



The Development of Rural Economy, by Using Local Traditional Products: Case Study, Romania

KEYWORDS

rural economy, semi-subsistence farmers, traditional products, income source

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ABSTRACT

The use of local traditional products constitutes an important principle of the local economy development. An attempt to define them qualifies them as food, goods and services produced and consumed locally. Food and farming practices by which land, pastures, meadows and orchards are managed, and how the animals are raised and cared, plays a crucial role both in creating and maintaining rural local culture, the landscape, but also for human health. Thus, obtaining and selling local food is a catalyst for the maintenance and development of the community and at the same time a source of sustainable benefits to the rural economy.

INTRODUCTION

Romania has registered at national level a number of 4400 food products in the REGISTER FOR THE CERTIFICATION OF THE TRADITIONAL PRODUCTS. The traditional producers understand their role as administrators and not necessarily the owners of the land they work, they know the value and use it wisely. They know that the natural resources are not endless and that their existence depends on them. They are generally semi-subsistence farmers with small farms that integrate farming with animal husbandry. They practice traditional farming type, which means that they use only organic fertilizers and several machines.

In Romania there are areas that preserve the heritage of traditional products, mountain and hill areas, considered as basin for the identification of agricultural and / or food products that can acquire protection at national and community level, that have about 50% of traditional products certified, such as Arges, Sibiu, Satu Mare, Maramures counties.

The traditional agricultural practices do not endanger the species of plants and animals that live in the rural areas and do not affect their living environment. The traditional products support the local economy: by using them, the incomes obtained return to farmers, and thus help to support in the future their activity.

For many farmers, these activities are the main source of income, without which they could not continue to work, how much they would like to keep traditions and stay close to nature. A traditional product maintains the cultural heritage of the rural areas and helps preserve the cultural identity by preserving local traditions and customs: local holidays and festivals in which popular costumes are promoted, customs and products alike.

CASE STUDY

In the present study, we proposed an analysis of the market of the local traditional products, of the legislative and financial constraints regarding this market, of the advantages of producing and using this type of products for consumers but also as source of income that will lead to the development of the Romanian rural economy.

According to the data of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the dynamics of registering the traditional products in the register of certification increased significantly during the last years, their number is double and even triple

during one year. If in 2005 598 products were registered at MADR, during one year, in 2011, their number increased to 1.050, reaching a total of 4.400 at present. This system of registration is a voluntary one, non taxable and it does not benefit by national or community protection. As it results from the data presented in table 1, the most products, a number of 1.474, are those of diary, and around 1.441 are those of meat.

From the data presented in table 2, it is remarked the share of diary in total local traditional products, of 36,21% in 2010 and 33,50% in 2013, although the total number of such products increased from 1015, to 1474, in the mentioned period. The meat products register the highest evolution both as number, and share, respectively, from 24,64%, to 32,75%.

TABLE – 1 EVOLUTION OF LOCAL TRADITIONAL PRODUCTS

| PRODUCT | 2005 | 2007 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 |
|-------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| DIARY | 213 | 534 | 1015 | 1360 | 1474 |
| MEAT PRODUCTS | 204 | 413 | 686 | 1059 | 1441 |
| PASTRY AND BAKERY | 123 | 256 | 524 | 578 | 603 |
| ALCOHOLIC DRINKS | 43 | 132 | 357 | 347 | 358 |
| VEGETABLES, FRUIT, CANS | 12 | 17 | 104 | 207 | 215 |
| OTHER PRODUCTS | 3 | 19 | 117 | 302 | 309 |
| TOTAL | 598 | 1371 | 2803 | 3853 | 4400 |

Sources: The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development

The main categories certified last year are those of *meat products, diary, bakery, honey, drinks, vegetables/fruit, fish and fish products.*

TABLE – 2 SHARE OF TRADITIONAL PRODUCTS ,ON GROUPS OF PRODUCTS

| Product | Dairy | Meat | Pastry and bakery | Alcoholic drinks | Veg- etables, fruit, cans | Other products |
|------------|-------|-------|-------------------|------------------|---------------------------|----------------|
| TOTAL 2010 | 1015 | 686 | 524 | 357 | 104 | 117 |
| % 2010 | 36,21 | 24,64 | 18,61 | 12,71 | 3,67 | 4,13 |
| TOTAL 2013 | 1474 | 1441 | 603 | 358 | 215 | 309 |
| % 2013 | 33,50 | 32,75 | 13,70 | 8,14 | 4,88 | 7,03 |

Source: Own calculations of authors

CONCLUSIONS

A Romanian traditional product can penetrate the foreign market only if the producer is potent enough financially to be able to promote it. In most cases, the traditional producers are having trouble selling their products on the domestic market.

The Romanian authorities and producers should be more ac-

tive to register a large number of traditional products with European protection. The lack of information was one of the causes of registering one traditional product with protection at European level. It requires the preparation of some specialists in this field who know very well the European legislation and the producers to prepare files as the accreditation rules are not complicated. It is not so difficult to make the file, but mostly, people to understand in a certain territory.

REFERENCE

[1] Order of MAPDR no. 285/2004, Published in MO no. 414/10.05.2004, for the approval of the Norms on the protection of origin names and geographic indications of the agricultural and food products | [2] http://old.madr.ro/pages/industrie_alimentara/legislatie_produce_traditionale.pdf | [3] Guide for the certification of the traditional products edited by the national Office of Romanian Traditional and Ecologic Products, 2012. | [4] www.madr.ro/date_produce_traditionale