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RESEARCHES ABOUT THE SITUATION OF THE IMPORT AND EXPORT OF FRUITS IN ROMANIA IN THE PERIOD 2007-2016

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Abstract: *Among the main factors that accentuate the decline of the fruit sector are the downward trend in the area of the fruit farms, their aggravated degree of aging, and the existence of many extensive farms. In addition, a generally valid problem at the agricultural level is the weak interest of young people in agricultural activities, as the National Rural Development Program 2014-2020 supports the measures created specifically for the fruit sector, but also to support farm holdings owned by young people.*

Keywords: *fruit, import, export*

Clasificare JEL: *Q17*

INTRODUCTION

The pedo-climatic conditions of Romania offer the possibility of cultivating many species of trees and shrubs, starting from the plain area, to areas with altitudes of about 1000 m. Nowadays, fruit consumption tends to ascend, in the context in which more and more health promotion is promoted, encouraging fruit and vegetable consumption, but still below the European average.

The situation of the fruit farms has suffered a drastic decrease, so that in the last 20 years Romania has become almost exclusively dependent on the fruits brought from the intra-Community and extra-community countries. At present, our country uses apples from Poland, Turkey pears, apricots and nectarines from Greece and Italy, mainly due to high production costs compared to low sales prices.

The ores that remained unsettled after the fall of communism and the restitution of land to the rightful owners are aging, morally exploited, and those who restituted them either did not invest in their maintenance or exploited them until exhaustion without any notable investment. It is thus that these orchards left in the cradle have become true outbreaks of infection for the rest of the orchards around them, and the burden of diseases and pests prevents other fruit growers from obtaining good quantitative and qualitative productions to compete in directly with imported fruit [1]. However, due to competition with products imported from other countries, fruit growers have begun to focus more and more on market niches, in the context in which the existing fruit farms in Romania, until now, mainly focused on plums and apple. At the same time, it should be mentioned that in the winter, exotic fruits, such as bananas or oranges, are highly consumed after by Romanian consumers.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research is based on the information obtained by analyzing the existing data on the area of the fruit plantations, the yields of the main fruit plantations, but especially the imports and exports both in terms of quantity and value which allow us to determine the evolution of the areas and productions in the period 2007-2016, in relation to the volume of imports and exports of fruits made in Romania. The information was collected from the INSSE and Trade Map databases and interpreted using the technical-economic analysis methods.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

For the relevance of the study, we will analyze the evolution of the areas cultivated with fruit trees in the 8 development regions of Romania, the evolution of total fruit production (1990-2015), import, export and trade balance of fruits and nuts (2007-2016).

Analyzing the evolution of the area planted with fruit trees in Romania between 1990 and 2015, we notice that it fell by 40% in 2015 when about 138,000 hectares were cultivated compared to the area cultivated in 1990 when more than 230 thousand hectares have been grown (Table 1).

Table no. 1.

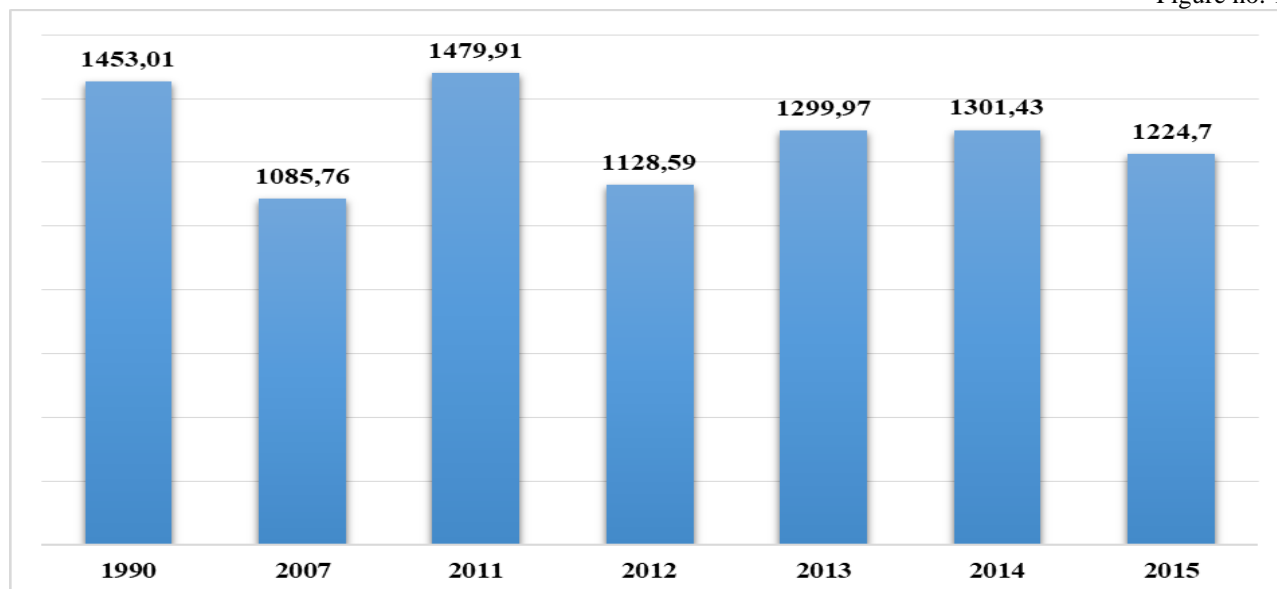
Evolution of the area planted with fruit trees in Romania during 1990 – 2015

Development regions	1990	2007	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2015/1990
	UM: Ha							%
TOTAL	230795	156002	140048	142242	147435	140820	138502	-40,0
Region NORD-VEST	40016	29620	23466	24696	26918	25895	25710	-35,8
Region CENTRU	14565	10078	9161	9381	10003	8940	8171	-43,9
Region NORD-EST	23163	16467	12949	13738	14475	13482	12750	-45,0
Region SUD-EST	22320	13038	14515	14292	14491	13910	13716	-38,5
Region SUD-MUNTENIA	54486	44532	41292	40895	42065	40353	40998	-25
Region BUCURESTI - ILFOV	2324	873	434	538	481	475	432	-81
Region SUD-VEST OLTENIA	48790	21884	26291	26151	27121	26049	25486	-48
Region VEST	25131	19510	11940	12551	11881	11716	11239	-55,3

Source: processed data INSSE, access 29.09.2017;

At the level of 2015, in the South-Muntenia region, the largest area with fruit trees of approximately 41,000 hectares was exploited, but still by 25% compared to the area cultivated in 1990. Also, the most pronounced decrease of the surface cultivated in the Bucharest Ilfov region where, if in 1990, an area of over 2300 hectares is exploited, in 2015 it reached only 432 hectares, this decrease being determined by the real estate flow recorded by this region, especially in the last 15 years (Table no.1).

Figure no. 1.

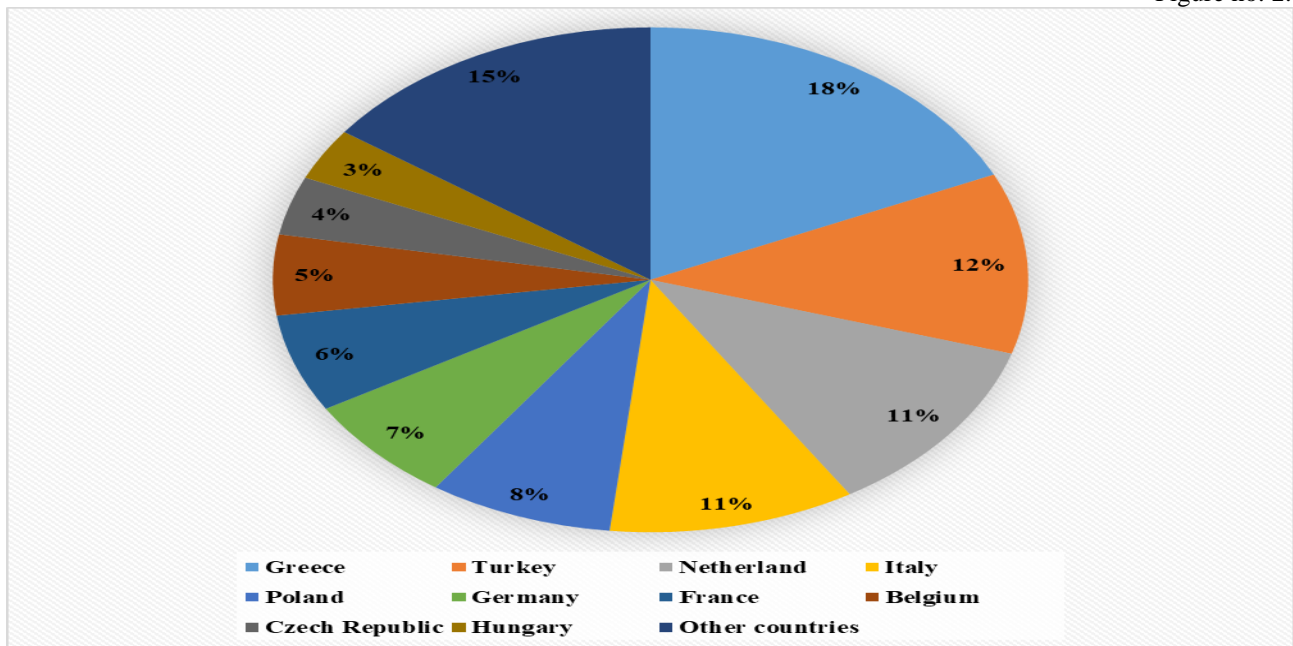


Source: processed data INSSE, access 29.09.2017;

The evolution of the total fruit production obtained in Romania between 1990 and 2015 (thousand tons)

Depending on the cultivated area (decreasing) and the aging of already existing and irreplaceable farms, there is also a decrease in fruit production, so that if in 1990 it was over 1.4 million tonnes in 2015 the production was 1.2 million tons, representing a decrease of 15.7% (Figure no.1).

Figure no. 2.



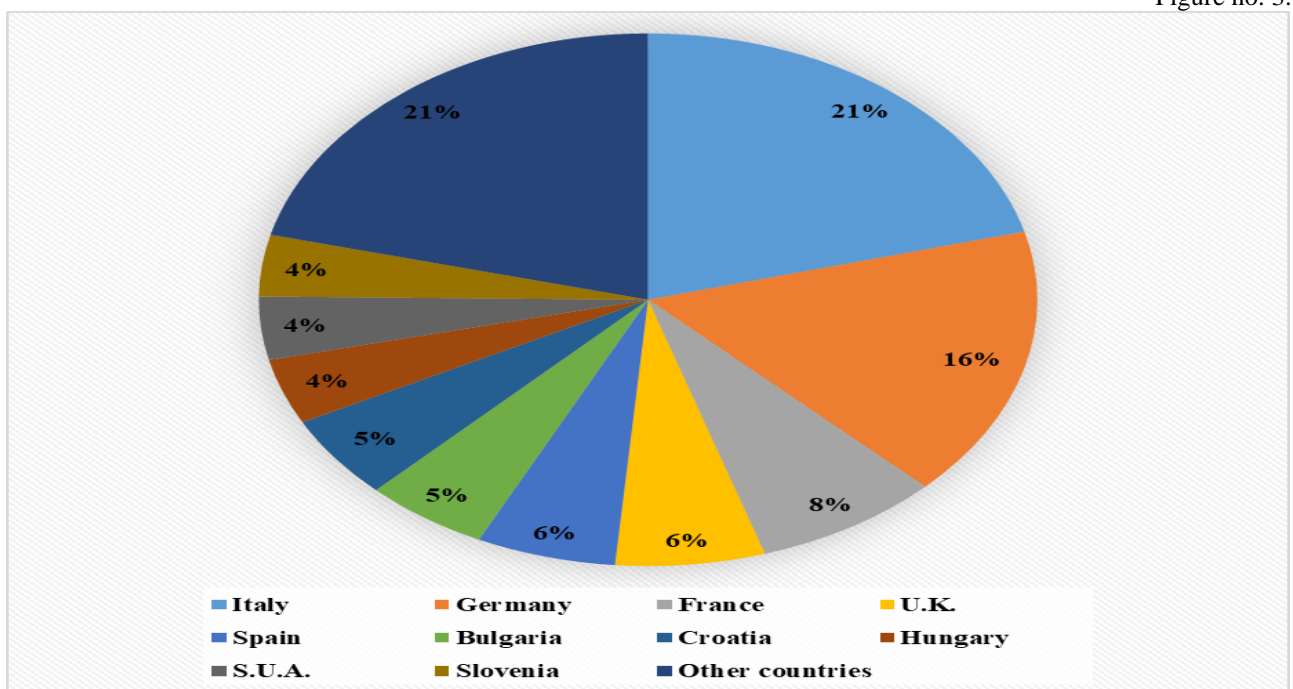
Source: processed data comtrade.un.org, access 27.09.2017;

Percentage distribution of fresh vegetables (value) exports in 2016

It is noteworthy that the evolution of the fruit imports has been on the rise since 2011, so that in the year 2016 in 2007 there is an increase of the import value by over 133%, taking into account the fact that in 2007 they reached a value of 241 million euros, while in 2016 they reached no less than 562 million euros (Figure no. 2).

In the year 2016, among the main countries from which Romania has imported fruits, Greece has an import value of over 120 million euros, up 172% compared to imports in 2007, followed by Turkey with 65.1 million of the euro, up 60% compared to 2007, as well as the Netherlands with imports of EUR 64 million (up 407% over 2007) (Figure no. 2).

Figure no. 3.



Source: processed data comtrade.un.org, access 27.09.2017;

Percentage distribution of fresh vegetable (value) imports in 2016

Concerning the export of fruit and nuts, there is an oscillating trend, so that in 2016 there was an export value of 52.7 million euro, 37.6% more than the value of exports at the year 2007, when they amounted to more than EUR 38.3 million (Figure no. 3).

At the level of 2016, among the main countries to which Romania exported fruit, there is Italy, which imported EUR 11 million (up 121% from the value imported in 2007), followed by Germany with 8, EUR 7 million (up 23% on value imported in 2007), but also France with a value of EUR 4 million in fruit imports (up by more than 1000% compared to value imported in 2007) (Figure no. 3.).

Table no. 2.

Evolution of the trade balance with fruit and nuts in Romania during 2007 – 2016

Country	2007	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2016/2007
	U.M: Mii Euro							%
Total	-202715	-113684	-159828	-214007	-247548	-395081	-510109	151,6
Italy	-21842	-13647	-29012	-21648	-23851	-41457	-48498	122,0
Germany	-1842	4179	-5304	-3307	-2887	-15669	-29707	1512,8
France	-244	911	-11598	-19956	-24360	-25513	-31180	12678,7
UK	-83	-135	-806	376	2133	985	2881	-3571,1
Spain	-6313	-3553	-4733	-2740	-3711	-11900	-13870	119,7
Bulgaria	-630	4278	1896	-2068	-5657	-8246	-4861	671,6
Croatia	1881	3458	4449	4477	3263	3514	2433	29,3
Hungary	-1258	-1217	-1972	-1887	-6951	-13400	-16611	1220,4
United States of America	-697	-792	285	-74	-202	-614	-896	28,6
Slovenia	765	-1198	264	-1095	546	-895	-2997	-491,8

Source: processed data comtrade.un.org, access 27.09.2017;

Concerning the trade balance, it presents a year-on-year deficit, so that the deficit in 2016 was 510 million, up 151% over the deficit in 2007 when it reached the value of EUR 202 million (Table no. 2).

However, at the level of 2016, Romania was among the largest trade deficits in the fruit category with countries like Italy (over EUR 48.4 million or France with over 31.1 million euro (Table no. 2.).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Due to the scarcely underused areas of fruit trees, the practice of the extensive system, as well as the aging degree of a significant part of the fruit farms, prevent significant production to cover the fruit requirements in Romania, referring to the products that can be obtained in our country taking into account the specific pedoclimatic conditions.

Accessing European funds to develop new orchards or replacing aged farms can be a solution that Romanian fruit producers (Sub-measure 4.1a - Investments in fruit holdings) still have, but the many problems related to bureaucracy or sources of co-financing prevents them from accessing these funds from the EU budget. Small and medium sized farms can access up to 900,000 euros if, through the investments, they will lead to an integrated food chain formed at the level of the holding, consisting of production, processing, marketing).

These funds can also be accessed in order to create storage, conditioning and processing facilities for fruits, a measure dedicated to this fruit sector (Sub-measure 4.2a - Investments in the processing / marketing of fruit-growing products), where the holdings small and medium sizes, can access up to EUR 1.1 million, where investments lead to an integrated food chain consisting of collection, storage, conditioning, processing and marketing.

Both sub-measure 4.1a - Investments in fruit holdings and sub-measure - 4.2a - Investments in the processing / marketing of products from the fruit sector are supported in particular by the associative forms, with additional scoring within the criteria selection.

At the same time, a major problem for agriculture is, in general, the weak interest of young people in agriculture, although measure 6.1 - Support for the installation of young farmers, through

which they can receive up to 50,000 Euros, can be accessed the development of the agricultural holding (including fruit trees) and for which they do not need co-financing.

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