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## Poland

### Agricultural Situation

### Farm Organizations In Poland

### 2006

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**Report Highlights:**

With nearly two million farms, Poland's farm organizations have a tremendous responsibility in advancing farmer concerns to the Polish government. Five of these farm organizations have significantly more impact on farm policy than the many other farm organizations in Poland. Nevertheless, Polish farm organizations do not have the political clout that similar organizations in other EU countries or the United States have.

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[PL]

Poland, with nearly two million farms, about 90 percent of which are smaller than 6 acres, is expected to eventually become a major player in EU agricultural policy because of its size, future gains in production and trade proficiencies, and the importance of agriculture to rural development. However, local farm organizations are not at the stage of development where their influence on agricultural policy could be compared to that of similar organizations in the United States or the EU. The following five farm organizations which may have some impact on Poland's farm policy.

### **Federation of Large Scale Farm Producers**

The Federation of Large Scale Producers was formally organized in May 1993. Currently, it is comprised of 15 associations and has about 1,000 members. Its members are mainly large scale farmers (1,000 acres or more). The Federation lobbies members of Parliament and regularly comments on legislation proposed by Parliament and the Ministry of Agriculture. The Federation also coordinates with European Union farm organizations including the Social-Economy European Commission, also known as EKES, the Committee of Professional Agricultural Organisations in the European Union, known as COPA-COGECA, and the General Confederation of Agricultural Co-operatives in the European Union known as GEOPA COGECA.

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### **Grain Chamber**

The Grain Chamber (Chamber) was formally organized in 1997. The Chamber consists of about 90 members who represent about 60-70 percent of the Polish grain industry. The members are grain traders, but some grain feed and grain milling companies are also members.

The Chamber represents its members in meetings with Polish government officials and representatives of foreign organizations. The Chamber actively seeks to influence Polish and EU policy by lobbying Polish and EU officials. Currently, the Chamber is a member of COCERAL. (COCERAL represents the interests of traders with European Union institutions including the European Commission, the European Council, the European Parliament, the European Food Safety Authority and the Economic and Social Committee.)

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### **National Association of Farmers, Agricultural Circles and Farm Organizations**

The National Association of Farmers and Agricultural Circles and Farm Organizations (NAFACFO) has nearly 1.1 million members and two major sub-organizations:

1. Agricultural Circles (22,500 Circles)
2. Farmer Wives Circles (25,800 Circles)

Almost 70 percent of all members are Farmer Wives Circles members. There are and 997 agricultural cooperatives that are members of NAFACFO. NAFACFO has 48 regional offices and 1,703 county offices.

NAFACFO's key goal is to support the development of rural areas. NAFACFO also represents Polish farmers in Brussels as a member of the COPA/COGECA organization. Its activities include managing a system to distribute farm inputs, machinery and other supplies to farmers at preferential prices. NAFACFO also owns a network of gas stations where farmers are able to buy gasoline and diesel at a discounted price.

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### **National Council of Agricultural Chambers**

The National Council of Agricultural Chambers (NCAC) was founded in 1996 and is comprised of all farmers in Poland as membership is automatic based on ownership of at least 1 hectare of farm land. It has 16 regional offices in addition to its Warsaw headquarters. They council and advise members regarding agricultural and rural issues.

The NCAC is one of the main negotiators for farmers with Polish agriculture authorities. In 2005, NCAC helped prepare the strategy for developing rural areas and agriculture, and is a consulting organization to the draft of the National Development Plan for 2007-2013.

### **Self Defense Samoobrona – Farmers Union & Political Party**

Samoobrona was founded 1991 and registered as an organization in 1992. It is well known for organizing large protests by farmers concerned with the lack of government support for the agriculture sector. In 1992, the Trade Union of Farmers (Self Defense) was registered and soon became a political party. Numerous protests organized by Self Defense have captured public attention and support.

The 2001 parliamentary elections saw Samoobrona, led by Andziej Lepper, flex its muscle as a serious political player. Samoobrona further strengthened its political position in May 2006 by forming a coalition with the ruling government. As a result of this coalition, Andrzej Lepper became a Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Agriculture in the current Polish government on May 5, 2006.

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