

The development of crop production in Eastern Galicia in 1867–1914

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Abstract.

The purpose of the study is to analyze the peculiarities of the development of crop production in Eastern Galicia during 1867–1914 under the conditions of the modernization processes of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, to clarify the role of the sector in the empire-wide agricultural market, and to identify the positive and negative trends of its evolution in the context of the socio-economic transformations of contemporary society. **Methodology.** The methodology of the study is based on a combination of historical-systemic and statistical-comparative approaches to processing archival materials, statistical yearbooks of the Austrian Ministry of Agriculture, and the works of Polish and Ukrainian economists and statisticians of the late nineteenth and first third of the twentieth centuries. A quantitative analysis of the dynamics of sown areas, crop yields, and marketability of the region's main agricultural crops was applied, making it possible to trace the structural changes in the sector over a period of almost half a century. **Scientific novelty.** The scientific novelty lies in conducting a comprehensive analysis of the development of crop production in Eastern Galicia as an integral phenomenon, combining quantitative indicators (the dynamics of sown areas of grain crops, industrial crops, and potatoes, alongside changes in yields) with a qualitative characterization of the socio-economic factors that hindered the modernization of the sector—namely, the persistence of large manorial (folwark) landownership, agrarian overpopulation, strip farming (*cherezsmuzhzhia*), in-kind labor payments, and backward agrotechnology. For the first time, data on the population's food security, the marketability of peasant farms, and the role of individual crops (tobacco, flax, hemp, sugar beets, and potatoes) in the structure of the regional economy have been systematically summarized. **Conclusions.** The study establishes that during 1867–1914 crop production in Eastern Galicia demonstrated noticeable, yet contradictory, progress driven by imperial political and economic reforms. Sown areas under main grain crops and potatoes increased, areas under industrial crops expanded somewhat, and average yields rose owing to the spread of iron agricultural implements, the dissemination of agronomic knowledge through agricultural societies, and growing literacy among the population. At the same time, the region retained a predominantly agrarian-raw-material economic structure: only a small proportion of peasant farms produced grain for market sale, while the majority were forced to purchase food, causing chronic food vulnerability and high mortality. The authors demonstrate that the development of crop production in Galicia during this period illustrates the model of "peripheral modernization"—a combination of quantitative progress with deep structural contradictions that yielded limited profits mainly for wealthier farmers and landowners, ultimately serving as a major source of social tension on the eve of the First World War.

Keywords: crop production, Eastern Galicia, land reform, low-income population groups, seed fund, social history, First World War.

Розвиток рослинництва у Східній Галичині у 1867 – 1914 рр.

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Анотація.

Мета дослідження – проаналізувати особливості розвитку рослинництва у Східній Галичині впродовж 1867–1914 рр. в умовах модернізаційних процесів Австро-Угорської монархії, з'ясувати роль галузі в загальноімперському сільськогосподарському ринку, а також виявити позитивні і негативні тенденції її еволюції в контексті соціально-економічних трансформацій тогочасного суспільства. **Методологія дослідження** ґрунтується на поєднанні історико-системного та статистично-порівняльного підходів до опрацювання архівних матеріалів, статистичних щорічників австрійського сільськогосподарського міністерства, праць польських та українських економістів і статистів кінця XIX – першої третини XX століття. Застосовано метод кількісного аналізу динаміки посівних площ, урожайності та товарності основних сільськогосподарських культур регіону, що дозволило простежити структурні зміни галузі впродовж майже півстолітнього періоду. **Наукова новизна** полягає у здійсненні комплексного аналізу розвитку рослинництва Східної Галичини як цілісного явища, що поєднує кількісні показники (динаміку посівних площ зернових, технічних культур і картоплі, зміни врожайності) з якісною характеристикою соціально-економічних чинників, які стримували модернізацію галузі – збереженням великого фільваркового землеволодіння, аграрним перенаселенням, черезсмужжям, натуральною оплатою праці та відсталою агротехнікою. Уперше системно узагальнено дані щодо забезпеченості населення продовольством, товарності селянських господарств та ролі окремих культур (тютюну, льону, конопель, цукрових буряків, картоплі) у структурі регіональної економіки. **Висновки.** Досліджено, що впродовж 1867–1914 рр. рослинництво Східної Галичини демонструвало помітний, проте суперечливий поступ, зумовлений політичними та економічними реформами імперії. Зросли посівні площі під основними зерновими культурами, картоплею, дещо розширилися площі під технічними культурами, підвищилася середня врожайність завдяки поширенню заліза в господарствах, агрономічних знань через сільськогосподарські товариства та зростанню грамотності населення. Водночас регіон зберігав переважно аграрно-сировинний характер економіки: лише незначна частка селянських господарств виробляла зерно на продаж, більшість же була змушена докуповувати продовольство, що спричиняло хронічну продовольчу вразливість і високу смертність населення. Авторами доведено, що розвиток рослинництва в Галичині у зазначений період ілюструє модель «периферійної модернізації» – поєднання кількісного прогресу з глибокими структурними суперечностями, які зумовили обмежені прибутки галузі переважно для заможних господарів і землевласників та стали одним із джерел соціальної напруги напередодні Першої світової війни.

Ключові слова: війна, земельна реформа, малозабезпечені категорії населення, насіннєвий фонд, рослинництво, соціальна історія, Східна Галичина.

Statement of the problem. Political and economic reforms in Austria-Hungary created the preconditions for economic progress in Galicia, fostering the capitalization of agriculture and the establishment of market relations. However, this process was hindered by numerous factors: the persistence of large manorial estates (*folwarks*), acute agrarian overpopulation, widespread rural poverty, and the relative technical backwardness of production. Consequently, Galicia became integrated into the market system of Austria-Hungary while retaining a predominantly agrarian and raw-material-oriented economic character. Crop production remained a vital sector, serving not only as the primary source of food for the local population but also—with relatively modest capital investment—yielding steady profits for diligent farmers capable of adopting modern agricultural techniques.

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The fundamental issue lay in the sharp contradiction between the potential for modernizing crop production in Galicia and the structural impediments that prevented this potential from being fully realized between 1867 and 1914. Highlighting this contradiction is essential for a deeper understanding of the mechanisms of peripheral modernization in Central and Eastern Europe, the causes of the region's chronic agrarian backwardness, and the socio-economic prerequisites for mass emigration and heightened social tension on the eve of the First World War. Moreover, addressing this dynamic fills critical gaps in the study of the agrarian history of Western Ukraine during the period of Habsburg rule.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Among the studies on the history of crop production in Galicia, one may cite the works of the Polish economists and statisticians Franciszek Bujak (Bujak, 1908; Bujak, 1910; Bujak, 1924), Józef Buzek (Buzek, 1905), and Tadeusz Pilat (Wiadomości statystyczne o stosunkach krajowych, Vol. XXIV, Part I, 1902), who analysed data from property and population censuses of the province. Their works represent a certain generalization of more detailed statistical data that have since been lost. Our topic was also partly addressed by Sławomir Tokarski (Tokarski, 2003) in his study of the impact of economic development on interethnic relations.

Among the works of Ukrainian scholars who have contributed to the study of the problem, that of Petro Sviezhynskyi stands out (Sviezhynskyi, 1966). He focused primarily on questions of class struggle. Among studies of recent decades, the monograph by Andriy Zayarnyuk (Zayarnyuk, 2013) and the works of Ihor Makaruk, Volodymyr Klapchuk, and others (Makaruk, Tokar, Filoretova, & Klapchuk, 2021) are noteworthy.

Purpose of the article — to study the peculiarities of the development of crop production in Galicia in 1867–1914, to clarify its role in the empire-wide agricultural market, and to identify positive and negative phenomena in the development of the sector.

Presentation of the main material. Overall, Galicia was an important agricultural region of Austria-Hungary, and crop production there was one of the driving forces of the capitalization of output. In 1910, Galicia produced 37% of all wheat grown in Cisleithania, 32% of oats, 27% of rye, and 22% each of barley and maize. The province was home to almost 50% of all horses in Cisleithania, 32% of cows, 27% of all cattle, 29% of pigs, and 15% of sheep. At the same time, in terms of area Galicia accounted for 26.2% of the territory of Cisleithania, and in terms of population in 1910, for 28.1% (Nazaruk, 1916, p. 126).

As follows from the data presented in Table 1, part of Galicia's farms in 1867–1914 began to specialize in growing industrial crops — tobacco, hops, chicory — as well as crops that could be used both in the food industry and for industrial processing, for example for the production of spirits — wheat, barley, potatoes, sugar beets, and others. It may be assumed that the reduction of sown areas devoted to flax and hemp was caused by negative developments in the province's light industry and by the increasing amount of fabric and ready-made clothing entering local markets from the central regions of Austria-Hungary and major industrial powers — Germany, France, and Great Britain. The slight growth in the areas under these crops on the eve of the First World War was probably caused by an increase in state (military) orders. However, this assumption still requires separate additional research.

The reasons for the decline in areas under tobacco, millet, and chicory, as well as buckwheat (not included in Table 1 due to the fragmentary nature of the data), are also not entirely clear. According to F. Bujak's calculations, the area under buckwheat decreased from 156,000 ha to 63,000 ha between 1880 and 1910 — almost 2.5-fold. The sown areas under maize showed considerable dynamics. In 1871, 34,000 ha were allotted to it, while by 1890 it already occupied 103,000 ha. Thereafter its plantings gradually decreased (Bujak, 1924, p. 146). It may be assumed that such fluctuations depended on market demand as well as weather conditions. It can also be assumed that growing industrial crops required a higher level of agronomic culture, which became possible only after the improvement of the population's literacy at the beginning of the twentieth century and the creation of numerous agricultural societies that disseminated methodological recommendations on plant care. The cultivation of sugar beets and tobacco on a qualitatively new level began only after the First World War. Farmers were very often attracted to new crops in the hope of additional profits, which led to an expansion of the areas sown. Later, however, having encountered difficulties in growing and selling them, landowners would abandon these crops for a long time.

Table 1

Dynamics of changes in sown areas of the main agricultural crops (ha)¹

Crop	Years			
	1898	1903	1908-1909	1913
Wheat	273 522	275 864	403 560	537 411
Rye	352 311	337 105	452 661	674 666
Barley	201 682	188 246	239 110	328 869
Oats	398 560	412 739	438 037	707 072
Millet	20 473	22 277	14 271	17 913
Maize	79 573	75 003	82 705	58 374
Legumes	109 878	88 271	104 553	134 579
Flax	12 613	10 281	8 365	9 978
Hemp	19 911	15 757	15 020	16 526
Potatoes	200 161	229 666	312 335	520 730
Sugar beet	2 200	3 694	4 029	7 164
Tobacco	3 344	2 669	2 628	1 547
Hops	1 454	1 996	1 934	2 208
Chicory	—	—	890	91

There is also no clarity as to exactly how yield estimates for agricultural crops were made on small peasant farms. The situation is clearer with regard to the folwarks (manorial estates) — account books have survived for individual estates of large landowners such as the Baworowski, Didushycki, Potocki, and Sapieha families, from which it is possible to establish both the area and the yield, as well as the total harvest collected.

It is difficult to devise a methodology that would allow crop output to be divided into that intended for own consumption and that intended for sale on the market, since contradictory processes could have taken place. Traditional historiography holds that industrial crops were grown mainly by wealthy peasants and large landowners from among the local gentry. We believe, however, that poorer peasants could also sell part of their harvest, both at town markets and to the various middlemen and buyers who systematically visited the villages and small towns of Galicia. They could sell both surpluses and products they themselves lacked enough of to last until the next harvest, since they needed funds to pay taxes and various fines and to buy clothing or footwear.

Crop yields varied among different types of farms. According to the calculations of historian Petro Sviezhynskyi, in 1894 the yield of wheat on peasant farms was 8.8 centners per hectare, compared with 10.5 centners per hectare on manorial estates. The difference in yields was similarly noticeable for rye — 8.3 and 9.3 centners per hectare — for barley — 8.3 and 9.8 centners per hectare — and for oats — 5.7 and 7.7 centners per hectare, respectively (Sviezhynskyi, 1966, p. 88). According to contemporaries, most of the crop output grown by peasants was consumed by the peasants themselves; in some years it was not even sufficient for them. Produce reaching the market came mainly from manorial estates. Only in villages located near towns could the situation differ, where peasants could grow not only grain but also greens, vegetables, and fruit (mainly apples, pears, plums, and cherries) for sale to townspeople.

On the other hand, estate owners distributed part of the harvested crops to local peasants as payment in kind. It is known that an important problem in the development of agriculture, and of crop production in Galicia in particular, was the agrarian overpopulation of the province and the large number (about 80% of all peasant farms) of smallholdings that could not survive on their own landholding alone. Their owners were forced to hire themselves out to wealthier fellow villagers or large landowners, receiving in-kind produce instead of money — rye, barley, oats, buckwheat, potatoes, hay, straw, chaff, and the like — as food for themselves and their livestock. Thus, in 1900 in Borshchiv County, the landowner Mayer Bartfeld paid the peasants he hired for the harvest season in kind: every 13th sheaf of rye, the 14th sheaf of wheat and barley, the 15th sheaf of mown wheat, the 10th sheaf of mixed wheat, and every 3rd ear of maize (Ochevydets [Eyewitness]. (1892, October 3), p. 2; Dilo. (1900, May 4). Correspondence from Borshchiv County, pp. 2–3). Such payment could, however, vary: in other villages of the same county peasants agreed to work for the 12th sheaf of wheat or the 4th ear of maize. The practice of paying peasants in kind was widespread, whereas monetary payment for labour was almost never used in Galician villages before the First World War.

¹Source: Statistisches Jahrbuch des K. K. Ackerbau-Ministerium für das Jahr 1898 (Erste Heft: Statistik der Ernte des Jahres 1898). (1899). Wien. (Also: 1904, pp. 117–129; 1909, pp. 111–123; 1914, pp. 106–121) https://books.google.com.ua/books?id=Pn0va_vKpmlC&printsec=frontcover&hl=uk&source=gbg_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false.

Despite these nuances, it should be emphasized that it was the development of crop production that generated the greater part of the province's income. According to the Polish economist Witold Lewicki, in 1910 the entire agriculture of Galicia produced output valued at 600–650 million crowns, of which the value of wheat, rye, barley, and oats amounted to 476 million (Lewicki, 1914, p. 41). A further analysis of these figures shows that the province's agriculture as a whole was in an extremely difficult condition and, with certain exceptions, did not meet the region's food needs.

According to estimates by the well-known Ukrainian civic, political, and religious figure Tyt Voynarovskiy, the situation could vary from year to year but generally looked grim — no more than 5% of Galician peasants produced grain for sale, 30% did not need to buy grain, and 65% were forced to purchase grain for their own needs; in poor-harvest years, up to 70% of peasant farms bought food (Voynarovskiy, 1908, pp. 27–28). The Polish economist Antoni Górski reached similar conclusions, asserting that Galician agriculture provided only 25% of the flour needed by the province's population, while the remaining 2.5 million centners had to be purchased in Transleithania (Górski, 1915, p. 31). From other sources we know that in 1910 the 2,067 mills of Galicia produced 5.7 million centners of wheat flour, but only 4 million tons of it came from wheat harvested in the province, along with 2 million centners of rye flour (Podręcznik Statystyki Galicyi, R. 8, Part 1, 1908, p. 175). Characteristically, wheat was sown mainly by large landowners, while peasants grew mostly rye for their own needs and oats for feeding livestock. In mountainous areas maize was most often sown.

According to historian Petro Sviezhynskiy, after deducting grain used for seed, only 112 kg of wheat, rye, and maize per capita were available in Galicia, compared with 370 kg per capita in the Russian Empire, 200 kg in the German Empire, 240 kg in France (wheat alone), and 190 kg in England (Sviezhynskiy, 1966, p. 76). It was precisely this food shortage that the Polish economist Stanisław Szczepanowski identified as the main cause of the high mortality rate in Galicia. He asserted that, by contrast, Galicia had one of the highest per-capita potato consumption rates — 310 kg — and one of the lowest for meat — 10 kg (Szczepanowski, 1888, pp. 19–20).

Let us examine some of the industrial crops in more detail. In 1910, only 32,065 of Galicia's roughly 650,000 peasant farms (5%) grew tobacco. They harvested 4,300,508 kg of raw material, valued at 1,944,143 crowns. The overall figures may look impressive, but on average each farmer grew only 134.13 kg of tobacco and earned only about 60 crowns from it. The area under tobacco totalled 2,625 ha, or an average of 0.12 ha per farm. Tobacco was grown only in the counties of Yahilnytsia, Terebovlia, Borshchiv, Monastyriska, Zabolotiv, and Horodenka (Uprawa rośliny tytoniowej w Galicji w świetle cyfr w roku 1910, 1911, p. 207 [15]). In other words, the scale of this crop's cultivation should not be overestimated. As a rule, in addition to tobacco, farmers were forced to grow other produce as well. In Buchach County, a 14-morg farm earned a profit of 3,234 crowns by growing tobacco and vegetables for sale, with vegetable sales accounting for more than half of the revenue (Biegeleisen, 1916, p. 205).

A similar situation existed with the cultivation of flax and hemp, although these crops were grown on a somewhat larger area in 1898 — 32,524 ha (see Table 1). 3,390 tonnes of flax were grown for sale, and in 1900 as much as 4,794 tonnes of flax were sold. In subsequent years, however, the areas allotted to flax and hemp decreased, along with the gross harvest. Most of the harvested fibre was exported to Italy, Russia, and other countries, supplying the weaving mills there (Bernscheite, 1922, pp. 35–37).

As peasant landlessness kept intensifying, potatoes became the most widespread crop for them during this period. At the same time, it would be incorrect to assume that potatoes were grown exclusively for own consumption. In Galicia in 1867–1914, potatoes were used to feed cattle and pigs and served as raw material for distilling. According to Petro Sviezhynskiy's calculations, at least 296 farms grew potatoes exclusively for the needs of small distilleries, while at the same time 867 peasant farms grew sugar beets (less than 0.01% of all farms in the province) (Sviezhynskiy, 1966, p. 40). Sugar beets and potatoes were the main raw materials for distilleries.

It is difficult to establish the scale of the trade in vegetables and fruit in Galicia. From periodicals and from the work of Stanisław Hoszowski, it is known that in Galician towns peasants from the surrounding villages sold greens, dill, parsley, carrots, beets, onions, cabbage, tomatoes, cucumbers, pumpkins, radishes, and beans. Several dozen orchards of more than 10 ha are known to have existed in Galicia, specializing in apples, plums, and cherries. Near Lviv and Kraków there were small enterprises with greenhouses, which, in addition to vegetables, grew small quantities of flowers. Viticulture developed rather weakly in the province. Seeds of fodder grasses and other sowing material were sold separately (Hoszowski, 1934). It is known that at the beginning of the twentieth century societies of gardeners and vine-growers emerged in certain towns of Galicia. In particular, a horticultural association was established in 1904 in the village of Yabluniv, Husiatyn County. At around the same time, several large orchards of sour cherries and apricots were planted near the town of Zalishchyky under the patronage of the provincial authorities. In 1904, more than 1,200 currant and gooseberry bushes were planted near Kraków. These horticultural estates were meant to become

centres of gardening and of breeding and cultivating orchard trees and shrubs (Bujak, 1908, pp. 365–368).

Gradually, with the development of railway connections, more and more peasants became involved in the trade of vegetables and fruit, although sources for studying this question are still lacking. We can only surmise the gradual increase in the area under orchards and vineyards from the reports of individual agricultural societies, which actively emerged between 1880 and 1914. They were established in individual villages as mutual-aid societies, often operating "Prosvita" reading rooms, disseminating publications on improving farming methods, and providing recommendations on the care of industrial and orchard crops. At the same time, there are known instances of individual landowners providing fruit-tree seedlings to peasants working on their estates and sharing methods of growing tobacco, hops, and grapes. However, it is difficult to speak of the scale of such transfers today; they were probably more sporadic than systematic in nature.

Almost no statistical material has survived today on the scale of vegetable and fruit growing in Galicia. F. Bujak cited some figures: according to his data, in 1906 the area allotted to sugar beets in the province as a whole was 6,800 ha, to red beets and carrots 29,000 ha, and to cabbage 25,000 ha, with the overwhelming majority of these areas located in Eastern Galicia (Bujak, 1908, p. 290). Elsewhere he notes that a certain portion of the land was also devoted to crops such as poppy, caraway, anise, rapeseed, and turnip, among others (Bujak, 1908, p. 296). The researcher even attempted to calculate the yield levels of these crops, noting that on most indicators they lagged behind the harvests gathered in Bohemia, Germany, and other regions of Europe. Among the shortcomings in the development of crop production in Galicia, F. Bujak highlighted the fact that hops in the province were grown mainly by large landowners rather than by peasants (Bujak, 1908, p. 308). The economist also critically assessed the state of horticulture, viticulture, and vegetable growing in the province, proposing an increase in the number of nurseries for fruit trees and shrubs and the purchase of Dutch-bred flowers, considering floriculture a promising direction for the development of crop production.

In addition to landlessness, the agriculture of Galicia, and crop production in particular, developed slowly owing to the persistence of post-serfdom remnants, low capitalization of production, backward agricultural technology, a lack of advanced agronomic knowledge, a low level of mechanization, an insufficient quantity of fertilizers, and poor development of improved plant varieties. Because of the aforementioned landlessness, strip farming — the fragmentation of peasant holdings — was a mass phenomenon; sometimes up to 1 ha out of every 10 ha of arable land consisted of boundary strips between small peasant plots. There was often no road at all to these plots, so peasants had to walk along the boundaries, carrying their tools by hand. To remedy the situation, various Galician settlements carried out so-called "commassation" — the consolidation of a single owner's scattered small plots into one. Before 1914, commassation was not carried out systematically and produced only temporary positive effects. Most often, within 10–15 years after commassation, the once-unified plots were again fragmented among peasants as a result of inheritance by children, sale and purchase, gifting, or transfer as a marriage dowry.

The introduction of new implements and the increased use of iron on peasant farms was more successful. According to the calculations of the Polish historian and economist Aleksander Szczepański, in 1894 there were 10 kg of iron per inhabitant of Galicia, and by 1906 this had risen to 25 kg (Szczepański, 1912, p. 198). Another researcher, Franciszek Bujak, noted that iron was used to reinforce carts and improve ploughs; it was precisely the replacement of the wooden ard with a plough fitted with iron shares that caused the rise in the yields of Galician agricultural crops (Bujak, 1924, pp. 108, 144, 152). The progress was tangible, yet, according to the same A. Szczepański, in terms of the use of iron in agriculture Galicia had only reached the level of the German lands as of 1847, and the lag behind France and Great Britain was even greater.

Table 2.

Gross harvest of individual agricultural crops in Galicia (thousand centners) and average yield (centners per hectare)¹

Years	Wheat		Rye		Barley		Oats		Potatoes	
	total	per ha	total	per ha	total	per ha	total	per ha	total	per ha
1854 - 1859	1 010	-	2 480	-	2 912	-	4 130	-	11 600	-
1862 - 1865	787	-	2 131	-	2 665	-	3 685	-	12 218	-
1875 - 1879	2 890	9,2	4 300	7,7	2 810	7,1	4 300	6,4	21 000	65,2

¹ Source: Bujak, F. (1924). *Z odległej i bliskiej przeszłości: Studja historyczne i społeczne*. Lwów – Warszawa – Kraków, 284 p. <https://archive.org/details/studjahistoryczn00bujaj>.

1881 – 1890	3 560	8,9	4 500	7,6	2 840	7,8	4 490	6,6	31 600	84,1
1891 – 1900	3 690	8,9	4 244	7,6	2 766	7,8	4 842	6,9	37 503	93,3
1901 – 1910	5 218	11,0	6 185	9,9	3 333	9,7	6 201	9,1	54 005	103,3

This inevitably affected the level of crop yields in Galicia. Yields also rose, but more slowly than in the industrially developed countries of Western Europe. According to calculations made by F. Bujak, grain yields in Galicia in the 1860s–1910s grew perhaps the most slowly of all; they remained at roughly the same level in centners per hectare for a long time, rising by only 23–30% in the pre-war decade. F. Bujak even recorded some decreases in wheat and rye yields in 1880–1900, explained by weather effects. These crops are highly sensitive to weather during their flowering period and during harvesting; they are self-pollinating, and if rain fell during their flowering period, pollination proceeded poorly and the ears often remained empty. Prolonged rains during the August harvest led to large losses. Given the low level of mechanization and the absence of means to cover harvested grain, crop losses traditionally remained substantial. Weather conditions also affected grain quality. Unfortunately, Austrian statistics do not indicate how much of the harvested grain was suitable for baking bread and how much could only serve as fodder for animals or raw material for distilleries.

Conclusions. The period from 1867 to 1914 was a time of noticeable, albeit contradictory, progress for crop production in Eastern Galicia amid the province's integration into the broader economic space of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Imperial political and economic reforms established the prerequisites for the gradual capitalization of agriculture, the expansion of market relations, and a degree of regional production specialization. Crop production remained a key sector of the local economy, providing a significant share of food for the population and supplying substantial volumes of grain to the Cisleithanian market.

During the period under study, sown areas under the main grain crops (wheat, rye, barley, and oats) and potatoes increased, accompanied by a modest expansion of areas under industrial crops (sugar beets and hops). Average crop yields also rose. This progress was rendered possible by the gradual adoption of iron agricultural implements, the dissemination of agronomic knowledge through agricultural societies, rising literacy rates, and an elementary intensification of farming practices.

At the same time, the development of crop production was severely constrained by a series of deep structural impediments: the dominance of large manorial (*folwark*) landownership alongside widespread peasant land poverty and landlessness; severe agrarian overpopulation and strip farming (*cherezsmuzhzhia*); a low level of mechanization, insufficient use of mineral fertilizers, and backward agrotechnology; the persistence of feudal remnants, particularly in-kind labor payments; and a heavy reliance on weather conditions paired with weak resilience against harvest failures.

Consequently, Galicia retained a predominantly agrarian and raw-material-oriented economic character. Only a small fraction of peasant farms produced grain for market sale, while the vast majority consumed their own yield or were forced to purchase additional food; as a result, the region failed to achieve full self-sufficiency in bread production. Industrial crops were often cultivated only sporadically, with sown areas fluctuating according to market demand, competition from industrial goods, and military orders on the eve of the war. Meanwhile, potato cultivation became a mass phenomenon, serving as the primary means of subsistence for land-poor peasants, a staple raw material for distilleries, and essential fodder for livestock.

These positive developments could not fundamentally overcome the province's economic backwardness. Galicia lagged significantly behind the industrialized regions of Western and Central Europe in terms of crop yields, machinery adoption, and overall food security. Crop production remained a source of relatively stable yet limited profit, primarily benefiting wealthy farmers and large landowners, whereas for the majority of the peasantry, it functioned as a mechanism for basic survival rather than an efficient form of commodity production.

Thus, the development of crop production in Eastern Galicia between 1867 and 1914 exemplifies the classic model of "peripheral modernization": demonstrable quantitative and qualitative progress unfolding against a backdrop of persistent socio-economic contradictions. These structural flaws resulted in low agricultural productivity and chronic regional food vulnerability, ultimately serving as major catalysts for heightened social tension on the eve of the First World War and driving the radical transformations of subsequent decades.

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