

AGRICULTURE IN THE TOWN OF RECAS, TIMIS COUNTY

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ABSTRACT

The solution to the food crisis that affects the entire world nowadays depends directly and decisively on increasing the agricultural yield, through rational use of the productive resources and technical and social modernization of agriculture, since agriculture is the main branch of world food economy. That is why the effort of all countries must be focused on increasing the availability of food worldwide.

Agriculture has been the main - maybe still the only - food source for mankind; the number of people has been continually increasing and this poses a problem especially now, with the population explosion taking place in poor countries. These two major events make it not only necessary but also urgent for all nations to combine their efforts towards finding ways to accelerate the development of agriculture, in order to regulate the great discrepancies in food consumption and to ensure fair living conditions for all inhabitants of the earth.

These risks can be reduced or even eliminated only by putting technologies into practice correctly, with the help and under the supervision of agronomists, animal husbandry specialists, veterinarians, chemists and biologists.

We, Romanians, are still strongly tied by our origins, culture and mentalities to rural civilization, which may seem to be an impediment in our way to progress and modernization. Nevertheless, we will not solve the problems of modernization by cutting ourselves off from the village, but instead by integrating the villagers in this process which is by no means easy, but certainly long-lasting.

Keywords: Rural Development Strategy, planning, agriculture, strategy

INTRODUCTION

Modern and competitive agriculture cannot be practised without specialists, without a strong research-development sector, without technologies, without chemical and biological products in compliance with health safety requirements. Let us not get the wrong idea: there are just as many risk factors in ecological agriculture as there are in industrial agriculture.

These risks can be reduced or eliminated only by putting technologies into practice correctly, with the help of and under the supervision of agronomists, animal husbandry specialists, veterinarians, chemists and biologists.

These are the facts that require the evolution from villager and subsistence farming to farmer and efficient farming. This transformation is neither simple nor easy to accomplish. The educational system must play a very important part in this process. For this purpose, the system of continuous formation must be introduced among farmers and specialists; at the same time, they should be granted access to information and expertise.

Young people living in villages must be convinced and helped to make a career in the field of agriculture, where they can lead a decent life, with all the attributes of modernity. We must not repeat past mistakes or the mistakes made by other countries. Forced urbanization does not necessarily mean progress.

An increase in the level of civilization in villages by introducing public utilities, like schools, hospitals, kindergartens, common transport system, sewage system, gases, etc, can lead to the necessary balance between rural and urban areas.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The data used for writing the present paper were obtained from MADR, INSSE and the Chamber of Agriculture in Recas.

The weight of agriculture in Romanian economy has constantly decreased after 1990 (the pace was slower during the first years of the transition and faster after 1997). Nevertheless, the contribution of agriculture to GDP (gross domestic product) is substantial (12.8% in 2001), as compared to the EU average (1.7%).

The regional distribution of agricultural lands according to their use is differentiated in relation to the relief, soil and climatic conditions, and suitability for certain crops. Overall, only 25% of all agricultural lands have superior quality, with good and very good productive potential.

Agricultural yield has manifested very diverse specific dynamics, both per sector (vegetal and animal) and region, in accordance with the diversity of soil and climatic conditions and also with the degree of use of the production factors.

The vegetal production has had a faster growth rhythm, since it implies smaller material and financial efforts, during times when the capital market and favourable credits are practically non-existent.

In the last decade, the numbers of animals have decreased significantly. Their decrease under the current level, which represents the technological minimum, may lead to disparagement of the genetic fund in animal husbandry.

RESULTS

Recas fits into the typology of localities with mixed activities, while localities Izvin, Bazoș, Petrovaselo, Herneacova, Stanciova and Nadas are rural settlements with mainly agricultural activities. The fact that these settlements are all situated along national road DN6 (European E70) makes their development potential to be higher than that of others.

The primary sector is represented by agriculture (growing crops, raising animals) and forestry, the secondary sector is represented by processing (food industry), constructions, light industry, storage. The tertiary sector is mainly public administration, education, health, culture, sports, commerce, financial and banking activities, post and telecommunications. Being placed on a hill, Recas is the most famous vinery area in the west of Romania

Other economic branches (industry and services) are in development, since the geographic conditions and the local conditions of the town attract investments with Romanian and foreign capital. Agriculture is the main activity in Recas, providing roughly 30 % of the jobs (employees). Crops represent the main agricultural activity, namely maize, wheat, barley, two-row barley, oats, vegetables, sunflower, sugar beet.

Agriculture

Agriculture is the main occupation of the inhabitants of Recas: more than half of the active population work in this sector. In 2009, the land fund and categories of use were as follows:

**Table 1. The situation of Recas land fund in 2009
(according to the agricultural chamber of Recas town hall)**

Use	Surface (ha)	%
Arable	14.331	73
Meadows	2355	12.08
Hay lands	969	4.97
Vineyards	1589	8.15
Orchards	230	1.80
Agricultural total	19479	100
Forests, bushes	1810	54.86
Waters, ponds	403	12.21
Non-productive	177	5.36
Roads, railroads	510	15.45
Constructions	399	12.12
Non-agricultural total:	3299	100
General total	22773	100

The structure of crops, orchards and their yields in 2010 are presented in *Table 2*.

Table 2. The structure of crops, orchards and their yields in Recas in 2010

Crop	Area (ha)	Yield (t)	t/ha on average
Wheat	1616	4848	3
Barley	500	1400	2.8
Winter two-row barley	410	1025	2.5
Spring two-row barley	105	210	2
Spring barley	305	610	2
Maize ears	2610	9135	3.5
Legumes	30	64	2.13
Sunflower	715	1573	2.2
Rape	290	522	1.8
Potatoes	140	3780	27
Total legumes	269	4233	15.73
Total fodder plants	1310	41260	31.50
Total fruit	230	1106	4.80

The structure of the areas cultivated with various crops vacillated in time in direct relation to the price of products. The average yields obtained are modest in comparison with the production potential of the area. One cause for this is the weak fertilization of the plots in the area. Table 3 shows the average quantity of chemical fertilizers applied per hectare. Still, these numbers are not accurate in reflecting the reality in the field.

Some traders in the agricultural field practise competitive agriculture, in that they apply the proper quantities of chemical fertilizers. Other producers do not apply any chemical fertilizers or use them, but not in satisfying quantities, due to the high prices of chemical fertilizers, which for some have become "luxury products". Nevertheless, during the agricultural census the natural persons did not report accurate numbers. This makes it possible for one to notice, after making direct observations on the state of crops that these quantities are larger than those presented in *Table 3*.

**Table 3. Chemical fertilizer application per surface unit in 2010
(data obtained from the Chamber of Agriculture of Recas Town Hall)**

Indicator denomination	Area (ha)	Quantity (t)	Average kg/ha
Nitrogen chemical fertilizers	5861	51,8	8
Phosphate chemical fertilizers	3495	13,6	3,90
Potassium chemical fertilizers	3495	13,6	3,90
Manure	--	--	--
Liming	--	--	--

Animal husbandry

When the census in January 4 1971 was performed, there were 7661 cattle, 9586 pigs, 11078 sheep, 431 goats, 1354 horses, 38200 poultry, 881 beehives.

After 1989, the number of animals have reduced drastically after the old agricultural cooperatives were dissolved; in the individual sector this has happened because of the uncertain status of the land and because the products have not been purchased from the population.

At present, the situation of livestock is the one presented in *Table 4*.

Table 4. The numbers of animals in Recas county (data obtained from the Chamber of Agriculture, Recas Town Hall)

Animals	No.
Cattle of which:	
Dairy cows	272
Heifers	143
Total Cattle	415
Total Pigs	1782
Sheep of which:	
Ewes	11955
Rams for breeding and young sheep	2756
Total Sheep	14711
Goats of which:	
She-goats	361
He-goats	29
Total Goats	390
Total Poultry	19.000
Total Horses	513

Agro-industrial firms

There are 36 agricultural firms in Recas. The most representative of these are presented in *Table 5*, as follows:

Table 5 Agro-industrial firms in Recas (data obtained from the Chamber of Agriculture of Recas Town Hall)

No.	Company	Arable land (ha)
1	SC HORTII EXPRESS	121.26
2	SC VULTURUL DE AUR	350
3	SC NORD SRL	251.41
4	SC BAZOŞ SRL	558
5	SC ENOTRIA SRL	117.28
6	SC VIGNA SRL	124.26
7	SC MC BUSSINES	272
8	SC CLAUMAR SRL	332
9	SC AGROPRELIPSEM	502
10	RNP ROMSILVA	359
11	SC ROMANAGRI SRL	1405
12	SC UNICA CBF	166
13	SC BANAT BEET SRL	288
14	RECATIM SA	33.5

In Recas there is a small factory at present that processes milk, "LACTITALIA". It pasteurizes and packages milk and also produces dairy products.

S.C. Recosemtract S.A. currently has a slaughterhouse equipped in conformity with EU standards through a SAPARD project; it presents increased processing capacity and it also has a chain of shops in the county.

There is also a stud farm activating in Recas; "Herghelia Izvin" is a branch of the Romanian Horse Breeders Association. It is a stud farm and provider of stallions for breeding.

The rest of the agricultural lands are capitalized by private entrepreneurs or by their owners, according to the level of mechanization of each.

CONCLUSIONS

The yields obtained differ from one year to another in relation to the weather conditions, the fluctuation of the prices for cereals and to the equipment and money that the producers have access to. As agriculture focuses on man getting the control over food production, it constitutes a fundamental social activity that satisfies the vital requirements of mankind.

In Recas area, the arable land is favourable to crops and it can sustain a large range

of crop plants. Nevertheless, insufficient knowledge, difficulties in capitalizing agricultural products on the market and especially the reduced purchasing power of the villagers have had as a result the fact that the main crops are wheat, maize, sunflower. On smaller areas people grow potatoes, vegetables and sugar beet. As a matter of fact, people have stopped growing sugar beet because it was hard to capitalize it.

In time, the local operating conditions, associated with other problems of the transition period that have had massive impact on this domain, have led to a reorientation of the locals regarding agriculture. Many of them have given up tilling the land. Part of the locals have sold their land or rented it to the associations that have formed over time.

The local people also raise animals. Various species of animals, cattle, sheep, pigs and poultry, raised in various numbers in individual households, give the complete image of the livestock in Recas.

The main problem regarding the capitalization of agricultural products is the lack of organized distribution channels. There are no organized networks for the distribution of the main agricultural products. Nor can one talk about vertical integration in networks. In what the supply of seeds, chemical fertilizers, pesticides is concerned, it is easily noticeable that there is no organized market for this purpose. There are some individuals that sell this kind of supplies through the trading firms that they own.

Agri-tourism is not to be overlooked in Recas. It could be further developed especially because of the vineyards in the area. At the same time, the hills and forests in the area have high potential that has not yet been used fully.

The Ministry of Agriculture is involved in helping the agriculturists by various programs such as payments per hectare and crops through the Agency of Payments and Interventions in Agriculture (APIA), which allots around 130 Euro/ha every year. There are also various measures, such as Measure 112, Installation of young farmers, that offers 25.000 Euro non-refundable to young people under 40 who take on for the first time the farm manager position in an agricultural exploitation.

However, due to difficult conditions for submitting projects, financing in this sector is still not at best levels.

The only real ways in which agriculture in this area can be developed is to obtain a good price when selling cereals and to reinvest the profit in modern technologies that can ensure high productivity at low costs.

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