moreover, they were better on big farms with specialized production, oriented at the market and run by young or middle-aged farmers. These conditions and equipment of farms with tractors and agricultural machines are strongly correlated.

2. Disproportions in the state of possession of consumer durables between the village and the town tend to diminish slowly<sup>9</sup>. However, there can be still observed considerable differences, which cannot be explained by incomes levels of both population groups. 7.2% of rural households and 23.1% of urban households had a colour TV set, 11.2% (38.7%) an automatic washing-machine, 54% (95%) - a vacuum-cleaner, 23.7% (27.2%) - a passenger car. A general improvement in equipment of peasant families with consumer durable goods is accompanied by a process of deepening disproportions in possessing these goods among households, while the resulting inequalities are bigger than in the case of urban households. This differentiation was most pronounced as regards goods considered to be luxury items in Poland (e.g. colour TV, freezer, automatic washing-machine, passenger car) although these goods generally satisfy basic needs of the contemporary man. It depends on many characteristics of both a family household and an agricultural household as production workshop.

<sup>9</sup> There exists a huge dissonance in equipment of peasant households with these goods in Poland and highly developed countries. For example, in the FRG in 1983, 94.5% of such households has a passenger car (thus four times more than in Poland), 68.9% had a colour TV set (almost ten times more) 88.1% - an automatic washing machine (eight times more), 94.5% a vacuum-cleaner (76% more). Meanwhile, 89.4% of peasant households had telephones, while in Poland there were 9 private telephones per 1000 inhabitants of villages. For the data about the FRG see: Agrarbericht der Bundesregierung. Materialband (1984).

In the regions with developed infrastructure, high level of the agriculture, and higher living conditions such disproportions in possessing these goods were smaller than in the remaining regions. On the other hand, they were most evident in poor administrative communes and villages. Thus, although the quality of life in the country side steadily improves, this progress causes, simultaneously, degradation of many households. Moreover, awareness of this degradation is much stronger than it used to be. In fact, many young respondents from poor villages felt uneasy about not possessing a given product.

Abundance in households of durable consumer goods did not display characteristics of substitution but rather a marked complementarity in relation to other elements of living conditions, as well as equipment of farms with capital goods (mainly agricultural equipment). Hence, it appears that the farms on which works is largely mechanized (and in this way less arduous) enjoy, simultaneously, more favourable living conditions.

Declarations about willingness to purchase the goods in question point at a high consumption propensity among the agricultural population. The demand declared by the respondents represented ca. one-third of the value of these goods already possessed by them. It was mainly concentrated on more luxurious goods. Especially high demand was declared by economically prosperous and more innovative farms. Due to supply shortages, agricultural farms cannot fully satisfy their consumer needs. There are many indications that difficulties encountered in satisfying demand for consumer durables do not result in increased demand for production supplies and especially in increased investment propensity. On the other hand, they undermine production motivation (J. Dietl 1981).

#### 5. SELF-EVALUATION OF LIVING AND WORKING CONDITIONS BY THE AGRICULTURAL POPULATION

The empirical material presented above and characterizing chosen elements of living and working conditions in the countryside was supplemented by subjective opinions of farmers on this subject. One of questions included in the questionnaire was: What is the main shortcoming, in your opinion, of life in your village or in its close vicinity? This question aroused a great deal of

interest among the respondents, which may be a proof confirming acute shortcomings of life in the countryside. The farmers were pointing, as a rule, at several shortcomings. They are compiled in Table 1.

The biggest impediment are shortages in provision of agricultural production supplies. Such an opinion was expressed by almost every fourth respondent. That was not surprising for us, because these shortages are commonly known. Some farmers listed concrete products whose deficit they felt most acutely. Those most frequently mentioned were coal and mineral fertilizers. Some respondents would, moreover, point at tremendous waste of time when trying to "secure" means of production and at nervousness accompanying it, which had a negative impact on agricultural production. Shortages in the network of cultural-educational centres ranked next in the hierarchy of existing shortcomings (18% of the farmers). Most indications concerned deficit of cultural and entertainment amenities. Educational facilities were more seldom listed, and sports facilities quite sporadically. It is highly characteristic that the farmers from the Glogowek Commune were most critical in this respect (almost five times more indications than in Wiskitki) despite the fact that the level of social infrastructure development in this microregion was relatively the highest. While postulating development of cultural-entertainment centres it was underlined that it was a fundamental condition allowing to check the outflow of young people from the countryside. That concerned, first of all, farmers running large well-organized and well-equipped farms, because it appeared that even in such cases it was sometimes difficult to induce the young generation (especially girls) to remain on the farm.

Problems connected with supply of water proved to be another major impediment. Absence of a water-supply system and deficit of water were listed jointly by one-fourth of the respondents. Deficit of water for production purposes is most acute in farms oriented at animal breeding.

The next place was held by poor supply of consumer goods. Apart from general evaluations pointing at discrimination of rural areas in this field, there were also more detailed ones speaking about inefficient performance of selling personnel in stores, inconvenient opening and closing hours, etc. In several cases (mainly in the Wiskitki Commune), the respondents spoke about advance ordering of bread, its bad quality and unpunctual

Table 1

Main shortcomings experienced by the farmers under survey according to administrative communes,  
farmer's age and size of his agricultural farm (% of the respondents)

Shortcomings	% of respondents	Administrative communes			Farmer's age			Farm area in ha		
		A	B	C	under 40 years	41 to 60 years	61 and more	2 to 7 ha	7 to 15 ha	over 15 ha
Shortages in supply of means of production	23	27	16	26	25	22	22	23	21	25
Poor provision of consumer goods	13	16	12	10	15	13	9	14	11	14
Inefficiency of institutions providing services for rural areas	10	12	9	9	5	12	14	7	13	10
Deficiencies in tradeservice network	12	17	13	5	13	13	8	11	13	13
Deficiencies in cultural-educational network	18	28	19	6	19	19	15	16	18	23
Absence of water-supply system	15	7	16	25	16	19	10	15	18	9
Deficit of water for production purposes	10	3	5	25	11	11	7	12	11	5
Deficit or bad state of public roads	12	5	14	19	12	10	18	12	14	7
Deficit or bad state of country roads	9	6	9	14	6	9	17	9	11	7
Deficit or inefficiency of transport services	10	3	13	14	10	9	13	12	8	10
Absence or difficult access to telephone	6	9	8	2	8	6	3	4	9	7
Lack of gas	10	13	12	5	12	10	5	12	9	7
Bad interhuman relations	4	8	2	1	3	4	3	3	3	6
Other shortcomings	21	16	35	14	23	22	17	17	24	27

Note: A - Glogowek; B - Kowal; C - Wiskitki.

deliveries, as well as about the necessity of travelling to other places to buy bread (sometimes 5 to 7 km distant from their place of dwelling). From among remaining shortcomings, we would like to draw attention to absence of telephone and bad interhuman relations. Due to a highly restricted access to the telephone in the countryside this need is not fully stimulated as yet. It is, however, strongly correlated with the level of agriculture. A need to possess the telephone was felt most strongly by the farmers from Glogowek. Although bad interhuman relations were pointed out by only 4% of the respondents, it can be supposed that the farmers were unwilling to disclose their opinions on this subject. After all, it concerned their own environment, which has its distinct characteristics in the village. Moreover, bad interhuman relations are almost never of directly material character and, hence, their competitiveness in relation to other shortcomings is insignificant. Quite surprising here is a much higher share of these indications in the rich administrative commune of Glogowek. That was largely connected with a still maintained antagonism between the autochthonous population and the immigrant population.

The big number of shortcomings and the high intensity with which they are felt prove that living conditions are evaluated as hard by the agricultural population. That was fully confirmed by another question, which was: "Some people think that living and working conditions in the countryside are more difficult than in the town. Do you share this opinion?". An affirmative answer was given by 80% of the respondents, 18% did not agree with such an opinion, and 2% did not have any opinion on this subject<sup>10</sup> (see: Table 2). The level of socio-economic development of microregions was found to exert a big influence on the expressed opinions. In the administrative commune of Glogowek, the share of farmers believing that living and working conditions in the countryside are more difficult than in the town was by 18 percentage points lower than in the poor commune of Wiskitki although needs and aspirations of peasants in this microregion are certainly higher than elsewhere. However, such situation fully corresponds with the earlier conclusions, because all the elements

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<sup>10</sup> Similar results were yielded by the survey carried out on a sample of 1,466 persons living in the countryside by the Centre of Public Opinion Polls in 1987. See: W. Dzun (1988).

Table 2

Structure of the farmers' answers to the question: "Are living and working conditions in the countryside more difficult than in the town?" according to chosen taxonomic characteristics

Items	% of the farmers' answers		
	YES	NO	NO OPINION
Total for the respondents	80	18	2
Rural administrative communes:			
- Glogowek	74	25	1
- Kowal	79	20	1
- Wiskitki	92	4	1
Farmers' age:			
- under 40 years of age	79	20	1
- from 40 to 61 years of age	83	16	1
- 61 and more years of age	74	21	5
Area of farms in ha:			
- from 2 to 7 ha	77	20	3
- from 7 to 15 ha	84	14	2
- above 15 ha	78	21	1
Farms:			
- with tractors	82	18	1
- without tractors	77	18	5
Farms with the value of socialized purchasing of agricultural produce per 1 ha:			
- without socialized purchasing or with purchasing up to 60,000 zloty	83	14	3
- from 61,000 to 120,000 zloty	80	18	2
- above 120,000 zloty	76	23	1

Table 3

Circumstances justifying the statement that living and working conditions in the countryside are more difficult than in the town according to administrative commune, age of a farmer and size of his farm (% of the respondents)

Items	% of respondents	Administrative communes			Age of farmer			Farm area in ha.		
		A	B	C	under 40 years	41 to 60 years	61 and more years	2 to 7 ha	7 to 15 ha	over 15 ha
Longer working hours, harder work	79	77	79	82	82	78	77	78	82	72
Lack of free time	38	37	40	38	44	38	28	30	43	48
More complicated working conditions	23	27	29	22	26	23	19	23	21	29
Lack of access to culture	9	9	13	4	14	8	3	7	10	13
Worse housing conditions	6	3	10	5	8	6	3	7	7	2
Worse supply of consumer goods and services	10	11	9	9	10	9	11	14	6	6
Worse material situation of rural population	7	2	11	7	7	6	8	7	7	3
Inefficient functioning of institutions providing services for rural areas	4	3	4	5	3	4	5	3	3	8
Awareness of pejorative image of village and agriculture	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	6
Other circumstances	7	6	7	7	5	7	9	6	7	8

Note: A - Glogowek; B - Kowal; C - Wiskitki.

of living and working conditions analyzed by us were the most favourable in this commune.

The respondents who claimed that living and working conditions in the countryside are more difficult were next asked to justify their stance. This part of the question was of an open character. The farmers' responses have been classified in ten groups of causes and they are compiled in Table 3. The first three groups are by far the most numerous and they are related with specific character of work on the farm. The farmers were most often pointing out that they worked longer hours, that there were no fixed working hours, and their work was harder. In their opinion, that was imposing a huge burden on rural women. They would also stress lack of free time. When speaking about more complicated working conditions they meant, first of all, that their work was dependent upon the weather, it had a more complex character (a farmer is both a manager and an employee) and underdevelopment and small spatial accessibility of production services. Only 6% of the respondents listed worse housing conditions. It is interesting to note a low rank of causes of material character. Only every fifteenth respondent justified his opinion by the worse material situation of the rural population. This makes us ponder over rightness of often repeated opinions according to which the most important problem is equalizing living conditions are income disparities existing between the town and the countryside.

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WARUNKI PRACY I ŻYCIA LUDNOŚCI ROLNICZEJ  
W ŚWIELE BADAŃ EMPIRYCZNYCH

W oparciu o wyniki badań empirycznych przeprowadzonych na próbie 782 indywidualnych gospodarstw rolnych dokonano oceny warunków pracy i życia na wsi. Analizie poddano: zasoby czynników pracy, wyposażenie w ciągniki i maszyny rolnicze, dostępność do siły roboczej z zewnątrz oraz usług produkcyjnych (jako elementy warunków pracy); warunki mieszkaniowe i stan posiadania konsumpcyjnych DTU (elementy warunków bytowych). Wskazano na zróżnicowanie owych warunków oraz czynniki je determinujące. Poglębieniem rozważań były opinie rolników o podstawowych bolączkach wsi oraz warunkach pracy i życia na wsi w porównaniu z miastem.