Chapter 19
Trends in the Evolution of Romania's Agricultural Resources in the Context of Sustainable Development

Cornel Lazăr
Petroleum-Gas University of Ploieşti, Romania

Mirela Lazăr
Petroleum-Gas University of Ploieşti, Romania

ABSTRACT

Although its share in Romania's Gross Domestic Product is relatively small (about 5%), agriculture is one of the important activities of the national economy, with direct implications on ensuring food security. Achieving an efficient modern agriculture represents a major strategic objective for Romania, imposed both by the need of ensuring food security and the role of this activity in supporting export. In this chapter it is analysed the evolution of Romanian agriculture in the context of sustainable development's objectives, through the resources available in this activity: land, technical means, human resources and financial resources. In doing so, we considered an analysis of the agricultural real estate, labour force, investments and loans used in agriculture on the period 2008 – 2014.

INTRODUCTION

Although its share in Romania's gross domestic product is relatively small (about 5%), agriculture is one of the important activities of the national economy, with direct implications on ensuring food security. Achieving an efficient modern agriculture represents a major strategic objective for Romania, imposed both by the need of ensuring food security and by the role of this activity in supporting export. The evolution of Romanian agriculture in the context of sustainable development's objectives is conditioned by the volume, quality and efficient use of available resources in this activity: land, technical means, human resources and financial resources.

In order to highlight these issues in the present chapter, we considered three major objectives.

A first objective refers to the analysis of the Romanian first means of agricultural production, agricultural lands and technical means that are used. Agricultural lands have been approached in analysis, not only by the surfaces' dynamics, but also in terms of their structure by the category of use or other characteristics. We also considered the analysis on the existing agricultural holdings in Romania, under different aspects.

Another objective was the analysis of the labour resources in the Romanian agriculture. Work in agriculture is an essential element for enhancing the resources of this activity, influencing in a decisive manner the results of the production. For this reason, the analysis of labour resources was a thorough one and was pointed at the dynamics of the employed population in agriculture and its structure by several characteristics (age, gender, employment status, area, type of ownership).

Along with natural resources, technical means and human resources, a particularly important role in the development of modern agriculture is represented by the financial resources.

Hence, the third goal envisaged in this chapter was the analysis of financial resources, through the eyes of instruments and mechanisms the are used: budgetary allocations, actions of external funding, by granting of loans and irredeemable funds through the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), destined to restructuring and investment, bank loans for production and investment.

In addressing the three objectives mentioned above, we have considered and compared, depending on the availability of data, the various indicators of Romanian agriculture with those of the European Union and the other countries. The comparisons were done to highlight some significant issues, positive or negative, about the evolution of Romanian agriculture resources.

BACKGROUND

Agriculture has played a major role in the development of society at all times. In recent decades, however, the demand for food has continuously increased due to the rapid growth of the world population. Moreover, food security has become a national priority for all countries, no matter of their economic development, which requires the use of measures to support agriculture and farmers (Barbu, 2011).

Meeting the growing demand for food was achieved mainly by increasing agricultural production (Lambin et al., 2000). Basically, it is considered (Dietrich et al., 2012) that there are two possibilities of increasing the agricultural production:

- Expanding agricultural areas;
- Intensive land use

Given that expansion of agricultural areas is limited, increasing the agricultural production based on productivity growth is the only option in most states (Oniciou, 2014)

In the last 20-30 years it was less talked about intensive agriculture, the emphasis being on sustainable agriculture. The new paradigm of sustainable growth highlights the role of agriculture in economic growth, in ensuring food security, in poverty reduction, rural development and environmental protection (Byerlee et al., 2009).

The idea of sustainable agriculture implies the use of modern work methods and technologies that provide high productivity and consistent profits with minimum negative effects on the environment and

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