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THE DEVELOPMENT OF AGRIBUSINESS IN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATIONS IN THE PERI-URBAN AREA. CASE STUDY: DUDEȘTII NOI COMMUNE, TIMIȘ COUNTY

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Abstract: *The peri-urbanization process causes significant transformations in the economic, demographic and land structure of rural localities located in the vicinity of large urban centers, directly influencing the development prospects of agribusiness. This research analyzes the specific development patterns of the agri-food sector in the commune of Dudestii Noi, Timiș County—a locality situated within the sphere of influence of the city of Timișoara. The methodology combines an analysis of indicators related to land resources, agricultural production, demographic trends, and local infrastructure with findings from an empirical investigation based on 150 validated questionnaires. The results highlight the predominance of agricultural land, a focus on the cultivation of cereals and industrial crops, and the impact of demographic shifts on the demand for agri-food products. The study underscores the need to modernize agricultural holdings, diversify activities, strengthen short supply chains, and leverage proximity to the urban market.*

• Introduction

The topicality and importance of the topic addressed derive from the profound structural transformations that Romanian rural areas, particularly those near major economic growth poles, have been undergoing in recent decades.

Structural challenges and pressures:

- Real estate pressure (land conversion).
- Labour migration.

Strategic opportunities and advantages:

- The nearby sales market.
- Short supply chains.
- Logistics and processing.

• Material and method

- Case study applied to Dudestii Noi commune, Timiș County.
- Integrated analysis of natural, demographic, economic and social resources.
- Identification of opportunities and constraints concerning sustainable development.

To achieve the objectives of the paper, a questionnaire research instrument was developed, structured into four main sections.

It aims to map the demographic profile of residents of Dudeștii Noi commune, analyse agri-food consumption patterns and assess perceptions of the impact of suburbanisation and agricultural association processes at the local level.

To ensure optimal statistical representativeness and compensate for potentially incomplete questionnaires, the final sample size established is 150 respondents

OS1

- Identification of the main food supply channels used by the population of Dudeștii Noi

OS2

- Determination of the purchasing frequency of local agri-food products and identification of the commercial barriers perceived by consumers

OS3

- Analysis of the impact of demographic changes on attitudes towards local agribusiness.

OS4

- Assessment of peri-urban consumers' willingness to pay a premium price for products with a local identity or organic certification.

• Results and discussions

Dudeștii Noi commune is a rank III administrative unit, located in the central-western part of Timiș County, in the historical region of Banat.

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF PURCHASING BEHAVIOUR (OS1, OS2)(multiple responses) – figure 1.

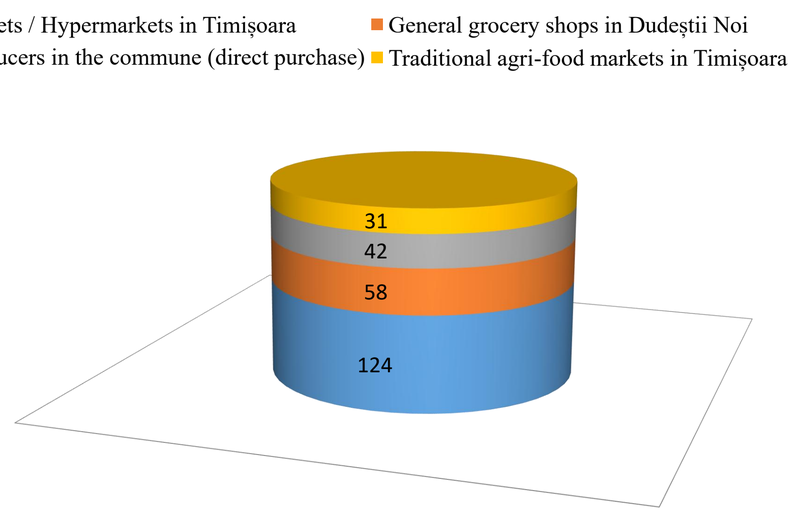


Figure 1. Descriptive analysis of purchasing behaviour

- The study revealed that 82.67% of procurement takes place through hypermarkets, while the lack of a centralized marketplace (44.67%) and difficulties in promotion (23.33%) were identified as significant barriers. These findings support the exploration of short supply chains, local points of sale, and the territorial identity of products, subject to a prior assessment of economic feasibility.

- Following the research conducted, the main strategic proposals and recommendations (action plan) were outlined (figure 2).

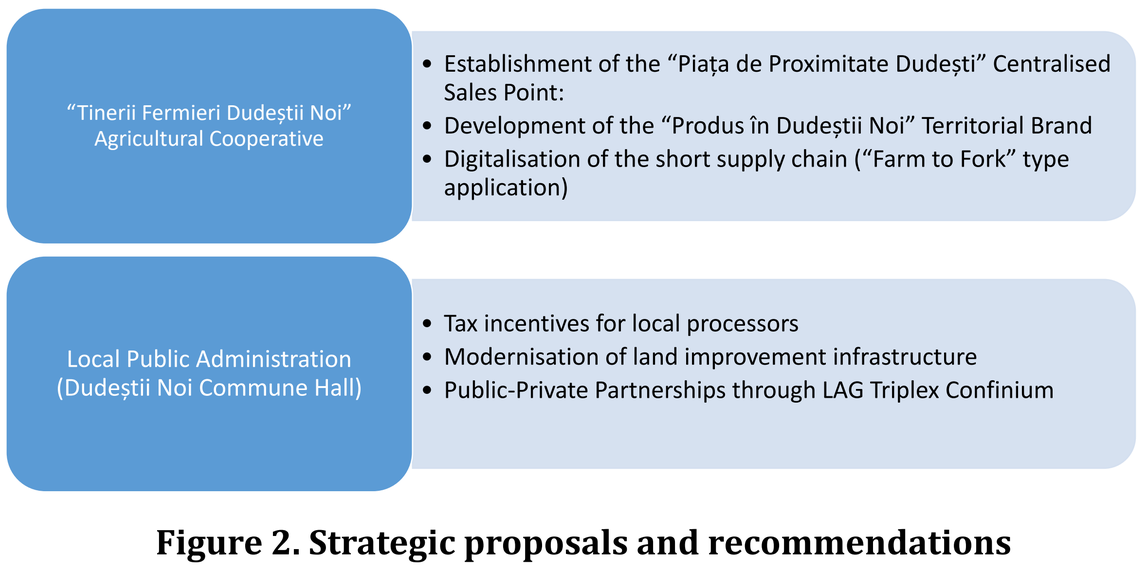


Figure 2. Strategic proposals and recommendations

• Conclusions

In conclusion, the research conducted demonstrates that the future of agribusiness in Dudeștii Noi commune depends on the capacity of local stakeholders to use the advantages generated by proximity to the municipality of Timișoara and to transform demographic and economic changes into a driver of local development

The development of short supply chains, promotion of local products, consolidation of associative structures and investment in economic infrastructure represent strategic directions capable of supporting the community's long-term competitiveness and sustainability.