

CENTRAL ANTI-CORRUPTION BUREAU

<https://www.cba.gov.pl/en/news/285,The-owners-of-the-big-fish-farm-have-extorted-millions.html>
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The owners of the big fish farm have extorted millions

The officers of the CBA Regional Office in Rzeszów detained seven persons dealing with extortion of EU direct payments, so-called land subsidies, agro-environmental subsidies and area subsidies for agricultural land. The group operated in the period from 2011 until 2017.

Among those detained by the CBA in Rzeszów are the owners of a fish farm with a pond complex with an area of 800 ha located near the border with Ukraine, near Przemyśl. Employees of offices dealing with the preparation of subsidy applications as well as persons ("straw persons"), who submitted applications for subsidies in the powiat Podkarpackie offices of the Agency for Restructuring and Modernization of Agriculture, were also arrested.

The findings of the CBA and the prosecutor's office indicate that a number of corruption crimes could have taken place and threaten the economic interest of the state. The representatives of the Agency for Restructuring and Modernization of Agriculture were misled and the institution was brought to an unfavorable regulation with a property of great value.

All 7 persons detained by the Rzeszów CBA District - the Prosecutor's Office in Rzeszów will present charges of acting jointly and in agreement in order to obtain a material advantage of great value - they were to create "artificial conditions" to obtain EU subsidies, resulting in unfavorable disposal of the Agency for Restructuring and Modernization of Agriculture in the total amount of about PLN 9 million.

The proceeding consisted in illegal omission of provisions - completely fictitious division of a part of a large area of farm land into smaller plots, which were supposed to be fictitiously part of the so-called straw persons. At that time, subsidies were available for each of the pseudo-separate farms and in total it gave a much larger

amount, by millions of zlotys. This money in a small part went to "straw persons" - practically everything was picked up by the organizer of the procedure.

The CBA agents are also searching 13 places, apartments and offices. Further detentions and enlargement of their list may are not ruled out.

The material collected so far by the CBA and the District Prosecutor's Office in Rzeszów shows that the losses from extorting subsidies from the Agency for Restructuring and Modernization of Agriculture may reach between 20 and 30 million PLN.

