

## Abstract

As the rural retail net in Czechia has declined in the last 20 years, the aim of this thesis was to develop the current socioeconomic importance of village shops in countryside in order to assess the possibility of the existence of rural food deserts in Czechia. The example of the Semily district was used. The combination of quantitative and qualitative analyzes allowed to learn that the absence of a village shop is often associated with other unpropitious socioeconomic characteristics. In comparison with municipal leaders of villages without village shops, municipal leaders of villages with village shops believe in the crucial importance of village shops. However, no differences in social conditions and quality of life between villages with and without village shops were found. In the researched region, seven of nine villages without any village shop have the characteristics of rural food deserts. Their particularity is the comprehension of their inhabitants with the current situation. Nevertheless, village shop is an important community centre in the countryside. Therefore its preservation should be one of the priorities of local governments. Hence the duty of municipal leaders of villages without any village shop is to support the community life of village inhabitants by another means. The paper results allowed to suggest a definition of rural food deserts in Czech environment and some methodical recommendations for their localization.

key words: village shop, food deserts, social exclusion, village community, retail