



UDC JEL Classification: Q15; Q10

Problems of Land Modernisation in Ukraine

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► **Abstract.** The necessity of improving land relations in the agricultural sector at the local, regional and national levels is becoming more urgent considering the objectives of the current reformed land use, an important component of which is the establishment of environmentally friendly and cost-effective mechanisms for land use in agriculture. The purpose of the study - highlight and justify the theoretical provisions of land relations in improving the situation in agricultural production. The theoretical provisions on the characteristics of land relations in market conditions and using agricultural land in the activities of the agro-industrial sector of Ukraine became the foundation for the study. General scientific methods of production management and knowledge of the processes of development of production land relations served to achieve the purpose of the study. Knowledge of the specifics of the agrarian sector, the real state of rural life, and involvement in the process of a qualitatively new state of the economy – the land market, is evidence that the market economy in content is self-supporting and determines: the comparison of costs with revenues from the sale of products; allows free enterprise, independence, responsibility and interest of the commodity producer; the implementation of the activities of the business entity, in the centre of which is a person and his vital social protection. The strategic principles of reforming land relations in agricultural production of the country as a prerequisite for their rational organisation at the present stage of management in rural regions have been developed. Application of theoretical provisions of land relations, their reform and establishment as a transformational process in agricultural production. The results of the study are identified as influential factors in the development of the land market in the new economic conditions

► **Keywords:** strategic principles, market economy, new agrarian system, land value, food supply, economic mechanism, peasants' interests

► Introduction

Ukraine as a state is increasingly entering the market system of the world community. Based on the international division of labour, it should determine its niche in the world economy. By all accounts, agriculture is such a niche. Therefore, finding a market for its products in the world is the primary task of the state. Its agrarian policy should be oriented to this. In economic terms, the state should ensure the most efficient use of natural and land resources

with a guarantee of improving the economic situation and achieving such volumes of production that would both provide full and high-quality nutrition for the population, and export competitive agricultural products and products of its processing with sustainable profits (Khodakivska, & Mohylnyi, 2018).

The real condition for the implementation of such a policy should be the recognition by all government bodies and spheres of activity of the

► **Suggested Citation:** Sabluk, P. (2021). Problems of land modernisation in Ukraine. *Ekonomika APK*, 28(10), 21-29.

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priority importance of the agricultural sector compared to all others, focusing efforts on the priority development of agro-industrial production as the largest consumer of the results of all spheres and industries in the domestic market.

It is impossible to improve the situation in agriculture without introducing a market mechanism based on modernisation. There was an opinion that it could be introduced faster in the agricultural sector than in other areas. However, this opinion is far from indisputable. It reflects insufficient knowledge of the specifics of the agricultural sector, the real state of the village and related sectors of the agro-industrial complex. Such a simplified perception is based on formal analogies with Western countries and even some countries of the post-socialist camp. However, in no country has the village and the land been brought to a devastating state, and the peasant - to spiritual and physical degradation, to the destruction of entrepreneurial economy, the foundations of market infrastructure. Therefore, great caution is required in conducting analogies with other countries.

Admittedly, the movement to the market is a transition to a qualitatively new state of the economy. Any aspect of this process in the agricultural sector is associated not with less but probably with greater difficulties than in other sectors, as evidenced by the major structural links of the market economy.

First. The market economy, in its content, is a self-supporting economy, which provides for the comparison of costs with revenues from the sale of products (services) and the determination of financial results (profit, loss). Such self-support is valid in all countries with developed market economies. Therewith, Ukraine has been searching for forms and methods, options for self-supporting activities for years, but this task has not been solved. They work successfully in the world by ensuring the functioning of the market economy. Thus, the development of the market economy is, first of all, the provision of activities on the well-known principles of self-sufficiency - economic independence, interest, responsibility, control of the hryvnia, etc.

Second. A market economy presupposes free enterprise, with the owner-occupier as the central figure. He needs to develop a multi-structured

economy instead of the previously existing single-structured one based on monopoly state ownership. The way to such an economy lies through the processes of establishing and supporting the owner.

Third. The development of the market mechanism involves the transition to the free sale of products and wholesale trade in resources. The necessary attribute of such a mechanism is free prices, which are developed under the influence of supply and demand. The scope of state regulation is significantly narrowing. It is limited only to those functions that are national. Moreover, the state influence on entrepreneurs-producers is performed considering their interests, mainly through economic regulators.

Fourth. To develop products with a consumer-oriented approach, rather than a plan imposed from above, based on free enterprise, direct ties with allied companies in terms of resource supply and sales of products, appropriate market infrastructure and organisational and economic market mechanisms are required. The market of goods should be organically complemented by the markets of capital, land and labour. The relevant exchanges and banks are designed to serve these markets.

Fifth. In a market economy, the activities of any business entity and its products are evaluated by the market, before which all are equal. The transition to the market is performed for the sake of a person, and a high level of their welfare. The market should work exclusively in the interests of the individual. Hence the significance of social protection measures that have a particular specificity for rural residents.

Thus, the above main structural links reflect the essence of a market economy. They are general, go beyond the borders of individual industries, and concern all spheres, including agriculture. However, each of the identified problems is characterised by fundamental features, and that, contrary to popular perceptions, do not facilitate, but even complicate the transition to the market.

► Analysis of recent studies and publications

Aspects of land relations were considered by numerous studies in the works of domestic scientists: O.M. Borodina (Borodina, 2020); Y.M. Hadzalo (Hadzalo, et al., 2021); P.I. Haidutskyi

(Haidutskyi, 2014); A.S. Halchynskyi (Halchynskyi, 2009); M.V. Hladii, Yu.Ya. Luzan (Hladii, & Luzan, 2020); A.S. Danilenko; M.F. Kropyvko (Kropyvko, 2016); I.I. Lukinov (Lukinov, 2002); Yu.O. Lupenko (Lupenko, 2021); V. Ya. Mesel-Veseliak, M.M. Fedorov (Hadzalo, et al., 2021; Yurchyshyn, Sabluk, Mesel-Veseliak, Fedorov, 1993); A.M. Moskalenko (Volkohon, Moskalenko, 2021); L.Y. Novakovskiy (Novakovskiy, 2009; Novakovskiy, & Tretiak, 2020); A.M. Tretiak (Novakovskiy, & Tretiak, 2020); O.V. Khodakivska (Khodakivska, Patyka, & Harhasas, 2019; Khodakivska, Mohylnyj, Kolesnyk, Mykhalchyshyna, & Khomyachenko, 2019; Khodakivska, & Mohylnyi, 2018); O.M. Shpychak (Shpychak, & Bodnar, 2012); V.V. Yurchyshyn (Yurchyshyn, Sabluk, Mesel-Veseliak, Fedorov, 1993), etc. The results of the conducted research are reflected in scientific and textbooks, which consider land relations as a system of development of production relations in agriculture.

The purpose of the study – highlight and justify the theoretical provisions of land relations in improving the situation in agricultural production.

► Summary of the main results of the study

Failure to recognise the value of land in agrarian production capital with the definition of a specific owner brought the village and the peasant to an economic dead end. To a large extent, in recent years, these processes have been adversely affected by the position of some political forces that were against private ownership of land, did not recognise its price and value, and even more – as a commodity. Without private ownership of the land, it is impossible to develop a market economy, as land is one of the main types of production resources. The concept of land marketability is determined by the recognition of the value and price of the resource, and its introduction into the system of economic turnover of state resources, rather than by the process of its purchase and sale, which is regulated by legislation. Without this, the economic owner is deprived of the economic aspect and finds himself in unequal economic conditions with producers of other industries.

The value of land should be recognised as a component of productive capital. In each case, it should reflect the role and importance of this

resource in achieving the final economic results. Inflationary processes should not affect the loss of the natural form of land owned by the owner.

The philosophy of establishing enterprises and organisations in the agricultural sector should be oriented towards satisfying the interests of the farmer-owner and the farmer in general. Ukraine has completed the development of new economic structures on a private foundation. Science has elaborated, and practice has accepted various models and variants of such forms. In the newly established farms, production relations are based on ownership relations both for labour and for land and property.

Currently, no less urgent is the issue of establishing the same economic “rules of the game” for all spheres and sectors of the national economy. In the author’s opinion, it was and remains one of the main functions of the state. However, it should perform them not by command methods and interference in the production activities of producers but through the efficient use of economic levers. Objectivity in the application of such economic methods to all sectors of the country’s economic complex will be the greatest support of the state in the development of agro-industrial production.

The state requires to revise the pricing policy, which should be fair to the agricultural sector. It is not possible to agree with the situation that prices for industrial goods are constantly growing at a higher rate than for agricultural products. The thesis proposed by science to provide the system of pricing in the starting period of equal profit on equal capital, with the inclusion of the value of land in the agricultural capital, has not found understanding and support and is not perceived by many at present. Neglect of this fundamental element of a market economy has resulted in the near bankruptcy of public-sector agricultural enterprises.

The theoretical models of market economy formed in developed countries are distinguished mainly by the social orientation of economic activity, and the role of the state in the economic reproduction process. When evaluating foreign market models, it should be remembered that in practice there is no so-called free market, particularly for agriculture.

The experience of countries with economies in transition demonstrates that those of them that have embarked on the path of market reforms (East Germany, Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Romania, Lithuania, Estonia, Albania, etc.) have overcome or are successfully overcoming the difficulties of the transition period in a short period and are increasing their economic potential, in particular in the agricultural sector. In Ukraine, the society has not consolidated on a precise definition of the ways of development of the national economy, thus, currently, three economies are operating simultaneously – administrative-command economy, which has nothing to do with state regulation from the standpoint of modernity, shadow and market economies, which are developing in different areas. In the above list, the market economy is placed last not by chance but as a sign that it now belongs to the leading place. After all, a market economy is a self-supporting economy, when profit (loss) is determined by comparing the revenue from the sale of products (services) with the full costs of its production. The longer this “three-policy” economy is in place, the more difficult the process of establishing a market economy in the self-supporting sense will be, the more non-payments will increase, and their impact on production efficiency will be detrimental. Thus, the awareness of the market economy process is developed.

Therewith, the market economy has its own “rules of the game” (market laws), ignoring which results in distortion of economic relations and development of crisis phenomena. In particular, the failure to consider land relations in these rules, in the author’s opinion, was the main reason that all the last components of market relations in economic terms work against the land, which results in crises in agriculture.

However, despite the decline in production and significant socio-economic losses caused not by the reform processes but by the global economic crisis in general, the agricultural sector is gradually transforming into a fundamentally new agrarian system, opposite to the one that has prevailed in the country for more than 70 years in the form of collective and state farms. Instead of collective property,

private land use and land ownership developed. Organisational forms of management have changed.

Under the previous system of management, Ukraine was unable to ensure an appropriate level of agricultural production. Thus, back in 1990, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine adopted the Law “On Transition to a Market System of Management”. The Law of Ukraine “On the priority of social development of the village and agro-industrial complex in the national economy” was adopted (Law of Ukraine No. 400-XII..., 1990). However, the mechanisms and tools for their implementation and control have not been developed yet.

The laws adopted in 1990 had to be implemented step by step, but for many years this was resisted, including by those who voted for them. If the decision on the necessity of transition to the market system of management has been adopted, it is not clear what the discussions have been about until now. As for the peasants, not all of them were psychologically ready for the new conditions of management. It demonstrates, first of all, their lack of understanding of the economic content of reforms, and market self-supporting economic system. And this is not surprising, since a significant part of managers and specialists still do not accept such concepts and categories as capital, goods, profit margins, and excess profit development, which should be used in all vertical and horizontal economic activities. However, there are still unnecessary discussions around this alphabetical truth. Is it possible to establish normal production relations in the countryside, while neglecting land relations? However, many politicians who adopted the law on the transition to a market economy still do not consider land relations to be a component of production relations. And Ukraine has been in such uncertainty for almost a quarter of a century.

It should be understood that the world is ruled by financial capital. To balance the role of different types of capital, it is necessary to find the full value of productive agricultural capital, which cannot be achieved in agriculture without including the value of the land. Without land – the main resource of production, agriculture is destined to lose in comparison with other industries. Many are still afraid of the land market. But it is not the main thing. First of

all, it is necessary to acknowledge the value of land as a resource, to know its price. If we will receive accumulations or dividends on the mentioned resource, then the question will arise: to sell it or not? In this regard, there is an instructive example when the chief of an Indian tribe was given dollars, offering to sell the land, he threw the dollars into the fire and said: "Look, the money is burning, but the land is not! I will not sell it". Therefore, the land and its economic fertility as a national wealth must have a value and, accordingly, a price.

Without belittling the place, role, and importance of any sector in the economy of Ukraine, the only right thing to do is to assume that agriculture, agro-industrial production in general, is the most important among them. According to the objective law that has developed over the centuries, a country, if it wants to be strong and independent, must take care of its food supply. In world practice, the fact that the reconstruction of the country's economy began with agriculture has proved itself.

The analysis of the economic state of agricultural development confirmed the rightness of the position of agricultural economists that the implemented economic mechanism in the agro-industrial complex and economic policy was based on false foundations and therefore was unable to bring the Ukrainian economy on a growth trajectory, and the imperfection of pricing policy, monetary system, taxation and other components of the economic mechanism. In general, the macroeconomic policy appeared to be imperfect and subordinated to the state fiscal interests so it began to contradict the interests of agriculture and peasants, and this was the main reason for the critical state of agricultural production.

Most of the reasons for the current state of agriculture and agro-industrial complex are outside agriculture, namely in the sphere of macroeconomics, while the economic mechanism does not work in favour of agriculture. Such a situation is explained, first of all, by the lack of competitiveness of agricultural products and processing industries in the domestic market. The flow of cheap imported food products has captured a share of consumers. In addition, a large number of enterprises in Ukraine operate under the cost model of management. There

is an increase in the cost of production, in particular milk, meat, eggs, and other livestock products. In addition, it applies to the fruit and vegetable industry. With low effective demand from consumers, domestic products do not find sales, therefore, producers are forced to sell them at prices below costs.

In Ukraine, there is objectively no possibility for substantial support of commodity producers and the equivalent exchange of products between agriculture and industry, and therefore there are too large disproportions.

The crisis in the agricultural sector is intensifying, as most agricultural enterprises and organisations that produce consumer goods are outside the current functioning market. A significant part of the consumer market is represented by imported goods, about 80% of bank capital serves only the sphere of circulation. The latter does not go to rural producers but mainly circulates in import-export trade, which is recognised as one of the main reasons for the decline of important sectors of the agro-industrial complex. Distorted market relations do not provide savings for reproduction, thus, natural forms of production are introduced. At the beginning of the agrarian reform, in 1991, the author published in the journal "Bulletin of Agricultural Science" (№ 2) the article "Market from the standpoint of an agricultural economist" (Sabluk, 1991; Sabluk, & Luzan, 2019). It outlined the first steps of agrarian transformations, which later became the foundation of the concept of agrarian reforms. First of all, an essential condition for the transition to a market economy was the implementation of land reform in Ukraine.

The issue of land ownership is extremely significant, as land is the property of the people living in a particular territory. Therefore, the most important thing in the implementation of land reform in the country is the transfer of land to the ownership of villages, settlements, and city territorial communities, providing them with full authority over the land fund. Currently, the processes of decentralisation of power in Ukraine require using all available reserves, particularly land reserves.

Self-reliance, independence of the citizen, and revival of the true owner of the land are impossible without private property. Based on the right to

dispose of land, which was granted earlier by the Land Code of Ukraine (Land Code of Ukraine No. 2768-III..., 2002) it is necessary to have permanent land commissions consisting of people's deputies, managers, specialists of agricultural enterprises and governing bodies, lawyers, and land surveyors.

The Land Commission decides on the preparatory work that precedes the provision of land for a possession, use (including lease) or its sale and withdrawal, in particular:

- inventory of land by landowners and land users;
- analysis of land use status;
- clarification of the demand for the land of

industrial enterprises and organisations wishing to conduct subsidiary agriculture or arrange collective gardening and horticulture.

To establish an economic mechanism for the rational use of land, improve its quality, and strengthen the reliability of protection, the legislation provides for paid land ownership and land use. Payment for land is performed in the form of land tax or rent, the amount of which depends on the quality and location of the land plot.

Payment for land and rent should go to the budget of rural and settlement territorial communities. Such funds should be used exclusively for the intended purpose of measures to improve land fertility, financial incentives for landowners, land users and tenants, land management, and land protection.

The level of income of farmers, which the state refused to regulate, does not allow them to provide even simple reproduction of production. As a result, agricultural workers receive the least income per unit of resources invested in production, and land is not a component of the capital of these resources. For this reason, the wages of farmers are two to three times lower than in other sectors of the economy, as a result of which they do not receive their due payment every year.

Reacting to such injustice, peasants refuse to work on the land granted to them in the process of reforms, rent it out, and massively leave for cities or to work in other countries.

Peasants should be actual owners of the land and the results of work on it, and today there are almost 7 million owners of land shares. Without this,

rural areas will not develop, and social issues in the countryside will not be solved. Moreover, there will be no economic growth of the state, as agriculture is based on the functioning of more than 12 sectors of the country's economy.

Notably, despite all the difficulties in Ukraine, a lot has been done to develop the national economy. In particular, several Presidential decrees have been adopted, and a strategic model of innovation and investment development has been developed, according to which Ukraine's economy is classified as an industrial country. The active role of the state in the search for mechanisms and tools for optimal development of the agricultural sector was initiated in 2004 by the Law "On State Support of Agriculture of Ukraine" (Law of Ukraine No. 1877-IV..., 2004; Sabluk, 2019). Therefore, it is crucial to bring this work to its logical conclusion. In particular, it is necessary to manage budgetary resources rationally and efficiently. If these funds are used to produce machinery, and fertilisers, reduce the cost of loans, support leasing, etc., bypassing the peasant, the effect will be minimal.

To ensure the efficient operation of the Law "On State Support of Agriculture of Ukraine", it is necessary to develop the tools for its application, to ensure that the difference between the minimum and maximum procurement prices, the establishment of which is provided by law, is the price corridor that is skillfully used by all civilized countries of the world and which should be fully implemented by Ukraine.

First of all, it is necessary to eliminate the imbalance between the demand for basic foodstuffs and the population's ability to pay. It is well-known that the level of consumption of staple foods is much lower than the rational provisions. The total nutritional value of the diet decreased by one-third. There is insufficient filling of the market with many types of domestically produced food. The protection of domestic producers in the domestic market requires strengthening. The domestic food market is not sufficiently organised, which results in an unjustifiably large number of intermediaries and a low share of products sold under contracts.

The practice of reform in the agro-industrial complex demonstrates that with the intensification of transition processes, land lease and the expansion

of its market turnover become the main instruments of the mechanism for further development of land relations (in the field of concentration of land in the ownership of efficiently operating farms of all types). The condition for such involvement is the comprehensive development of the entire market mechanism, clear state regulation of the land market, and the entire system of agrarian relations according to the laws of the market. Thus, it is necessary to legislate such regulation of land relations.

► Conclusions

Due to the current unsystematic agricultural policy, the efficiency of the potential of agriculture is significantly impaired. Due to the limited managerial state influence on rural development, the strategic purposes of economic entities are not achieved.

Notably, the rural settlement network is changing due to the significant progress of labour migration of residents, loss of their interest in working

on their land, and hence the reduction of additional financial resources that ensure the functioning of the village. If villages are devastated, then there is an almost complete curtailment of measures to restore rural land relations, the fertility of agricultural land, and the return on the labour invested in them is lost. All this testifies to the lack of a coherent national policy in the field of land relations in the country.

It is the modernisation of land relations that provides an opportunity to objectively assess the value of land, and to equalise economic problems in the agricultural sector, which should have a positive impact on the state and development of rural areas. Thus, the highest authorities (Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food of Ukraine, Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine) should support with practical actions those specific mechanisms that will successfully work for the development of land relations in the state with the active participation of land resources in the economic turnover of the economy.

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Проблеми модернізації земельних відносин в Україні

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► **Анотація.** Необхідність удосконалення земельних відносин в аграрному секторі на локальному, регіональному і загальнодержавному рівнях загострюється з огляду на завдання нинішнього пореформеного землекористування, важливою складовою якого є створення еколого-безпечних та економічно-ефективних механізмів використання земель у сільському господарстві. Мета статті – висвітлити та обґрунтувати теоретичні положення земельних відносин у поліпшенні ситуації в сільськогосподарському виробництві. Основою для дослідження стали теоретичні положення щодо характеристики земельних відносин у ринкових умовах та використання сільськогосподарських земель у діяльності агропромислового сектору України. Досягненню мети дослідження слугували загальнонаукові методи управління виробництвом та пізнання процесів формування виробничих земельних відносин. Знання специфіки аграрного сектору, реального стану сільського життя, задіяння у процес якісно нового стану економіки – ринку землі, виступає свідченням того, що ринкова економіка за змістом це госпрозрахункова економіка і визначає: зіставлення витрат з виручкою від реалізації продукції; допускає вільне підприємництво, самостійність, відповідальність та інтерес товаровиробника; здійснення діяльності суб'єкта господарювання, в центрі якого є людина і її життєвий соціальний захист. Розроблено стратегічні засади реформування земельних відносин в аграрному виробництві країни як передумови їх раціональної організації на нинішньому етапі господарювання в сільських регіонах. Застосування теоретичних положень земельних відносин, їх реформування і становлення як трансформаційний процес у сільськогосподарському виробництві. Результати дослідження визначено як впливові фактори на формування ринку землі в нових умовах господарювання

► **Ключові слова:** стратегічні засади, ринкова економіка, новий аграрний устрій, вартість землі, продовольче забезпечення, економічний механізм, інтереси селян