

Dynamics of the Ecological Agroalimentary Produce Market

**Cornelia Petroman, Ioan Petroman, Gabriela Ivaşcu, Diana Marin, Ştefan Coman,
Moisina Şucan**

*Banat`s University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine, Faculty of Agricultural Management,
Calea Aradului ,119, Timisoara, Romania*

Abstract

The market of ecological agroalimentary produce in Romania tends to have a positive evolution, identical with the world market, according to the specialists in the field. The market of ecological produce in Romania is being developed: from the point of view of its life cycle, it is steadily going to the growth period. Since the appearance period passed away, now there is the unsatisfied need of green produce: the first producers able to meet this need have appeared and they have started to meet the needs related to these produce.

Keywords: market, ecological produce, dynamics

1. Introduction

There is, worldwide, an increasing trend in the demand for ecological produce. From the perspective of the world ecological agroalimentary produce market, it is steadily developing. There are, in the European Union, a number of factors that have ensured the success and development of the ecological agroalimentary produce market. These factors are as follows:

- a pressure from the consumers who wish to purchase produce that maintain their health and whose manufacture is environmental friendly;
- a process of information and education of the population by the state organisms and institutions, but not only;
- an active promotion of these produce by the great retailers;
- the existence of some production, processing, and marketing networks;
- a proper labelling of the “green” products that ensures their easy “identification” by the consumers.

2. Material and Method

Through this scientific approach we propose to analyze the evolution of organic crops and livestock based on information gathered from various sources considering organic production one new ecological niche for agricultural development seen as a pivot for sustainable rural development by improving the maintenance of biodiversity and nature protection.

3. Results and Discussion

Two ecology-oriented trends have been manifest in our daily life. The former concerns the turning of customers into customers aware of the theory and practice of environmental conservation and protection, while the latter concerns the conversion of an ever larger number of consumers into natural and healthy nutrition consumers. The two trends define the basic elements of stimulating the demand on the ecological produce market in Romania, too.

This type of demand is enhanced by the following factors [1]:

- the increase of the number of legal regulations that intensify ecological restrictions in the fields of

* Corresponding author: Cornelia Petroman,
0256277354 c_petroman@yahoo.com

marketing, manufacture, and processing of agricultural produce;

- the ever wider awareness of the pollution hazards on humans' and animals' health and food safety;
- an increase of the degree of public and social responsibility;
- higher awareness on the issues of environmental protection domestically that result from international regulations;
- an increase and an intensification of the concerns related to the environmental conservation and protection, as well as to social welfare;
- the development, improvement, and use of sustainable technologies that ensure the healthiest produce possible.

These trends are supported particularly by the inhabitants of industrialised countries, while in developing countries they are less obvious. These processes will be stimulated by globalisation. Subjected to standardization, different customs, traditions, individual or collective behaviours, etc. tend to globalise, to homogenise in time. In this context, agroalimentary market also globalises: the differences between regions, countries, or continents tend to disappear. The future will probably bring us a market on which the differences between consumers will be quasi-existent [2]. This levelling of the agroalimentary consumption behaviour will characterise firstly the market of ecological produce or maybe through it. From the point of view of the alimentary produce market, we can say that the ecological produce market is a niche market. But meeting the needs of this market segment is hindered by a series of problems related to both the specificity of ecological produce and of the Romanian consumers. These problems that slower down the development of ecological agroalimentary produce market are as follows:

- the prices that are 30-400% higher than those of similar conventional agroalimentary produce and that hinder their purchase by Romanian consumers;
- the low purchase power of the Romanian consumers (mean incomes per capita are very low and up to 60% of the incomes are spent on food, which eliminates the possibility of purchasing ecological produce): from this point of view, food consumption in Romania is a subsistence one;
- the Romanians do not have an environmental "culture" (environmental protection, preventing disease through proper nutrition) yet: they still

chose alimentary produce without analysing the produce content, its composition, as well as the other data marked on the package or on the label – which means that they are not educated yet in the spirit of "clean" produce;

- Romanian consumers lack information on ecological agroalimentary produce, on their benefits, on their marketing conditions, way, and place of sale;

- The fact that part of the Romanians have relatives or friends in the countryside which allows them to purchase at reasonable prices agroalimentary produce produced in "natural" conditions, close to the conditions required by ecological agriculture.

As for the Romanian market of ecological agroalimentary produce, it will continue to develop. Even official regulations predict the development of this sector. The proof: the statistics and academic arguments contained in the National Plan of Development for the period 2007-2013, the National Strategic Plan for Rural Development for the period 2007-2013, etc.

By spontaneous flora we mean: berries, raspberry, mushrooms, hazelnuts, etc.

According to the legislative and planning documents presented above, the qualitative goal of stimulating ecological agriculture is its positioning in the core of national agriculture as a central pivot for sustainable development in the rural area, for the improvement of the environment, for the conservation of biodiversity and for the protection of nature. In Romania, in 2004, there were 262 certified agricultural producers, to be more exact: two dairies – S.C. Dorna Lactate Vatra Dornei and S.C. Camylact Vatra Dornei, a processor of ecological vegetables – S.C. Maria-Elena București, and an importer – S.C. Natura Land București. After updating and publishing the data concerning the ecological production in Romania in 2007, the number of certified ecological producers increased considerably: there are 278 producers specialised in vegetal production, 1,955 producers specialised in animal production, 8 milk processors, 20 vegetal produce processors, 7 milling and bread-making processors, and 3 processors of oil plants [3]. Domestic consumption of ecological produce is oriented towards the following produce: eggs, sheep milk white cheese, bee honey, yellow cheese, butter (ecological butter sells 5 times less than conventional butter), vegetables preserves, and Swiss cheese. A

quantitative evaluation of the ecological produce between 2000 and 2007 is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Evolution of ecological vegetal and animal production [4, 5]

Specification	M.U.	2000	2005	2006	2007	2000-2007 (+/-)
Total vegetal production, of which:	t	13,502	131,898	166,573	169,312	155,810
Cereals	t	7,200	55,000	48,441	65,127	57,927
Oil and protein plants	t	5,500	45,600	73,082	52,982	47,482
Vegetables	t	600	7,200	8,707	3,410	2,810
Fruits	t	-	1,000	340	1,250	-
Spontaneous flora	t	200	16,748	24,962	35,236	35,036
Animal production, of which:						
Cow milk	hl	58,367	100,000	122,000	85,031	26,664
Sheep milk	hl	701	13,500	15,500	13,273	12,572
Eggs	thousands	-	1,820	1,075	1,321	-
Main processed produce, of which:						
Sheep milk white cheese	t	18	480	520	510	492
Swiss cheese	t	23	268	576	580	567
Yellow cheese	t	-	330	642	640	-
Vegetables and fruits preserves	t	-	50	42	40	-
Bee honey	t	10	610	1,242	1,950	1,940

The present Romanian market of ecological produce was worth 15,000,000 Euros in 2008. About 20% of this amount is ensured from imports [6]. The raw matter exported comes back to Romania as finite ecological produce. In Romania, the first certified importer of ecological produce is Natura Land, a company that imports brown sugar from Brazil, vegetal milk and maple syrup from Germany, rye bread from Poland, chocolate cream from Holland, pastry from Italy, and infant food worth 200,000 Euros per year. The demand for ecological agroalimentary produce is steadily increasing in Romania, but it has not reached yet the significant level reached in other countries. In 2007, the demand for ecological produce shared about 0.5% of the food consumption, which represents considerably less than the similar consumption of other European countries, where it has reached 5-8% of the consumption.

4. Conclusions

The level of consumption and the number of consumers purchasing ecological agroalimentary produce depends directly on the standard of living. The main barrier in the consumption of ecological agroalimentary produce is their price, considerably higher than that of similar conventional produce.

On the market of ecological produce, the volume of sales reached, in 2004, 1,000,000 Euros, an amount that is steadily increasing. As for ecological produce, they estimate that their market shares, in Romania, only 1% of the market of food produce.

The local potential of traditional produce is diversified. By June 2010, there were 2,713 registered and licensed traditional producers of which 1,547 between 2007 and 2009. The main categories of traditional licensed produce are milk, meat, bread, and beverage produce.

References

- Petroman, C., Procesarea materiilor prime agricole. Timișoara: Editura Eurostampa, 2010
- Pop, D., Ecomarketing. De la provocare la necesitate. Editura Universității din Oradea, 2009
- Stoian, M., Evoluția piețelor agroalimentare în contextul globalizării. Amfiteatru economic 2005, pp.17
- Agricultura ecologică Online: [http:// www.madr.ro/agricultura ecologică](http://www.madr.ro/agricultura-ecologica)
- Ivașcu, G., Teză de doctorat, “Studiu asupra consumului de produse agroalimentare în județul Timiș”, USAMVB Timișoara, 2010
- Orboi, M. D., Băneș, A., Monea, M., A study on the Romanian organic market and consumers, Journal of Food, Agriculture & Environment, 2009, 7(2), pp. 182-188, Helsinki, Finlanda, www.world-food.net