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ROMANIAN AGRICULTURAL POLICY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF ANIMAL PRODUCTION

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Abstract

The rapid evolution of civilisation within the last two hundred years has involved the replacement of extensive, pastoral livestock systems for intensive production methods. The dangers implicit in this rapid evolution are discussed by Forrester (1971),in the Meadows report (1972) and latterly the necessity for "sustainable development" was flagged by the Brudtland Report (1987). The last agrarian reform in Romania increased the weight of small farms and led to non sustainable agriculture. In such conditions we are obliged to follow a twin-track strategy: (1)livestock systems with high productivity potentials; (2)traditional pastoral systems and organic agriculture, on marginal lands, which allow the utilisation of extensive grazing lands, the conservation of environment, genetic resources, landscape, the minimisation of the use of non-renewable resources and the production of "natural foods".

Key words: *agricultural policy, agricultural reforms, developmental mechanism, organic agriculture, premises of development, sustainable intensive systems, traditional pastoral systems*

INTRODUCTION

After five agricultural reforms, of which the only the one of 1864 had a clear economic objective: family farm of 5 ha and implicit an etic-social objective, and the second reform (1950-1962) whose economic reason (farms flexible to the new technological inputs), was shaded by its brutality, the lack of equal achievement and an unsufficient technological support, **animal production, Romania's agriculture is today unviable and non durable,** characterized as follows:

-animal livestock and production has dramatically decreased during the last decades. **We consume more than we produce** without being sure that malnutrition and low nutrition could be avoided;

-from an economic and qualitative point of view, what is produced is not competitive under the actual conditions and international trade agreements (EU, CEFTA, globalization etc.);

-it is not assured a secure food supply at reasonable prices for consumers;

- for the agricultural population with a share of 35% in the country population can not be assures a corresponding living standard compared to the population working in other fields of activity;

- the EU Common Agricultural Policy of a large intervention in the farm modernization is not enough understood;

-production and development of technological inputs is a critical one and the lack of vertical integration can not protect farms against the upstream and downstream pressure.

The main cause of the actual situation is the agricultural reform promoted in 1991. It facilitated the creation of very small farms which are not able to buy and use new technological inputs. As the economists from the period between the two world wars remarked, the tradition to divide land in equal parts for all the descendants has led to an extreme property fragmentation, annulling the effect of all the other previous reforms. Taking into consideration the American standard ("an agriculturist is any person owning minimum 4 ha land and getting a minimum $4,883 income, of which $ 3,605 from farming), in Romania there are no agriculturists. It is like in that French article "Une France sans paysans" (Gervais et al., 1965).

The CAP objective is the farm modernization by increasing farm dimension, technical endowment and receptivity to the new technological inputs.
The ethic objectives of the reform in Romania are annulated by the lack of economic efficiency.
Therefore, it is needed to set up a new **strategy, a national policy for agriculture modernization, neutral in relation to the actual political framework and whose objectives to be carried out consequently by all the governments who will succeed.**

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The paper presents the author opinions on the situation of animal production and the need of its development in the context of the actual EU agricultural policy.
A critical approach is carried out using the analysis and synthesis methods and logical deduction method as well emphasizing on the following aspects: premises of the new agricultural policy, modern mechanism of agricultural production development and durable development of animal production.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Premises of an agricultural policy

The policy for the development of animal production is based on three premises as follows:
1.At least in the 1st half of the 21st century, **it is imposed the efficient economic maximization of food production, saving of the nonrenewable energy resources and nature preservation**. This is imposed by actual malnutrition and low nutrition of the population and the danger **to decrease food production per inhabitant** in the 21st century, one of the 5 dangers mentioned by Forrester (1971) and Meadows (1972) and who developed the concept of **sustainable development** (Brundtland, 1987). Ignoring Meadows Report, it is a continuous tendency to **depreciate the concept of sustainable development** reducing it to environment protection, "natural capital" (Kalow, 2000). Without denying the need to preserve ecological principles, the economic policy has to see clearly the consequences of this principle and analyze the solutions.
2.Animal husbandry, component of agriculture, is a **strategic resource.** National security **includes the long-run maintenance of its sustainability** (Battie şi Healy, 1980).
3.Rural life has a major role in assuring the **social sustainability and national persistence**. Despite that, for assuring a normal living standard, the share of active population in agriculture has to decrease below 10% (from 35% nowadays in Romania), and of the one of rural population dealing with agriculture below 25%, it is necessary **to assure a long-term rural development by** encouraging investments in rural space both in agriculture and industry. Animal production play an important role in this direction.

The modern mechanism of the development of agricultural production

The mechanism of the development of intensive agriculture (The High-Payoff Output Model Fig. 2 – adapted after Ruttan, 1980) includes four factors:
1.Capacity of institutions in the field of scientific research and technology to continuously produce scientific knowledge and technologies (biologic, chemical, mechanical) proper to market change, input-output ratio (energy etc.). In case of the correct selection of the scientists, the investments made in science proved to be the most efficient ones (Ruttan, 1980).
2.Capacity of upstream industry (vegetal production, combined fodder, genetic resource, machinery etc.) to **produce, develop and commercialize the new technological inputs**.
3.Farm capacity to absorb the new technological inputs and use them effectively.
4.Capacity of downstream industry to adapt its tehnologies to market change and establish benefits which do not affect farm viability (vertical integration).
The input-output relation is different in various countries and in a continuous

dynamics, so that the mechanism should be adapted to it and the system of resource allocation to support it.

A double itinerary for the sustainable development of animal husbandry

The fast evolution of civilization in the last 200 years and especially in the last 50 years has led to **a rapid development of intensive agriculture on the back of the extensive one**. Despite that it was justified by the need to nourish the world population growth which is ongoing, such an evolution **has raised serious problems regarding nature preservation, non-renewable energy sources and the use of marginal resources**. All these aspects oblige us to accept a double itinerary of development for animal husbandry as follows:

-intensive sustainable systems with a high production potential which have to allow a correct food supply for long –term to the country and planet population, **economically and ecologically viable and also competitive systems**;

-traditional production systems, especially pastoral systems, able to allow the use of **marginal resources, nature preservation** (genetical resources, pastures, landscape, environment) and to also satisfy the **requirements, on a large-scale subjective of the amateurs of organic food**.

Sustainable intensive animal husbandry

Appeared under **the incentive of the green revolution** (1940-1973) and of **the strategic competition** between military blocks, animal production and vegetal industry, **animal production has increased 3 times** pee head and hectare especially in the NATO countries. The mechanism of this development is mentioned in the EU documents. The major EUCAP provided into Art.39 of Rome Treatise were:

-to increase of agricultural productivity by encouraging **holdings modernization**;

-to guarantee **a equal living standard to agricultural population** similar to other sectors of activity;

-to guarantee **a safe food supply at reasonable prices for consumers.**

These objectives were fulfilled by a large intervention (1/2 of the EU budget, subsidies, guaranteed prices etc.) in the market economy. **Farm modernization** remains a major EU objective after CAP Reform(Mc Shary, 1992, Agenda 2000).

In the period 1965-1989, Romania achieved important progresses in the file dof animal husbandry modernization. Despite that pig industrial holdings assured only **60% of Romania's pork production**, and the poultry complexes only **44.7% of poultry meat production and 42% of egg production**, the difference coming from the private sector, Romania came on the first positions among the top **10 countries in the world**. More than that, according to Dr. M. Bichard, in the field of pig production Romania was a pioneer in modernizing pig farms.

The big problems of the Romanian poultry and pig farms were: high fodder **consumption**/product unit, **carcass low quality** etc), and were generated by the upstream farm inputs (fodder assortment, quality of genetic material etc.). **These inputs, especially fodder price and sort have deeply contributed to the fail of holdings and brake their recover.**. The upstream inputs, besides a few technological problems have practically obstructed the modernization of **dairy farms** (60% of milk production was supplied by subzitence family farms in 1985).

Romania's integration in the EU CAP of farm modernization supposes besides the modernization of the family farms in order to increase their size and endowment, **the restart of the industrial poultry and pig holdings** (Drăgănescu, 1992) and **their modernization** in the context of sustainability and competitiveness. A similar way has to be adopted for dairy farms, even thou the problem is more complicated from a technical and economic point of view. **The objections brought to industrial production are not essential**. Paraphrasing Harlem (1980), who sustained monoculture, "industrial animal production is specific for modern agriculture and we have to e accustomed with it; in fact we could dye without it. There are too many

people on the earth to go back to the more complex agro-systems from the old times.

Extensive systems of animal production

In Romania, "**a Carpathian sheepfold for a wolf pack**", as Iorga said, traditional systems, especially the pastoral ones with low input-output animal production have a long tradition and contributed substantially to the **persistence and unity of the Romanian people** (Drăgănescu 2001). They survived in difficult conditions. In 985, after 25 years of pressure against them, in the family subzistence households of the peasants working in co-operatives and also non working in co-operatives, there were **99,1% of goat livestock, 85.1% of bee hives, 60% horses, 50.5% sheep, 40% cattle and poultry; there were able to produce 60% of milk production, 48.8% of meat production and 52.8% of wool**. These systems had the mission to:

-utilize the marginal resources without using non-renewable resources;

-assure landscape preservation (pasture ecosystems);

-assure animal genetic resource conservation;

-contribute to the stabilization and development of rural settlements;

-preserve history.

Low input-output production systems can be classified into three categories:

a)traditional pastoral systems: transhumance, moving between mountain village and meadow or free grazing in the Danube Delta;

b)subzitence systems– animals (dairy cows, goats, pigs, sheep, poultry) raised next to the house for covering the family needs;

c)**organic agriculture** ("ecological", "biological", "alternative" etc.).

Pastoral systems are of the highest interest from all the points of view. Practiced for long distances from the Bohemia Carpathians to Istria and to the Caucasian and Ural Mountains, transhumance is the most efficient economic system which allowed …"**to conquer territories with sheep**" (Teaci D., 2000), territory which could not be preserved by political relations. Nowadays, there is an "**European transhumance map"** (1997), non considered in Romania and which recommends its preservation.

The subsistence systems are a short or middle run system in close relationship with the living standard in the rural area. For long run, they have to be transformed into "hobby" or "part-time" systems.

Organic agriculture is too much taken into consideration in Romania. This is generated by the fact that **it is not expected an increase of animal products on the EU market**, being considered just an increase of demand for higher quality products. The high production expenditures in these farms is expected to double the pork retail price that a few consumers would like to pay (In United Kingdom, the share of food costs is only 11 %), while most of consumers will remain faithful to intensive agriculture because they would accept a price by maximum 20-30% higher (M. Bichard, 2001). The paradigm of this situation is that "**producing less, spending more, and selling more expensive, the organic farmers will solve their own business, but not national and world food requirements**" (Klatzman, 1985). **In this context, agricultural policy must not encourage organic agriculture except on the marginal land and against intensive and pastoral agriculture**.

In case of Romania, it is expected as fodder production to increase, fodder price to decline and vegetal production to be modernized and have enough capital to develop the intensive animal production, which will become competitive in the EU market. The lower labour price, avoiding the legislation regarding "animal welfare", avoiding legislation regarding environment preservation and introduction of new technologies which will determine a lower production cost, will be of much help for the development of intensive animal production.

CONCLUSIONS

In order to develop sustainable animal husbandry in Romania, a new agricultural policy is needed and should be oriented in four directions:

-Development of traditional pastoral system in the mountain areas;
-Development of subzistence systems which should be transformed into "hobby" and "part-time" agricultural systems in family farms;
-Development of organic agriculture on the marginal land;
-Development of intensive animal production by using new technologies in order to assure food at national level and also for the EU market.

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