On the history of forest-agrarian relations and modern socio-economic problems in the rural Novgorod region

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Abstract. The article provides historical information about the life and work of the peasant population from the middle of the 19th century reflecting significant demographic changes in the number of families of rural residents, as well as the structure of their income from various types of activities. The total income of peasant farms was not only agricultural, but also largely from trade and craft occupations, primarily from forestry. Diversification ensured year-round employment of the rural population and its sustainability. An analysis of legislative changes in recent decades has shown that a negative situation has arisen of alienation of the agricultural sector of the economy and rural residents from forest resources. They mainly began to be used only in the interests of large specialized enterprises for the harvesting and processing of wood under the auspices of a monopoly, self-controlling federal forestry agency. It is proposed to introduce a number of legislative amendments to the socio-economic life of rural residents, to restore the complexity of agriculture and forestry in the development of the provisions of the new Forest Code of the Russian Federation. It is advisable to use not only international but also historical domestic experience of self-sufficiency, self-financing, profitability of complex enterprises in agriculture and forestry that existed in the 60-70s of the 20th century, both in the Novgorod region and in other forest regions of the country.

1. Introduction

The analysis of historical sources indicates that for the successful development of the national economy in rural areas, the interrelated socio-economic relations between agriculture and forestry are of particular importance. And it was no accident that it was believed that these were two “sisters” brought up by their common “mother” - the soil. Unfortunately, in recent decades, this postulate verified by history has not been claimed, and there has been an unjustified division of these industries into different departments. This affected not only their economic indicators, but also the standard of living of the rural population.

Statistics show that the demographic situation in rural areas, including in the Novgorod region, has a steady negative trend towards a decrease in the number of residents, especially those of working age, and the measures taken so far do not bring much success. Over the past 20 years alone, the rural population of the region has decreased by more than 22%.

However, this situation was not always. So, for example, from 1858 to 1917, the peasant population of the Novgorod province grew by two-thirds, and the number of villages in 1884 to 1917 increased from 4819 to 5034, while the number of households per village did not increase very much - from 26 to 28. In these the data do not include information on farm enterprises, the number of which reached 3866 by 1917. The average composition of peasant farms in the pre-reform period of 1858 was 6.2 people, and by 1917 it had decreased to 5 people, now 2 people. In 1858, there were 111 women per 100 men,
in 1917 - 104. In 1910-1911, in the revenue part of the budget of peasant farms, serious importance fell on revenues from trade and craft occupations (27%). Of all the cash, with the exception of in-kind income, fishing occupations were given by two-thirds, and only one-third of the cash proceeds came from agriculture and forestry [1]. In 1923, only the crafts of the village accounted for almost 2/3 of all industrial production of the country [2]. The connection between fishing and forestry activities was the closest. In the temperate climate of the Novgorod region, active farming has a pronounced seasonal character, and is objectively limited to a relatively short growing season, lasting less than half a calendar year. Forestry and artisanal crafts occupied the rural population mainly in winter time free from agriculture, providing increased stability of peasant farms. The high level of diversification of the agrarian sector of the economy allowed peasant farms to support a greater number of workers and to efficiently and fully utilize the labor resources of the rural population. Historical experience shows that the integrated management of agriculture and forestry in the zone of risky and seasonal farming, to which the Novgorod region belongs, is the basis for successful and sustainable development of rural areas.

2. Discussion
The main industry of the rural population of the Novgorod region was the so-called forestry, which included the activities of the population in the harvesting of wood, its removal to railway stations and rafted rivers and its alloy. Therefore, the main factor determining the degree of development of commercial extra-agricultural activities of the peasant population was forest cover (the fraction of the land occupied by forest stands to the total area of this territory).

According to Zemstvo statistics on the state of agriculture and forestry in the province for 1903 by counties (groups of modern municipal districts), the forest cover of Starorussky district was – 35%, Novgorod district – 51%, Demyansky district – 53%, Valdaysky district – 54%, Borovichsky district – 61%, Krestetskiy district - 64% . At present, the actual forest cover in all territories of the districts has significantly increased (by 15–20%), which is due to the intensive forest overgrowing of agricultural land and a sharp decrease in the rural population (on average 5 times). The forest area per person has increased in the same ratio. In the districts at that time, a rather uneven ratio was observed. For example, in Starorussky district there was only 1.4 tithes per person, and in Krestetsky district - 5.0. In the rest - from 2.6 in Novgorod district, to 3.5 in Borovichi district [3]. A similar ratio is maintained at the present time. In the current circumstances, in our opinion, it is necessary to immediately take measures at the legislative level related to the restoration of historical mutually beneficial relations between agriculture and forestry. This will allow for more effective integrated development of rural areas, to stop the decline in the number of able-bodied rural population.

It should be noted that in the recent past, in 1993, the Fundamentals of the Forest Legislation of the Russian Federation were adopted, which included collective farms, state farms and other agricultural groups among the owners of the forest fund. Earlier, the forest fund was transferred to them - collective farms for indefinite use, and the forests of state farms were included in the category of forests of special importance, which belonged to the assigned (attributed) forests. A mandatory feature, according to which they were recognized by the owners of the forest fund, is forest management through inter-farm forestry enterprises in order to provide agricultural groups and the rural population with their needs for wood and other forest products. The total area of these forests in the country amounted to more than 45 million hectares and, in addition, the areas of former agricultural lands that were overgrown with trees and shrubs in the Novgorod region could be attributed to them; these forests occupied an area of more than 42% of all forests in the region.

In 2000, the Ministry of Agriculture of Russia became a specially authorized state body in the field of use, protection, protection of forest fund and reproduction sites, former collective and state farm forests, transferred to new agricultural organizations for free use. More than 700 rural forestry enterprises functioned in the rural forest management system, united in territorial administrations in 38 constituent entities of the Russian Federation, with a total number of employees of more than 22,000 people. In the Novgorod region, such rural forestry enterprises were created in all regions and
successfully, on the basis of self-financing, conducted integrated forestry and industrial activities, directing part of the profit to agricultural enterprises. At the same time, agricultural enterprises were provided with their own timber (construction timber, lumber, firewood, shavings, sawdust, charcoal, etc.) and non-timber forest products. With surplus forest products, agricultural enterprises entered the market, receiving additional income. So in the framework of horizontal cooperation, sometimes even bypassing commodity-money relations, mutually beneficial exchange in kind was carried out. For example, lumber was sent to the sparsely forested areas of the country's chernozem (blacksoil) zone, and seed seed, feed grain, mixed fodder, etc. were received back. In addition, rural forestry enterprises performed an important social function, fully providing the local population for a nominal fee with business and firewood. At the same time, in rural forests, the level of farming was high, since there was no foundation for the emergence of especially urgent problems of sparing and integrated forest management, effective forest reproduction, prevention and control of forest fires, illegal logging, etc.

The Forest Code, adopted in 1997, indicated that all forests previously owned by agricultural organizations were transferred to it for free use, but now there is no mention of rural forests in the current Forest Code of 2006. This led to the alienation of forests from both the rural population and agricultural organizations with the liquidation of all specialized structures for forestry in them.

The time elapsed after the entry into force of this legislative act showed the fallacy of the decisions taken on the elimination of rural forests and the system of inter-farm forestry enterprises. The situation was aggravated by the fact that at the same time the competences of the district (city) administrations and local representative bodies in the field of regulation of forest relations, including management and control functions, were unreasonably abolished. In our opinion, this led to an increase in forest violations and forest fires, their concealment and abuse of their monopoly functions by the bodies and organizations of Rosleskhоз. At the same time, the words of the scientist arborist, Professor M. M. Orlov, who as early as 1925 noted that forestry planning is closely related to forestry policy, were forgotten. In those years, the head of the Forest Management Department of Narkomzem, A. I. Schulz, paid priority attention to the supply of wood to the rural population. He believed that this issue is a matter of both economic and political nature, and the underestimation of the needs of the rural population in forest resources will force spontaneous cutting and letting of fallen trees into the forest spontaneously, therefore this problem, which, of course, is connected with the whole fate of forestry.

In recent years, this problem has escalated and has attracted increasing attention not only of specialists, but also of the country's leaders, the media, including television and the public. Our monograph details the position of these and other prominent scientists of the country on this issue. But, unfortunately, the authors of modern regulatory acts and the leaders of the forest industry make little use of not only regional scientific historical knowledge, but also many years of international practical experience [4, 5]. This leads to ill-conceived and erroneous decisions in this area.

Novgorod zemsky councilor, the famous scientist P. S. Guryev (1807–1884) remarked very precisely about this: “A person only judges sensibly when he knows what he judges well, and knowledge is not easily obtained ... but without science nowadays it’s far you will not leave. It penetrates everything and everywhere shows its rights. We often predict and hurry painfully, clutching at the first brilliant thought, not being completely convinced how true it is. From this we often make mistakes and almost always come back with the loss of time and money” [6]. The development of scientific knowledge on the basis of experimental work in his testament to young contemporaries that are relevant today, was also noted by a prominent agrarian, founder of Petrovsky Agricultural and Forestry Academy (now RSAU - Moscow Timiryazev Agricultural Academy) Academician N. I. Zheleinov who in the mid-19th century lived and carried out unique experimental work in the field of agriculture and forestry in the Novgorod region for many years, which for many decades were forgotten [7].

Obviously, the problems that have developed in recent years in the forest-agrarian sector cannot be solved without reforming and changing the management structure, primarily the vicious self-control system existing in forestry. A system of independent, departmental federal forest supervision and control should be created, without mixing it with forest protection. In addition, previously dissected inefficient forestry enterprises and forestries should be combined into integrated state forest enterprises engaged in
forest management and forestry on non-leased forest land in conditions of fair competition with other forest users.

Unfortunately, the current Forest Code of the Russian Federation ignored the competitiveness of ownership of natural resources, including forest resources, established by the Constitution of the Russian Federation. The transfer of part of the powers from the monopoly federal owner to the subjects of the Russian Federation did not and could not give positive results, since the rights and obligations for effective forestry management can never be balanced due to the vast territory of the country and various regional characteristics. In world practice, this option of “two bears in one lair” does not exist anywhere, and the rightful owners of different levels of state and municipal authorities, legal entities and individuals, including private ones, conduct forestry in a competitive environment at a higher level. Under the current conditions of a market economy in Russia, such a tough monopoly on forest resources has developed that was not even with the planned economy in the USSR. This is the main cause of many negative phenomena. So, for example, inexplicably and unjustifiably complicated access to forest resources for the rural population, as well as low forestry and economic efficiency of forestry.

In our opinion, the Novgorod region can be selected as a promising pilot region for pilot-production inspections in solving urgent problems in the forest-agrarian sector of the economy. These include issues related to the integrated use of land and forest resources, starting with simultaneous joint work on land and forest management with a clear identification and reasonable registration of the boundaries of agricultural land and forest fund [8]. Currently, land accounting documents and forest inventory materials contain numerous inaccuracies and controversial facts, for example, when forested areas continue to be counted as farmland, including those owned by individuals allocated to them in 90 years during the reorganization of agricultural enterprises. Long discussions are being held about this at the federal and local levels with different points of view, but no final balanced decision has yet been made.

Among the topical issues in the development of bills should include issues of diversification of the agricultural economy [9, 10, 11]. For this, it is necessary to provide the right to peasant (farmer) farms, agricultural holdings and other agricultural enterprises to give free use or long-term lease of forest plots within their land use as a priority (without tenders and auctions), and to state and municipal agricultural enterprises to provide such plots for permanent unlimited use. These forest management institutions can be both self-sufficient and intermediate in the way of “educating” an effective owner. Subject to the requirements of proper forest management for at least five years, provide such integrated land users with the right to obtain ownership of these forest areas.

Providing the farmer with simplified access to the forest resource will achieve the following goals. Firstly, taking into account market conditions, actual forest cover and other factors, such integrated land use will increase the level, as well as find a harmonious balance and the optimal ratio of forest and agriculture.

Secondly, this will allow financial recovery of agricultural producers balancing on the verge of zero profitability in the Non-Chernozem Zone of Russia, increasing their economic stability. This is very important, because according to the obligations that Russia made upon entering the World Trade Organization (WTO), measures of state support for farmers are combined in three baskets: “green”, “yellow”, “blue”. Blue basket measures include programs aimed at self-limiting production. The yellow basket includes measures that have a direct impact on trade. These measures include: subsidization of interest rates, reimbursement of expenses for fuel and lubricants, compensation for the purchase of mineral fertilizers, chemical protective equipment, price support. Russia joined the WTO on the condition that state support for Russian villagers in the framework of the “yellow” basket will decrease from $ 9 billion in 2013 to $ 4.4 billion in 2018 [12]. Measures aimed at the construction of housing, roads, engineering infrastructure, subsidies for science, education, retraining of personnel, reduction of the negative impact of natural and climatic factors, development of land reclamation are measures of indirect financial support for production, and do not imply redistribution of funds from consumers, do not provide for price manufacturer support, therefore, are included in the "green" basket, which is not limited to anything. Thus, indirect support in the framework of the “green box” is of particular importance in the conditions of a sharp reduction in more than two times of direct state support.
The Ministry of Agriculture has to dodge literally in the interpretation of WTO rules in order to protect domestic producers. So, within the framework of the “green basket”, it is possible to implement regional development programs, which are considered unfavorable for agriculture. And on April 6, 2013, the Minister of Agriculture of Russia Nikolai Fedorov said in an interview with RIA Novosti that the Ministry of Agriculture prepared a draft “Government Decisions in two versions: according to one version, regions are classified as unfavorable for agriculture only by natural and climatic criteria - 42 subjects RF And according to another version, if we include socio-economic criteria, that is, depopulation, population incomes and so on, we get 62 subjects” [13]. As a result, by Order of the Government of the Russian Federation dated January 26, 2017 No. 104-r, only 29 entities were approved as unfavorable for agricultural production. However, such a clumsy attempt by the Ministry of Agriculture to declare 3/4 of Russia unsuitable for agriculture, including the capital of the Russian Black Earth Region - Voronezh Region, the largest soybean producer - the Amur Region, the birthplace of oil - the Vologda Region, as well as all regions of the North Caucasus, indicate a convulsive search for life necessary indirect support measures to adapt the agricultural industry to new conditions.

Therefore, providing the farmer with simplified access to the forest resource can be considered as a hidden state subsidy, which will allow, without violating the restrictions of the WTO, to significantly support the domestic producer of agricultural products. At the same time, this will significantly reduce the burden on budgets of all levels and redirect funds planned for direct support of agriculture and forestry to social needs.

Thirdly, the integrated management of agriculture and forestry will make it possible to level the seasonal employment of the rural population, increase production volumes, as well as launch processing of forest and agricultural raw materials, traditional crafts and tourism [14, 15, 16]. All this will intensify the multiplier effect and will lead to a significant increase in permanent jobs, increase local employment, stop the outflow of the able-bodied population, and the extinction of the Russian village. In addition, organized centralized provision of local people with forest resources (timber, firewood, etc.) will reduce social tension and give impetus to the sustainable development of rural areas.

At the same time, scientific recommendations and literary sources, time-tested, covering the results of the integrated management of agriculture and forestry, as well as forestry and the forest industry, should be used comprehensively, using the example of successful work for many decades in the second half of the last century of the regional association “Novgorodmezkhkhozles” and Krestetsky experimental timber industry of the Central Scientific Research Institute of International Economics [17, 18, 19].

This was very clearly expressed by the Head of the Ministry of Natural Resources of the Russian Federation D. Kobylkin in the Izvestia newspaper on August 22, 2018: “We need to return the owner to the forest. To return the system that effectively existed in 1960-1970”, which is difficult to disagree with [20]. The coincidence of our views with the position of the industry leadership is especially timely and relevant in connection with the development of the new Forest Code of the Russian Federation.

3. Conclusion
The traditional, historically developed and successfully tested by time, integrated management of agriculture and forestry should become a powerful driver not only for the development of rural territories, but also one of the main directions of development of the entire economy of the Novgorod region.

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