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THE DAIRY INDUSTRY IN POLAND DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC®

Branża mleczarska w Polsce w czasie pandemii koronawirusa®

The COVID-19 virus pandemic, which appeared in Poland at the beginning of March 2020, caused practically the entire economy to stop for almost 2 months. One of the food industries affected by the COVID19 pandemic is the dairy industry. The dairy industry is one of the basic sectors of the domestic agri-food sector. In Poland, milk is one of the most important agricultural products – it has the highest share (16.3% in 2015) in commercial agricultural production. In the preparation of the article, the literature on the subject was used, which was used to present and determine the significance of the introduced restrictions related to the COVID19 pandemic on the dairy industry in Poland. The article uses simple descriptive and cause-effect methods. Based on the analyzes, it was found that the slowdown in the economy and the closure of the borders caused by the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to a decline in the value of exports of dairy products, and dairy companies were obliged to introduce detailed hygienic and sanitary restrictions in connection with the situation related to the coronavirus pandemic. In the obligation of each employee to wear a protective mask and gloves, as well as to observe hygiene by frequent disinfection of hands and maintaining distances between work stations.

Key words: dairy industry, COVID-19 pandemic, effects of the pandemic.

Pandemia wirusa COVID-19, która w Polsce pojawiła się na początku marca 2020 roku spowodowała, że na prawie 2 miesiące praktycznie cała gospodarka stanęła. Jedną z branż przemysłu spożywczego, która odczuwa skutki pandemii COVID19 jest branża mleczarska. Branża mleczarska tworzy jeden z podstawowych działów krajowego sektora rolno-spożywczego. W Polsce mleko należy do najważniejszych produktów rolniczych – ma najwyższy udział (w 2015 roku 16,3%) w towarowej produkcji rolnej. W opracowaniu artykułu wykorzystano literaturę przedmiotu, która posłużyła do przedstawienia i określenia znaczenia wprowadzonych ograniczeń związanych z pandemią COVID19 na branżę mleczarską w Polsce. W artykule zastosowano proste metody opisowe i przyczynowo-skutkowe. Na podstawie przeprowadzonych analiz stwierdzono, że zahamowanie gospodarki oraz zamknięcie granic spowodowane pandemią COVID-19 przyczyniło się do spadku wartości eksportu artykułów mleczarskich, a przedsiębiorstwa mleczarskie w związku z zaistniałą sytuacją związaną z pandemią koronawirusa zostały zobowiązane do wprowadzenia szczegółowych restrykcji higieniczno – sanitarnych, polegających m.in. na zobowiązaniu każdego pracownika do noszenia maseczki ochronnej oraz rękawiczek, a także do przestrzegania higieny poprzez częstą dezynfekcję rąk i zachowywania odległości między stanowiskami pracy.

Słowa kluczowe: branża mleczarska, pandemia COVID-19, skutki pandemii.

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic, which appeared in Poland at the beginning of March 2020, meant that practically the entire economy stopped for almost 2 months. Some companies that had such an opportunity decided to introduce remote work, others had to stop production and wait for the regulation that would remove the restrictions, and some companies were forced to reduce employment due to the effects of COVID 19 in our country [18].

One of the food industries affected by the COVID19 pandemic is the dairy industry. The dairy industry is one of the basic sectors of the domestic agri-food sector. In Poland, milk is one of the most important agricultural products – it has

the highest share (16.3% in 2015) in commercial agricultural production [10]. The Polish dairy industry is a constant source of income for people working in this sector and guarantees food for a significant number of farms [6, 10].

The aim of the article was to present and determine the significance of the introduced restrictions related to the COVID19 pandemic on the dairy industry in Poland by answering the question of how the coronavirus pandemic changed the functioning of dairy enterprises and farms specializing in milk production. The research was based on a literature study and on the example of activities undertaken by MLEKOVITA and OSM Włoszczowa, i.e. two dairy enterprises operating in Poland.

WHAT IS COVID19?

The COVID-19 coronavirus was discovered in late December 2019 in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. The source of the infection was a fish and seafood market, and more precisely, wild animals sold there. The COVID-19 coronavirus is of the same type of virus as SARS and MERS. It can be transmitted from person to person by droplets. Wuhan city authorities, fearing the spread of the virus, decided to close the city. Most flights were canceled, public transport was restricted and people were told to stay home. The coronavirus, also known as the “Wuhan virus”, has, however, managed to spread to other parts of China, as well as go beyond its borders. The COVID-19 coronavirus produces flu-like symptoms. The patient develops high fever and breathing problems. At the moment, there is no effective drug to fight the virus, but scientists say drugs used to treat HIV may help. Work is also underway on a vaccine against a new type of coronavirus [19].

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DAIRY INDUSTRY IN POLAND

Milk produced on farms and used as a raw material in the processing process is one of the most developed and important items of trade in the food economy. Dairy cattle farming, milk processing and trade in dairy products occupy an important place in the food economy of many countries of the world, including Poland. This is due to the importance of milk production for the income of agricultural producers (as well as all elements beyond the sole sale of milk, such as the maintenance of meadows and pastures for the production of roughage, the use of manure in organic fertilization) and the role of dairy products in the nutrition of the population.

Dairy industry is considered to be a dynamically changing area of economic activity, subject to a constant process of changes [11, 16]. The dairy sector, in combination with milk production at farm level, forms one of the basic sectors of the domestic and EU agri-food sector. In Poland, milk is one of the most important agricultural products - it has the highest share in commercial agricultural production. The agri-food industry is one of the most important and fastest growing branches of the Polish economy, despite the use of traditional technologies [4, 9]. The food industry plays a significant role in the creation of gross domestic product, in international trade and employment [1]. When examining the industry, one should also analyze the economic indicators that characterize its functioning, thanks to which we can assess its economic condition in the economy. One of the branches of the food industry, which is considered to be a dynamically changing area of economic activity, undergoing a constant process of changes, is the dairy industry [2, 3, 11, 16].

The dairy industry is one of the most important sectors of the food industry in Poland. After sixteen years of membership in the EU, the Polish dairy industry stands out from other EU countries in terms of the development of internal demand for dairy products (in 2018 the consumption of milk and products in Poland amounted to 224 l per capita, which results in an increase of 12% compared to until 2005) [12]. From the point of view of international competitiveness, the advantage of the Polish milk market is the relatively low price of the raw material (according to GUS data, in 2019 the average purchase

price of milk was around PLN 134 / hl, which stimulates the export of milk and its products) [7, 15]. Since the accession to the EU, the process of sector concentration and production specialization has been observed. The number of farms keeping cows has decreased by more than 40%, the number of wholesalers more than 60% and direct suppliers more than 80%. What distinguishes the Polish dairy sector from the rest of the new Member States is the fact that although in most of them the production of milk and milk products has decreased in recent years, it has increased in Poland. In Poland, there are relatively good natural conditions for cattle breeding. These are mainly regions of central and north-eastern Poland, with a large share of meadows and pastures – there it is possible to develop production in line with traditional animal grazing, which is less susceptible to fluctuations in the supply and prices of forage plants (as opposed to the alcove system). In addition, it creates traditional dairy products with high added value much more often than in industrial production, and contributes to the sustainable development of rural areas through the employment structure [8]. Poland is the fourth producer of dairy products in the EU with an 8% market share [5, 17].

METHODS AND MATERIALS

The research material included, first of all, the literature on the subject, which contributed to defining the significance of the restrictions introduced in the COVID19 pandemic on the dairy industry in Poland. As part of the article, the following research problem was demonstrated: The coronavirus pandemic changed the functioning of dairy enterprises and farms specializing in milk production. The descriptive and cause-and-effect methods were used in the presentation of the research results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION COVID19 EFFECTS ON THE DAIRY INDUSTRY

About 30% of Polish dairy production has to be exported because the domestic market is unable to absorb it. Meanwhile, the coronavirus, which disrupted supply chains and largely closed borders, thwarted the plans of dairy companies not only in Poland, but also throughout the European Union. According to preliminary data (GUS), in 2019 the value of Polish exports in total amounted to EUR 235.8 billion and was 5.5% higher than in the previous year. The share of agri-food exports in total exports was 13.3%, the same as in 2018. This is largely due to the dairy industry, which directs approximately 30–35% of its production to foreign markets. Preliminary data of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development show that in the first quarter of 2020, the export of dairy products increased compared to the first quarter of 2019 (from 398 931 to 407 388 tons), mainly due to higher sales of cheese, cottage cheese and whey. According to the report of the Institute of Business, in the first quarter of 2020, the Mlekovita Group exported products worth PLN 400 million (35% of production), which was 30% more than in the first quarter of 2019. OSM Giżycko sold goods worth PLN 120 million abroad and it was 80% of the cooperative's production. Among the countries that adopted significantly larger amounts of Polish milk and cream are Yemen, Mexico, China and Japan [20].

During the lockdown, producers tried to focus on promoting domestic consumption, which resulted in more milk sales, especially UHT and butter, when consumers bought products in stock. In turn, plants that had such an opportunity stored excess production. In December 2019, an expert of the Institute of Agricultural and Food Economics, Teresa Zdziarska, assessed the situation on the European milk market as positive, and the prices of almost all dairy products, except for butter, showed an upward trend. During the three quarters of 2019, an upward trend was also observed in production, including whole milk powder by 23.3%, whey (7.4%) or milk drinks other than yoghurt (4.9%) [20]. In March and April, a downward trend in the prices of dairy products in the EU was observed, including whole milk and skimmed milk powder, affected by a decline in world demand. As emphasized by analysts of PKO Bank Polski (Agro Nawigator on May 5), the European Commission forecast that in 2020 EU exports of skimmed milk powder will decrease by 17% compared to the record level from 2019, and butter – by 10%, while increase in production (due to the fact that producers switched to the production of products with greater durability – milk powders and butter). In response to negative market changes, the European Commission prepared a proposal of a subsidy program for the private storage of dairy products (skimmed milk powder, butter, cheese) aimed at restoring the balance on the EU milk market [20].

According to experts, the pandemic will slightly change sales and consumer habits, for example by increasing grocery shopping online. However, it is hard to expect that the domestic market will use up all surplus production, and Poles will completely give up products manufactured abroad [20].

EFFECTS OF COVID-19 PANDEMI IN OSM WŁOSZCZOWA

The management of OSM Włoszczowa, which observed the growing trend of COVID-19 incidence in Europe, decided that in order for the plant to function without major disruptions, protecting the health of all employees must be a priority. Therefore, already on March 9 this year, i.e. a few days earlier, before the state of epidemiological emergency was announced in Poland, which took place on March 14 this year, a strict sanitary and hygienic regime was introduced in OSM Włoszczowa. At OSM Włoszczowa, as a dairy enterprise, wearing protective masks and gloves by employees operating production lines has been a standard for many years. And from March 9 this year. this obligation also applies to all persons employed in the plant and entering and entering the company. Initially, it was a big surprise for the drivers from the outside, receiving the products of OSM Włoszczowa, because they were not equipped with masks, so the plant made them available from its own resources. Drivers who transport raw materials from farms, who were recommended to distance themselves as much as possible, were also quickly trained; practically seeing the farmers. Milk receipts are left at the agreed place [21].

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in an increase in spending on hygiene products at OSM Włoszczowa. Hygiene expenses for a food company are natural, but the coronavirus pandemic has caused a shortage of them. Costs

for hygiene and compliance with sanitary standards are always borne by dairy companies before a pandemic occurs, and they were not high. However, these costs became more apparent as hygiene measures increased dramatically. An example can be masks, the price of which increased from a few dozen groszy to PLN 6-8. Unfortunately, the dairy companies were forced to accept the increase in these costs because the priority was to protect the health of the workers, without whom the plant could not function [21].

The situation related to the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic downturn for a period of two months resulted in an economic collapse on the market in March and April.

The pandemic caused many unfavorable changes on the milk market, including a downward trend in exports was observed at OSM Włoszczowa. Exports abroad fell in March, which was caused by the situation in China. The problem was with logistics, there was a shortage of containers stuck in Chinese ports. Initially, the problem of exports concerned milk powders, and the cooperative in Włoszczowa sells abroad about 90% of powdered whey. Later, block cheese exports suffered greatly due to the situation in Europe. Interest in ready-to-eat, portioned and packaged products has increased. Meanwhile, block cheeses had to be cut in the store and packed, which in the eyes of consumers could pose a threat. In March and April, OSM Włoszczowa recorded a significant drop in exports, which included dried whey and cheese in blocks. Also on the domestic market in March and April sales were not conducive to restrictions in shops concerning both consumers and sellers. The restrictions also applied to gastronomy and hotels, which resulted in a 90% decrease in turnover on the HoReCa market. It can be said that this market segment in the dairy industry has ceased to function. Before the pandemic, the HoReCa market constituted only about 5% of OSM Włoszczowa's turnover, so it was not a big problem for the company. It was felt, first of all, by dairies very much involved in supplying schools, hotels and restaurants with dairy products [21].

Another effect of the COVID-19 pandemic at OSM Włoszczowa was observed in the category of prices that were below production costs. Disruptions in the milk market are reflected in the prices of finished products. Among the global products, the price of skimmed milk powder decreased the most. It cost 11.5 PLN / kg, and before Easter only 7.5 PLN / kg. After Christmas, the prices of this product showed an upward trend, and now you can get PLN 9.2 per kilo. On the other hand, producers from Western Europe were satisfied with very low cheese prices, i.e. 2.3–2.4 EUR / kg, and even 2 EUR / kg. Before the pandemic, EUR 3.1–3.2 could be obtained per kilogram of Dutch cheese. The cheeses produced by OSM Włoszczowa are mainly exported to the Czech Republic and Slovakia, but due to low prices, it was not decided to sell. It is difficult to accept the price of PLN 9 per kilogram of cheese, when its production costs PLN 14. In this situation, OSM Włoszczowa was accumulating stocks, which in practice means freezing the capital. At the end of April, the warehouses of OSM Włoszczowa were full to the brim. Sales started in May and prices rose to an acceptable level. The drop in exports prompted the management board of OSM Włoszczowa to lower the payment for milk in April by an average of PLN 0.05 / liter [21].

Due to the difficult financial situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, lower revenues from milk sales were observed. For cattle farmers and dairy producers, uninterrupted reception of white raw material is crucial. Most of the dairy plants complied with the sanitary and hygienic requirements set by the Polish authorities, thanks to which farmers running farms specializing in milk production do not have problems with receiving the raw material. From a dairy cooperative collecting milk, a farmer received a notification about the obligatory equipping of tanker truck drivers with masks and protective gloves, and about the need to distance himself from other people outside the farm. However, the continued coronavirus pandemic contributed to a decline in the purchase price of milk per liter of raw material. In April this year, the farmer received PLN 0.05 less per liter of raw material. The dairy paid 1.4 zlotys for a liter of milk containing 4.1% fat and 3.3% protein. The reductions were accompanied by an increase in the prices of some inputs. In the initial period of the pandemic, a ton of extraction soybean meal went up by PLN 300, and by 200 PLN more one had to pay for a ton of extraction rapeseed meal. In the opinion of farmers, the period of the application of strict sanitary regulations resulting from the announcement of an epidemic threat also has positive sides. It was an opportunity to strengthen relationships with loved ones, in line with the slogan "Stay at home". Various games had to be organized for children not attending school. The bursting energy aroused interest in the work in the cowshed. Farmers positively evaluate the campaign "Thank you for drinking milk", which also has a family aspect. Entire families of breeders are eagerly involved in photo sessions posted on social networks such as Facebook [21].

GOOD PRACTICES FROM MLEKOVITE DURING THE COVID19 PANDEMIC

SM Mlekovita is the largest dairy company and the largest producer and exporter of dairy products in Central and Eastern Europe. It is a company with an established reputation in the world, the leader of the List of 1000 Greatest Companies in the Food Industry in Poland and the most valuable brand in the production sector of the Polish economy. SM Mlekovita is a company with 100% Polish capital. The plant, which was established in 1928 in Wysokie Mazowieckie, employed 30 people and dealt exclusively with the production of cheese and butter. Currently, the company's development policy pursued consistently by SM Mlekovit means that after 90 years of operation its potential is created by: excellent breeders, modernized and still developing farms, diligence, entrepreneurship and great resourcefulness of farmers, 15 thousand milk suppliers, 20 production plants, 160 lines production centers, 32 own distribution centers, including the first company wholesalers in the Cash & Carry format, over 100 company stores in their own retail network operating under the MLEKOVITKA brand, permission to export to 159 countries on all continents, 5,000 employees, approx. 20% share in the Polish market, a well-recognized brand based on the message: "Polish" [13]. MLEKOVITA's market success is invariably based on 5 pillars: high-quality raw material and products; a recognizable and well-associated brand, a modern and efficient production, logistics and trade system; good strategy and independent and responsible managers

at all levels of the organization; experienced, committed and motivated crew.

As the leader of the Polish dairy industry, "MLEKOVITA" fulfills its socially responsible obligation, carries out orders, functions better and better and we do not slow down, and the production processes run properly. As an inherent agricultural company, it has experience in dealing with specific disease prevention situations, as previously the company had to deal with mad cow disease, avian influenza and ASF [22].

At the time of the coronavirus pandemic, the management board of "MLEKOVITY" introduced limitations in interpersonal contacts to the necessary minimum, using the possibility of remote work, including sending documents by electronic means and cashless transactions. For preventive purposes, personnel surveys were introduced, following local recommendations in farms and production plants in accordance with the recommendations of the Polish government [22].

The MLEKOVITA Group in its 20 production plants processes 8 million liters of milk from Polish suppliers every day, works 7 days a week in a three-shift system. The most important priority is to ensure the supply of products to the Polish market, which is why domestic orders were carried out first. In order to better supply consumers, 32 wholesalers and nearly 130 MLEKOVITKA brand stores [22] are at their disposal.

To meet the expectations of consumers, MLEKOVITA produces both the so-called long shelf life, such as UHT milk, butter or cheese, and the production of products with special health properties, i.e. increasing immunity, i.e. DarPro and WPC 80, was introduced. In addition, direct deliveries to the homes of people under quarantine were introduced, so that no one there was no shortage of dairy products [22].

SUMMARY

Based on a review of the literature on the subject and the conducted research analyzes to determine the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the financial situation of selected dairy enterprises in Poland, it can be concluded that:

- ◆ The slowdown of the economy and the closure of borders caused by the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to a decline in the value of exports of dairy products;
- ◆ Dairy enterprises, in connection with the situation related to the coronavirus pandemic, have been obliged to introduce detailed hygienic and sanitary restrictions, including on the obligation of each employee to wear a protective mask and gloves, as well as to observe hygiene by frequent disinfection of hands and maintaining distances between work stations;
- ◆ Dairy companies incurred increased expenses on hygiene products in the period from March to April, which was related to the increase in prices for these products due to the increased demand caused by the COVID-19 pandemic;
- ◆ The continuing coronavirus pandemic caused a drop in the price of milk per liter, which contributed to the deterioration of the financial situation of farms specializing in milk production.

Due to the long-standing coronavirus pandemic, which caused the deterioration of the financial situation of dairy enterprises and farms specializing in milk production from August 13 this year, applications may be submitted by agricultural producers who are threatened with a loss of financial liquidity due to restrictions on the agricultural market due to the COVID-19 epidemic and who continue to suffer the financial consequences of last year's drought, hurricane, hail, downpour, spring frosts and floods, and their applications for aid submitted in 2019 in connection with the occurrence of these adverse events, have not been considered. Therefore, agricultural producers whose farms are threatened with a loss of financial liquidity due to restrictions on the agricultural market due to the COVID-19 epidemic and who have not been granted the aid indicated in § 13v para. 1 of the Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 27 January 2015 on the detailed scope and methods of implementation of certain tasks of the Agency for Restructuring and Modernization of Agriculture, after they waive the right to the aid referred to in the above-mentioned § 13v section 1 of the regulation. This means that the pending application must be withdrawn. The declaration on the withdrawal of the application submitted in 2019 is included in the content of the currently submitted application. The amount of aid is determined in accordance with the provisions of § 13v of the above-mentioned regulation. Applications should be submitted to the head of the poviata office of the Agency for Restructuring and Modernization of Agriculture competent for the place of residence or the seat of the agricultural producer, on the form specified by the President of ARMA. Aid may be granted by ARMA only until 31/12/2020 and must be paid by that date. There is no set deadline for submitting applications, but submitting the application as soon as possible guarantees faster payment of the aid. The aid will be in the form of public aid granted on the basis of the decision of the European Commission No. SA.58105 (2020 / N) of July 31, 2020. Legal basis: § 13 of the Regulation of the Council of Ministers of January 27, 2015 on the detailed scope and methods of implementation certain tasks of the Agency for Restructuring and Modernization of Agriculture (Journal of Laws, item 187, as amended) – change published in 2020, in Journal U. item 1375 [14].

National authorities and the EU are aware that maintaining the continuity of food supplies is one of the most important issues in the era of the epidemic. It must be admitted that so far the Polish government responds quickly to the reported problems and helps dairy companies to overcome emerging difficulties.

PODSUMOWANIE

W oparciu o przegląd literatury przedmiotu oraz przeprowadzone analizy badawcze w zakresie określenia wpływu pandemii COVID-19 na sytuację finansową wybranych przedsiębiorstw mleczarskich w Polsce można stwierdzić, że:

- ♦ Zahamowanie gospodarki oraz zamknięcie granic spowodowane pandemią COVID-19 przyczyniło się do spadku wartości eksportu artykułów mleczarskich.
- ♦ Przedsiębiorstwa mleczarskie w związku z zaistniałą sytuacją związaną z pandemią koronawirusa zostały zobowiązane do wprowadzenia szczegółowych restrykcji higieniczno – sanitarnych, polegających m.in. na zobowiązaniu

każdego pracownika do noszenia maseczki ochronnej oraz rękawiczek, a także do przestrzegania higieny poprzez częstą dezynfekcję rąk i zachowywania odległości między stanowiskami pracy.

- ♦ Przedsiębiorstwa mleczarskie w okresie od marca do kwietnia poniosły zwiększone wydatki na środki higieniczne, co związane było ze wzrostem cen na te środki, w związku ze zmożonym zapotrzebowaniem spowodowanym pandemią COVID-19.
- ♦ Utrzymująca się pandemia koronawirusa spowodowała spadek ceny za litr mleka, co przyczyniło się do pogorszenia sytuacji finansowej gospodarstw specjalizujących się w produkcji mleka.

W związku z długotrwałe utrzymującą się pandemią koronawirusa, która spowodowała pogorszenie sytuacji finansowej przedsiębiorstw mleczarskich oraz gospodarstw specjalizujących się w produkcji mleka, od dnia 13 sierpnia bieżącego roku wnioski mogą składać producenci rolni, którym zagraża utrata płynności finansowej w związku z ograniczeniami na rynku rolnym spowodowanymi epidemią COVID-19 i którzy w dalszym ciągu odczuwają skutki finansowe zeszłorocznej suszy, huraganu, gradu, ulewy, wiosennych przymrozków i powodzi, a ich wnioski o pomoc złożone w 2019 r. w związku z wystąpieniem tych niekorzystnych zjawisk, nie zostały rozpatrzone. O pomoc mogą ubiegać się więc producenci rolni, których gospodarstwo jest zagrożone utratą płynności finansowej w związku z ograniczeniami na rynku rolnym spowodowanymi epidemią COVID-19 oraz którym nie została przyznana pomoc wskazana w § 13v ust. 1 rozporządzenia Rady Ministrów z dnia 27 stycznia 2015 r. w sprawie *szczegółowego zakresu i sposobów realizacji niektórych zadań Agencji Restrukturyzacji i Modernizacji Rolnictwa*, po zrzeczeniu się przez nich prawa do pomocy, o której mowa w ww. § 13v ust. 1 rozporządzenia. Oznacza to konieczność wycofania wniosku oczekującego na rozpatrzenie. Oświadczenie o wycofaniu wniosku złożonego w 2019 r. jest zawarte w treści aktualnie składanego wniosku. Wysokość pomocy ustalana jest zgodnie z przepisami § 13v ww. rozporządzenia. Wniosek należy składać do kierownika biura powiatowego Agencji Restrukturyzacji i Modernizacji Rolnictwa właściwego ze względu na miejsce zamieszkania albo siedzibę producenta rolnego, na formularzu określonym przez Prezesa ARiMR. **Pomoc może zostać przyznana przez ARiMR tylko do dnia 31.12.2020 r. i do tego terminu musi zostać wypłacona.** Nie został ustalony końcowy termin składania wniosków, jednak jak najszybsze złożenie wniosku gwarantuje szybszą wypłatę pomocy. Pomoc będzie miała **charakter pomocy publicznej** przyznanej na podstawie decyzji Komisji Europejskiej nr SA.58105 (2020 / N) z dnia 31.07.2020 r. **Podstawa prawna:** § 13z rozporządzenia Rady Ministrów z dnia 27 stycznia 2015 r. w sprawie *szczegółowego zakresu i sposobów realizacji niektórych zadań Agencji Restrukturyzacji i Modernizacji Rolnictwa* (Dz. U. poz. 187, z późn. zm.) – zmiana opublikowana w 2020 r., w Dz. U. poz.1375 [14].

Władze krajowe, jak i UE zdają sobie sprawę, że utrzymanie ciągłości dostaw produktów żywnościowych jest jednym z najważniejszych zagadnień w dobie epidemii. Trzeba przyznać, że póki co polski rząd reaguje szybko na zgłaszane problemy i na bieżąco pomaga przedsiębiorstwom mleczarskim w pokonywaniu pojawiających się trudności.

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