

Central European Land Fragmentation in the Years to Come – A Scenario Study into the Future Need for Land Consolidation in Central Europe

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ABSTRACT

Central European agriculture suffers from extreme fragmentation of land ownership. Land consolidation may be a solution, provided that specific regional conditions are considered. Current regional conditions are the subject of several studies, but do lack the time-dimension. Investigating Central European fragmentation should not be confined to the present, for three reasons. Firstly, considering Western European experience, land consolidation is not only useful for a swift reduction of fragmentation, but stays important for constantly adapting farm outlay to the ever changing conditions of world market, agricultural policies or regional economic developments. Secondly, present land use may not reflect underlying ownership fragmentation. In that case, consolidation of holdings is not needed acutely, but likely will be necessary in the future. Thirdly, mid-term autonomous developments may have important effects on land ownership distribution.

This paper presents likely developments in land fragmentation and the consequent need for land consolidation. The aim is not to forecast, but to reveal determining factors. The developments in land ownership distribution in part rely on factors that are predictable, for example the initial situation, demography and consumer behaviour. On the other hand there are rather uncertain factors, especially agricultural policies and level of economic wealth. Both types of factors, relevant for developments in land ownership, are used to describe four scenarios of events. The resulting land ownership structure is then analysed in the light of land consolidation.

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7.16 Land Consolidation Experience from the Field

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