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FROM THE STRATEGY OF FOOD INDEPENDENCE TO THE STRATEGY OF RAISING THE COMPETITIVENESS OF AGROINDUSTRY ¹

In the conditions of the globalization of national economies, the current situation in macroeconomics and, as a result, the need to improve the quality of life of the population, it is necessary to clearly outline and resolve the following three strategic tasks of the country's agro-food industry: ensuring the country's foodstuff independence based on import substitution; raising the competitiveness of farm products; developing the high level standard of living at the rural area based on the socio-economic development of the territories. The analysis of the government policy documents and concepts for developing the agricultural sector of the economy has revealed the following. The State Program for the Development of Agriculture and Regulation of Agricultural Commodities Markets, Agricultural Raw Materials and Foodstuff in 2013–2020 is the main active tool, a primary factor of accelerated agro-food import substitution, and a foundation for the new national agricultural policy. At the same time, the program does not answer the question, how one can really improve the competitiveness of national farm products. It does not outline the tasks and mechanisms to raise the standard of living for the rural population. The article considers the necessity to increase the competitiveness of agro-food sector as a prospective strategic direction in the government export policy. It clarifies the key factors of the influence on the competitiveness of the national farm products, namely: at the macroeconomic level—equivalence of cross-sector exchange, subsidizing and credit financing of the agro-food sector; at the sectoral level—territorial and sectoral specialization in agricultural production and the system of profit distribution between the producers, processors and retailers of the farm products. The article outlines the possible ways of employment assistance for the rural population left without jobs as a result of improving the competitiveness of the agricultural production. It shows the expediency of the development of both the single scientifically-based interministerial document in the form of the national strategy and some relevant programs to improve the competitiveness of the country's agro-food industry, employment and income of the rural population.

Keywords: agro-food industry, state program, import substitution, macroeconomic factors, territorial and sectoral specialization, household agriculture, agricultural organizations, dairy cattle breeding

Introduction

The national agro-food industry (AIC) (agricultural sphere of the economy) presents a complex multipurpose multifunctional organizational-economic and production system. AIC considerably defines the condition of the whole economy of the country, closely interacts organizationally, industrially and resource-based with more than 80 sectors producing nearly 8.5 % of GDP. In the agrarian sector, almost 11 % of all employed fall on economics, it forms more than 45 % of retail commodity turnover of the country.

The food and processing industry is a leading sector of AIC economics, including nearly 30 sectors and 51.5 thousand enterprises with 1.3 mln. employed, every of which creates not less than 5–6 workplaces in jointed providing and serving sectors. The 16 % of federal revenues and a significant portion of regional budgets are formed due to its tax deductions. It keeps its dominating condition in the structure of processing productions taking the share of 14.6 %, and along with the metallurgical production, construction and fuel industry, it is among the leaders in the production of national products. Being the system-forming sphere of the economics of AIC, the food and processing industry forms the national agro-food market and its product segments provide the food security of the country. Nearly one-third of the costs of households fall on food. The level and quality of nutrition characterize the level of socio-economic development of the country and it defines the human health and life expectancy for almost 70 %.

¹ © Original Russian Text © A. I. Altukhov, V. V. Drokin, A. S. Zhuravlev, published in *Ekonomika regiona* [Economy of Region]. — 2016. — Vol. 12, Issue 3. — P. 852-864.

The agriculture and rural regions are also multifunctional because they implement not only the production function providing the food independence of the country, but save the population of huge territories, historical landscapes and the traditional way of life of the rural population. The 38 million people or 26 % of the country's population fall into rural areas, a number of economically active rural population amounts to 15.7 million people in agriculture, hunting and forestry amount to 6.2 million people or 9.2 % from the whole average annual number of employed in economics. It is a great potential, which can under scientifically substantiated organization, firstly the agro-food industry production and its full value state support are able to provide not only the food independence of the country but the export of significant amount of food commodities and agricultural raw materials. It is a great potential, which under scientifically substantiated organization, first of all for the agro-food production and under its full state support can provide the food independence of the country as well as the export of significant amount of food commodities and agricultural raw materials.

About the Methodology of the Research

The present system of state special-purpose program of sectoral regulation includes the development of special-purpose program arrangements, methods and ways of their realization, the scheme of agency's responsibility to the government.

The development of the program and the scheme of responsibility for its implementation, as a rule, fulfills by one of the same interested agency. It quite often allows to include minor goals, subgoals and tasks in programs and not to include the necessary indicators of the results' assessment of its realization on the strategic trends of development.

So, the analysis of the State Program for Development of Agriculture and Regulation of Agricultural Commodities Markets in 2013–2020 in a new revision of the Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation from 19 December of 2014, No. 1421², shows the following: the realization of presented goals in this program demanded the determination of 20 tasks appeared in subprograms and federal special-purpose programs. It was provided for more than 130 indices to assess the level of the implementation of these tasks. The degree of the implementation of all state programs was described by ten main indicators (indices), federal special-purpose programs were assessed by 20 indices, and the use of 104 indicators reflected the achieved results by individual sub-sectors and activities. Certainly, the use of so many estimates to achieve the goals and objectives for monitoring the progress and results of the implementation of the State program does not provide a clear response to the execution of all its major events and their effectiveness.

The complexity and diversity of tasks accomplished in the system of agro-food industry, which is a main component of the system of national socio-economic development of the country, allows to characterize the food industry with all its components as an open complex system, condition and development of which are determined by the macroeconomic situation in the country.

The systematic development predestines the balance of main elements of social and macroeconomic factors between main elements of social and economic spheres of the system as well as inside of these spheres. The character of the balance of elements can correspond both to the preservation of the system in its conservative condition and to the development. The non-coordination in the development of some elements of the system negatively influences the development of the whole system. That is, a transition of the system to the implementation of any new local strategic directions of the development requires a balanced correction in all its elements.

The changing trends of economic intersectoral relations, the negative influence of the systemic crisis on the condition of agro-food industry, the necessity of its development and the increase of the life quality of population in the conditions of new challenges predetermine the correction of strategic trends of its development.

In this regard, the following strategic objectives should be clearly stated and solved by the agro-food industry of the country.

1. Food supply independence based on import substitution.
2. Real increase of the competitiveness of agricultural products.
3. Achievement of the high level of life sustenance in rural areas on the basis of socio-economic development of territories.

² Retrieved from: <http://pravo.gov.ru/proxy/ips/?docbody=&nd=102158516&rdk=&backlink=1> (date of access: 29.06.2016).

Below-mentioned results of the analysis of the concepts and programs for the development of the agrarian sector of economy confirmed by the government allow answering the question of how they correspond to the solving the present tasks. Whether the actualization of some directions in the development of the agrarian sector of the economy is needed to achieve the previously outlined program goals (in terms of new risks).

Results of the Research

In the modern socio-economic conditions, the present State Program has a great importance for the agrarian sphere of economics and, first of all, the bases of agriculture, because among many adopted fundamental documents on the development of agro-food industry for the last years, there is no alternative for it. The State Program is a main really operating instrument for the adaptation of the agrarian sphere of economics to the demands of WTO, Eurasian Economic Union and the Union State. At the financial support, though in the volume of support allowed by WTO, it can become the basic factor of the implementation of accelerated import substitution on its separate types, as well as for the foundation of new national agrarian policy.

Below-mentioned data on the graphs of Figures 1–2 on the projecting positive tendencies in the production of cattle and poultry for slaughter in live weight, grain, potatoes and vegetables³ testify that up to 2020, the adopted indexes in the State Program can be achieved. For the remaining five

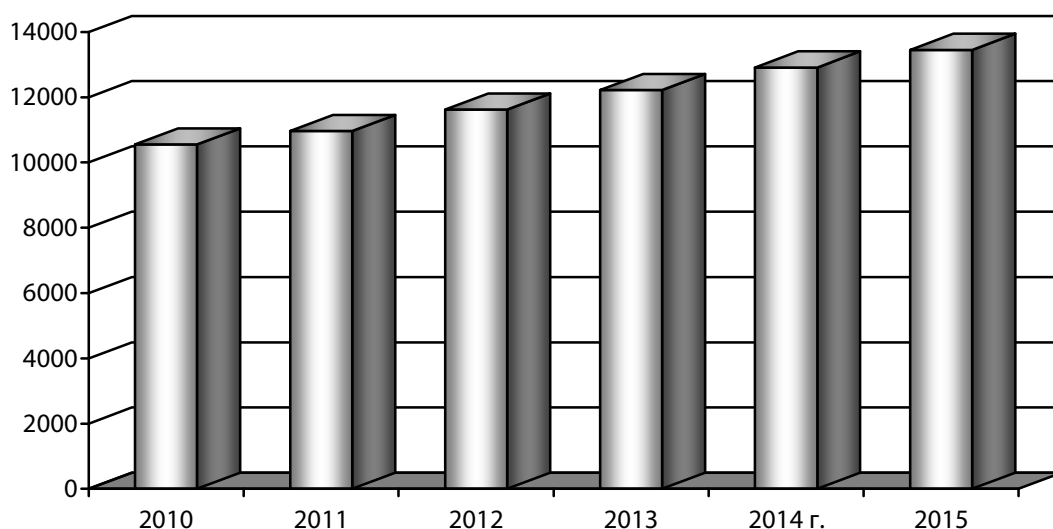


Fig. 1. Cattle and poultry for slaughter in live weight in farms of all categories of RF, thousand tons

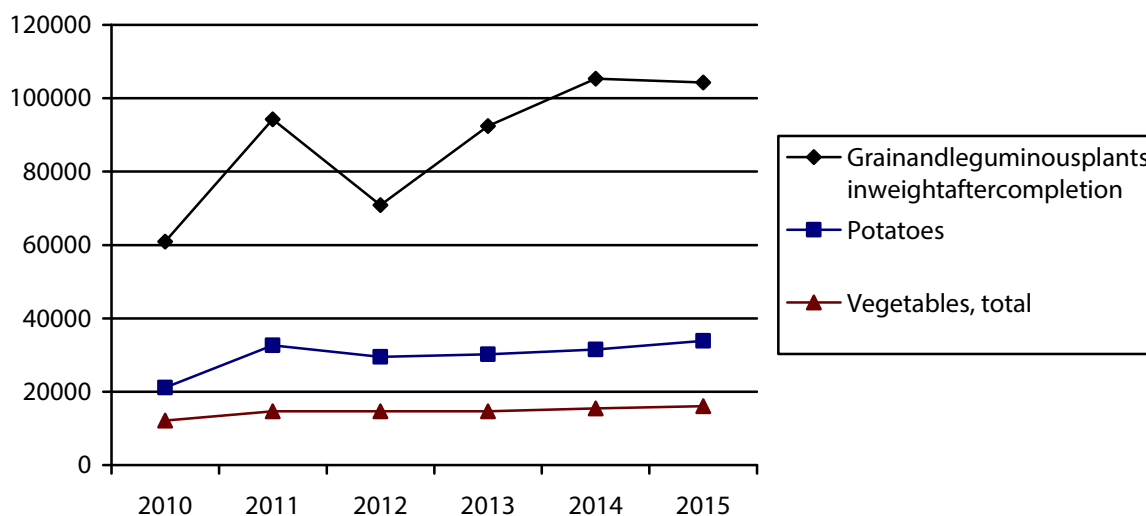


Fig. 2. Production of grain and leguminous plants, potatoes and vegetables in farms of all categories of RF, thousand tons

³ In 2014–2015, the general volumes of agricultural commodities production were shown with the account of the Crimean Federal District. But there is no essential influence on present tendencies. So, for example, the share of the region in All-Russian volumes of production in 2015 amounted in cattle and poultry for slaughter in live weight 1.09 % and in milk — 0.75 %.

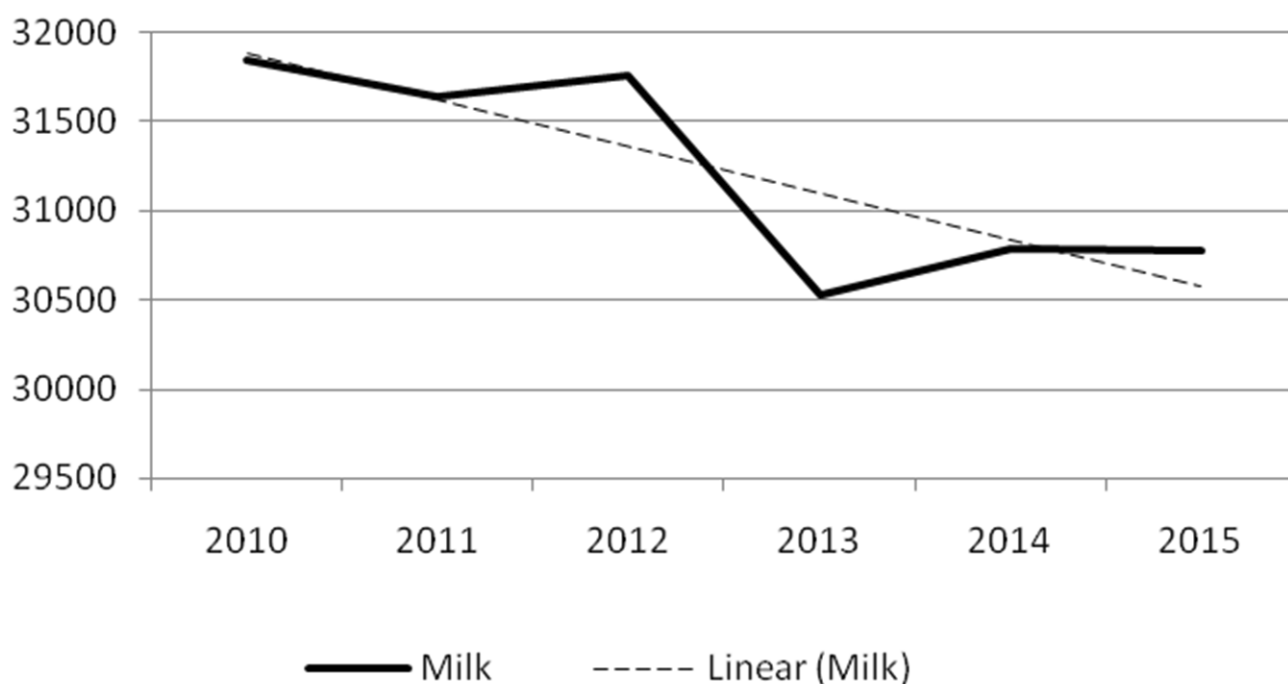


Fig. 3. Production of milk in the farms of all categories of RF, thousand tons

years, it is necessary to increase, for example, the production of livestock and poultry for slaughter by 7.5 %, and grain – by 10.2 %. It should be noted that the level of self-sufficiency for meat designated in the Doctrine of food security will be exceeded.

The problem of achieving the threshold value of the State Program on milk production by 2020 remains complex, as this will require an increase in the volumes of its production on 24 % for five years (at the present tendency of its decrease; Figure 3).

The main reasons for the decrease in its production are considered below. And if to eliminate them, there will be taken and implemented the relevant measures, the task can be solved even a bit later.

In general, it can be concluded that the implementation of the Program will allow solving the first strategic objective – ensuring the country’s foodstuff independence based on import substitution.

However, in order to eliminate or reduce the negative impact of new challenges in the process of its implementation, to identify the most problematic issues, to evaluate the progress and results of implementation of the State Program objectively, it is advisable to do the following:

1. To decrease the quantitative content of applied valuation indexes. It is necessary, first of all, to refuse the great amount of the goals of the State Program among which there are a prior and minor ones.

Reducing the number of the objectives of the State Program will allow eliminating the imbalance and blur, and most importantly – to focus the attention of the state bodies of the management of agro-food industry to the solving of the priority tasks of limited financial resources by focusing on their achievement.

2. To structure the State Program giving it more logically structure, and consequently, clearer and argued conclusiveness and validity of the application of main arrangements directed to the achievement of declared goals. For example, there are two subprograms needed the largest amount of attracted financial resources and volumes of budgetary support: “Development of the subsector of plant-growing, processing and realization of plant-growing products” and “Development of the subsector of livestock, processing and realization of livestock products”. Except them, such subprograms as “Development of meat cattle”, “Development of vegetable-growing of open and protected ground and seed potato-growing”, “Development of milk cattle-breeding”, “Support of breeding, selection and seed growing”⁴ are being under realization. They could be included in independent categories in a subprogram of the development of subsectors of plant-growing and livestock. This also would promote to the more substantiated distribution of limited budget for its development.

⁴ Retrieved from: <http://pravo.gov.ru/proxy/ips/?docbody=&nd=102158516&rdk=&backlink=1> (date of access: 29.06.2016).

At the same time, the absence of a subprogram of the development of grain farming and grain market leads to their elemental functioning, numerous “discordances” of separate sectors, the subsectors and productions of grain-food subsectors, the breach of organizational-economic relations between them, the steadfast growth of production and transaction costs, weakening of the influence of the state on reproductive process in grain farming, the despecialization of grain production, the reduction of inter-regional exchange, the subdivision of integrated national grain market on locally closed markets in scales of separate regions. In whole, traditionally, nearly 40 % of the volume of national agroindustrial meat production directly or indirectly is connected with the use of grain resources. It is necessary that the grain farming has the priority-target principle of development and relies on quite sufficient and foreseeable financing.

3. To avoid the annual adjustment of the budgets of the main activities of the State Program more than for 10–15 % in either direction from the originally approved, do not change too often the terms of state support and to abolish the principle of co-financing, which is necessary to significantly strengthen the scientific support of the State Program in terms of creating a more effective system for the forecasting and planning its key activities at the federal and regional levels, their balance on financial resources. It should be taken into account that the support of the profitability of agriculture on the level of 10–15 % (without an account of inflation), though it is necessary to have its level not below 27–30 % for guaranteed provision of its realization.

4. To make better the use of the State Program of an organizational-economic mechanism aimed at the effective use of territorial competitive advantages of the country related to the sustainable territorial and sectoral division of labor in agricultural production.

For Russia, which occupies the first place in the world by the size of the territory and is characterized by a significant diversity of natural, economic, social and other conditions, the regional dimension for efficient agriculture always has and will be of great importance.

The improvement of the territorial and sectoral division of labor in agricultural production is the backbone of the development of the agrarian sector of the economy. The implementation of the Federal law "On strategic planning in the Russian Federation" must promote it. The development of the spatial development strategy and schemes of spatial planning of the country and every region is provided for in the Article 11 of the Law.

This will require:

— the elaboration of the All-Russian scheme for the development of agroindustrial production, on which base, it is reasonable to form the specialized zones of production of separate types of agricultural products with the account of the possible development of the sectors of food and processing industry, the creation of regional and inter-regional commodity clusters;

— the perfection of the organizational-economic mechanism providing the improvement of the use of the bioclimatic and agrarian potential of the country and its separate regions;

— the creation of developed production infrastructure and logistic supply of production and sales of agricultural products, raw material and food, first of all, in zones and regions of their specialization, improvement of inter-regional exchange;

— the coordination of the joint activities of the Eurasian Economic Union in limits of realization of the general scheme of the territorial-sectoral labor division of its countries-participants in AIC.

5. To take into account the present tendencies in the mechanism of the provision of food security of the country, especially in the period of agro-food import substitution. It is known that main agricultural commodity producers in the country are agricultural organizations, household agriculture, small farms. At present time, household agricultures of Russia produce 45.6 % of milk and 25.4 % of meat, 77.6 % of potatoes and 67.0 % of vegetables out of the total volume. However, this category of farms is not mentioned in the State Program (excluding the material, where we are talking about the Northern deer and herd horses).

It turns out that the role of farms in ensuring food security of the country is officially underestimated. And this, in its turn, absolves the state from responsibilities of their full support, at least in the sphere of the realization of the part of their products.

6. To strengthen the scientific support of the State Program on the stage of its development, as well as in the course of its realization, especially in the part of economic justification of financial resources and the possibilities for the implementation of different activities, and also the assessment of the results from the point of the efficiency of the use of financial and production resources.

7. The goal and the mechanisms to improve the living standards of the rural population are not clearly identified in the policy documents. In the sphere of the provision of many social public services (medical care, decent education), their commercialization is getting higher. Therefore, it would be useful to deliver and implement the goal of increasing the rural incomes at the state level.

The State Program does not give the answer to the most important question of the development of the agrarian sector in the conditions of globalization — how we can really increase the competitiveness of national agricultural commodities.

As already was noted, the need to improve the competitiveness of Russian agricultural products in national and foreign markets within the framework of the country's membership in the WTO was reflected in the basic goals of the State Program.

The analysis of the State Program's content with the aim of the specification of directions and activities on the increase of the competitiveness of agricultural products has shown the following.

There was written in the certificate, in the part "Aims of the State program": "Increase of the competitiveness of Russian agricultural products in national and foreign markets in the context of the Russia's WTO accession". In the list of tasks for the achievement of the program goals, the task of raising the competitiveness is not separately marked.

In Table 1, there are shown the data of the analysis of the content of the text of main subprograms of the State Program.

Table 1

Presence (+) or absence (–) of the word combination "increase of competitiveness" in the certificate of subprograms

Certificate of subprogram		Goals	Objectives	Indicators of implementation assessment
No.	name			
1	Development of the subsector of plant-growing, processing and realization of plant-growing products	+	–	–
2	Development of the subsector of cattle-breeding, processing and realization of cattle-breeding produce	–	–	–
3	Development of meat cattle-breeding	+	–	–
5	Technical and technological modernization, innovation development	+	–	–
6	Securing of the State program's realization	–	–	–
7	Development of vegetable-growing of open and protected ground and seed potatoes-growing	+	–	–
8	Development of milk cattle-breeding	–	+	–
9	Support of pedigree, selection and seed growing	+	–	–

From data of Table 1, it is clear that only five subprograms of eight including main goals indicated to the need of the competitiveness increase. These objectives are not shown in such important subprograms as "Development of livestock" (No. 2), "Provision of the realization of State Program" (No. 6), "Development of milk cattle-breeding" (No. 8), in the last one, it is mentioned only in objectives.

From the above-mentioned data, it can be concluded that specific tasks and activities in the areas of improving the competitiveness of agricultural products do not exist. The indicators of the assessment of the levels of competitiveness are absent in the program.

When assessing the quality of governance in the state system, the so-called indicators to evaluate the results of managerial influence are used. In the State Program, the indicators of the increase or decrease of the competitiveness are absent, as nobody has no responsibility for it.

The necessity for the real increase of competitiveness did not find its reflection in such important documents as the Concept of Sustainable Development of Agricultural Territories of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2020 (it was confirmed by the regulation of the Government of RF from 2010, November 30 No. 2136-p), Strategy of Sustainable Development of the Rural Territories of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2030 (it was confirmed by the Government of RF in 2015, February 2 No. 151-p)⁵.

⁵ Retrieved from: <http://government.ru/media/files/Fw1kbNXVJxQ.pdf> (date of access: 29.06.2016).

It is known that the possibilities of the production of competitive products promote the stable development of rural territories.

The objective of the increase of the competitiveness of national agricultural commodities is conditioned by the necessity of solving some problems of national scale.

1. Agricultural raw material and the products of its processing must be considered in perspective as the main trend in the export policy of the country. In all developed countries, the energy sources, alternative hydrocarbons are searched. There are oil and gas deposits in many countries, with more profitable conditions of their extraction. The inter-country competitiveness will intensify. With regard to agricultural production, Russia with its vast land resources can be most competitive.

“According to the expert estimates, the total volume of the Russian exports of agricultural products and food can reach 50–60 billion dollars by 2030” [1, p. 9]. That is, these products must be competitive, which will require the maximum use of all existing competitive advantages, which are usually used in foreign practice [2–6].

2. The solution of the real increase of agrarian sector’s competitiveness will allow to solve such private tasks as the increase of profits and welfare of the rural population. What will allow to change the prevalent rejection of rural lifestyles in the public consciousness to create an idea about the creative nature of agricultural labor, about its great social utility and economic feasibility?

3. The possibility of the specification of strategic trends in the development of sectors serving the agriculture will appear.

The development of the strategy for an increase of the agrarian sector’s competitiveness and the program of its realization assumes the correction of many present interdependent components in macroeconomics as well as directly in the agricultural sector.

In Figure 4, there are shown the factors influencing the increase or decrease of the competitiveness of agricultural commodity.

In the current macroeconomic system, the reduction of competitiveness is influenced by the unequal cross-sectoral exchange and insufficient subsidizing of the agrarian sector for the liquidation of its negative influence. This is the main reason of low profitability of agricultural production and does not contribute to acceptable credit system for the sector. Taken together, these factors complicate the process of modernization in agriculture and thus, impede the increase of competitiveness. The low wages of farmers do not encourage the efficient organization of production. At the same time, the increase of the wages without modernization of production reduces its profitability.

The leading economists of the agrarian sector – G. V. Bepakhotny [7], R. S. Gaysin [8], I. G. Ushachev [1] et al. constantly indicate the negative influence of macroeconomic policy realized in the system of AIC.

Among the key industry factors impacting the competitiveness, there should be chosen the possible one in the scale of the country with a great diversity of its climatic and natural conditions of the territorial-sectoral specialization of agricultural production, allowing the effective use of the advantages of the territorial-sectoral division of labor.

The possibilities for the increase of the competitiveness of national agricultural products at the expense of the use of differences in natural-climatic conditions of agricultural production in the country, to our view, are not seriously taken on the state and regional levels, though, in Russian conditions, it should not be taken into account.

The real increase of competitiveness will lead to the decrease in workplaces, and consequently, in rural population employment.

Therefore, solving the problem of competitiveness, it is necessary to solve, at the same time, the problems of the employment of available labor resources replaced by the new technologies.

On Figure 5, there is shown the possible trends of rural population employment.

In our opinion, in the short and medium term, in the first place, there should be supported the preservation and development of private farms promoting the self-employment of the rural population, its food self-sufficiency. In a future perspective, this category of households will contribute the preservation of the territorial integrity of the country to a certain extent.

The availability of this stable form of the economy and the necessity of support are clearly proved by I. N. Buzdalov [9], A. V. Petrikov [10], V. Ya. Uzun [11] et al.

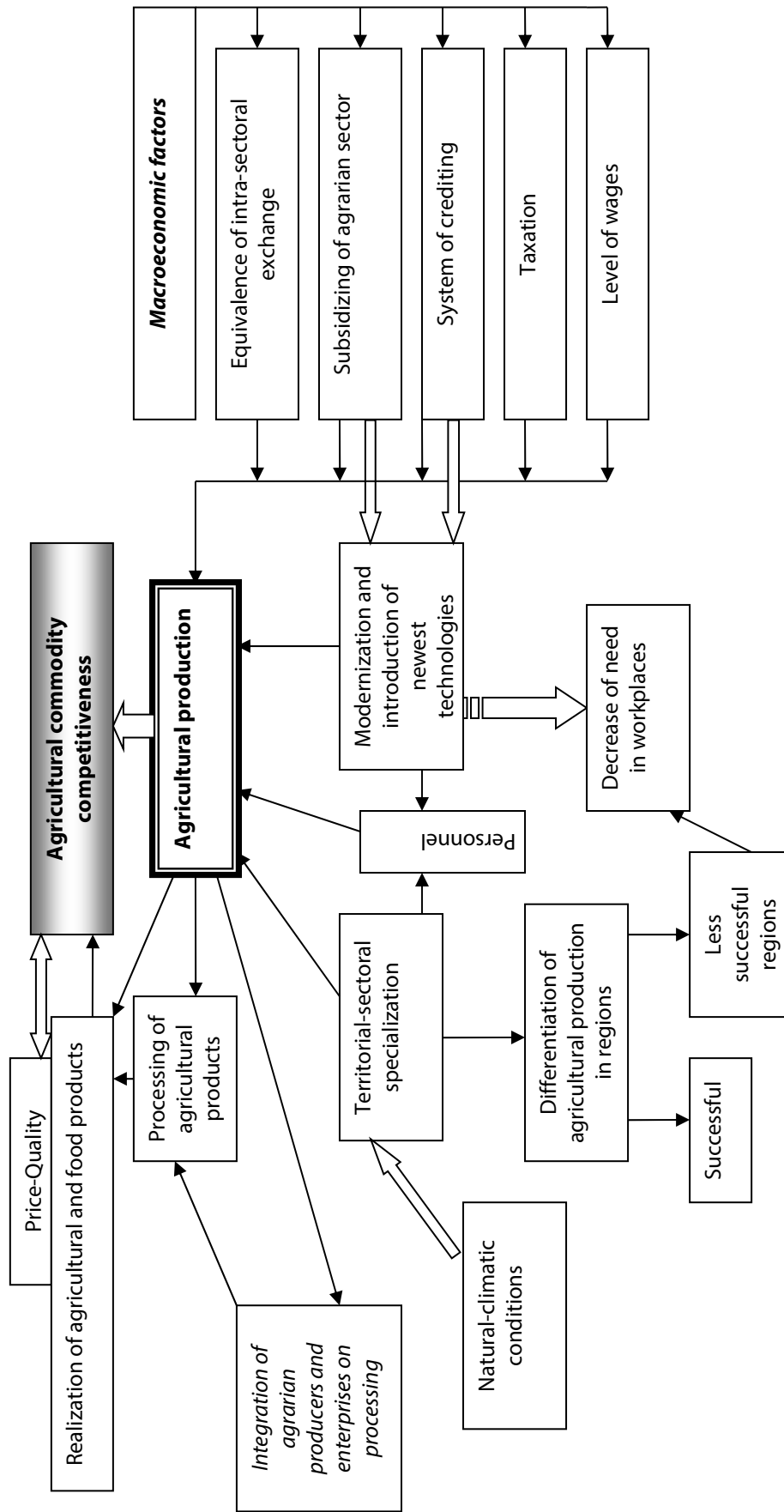


Fig. 4. Main factors of the influence on the level of the competitiveness of agricultural products

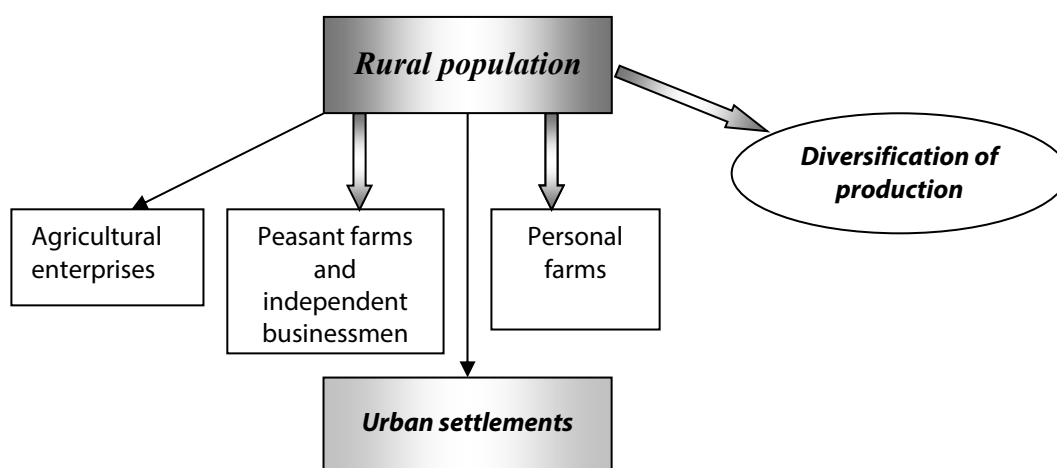


Fig. 5. Possible trends in the employment of rural population being unemployed as the result of agricultural production' competitiveness increase

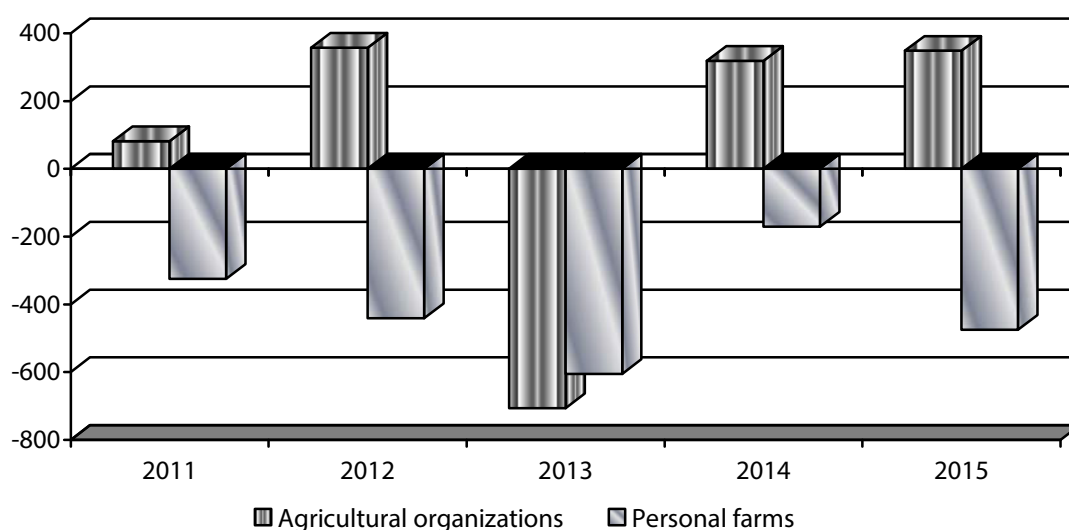


Fig. 6. Annual changes in the volumes of milk production in agricultural organizations and personal farms of RF, th.t

Currently, despite the governmental measures to increase the production of milk, this task is not solved yet in agricultural organizations. The main reason is a sharp decline in milk production in personal farms (Fig. 6).

The task of stabilization and a further increase of milk production in personal farms is primary for separate regions of the country. Let us consider it in the following example. In the personal farms of Rostov region, in 2015, there was produced 84.5 % of milk out of total volumes, in the Republic of Bashkortostan – 62.0 %, in the Altai region – 59.1 %. And, totally, in these three regions, in the personal farms, there was produced 4307.7 thousand tons of milk. Only private household agricultures of the Republic of Bashkortostan produce milk more (1123.8 th.t) than the agricultural organizations of the Udmurt Republic and the Sverdlovsk region together (868,7 th. t), though their share in total volume of production amounts 80.9 and 70.6 %, respectively. The state must determine the future preservation and development of this category of farms. It is important from the both the position of food self-sufficiency of rural population, the growth of its profits (at the expense of the increase of total output of these farms), and the preservation of the number of the rural population [13, 14].

Lately, the scientific community increasingly indicates the absence of sound strategies of the development of the Russian economy, including the agricultural sector. So, E.G. Abdulla-Zade, A.I. Filatov and K.I. Cherkasov give a proof on the example of AIC, that the strategy is necessary for effective development. The prognostic calculation of the volumes of its consumption “in the current year, in 5,10,15,30 and 45 years” is necessary to form the commodity production industry [14, p. 14].

Any strategy and program activities require the significant expenditures for their implementation. This is especially true for the sectors of the agro-food industry. But these costs, according to the foreign and domestic experience, are reasonable. "In 1990, the investments in the fixed capital of

agriculture and water management construction in rural areas have reached 18 % of the total volume of capital investments into the Russian economy. Instead of the loss of agricultural production, the profitability began to rise and reached 43 % in 1990, and in the entire financial-economic activity of the sector — 37 %. The wages of farmers amounted 95 % of the average level in economics" [15, p. 75].

It is known that the steady annual growth of agricultural production provides small farms. But as it was said by V. Bashmachnikov, these "successes are characteristic only for forward personal farms mainly for farmers of so-called "Silaev's call", the farmers of the first wave, supported by the state at the start and managed to expand the family agribusiness" [16, p. 16]. This also indicates the effectiveness of timely support of the agricultural sector development.

Conclusion

The State Program for the development of agriculture and regulation of agricultural product, raw materials and food markets for 2013–2020, with financial support in the amount allowed by WTO, can become a basic factor of accelerated import substitution in individual types, as well as the foundation of a new national agrarian policy of the Eurasian Economic Union and the Union State. With the financial support, at least in the amount allowed by WTO, it can become a basic factor for the achievement of accelerated import substitution in individual types, as well as the foundation of a new national agricultural policy.

At the initial period of reforming, the relatively low solvent demand of the population at the agro-food market, high-cost agricultural production remaining from the Soviet period, the open borders for the import of foodstuff and agricultural raw materials led to a sharp decline in the production of domestic agricultural products as well as to a corresponding increase in food imports. In present conditions, the problem of food security was solved not by means of the development of domestic competitive agricultural production but with the help of the increase of food import.

The large financial investments and highly skilled regulation in the system of macroeconomic processes, including the elimination of the negative effects of increased unequal inter-sectoral exchange were not required. However, this led to the deterioration of the socio-economic situation of a considerable part of the rural population, the loss of food independence of the country.

At the globalization of national economies, the conditions for production of competitive agricultural products are formed primarily at the state level through the establishment of appropriate macroeconomic conditions. The worse climatic and technological conditions of production are in comparison with the conditions of the leading countries-exporters of foodstuff and agricultural raw materials, the greater must be the state support of agricultural producers and available system of crediting of agrarian business.

The need to improve the competitiveness of agricultural products, many interrelated and opposing factors of macroeconomic and sectoral nature that affect the formation of its level require the development and scientific justification of the national strategy for improving the competitiveness of agro-food industry of the country, employment and incomes of the rural population up to 2030 and later.

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