DIMINISHING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES BY PERSONALIZING ISO STANDARDS

DIMINUAREA IMPACTULUI DE MEDIU AL ACTIVITĂŢILOR AGRICOLE PRIN PERSONALIZAREA STANDARDELOR ISO

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Abstract: *Personalized ISO standards for each agricultural company will determine their own environmental protection plan and environmental cost reduction plan depending on their resources available. Companies with agricultural activity must make decisions ment to diminish the impact on the environment as a basis for establishing environmental objectives and purposes. Personalized ISO standards implemented in agricultural companies are developed to increase environmental performance and the level of environmental reporting*

Key words: *personalized ISO standards, agricultural companies, environmental costs*

INTRODUCTION

Every agricultural activity is unique in its own way and every one of these activities must be aware of the impact that it has on the environment. This awareness reflects down upon the chance to benefit economically and socially from implementing and personalizing an ISO standard.

Agricultural activities are the most common activities worldwide not only because is among the most important type of activity but also because it represents the basis of food stock and reserve of almost everybody on the planet, because the population is increasing the pressure.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Materials used in our research paper include interviews with agricultural company owners, statistics and questioners. The research method consisted in participant observation, reviewing opinions and approaches within environmental agricultural impact literature, articles and journals. Last but not least, a great source of information in the documentation phase of our research paper represents the Statistic Yearbook of Romania for 2010.

RESULTS AND DISCUTIONS

THE IMPACT OF AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES ON THE ENVIRONMENT

Even tough agricultural entities are operating in a changing environment, their capability to adapt to new and challenging situations are decreasing. The economic and financial crisis that seams endless requires a great effort on behalf of al agricultural type businesses to adapt in order to be efficient and competitive on every market, effort that is not well managed by this type of firms with agricultural activities which are not willing or do not benefit from the financial pr physical capital to invest in research and development, to innovate so that they will for implementing new ISO standards. More than 85% of businesses operating in the field of agriculture do not spend money on innovation and they don't allocate any of their revenues on R&D for improving their activities in relation to the environment and for a sustainable development.

We turn our attention at the environmental challenge that concerns the economy and we notice that this is a problem which concerns not only a particular country but mostly being considered a global action with a firm objective – environmental protection strategy.

If we turn to agricultural activities, they have a great impact on the environment. This impact includes: air pollution, the deficient use of natural resources, the use of energy, increasing noise, odor, dust, disposal of wastes and so on.

Agricultural activities which include cultivated areas represent 7.804 thousand hectares in a total of 13.753.046 hectares. Agricultural activities by branch production are developed in terms of vegetable production, animal production and agricultural services (see Figure 1).

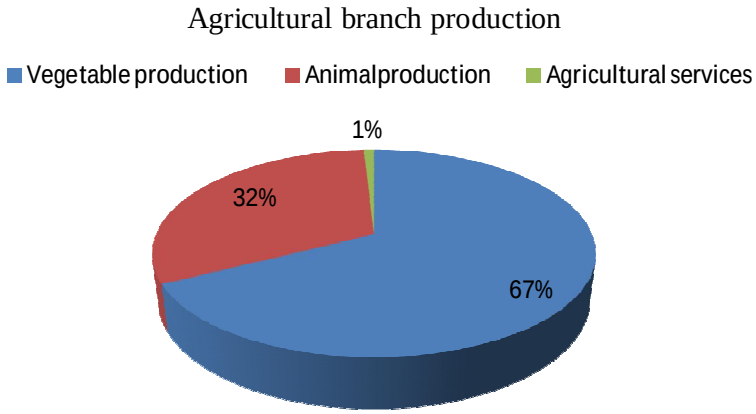


Fig. 1. Agricultural branch production
Source: Statistical Yearbook of Romania

Turning towards the agricultural branches we can see that they have a significant impact on the environment from emissions to consumption of raw materials, waste, discharges, deficient consumption of water, deficient consumption of energy, risks of environmental accidents, effects on biodiversity and others.

Businesses related to agriculture must turn their attention to all the aspects of their activities, and make decisions, based upon the norms laid down in national regulations, which have a great impact on the environment as a basis for establishing environmental objectives and purposes.

BENEFITS OF ISO STANDARDS WITHIN AGRICULTURAL COMPANIES

To implement a Personalized Environmental Management System like ISO 14.001 in an agricultural branch activity is important to define and establish a strategy to develop all the process of implementation.

From this point forward, we commence planning the process which is conditioned by different factors (see Figure 2).

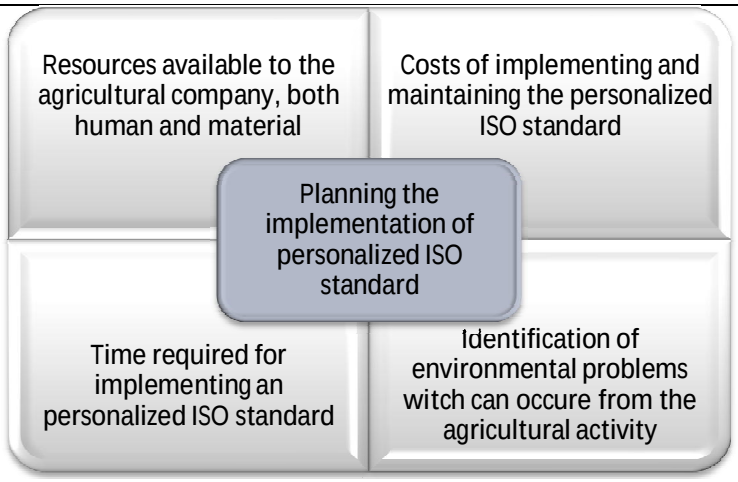


Fig. 2. Implementing a personalized environment management system
Source: Projection made by author

ISO standards implemented in agricultural companies are developed to increase environmental performance and the level of environmental reporting.

Even dough environmental management systems, such as ISO 14000, are at the moment voluntary, the increase rate of implementations among agricultural companies will lead to the improvement of their own image and the increase in credibility regarding investors, creditors and any other interested in such agricultural activity.

PERSONALIZED ISO STANDARDS WITHIN AGRICULTURAL BUSSINESES

If we consider personalizing environmental management system, personalized ISO standards for each agricultural company will determine their own environmental protection plan and environmental cost reduction depending on their resources available.

A particular agricultural company can save old species of fruits and restore them to their rightful value by seeding this type of fruits and increasing of traditional agricultural profitability by processing local fruits.

A different agro company can identify and implement ways or actions to improve the efficiency with witch energy are used as a personalized ISO standard.

One agricultural company can personalize ISO standard by improving water management in the farm by eliminating leakage from the pipes used to irrigate the crops. Other company can personalize an ISO standard by installing sensors which will reduce the amount of water used to irrigate the crops.

Another agricultural business can personalize ISO standard by developing rain water collecting system which then can be turned into water for irrigating the crops. Another personalized option can be developing a support system for saving water and rotating it in areas affected by water deficiency.

CONCLUSIONS

Companies with agricultural activity must turn their attention to all the aspects of their activities, and make decisions which have a great impact on the environment as a basis for establishing environmental objectives and purposes.

Defining an action plan and structuring a strategy is the key element in personalizing environmental management systems such as ISO 14.001 in an agricultural branch activity is

Personalized ISO standards for each agricultural company means that this companies will determine their own environmental protection plan and environmental cost reduction plan coordinated with their own budget.

Personalized ISO standards will increase public image of the agricultural company, and it will offer competitive advantages which represent a head start in this long-lasting economical and financial crisis. Other benefits that this personalized ISO a standard brings up front are the increase in credibility in relation with clients and investors, not to mentions the insurance regarding managing environmental aspects.

Personalizing ISO standards, in local communities, for agricultural companies will lead to sustainable development in agriculture and increase of efficiency in the use of resources.

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