

DIFFICULTIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVES IN RUSSIA: THE CASE OF THE KURGAN REGION

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Abstract

This study concerns the political, economic and socio-psychological conditions for marketing and supply cooperatives in Russian agriculture. An analysis of secondary data indicates that neither political nor economic conditions inhibit the development of cooperatives. Therefore, the focus is directed towards the socio-psychological factors. The aim of the study is to empirically explore the extent to which socio-psychological factors explain the difficulties for agricultural cooperative development within the Kurgan region of the Russian Federation. Based on literature concerning cooperative members' attitudes, values, commitment and similar variables, four hypotheses are suggested. These are tested empirically on the basis of data from a total of 927 agricultural producers, both members and nonmembers of existing cooperatives. The findings reveal that especially the level of trust in others is crucial. Furthermore, the involvement is low among non-members, their attitudes to cooperatives are poor, and their belief and experience in democratic governance are weak.

Key words: Russia, transition agriculture, cooperatives, socio-psychology, trust.