

## CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING THE EVOLUTION OF AGRICULTURE IN NEAMT COUNTY BETWEEN 2004 AND 2006

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*The great diversity of the natural conditions which characterize the territory of Neamt county makes the systems of agricultural production be different.*

*Processing the data has been done through statistic methods obtaining specific indices and indicators that allowed the interpretation of evolutions and tendencies of the agriculture of Neamt county.*

*The territorial administrative organization is made up of 421 localities, having two cities, Piatra Neamt, which is also a county, and Roman, three towns: Bicaz, Roznov and Târgu Neamț, 78 communes and 339 villages. As a result of the application of the laws in agriculture, the private propriety has risen due to the accentuated reduction of the gravity of state propriety. At present, the state property is represented only by 1,3% of the agricultural area of Neamt county, i.e. 3.860 ha. As regards the Animal husbandry area, in 2006 we can notice a reduction of animal effectiveness as a result of the actions of improvement and selection, there rise the middle production per animal head. Between 2004 and 2006 there have been registered 49 associations of bull breeders, and also there was set up the County Association of bull breeders and the County association of goat breeders. In Neamt County, the main problem is low profitability of agriculture due to the crumbling of lands, small productive units, old labour force, little developed infrastructure, reduced mechanization, insufficient irrigation of agricultural lands; another problem is represented by the vegetal monoculture (high concentration of cereal crops – little diversity of agricultural production).*

*In Neamt County, a great advantage could be the associations of the farmers in order to share the production costs and to increase profit in agriculture.*

**Keywords:** *diversity, private propriety, agricultural area, small productive units.*

Neamt County is situated in the central-eastern part of Romania and it can be situated between 46040' and 47020' Northern latitude and 25043' and 27015' Eastern latitude, from the geographical point of view.

The forms of relief have heights between 1907m (Ocolașul Mare Peak) and 169 m (Siret meadow).

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In 2006, the population of Neamt county was of 570.682 inhabitants, of which 220.149 in towns and 350.533 in villages, the latter representing 61,4 % of the total population, of which 45,1% is represented by the population involved in agricultural works. During the last years, the main tendency as regards the population involved in agricultural works is that of decrease at an annual rate of 1,63%.

## MATERIAL AND METHOD

In order to make the analysis regarding the present situation of agriculture in Neamt county, the evolution in time and its future tendencies we have used a large variety of statistic data, some of them from official sources (The Statistic Yearbook of Romania), while others are from the internal evidence of some economic agents or from the direct investigations from the territory authority of the agricultural domain. Processing the data has been done through statistic methods obtaining specific indices and indicators that allowed the interpretation of evolutions and tendencies of the agriculture of Neamt county.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Neamt county has a total area of 589.614 ha, of which 282.961 ha agricultural land and 306.691 ha non-agricultural land.

The area of Neamt County is of 5.896,16 km<sup>2</sup>, representing 2,5% of Romania's area.

As a result of the application of the laws in agriculture, the private propriety has risen due to the accentuated reduction of the gravity of state propriety. At present, the state property is represented only by 1,3% of the agricultural area of Neamt county, i.e. 3.860 ha.

In Neamt county, between 1991-2006 (table 1) according to the laws of ownership, law nr.18/1991, law nr.1/2000 and law 247/2005 there has been made out 128.910 titles of property.

Table 1

**The titles of property have been made out in Neamt County till 2006**

The law of ownership	No. of titles of property issued
Law 18/1991+law 1/2000	128.180
law 247/2005	730

Source DADR Neamț, processed data.

At present, the state property represents only 1,3% of the agricultural area of the county, i.e. about 3.860 ha (table 2).

Of all the agricultural area of the county, 60% is represented by the arable area, and 39% by the natural lawns. The arable area of the county (table 3), is organized in 268 commercial and family exploitations, with a total area of 39066 ha – representing 23% of the total cultivated area, the difference of 131547 ha is represented by the individual household.

Table 2

**The structure of the rural area of Neamt county in 2006**

SPECIFICATION	Total of the total area	Of which:			
		Arable area	Natural lawn	Vine growing plantation	Tree growing plantations
Total county	282916	170613	109198	781	2324
State sector	3860	2441	1214	111	64
Private Sector	279086	168172	107984	670	226

Source DADR Neamț, processed data.

Table 3

**Agricultural exploitation of Neamt county, according to their dimensions**

Nr. crt.	Agricultural exploitations according to their dimensions	Number of exploitations	Area ha
1.	Commercial (over 50 hectare)	149	36.401
2.	Family ( sub 50 hectare)	119	2.665
TOTAL		268	39.066

Source DADR Neamț, processed data.

In the period 2004-2006 in Neamt County, there functioned two powerful associations of agricultural producers: The Association of sugar beet cultivators, and the Association of potato cultivators.

In this period there were created 14 product councils, they started to cultivate energetic plants and bio-fuel production, unrolling investments of more than 622000 RON.

As a result of the support programmes for the agricultural producers from the 2004-2006 period, the agriculture of Neamt County was equipped with tractors, combines and new agricultural machines of 1.583.174 RON.

As regards land improvement from the period 2004-2006, there were made works on an area of 648 ha valuing 4.058.672 RON.

Also, as regards the vegetal production in the period 2004-2006 at the main culture, the following productions have been obtained (Picture 1):

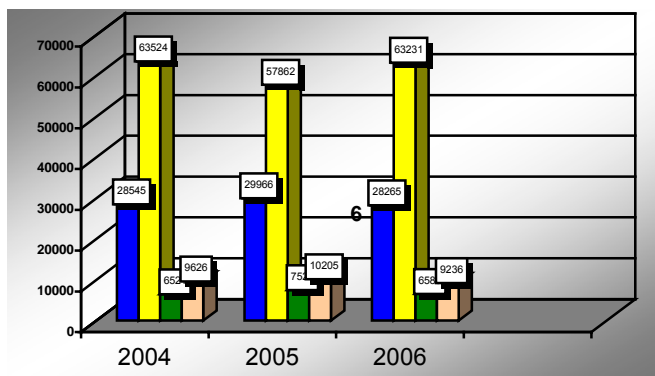


Figure 1. The evolution of the cultivated area with the main culture in the period 2004-2006

As regards the Animal husbandry area, in 2006 we can notice a reduction of animal effectiveness as a result of the actions of improvement and selection, there rise the middle production per animal head. Between 2004 and 2006 there have been registered 49 associations of bull breeders, and also there was set up the County Association of bull breeders and the County association of goat breeders.

Table 4

**The evolution of the animal production in Neamt County**

Specification	2004	2005	2006
Came-total to alive	35776	38100	38.765
Cow milk total hl/head	1.705.903 3213	1.710.100 3250	1.700.000 3592
Sheep milk total hl/head	72.437 49	60.300 48	60.300 48
Goat milk total hl/head	4092 70	4000 66	4.920 53
Wool/t	343	390	390
Oggs /thousands each	127241	150000	148.300
Honey /t	307	360	394

In all the communes of the county there were made maps of the bull, sheep and goat effectiveness, obtaining the following results:

Bull, exploitations -4477, of which:

- between 2 and 10 heads 3502 (78,2%);
- between 11 and 50 heads 36 (0,8%);
- over 50 heads 2 (0,04%).

Sheep, exploitations -2506, of which:

- between 10 and 50 heads 149 (85,7%);
- between 51 and 100 207(8,4%);
- over 100 heads 149 (5,95%).

Goat, exploitations -54, of which:

- between 10and 50 heads 37 (68,5%);
- between 51 and 100 heads 11 (20,3%);
- more than 100 heads 6 (11,2%).

In 2006 there increased the number of animals which are under the official control of performances for all the species; it also has risen the number of artificial planting, from 36,7% to 52,7% (queen effectiveness).

In order to diminish the restrictive factors on the agricultural land, in 2007 they are going to do afforestation on an area of 619 ha, in 21 communes.

For the next period, till 2013, the fundamental studies are going to be obtained in order to afforestation on at least 700 ha.

Within the rural area of the Neamt county, along 2006 there were started 140 projects through the SAPARD AND Fermierul programmes of 131.562.576 RON, the equivalent of 41.463.969 Euro. They have in view the following:

- 4 projects for modernizing meat processing;
- 5 projects for modernizing milk processing;
- 1 project for preserving fruits and vegetables;

- 1 project for fish preservation.

The total value of the projects is 13.092.942 Euro.

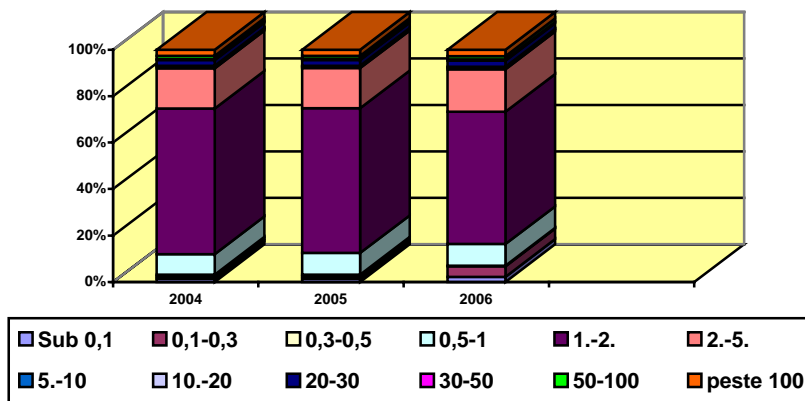


Figure 2. Land area in claim during the period from 2004 till 2006

Other 23 projects with a total value of 16.494.295 Euro, has in view 5 milk cow euro-farms, 1 farm for pigs, 1 farm for goats, 16 projects for buying specific machines for the vegetal sector.

Meanwhile, in the domain of developing and diversifying the economic activities, there were unfolded 56 projects of 8.934.490 Euro, consisting in:

- 49 agro-tourist pensions;
- 1 mushroom bed;
- 1 piscicultural farm;
- 1 micro farm of herbs.
- sustaining the process of establishing agricultural exploitations of optimum dimensions in order to reach a weight of over 60%;
  - growing and diversifying the vegetal production, choosing cultures with high economic efficiency and sure market (sugar bet, sunflower, rape, soya, textile plants, fodder plants), up to a percentage of over 20%, stimulating and training the young as future farmers in the rural area;
  - growing competitive side of the agricultural sector by supporting the subsistence farms for a period of 3 years by offering modernizations and acquisitions;
    - supporting the establishing of producers' groups – cereals and technical plants, vegetables, so as in 2010 the should function at least 25 such groups.
    - supporting in every way the animal breeders in order to organize their animal farms as follows: at cows for milk there should be at least 12-15 animals per exploitation (from 36 at present , to a number of 270), at sheep - over 200 animals (from 149 to 200 exploitations), at goats – there have to be more than 200 animals (from 11 to over 30 farms);
    - accelerating the process of genetic improvement at bulls by using high technology such as artificial insemination and embryo transfer; taking into

considerations, reintroducing and extending the artificial insemination to sheep and goat to up to 50% of the effective.

- extending the artificial insemination to the pigs that can be found in private households; counseling and convincing the animal breeders to organize themselves into associations, producer groups, cooperatives and enforcing the existing ones.

## CONCLUSIONS

In Neamt County, the main problem is low profitability of agriculture due to the crumbling of lands, small productive units, old labour force, little developed infrastructure, reduced mechanization, insufficient irrigation of agricultural lands; another problem is represented by the vegetal monoculture (high concentration of cereal crops – little diversity of agricultural production)

Besides the problems presented up to now, Neamt County has to face other obstacles, such as:

- Poverty, an obstacle for investments in order to diversify the rural economy and opportunities for development of the rural area;

- Insufficient development of basic units and public services (education, health) in rural area for a better information of the inhabitants of the rural areas about the opportunities of project financing as regards the rural area;

- Insufficient promotion of food and non-food traditional products that are produced in the rural areas (including the handcraft products and the products that are made in the mountainous zone);

- Lack of systems for collecting and processing the agricultural products, of „en gross” markets;

- Inexistence of an agro-food commodity exchange that can lead to the existence of a free market for this domain;

- Agricultural products that are not ticketed or certified according to the norms of the European Union;

- Ignorance regarding the European regulations on agricultural problems of the rural area;

- Agricultural exploitation is made on reduced plots 1-3 ha;

- Reduced agricultural park which is obsolete physically and morally;

- 45,1% of the total population weight in Neamt county is represented by the population that works in agriculture;

- The relative stability of the dimensions of the rural and arable areas, due to which there are insignificant oscillations;

In Neamt County, a great advantage could be the associations of the farmers in order to share the production costs and to increase profit in agriculture.

- Supporting the process of formation of agricultural exploitations of optimum dimensions;

- Growth and diversification of vegetal production, choosing cultures with a high economic efficiency and sure market;

- Supporting the establishment of producers; groups – cereals and technical plants vegetables etc.;
- Setting up as many consultancy and agricultural counselling centres.

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