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THE POTENTIAL OF SAFFRON CULTIVATION FOR SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN ROMANIA

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Abstract

Saffron cultivation (Crocus sativus L.) offers a potential route to agricultural diversification in Romania. This qualitative synthesis examines economic opportunities, cultivation requirements and barriers to adoption, with Bihor County as a case-study setting. Its contribution to rural development depends on production costs, product quality and reliable markets.

Keywords: Crocus sativus L., rural development, agricultural diversification, rural entrepreneurship, niche crops

Introduction

Saffron is a niche crop with commercial uses in food and other industries. This study examines its potential contribution to farm diversification and rural development in Romania.

Material and method

Qualitative assessment of saffron cultivation, drawing on published evidence on farm economics and environmental performance [1].

Bihor County provides the case-study setting. The framework considers corm costs, seasonal labour, processing and market access.

No Romanian yield measurements or profitability estimates are reported.

Results and discussions

Opportunities and conditions [1]

Potential contribution	Condition for viability
Income diversification	Affordable corms and viable yields
Seasonal employment	Labour available at harvest
Local value creation	Quality processing and reliable sales
Environmental benefits	Efficient use of farm inputs

Literature-based synthesis. Implications for Romania require local validation.

For Bihor, a local feasibility study should record labour hours, corm costs, dried stigma yield and sales before evaluating commercial expansion.

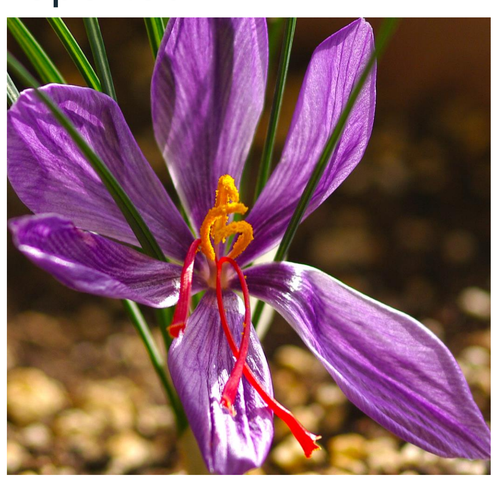


Fig. 1. Crocus sativus flower. Zeynel Cebeci, CC BY-SA 4.0. Wikimedia Commons. Full image, resized.



Fig. 2. Dried saffron stigmas. Henna, CC BY-SA 1.0. Wikimedia Commons. Full image, resized.

Conclusions

Saffron may support rural entrepreneurship where cultivation, labour and markets are suitable. Local pilot trials and cost accounting should verify economic and environmental benefits before commercial expansion.

[1] Mehmeti et al. (2024). Energy, Environmental, and Economic Sustainability of Saffron Cultivation. Sustainability, 16(3), 1179. doi:10.3390/su16031179.
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