

RURAL DEVELOPMENT - NECESSITY FOR REDUCING REGIONAL GAPS IN ROMANIA

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An important role in rural development is to revitalize agriculture as a key sector for reducing regional disparities at national level. Creating a functioning market in Romania which is able to cope with market forces within the EU, implies reducing existing disparities in Romania's agriculture, and including those relating to physical production and value are in the foreground. Performance of production structures in agriculture is determined by a number of factors, among which the most important are: the natural potential of farm financial resources required purchase of inputs, ensuring balance in the allocation of production factors, potential technical and technological, the existing workforce and readiness of the farm manager. The agricultural potential of the area is high, but the fragmentation of agricultural land, plus inadequate technical equipment, poor infrastructure and an aging workforce and / or unqualified to practice agriculture, make this potentially be exploited weak.

Keywords: rural development, agricultural policy, production structures, size of agricultural holdings

INTRODUCTION

Romanian territory illustrates the geographical structure and potential agrarian harmony - since landforms; river, soil, vegetation, how land use, land improvement and ending with ways of communication, network of settlements and economic activities, reflecting their natural and economic integrated into a continuous process of development, recovery, restructuring, development and harmonious organization.

In this context, Romanian agriculture has been and remains the general attention by potential land resources, employment and production that conditions achievable food security, farmers' welfare and existence of all its inhabitants.

Agricultural structures necessary training and competitive market functioning is constituted in a system of interdependent components and flexible in time and space related to: economic organization of farmers into viable forms of exploitation; formation of production structures to the needs of consumers; technical and technological modernization of farms to obtain quality products at competitive costs; organization of marketing structures so as to ensure the supply and distribution channels over the material and financial flows needed resumption of production; formation foodservice chains; complex and sustainable rural development.

Existence in our country, predominantly subsistence households, such behavior leads to their productive. Such a situation, given that the area owned by each household is reduced leading to its fragmentation, which does not favor rational conduct of agricultural operations and the efficient use of various resources, such as, for example, technical means. In addition, it is difficult to practice a modern agriculture in such a state of things. In agriculture developed such households are endangered, or have ceased to exist.

Commercial farming known often simplify the structures of production at farm level. Prevailing influence demand (volume, structure) market. Branches and cultures he has chosen are

consistent with what is requested. Holdings are contained in vertical integration under the contract. It provides thus demand different categories of beneficiaries (processors, traders, etc.).

Simplification of the production structures lead to homogeneity of production processes and to obtain large amounts of production from the cultivation, entering the distribution chain, facilitating the conduct of relations with beneficiaries. Consistent production advantages for those who take them over whether processors, whether they are merchants that sell fresh products. If processing, simplifies operations and organizational training material necessary to initiate production processes. As traders, homogeneity (eg, fruit size, their color, etc.) facilitate the conduct of relations with individual consumers and is an argument for low prices.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Population and human resources from rural areas

The rural population is not evenly distributed across the country. Thus, the rural population has a high proportion in certain regions (Sud Muntenia - 58.6%, North East - and South-West Oltenia 56.8% - 51.9%), highest density, except Bucharest-Ilfov region, registered in the Northeast region (63.24 inhabitants / km²), while in the western part of the country is sparsely populated rural areas (26.51 inhabitants / km² in the Western region). These disparities are reflected in the socio-economic development of the area and quality of life of rural population.

Within the EU, Romania is the country most dependent on agriculture and the country with the largest number of farmers. Not only has the highest percentage of farmers in the EU, but they represent 20% of the total EU labor force mobilized for agriculture.

Human resource level area has a low level of education and information in all areas (management, marketing, financing opportunities), a situation maintained and that young people who accede to higher education studies (even from high school starting) do not come back in the countryside. Basically, it's a vicious circle: young people who continue their studies in urban areas do not come back in the countryside, because, because of the few options / opportunity, have nowhere to engage.

The data presented in Table 1 reveals the extent of oversize segment of the rural population employed in agriculture in Romania, which requires finding solutions to the structural change of farms, especially since the situation remains unchanged in the recent years, reflect labor productivity and economic performance of farms.

Table 1

The main indicators of human potential in agriculture Romania, 2007-2015

Thousand persons

Specification	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Total population:	21565	21529	21499	21462	21414	21336	21286	19697	19488
- in rural areas:	9651	9656	9663	9643	9636	9601	9579	8985	8770
%	44,8	44,9	44,9	44,9	45,0	45,0	45,0	45,0	45,0
The active population:	9994	9945	9924	9965	9868	9964	9977	9243	8892
- in rural areas:	4500	4473	4449	4427	4305	4424	4425	4165	4046
%	45,0	45,0	44,8	44,4	43,6	44,4	44,4	45,1	45,5
The employed population:	9353	9369	9243	9240	9138	9263	9247	8614	8237
- in rural areas:	4281	4268	4211	4208	4066	4197	4189	3945	3814
%	45,8	45,6	45,6	45,5	44,5	45,3	45,3	45,8	46,3
The employed population:	9353	9369	9243	9240	9138	9263	9247	8614	8237
- in agriculture*:	2757	2690	2689	2780	2612	2686	2635	2438	2306
%	29,5	28,7	29,1	30,1	28,6	29,0	28,5	28,3	28,0

* Agriculture, forestry and fishing

Source: Press release "Labour force in Romania: employment and unemployment," INS

The number and size of farms

Increasing domestic agricultural production is the main factor that affects food security and agricultural policies of the country. Farm structure adjustment measures are tools that have the potential to bring a lasting solution to the problem of agricultural supply, including by supporting economic growth and the physical size of holdings, in line with evolving technologies used in agricultural production. Comparing the economic performance of farms of different sizes between Romania and the EU member countries shows that Romania is only at the beginning of the road to a modern agriculture.

According to statistics Eurostat, the EU-28 there are a number of 12.248 million farms. These farms use an area of 174.1 million hectares, average farm is 14.2 ha (Table 2).

Table 2

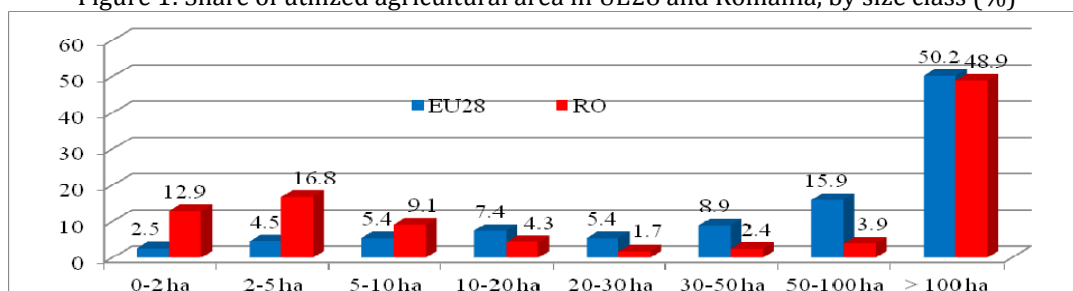
Number of farms and utilized agricultural area (UAA)
Size class in the EU-28 vs. Romania

	Total	< 2 ha	2-5 ha	5-10 ha	10-20 ha	20-30 ha	30-50 ha	50-100 ha	> 100 ha
The number of farms according to their size									
UE-28	12247990	6018390	2474030	1337660	916570	382560	399160	393890	325820
	100%	49.1%	20.2%	10.9%	7.5%	3.1%	3.3%	3.2%	2.7%
RO	3859040	2866440	727390	182440	43610	9730	8210	7480	13730
	100%	74.3%	18.8%	4.7%	1.1%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	0.4%
The utilized agricultural area (UAA), depending on the size of farms									
UE-28	174115580	4301640	7810520	9368890	12851610	9323600	15429640	27605440	87424210
	100%	2.5%	4.5%	5.4%	7.4%	5.4%	8.9%	15.9%	50.2%
RO	13306130	1718360	2229930	1210510	571390	233850	315400	518300	6508390
	100%	12.9%	16.8%	9.1%	4.3%	1.7%	2.4%	3.9%	48.9%

Sursa: Eurostat, 2014

In the structure of agriculture at European level but there are strong contrasts: on the one hand there is a large number (6018 thousand holdings) of very small farms (less than 2 hectares), which uses a small percentage (2.5%) of the surface total land area (4.3 million hectares), and on the other hand there are a small number (2.7% of total holdings) of very large farms (over 100 ha), employing 87.424 million ha (50.2%) of the total land area used in the EU-28 (Figure 1, Figure 2).

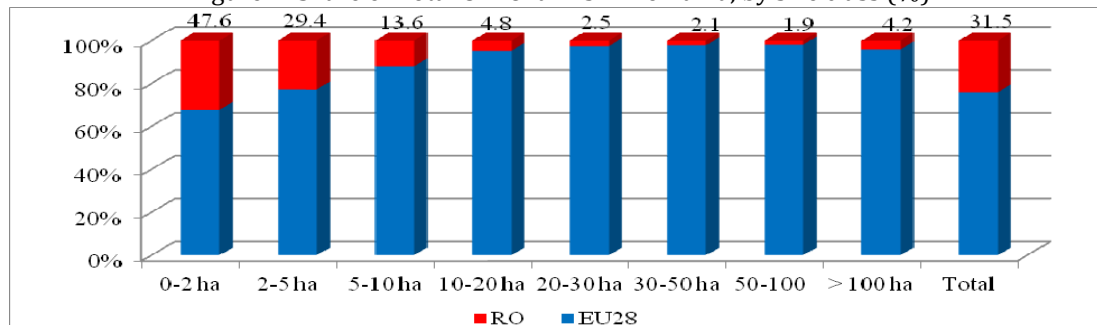
Figure 1: Share of utilized agricultural area in UE28 and Romania, by size class (%)



Sursa: Eurostat, 2014

The weight of between 0-2 ha holdings is 47.6% of total holdings, which shows the size of the phenomenon of fragmentation of agricultural holdings Romanian, with negative effects on economic performance and their development.

Figure 2: Share of Total UE28 farms in Romania, by size class (%)



Sursa: Eurostat, 2014

The average size of farms

In Romania, agricultural land fund is strongly affected by the crumbling plots small, leading in many cases to the impossibility of applying technologies Agronomic modern agricultural leading, scientifically, to obtain cropland of stable production both in terms of quantity but also in quality. Agricultural production is supported by the majority of small farms and therefore the performance of agriculture in Romania is affected by excessive fragmentation of ownership.

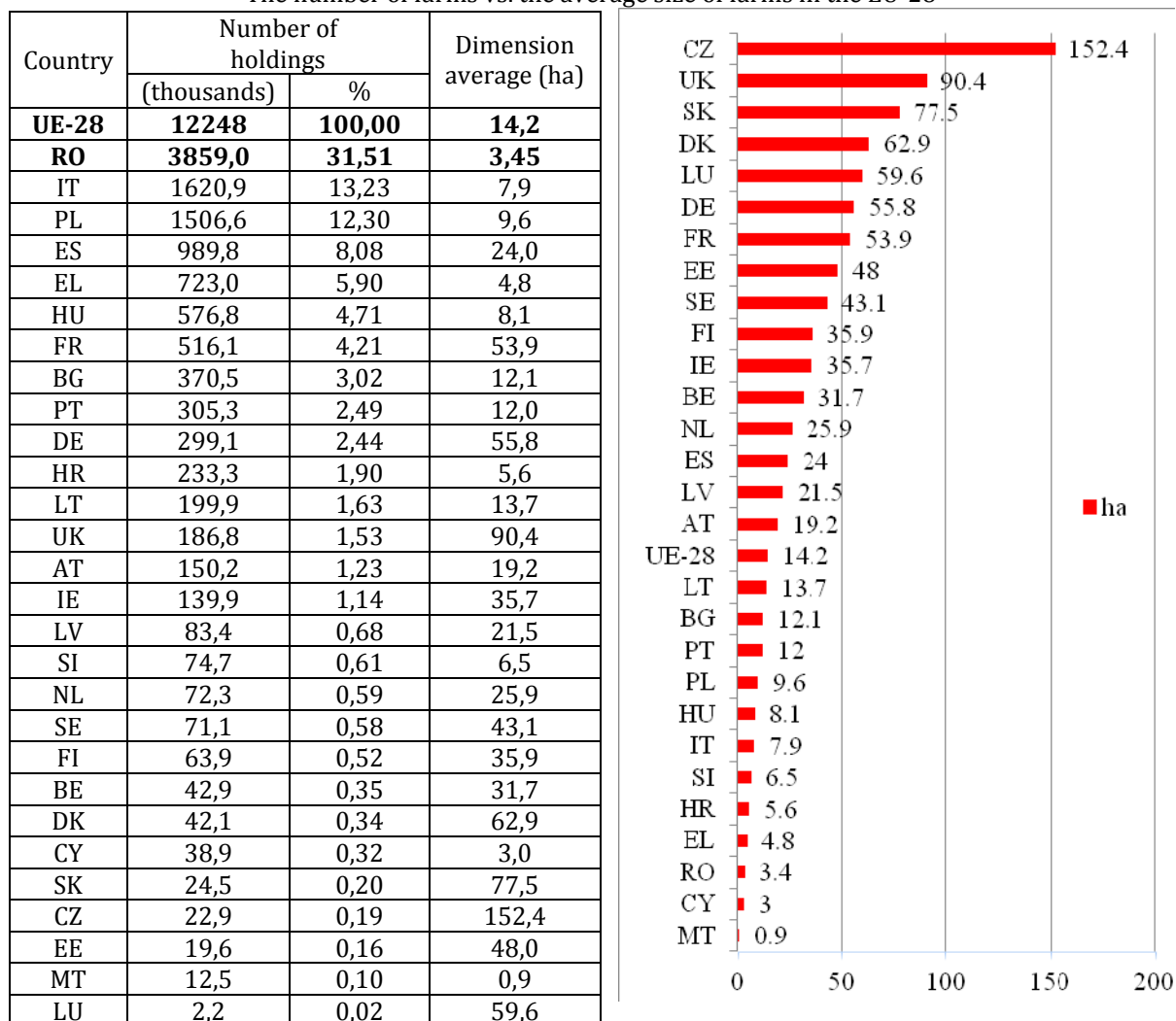
On the other hand in Romania there is a category of large farms and very large surface area of over 100 ha, representing 0.4% of total holdings (13730 holdings), but employing 48.9% of the utilized agricultural area.

The phenomenon of structural duality of farms maintain, requiring a lengthy process to effect the restructuring at farm level. Although the total number of farms decreased in 2002-2013 was kept extremely divided structure of Romanian agriculture and subsistence character of the vast majority of farms.

According to Eurostat, the average size of farms in the EU-28 was 14.2 ha and 3.45 ha in Romania (over 4 times lower), which negatively influences the enhancement of agricultural and rural resources available, with direct effects on the rural economy and farmers' incomes default (Table 3, Figure 3).

Table 3, Figure. 3

The number of farms vs. the average size of farms in the EU-28



Sursa: Eurostat, 2014

Restructuring holdings through the Rural Development Programme

In 2007-2013, the National Rural Development Programme (RDP) included two measures with a direct effect on strengthening holdings, the proposed European regulation in an attempt to

speed up structural transformation of agriculture to the new Member States (that joined the EU after 2004). It is transitional measures 141 "Supporting semi-subsistence farms" and 142 "Setting up of producer groups", designed to speed up market integration smaller farms.

Through the Measure 141 semi-subsistence could be supported to restructure individually, based on a development plan which included better integration market, as long as the Measure 142 aid has been granted for a collective activity integration market through joint marketing of the products.

If the Measure 141 assumed increasing its sales through a form of vertical coordination of production (sale on an organized market or integration into a branch on the basis of firm contracts), the Measure 142 encourage the association to market production through horizontal coordination among farmers by setting up producer groups, with a special contribution to the agri-food sector structuring of Romania.

At the end of the 2007-2013 programming period, the two measures studied the situation of the projects submitted, selected and funded is presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Situation Measures 141 and 142 projects under the RDP 2007-2013

Measures	Projects submitted		Selected projects		Financing contracts signed		EURO Payments made
	Nr.	Public value	Nr.	Public value	Nr.	Public value	Public value
141	88.846	666.345.000	63.544	476.580.000	53.348	377.029.184	333.378.187
142	86	16.870.702	80	15.560.049	58	11.921.945	5.254.616

Source: MARD Directorate General of Rural Development RDP

Through the National Rural Development Programme 2007 - 2013 was first introduced in Romania under the LEADER approach to the regulation of rural development. LEADER method is ascending involvement of local stakeholders to implement rural development policy. LEADER approach complemented the measures RDP giving occasion local communities rural to explore new ways to become competitive as a result of valuing local goods, to preserve the environment, create jobs for the rural population and contribute to increased quality life.

The support provided by LEADER axis for local action groups offers the possibility of combining the three objectives of the RDP, ie competitiveness, environment and quality of life / diversification in a rural development strategy developed by local communities, taking into account the needs and potential local. Also, the LEADER approach involved the consolidation of territorial coherence and implementation of integrated actions which have led to the diversification and development of rural economy, to the benefit of local communities.

Axis IV - LEADER of the RDP 2007-2013 envisaged the implementation of local development strategies for improving governance level administrative areas.

Establishment of a local partnership "local action group" (LAG) is an original and important feature of LEADER. These groups can effectively stimulate sustainable development because they: gather and combine human and financial resources available in the public sector, private sector, civic and voluntary sector; associate local players around collective projects and multi-sectoral actions to achieve synergies and critical mass to improve the area's economic competitiveness; strengthen the dialogue and cooperation between different rural actors; facilitates the interaction of different partners, the processes of adaptation and change in the agricultural sector (eg quality products, food chains), the integration of environmental concerns, the diversification of the rural economy and quality of life.

CONCLUSION

Achieving sustainable development depends, above all, by practicing sustainable agriculture, whose principles are based on the fact that natural resources are not infinite and must be used wisely to ensure the correlation between quantity, quality and structure of the foods and preserving environmental quality. Pursuing sustainable agriculture principles: conservation of soil, water resources, biodiversity conservation and sustainable management thereof. In other words, sustainable agriculture stresses the need to promote the health of human and natural resources at the same time, the concept of sustainability with an emphasis on the interdependence between humans and their natural environment.

For Romania, sustainable development of rural areas is an essential component of sustainable development due to the high share of rural population and areas owned by the countryside, it aimed at achieving a balance between the requirement conservation of material and spiritual values of the rural area and the trend of modernization of its . In this regard, pursue the objectives of sustainable rural development:

- Increase and stabilize agricultural production under sustainable land use and practice of environmentally friendly technologies. This requires maintaining the capacity of agricultural land to increase and stabilize crop;
- Increasing the competitiveness of rural areas in order to maximize their contribution to greater economic and social progress;
- Creating development opportunities for the rural population in order to increase its standard of living compared to the urban areas;
- Preserving and protecting the environment and cultural heritage place;
- Maintaining the population in rural areas by reducing the population exodus to urban centers;
- Diversifying and promoting occupational opportunities, in order to reduce unemployment in rural areas by increasing the income of rural household's alternatives.

In terms of economic, sustainable rural development requires that any specific activity in rural areas to achieve economic efficiency. Given that agriculture is the defining activity of rural areas, sustainable development requires a new approach to this activity, consistent with the needs of future development. In this respect, it is considered that the main elements relating to the formation and development of sustainable agriculture are:

1. Develop a competitive agriculture, to ensure the creation of added value needed for their own development;
2. Insertion of agriculture in the national economy and its functioning on the principles of competitive market economy;
3. Development of ecological agriculture, producing clean food goods, and not to post any agent or as a victim of pollution;
4. Development of agricultural activities, to ensure the stability of farmers' income, improved quality of life for farmers and hence the entire population of rural areas.

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