

## ABSTRACT

The provisions that refer to cross-compliance condition the granting of payments to farmers if they comply with the standards regarding the good conditions of agricultural land and the requirements for managing the environment, human, plant and animal health.

Eco-conditionality therefore appears as a conditioning mechanism for making payments consistent with the provisions of the support schemes and respecting the rules in the field of the environment, public health, animal and plant health, ensuring the well-being of animals, on the entire land surface of the agricultural holding for which financial support is requested. Dissemination of information regarding Eco conditionality can also be achieved with the support of local authorities, during meetings with agricultural producers at the commune level. The means of information include posters, leaflets, brochures, Power Point presentations, interviews and advertising spots in the local audiovisual and print media. When submitting the documents requesting payment, the farmer undertakes to comply with the requirements of cross-compliance as well as other relevant obligations (e.g. those related to plant protection products, nitrates, etc.) regulated by national legislation.

The prescriptions in question can be grouped into distinct categories according to the areas pursued in management rules (SMR) and, respectively, agricultural and environmental conditions (GAEC). In terms of agricultural and environmental conditions, cultivated lands must be maintained in excellent conditions for production with measures to prevent soil erosion, preserve the ideal amount of organic matter in the root space, preserve the soil structure, a minimum degree of agricultural land management, as well as protect and water management.

In accordance with articles 65 and 72, letter c) from Regulation (EU) no. 809/2014, the control report drawn up by the on-site control inspector, mentions any non-conformities found, which are taken into account when calculating the respective reductions and exclusions. In order to determine the reduction of the financial support related to the direct payment schemes, in case of negligence or deliberate action of the beneficiary, in case of finding several cases of non-compliance regarding the various acts related to the same field, it must be treated as a single case of non-compliance and for calculation of discounts from payment. Some areas of ecological interest can also be protected by conditionalities rules, such as: the buffer strips (protection strips) provided by GAEC 1.1-2, SMR 1 and SMR 10, the terraces found in GAEC 5.2 and GAEC 7.1, such as and trees in line, group or isolation specified in GAEC 7.1.

Directive 91/676/EEC on water protection (SMR 1) aims to ensure the favorable framework for avoiding water contamination with nitrates generated from the agricultural environment. The Nitrates Directive is found in the provisions of HG 964 of 2000.

The Code of Good Agricultural Practices provides for implementation measures to ensure the protection of the population and life within aquatic ecosystems, but also to guarantee the possibility of using water for various uses.

In order to maintain organic matter in the soil, it was considered necessary for farmers to comply with the requirement of crop plants in rational rotations and to give up the harmful practice of burning plant residues. In addition to these norms that refer to the subject of this paper, a number of other norms have been implemented that concern the conservation of habitats, the fight against invasive plants, the conservation of biodiversity, food safety, and the protection of public and animal health.

The particularities of the Brăilei Plain require the observance of good agricultural practices that allow obtaining large, stable and quality harvests as well as healthy and

quality livestock. All this, however, in environmentally friendly conditions that prevent the processes of soil degradation, water pollution and other components of the natural environment. One of the original EU initiatives, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), was established on the principles of the single market, community preference and financial solidarity. The main objectives of the CAP are to stimulate agricultural production, to guarantee a fair standard of living for rural residents, to stabilize the markets of agricultural products and to ensure the general food security of the population. These goals, which are being met gradually, were created with both the manufacturer's and the customer's interests in mind.

The aim of the paper is to optimize the system of cross-compliance within the framework of direct payments for farmers in Romania by identifying the best model for the implementation of cross-compliance rules in the years 2021-2027 that is compatible with the specific objectives of the common agricultural policy and the financial interests of farmers. By implementing an effective cross-compliance system, the growth of sustainable agriculture will be ensured by farmers' compliance with relevant regulations related to the core cross-compliance areas (environment, public health, animal and plant health and animal welfare).

Furthermore, by targeting subsidies to farmers who provide essential public services, the Common Agricultural Policy will become more compatible with the expectations of society as a whole (increasing the credibility of the CAP). This is also our position regarding the subject of the study undertaken, with the main objective being a better understanding of the conditionality that applies to and for farmers' support programs and measures. successful implementation in relation to the objectives of the Common Agricultural Policy. The main objectives of the paper are to and optimize the system of cross-compliance in direct payments for farmers in Romania through.

1. Assessment of how cross-compliance rules have been applied to support programs and measures for farmers in the period 2018-2021;

2. Identifying the best models for applying the eco-conditionality rules in the period 2021-2027 compatible with the specific objectives of the CAP and with the financial interests of farmers;

3. Analysis of the performances of agricultural holdings in the Brăilei Plain by types of holdings;

4. Proposals for increasing the effectiveness of the eco-conditionality system in the reference area.

In order to evaluate the application and compliance with the rules in the period 2007-2013, the existing information in the database of the Integrated Administration and Control System (IACS) and statistical documents managed by APIA, regarding the verification of payment requests per area (eligibility conditions) were processed and studied, the declared area, the amount of the payment request, penalties regarding the control of the areas); the monitoring of the surface of the permanent meadows at the level constituted a reference element and, respectively, the control of compliance and the application of sanctions from the point of view of Eco conditionality.

Data obtained during the research period from local authorities combined with results obtained from field observations can provide a useful database that can be continuously improved.

The improvement of the cross-compliance system in the framework of direct payments for farmers in Romania in the period 2021-2027 was also considered, which corresponds to the specific objectives of the common agricultural policy and the economic interests of farmers. In order to achieve this objective, it was considered necessary to carry

out specialized studies and analyzes regarding the implementation of standards and requirements in terms of eco-conditionality, which would lead to the review of decisions, in accordance with European regulations.

The obligation to maintain the area of permanent meadows at the national level constitutes an eco-conditionality norm within the area payments and is fulfilled by maintaining the ratio between the area of permanent meadows (SPp) and the total agricultural area (SA<sub>t</sub>) declared by farmers on January 1, 2015. The analysis of the way in which the norms of eco-conditionality are respected requires specifying the particularities of agriculture in the study area, including in the aspect of land improvement arrangements in the Brăilei Plain.

The rainfall regime in the analyzed territory is characterized by important variations both in time and in space. The multiannual average value of precipitation is 505.2 mm and the value recorded at the Brăila weather station is 435 mm, which corresponds to a dry climate. Combined with the temperature regime and the consumption requirements of the main species of cultivated plants, there is an accentuated deficit of precipitation, which has the effect of making it impossible to maximize the agro-productive potential of the cultivated species, nor the fertility characteristics of the soils in the absence of irrigation. Since 2006, the Romanian authorities wanted to repair the irrigation systems that had become non-functional.

With the accession to the European Union, funds were obtained for the rehabilitation of the irrigation facilities until now, the Viziru and Terasa Brăila irrigation systems being redeveloped. Unrestricted grazing, as well as overcultivation of agricultural land, had the effect of reducing the degree of soil cover with vegetation to low values, ranging between 5 and 23%, so that after harvesting crops it is exposed to degradation processes. The greatest impact on the soil, however, is the intensification of the production process through the over-cultivation of arable land surfaces and the practice of improper agricultural techniques.

Abusive grazing causes the damage of meadows on extensive surfaces are common in the studied area. Another inappropriate aspect is the practices of some farmers who burn plant residues to reduce the time interval related to the preparation of the bed.

Crop rotation is the basis of production systems in agriculture as it influences the rationalization of inputs. On a global scale, to this problem is added the one aimed at conservative technologies. Intercropping ensures superior utilization and at the same time conservation of water and soil resources and biodiversity. At the same time, it contributes to reducing the soil pollution process.

The practice of diversified crop structures and the application of conservative tillage technologies increase the benefits of the sustainability of agriculture in the studied area. The complex land use planning process must include Land Degradation Neutralization (LDT) as an essential component (fig. 5.18). Examining the advantages and disadvantages of different models of agricultural techniques will serve as a basis for planning the complicated process of land management.

When put into practice, this approach involves coordinated actions within short, medium and long-term plans, ordered by actions aimed at halting degradation processes and restoring the ecological health of degraded lands.

The last chapter of the paper analyzes the issue of hydro-ameliorative intervention, respectively the application of irrigation. Experiences carried out in representative farms in the area allowed the adaptation of the elements of the irrigation regime to the edaphic and climatic conditions for grass cereals (barley and barley) and for legumes for grains. The determinations made highlight the disproportionate importance of applying irrigation in the dry area where the scientific investigations were carried out.