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THE SITUATION AND PROSPECTS OF FAMILY FARMS WITH SPECIAL ATTENTION TO GENERATIONAL TURNOVER IN KARCAG

Case
Study

Keywords

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Succession;
Agriculture;
Aging society;
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Abstract

The core aim during the research was to map how farmers assess the current situation and prospects of family farming; what are its greatest benefits and drawbacks? How enticing is it for young people? How possible is a stable future for them? During the research, processing of statistical databases and questionnaires based on literature was completed. Local sole farmers, farmers, family farmers and partnerships in agricultural activity personally completed the questionnaire. The questionnaire of 81 was processed with Microsoft Excel 2016 and IBM SPSS 19. Afterwards, five pieces of professional interview were conducted based on the answers of the questionnaires. As a consequence, the author concludes that family farming has become an accepted form of farming. It is a livelihood for farmers. One of the greatest benefits of family farms is the increased time spent within the wider family, division of labour and reliable workforce, based on farmers' responses. Working together within the family creates value by contributing to rural job preservation and landscape conservation. One of the greatest disadvantages includes vulnerability due to fluctuations in buying-in prices affecting livestock farms. The future of family farms is saddened by the fact that fewer and fewer young people are interested in agricultural activity.

INTRODUCTION

Family and tradition play a crucial role in the lives of rural people. As a consequence, a family farm is not only a capital business, but also a way of life under which adherence to family, independence, self-determination and the countryside are crucial. Therefore, allowance for family farms encouraged by the current system and the European Union is crucial with respect to rural development. Both agriculture and this form of farming require being glued to a particular place; family farming will be able to increase the retention power of the population over several generations. However, this requires sufficient motivation for young people to further develop their traditions.

The importance of family farming is also backed by the fact that the proportion of part-time family farms exceeds 50% in the European Union (European Parliament, 2014).

However, the use of family labour is not limited to family farms. Therefore, it is important to assess the proportion of different types of farming employing family members. One of the main objectives of the topic selection process was to map the current situation of farming and its future prospects. During the research, the author aimed at answering how farmers in Karcag assess the situation of family farming. What do they see as the greatest benefits and drawbacks of a family farm? How enticing is this form of farming for young people? Finally, what conditions can ensure secure family farming?

Accordingly, I set up the following hypotheses:

H1: Family farming has become an accepted form of farming these days.

H2: The key benefits of family farming are that the farmer can be self-sufficient while spending more time with family and being surrounded by a reliable workforce.

H3: The core drawback of a family farm is the vulnerability to low sales prices.

H4: Family farming may become enticing to young people within the framework of current agricultural policy.

H5: The current agricultural policy promises a secure future for family farming.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of family farming

Several definitions are available to define a family farm. In order to clarify its real meaning, it is also essential to clarify the concept of entrepreneur and farming. According to Schumpeter (1980) and Solomon (1991), an entrepreneur is an innovative person who, in the hope of a positive result, dedicates the time to take on the risks evolved. In

other words, farming is a conscious, systematic and complex activity involving the production of agricultural goods, services and income (Dobos, 2000).

Williams (1973) suggests that a family farm is maintained by the farmer and his / her family without any external labour. However, this definition is incomplete because, as life has shown, the use of external labour is essential in some cases. As a result, a definition by Juhász (2001) is more accurate; family farms can be considered as peasant farms that use family labour, particularly.

The use of different definitions as synonyms may generate difficulties, such as family farm business, farming family, agricultural family business, peasant farming and small-scale production. However, these concepts should not be confused with each other as one of the major differences between American farms and European family farms is the use of profit making. Since family farms produce primarily for their own use and sell the surplus, while the main purpose of other farms is to maximize profit (Alvincz & Varga, 2000).

However, the differences between the definitions may vary within Europe, therefore they should be country specific. As a result, based on Act CXXXII of 2013, a family farm includes all agricultural land owned, leased or used by the farmer family with up to 300 hectares of arable land (including urban land under agricultural or forestry cultivation). Based on the full employment of at least one member of the family and with the assistance of the other members of the family. Members of the family farm may include the family farmer, his / her spouse or partner, his / her children (minor child, adult child registered as a member in the family farm, adopted child, stepchild and foster child), his / her grandchildren, parents, grandparents and siblings. However, the law also excludes from the members of the family farm the parents of the spouse or partner of the farmer, or the spouse of an adult child or brother.

With respect to the form of entrepreneurship, the family farm can be considered special, since depending on which organizational framework proves to be more favourable in the given case, it can be a sole proprietorship or even an owner's association (Nábrádi, 2004). In view of its business form, the farm and the household cannot be separated, since the family provides a large share of capital and labour, and a portion of the income generated is reinvested to households (Gasson & Errington, 1999).

The ideal composition of a family farm is well-illustrated in an onion (Figure 1) by Gasson & Errington (1999). The crucial features are shown in the middle of the onion. Ownership and control of the business are in the control of the business manager. Going from the inside of the onion, the less important features are that the family primarily

provides capital and labour or the family lives on the farm. Due to its layers, if some features are missing, it still retains its shape. However, if none of the conditions are met, one cannot talk of a family farm. Several of the benefits and drawbacks of family farms are also known by Nagy (2006). One of its greatest benefits is the need to fulfil the administrative obligations in one record. In the case of an investment, the purchase price at the time of installation can also be deductible. Under the current Land Act, family farmers are entitled to pre-emption and pre-leases. Revenues and expenses are apportioned based on the number of family members existing on the last day of the tax year, with the option of taxation in the form of flat-rate taxation or itemized cost accounting. Sharing of revenues and expenses is obligatory in the case of farmers. Several preferential credit facilities and grant are available to farmers. In terms of social factors, the available workforce is much more reliable, flexible and motivated, as the aim is to increase their standard of living. It is also a great advantage that they are able to produce their own food needs and then sell the surplus. Almost every resource is used in this way. The 'own product awareness' provides a sense of security. The greatest virtue is independency, because the farmer can be independent here and spend more time with his / her family.

Drawbacks include, in some cases, lower productivity or expertise. It is very difficult to check the actual work and to share the responsibility, because verbal agreements tend to be more widespread within the family. Another problem is that the labour supply changes at the pace of the family cycle (marriage, death, etc.). If a member of the farm leaves the family farm, the revenue and costs have to be shared among the family members, which may also be a problem. Subsequently, based on the reduced headcount, revenue and proven costs can be distributed among the members of the family farm at the end of the tax year (Krenovszkyné, 2014).

Labour use in agriculture

A substantial part of the agricultural workflows can be mechanized, but not fully automated. In some cases, it is needed to manually complete some of the mechanized work (milking, shearing). Therefore, direct human intervention is essential. During the implementation of work processes, biological processes as well as changes in weather and ecological conditions have to be constantly monitored, which changes have to be continuously adapted during work (Buzás, 2001). All of them require complex conditions, including professional skills, problem-solving ability, independency, rapid decision-making and adaptability (Pfau, 1998).

One of the most important characteristics of agricultural processes is the fluctuation of work due to seasonality. This in itself generates serious

employment, structural and organizational problems. This is called seasonality, which is the natural result of the biological and climatic dependency of agricultural processes. As a result, more labour is needed at certain times of the year while less at other times. The tasks of the harvest periods are usually solved only by 'seasonal workers' hired only for the occasion. However, it is only occasional labour. Most agricultural organizations face such problems. It is almost impossible to provide an appropriately qualified labour for seasonal tasks (Berde, 2003).

Increased seasonal labour due to seasonality must be somehow integrated into the existing organization. An organization that is expanding and then shrinking in a flexible way is an agricultural feature that is not typical of other sectors. When the task is over, the organization is reduced to its original size. All this involves a continuous organizational task, which is a natural part of agricultural production. Agricultural tasks and workloads fluctuate not only in a particular year, but also within a shorter period.

The process of succession and its problems

Succession is basically the process of transferring ownership and control from one generation to the next. This includes financial, legal, as well as psychological, emotional and social factors. In most cases, this does not happen smoothly. There may be a conflict of interest in which the actors involved cannot make the right decision that satisfies the preferences of both the predecessor and the descendant (Le Breton-Miller, Miller & Steier, 2004). One of the fundamental conflicts of a business may be the value system of opposing systems (i.e. family and business). Indeed, while the business aims to maximize profit, the family is much more consumption oriented. The hierarchy of a business is determined by the birth order, and relationships are based on trust. Conflicts often include father-son conflicts due to generation gaps, and sibling rivalries often occur. In this case, neither the predecessor nor the descendant is in an easy position (Meier & Schier, 2016). According to Leach (2007), however, the predecessor is more fortunate because he / she has ownership and control. In contrast, according to Kazmi (1999), descendants are in a better position because the previous generation has the necessary capital, structure, human resources and market presence.

The most vital question that arises after choosing a descendant is what the predecessor actually transfers. Most would like to keep their ownership or transfer it on paper, but still intend to take part in the management. In contrast, $\frac{3}{4}$ of the descendant plan to have ownership and control at the same time, which can lead to further conflicts (Agrya, 2017).

The predecessors continue to play a symbolic role after succession, and thus have a profound impact on performance and corporate culture. As a result, they

may delay or even hinder decision-making. At the same time, they are in a very difficult situation because they have to give up their power and influence in favour of their descendants (Miller & Le Breton-Miller, 2003; Csákné, 2012). The predecessors have extensive farming experience but are inexperienced in succession. Many of them have the idea of retirement or withdrawal, but few actually get to the point of action.

Adherence of the old generation to ownership and control greatly inhibits the willingness of the younger generation to take risks and exploit their development potential. As a result, in Hungary, generational turnover can be partially based on natural processes in farms with family labour. Recognizing all of this, the state and the European Union give high priority to the start of a young farmer or running a family farm. For this purpose, various incentives are used, such as subsidy of pillar I and II in CAP 2014-2020. However, in order to make efficient use of the resources, it is essential that the young generation should be trained, provided with continuous information, and has the opportunity to gain experience (Agrya, 2017).

In the history of family-owned companies, it is noticeable that in order to maintain proper business succession, the management of the family needs to plan for generational turnover. The successful succession is of strategic importance for the next generation. The descendant must take over the business and operate it well so that the business would be sustainable (Tobak, Nagy, Pető, Fenyves & Nábrádi, 2018).

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The author opted for the processing of statistical databases among the research methods. A questionnaire was compiled based on literature, which were completed by local sole farmers, farmers, family farmers and partnerships in agricultural activities. When completing the questionnaires, she strived to collect direct data, as other questions may arise during the personal questionnaire.

The questionnaire was divided into three main questions: questions related to the farm manager, his / her own farm, and finally family farming and generational turnover.

81 pieces of questionnaire were processed with Microsoft Excel 2016 and IBM SPSS 19. She performed non-parametric tests, cross-table analysis, and *Spearman* correlation.

Among the methods used in the research, in some cases it was necessary to test the normality of the scales. It was analysed with the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, where a null hypothesis is accepted in case of a significance of more than 0.05 since the sample is of normal distribution with respect to the

given factor. If the significance is below 0.05, the sample shows an abnormal distribution according to the given factor, so the null hypothesis must be rejected (Malhotra, 2008).

In the correlation analysis, the author mainly used the Pearson Chi-square test, which examines the correlation between categorical variables. According to the null hypothesis, the estimated and measured data are the same, i.e. there is no correlation between the two variables. It can be used if the frequency of data in each cell of the table based on the two properties is at least two, and less than five data are allowed in a maximum of 20% of the cells (Sajtos & Mitev, 2007).

In case, differences between several groups were to be detected, the author applied median test, in which the median of all ordered data was used. Data in each group are distributed in approximately the same way below and above the common median provided there is no difference between the groups at all. Ratios are tested as described in the Chi-square analysis above.

The Mann-Whitney test compares the median test factor values in two independent groups. First, rank all the data in order of magnitude, then replace the data by their rank (in the case of two or more identical data, their mean rank), and then divide the rank into original groups. If both groups have low and high ranked observations and the mean rank is approximately the same, then there is no difference in the median between the two groups. Otherwise, the mean rank in one group is likely to be higher. The sum of the ranks is then calculated for both samples. If there is a significant difference between them, it means that there is also a significant difference between the groups (Fidy & Makara, 2005).

In case, more than two groups are to be studied, the Mann Whitney test should be extended to the so-called Kruskal-Wallis analysis. This is applicable when examining the benefits and drawbacks of family farms in relation to different types of farming. In fact, it can be used to examine whether the changes in the quantity of the test factor differ within a given grouping. Basically, during the test, the null hypothesis that the mean values are the same within the groups, which is accepted above a significance level of 0.05, but rejected below this value. If the null hypothesis is rejected, there is a significant difference in the grouping criteria in the judgment of the given test factor (Leard Statistics, 2016).

Subsequently, the author conducted professional interviews with the *Karcag Research Institute – University of Debrecen, the Deputy Director of the Szentannai Sámuel Agricultural Secondary School and Grammar School*, the Co-President of the Young Farmers' Association of Hungary and *two local family farmers*. The first interviewees (2015) were dr. Róbert Czimbalmos and Györgyi Kovács,

who are researchers at the Research Institute and are currently examining the situation of family farms in the Northern Great Plain and Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok county, as well as Dezső Spisák, Deputy Director of Szentannai Sámuel Agricultural Secondary School and Grammar School. Subsequently, dr. Miklós Weisz was interviewed who is the Co-President of the Young Farmers' Association of Hungary (also a registered consultant, expert in the Ministry of Rural Development, and associate professor at the Georgikon Faculty).

The interview included longer, open questions about the current situation of family farms, their virtues, difficulties, motivations in choosing this form, and their future.

RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

Analysis of the situation among farmers in Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok county

Unfortunately, there was not enough information available on the management of the settlement during the research, therefore local conditions are presented based on the county situation. The analysis of the situation among farmers in Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok County is based on the research of the Karcag Research Institute of the University of Debrecen (hereinafter referred to as Research Institute). Questionnaires conducted by the Research Institute collected information on farmers in the county and their farms from 1997 to 2015.

In terms of land size, the county has been characterized by medium-sized farms (between 30 and 300 hectares) since 1997. The number of farms under 10 ha remained the same over the last 10 years. The proportion of farms between 10 and 30 hectares increased until 2002. However, the share of farms with over 300 hectares of land increased to the largest extent. In most cases, the area used by farmers remains below 1200 hectares. The survey shows that medium and large farms are steadily growing. In 2015, only 7.3% of farmers did agricultural activity over 300 hectares, which represented 41.9% of the areas. Medium and large farms owned 95.3% of the land surveyed. Figure 2 shows the size of the land used by farmers between 1997 and 2015.

The sectoral distribution in the county is similar to the national level. 87% of farmers are engaged only in crop production, 6% only in livestock farming, while only 4% are engaged in mixed farming. Horticulture represents less than 3%. The current system seeks to change this sectoral structure by grants, EU tenders, land auctions: livestock farms and those with secondary and / or higher education qualifications are given priority for obtaining grants. Figure 3 shows the distribution of farmers' education by professional fields. Accordingly, it can be clearly seen that as the size of the farm grows, the equivalent

qualification of farmers will also increase. The majority includes farmers with equivalent qualification. In 2015, the proportion of farmers with secondary and tertiary education reached 78% on farms over 300 hectares. This proportion is slightly lower in medium-sized farms, but half of the farmers have equivalent qualifications and the number of skilled agricultural workers is higher in this category. The proportion of those with secondary education (professional and other) was increasing slowly by 2015. Lower qualification is more common among older farmers.

The change in the age composition of farmers by farm size is shown in Figure 4, which shows that the age group of 56-65 represents the largest proportion in large farms (44%). The younger generation is also on the rise, especially in medium-sized farms. The proportion of those over the age of 66 is steadily declining for each size category. The presence of the oldest age group is more typical in small farms.

The basic statistics of the questionnaires

The questionnaire was completed by 81 people, consisting of 32 farmers, four sole proprietors, 40 family farmers and five partnerships in agricultural activity, the distribution of which is shown in Figure 5.

87.7% of the respondents are male and 12.3% are female. In practice, the proportion is similar among farmers, as men tend to dominate agriculture for manual labour. The role of women in paperwork or animal husbandry is more crucial.

According to the survey, the average age of farmers is 54 years. The oldest participant was 84 and the youngest was 16. The problem of aging of society is very clear, as can be seen in the county and national context.

In terms of education, the majority of farmers (74%) have secondary education, with 19% having tertiary education and only 7% having primary education.

The sector is dominated by mixed farming with 72.8%, followed by a 23.5% share in crop production. The proportion of livestock farms in itself is not significant. It is also backed by the fact that livestock farming in itself is not worthwhile because the sector is less profitable due to the opinion of farmers regarding low sales prices.

The average area cultivated by farmers is 88.9 ha. The largest land is 1000 ha (partnership), while the smallest land (2 ha) is cultivated by small farmers with gardens.

The land is mainly characterized by the production of traditional arable crops. This proportion is similar for family farms, as shown in Figure 6.

Cereal crops are dominated by wheat, maize, barley and sunflower. But rape, oilseeds, alfalfa, mustard, triticale, oats, poppy, peas and thistle are also included. Vegetables and fruit production play a less prominent role among farmers in Karcag.

The distribution of livestock among family farmers is shown in Figure 7, which shows that pigs (30%) and hens (21%) are dominant, but sheep and cattle are also common.

The role of hired labour is very significant in the region, which is well represented by the response of the participants; 43.2% use and 40.7% do hired labour.

Benefits and drawbacks of family farms according to the questionnaires

Subsequently, the author examined the main benefits and drawbacks of family farm according to the different forms of farming. According to the literature, the questionnaire indicated seven benefits and five drawbacks, which the participants had to evaluate on a 1-5 numerical scale depending on how typical family farming is. Five is the most characteristic and one is not characteristic at all. In both cases, there was another option for farmers to respond to, if they had any other benefits or drawbacks that they could complete. It only occurred in a few cases.

Benefits included the following factors: more time in the family, division of labour, reliable motivated workforce, preferential credit, better tax conditions, own product awareness and self-control. By the form of farming, the author used the Kruskal-Wallis test, which found that the greatest benefits were more time in the family ($\text{Chi}^2 = 15.981$; $p < 0.01$), reliable workforce ($\text{Chi}^2 = 9.148$; $p = 0.027$), preferential credit ($\text{Chi}^2 = 16.434$; $p < 0.01$), and taxation ($\text{Chi}^2 = 11.353$; $p = 0.01$) at a confidence level of 95%. In the responses of family farms, more time in family (49.775), reliable workforce (46.575) and division of labour (44.4375) were definitely outstanding with respect to mean ranks. On the other hand, according to farmers, the greatest benefit of family farms is that the farmer has own control and have a reliable workforce. The mean rank of these factors is illustrated in Figure 8.

Drawbacks included lower productivity, less expertise, lower sales prices, low size efficiency, and vulnerability. According to the Kruskal Wallis test, there was no significant difference between the different disadvantages according to the types of farming, only vulnerability ($\text{Chi}^2 = 7.156$; $p = 0.067$) and less expertise ($\text{Chi}^2 = 9.001$; $p = 0.026$) at a confidence level of 95%. The average rank of the listed drawbacks is shown in Figure 9.

The results of professional interviews

Participants in the professional interviews were relatively unanimous in the subjects of questions, so the answers are presented as questions, where different opinions are highlighted.

Considering opinions about the large number of family farms in the city, it can be concluded that their high proportion in an essentially agricultural area is not surprising. Industrial activity is neglected,

and existing industries have always been based on agriculture (milling, dairy industry). Family farming provides both secure employment and adequate livelihood. In some cases, this is the only livelihood for some farmers. It is positive to see that as many people as possible can find their way in farming, as family farmers have a place in agriculture. Mostly due to the fact that large-scale level cannot include all kinds of agricultural activity. It is undoubtedly positive that they try to get the family involved in the work so that everyone can participate in it while they can spend more time together. This may also motivate the younger generation to stay and run the farm forward. This would also be the essence of the grant system to keep the population in the countryside. It would be a basic objective to increase the importance of small and medium-sized farms, but this has not been achieved in the land consolidation. Although their number is high, their areas are so small that they are insignificant at local, county and national levels. The first wave of compensation between 1990 and 1992 did not go quite as planned. Farmers who had been deprived of their property were given compensation tickets, but several farmers did not use it. This is largely due to a lack of information and capital. Elderly farmers sold their compensation tickets well below the exchange rate.

The next question was how farmers see the current situation of family farms. From the farmers' point of view, 'Dirty, but an anchor point!', i.e., there is a lot to do, but it is a sure livelihood, because the land will always be available. If the farmer works well and pays attention to the farm, he / she will earn much more than in a permanent workplace. In addition, he /she is not vulnerable to being fired. From the point of view of the Research Institute and Agrya, the issue is very complex. In general, the situation of medium-sized farms is improving, while the situation of small-scale farms is almost hopeless. Farmers on poor soil either lease out the land or get old. There are farms that are very well-functioning, developing, capable of development, and there are some who cannot. Their position is highly dependent on the type of activity, the intensity and the regulatory environment. Growing vegetables / fruits on a smaller area of higher quality is more profitable than growing a crop on larger and lower quality land. Karcag is not characterized by intensive horticulture, which requires a large scale of investment, but can be much more profitable.

The author then examined what farmers considered to be the main virtues of family farming. Answers to this question suggest that predictability, secure livelihood and independence are the most significant issues for farmers. The farmer can control his / her life and divide his / her own time. They do not have to adapt to the demands of different workplaces, they organize their own work within the family. In addition, working together within the family creates

value by contributing to rural job preservation and landscape conservation. It is financially very favourable due to taxation. Furthermore, not only production, but also processing is provided. The farmer can breed animals with their own crops and processing is also possible. Therefore, the farmer can run his / her own family and know exactly what is on the table. Last but not least, the farmer can preserve the family traditions and nurture and pass on the gastronomic traditions (pig slaughter, palinka distillation, cooking sheep) if he / she is so fortunate that his / her descendant is also interested in farming. Traditions also mean being glued to a particular place.

In addition to the benefits, the author also addressed problems, which leads to the conclusion that buying-in prices are very fluctuating, especially for meat and dairy products. Due to the damage caused by weather, the family sometimes are compelled to miss or apply for a loan to overcome difficulties. Even in the direst situation, the farm entails being glued for the family. It may be a danger if someone develops a family farm for a lifetime and there is no one to carry on. This can also cause tensions within the family and the farmer will have to liquidate his farm as he / she gets older. The work of one or more generations is lost. It is very difficult to urge descendants because 'working for money is not popular these days'. However, if there is one to take the farm further, there is still the potential for generational tension. After all, farmers of different ages see different situations differently. For example, younger people take greater risks for more income, while older people tend to look for safety. Generally speaking, there is a lack of resources and a lack of skills. As a result, crop production and animal husbandry are in poor proportion. The level of processing is very low. Thus, multiplexing (diversification) is not typical. Significant problems include the vulnerability, lack of tender knowledge, and the underutilization of mechanization.

As Dobos (2000) has already raised the important question of the necessity for family farms in Hungary according to the opinion by farmers. The unanimous answer is that family farms have every right to exist and are in great need. It does not apply to industrial cities, but it has been and remains the lifeblood of the countryside. If there is no other option, agriculture is always available, and the form is clearly family owned. The work of more generations goes on, the more generations it goes, the easier it is for the next generation. There was a mild rejuvenation among the middle-sized farms. Even though programs were launched to rejuvenate the farming community, they were not too successful. There are several reasons: on the one hand, the healthy and capable 80-year-old farmer does not want to transfer his / her farm, and on the other hand, there are few young people who could take it over. There is no shortage of agricultural

professionals, but a great lack of interest in agriculture.

Finally, the last question was about the future that farmers are predicting for family farming. Generally speaking, not only in Karcag, but also nationally, there is no renewal in this young generation compared to land available. If attitudes do not change, great troubles may be expected. Young people are less and less interested in agriculture. They are not interested in agricultural school, they do not apply to such school, agricultural classes of 100 % cannot be started. 95 % of those who were admitted complete the school, but it is not an attractive course. Only agricultural engineering technician courses have been started for years, where the number of people is very low but after leaving school they are in their profession. 13-15 people graduate as technicians each year, but this number is not too high nationally. It can therefore be concluded that young people are not sufficiently motivated to engage in agricultural activities. In the worst-case scenario, family farms may disappear completely within 10 to 15 years.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

According to the first hypothesis, family farming has now become an accepted form of farming. It has been ascertained, as farmers believe that family farming is absolutely justified in Karcag. Although they have not been able to find accurate data regarding the settlement, but the large proportion of family farming in the county and 40 farmers completing the questionnaire prove that their operation is significant in the city. This is no surprise at all in an agricultural settlement where the vast majority of industries are based on agriculture. The agricultural attitude is also due to the fact that it provides secure employment and an adequate livelihood.

A number of benefits of family farming form is known, therefore it was a crucial question as to what the greatest benefits for farmers were to choose this form of farming. According to hypothesis H2, the greatest benefits of family farming are that the farmer can be self-sufficient while spending more time with family members and being surrounded by reliable workforce. The author used the Kruskal-Wallis test to test the hypothesis, which partially confirmed the hypothesis. According to the answers of family farmers, the greatest virtues of this form of farming are that they can spend more time with family members. Family members work in a division of labour as it is in their own interest to perform the tasks in a timely manner and with sufficient expertise. Accordingly, family members are definitely considered to be a reliable and motivated workforce. According to other forms of farming, one of the greatest virtues is independence,

that is, the farmer has own control. However, in the answers of family farmers, it was much lower in order of importance. The answers given to the professional interview revealed that predictability and secure living are not the last considerations. They are able to run their families and know exactly what food is on the table. At the same time, they can preserve family traditions (pig slaughter, palinka distillation, sheep cooking), which generate being glued to the place, thereby strengthening the population's ability to maintain the population. 'Family heritage, love of the land. The love of land is the love of home.'

In addition to the benefits, family farmers face a number of difficulties, among which the vulnerability to lower sales prices can be highlighted in the third hypothesis. Among other options, the ranking is also based on the Kruskal-Wallis test. There was no significant difference between the drawbacks after the test. Only vulnerability and less expertise can be highlighted. Vulnerability is common to both types of industry but is more common in livestock farming. This is mainly due to high feed prices, low buying-in prices and fluctuations. Due to extreme weather conditions, farmers are most vulnerable to crop production. In the professional interviews, the farmers mentioned generational tensions that may arise from different ways of thinking or the issue of succession. The current trend shows that young people are showing less and less interest in agriculture. Even though the current system tries to encourage them, it is an absolute bottleneck position. At the same time, the H4 hypothesis was rejected that family farming, 'I have own control, can become attractive to young people within the framework of current agricultural policy. Generally speaking, most farms have a lack of resources and, in many cases, a lack of skills. As a result, crop production and animal husbandry are in poor proportions, and diversification is not typical.

The current agricultural policy prefers family farming, so in the last hypothesis the author assumed that this policy promises a secure future for family farming. This hypothesis can only be partially accepted. Although the ambition of the state can be perceived, as significant amount of grant is available to small businesses and concentration of holdings is in progress, it does not occur as might be expected. In practice, smaller farms lease out or sell their land, and large farms buy them. There is also inactivity in exploiting the opportunities for smaller farm sizes. In many cases, this is due to ignorance or the mentality of the farmers. They are distrustful of the state because of the hardships of the past system. All in all, the incentive scheme of the state is not enough to secure the future of family farming. As it has been mentioned several times before, the lack of renewals in farming does not allow the author to speak of a sure future. This is typical not only in

Karcag, but also nationally. As a result, within 10 to 15 years, family farms will not reach the level that current agricultural policy is designed for them. By cooperation, integration, processing their own products and selling them locally, they could greatly improve their situation. In this way, arguments in favour of the merger can be put forward for better enforcement of interests. However, its feasibility is questionable due to the attitude of farmers.

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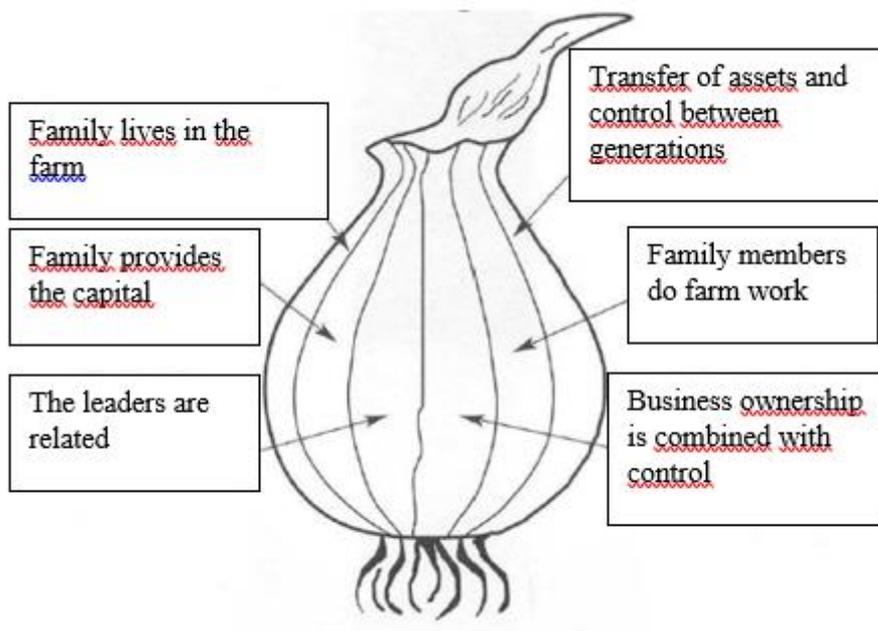


Figure 1
Layers of a family farm
 Source: Own edited by Gasson & Errington, 1999

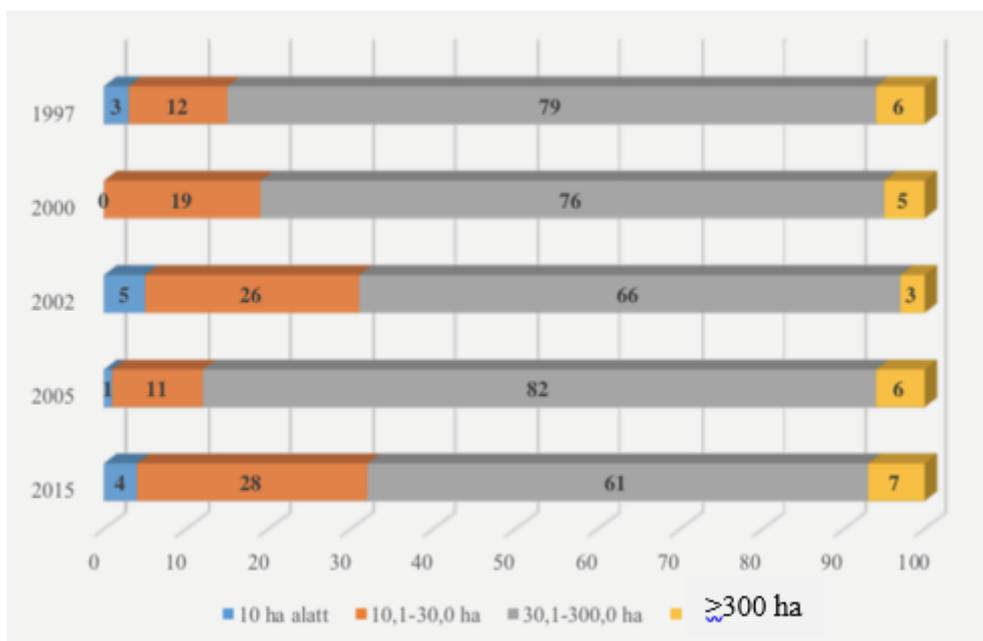


Figure 2
Changes in the size of land used by farmers 1997-2015 (Unit: %)
 Source: Czimbalmos, 2015; Database of the Research Institute, 2015

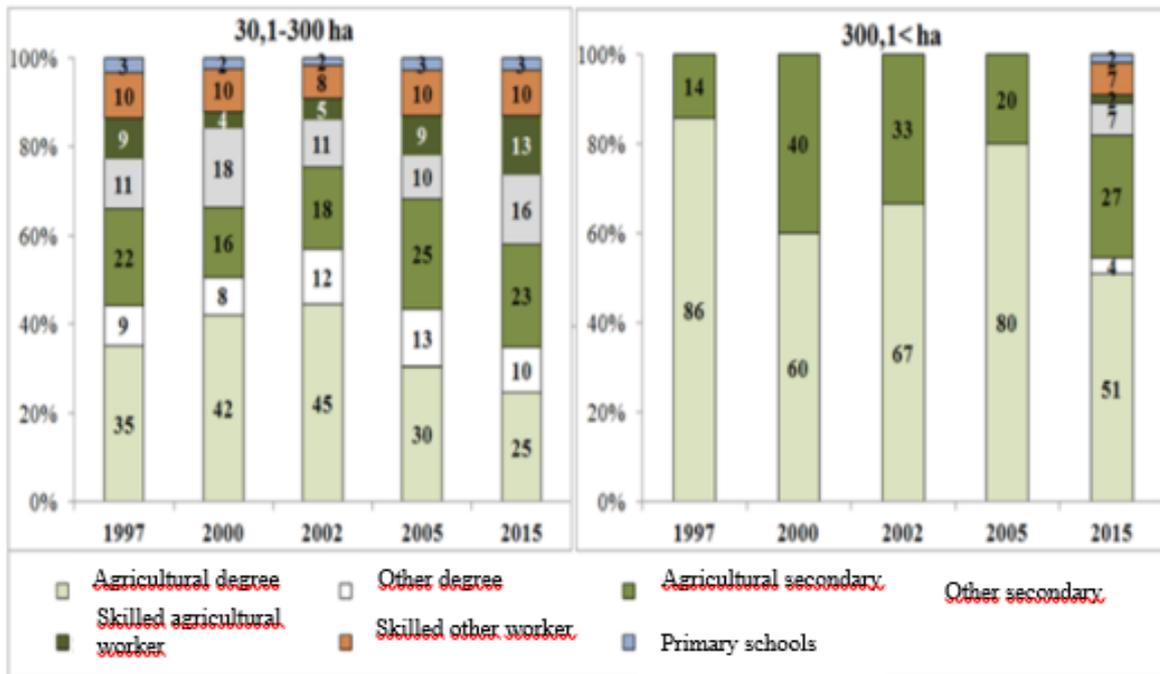


Figure 3
Level of education among farmers by farm size category (1997-2015)
Source: Database of the Research Institute, 2015

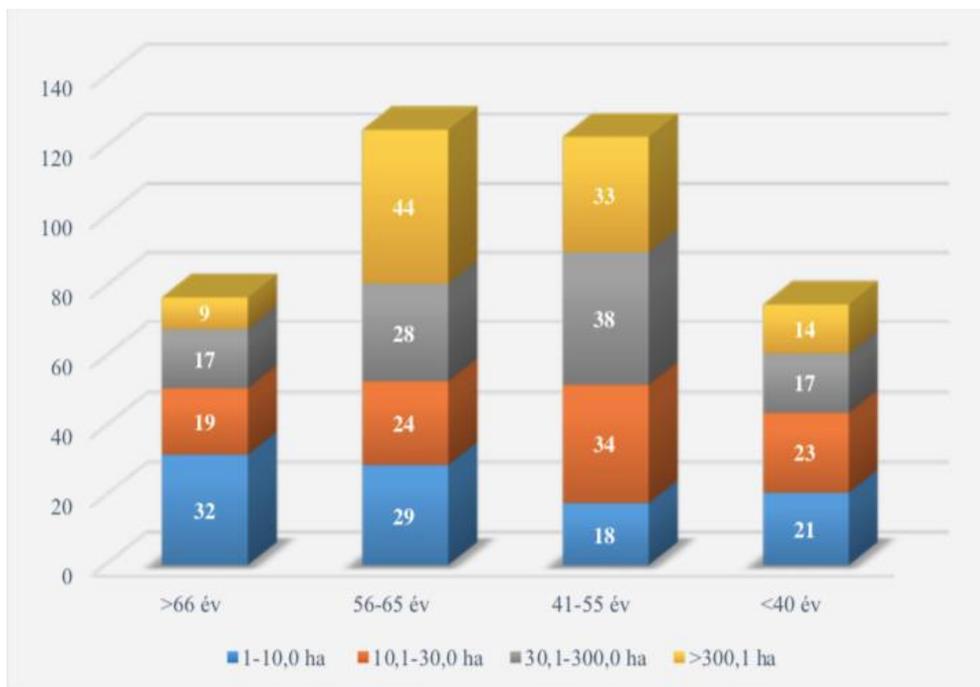


Figure 4
Age distribution of farmers by farm size (Unit: %)
Source: Database of the Research Institute, 2015

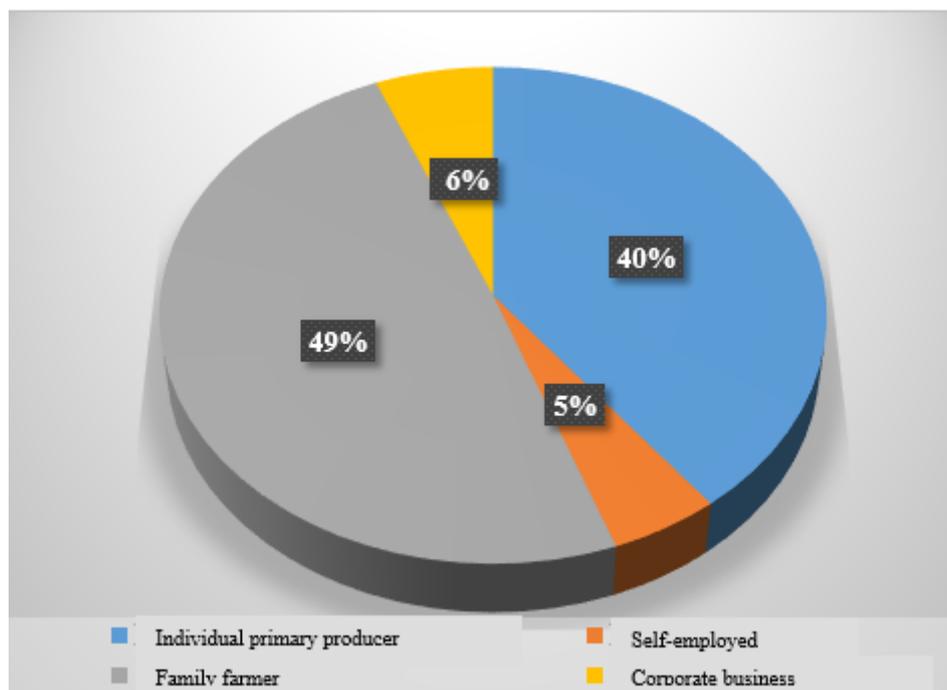


Figure 5
Proportion of forms of farming among the respondents (N:81, Unit: %)
Source: own research, 2017

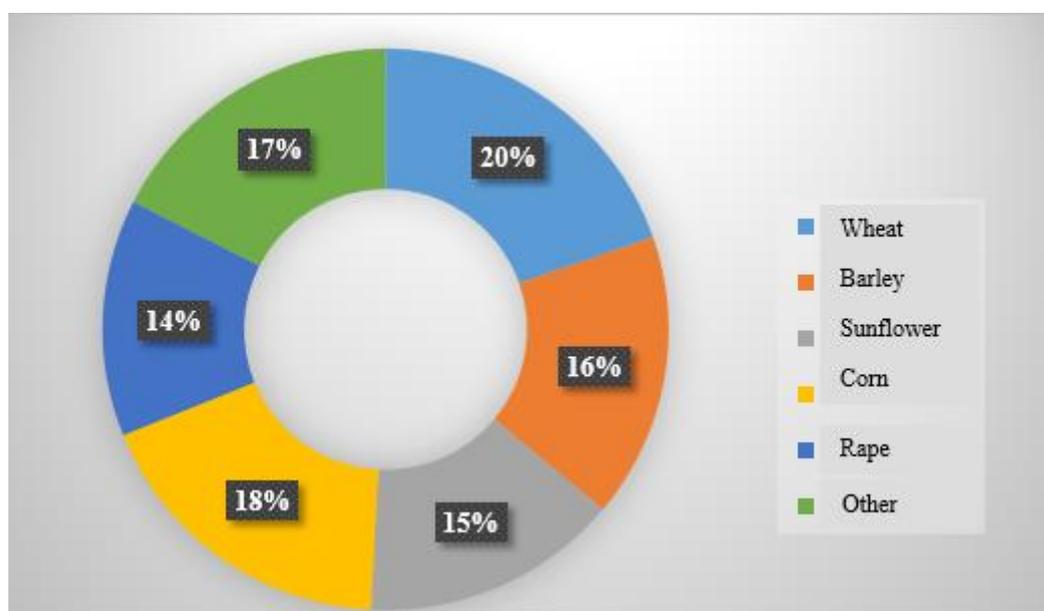


Figure 6
Proportion of crops grown by family farmers (N:40, Unit: %)
Source: own research, 2017

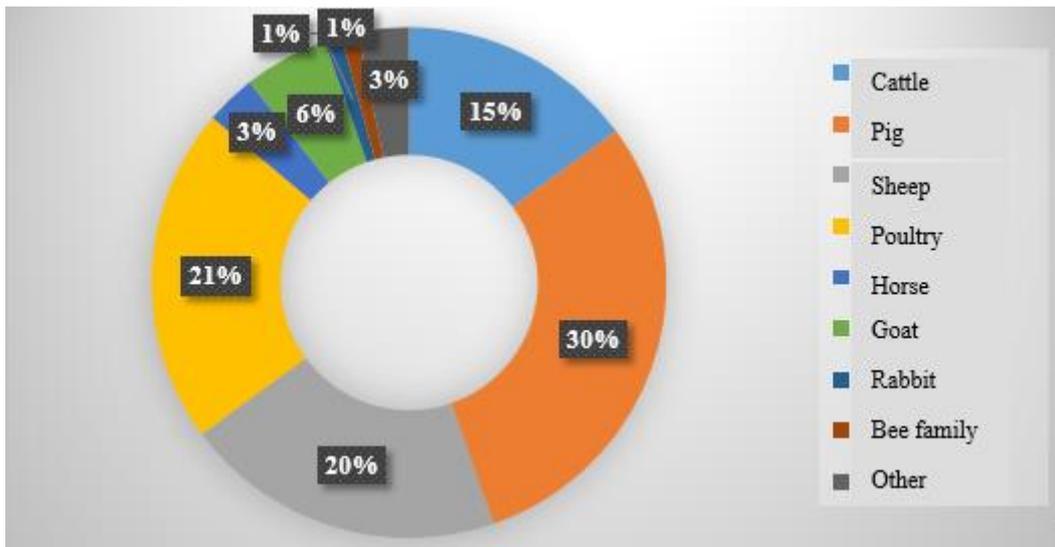


Figure 7
Distribution of livestock among family farmers completing the questionnaire (N: 31, Unit: %)
Source: own research, 2017

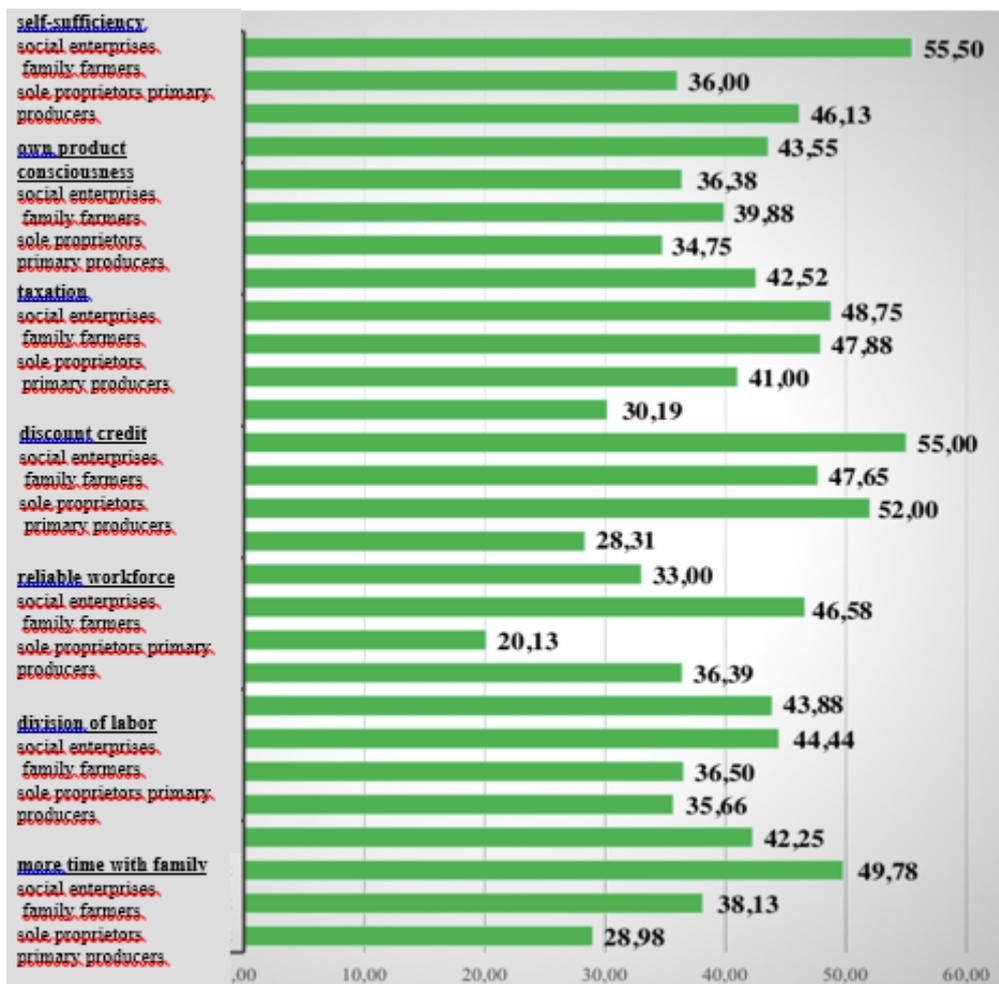


Figure 8
Mean rank of benefits among family farms based on the response of farmers
Source: own edition based on Kruskal- Wallis test, 2017



Figure 9
Mean rank of drawbacks based on the response of farmers
 Source: own edition based on Kruskal- Wallis test, 2017