ASPECTS CONCERNING THE MARKET OF VEGETABLES IN ROMANIA

ASPECTE PRIVIND PIATA LEGUMELOR IN ROMANIA

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Abstract: *There are in Romania particularly favourable pedo-climate conditions for developing truck farming, for increasing its share of national wealth, for meeting vital food requirements of the population, or for increasing exports. The Romanian market of vegetables is characterised by unbalance between demand and offer, caused mainly by the seasonal character of the vegetable production. Neither producers, nor traders can meet the continuous consumers' demand of vegetables on the market. Balancing demand and offer can be done by completing the latter with imports of fresh vegetables from countries where vegetable cultivation is not seasonal. The offer should be as continuous as possible; the solution to do so is double: greenhouse or solarium cultivation, and storage in conditions that allow market offer prolongation. This is why we need to adopt policies meant to develop vegetable culture, taking into account the three advantages of such a culture: the very favourable ecological frame, tradition, and potential of the domestic market.*

Key words: *market, offer, demand, consumption, price*

INTRODUCTION

Due to its economic and social dimensions and to its ecologic functions, the Romanian horticultural sector plays an important role in

Romania's national agriculture and economy. From an economic point of view, the horticultural sector is a main source of income for the State's budget and it also provides the opportunity of completing the country's currency reserves through export activities. On the other hand, it supplies the raw material necessary for the processing branches in small and medium enterprises, which are easy to integrate in rural communities.

Vegetable production shares a considerable part of Romania's agricultural production, with major implications in our national economy and, particularly, in the Romanian population's food.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The Romanian vegetable market has certain features that differentiate it from the markets of the other agricultural produce, i.e.: atomicity of the demand and of the offer, seasonality of vegetable production, zonality of vegetables, the existence of a poorly developed system of marketing, and a high degree of perishability of vegetables. At the same time, the demand for vegetables is continuous, while the offer is seasonal, there is a high consumption of production factors (particularly, labour force), and a wide range of vegetable assortments on the market. (4).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Romanian offer of vegetables as volume and structure should meet first the demand from Romanian consumers. The domestic vegetable offer is determined by the area cultivated with vegetables and by the mean productions per ha.

The evolution of the areas cultivated with the main vegetable crops between 2000 and 2008 is shown in Table 1.

Analysing the data presented in Table 1 we can draw the following conclusions:

- the area cultivated with vegetables diminished in 2008 from 268.800 ha to 281.900 ha in 2000;
- tomatoes, the main vegetable crop of Romania, shares 19.17% of the total area cultivated with vegetable crops in 2008;
- onion and garlic covered the largest cultivated areas in 2002, i.e. 38.000 ha in onion and 15.000 ha in garlic;

- cabbage and green pepper cultivated areas increased with 23.70% in cabbage and with 5.75% in green pepper in the year 2008 compared to 2000.

Table 1. Evolution of the areas cultivated with the main vegetable crops between 2000 and 2008 (thousands of ha)

Specification	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Difference (%) 2008/2000
Areas cultivated with vegetables, of which:	281.9	269.9	282.0	286.9	308.2	266.7	280.1	253.4	268.6	- 4.7
Tomatoes	47.9	46.1	48.4	49.5	58.5	47.1	50.7	46.0	51.5	7.51
Onion	37.1	37.1	38.0	36.9	28.3	35.7	33.8	34.1	35.0	- 5.66
Garlic	14.8	14.7	15.0	14.8	8.7	12.4	13.1	11.5	13.8	- 6.75
Cabbage	39.6	39.9	40.5	42.2	42.1	54.8	45.7	46.1	49.0	23,7
Green peppers	19.1	17.9	19.2	20.0	18.1	19.0	23.0	18.6	20.2	5.75

Source: Anuarul Statistic al României 2009

The evolution of the mean productions per ha in the main vegetable crops between 2000 and 2008 is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Evolution of the mean productions per ha in the main vegetable crops between 2000 and 2008 (kg/ha)

Specification	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Difference (%) 2008/2000
Tomatoes	13121	14141	13599	16535	22743	13302	16468	13916	15815	20.53
Onion	7990	10686	8979	9495	11771	10198	11554	9526	11298	41.40
Garlic	4613	5658	4824	5172	7532	5506	4893	4359	5244	13.67
Cabbage	18479	20550	20303	24130	21831	18406	24227	19364	19684	6.52
Green pepper	9153	10318	10264	12426	13106	10736	12135	9931	11827	29.2

Source: Anuarul Statistic al României 2009

The data presented in Table 2 show that mean vegetable productions per ha has an oscillating evolution with an increasing trend in 2008.

Output per ha had a low level compared to the potential of our agricultural lands. With performing cultivation technologies, vegetable production per ha should increase in some of the vegetable crops.

From the point of view of its value, vegetable production represented 19.00% of the total crop production in 2008.

The demand is the amount of produce that can be purchased for a certain price during a certain period of time. It depends on price, income, age, sex, preference, consumer habits, and specificity of culinary product of the population in the area.

The variation of vegetable demand depending on the changes in influence factors is measured with elasticity factors. Demand of vegetables increases a little with the cut of prices: the coefficient of elasticity of the demand in relation to price being sub-unitary because a price cut is always considered by the consumer as a personal economy. Demand of vegetables remains relatively constant with an increase of the incomes: supplementary purchases are made outside the sector and, therefore, demand coefficient in relation to income being sub-unitary (4).

Both domestic production and imports – larger than exports, in the case of Romania – meet domestic demand of vegetables, thus contributing to a higher degree of satisfaction of the demand.

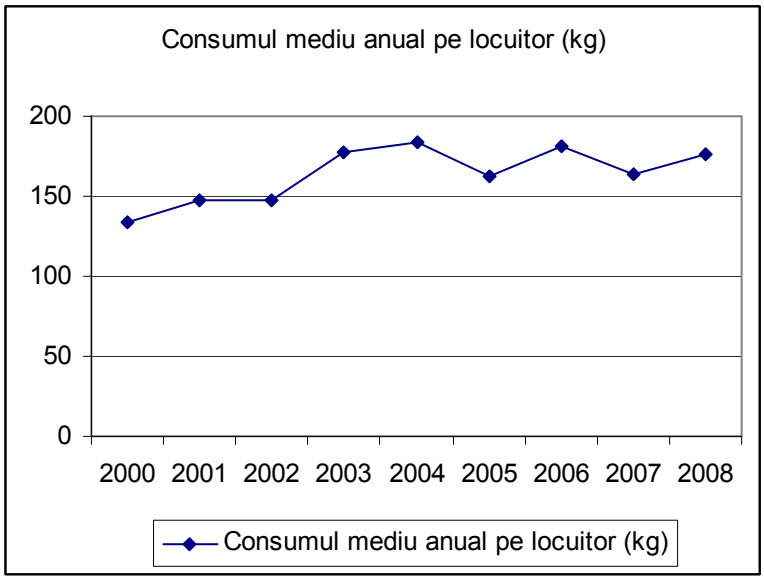
The starting point in studying Romanian vegetable demand is physiological consumption of vegetables – 130 kg/year/capita – according to the study by the Institute of Agrarian Economy in 1994 (Institutul de Economie Agrară – INCE).

The structure of the physiological needs of consumption in the main vegetable produce is as follows: tomatoes 48 kg/year/capita, onion 11.5 kg/year/capita, garlic 0.5 kg/year/capita, cabbage 32 kg/year/capita, green pepper 12.5 kg/year/capita, tap-root vegetables 11.5 kg/year/capita, other vegetables 14 kg/year/capita. (1)

The evolution of the vegetable consumption between 2000 and 2008 is shown in Figure 1.

The level of vegetable consumption increased steadily until 2004, after which there was a decrease in 2005, with a slight increase between 2006 and 2008.

Figure 1. Evolution of the vegetable consumption between 2000 and 2008



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Along a year, prices of vegetables fluctuate: they are higher particularly during extra-seasonal periods and lower particularly right after optimal harvest time.

CONCLUSIONS

The changes taking place today in economy, determine the spectacular developments in the production of vegetables.

Although cultivated areas have decreased in recent years there is a better supply the market with a diverse assortment of vegetables. This increased interest is due to growers for commercial production, market, interest justified by higher revenues that result from this activity.

The vegetable market is characterised by unbalance between demand and offer which is caused mainly by the seasonal character of vegetable production.

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