



PRACTICE ABSTRACT NR. 52

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Advisory support for agri-innovation: Development of renewable energy in rural areas as an alternative to traditional forms of energy in Radomski region, Poland

Sustainable development targets include the use of distributed, low-power energy sources that produce local energy and supply it directly to households. These criteria are best met by renewable energy sources such as biomass boilers, microbiogas plants, small wind turbines, small hydropower plants, solar collectors, photovoltaic cells. The use of these technologies in agriculture enables the independent production of energy and reduces its purchase from the outside, which brings measurable financial and ecological benefits. The selected focus region - Radomski, central Poland (as part of a case study within the AgriLink project) is characterised by a gradual increase in the cultivated area of oilseeds and plants used for biofuels and for energy purposes. Farmer's attitude towards innovation and change: all respondent farmers stated that public sector advisors cooperating with farmers at the regional level play a significant role in advising on innovation. The vast majority of the farmer-advisor interaction takes place in the form of 'one-to-one' (individual advice in person). In addition, many farmers benefit from advisory services in the form of training sessions, workshops and seminars, organised by local public advisors. Cooperation and regular (one-to-one or collective) meetings help to streamline farmers' decision-making regarding the introduction of innovation on their own farm. The role of agricultural advisory services in the region is significant. Public advisors are main advice providers for most of the farmers in the region, which is due to the long history of public consultancy in the region, trust in farmer-advisor relations, and the high competencies demonstrated by advisors in the subject of innovation.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The functionality of a modern farm is closely related to the need to cover the growing demand for electricity and heat. Farmers are forced to run a rational energy economy and seek alternative sources of supply in the face of rising fuel and electricity prices.

Farms operate in the specific conditions of rural areas that constitute over 90% of Poland's territory. The use of renewable energy sources in these areas may be an opportunity to compensate for the development of these areas. Diversification of resources in rural areas creates opportunities for innovation and the development of renewable energy sources.

Increasing climatic anomalies, hurricanes, floods, which are increasingly occurring in Poland, are also the cause of power outages. This encourages the promotion of distributed energy and the pursuit of energy self-sufficiency of the farm through the development of renewable energy.

The development of renewable energy can become one of the most important factors for rural development. Renewable energy will increase the quality of energy in rural areas, improve supply reliability and thus stabilize the conditions for farming.



ABOUT AGRILINK

Agrilink is a multi-actor project funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme. It brings together 16 partners from 13 countries, including universities, applied research institutes, advisors and consultants from public organisations, private SMEs, a farmer-based organisation and specialists in communication and distance learning.

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