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AWARENESS OF RURAL POPULATIONS REGARDING THE IMPORTANCE OF MID-FIELD WOODLOTS, AN EXAMPLE OF THE LUBACZÓW MUNICIPALITY

Key words: ecological farming, mid-field woodlots, mosaic landscape, woodlots functions

Summary

The study was designed to assess the knowledge of rural populations related to the importance of mid-field woodlots for the properties of farming lands. A survey was conducted among randomly selected group of rural residents of the Lubaczów Municipality.

A significant majority, i.e. over half of the respondents, believe that presence of woodlots leads to increase in crop yield, except in the area adjoining the woodlots. Likewise, nearly half of the respondents (47%) are convinced woodlots favourably affect the microclimate of farming lands. The most commonly recognized protective functions of woodlots include: decrease in wind speed (indicated by 40% of the subjects), increase in biodiversity (30%) and protection of soils in adjoining areas (30%). Notably, the findings show a very high percentage (34%) of those who are unable to name the role of woodlots. The main sources of knowledge related to woodlots reported by the respondents (39%) include their own observations and experience. The study shows a statistically significant relation between the presence of woodlots in an area and the relevant population’s awareness of their role for the properties of the farm land. Generally, those living in areas with numerous woodlots presented with better knowledge. On the other hand, education seems to have little impact on the state of knowledge. If the awareness of the positive effects of woodlots among rural populations is not higher, then rather than sustain the existing and establish new clusters of vegetation farmers will be more inclined to eliminate them in order to facilitate agrotechnical works and increase the area designated for crops cultivation.