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Romanian Organic Products – Vector of Sustainable Development

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Abstract

In the last decade European population is witnessing a popular phenomenon of growing the capital image of organic products. Romania is a country that provides resources for the growth and stabilization of such a productive environment in order to establish an optimal development of ecological food. Also its approach it is mostly conservative and conventional and this a big struggle in the way of organic development on a serie of layers. The purpose of this article is to validate the arguments that this kind of agri-food products and this type of agriculture is a vector of sustainable development that can also represent the key to the economical stability of a country. The considerable progress of the technology opens the perspective of the importance of a balanced lifestyle and the point of view can be economical, political, social and also sustainable. To the necessity of this article contributes the change of the behaviour of consume in the last decade when possible customers became more selective in the process of purchasing food. The arguments presented in this article sustain the potential of development in Romania in agricultural and agro-sales fields through statistical analysis and interpretation and also by the opinion of the top entrepreneurs which activate in agriculture in Romania. The article aims to highlight the need to bring to the common denominator the two variables of the ecological optimal equation: the mitigation of the negative effects of conventional farming on the environment and the provision of a healthy lifestyle for current and future generations.

Keywords: *sustainable agriculture, eco-friendly business, economic development in Romania, ecological food.*

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1. Introduction

The tremendous social and business environment of the last years builds the perfect space of development for niche businesses and sustains a blue-ocean marketing strategy, meanwhile conservative and rigid businesses seem to have a close deadline. Gliessman (2000) thinks that archiving sustainability in agriculture implies a sort of compromise in managing the structure and the functions of the natural system [7].

According to Buliga and Stoleru (2009) Romania is in a pioneering stage in terms of producing and consuming ecological products, the quantity and not the quality representing a more influencing indicator in the Romanian consuming behaviour [1].

Eco products are much more expensive than the classic ones because it takes a lot more work in order to obtain them, it has smaller productivity and higher certification costs, being obtained separately. The price may differ depending on how hard it is to get a certain type in a eco environment [14].

The exponential trend of changes in the consume behavior brings with it a deep and irreversible dimension of sales, business and agriculture. When it comes to debating a topic like that addressed in this article, it is important to define the terms. The need to increase the dynamics of organic agriculture and the abundance of ecologically productive agriculture consists in choosing the proliferation of an upgraded alternative to agriculture that conserves soil resources and addresses the economic evolution from an environmentally friendly perspective. Theoreticians of the subject mention a reshaping of the forms of agriculture known to date, especially in Western Europe, where the information society has put its mark on the applied information in the development of the rural areas [11] and in this way the updating of the methods used in production, represents now a must.

By considering this idea, it is important also to pay attention to the perspective of Funtowicz and Ravetz (2001) [5] which bring in this perspective the concept of “democratization of science” which refers at an informed public debate of the possible options of implementation of the notions. In case of Romania, this can represent a manner of approach because the basic state of the rural society it is close to this concept. Although, it is important to trace in the history the way how our ancestors approached the management of their environment, in order to satisfy the perpetuum development of the growth of needs on the market [12].

The issue regarding the sustainable development has gone through an increased number of important stages until it is has been included in public policies, but also in the work of organizations in various fields. I can consider the following global events to be relevant for the awareness that

includes the role of sustainable development: the Brundtland Commission (1983), the Brundtland Report (1987), the Rio Conference (1992), the Johannesburg Summit (2002), and others [2].

The Brundtland report, published in 1987 by the World Commission on Environment and Development, mentioned that public and private actors must show higher responsibility in their actions, tactics implemented towards the environment and society. The committee's report for the first time formally approached sustainable development, which understood as follows “the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” [3].

The year 1992 represents an reference year for this issue, because then the European Union approves the doctrine and the series of directives that will ensure a business development framework to date, which initially represented only a niche that fits on a food trend. At present, it is essential not to understand through organic food and sustainable development just a whim of European citizens or Romanian consumers behavior, but a necessity to apply in accordance with the laws of nature a business model that does not damage the resources it uses but to orient their strategy of action towards their regeneration.

2. Theoretical Background

There is unanimously accepted the semantic equality between organic, biological and ecological terms when it comes to talk about the products which have the source of bio/eco/organic agriculture. Because this article discusses the socio-economic impact of a relatively new notion therefore the literature that has been approached falls within the research cycles of the last two decades. The academic debate is necessary in these cases because the innovative valence of a concept which it must first be appreciated by theoretical models describing the empirical experience up to that moment, and more so, why this new process deserves to be widely applied. So, it is important to follow the correlation between the quantity of emissions which are implied in conventional agriculture and to be seen a healthier perspective which can be maintained in time. For example, nitrous oxide has a very high warming potential, more or less 310 times more than carbon dioxide[8].

In the '90s James [10] launches the theory which affirms that food includes a major part of a social code between families and acquaintances, and therefore this product represents more then and object used only for its nutritive function, but also it has an ethical valence which is creating a

specific framework to a perpetual social process. It can be said that this affirmation sustains the sensitive tendency of changes in the alimentary consume behavior. The laws and doctrines adopted over time by the European Union transmit the message that organic products represent more than a whim or a passing trend.

Because of the proliferation of “food scandals” through the propulsion of dangerous viruses and bacteria (Salmonella or E.coli), supporters of the organic marketing strategy classify industrialization and conventional farming as being risky by its industrialized nature and the alternative even if it does not have a high productive yield, it is a safer option, referring to the health of the consumer.

Lester R. Brown is one of the pioneers of the concept of sustainable development and one of the great thinkers of the modern world, popularizing this concept on a large scale. He came to the conclusion of the necessity of this concept after observing the tumult of the previous century that was characterized by conflicts (modal, zonal, diplomatic, etc.). Thus, the responsibility of the optimal environment and the consumption and quality of the natural resources is no longer a worrying notion research and academic level, but is reported to each individual business individually.

The environment protection represents a certain condition, higher economic efficiency as a support and a social individual development as a final efficiency from sustainable development [6].

3. Argument of the paper

In the current world context, even more limited, European context, Romania has a high potential for economic evolution from the agricultural perspective. The ever-increasing trend is the ecological one, that proposes alignment with the latest European standards and which represents the future pattern under which, in time, the businesses in the market will activate. Enrollment in a growing market is based on the “go with the golden rush” management principle that describes the take-up of the newly created and present opportunities of the economy. Based on newly opened commercial lines, it has been the key to success over time.

Entrepreneurial thinking in the prospect, the visionary qualities of a good leader confirm success attributes, and sustainable development is under the sign of stable and evolutionary gains, because firstly it respects the argument of economic interest in a business, and secondly, it plots on social ethics approved by the customer.

4. Arguments to support the thesis

By subscribing to Robert D. Hamrin's (1988) [9] opinion, the benefits of developing an efficient internal market for organic products, which are then outsourced by export, are the benefits of this area of increasing quality and life expectancy, consumer education, long-term production efficiency and traceability food, engaging in a transparent competition mechanism from the point of view of the consumed resources and satisfying the most elevated and diverse wishes of the client.

Also, a food consumption trend that feeds the entrance into the organic products market of several economic agents is lacto-vegetarian or egg-lacto-vegetarian, whose consumers show a special care for the style of nutrition practiced. Therefore, the market for organic cereals might be suited to these special requirements, and for example, the production of bakery using whole or black flour could be encouraged, the white one being produced in a conventional system and being depleted in nutritional properties. Eurostat [4] studies say that in Romania, the organic field production is best illustrated in the cereal domain (33,1% ha from the total land used with this type of agriculture).

The ascending dynamic of the organic fruits cultivated in Romania it is one which sustains the trend of enrolment in this type of agriculture. In this way, the value of the land grows. It is notable that the growing surface of the land cultivated with plums registered an evolution by 17,5 times.

Table 1. The Dynamics of cultivated fruits under organic certification in Romania (hectares)

Agricultural culture	2011	2015
Apples	1.252	2.158
Apricots	215	108
Forest fruits	37	840
Cherries	116	203
Grapes	894	2.160
Nuts	274	774
Peaches	-	30
Pears	40	76
Plums	137	2.399
Strawberries	2	21

Source: Personal adaptation of the data from:

<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/agriculture/data/database> [4] and

<http://www.madr.ro/agricultura-ecologica/dinamica-operatorilor-si-a-suprafetelor-in-agricultura-ecologica.html> [13]

5. Arguments to argue the thesis

According to the European Parliament, the highest organic consumption is found in the United States, where the value of this kind of trade is around 38,9 billion euros. It is also essential to note that an emerging country such as China is registering sales of about 5,9 billion euros while the trade values collected by the entire European Union are at the level of 30,7 billion euros. These figures represent an economic monitoring from 2016. The figures presented above are relevant because they support the fact that the development environment of this business model is placed under the auspices of fierce competition. In a narrower perspective, Romania does not align with the average level of trade in the European Union, thus representing an unattractive market. The fact that Romania until now couldn't adapt represent a clear sign that it will not succeed in the future on this type of economic activity.

This can increase the quality of the soils at its disposal, thus capitalizing as an investment space. However, the risks to which potential investors are exposed are in the specter of unpredictable taxation and of a fluctuating political and economic environment.

Also, N.S. Kasimov's opinion of sustainable development is that no other concept has enjoyed a similar public impact, and its breadth would not be but a marketing product that classifies this economic model as one that is under the stamp of capriciousness and artificial need, created by a manipulative and abusive consumption strategy.

So, in this way, organic products cannot be considered a development vector because Romania it is not prepared for this manner of agriculture. Another important point is that Romanians will not align at this trend because are mostly poor people and the financial effort to purchase this products or to do a business under organic directives it is too much for them. In this order, Romanian organic products do not represent an economic development vector.

6. Dismantling the arguments against

When we talk about sustainable development, we don't talk about a whim, but a responsible politics which targets all the business and the individuals. Along the history where another greater trends which had a very strong on development (political, social, economic, industrial ones) which did supplied the work did by man, which made the information one of the

most valuable things in the world and a neo-factor when we talk about production.

Negating sustainability equals negating climate change and the needs of the future generations, which a lot of recent and old studies approve.

Romanians are not poor enough to continue agriculture in an inefficient way, and the trend through Romanian farmers is to listen the customer's desires and to target the most profitable opportunities to develop their business.

7. Conclusions

The reasons why it is so important to discuss at an academically level the need of recalibrating the agricultural and commerce perspective relies under the sign of awareness of the present opportunities to the farmers which want to make more profitable their businesses. Because the majority of arable Romanian land it is really segmented, ecological agriculture can represent a way of making this weak point into a strong one, because this is one of the attributes which are at this moment one of the most threatening aspects of conventional agriculture in Romania.

Because of its history in the domain of agriculture, good quality soils, segmented, not that polluted membership of European Union, Romania represents and aspiring candidate to perform in durable economy through organic products.

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