

MANAGERIAL SKILLS NECESSARY FOR MANAGERS OF AGRICULTURAL FARMS FROM VASLUI COUNTY IN ORDER TO ABSORB EUROPEAN FUNDS

COMPETENȚE MANAGERIALE NECESARE MANAGERILOR EXPLOATAȚIILOR AGRICOLE DIN JUDEȚUL VASLUI PENTRU ABSORBȚIA FONDURILOR EUROPENE

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Abstract: *The farm managers must take into account the future development of their business the impact of changes in the environment, the complex issues and situations circumstantial that tend to appear. An important issue related to the development of rural development projects is the professional competence of economic and social agents who initiate, develop and implement such projects, the existence of an effective infrastructure for consultancy of such projects. In order to produce efficiently and competitively, the agricultural farms, irrespective of their type, must enroll in the tendencies that currently exist in the global agriculture, in order to promote qualitative factors among which we mention developing knowledge, managerial training, technical upgrade, application of modern technology, computerization etc.*

Key words: managerial skills, agricultural farms, Vaslui, European funds

Rezumat. *Managerii exploatațiilor agricole trebuie să țină seama în dezvoltarea viitoare a afacerii lor de impactul schimbărilor în mediul din care face parte, de problemele complexe și situațiile conjuncturale care apar. O problemă importantă legată de elaborarea proiectelor de dezvoltare rurală o constituie competența profesională a agenților economici și sociali care inițiază, elaborează și pun în aplicare asemenea proiecte, existența unei infrastructuri eficiente de consultanță pentru asemenea proiecte. Pentru a putea produce eficient și competitiv, exploatațiile agricole indiferent de tipul lor, trebuie să se înscrie în tendințele care se manifestă în prezent la nivelul agriculturii mondiale, spre promovarea factorilor calitativi din rândul cărora fac parte dezvoltarea cunoașterii, pregătirea managerială, înnoirea tehnică, aplicarea tehnologiilor moderne, informatizarea etc.*

Cuvinte cheie: competențe manageriale, exploatații agricole, Vaslui, fonduri europene

INTRODUCTION

The management concept of the businessman in agriculture is at the basis of his action plan which includes, among other things, economic development solutions, optimal technical and strategic identification of skills that exist in the

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team that he leads, establishing responsibilities to subordinates, motivating their actions and last but not least, control of actions taken on responsibilities. In practice, the human factor is decisive. Consequently, training and certification of future specialists is a necessity arising from the economic development strategy.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The work includes theoretical and practical concepts and principles of production management and a range of methods and techniques which act as tools for improving the farmers' competences. The theoretical foundation is complemented by practical example of the analysis of Vaslui County agriculture. As for the agricultural systems practiced, completed by the evaluation of agricultural activities in 2007-2009, with emphasis on dynamics and structure of the results and indicators of economic efficiency achieved during the period under review. There were also used materials provided by the FEADR. For the processing and interpretation of data, there were used diagnostic analysis method, investigation and correlation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In practical implementation of management precepts, the human factor is decisive. Consequently, the training and certification future specialists is a necessity arising from economic development strategy. In addition, management is foreseen at the branch level, more than an integrating subject. It has, therefore, the role of assembling knowledge from different disciplines, of harmonizing them into a global system of thinking and - especially - to reveal the economic dimension of a certain technology options in the plan. Acquiring thorough theoretical precepts, methods, techniques and management tools, is a sine qua non of competent performance of their duties vested with powers under the management boards, steering committees of the farm or to become a private entrepreneur.

The training also aims at calling attention to the heritage of knowledge of management, but also the formation of modern managerial thinking, emphasizing on the development of personality in the profession, under conditions of risk and uncertainty. In these conditions of risk and uncertainty, the progress of farms and agriculture as a whole depends on the highest level of quality of managerial competence and skills that managers must show when managing- the provision, organization, initiation actions, control and regulation of activity. If the farmer is setting up a vegetable farm he must take account factors relating to: preparation and individual experience, need to choose an optimal structure of crops, assess the possibilities for optimal recovery of production, determination of main competitors, identifying potential customers for products produced on the farm. The manager of a vegetal farm must constantly intervene in the conduct of the entire production process and choose the best solutions for the supply of material and technical resources, administration, staff management and coordination of the farm, carrying out production activities according to objectives, ensuring quality production processes and products, recovery products, promote and sell them on the market, the financial activities of the farm.

After the inventory of cultures it turned out that the agricultural area of Vaslui county is 401,231 ha, of which 291 473 ha of arable land, 86,950 ha of pasture, 7951 ha of grassland, 12,259 ha of vineyards and 2,598 ha of orchards (figure 1).

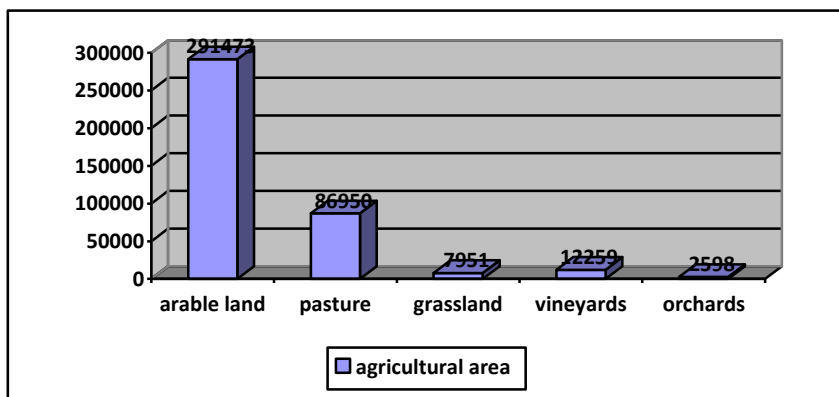


Fig. 1 - The agricultural area of Vaslui county (ha)

Of the total 401,231 ha, the area of 353,100 ha is worked in the private sector and 48,131 hectares in the state sector.

The private area is used by a number of 214 commercial farms in which 13 agricultural companies established according to the Law no.36/1991 on agricultural associations and other forms of association in agriculture with an area of 5442 hectares, 133 limited liability companies, 30 family associations and 38 authorized individuals who exploit agricultural land under Lease Law nr.16/1994, as amended and supplemented with an area of 93,159 ha as well as 239,503 ha of individual producers and other private establishments 2133 ha. The state sector has 48 131 ha, of which 5823 ha is owned by the State Domains Agency and leased to economic operators, 1266 ha belong to research units and 42 487 ha of other owners (local councils, colleges, schools, households annexes of Defence etc.).

From the analysis of surfaces and yields achieved in 2007-2009, at grain crops, there is a decrease in area with 7636 hectares, from 167495 ha in 2007 to 159859 ha in 2009, and the production fluctuated, in 2007 resulting in a yield of 3280 kg / ha due to drought, and in 2009 obtained the highest yield of 4130 kg / ha in the period under review (table 1).

We also believe that a very important role in increasing economic efficiency have the grain producer organizations that can negotiate a good price with employers in the milling and baking areas.

At maize there has been a sharp decrease in the area with 21699 ha from 117063 ha in 2007 to 95364 ha in 2009 and average production per hectare increased from 2075 kg / ha in 2007 to 3417 kg / ha in 2009.

Sunflower area decreased from 40747 ha in 2007 to 34825 ha in 2009, and the average production dropped from 1389 kg / ha in 2007 to 1018 kg / ha in 2009.

Table 1

Areas cultivated in 2007-2009 crop years

Nr. crt.	NAME OF CROPS	Cultivated area (ha)			Deviation registered 2009/2007	
		2007	2008	2009	ha	%
1	Grain cereals	167495	172105	159859	-7636	-4,5
2	Wheat+ rye	42016	43941	55496	13480	24,2
3	Maize-consumption	117063	119983	95364	-21699	-18,5
4	Leguminous plants for grains	1016	1009	1026	10	0,9
5	Total oil plants	54618	55476	58243	3625	6,2
6	Sunflower	40747	55476	34825	-5895	-14,4
7	Rape	7570	7441	22929	15359	66,9
8	Soy	6232	1611	223	-6009	-96,4
10	Total potatoes	2540	2866	2617	77	2,9
11	Vegetables	6324	6664	6723	399	5,9
12	Total forage	28920	30212	33217	4297	12,9
13	Seed lots	695	718	1003	308	30,7
14	Left unseeded	27430	20571	27620	190	0,6
15	Total arable	291 437	291 202	291 340	-79	0,02

In Vaslui County there has greatly increased the area planted with rape from 7570 ha in 2007 to 22929 ha in 2009. As for the average production, it increased from 1398 kg / ha in 2007 to 2413 kg / ha in 2007 (table 2). Given that rape is the main species from which biodiesel is extracted and 2003/30/EC EU requirements, which seek to promote the use bio-fuels and other renewable fuels, particularly in the transport sector as part of EU policy to reduce import dependency energy and lowering greenhouse gas that causes global warming, we believe that the culture should be extended.

Table 2

Total productions in 2007-2009 crop years

Nr.crt	Name of crops	Total productions (tone)			Deviation registered 2009/2007	
		2007	2008	2009	tone	%
1	Wheat+ rye	137813	59834	229209	91369	39,8
2	Maize for grains	242999	41155	230584	-12415	-5,1
3	Sunflower consumption	56638	15389	35472	-21166	-37,3
4	Rape	10583	19755	55339	44756	80,8
5	Soy	7579	8	0	-7579	-100
6	Sugar beet	23856	3554	3661	-20195	-84,6
7	Total potatoes	25579	4270	23122	-2457	-9,6
8	Vegetables	85496	38377	73363	-12133	-14,1

The specifics of the managerial processes is reflected both in higher proportion in which managers must possess a number of qualities, knowledge, skills and behaviours required of all farm components and a range of knowledge and skills in this area. The first category includes: intelligence, memory, sense of observation, concentration capacity, health, character, qualities necessary in any profession, but higher for managers, given the complexity and difficulty of management processes. The results of qualitative knowledge and skills, talent and training managers, regardless of the hierarchical level, gender, age, is represented by the managerial ability or "leadership". In essence, we designate the interpersonal influence which the manager exerts on the subordinates in the process of setting and especially accomplishing the objectives.

The items presented provide sufficient grounds to argue that in the agricultural farms a new profession has outlined - the manager.

The **skills** needed for a farm manager are: *specialized skills* (in basic domain, project management, multidisciplinary, general management knowledge) *methodological skills* (organizational skills, focus on objective, strategic thinking, experience in project activities, teaching skills), *social skills* (management skills, motivation, delegation of powers) *communication skills* (communication and negotiation skills, confidence in talking, conflict resolution); *competences in personality* (self-control, creativity, desire for change, resistance to stress, initiative and accountability, adaptability, discipline, risk management, integrity, positive attitude toward people).

An important question regarding the elaboration of rural development projects is the professional competence of economic and social factors that initiate, develop and implement such projects, the existence of an effective consultancy infrastructure for such projects, availability of institutes or workshops for complicated projects, which require a large specific design proficiency and introduce effective economic and financial mechanism to enable the financial support of the design and implementation of the projects.

Measure 1.4.1.a EAFRD Programme: Support for semi-subsistence farms aims to facilitate the restructuring and transformation of semi-subsistence farms in farms oriented to the market through sustainable use of inputs, improvement of management through diversification of agricultural production and the introduction of technologies adapted to local conditions.

Measure 143 Provision of counselling and consultancy services for farmers. The aim of the scheme is to assist farmers to use counselling and consultancy services for restructuring and improving the overall performance of their duties. This will particularly serve to enrich managerial skills of all categories of farmers through specific advisory and consultancy activities undertaken with the help of specialists from the local consultancy centres.

The consultancy will help to better inform the farmers for modernizing, qualitative reorientation of production, farm diversification, application of production practices compatible with landscape conservation and promotion, environmental protection, hygiene standards and animal welfare and to acquire

management skills necessary to administer a farms economically viable. Consulting aims and standards for occupational safety in the workplace based on Community legislation.

It will follow the dissemination of knowledge in management and administration of land and farms, the application of good agricultural and environmental practices under the Cap. 1 Articles 4 and 5 and Annexes III and IV of Regulation (EC) no. 1782/2003.

The advice will include regular visits to farms, support for additional identification and coordination of specialist advice, support for the credit assistance for drafting, monitoring the implementation business plan, etc.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The rural development programs are based on the objectives of rural development strategies and policies laid down in this area and include all shares and assets intended to be used to achieve rural development goals within a given area.

2. EAFRD is an opportunity of funding for rural areas, amounting to approximately 7.5 billion Euros, from 2007 until 2013. Similar to SAPARD and EAFRD it will be based on the principle of co-financing private investment projects. The consultancy will include regular visits to farms, support for additional identification and coordination of specialist advice (e.g. preparation of the application for agri-environment), support for the credit (e.g., participating in meetings with prospective lenders), assistance for drafting, monitoring the implementation of the business plan etc.

3. In EAFRD program, the measures meant to improve knowledge and consolidate human potential, is more pronounced compared to SAPARD.

4. We recommend a series of measures to improve the managerial skills of farm managers in Vaslui county, namely: improving information for farmers on opportunities of EAFRD financing, promotion among small farmers firstly the measures that do not require co-financing such as Measure 141 "Supporting Semi-subsistence farms" knowing that the vast majority of farms in Vaslui County are in this situation, stimulate formation of producer groups by providing financial assistance for establishing and operating business support groups recognized under national legislation and encourage innovative activities (for example, new solutions to old problems, the introduction and development of new products, new market systems, modernization of traditional activities by applying new technologies).

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