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ROMANIAN TRADITIONAL PRODUCTS

VALENTINA TUDOR, IOANA MĂCĂU (ȚOGOE), MARIAN BUTU¹

Abstract: *The countryside is an available and eligible resource, with an unexploited growth potential for the exploitation of which is necessary to converge efforts of policy makers both at national level and in the Member States regarding the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of agricultural policies. The central elements of the policy - farms and farmers - will be central elements of the Common Agricultural Policy for the period 2014-2020.*

Key words: *Local agriculture, farmers, traditional products, consumers, consultancy.*

INTRODUCTION

Increasingly present in the public space are noticeable the campaigns on organic agriculture, the opportunities offered by rural areas in the context of national and European policies and enhancing its development, particularly of agriculture, promotion and development of local markets, not the least all local traditions, thus traditional products – viable and dynamic alternative to trade promoted through commercial companies (eg. supermarkets). In this way agricultural products and, in particular, those traditional products produced on farms (local products), may reach the consumer in the shortest possible market chain, ie. local markets. Diversity of agricultural production, maintaining a high quality of its maintenance and development, create the premises of a real competitive environment for farmers and contributes significantly to the enrichment of present cultural heritage and, without doubt, the gastronomic heritage. The increasing demand for high quality products and traditional products may increase the agricultural and/or supply with certain identifiable characteristics, especially in terms of their geographic origin. In this context, complementary local services can be initiated and developed (eg. local supply services to urban areas), being recognized at European level as active factors in local economic development, generating jobs (permanent and seasonal).

METHODS AND MATERIALS

For achieving the article we use statistics and official reports of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, official reports and communications of the European Commission - Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development. The technique and equipment used: laptop, programs for editing text and tables, Internet connection. Research period and location: This work was conducted under the Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development 2007 - 2013, number of the contract: POSDRU/107/1.5/S/76888.

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

Supporting and promoting (small and medium) farms and local farmers, best meet consumers' needs in terms of providing local products, including traditional ones. Partnership between local actors (authorities, local farmers and consumers) is an important step towards sustainable rural development and the challenges that agriculture is facing today:

- The need to increase agricultural production and agricultural products to meet market demand.
- The need for increasing farmers' income, especially small farmers and their families.

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- The need to carry out enabling conservation and natural resources needed to produce in the future (sustainable agriculture).
Local, traditional products, recommended themselves by a number of characteristics:
- Are produced, processed by farmers to the final product, and sold directly by them (meat products, milk products, bakery products, wine, fruit and vegetables, etc.).
- Are products for which the farmer is fully responsible for the whole process (both production and processing of products).
- Are products that are sold directly from the farmer – the shortest marketing chain is created, in other words, there could be no more than an intermediary between the farmer-producer and the final consumer (EU citizen).

A solution of sustainable development of rural areas depends, therefore, on the existing local capacity to create added value in the global market by anchoring in a limited, specific, traditional space. The product thus acquires a territorial link inseparable from the place of manufacture, able to individualize the high quality that satisfy consumer demands to provide protection of the intangible right of the manufacturer on it, and encourage rural development. Such an individual can meet within local market such specific and profitable demand.

Mr. Dacian Cioloș, European Commissioner, European Commission - Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development, stressed that in order to increase consumer access to local products, structural decisions are necessary, that will most effectively meet expectations, and the need of an organized frame (local supply services).

„I was presented with a study on 26 farms involved in direct selling in the Paris area (France). Overall, these 26 farms by themselves generate 170 permanent jobs and 200 seasonal jobs, well above the potential of traditional farms.[...]

A study in Italy showed that in 2008, more than half of Italians turned to local markets. I quoted just now the United Kingdom, where the first agricultural market dates back to 1997. Today it holds more than 7,500 such markets every year. I could just as well quote Slovakia, Romania and Greece. The latter is no doubt record holder in the short circuit phenomenon intensified as a result of the economic crisis to the benefit of farmers and consumers. Economic difficulties have led to a direct sale potato circuit at attractive prices, with 60% smaller than conventional circuits. This experience will be extended to other products” (Cioloș, 2013).

Agricultural policies will have to answer a series of questions:

- ”How to identify local pathways so that they ensure credibility and to ensure better visibility?
- How to ensure impeccable hygiene and health safety without discouraging local initiatives, taking into account that their investment opportunities are not comparable to those of large enterprises? Sufficient current exemptions? What about awareness and training of farmers?
- How to resume the connection between major urban centers of consumption and production areas surrounding them? Agricultural policy must give them the opportunity to pass the gates of cities and urban markets to support initiatives.
- How to encourage farmers to invest? For the period after 2013, Member States will have a range of support measures that will address strengthening entrepreneurship in rural areas. This is a key element of our will to build an agricultural policy for all and for all farm types” (Cioloș, 2013).

In Romania there have emerged since 2004, a number of actions that were aimed at unlocking the potential of rural areas. A first step was to develop a normative act that established the conditions and criteria for the certification of traditional products (Order of the Minister of Agriculture, Forests and Rural Development no. 690/2004 for approval of the conditions and criteria for certifying traditional products). This order establishes that the "certification of traditional products" recognizes the traditionalism of a product through its registration in accordance with the above standard mentioned. It also defines the terms "traditional product" and "traditional" (the term "traditional product" means the "product to be made from traditional materials, presenting a traditional composition or a mode of production and/or processing reflecting a technological

process of production and/or traditional processing clearly distinguished from other similar products of the same category" and the "traditional" highlights "the element or combination of elements that distinguishes a product clearly from other similar products of the same category; traditionalism cannot be limited to a qualitative or quantitative composition or to a mode of production established by Community or national legislation or by voluntary standards, however this does not apply if the regulation or that standard was established to define a product's traditionality") and a mechanism apparently simple, obtaining the status of "traditional product".

The annual activity reports of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Romania, documents published on the official website of the institution, showed a constant activity on the registration of traditional products, as recorded in the following data certification:

- In 2012 - a total of 440 products of which 220 meat and meat specialties, 89 dairy, 64 bakery, 32 from the fruit and vegetable sector.
- In 2011 – there are not presented information regarding the number of registered traditional products.
- In 2010 - a total of 309 products.
- In 2009 there were registered 448 traditional products and were given 33 serial numbers for: canned vegetables and fruits products, canned meat.

For the analysis of the traditional products in Giurgiu County were selected data available and information in lists of traditional products during the period 2005-2012, published on the official website of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in the South Muntenia Region (Table 1).

Table 1. Situation of traditional products in South Muntenia Region (2005-2012)

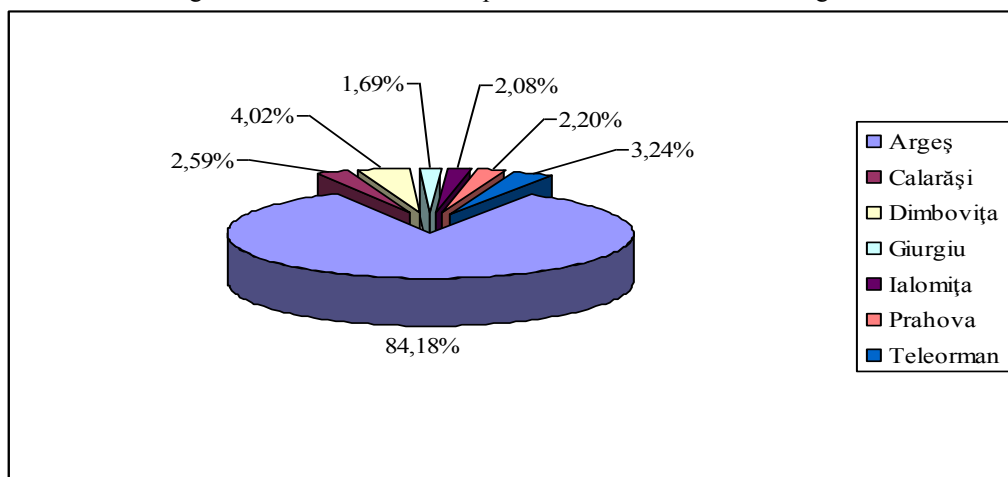
Year/	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Total in South Muntenia Region	33	131	302	51	67	5	157	25
Argeş County	33	125	273	27	48	2	125	16
Calarăşi County	-	1	-	11	1	-	4	3
Dimboviţa County	-	-	23	5	3	-	-	-
Giurgiu County	-	-	-	-	-	2	11	-
Ialomiţa County	-	3	3	4	2	-	4	-
Prahova County	-	2	3	-	-	1	5	6
Teleorman County	-	-	-	4	13	-	8	-

From the traditional products list results that in South Muntenia were recorded in the period 2005-2012 a total of 771 traditional products (dairy products - 61 % meat products - 24 % ; drinks - 8.95 % bakery - 2.7 %). Traditional product distribution by county is shown in Figure 1.

If we achieve a ranking of component counties, Argeş County ranks first with the highest number of registered traditional products - 649 (dairy - 63.5; meat products - 19.4%; drinks - 9.24 %), Giurgiu County falls last, recording a total of 13 traditional products (dairy products - 62 %, meat products - 23 %, vegetables and fruit - 15%). We note that in terms of traditional products made in the counties of the South Muntenia Region weights for dairy and meat products are similar, differentiation is registered for the categories of products on the third place as percentage, explained by different geographical characteristics of counties, favoring the development of different agricultural activities.

For enhancement of Romanian traditional products and facilitating their access to local and European markets, there were initiated corrective legislative measures. It became necessary to clarify the situation of Romanian traditional products, current legislation allowing registration of products supposedly "traditional" not carrying the dowry farmers transmitted from generation to generation, becoming more of a marketing concept. This fact is joined by the low interest of farmers to record traditional European products, which made only one traditional product of Romania (Topoloveni Plum Jam - Argeş County) from more than 4,000 registered traditional products, to benefit from recognition at EU level - application for product registration.

Figure 1. Share of traditional products in South Muntenia Region



In late July 2013, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development has proposed, in a draft order, conditions and criteria that a product must meet to receive the title of "traditional". Unlike the current rule, the draft law emphasizes the quality of "traditional" product, it must be produced from raw materials in the production area, not have the composition of food additives, except natural additives. Equally, the product must have a traditional recipe specific to the processing site, which reflects a mode of production and/or processing and a traditional technological process. In addition to regulating the way in which one can get a traditional product title and entry in the National Register of traditional products managed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, there is operationalized an ex-post compliance mechanism by farmers-processors of conditions and requirements that formed the basis of the certificate.

Besides a measure for a better regulation in this area, information and promotion actions should be undertaken in order to obtain a better use of traditional products, both on the local market and the regional market. Thus farmers can make better use of their labor, while consumers can have access to a variety of products and behaviors rooted in local traditions and to make a contribution to the local and regional development.

CONCLUSIONS

Taking into account the concept promoted at European level to promote rural and local traditions that support economic development in the period 2014-2020, the number of registered products as traditional products could be an important indicator to measure the quality, strength and performance of the business agricultural consultants at the county level.

Analysis of such county or regional level indicators can reveal objectively, systemic or operational barriers for the removal of which the authorities have the responsibility to establish a roadmap of measures, managing staff and deadlines.

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