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STUDY ON THE EVOLUTION OF AGRICULTURAL CROP PRODUCTION IN CARAȘ-SEVERIN COUNTY

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Abstract. Agriculture differs from other economic activities, very much, due to the fact that, on the one hand, agricultural activity is conditioned by the biological evolution of plants and animals, and on the other hand, it provides food for the population. Through this paper, the authors provide a clearer picture of the evolution of vegetable agricultural production in Caraș-Severin County. With an area of 386,778 ha, Caraș-Severin county owns 3.6% of the country's surface, ranking third among the country's counties. Although Caraș-Severin county is the third largest in the country, in terms of agricultural area (386,778 ha), it only ranks 13th, due to the predominantly mountainous terrain. Of all the existing agricultural lands in the studied area, about 82% are located on sloping lands, due to the relief which is mostly mountainous, not being suitable for large agricultural crops. Thanks to the involvement of local authorities and the data obtained from the National Institute of Statistics and other bibliographic sources, we were able to observe and compare the evolution, over time, of the vegetable agricultural production in Caraș-Severin County. The centralization, processing and interpretation of the data also allowed the formulation of the main conclusions with reference to the vegetable agricultural potential of the studied area.

• Introduction

Agriculture is an activity which differs greatly from other economic activities because, on the one hand, agricultural activity is conditioned by the biological development of plants and animals and, on the other hand, it provides food for the population.

Therefore, we can say that agriculture plays an important role in the economy of the area studied, due to the land it owns and which is the main source of natural resources, therefore agriculture is and will remain the most valuable branch of production.

The aim of this paper is to provide a clearer picture of the development of agricultural crop production in Caras-Severin county.

Caras-Severin county is located in the Banat region of Romania, with the city of Reșița as its capital. Located in the south-western part of Romania, Caras-Severin County has an area of 386,778 ha and accounts for 3.6% of the country's surface area, ranking third in terms of size among the country's counties. [75,88] Monograph of Caraș-Severin County

It borders Timiș county to the north-west, Hunedoara county to the north-east, Gorj county to the east, Mehedinți county to the south-east, the Republic of Serbia to the west and the Danube river to the south-west and comprises 2 municipalities, 6 towns, 69 communes and a total of 287 villages.

• Material and method

The research in this paper is located in the Western Region, specifically in Caras-Severin County. The materials used for the paper were provided by local authorities, the National Institute of Statistics and various bibliographic sources. With the help of the data obtained, we were able to observe and compare the evolution over time of agricultural crop production in Caras-Severin county.

• Results and discussions

Caras-Severin county has an agricultural area of 851,976 hectares, and the arable area in 2020 was 386,778 hectares. A careful analysis of Table 1 shows that the largest share is held by pastureland with a percentage of 43%, followed by arable land (34%), meadows (20%), and the last place is occupied by vineyards and orchards.

Table 1.
The evolution of the land fund by categories of use, 2005-2020

-hectares-

Land use	2005	2010	2014	2020
Total	851,976	851,976	851,976	851,976
Agriculture	398,083	396,999	396,915	386,778
Arable	127,313	129,661	129,628	129,472
Pastures	183,466	179,414	179,349	167,831
Meadows	74,796	76,393	76,392	77,462
Vineyards and nurseries	766	772	772	788
Orchards and nurseries	11,742	10,759	10,774	11,174

In addition to arable land, the agricultural area of Caras-Severin county also contains vineyards and vine nurseries with an area of 788 hectares, of which 634 hectares are vineyards under vines and the rest are young vineyards not under vines and land in preparation for vineyards.

As for the surface of the forest fund of Caras-Severin county, it is 411,276 ha, of which 402,600 ha are covered with forests. The coniferous forests occupy 47,200 ha and the deciduous forests 355,400 ha.

The agricultural production of Caras-Severin county, during the period under analysis, has been on an upward trend, as can be seen in the figure below.

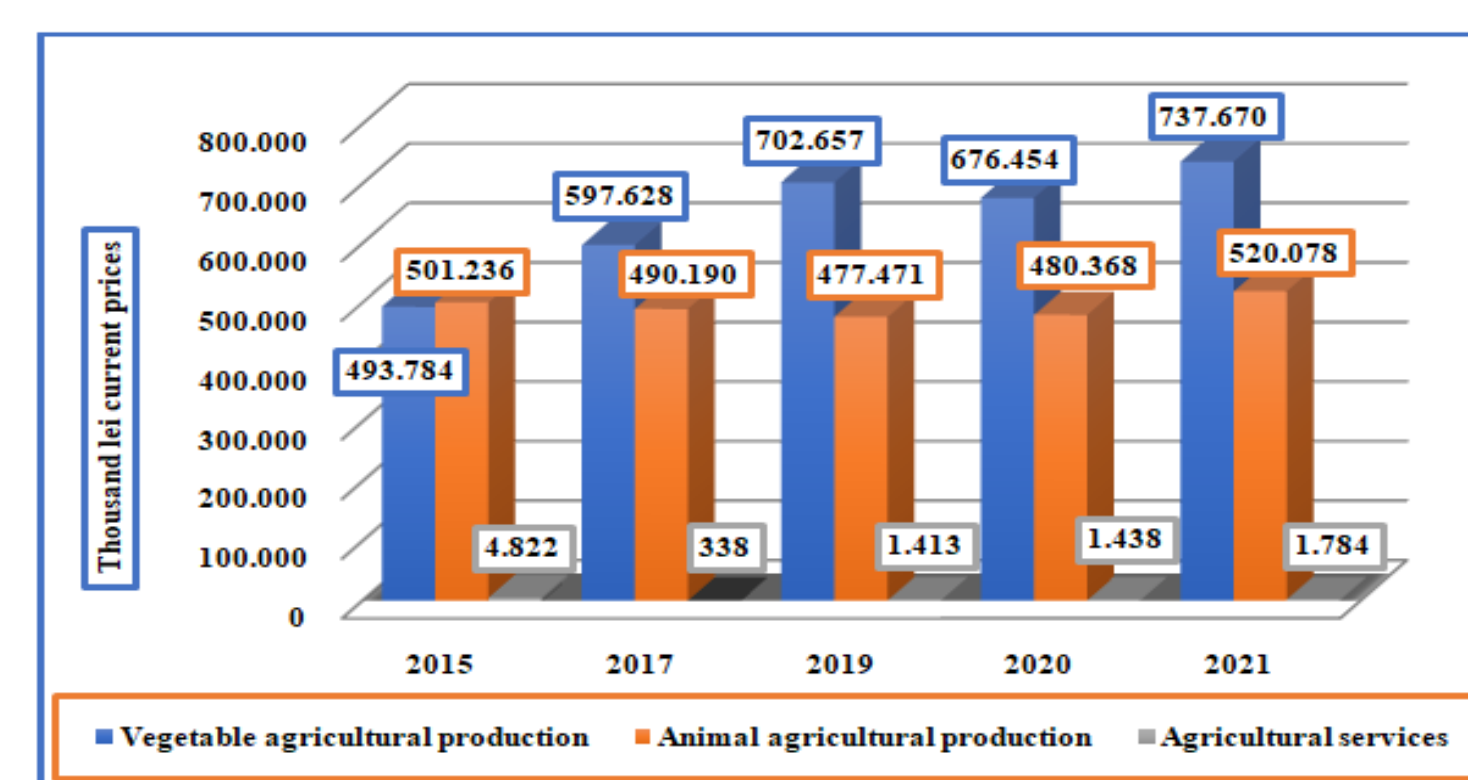


Figure 1. Value of agricultural production in Caras-Severin county

While in 2015 the income from the livestock sector was higher than that from the crop sector, over time, a trend can be seen for a reversal of these values, with a 58.48% share in 2021 compared to 41.16% for crop production. Unfortunately, the agricultural services sector has an insignificant share of only 0.14% in 2021 compared to the other sectors.

The evolution of crop production in Caras-Severin county in the period 2015-2022 fluctuated from one year to the next, as can be seen in Figure 2.

In the year 2022, a total production of 142,954 tonnes was obtained for grain cereals, which is much lower than in previous years, but much higher than in 2015 when the total production was 111,795 tonnes.

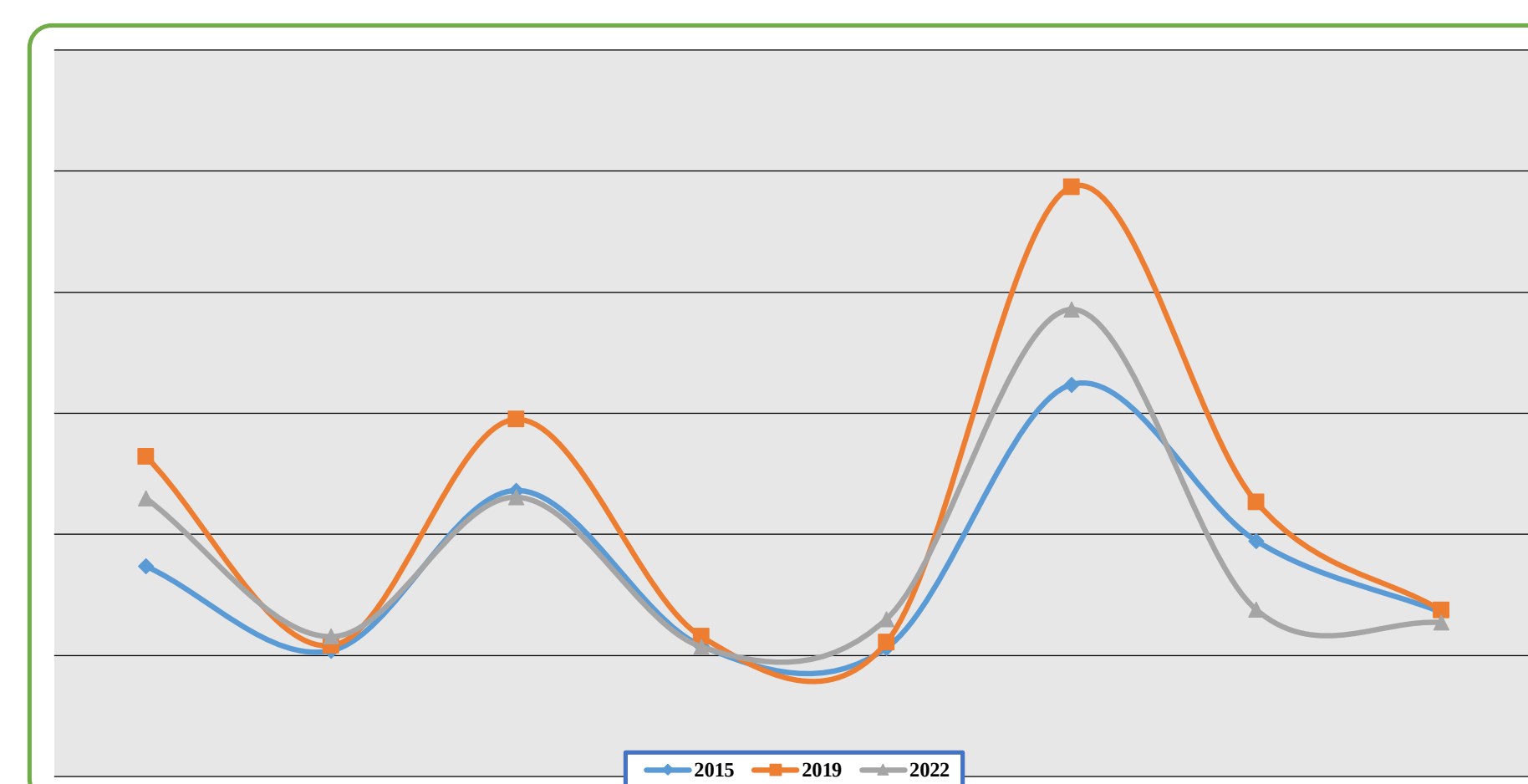


Figure 2. Evolution of vegetable agricultural production, in the period 2015-2022

We can say with certainty that the development of this indicator depends largely on climatic factors, which is why it is necessary to adopt certain measures in conditions of severe drought.

• Conclusions

Following the results of the research carried out in Caras-Severin county, the following conclusions can be drawn:

Caras-Severin county has an area of 386,778 ha and accounts for 3.6% of the country's surface area, ranking third in terms of size among the country's counties. Although Caras-Severin is the third largest county in the country, in terms of agricultural area (386,778 ha) it ranks only 13th, due to its predominantly mountainous terrain.

Of the total agricultural land in the study area, about 82% is located on sloping land, due to the relief which is mostly mountainous and not suitable for large agricultural crops.

Caras-Severin county has an agricultural area of 851,976 hectares and the arable area in 2020 was 386,778 hectares.

As for the area of the forest fund of Caras-Severin County, it is 411,276 ha, of which 402,600 ha are covered with forests. The coniferous forests cover 47,200 ha and the deciduous forests 355,400 ha.

The average yield per hectare of the main crops has fluctuated from one year to the next, with a downward trend, except for barley and barley, where the average yield per hectare has almost doubled.