

THE ROLE OF NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL CHAMBER'S ADVISORS IN THE LIFE OF FARMERS IN HEVES COUNTY

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The Hungarian Chamber of Agriculture (HCA) was established in the spring of 2013 as a public body. The main tasks of the HCA are strengthening and advocacy of domestic agricultural and food sector, supporting the competitiveness of Hungarian food, furthermore the consultancy and delivering fast, accurate and reliable information to farmers. After the integration of village consultants' network in 2014 the HCA established a unified support system for farmers. This system based on five pillars: information, consulting, training, project management and European Innovation Partnership.

In Heves County 27 village consultants and 4 village consultant administrators perform advisory tasks coordinated by the chief village consultants. The scope of official duties performed by the network: crop estimation, data collection and reporting tasks associated with state rating, assessment of damages in agriculture etc. The advisors validate about 9500 farmers' cards year by year.

In our research, we examined the main features of the village consultants and farmers receiving services (such as age, gender, level of education, professional experience, current scope of activities and contacts between the two groups). We hypothesized that the age and vocational qualifications of the farmers are determining the number of services used.

To answer our research questions, we were performed primary data collection in Heves County. We compiled two questionnaires, one for the farmers (N=150) and one for the village consultants (N=18). To answer the remaining outstanding issues, we conducted interview-based survey involving 4 experts.

In the course of the survey research for the village consultants we examined theirs most important activities and ranked by the number of mention. The five most common case were the Unified Application Administration, the validation of farmers' cards, information services in connection with former Agricultural and Rural Development Agency, monitoring data service and Chamber membership fee acknowledgment.

The farmers we've asked were all familiar with the local village consultant and 88% of them known the office client's time. The 69% of the respondents more than three times visited the advisor. Based on our research the village consultants completed more than 50% of administrative tasks of farmers in the 70% of cases. Overall, the village consultant network plays an important role in the life of the farmers regardless of age or level of education.