

## **THE MEAT AND MEAT PRODUCTS CONSUMPTION EVOLUTION IN ROMANIA DURING 1950 – 2005**

### **EVOLUȚIA CONSUMULUI DE CARNE ȘI PRODUSE DIN CARNE DIN ROMÂNIA ÎN PERIOADA 1950-2005**

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*Even if Romania has a high agricultural potential without having a competitive agriculture with the western countries, the food and agricultural products market is characterized by a lack of balance between demand and offer for many important food products and groups of products and which highlights a low level of nutrition insurance. The low level of productivity is caused by the lack of modernization and equipment, by the existence of an inefficient management and by the impossibility to maintain an external sales market.*

**Key words:** evolution, consumption, meat and meat products

#### **Introduction**

Even if in Romania, at that time, the detailed statistics concerning the real food consumption of the population were not published, the alimentary situation from Romania was known in the foreign countries. From the foreign bibliography we can find out that in many Eastern and Central European countries (Hungary, RDG, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria), in the 1970s and 1980s, the food consumption of the population had an increasing tendency. For example, in Romania, in 1986, according to the official declarations, the annual meat and fish consumption/inhabitant was 54.8 kg. In the other countries, almost in the same period (year 1984), the annual meat and fish consumption per inhabitant was 94.4 kg in RDG, 84.5 kg in Czechoslovakia, 79.2 kg in Hungary, 71 kg in Bulgaria and, in France, the consumption was twice higher than the Romanian consumption. These figures show the severe alimentary situation suffered by the Romanian population during these years.

#### **Materials and Methods**

Nobody would suppose at that time, and mainly after December '89, that for those who suffered of chronic hunger (cause by the lack of animal origin proteins) the situation will be worst than before. However, during the 1990s years

and after 2000, the annual average meat and fish consumption per inhabitant decreased with more than 10 kg, compared to the period of 1980s years. In 2002, this type of consumption was 54.3 kg/year, when in 2001 it was 48.0 kg/year and in 2005 increased to 68.3 kg/year (calculated according to the CANSTAT information, 2003, INS).

The general tendency of the consumption was oriented to an active support of the population nutrition with high nutritional quality products (meat, fish, milk, eggs, fruits and vegetables) and to reduce gradually the cereal products' consumption, but in Romania the situation was not always like this.

## Results and Discussions

The consumption of animal origin products and more specifically of meat registered a slight increase. So, the meat and meat products increased from an average consumption/inhabitant of 26.6 kg in 1965 to 45.7 kg in 1975 and 62 kg in 1980, but in 1989 the meat consumption decreases to 50.2 kg/inhabitant.

Table 1

The evolution of the meat consumption per inhabitant in the period 1951 – 1990  
(kg/inhabitant/year)

Specification	1951-1960	1961-1970	1971-1980	1990
Total meat where:	21,10	28,62	44,25	66,45
- beef	7,70	9,45	11,43	18,54
- mutton and goat	2,51	2,29	2,38	4,51
- pork	8,55	12,83	19,04	29,49
- fowl	2,01	3,65	11,00	13,50
- rabbit	0,02	0,02	0,02	0,02
- horse	0,06	0,09	0,03	0,03
Other types of meat	0,01	0,01	0,01	0,01
- venison	0,24	0,28	0,33	0,35

Source: information from the Agriculture Economy Institute – The evolution and the tendencies of the main food products of Romania, job specification no. 144, EX TERRA AURUM publishing house, Bucharest 1982

The analysis of the meat consumption evolution, per inhabitant, but also the analysis of the consumption structure according to the source is very important and necessary both to study the changes occurred in time and to establish the tendencies of the food consumption for different types of meat and meat products.

The increase of the meat consumption per inhabitant and the structure for different types could be improved by changing the ratio between different types of meat and mainly to favor the beef and the fowl and to decrease the consumption of pork. At that time the percentage of pork consumption was 43 – 44% of the total meat consumption while the fowl consumption represented only 25.8%.

These tendencies which can be noticed in the evolution of the meat consumption are correlated to the actual basis and to the perspective of the meat production and the necessities of a balanced and rational nutrition.

In 2000, an important percentage was registered by the expenses for buying meat and meat products, representing 24% of the total expenses for buying food products and alcoholic drinks. The highest expenses for buying these products are registered for the business owner families (29.0%) and for the employee families (26.9%) and the lowest expenses are registered for the farmer families (15.2%).

So, the expenses for buying the three main product groups – bread and cereal products, fresh meat and meat products, vegetables and canned vegetables – represent 55.2% of the total expenses.

The differences between the family categories regarding the level of the expenses for buying food products per person are determined somehow also by the differences of the variety structure and the price. For example, the average price paid by the business owners for a kilogram of meat products is 88 thousand lei and is with 40% higher than the price paid by the farmer (64 thousand lei) and with 25% higher than the national average price (70 thousand lei) for the same product.

Table 2

The annual average consumption per inhabitant, in Romania, for meat and meat products in the period 2001 - 2005

	U M	1990	1995	2000	2000/ 1990	2005/ 2000
Fish and fish products	kg	5,1	2,8	2,6	-2,5	+ 1,9
Meat and meat products and edible organs (the equivalent in fresh meat)	kg	61,0	51,2	46,3	-14,7	+ 22
Animal fats	kg	5,1	4,4	3,4	-1,7	+ 0,2

Source: The Annual Statistics of Romania for the period 1991 - 2006

Analyzing the information we can notice that the percentage of the meat and meat products consumption increases with 45.88%, meaning from 46.3 kg in 2000 to 68.3 kg in 2005, for fish the increase is 73.02%.

A more detailed analysis of the annual average available for consumption in Romania, shows important differences between the year 2000 compared to 1990, for fish and fish products (a decrease of consumption with 2.5 kg per inhabitant meaning 45%), for animal fats (a decrease of consumption with 1.7 kg per inhabitant meaning 33.3%), but also for meat and meat products (a decrease with 14.7 kg per inhabitant meaning 24%).

Comparing 1990 versus 2005 we can notice that the meat and meat products consumption decreases with 7.3 kg.

In order to emphasize the possible differences between the food consumption in Romania and other countries of the world, heterogeneous from the economic development point of view, we have to analyze two aspects: the quantitative aspect, concerning the average consumption per inhabitant and the qualitative aspect, concerning the average daily food consumption expressed in calories and other nutritional factors.

The statistic information shows us that there are some differences between Romania and the European countries, sometimes there are minor differences and show that, despite the purchasing power of the Romanians, the food consumption is at the EU similar parameters.

A food product from the basic consumption structure of the Americans is represented by the meat. So, the available for consumption for an American is 123 kg meat. In Europe, the biggest meat consumers are the Danish people, with an annual average consumption of 114.82 kg per inhabitant and the Spanish people with an annual average consumption of 113.85 kg per inhabitant, but the EU average is far below the USA.

This food product is a problem for the developing countries where the average of the available for consumption is 27.3kg per inhabitant. A person of our planet consumes an average of 38.1 kg of meat. For the developed countries the annual average is 77.1 kg per inhabitant and in Romania the average consumption is 53.65 kg per inhabitant, meaning that Romania's consumption is among the lowest levels from the Eastern Europe countries, the biggest consumers are those from Hungary with an average of 169.72 kg per inhabitant.

Table 3

The annual average consumption of meat and meat products in 2002  
(kg/inhabitant)

No.crt.	Country	annual average consumption of meat and meat products (kg/inhabitant)	
1	Romania	53,65	100%
2	Estonia	63,14	117,6%
3	Malta	77,01	143,5%
4	Lithuania	51,83	96,6%
5	Poland	73,36	136,7%
6	Slovakia	67,16	125,1%
7	Hungary	169,72	316,3%
8	Cyprus	106,94	199,3%
9	Czech Republic	77,38	144,2%
10	Bulgaria	68,62	127,9%

Source: information from FAO Statistical Databases Online, 2001-2003

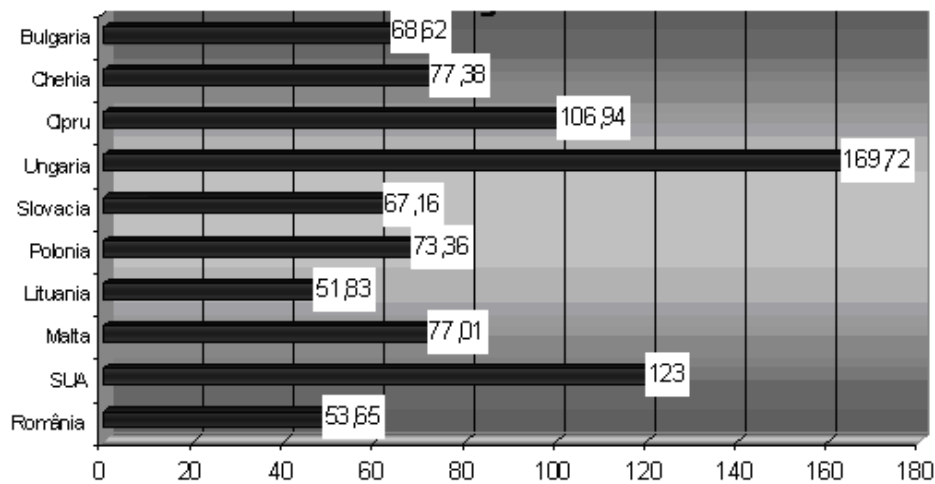


Figure 1

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### Conclusions

The lack of balance of the food consumption, represented by the high percentage of the vegetal origin food products and the deficit of animal origin food products, compared to the allowed limits for a balance nutrition pattern of the modern nutrition science, for the total families, but also for each family type, is specific for the Romanian nutrition pattern for a long time (at least 20 years).

In present time, the situation is closer to normal for the business owner families and for the employee families.

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