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EVOLUTION AND CURRENT SITUATION OF CATTLE BREEDING IN OUR COUNTRY

EVOLUȚIA ŞI SITUAȚIA ACTUALĂ A CREŞTERII TAURINELOR ÎN ȚARA NOASTRĂ

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Abstract: *After 1989, the cattle livestock in Romania (6.2 million individuals) has continuously decreased, reaching the value of 2.8 million individuals in 2003, with 1.75 million cows and heifers (62.3 %); at the moment, there is a number of 1.19 million exploitation recorded, with 1.73 million cattle and heifers and a mean of 1.46 cows per exploitation. Now the cattle livestock comprises 2503 thousand individuals. Regarding the percentage of imports in the internal consumption, we may notice that the beef category recorded, during 2006-2008, the most reduced percentage, 10.3%, compared with pork – 38.1% or chicken – 37.3%.*

Key words: *evolution, cattle, livestock, beef, import, export, Romania*

INTRODUCTION

The social-economic importance of cattle breeding, worldwide and in Romania, is represented by the fact that it has the character of a durable, perspective activity, due to the following aspects: reduced energy requirement; diversity of production; nature of forage used; stability of labour force in rural and mountain area; it is a traditional activity of the rural population and mainly in the mountain region; it represents a source for commercial exchanges; it may generate profitable productions to cover the beef export requirements and the internal beef requirements [*2,5*].

The social-economic importance of cattle breeding, worldwide and in our country, has determined the orientation of the Romanian agricultural policy towards the following specific **objectives** [*1,3,6,7*]: provision of the conditions necessary for the externalization of animal's productive potential; achievement of own incomes by sending the production to exports; the increase of meat efficiency in carcass, by increasing the weight at slaughtering; integration of the cattle livestock amelioration activity in the E.U. norms and standards; promotion of the cattle livestock amelioration activity in order to increase and improve beef production; stimulation of livestock breeding in the mountain regions with opportunities for cattle breeding; financial support for the organization of farms in associations, in order to represent their interests in their relationship with input suppliers and beneficiaries.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

To complete this scientific work, we analyzed the data provided by the National Institute for Statistics and other national and international sources. Our objective was to reveal the evolution of cattle livestock and beef production at national and international level, as well, as important source of animal protein used in human consumption. Also, we analyzed all the documents that aim at the increase of this species' production at national level and the detection of new markets to export the Romanian beef production.

RESULT AND DISCUTIONS

After 1989, the cattle breeding sector has been changed in terms of structure and number of animals as well. The big number of cattle, of approximately 6.2 million individuals, of which 2.45 million cows and heifers (39%), has continuously decreased. In 2003, there were a total number of 2.8 million cattle with 1.75 million cows and heifers (62.3 %). At the moment, there are 1.19 million farms with 1.73 million cows and heifers, with a mean of 1.46 cows/farm. Approximately 98% of the farms belong to the private sector. In 2006, the Romanian policy in the field of livestock and beef production predicted an increase, according to the analysis of production during 2001-2006, as presented in Table 1. [*8*]

Table 1.

Bovine number and beef production levels between 2001 and 2007

Specificație	**M. U.**	**Year**						
		2001	**2002**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**
Total cattle	Thousands heads	2.800	2.878	2.897	2.801	2.862	2.934	2.950
Total beef production	Thousands t	295	319	378	391	383	318	380
Mean weight at killing	kg/heads	208	258	321	328	333	275	330
Minimal weight for subsidizing	kg/heads	-	380	400	400	400	450	-
Total amount of subsidized beef	Thousands t	-	45,6	15,6	18,9	10,5	-	-

Sursa: [*7*]

According to the **Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development**'s website [*8*], the animal production reached, during 2006-2008, the numeric and percentage values indicated in Table 2.

Table 2.

Romania's agricultural production between 2006 and 2008

Agricultural industry	Year					
	2006		2007		2008	
	million lei current prices	%	million lei current prices	%	million lei current prices	%
Vegetal production	31.327,2	61,9	28,723,4	60,2	45.242,2	68,3
Animal production	18.848,6	37,2	18.291,6	38,3	20.535,7	30,6
Agricultural services	473,8	0,9	684,8	1,5	716,0	1,1
Total	50.649,6	100,0	47.699,9	100,0	66.993,9	100,0

Sursa: [*8*]

Also, the **animal-breeding sector** represents a significant part of the Romanian agriculture and one of the basic activities in the rural sector [*8*] (Table 3).

Table 3.

Romanian livestock sector between 2006 and 2009

Specification	M. U.	Year			
		2006	2007	2008	2009
Livestock					
Cattle	Thousands heads	2.934	2.819	2.684	2.503
Sheep+ goats	Thousands heads	8.405	9.334	9.780	11.147
Birds	Thousands heads	84.990	82.036	84.373	83.631

Swine	Thousands heads	6.815	6.565	6.174	5.893
Productions					
Meat (live weight)	Thousands t	1.401	1.503	1.426	1.588
Milk (including consumption)	Thousands heads hl	64.607	61.048	53.089	47.088
Wool	Thousands heads t	19,4	21	22,1	21,8
Eggs	milioane buc.	7.429	6.522	6.692	6.097

Sursa:www.madr.ro/pages/raport/agricultura-romaniei-feb2010.pdf

The measures applied were focused on the:

- ***allocations*** for programs preserving and using the animal genetic resources:
  - threaten by disappearance;
  - in bad condition;
  - vulnerable.
- ***subsidies*** for farmers from the animal-breeding and fish farming sectors, to improve the quality of the genetic material used for rams, heifers at first kidling, sheep, gilts, silkworms and calves, obtained according to:
  - commercialized production;
    - satisfaction of criteria like: reproduction and reproductive performance.

The drought from 2007 has determined the reduction of forage quantity, and this generated an ascendant-tendency price for them. In these terms, excepting sheep and goats, which recorded livestock increase, all the other animal-breeding sectors were submitted to significant livestock reductions. So that the increase at production may be due to the killings recorded during that period.

In 2008, the national market of ecologic products included plant tea, flour, cereal flakes, fresh vegetables and fruits, honey, eggs, pasta, bread, pastry and confectionery, secondary products, sunflower oil, soybean oil, wine and also ecologic products processed of:

- pork, **beef** and snails (sausages, pâté, bacon, etc.);
- fruits and vegetables (gems, juices, etc.);
- sheep and cow milk (pressed cheese, sour cream, Swiss cheese, telemea cheese, butter);
- rice, hemp seeds, soybean (pâté, tofu sandwiches, hemp oil, etc.).

We should remark (fortunately) that Romania exported, during 1st January – 30 November 2009, This type of product, as presented in Table 4

Table 4.

Romania's agroalimentary exports between January 1, 2009 and November 30, 2009

Product	Quantity (Thousands t)		Value (millions Euro)		% of total sales	
	2009	2008	2009	2008	2009	2008
Total, from which:	x	x	2.029,4	1.945,2	100,0	100,0
Livestock	78,0	86,8	154,6	160,3	7,6	8,2
- CATTLE	33,4	39,6	68,6	77,7	-	-
- horses, mules, donkeys	6,4	9,8	7,1	12,0	-	-
- goats and sheep	38,2	37,4	78,9	70,6	-	-
Poultry	30,2	8,5	45,8	13,2	2,3	0,7
Meat	5,8	7,7	22,4	30,2	1,1	1,6

Sursa: [*8*]

Regarding the percentage of imports within the internal consumption, beef has recorded, during 2006-2008, the values indicated in Table 5.

Table 5.

Share of imports (%) in domestic consumption (2006-2008)

Specification	**Year**		
	2006	**2007**	**2008**
Poultry	33,7	30,8	37,3
Pork	33,2	31,1	38,1
Beef	**25,9**	**7,8**	**10,3**

Sursa: prelucrare diferiți autori

To develop beef production, Romania has adopted a series of **agricultural support policies**, official zed, during 2001-2007, by the following legislative documents:

- **2001**: Governmental Decision no. 585 from 21st June 2001 on the distribution of sums for the maintenance, preservation and perpetuation of the genetic patrimony of animals per species, breeds, lines and hybrids, and also for the determination of the number of animals for which these sums may be offered in 2001 – value: 42.1 milliard lei;
- **2002**: Governmental Decision no. 756 from 18th July 2002 for the approval of the distribution of 50 milliard lei from the state budget for

2002, designed to cover some expenses for the protection of animal genetic patrimony, and also to determine the number of animals this sum is offered to – value: 552 milliard lei; Governmental Decision no. 54 from 17th January 2002 regarding the direct state support, through subsidies, in 2002, for farmers from the animal-breeding sector, in order to increase meat production and animal livestock – value: 4000 lei/Kg (83.4 mld. lei for 20.8 thousand tons meat), 157 mld. lei for heifers and 178.4 mld. lei for calves; Governmental Decision no. 1556 from 18th December 2002 regarding the direct state support, through subsidies, in 2003, for farmers from the animal-breeding sector, in order to increase meat production and animal livestock – value: 4.000 lei/Kg (63.3 mld. lei for 16 thousand tons meat, 39.2 mld. lei for heifers and 32.7 mld. lei for calves;

- **2003**: Governmental Decision no. 416 from 10th April 2003 for the approval of the distribution of 50 milliard lei from the state budget for 2003, designed to cover some expenses for the protection of animal genetic patrimony, and also to determine the number of animals this sum is offered to – value: 6.000.000 lei/individual (804 mil. lei); Governmental Decision no. 1593 from 23rd December 2003 regarding the direct state support, through subsidies, in 2004, for farmers from the animal-breeding sector, in order to increase meat production and animal livestock – value: 5.000 lei/Kg (94.6 mld. lei for 18.9 thousand tons, 53.3 mld. lei for heifers and 69.6 mld. lei for calves;

- **2004**: **Governmental Decision no. 157 from 12th February 2004** for the approval of the *distribution of 50 milliard lei from the state budget for 2004, designed to cover some expenses* for the protection of animal genetic patrimony, and also to determine the number of animals this sum is offered to – value: 10.000.000 lei/individual (1.2 mld. lei);

- 2005: **Governmental Decision no. 64 from 21st January 2005** regarding the direct state support, through subsidies, in 2005, for farmers from the animal-breeding sector, in order to increase meat production and animal livestock – value: 14.000 lei/kg (95.3 mld. for 10.5 thousand tons meat), 112.6 mld. lei for heifers and 82.1 mld. lei for calves; **Governmental Decision no. 445 from 19th May 2005** for the approval of the distribution of 52 milliard lei from the state budget for 2005, designed to cover some expenses for the protection of animal genetic patrimony, and also to determine the number of animals this sum is offered to – value: 10.000.000 lei/individual (1.28 mld. lei); **Governmental Decision no.**

1853 from 22nd December 2005 regarding the direct state support, through subsidies, in 2006, for farmers from the animal-breeding and fish-farming sectors, with the further changes and completions – value: 700 lei/individual (43.4 mil. lei for 62 thousand individuals) and 100-300 lei/cow (160.9 mil. lei);

- 2006: **Governmental Decision no. 1608 from 8th November 2006** for the approval of the distribution of 3349 thousand lei from the state budget for 2006, designed to finance the programs of preservation and utilization of animal population in bad condition, threaten by disappearance and vulnerable, per species and breeds – value: 1.000 -1.100 lei/individual (149.9 mil. lei); **Government Emergency Ordinance no. 123 from 21st December 2006** for the approval of the financial support for farmers from the vegetal, animal-breeding, land improvement and territorial organization sectors, with the further changes and completions – value: 7.5 lei/individual (1.690 thousand lei) and 1000 lei/individual 100 lei/carcass; **Emergency Ordinance no. 125 from 21st December 2006** for the approval of direct payment schemes and complementary direct national payments, which have been offered in agriculture since 2007, and for the modification of the Art. 2 from Law no. 36/1991 regarding the agricultural societies and other forms of association in agriculture – value: 240 lei/individual (278 mil. lei).

CONCLUSIONS

The program supporting beef and calf aims at the completion of the following objectives: amelioration of cattle livestock for meat production; the increase of reproductive livestock and natality, in order to increase the young cattle livestock designed for fattening and killing at optimal weights; enhancement of incomes and turning of self-consumption into commercial production; organization of competitive and efficient farms in rural and mountain area; organization of farms in associations, to represent their interests in relationships with input suppliers and beneficiaries of final products.

Consequently, t**he objectives of medium and long-term rehabilitation and refreshment** are the following: refreshment of this sector in order to cover the meat requirements for human consumption; the

support and refreshment of this sector considers the quantitative and qualitative beef production increase; alignment to the European Community standards on the allocation of subsidies and meat utilization, according to the quality classes regulated by the carcass classification system EUROP [2]; financial support in order to harmonize the producer's price with the price applied in E.U.

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