

WORK SATISFACTION IN PORK PRODUCTION

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ABSTRACT

Reforms, the change of economic regime, the restructuring of ownership, and changes in agricultural policy have made it difficult for Hungarian agriculture to adapt to the international environment. Economic establishments operating under new proprietary and organizational structures need to consider the aspects of the market-economy and need to produce effectively. In the confusion, problems such as job bating, redundancy, and unemployment have become an everyday reality. In most agricultural production units new aspects of production management and incentives for performance can be witnessed. In the course of our research a objective was set: to examine the most important questions of labour management from the point-of-views of the employee and the significance of work satisfaction. In the course of qualification assessments we found that the qualifications of both management and employees improved in the last three years.

Keywords: labour management, work satisfaction, agriculture, pork production

INTRODUCTION

Reforms taking place along with the change of economic regime, the restructuring of ownership and changes in agricultural policy made difficult for Hungarian agriculture to adapt to changing international environment. Economic establishments operating under new proprietary and organisational structures need to consider the aspects of market-economy and need to produce effectively. Therefore, such evidences as job bating, redundancy, and unemployment have become everyday reality. In most agricultural production units new aspects of production management and incentives of performance are witnessed.

In the course of our researches an objective was set. To examine the most important reveal the significant questions of labour management from the aspect of the employees and the relations of work satisfaction.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The work satisfaction of employees was analysed with questionnaire. Before starting the survey, we contacted the Association for Hungarian Pure Breed Hog Producers who provided a list of pure breed pig producers (address, name, contact person), then all producers were contacted. The questionnaire-based survey was carried out between 1st March 2009 and 15th October 2009. (36 producers, 344 employees – out of them 340 were evaluable). Altogether 22 questions analysed the work satisfaction (from aspects of motivation on job choice, relation system at workplace, satisfaction, attitudes on management). The open and closed questions

were tested and necessary corrections were made prior to survey. The data were analysed with SPSS 16.0. The coding of data was done according to the following:

- For background variables: female: 1; male: 2
- Education level was coded according to the order in the questionnaire.

Positions:

1. managers: farm manager, executive director, head of division, head of unit, work group leader, inseminator
2. technicians: locksmith, welder, repairer, machinist
3. herdsmen
4. miscellaneous staff: tractor driver, driver, guard, receptionist, unskilled labour, administrator, book-keeper, payroll calculator, leech, storekeeper

Mathematical-statistical tools used in the analysis:

- Frequencies, distribution analysis,
- Weighted arithmetical average, variation, coefficient of variation,
- Cross-tables, likelihood,
- Statistical tests to reduce uncertainty of correlation,
- Risk of estimations in case of cross tables.

For the qualification related analysis, the qualification index developed by *Zalainé* (2002) was used and modified – thus a new indicator was developed named as labour force value. This indicator shows the calculated value for given organisation based on the overall education level of its employees.

The differences applied in the new method compared to the qualification index.

Education levels:

- Primary school or lower,
- Vocational school,
- Other vocational school,
- Professional vocational school,
- High school graduation,
- Upper level high school
- Higher education,
- PhD.

The education levels were coded from (-3) to 4 points, where point 1 meant high school graduation (maturation exam). On the basis of the previous, labour force values for different age groups were calculated (years 18-29, 30-39, 40-59, 60+). The scheme for classification based on labour force value:

- (-3) - (-2.51) Primary school or lower
- (-2.50) - (-1.51) Vocational school
- (-1.50) - (-0.50) Other vocational school
- (-0.49) - (0.50) Professional vocational school
- 0.51 - 1.50 High school graduation
- 1.51 - 2.5 Upper level high school
- 2.51 - 3.5 Higher education
- 3.51 - 4 PhD

The new indicator is a weighted arithmetical average; providing the overall labour force value for the organisation.

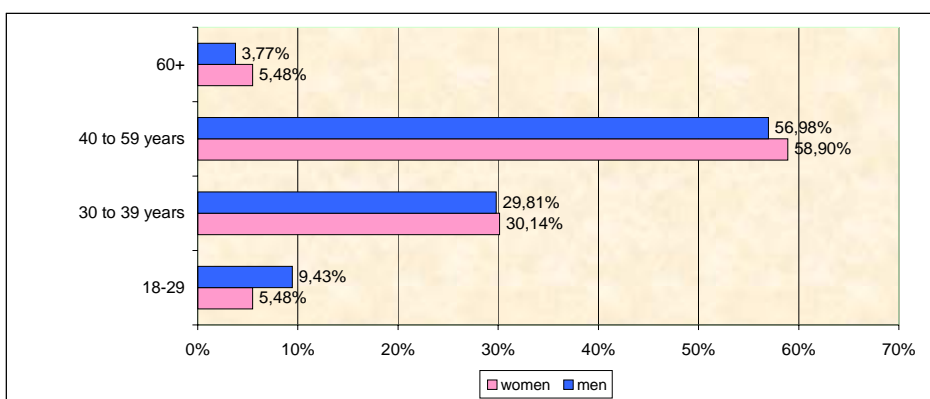
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demography and qualification

The proportion of employees involved in survey by their age and sex is shown in *Figure 1*.

Figure 1

Proportion indices of employees by age and sex



From the *Figure 1* it can be stated that pig production is not an attractive option for the young – due to its low income and profit making capability. In my opinion, the demand and willingness for agricultural jobs are highly influenced by the little free time and gradually more unreliable future. Our state is proven by that 14.91% of the respondents belong to the age group between 18 and 30 years. It is important to emphasise that the findings are in line with international tendency such as that the age structure of agricultural employees is getting gradually worse (*Hamza et al., 2001*). This is also proven by a *HCSO (2008)* study underlining that the 54% share of employees younger than 40 years in 1990 decreased to 38% during 15 years. The study emphasises that the share of employees aged above 60 years increased by eight-times. Another significant issue is qualification. Qualification of human capital is inevitable for effective and competitive agricultural production; as to gain the modern market and technological knowledge necessary for production is easier for skilled workers. In case of the analysed farms, the labour value index varied from -0.80 and -1.21; which reflect that the qualification level of employees is very low.

Labour value indices were found for different age groups are as follows:

18-29 years: (Kve₁): -0.84
 30-39 years: (Kve₂): -1.21

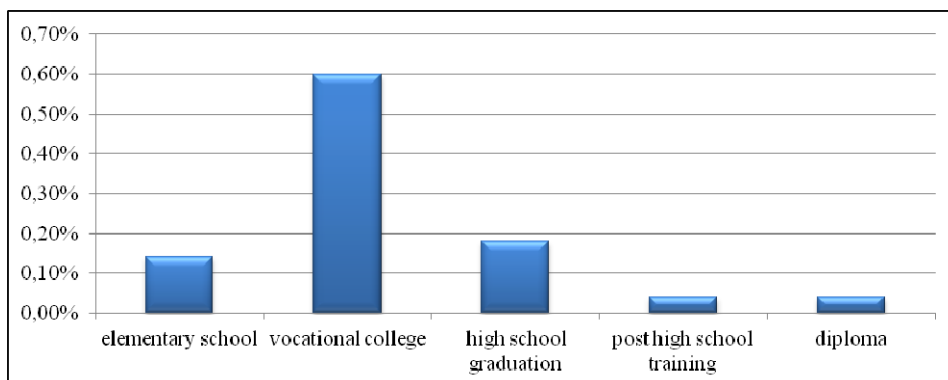
40-59 years : (Kve₃): -0.80

60 years: (Kve₄): -1.20

On the basis of the applied model, the least favourable situation is seen in case of age group between 30-39 years, while the best figures for 40-59 years. The findings are proven by *Figure 2*, as well, where the highest level of graduation of the employees is shown.

Figure 2

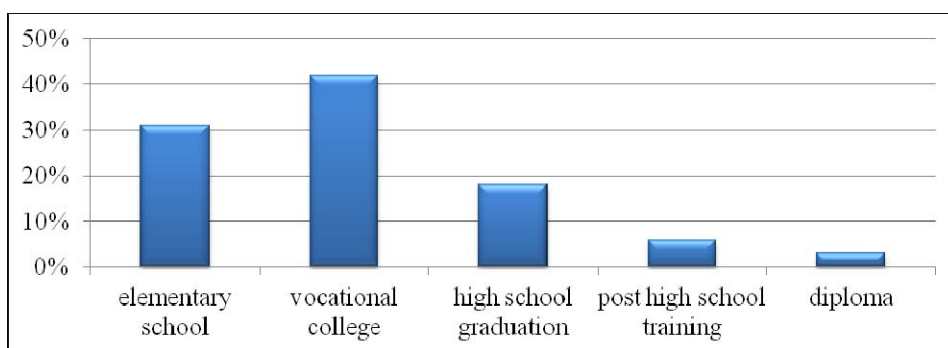
Proportion of employees by highest graduation level



Comparing the findings with the result of earlier survey will show more sophisticated results. *Figure 3* shows the findings of a study made in 2007 on the qualification of employees in pig production.

Figure 3

Proportion of employees by graduation level



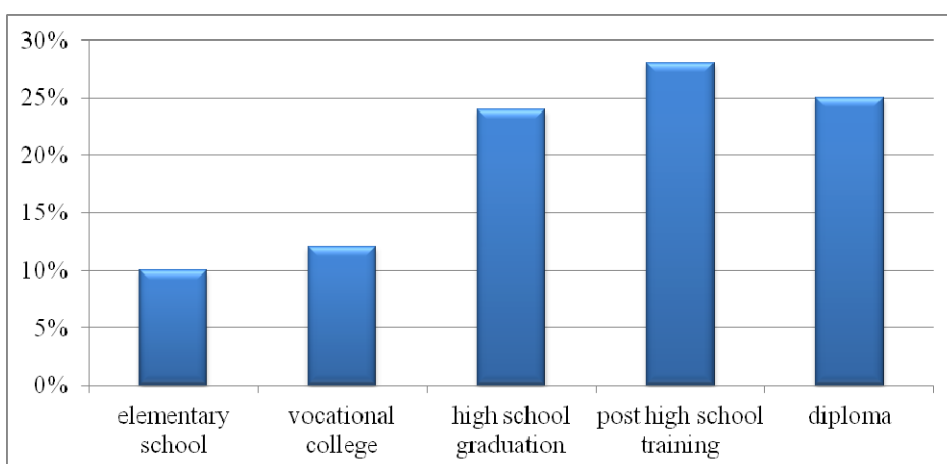
The comparative analysis of the two survey results show that the earlier findings restructured, though the dominance of employees with vocational school

graduation remained (from 41.27 to 60%), the share of people with less than 8 years of primary school dropped (from 30.06 to 16.66%), while the share of high school graduation decreased (from 25.37 to 20%). Significant change did not occur in case of people graduated from universities. While the share of employees with professional qualification was higher than 20% in 2007, it was only 13.33% by 2009. In our opinion, there will be a further improvement in the future of the qualification status of agricultural employees.

In next step we analysed the qualification of agricultural managers (*Figure 4*).

Figure 4

Proportion of managers by graduation level



Both the view point and qualification of the management improved (78% of them has at least high school graduation) in the last years due to that many young qualified but unemployed people wait for job. The elderly generation hand over their place to young colleagues. These managers of large concentrated pig farms will have necessary theoretical and practical background, as well.

Conditions of job-seeking and motivation for job choice

The conditions and efficiency of production have worsened since the economic crisis experienced from September 2008. Large part of producers gave up production and others cut off labour force. At the analysed farms the reasons to become unemployed were explained in 59.02% by redundancy and job reduction, in 21.77% by irregular payments, in 14.39% by distance from living place and in 4.82% other reasons were named. Following questions revealed that half of people been become unemployed found new job within one month. It is important though that the cross-table analyses show that skilled people found new job; while unskilled ones spent an average of 5 months with job-seeking. *Table 1* shows the ways of finding job.

Table 1

Job seeking channels

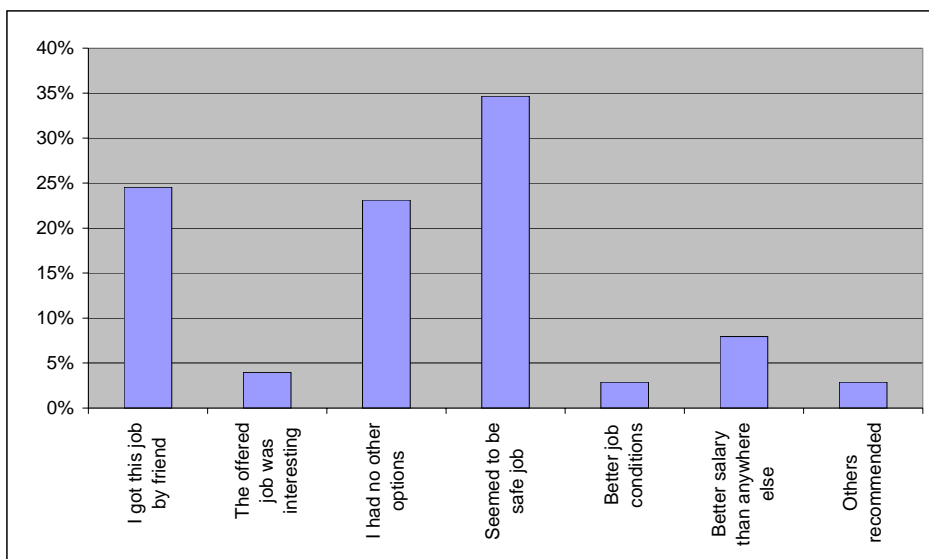
Denomination	Number of people
Labour centres	11
Friends	168
Themselves	141
Newspaper ads	10
other (internet, job-hunters)	10

It is seen that most importantly informal ways of job seeking are used. One of the most effective ways of gaining information is mobilising the personal information. According to the overall figures job-hunting is not really significant, only 3.23% of the people used this form to find job. In my opinion, only those ask labour centres who had no success with the other ways.

In next step, the motivation for job choice was analysed. The reasons and shares are shown in *Figure 6*.

Figure 6

Motivation on job choice



It was found that 35% of the respondents chose their current job because it seemed reliable; other 25% because of friends and somewhat less than 20% of them had not got options.

It was also found that only 13.1% of the respondents plan to change their job. This is somewhat opposite to the cross table analysis when the relation of graduation level and job safety was examined. Though the obtained result is not significant, it calls the attention (Sommer's d value 0.008, $r=0.35$). Majority of the respondents (52.25%) feels their job not really safe in this year. Large share of respondents with higher level qualification (71%) think serious problems occur in their work place. Less than one fourth of the respondents (11% of those with diploma) feels their work place entirely safe. In case of respondents with high school graduation the share of those seeing serious problems is lower, it is 48% in case of those with vocational school graduation and 46% in case of those with only primary school. In my opinion, in the course of social-economic changes it is important to examine the human values necessary for changes, the mobility of labour force and speed of professional changes are important. The factors influencing the overall feeling on workplace affect not only the loyalty, but individual performances and the overall profitability of the company, as well. Satisfaction can be related to the type of work and conditions of work. Spearman's correlation was used to define the degree of satisfaction with main factors influencing work. It was found that good work management and convenient environment are necessary but not motivating factors. Flexible working time was mentioned as motivation tool, but many emphasised the talks to employees and importance of social relations, participation in exhibitions, meetings. It is also important for the employees to get feedback from colleagues and managers on their work. The second place in the order was taken by the positive opinion of managers. The personality, experience and expertise of the manager are important. According to *Börzseiné* (2006) all these mean the management capital that confirms the employee in his functions. The strongest attitude relating to work is that the employee be able to finance his and his family's necessities; and for it he needs stable reliable job.

Opinions regarding past, present and future

Concerning the provisions week but significant relationship was found with age groups with SPSS 16.0 (Cramer's $V=0.180$; $\alpha=0.001$).

Demographic variables have important role in work satisfaction concerning the current life; a reverse proportion was found in case of answers of younger and older generations. The younger the respondent is, the more satisfied he is with life. The reason for it can be that young people generally clearly see their opportunities and barriers. Though they consider reliability important they know that finding a life-long job is impossible. They have better chance to find other job; this can be linked to the findings of *Kopp et al.* (1999) such as depression is more frequent in older age groups, while it is the rarest in young age (up to 30).

Among socio-demographic parameters age and qualification level are in strong correlation with satisfaction. 80% of respondents with higher qualification said that they are satisfied with their life, while it was 44% for those with primary school.

The following questions asked information on past, present and future (*Table 2*). People consider their life average (median: 3) in a five-point scale. The importance of the questions was proven that the responding ratio was high.

Table 2**Opinions on past, present and future**

	Considering present life, what is your position in a five-step scale?	In your opinion where you should be by now?	In your opinion where will you be in 5 years?
Number of respondents	343	340	342
Not responded	1	4	2
Mean	3.27	3.95	3.31
Median	3	4	3
Mode	3	4	4

Considering that in the past the Hungarian average people have better options than those living in surrounding countries. This explains that the respondents evaluated their past at a better rate than the present opportunities. It was a longer process to adapt to new legal-economic conditions after the change of regime; it led to a high dissatisfaction. The economic-financial crisis of the past year influenced the life standard, as well. Many of the people are afraid of losing their job, house, family (according to surveys); the opportunities have narrowed, people became pessimist, which in general is a Hungarian peculiarity, in my opinion. This can be the reason for seeing the future opportunities so pessimistically (median: The opinions of employees on current life and future are not only characterised by main social-demographic parameters, but are in a typical correlation with each other as well. The satisfaction with present life and future opportunities were found in strong linear correlation (Spearman's value 0.513). The more satisfied the employee is with his present life, the more satisfied they are with future expectations, as well.

On the question: In your opinion where you should be by now? the respondents give one mark better (mode, median: 4). A conclusion can be drawn that relatively cheap ways (e.g. extra payments, flexible working time, pig sale at lower price, cheap feed, higher level of attention) may easily increase the employees' work satisfaction.

CONCLUSIONS

In the course of qualification assessments it was found that the qualification of both the management and employees improved in the last three years. According to the results, the share of those with vocational school qualification strengthened compared to 2007 (60%), the share of those with only primary school graduation is still significant despite that their share decreased in the last two years, the share of those with high school graduation decreased to 20%; while the share of those with diploma did not change significantly. In 2007, the share of those with agricultural qualification was higher than 20%, it was only 13.33% in 2009. On the basis of registered data it was found that the age group between 30 and 39 years is in the

most unfavourable position, while the most favourable figures were found for the age group between 40-59 years. The qualification of the management improved also in the last three years; 78% of the managers bear with at least a maturation exam. We recommend that the managers of farms try to train their employees in case of demand and possibility and support their visits to professional conferences, meetings; this in the end may lead to profit for the employer as well.

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