AGRICULTURAL CONSULTANCY: A REAL SUPPORT FOR THE PROFESSIONAL TRAINING OF THE FARMERS

CONSULTANŢA AGRICOLĂ – UN SPRIJIN REAL PENTRU FERMIERI PRIVIND FORMAREA PROFESIONALĂ

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Abstract: *The goal of the present research was to point out the role and usefulness of agricultural consultancy in farmers' activity.*
To do so, we monitored the way the most important objective of consultancy is reached: involving agricultural consultancy in the professional training of the farmers, the type of courses and the number of graduates, the distribution per areas of the courses, and the impact of courses on the graduates.

Keywords: *agricultural consultancy, farmers, professional training, courses, graduates.*

INTRODUCTION

The Agricultural Chamber of the Timiş County (CAJ) was established on the ground of the H.G. nr. 1609 from 30 December 2009 as heir of the Timiş County Agricultural Consultancy Office subordinated to the late National Agency of Agricultural Consultancy (ANCA).

The Agricultural Chamber of the Timiş County was established on March 1, 2010 as decentralised public institution with legal personality subordinated to the Timiş County Council and financed form its own incomes and from state subsidies.

According to the organisational chart acknowledged by the Decision of the Timiş County Council nr. 78 from August 12, 2010, the Agricultural Chamber of the Timiş County is made up of the following departments:

- Education, professional training and human resources;
- Project development and assessment;

- Extension, consultancy and promotion of associative bodies;
- Budget, finance, accountancy and personal incomes;
- Commune agricultural centres.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The tasks of the Education, professional training and human resources department are as follows:

- It organises training, educational and specialisation courses for the agricultural producers through educational institutions, agricultural research institutions, economic agents, or others, if the case;
- It develops the annual programme of measures concerning educational, improvement and professional training activities depending on the needs identified in the area;
- It prepares the documents necessary to acknowledge educational, training and specialisation courses according to legislation.

The general objective of the activity of agricultural consultancy is to improve the knowledge and skills of private farmers and therefore make efficient decisions in a competitive economic context.

The professional training of the farmers aims at ensuring performance in agriculture, at producing high quality agricultural produce competitive with agricultural produce in the European Union, and at increasing the incomes of the farmers and improving the standard of living.

The need for professional training is related to the increase of competitiveness and to the diversification of the agricultural produce and activities, to the restructuring and modernization of this sector, of the processing and marketing sectors, to the encouragement of market-oriented businesses, to the acquisition of economic and management skills, as well as to a rational management of agricultural land, to the application of modern, environment-friendly technologies, and to renewable sources of energy.

This is why the activity of educational and professional training, the sharing of information and knowledge should be extended to adults involved in agricultural activities.

Farmers wishing to access European funds (FEADR) need to have the proper training or attend training courses in the field of agriculture.

Agricultural consultancy plays an important role in agriculture: it is present among the farmers through activities of information concerning the new agricultural policies in accordance with EU requirements, through

programmes of financing agriculture, through professional training, through technical assistance, through support in associating – all this to support the Romanian farmers and, with them, Romanian agriculture.

The Agricultural Chamber of the Timiş County supplies professional training for adults and is authorised through the National Council for Professional Training of the Adults to organise courses for the farmers.

Table 1 shows the number of graduates and of courses organised by the Agricultural Chamber of the Timiş County between 2008 and 2011.

Table 1. Number of graduates and of courses organised by the Agricultural Chamber of the Timiş County between 2008 and 2011

Name of the course	Period				**Total graduates / trades**
	2008	2009	2010	April 2011	
Vegetable growing	128	-	-	-	**128**
Cropping	261	37	211	131	**640**
Animal breeding	95	-	133	97	**325**
Apiculture	-	-	38	100	**138**
Total graduates / year	**484**	**37**	**382**	**328**	**1231**

Figure 1 shows the share of courses per years and trades.

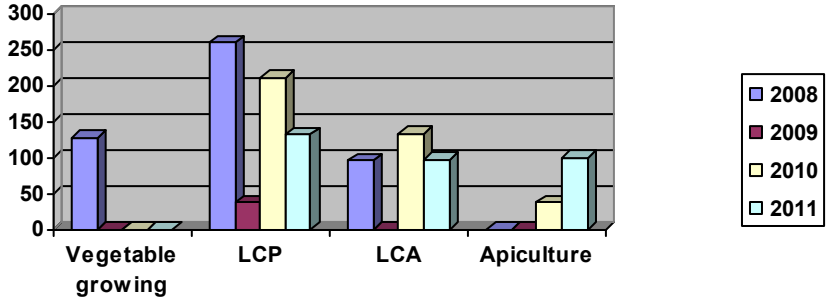


Figure 1. Share of courses per years and trades

Analysis of data shows that graduates of the cropping training courses share 51.9% of the total graduates; graduates of the animal breeding courses share 26.40% of the total graduates; graduates of the apiculture courses share 11.21% of the total graduates; and graduates of the vegetable growing courses share 10.39% of the total graduates. As we can see, farmers attending cropping courses are more numerous than the other categories of farmers because cropping is more widespread than other agricultural trades.

Table 2 shows the distribution of the professional training courses per localities.

Table 2. Distribution of the professional training courses per localities

Locality	Name of the course			
	Vegetable growing	Cropping	Animal breeding	Apiculture
Timisoara	-	158	123	154
Biled	-	146	54	-
Sinnicolau Mare	-	28	17	-
Jimbolia	-	203	-	-
Gataia	-	51	45	-
Belint	128	-	-	-
Bethausen	-	28	-	-
Lugoj	-	26	77	-
Faget	-	-	32	41

Figure 2 shows the distribution of courses per areas and the number of course attendants per location

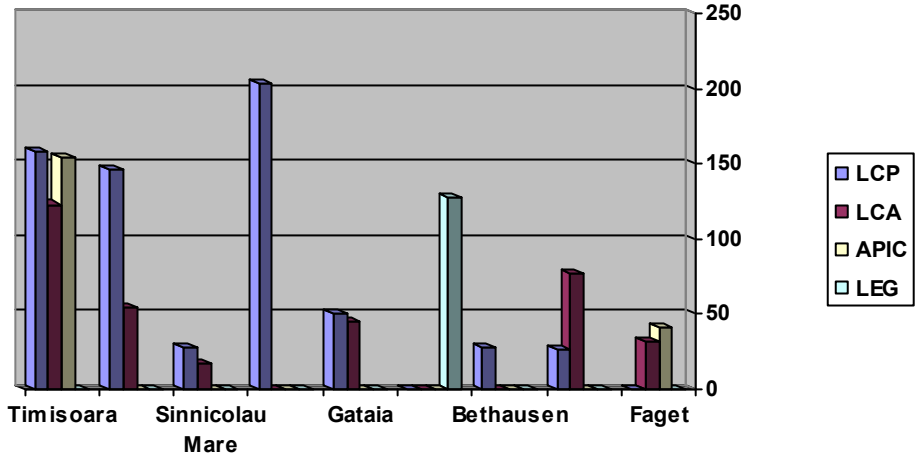


Figure 2. Distribution of courses per areas and the number of course attendants per location

Analysing the data above, we can see that the attendants of the cropping course share the largest number in the Jimbolia area, followed by the farmers from the Timişoara area with almost the same share, by the Biled area and, occasionally, by the Gătaia, Sînnicolau, Bethausen, and Lugoj areas. The animal breeding course was frequently organised in the Timişoara, Lugoj, Biled, Gătaia, Făget, and Sînnicolau areas. The apiculture course is very much needed in the Timişoara and Făget areas. The vegetable grower course was most needed in the Belinţ area because this is the favoured trade of the farmers in the area.

The explanation for this diversity is the predominant practice of field crops, of animal breeding or of apiculture in the area and the agricultural potential of the farmers in the areas.

The impact of the courses on the graduates of professional training is as follows:

- beneficiaries are trained for the field they asked;
- 1.46% of the graduates got jobs in the field they trained for ;

- 30% of the graduates accessed European funds (Measures 112, 141, or 121);
- 20% of the graduates got Physical Entity Licence;
- 10% of the graduates got an Individual Enterprise License.

CONCLUSIONS

Data presented above show the following:

1. Agricultural professional training is a must for Romanian farmers.
2. Farmers trained in cropping, animal breeding, apiculture, vegetable growing, flower culture and fruit tree culture can access programmes for the development of agriculture.
3. Based on the training certificate, they can get a license as physical entity or as individual enterprise.
4. Agricultural consultancy is a real support for farmers: it is open to their demands and it supplies solutions for the problems farmers have to face in agriculture.

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