

STUDIES REGARDING THE AGRICULTURAL POTENTIAL AND ASSOCIATIVE EXPLOITATION FORMS IN BOTOȘANI COUNTY

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Abstract

By its structural features and applied technologies, agriculture in Botoșani County has a profound extensive character, being subsistence agriculture. Associative forms in agricultural production represent, in essence, strategic options to elaborate in planned way production liaisons, with long term duration between an agricultural exploitation with a high level of specialization and other economic agents specialised in obtaining of some production factors or other processing activities and/or capitalization of agricultural products. Were analyzed indicators related with land usage in production, usage of labour force, tractors and agricultural machines and were proposed a series of measures for usage effectiveness of production factors in the studied agricultural exploitation

Key words: agricultural potential, association, cooperation, Botoșani County

MATERIAL AND METHOD

To estimate the performance level of Botoșani County was used diagnosis analysis focused on land fund, production structure, mean and total yields, different associative and cooperation forms, etc. For data gathering and analysis were used specific techniques and methods for qualitative research.

Data processing was realised by specific methods of diagnosis analysis resulting a series of specific indicators and indexes which allow the appreciation of evolution and tendencies of some specific agricultural production factors.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Difficulties facing by the small agricultural entrepreneurs from Botoșani County, which justify the necessity of association, are caused by a difficult cooperation with service providers units, especially when surface per exploitation is small and also by the lack or less developed marketing structures.

Association and cooperation relationships are influenced by the multitude of liaisons

which are established between agriculture and other branches of national economy, and also inside agriculture, between economic agents in the field of agriculture (animals, seeds and planting material) and storage, processing and selling units of those products [1].

Association of agricultural farmers for cooperation, production and capitalization of agricultural products, and also the development of leasing for establishing viable agricultural exploitations, are at least for the moment, inevitable solutions, because not land disunity assure better agricultural yields, but land pooling. In the Romanian actual conditions, when small subsistence exploitation in not viable, association and cooperation represent fast and less costly ways for society to agricultural recovery [3].

Running on the basis of market economy principles, rural cooperation could be organized in various domains aiming primary production, supplying, processing, storage and selling of agricultural products and also agricultural loans [2].

Choosing of association form by land-owners, as a modality of the exercise of their activity, is determine by the low individual possibilities of capitalization of own household which not allow to have all the necessary resources for its activity.

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By association, especially if associates have certain material resources, could action to annihilate the unwanted effects of lack of capital.

Focus of production in agricultural exploitation with optimal dimensions, as well as diversification and specialization of agricultural production are close connected with the development of association and cooperation relationships on raw agricultural materials technological flows, but also on processing and capitalization of agricultural products [4].

To understand the exploitation and land preservation regime as well as juridical status, lands which that make up the land fund, function of their destination, could be classified in the following categories: lands for agricultural purposes, lands for forestry

purposes, lands under water, urban lands and lands with special destination. Structure of lands' utilization is very close connected both with positioning of natural components, especially relief, and also by the existence of planning and land improving works.

Variety of usage categories of land fund represents a good opportunity for developing viable and profitable economic activities in several industries of rural economy from Botoșani County.

In according with the data from Department for Agriculture and Rural Development Botoșani, the structure of Botoșani County land fund, in period 2009-2011 is presented in table 1.

Table 1 Structure of land fund in Botoșani County

Types of usage	Area			
	ha 2009	ha 2010	ha 2011	% 2011/2009
Agricultural, from which:	393,193	393,039	392,792	99.8
Arable	298,774	298,774	298,762	75.9
Pastures (Grasslands)	75,535	75,381	75,146	19.1
Hayfields and meadows	14,635	14,635	14,635	100
Vineyards	1,690	1,690	1,690	100
Orchards	2,559	2,559	2,559	100
Non-agricultural, from which:	105,376	105,530	105,777	100.3
Forests	57,493	57,663	57,967	100.8
Waters	13,797	13,797	13,797	100
Roads and railways	8,396	8,396	8,396	100
Yards and constructions	11,623	11,612	11,601	99.8
Unproductive	14,067	14,062	14,016	99.6
Total	498,569	498,569	498,569	100

Analysing the land fund by the structure of usage categories in Botoșani County area, in the three studied years, could be observed various modifications regarding area dimensions from one year to another.

In agricultural sector a very significant share belongs to arable 75.9%. This makes that in the crop structure to be predominant cereals followed by sunflower and sugar beet. The great share of arable lands and the lack of mechanized equipments lead to a structure mainly focused on grains.

Almost always pastures and hayfields are overburdened by practicing an irrational grazing, lack of planning and improving works, overloading with animals at grazing,

all of these made that their productivity not to be at the level of possibilities.

Nevertheless must not be neglected the main contribution of those territories in the agricultural economy of the area, especially in animal husbandry.

Even if Botoșani County have a large area of arable land, this resource isn't efficient capitalized, efficiency being lower due to the following factors: exploitation of agricultural areas is realised on small plots due to fragmentation of land fund by passing into private ownership and also due to the lack of mechanization level; high level of poverty of the owners imply difficulties in crop growing and animal rearing and from here resulting the resting of areas; lack of capital for restructuring

and modernization of agriculture; instability and soil erosion due to failure of crop technologies and good agricultural environment practices; destruction of irrigation systems, which at the level of Botoșani County sum an area of 20,234 ha, which represent 6.7% from the county arable area. Very few agricultural units are specialized in tree

growing and viticulture, fact observed in the very few areas with these utilisation categories, under 1% from total land fund.

In according with the statistical data the arable area of Botoșani County in 2011 was equal with the one 2009, as could be observed in table 2.

Table 2 Situation of land fund between 2009-2011 (ha)

Nr.	Indicator	2009	From which		2011	From which		% 2011/2009
			Private sector	State sector		Private sector	State sector	
1	Arable total	298,762	297,487	1,276	298,762	297,507	1,255	100.0
2	Natural pasture	75,146	74,290	856	75,146	74,308	838	100.0
3	Natural hayfields	14,635	14,554	81	14,635	14,557	78	100.0
4	Vineyards total	1,690	1,690	-	1,690	1,690	-	100.0
5	From which bearing fruit	1,690	1,690	-	1,690	1,690	-	100.0
6	Orchards total	2,559	2,478	81	2,559	2,478	81	100.0
7	From which bearing fruit	2,486	2,405	81	2,486	2,045	81	100.0
8	Agricultural	392,792	390,498	2,294	392,792	390,540	2,252	100.0

Analysing the components of agricultural area between sectors, we observe a continuous decreasing of areas with agricultural crops for some components of it, in 2011 face to 2009, at state sector in favour of private sector.

Realised yields aimed exclusively the intensive side of the cultivated land, respectively agricultural land which deliver directly and immediately vegetal products, and global economic efficiency of land fund

aimed the intensive side of the whole land which is at the disposal of agricultural exploitations having in view both direct role and also the indirect one (animals and industrial equipments) of agricultural land and the indirect role of non-agricultural land (by building on these surfaces of facilities necessary in production process) to obtain various economical results, table 3.

Table 3 Evolution of total productions in Botoșani County (t)

Crop	2009	2011	% 2011 /2009
Cereals total	378,604	436,080	115.2
Wheat + Rye	8,375	17,466	208.5
Barley + Breweries	1,132	1,335	117.9
Oat	4,006	4,644	115.9
Maize grains	477,422	456,612	95.6
Beans	407	416	102.2
Sunflower	7,238	8,819	121.8
Sugar beat	16,650	11,449	68.8
Potatoes total	173,784	96,795	55.7
Vegetables (field + greenhouses)	119,997	116,280	96.9
Fodder plants	1,536,741	1,953,655	127.1

Total productions varied function of climatic conditions (especially due the prolonged droughts from the last years) and financial resources that had the agricultural producers.

Due to some problems such as: difficulties in making tillage after autumn crops, capitalization of agricultural exploitations, lack of tractors, unfavourable climatic

conditions, the total yields recorded significant decreases in 2011 face to 2009, at sugar beet, potatoes and maize crops or vegetables.

Regarding the evolution of husbandry sector from the analysis of the data presented in table 4 could be observed a decrease of flock of bovines, swine, equines and bees but an increase of sheep, goats and birds.

Table 4 Situation of animals' flock from Botoșani County

Nr	Indicator	2009	2011	2011 face to 2009	
				±	%
1	Bovines, total	117,044	116,638	-406	99.6
2	Swine, total	66,191	65,252	-939	98.6
3	Sheep, total	329,977	331,777	±1,800	100.5
4	Goats, total	18,433	19,544	±1,111	106.0
5	Birds, total	1,838,555	1,902,239	±63,684	103.5
6	Equines, total	40,314	38,170	-2,144	94.7
7	Bee families	26,265	26,190	-75	99.7

Low meat production could be explain, on one hand due to the low genetic potential of the breeds owned by small farmers, and on the other hand due to the existing inefficient technologies. A positive aspect of the analysed period is the continuous increase of mean milk production per animal and total production.

This improvement is due to the better maintenance conditions existent in the individual exploitations. As regarding the development of husbandry production, result the fact that cattle and swine were present in the majority of agricultural structures, for providing food for the family (table 5).

Table 5 Animal husbandry production in 2011

Botoșani County	Total	Private ownership
Bovine meat (tons, live weight)	17,730	17,681
Swine meat (tons, live weight)	7,408	7,367
Sheep and goat meat (tons, live weight)	2,332	2,332
Bird meat (tons, live weight)	9,402	9,402
Milk – total (thousands hl)	2,200	2,199
Cow and buffalo milk (thousands hl)	2,058	2,057
Wool– total (tons)	604	604
Eggs – total (millions)	249	249
Gathered honey (tons)	382	382

Cows herds and birds flocks are the basic component of productive capacity for development of agriculture, a main source of animal origin products used for family consumption or sometimes for obtaining some low incomes by capitalization of the excess of milk and eggs.

Agricultural potential of Botoșani County is considerable, due to the large agricultural areas and very good quality soils. Even if now this potential is under-capitalised, is provided that in future to become one of the most attractive bids of economic cooperation of Botoșani County for foreigner investors.

In Botoșani County agriculture is characterized by a dual structure for exploitation of agricultural areas: on one hand a large amount of households which have and work small areas of land, and on the other hand, quite a few number of agricultural exploitations with large dimensions, but which use almost half of the counties' agricultural area.

Regarding agricultural associations, organization of agricultural producers in

associative forms leads to new economical development opportunities by providing some local, area and regional advantages and utilisation of collective power aiming to increase the prosperity of members, their families and communities. In the last period of time, due to the concentration strategies or development ones, farmers from Botoșani County are forced to take a fundamental strategic decision, namely to choose how to act better in uncertain situations to realise viable agricultural exploitations, profitable, resistant in term of competition, with the market and efficiency in accessing financial funds.

As an alternative, farmers could realise different forms of associations, such as, cooperatives, producers groups and producers associations. People organize themselves in cooperatives to increase their incomes or economic position or to deliver a need service.

From the cooperatives which could be found in Botoșani County we mention: Association of Producers Group "Ieduța" and Producers Group "Unirea Agricultural Cooperative".

Producers group "Ieduța" Botoșani is the only association in county which is settled up by goat rearing farmers, the future goal being the realisation of a milk processing facility.

Association represent a modality to access funds because a group of producers have more chances to have an eligible funded project. For the beginning association wishes to built five processing units in villages Albești, Unțeni, Gorbănești, Răchiți, Corlăteni and possible at Vârfu Câmpului.

In Botoșani County the majority of families with small areas of land joined together in associations. The owners of agricultural lands understood that the best way forward is to group themselves in associative forms for land exploitation. Cooperation in the agriculture of Botoșani County proves to be one of the best solutions to recovery this economic branch. Because family associations and individual producers from Botoșani County depend on intermediaries for capitalization of products, takeover of this function by various forms of rural cooperation is an important goal in the process of organization of agricultural market. Necessity of cooperation in the field of supply, processing, storage and selling of agricultural products is the only pragmatic solution for sustaining and consolidating the individual agricultural structures.

CONCLUSIONS AND PROPOSALS

Situation of Botoșani County agriculture is the result of some historic, social and politic factors which have to possibility to offset and to quantify the factorial influences. Romania don't have the natural resources of the rich countries and nor the top managerial experience to create in a short period of time the most performing structures on the ensemble of agriculture.

It is important to adopt a prospect programme regarding future development of Botoșani County agriculture, according to the new PAC 2014-2020, which to take in account the economic effects provided by reform measures on a long term base.

Organization of agricultural exploitations must lead to transformation of different associative forms in viable economic units,

connected with a powerful cooperative sector on the agricultural products chain.

Also must be facilitate the exploitation process of the lands owned by elder landlords by the young and efficient farmers, through leasing, selling.

In vegetal production is imposed a better diversification and representation of crops, a better structure of them. Small owners with an exclusive agricultural work could increase their income by rearing animals.

Recovery of Botoșani County agriculture could be done only by applying of certain programmes which will lead to the decreasing of the number of agricultural exploitations for subsistence and their transformation in medium size agricultural exploitations. Solutions for a durable rural development must contain actual technical, juridical, financial elements for stimulating the sustainable and durable development.

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