

PARTICULARITIES OF ORGANIC PRODUCTS MARKET IN ROMANIA

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Abstract: : For Romania to be able to cope of the Europe structures exigences, it is necessary to adapt the food production to current quality standards, which meet the requirements of the buyer of organic products. Fertile and productive soils, chemical processing and technologies of which have not yet reached the levels of industrialized countries, the use of clean technologies, the possibility to define ecological perimeters, clean, to apply organic farming practices, increasing demand for organic products, organic farming that can become a source of employment in rural areas, are just some of the favorable conditions to obtain organic products in our country

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1. INTRODUCTION

Organic farming (bio farming) is a modern method of cultivating plants and raise animals without the use of fertilizers in the process, synthetic pesticides, hormones, antibiotics, stimulants and growth regulators and intensive livestock systems. BIO represents products containing less than 97% certified organic ingredients.

Organic products (food and non-food) are those which are composed of only organic ingredients from not genetically modified plants, which no other added chemicals such as pesticides, synthetic fertilizers, genetically modified organisms or have not been ionic radiation applied to optimize conservation.

The role of organic farming is to produce clean food, benefic for human body metabolism in full corelation with preservation and development environment, respect for nature and its laws.

Implementation of laws on organic production is observed by inspection and certification bodies issuing certificates organic. These control the production chain of

the product, from the inspection of the agricultural land to processes in which it obtain the final product.

Products of organic origin should not have traces of antibiotics or growth hormones. Plants should be grown on land that has not been applied to any chemical fertilizer (organic land), the harvested plant is subject of maceration without incurring chemical processes.

In the last phase, the plants must be packaged without the use of preservatives or other chemical substituents and must be certified by European body or worldwide accredited for this purpose.

All organic products are made from pure ingredients as nature left them without the intervention of food chemistry.

The line between natural and ecological products: products that are generally called natural are herbal. But plants that are part of natural products have not undergone biological processes in the growth process being used chemicals, the final product doesn't having bio-organic certifications required by law.

2. CHARACTERISTICS OF ORGANIC MARKET IN ROMANIA

The organic market in Romania is generated primarily by offer products on the market because the presence of products on the market awakens in fact, the interests of consumers. European market creation involves actually changing mentalities and lifestyles, work towards education and information, given that it is Romanian new products, products with special character.

The biggest problem of Romanian market for organic products is that there are processors. The raw material is exported Romanian products are manufactured abroad and return home four times more expensive.

Organic foods are more expensive than conventional (worldwide) due to the following reasons:

- ingredients used in the production are much more expensive and difficult to obtain;

- production takes time and requires specialized people;

- required a large labor force;

- the production must respect certain established standards to receive the certification;

- compared to conventional agriculture, in organic farming the beetles have collected by hand and plant diseases should be treated with tea;

- the most organic products are sold only in Bio stores;

- the ratio of production cost and price of the product.

Start of production requires a fairly long time, up to two years, in terms of the conversion period. More than this, the activity requires regular inspections of accredited inspection bodies and annual registration on MARD and the harvest is 20-50% lower than in traditional agriculture, but the export price for organic food may be two to three times higher. Also on the Romanian market, organic product range is quite limited, and most food is brought from abroad (canned vegetables, fruits, some bakery products).

The best selling organic products are milk, eggs, yogurts, fruits, vegetables, and charcuterie. Total sales of organic products in Romania reach about 10 million,

which represents 1% of the retail market and very little compared to 5-6%, as is the European average, according to representatives of the industry.

The demand for organic products has grown in Romania, as happened in the Czech Republic and Hungary after joined the EU.

Biological foods have a longer shelf life than regular food, they do not contain synthetic food additives - preservatives, coloring, speed, thickening agents,. Chemical preservatives are replaced with natural preservatives, lactic acid, for example. The lack of preservatives make salami, biological fermented milk altering faster. Organic charcuterie are better, their taste is natural. To preserve some foods are heat treated.

The main channels for the sale of organic products in Romania are:

- farmgate sales;
- seasonal sales markets;
- traditional retail;
- specialized stores;
- modern retail;
- hypermarkets, supermarkets, cash & carry;
- on line shops: www.rengali.ro; www.organikshop.ro (bio cosmetics); www.biomania.ro; - network marketing (Life Care); - vânzări prin bursa on-line pentru produsele ecologice (www.agricultura-ecologica.ro).

According to experts of the market in the next period, organic products sold in Romania will be sold in organic stores 60% , in supermarkets 30% and 10% in other stores. The main networks of stores that introduced organic products in the assortment and have arranged special spaces for them are: Carrefour, Cora, Gima, La Fourmi, Mega Image. The bestsellers organic products by organized commercial network are eggs and dairy products.

The consumption of organic products in Romania is under 1% of all food and is expected in the next 5 years will reach only 2%. This figure is explained by the higher prices of these products (to compensate for production losses versus conventional farming).

3. BENEFITS OF ORGANIC PRODUCTS

Organic products presents a series of benefits for consumers, producers and processors andfor the environment as follows:

- lack of chemicals, pollutants (pesticides, synthetic substances), that, after a long period of use, are harmful to our body and environment equally;
- nutritional quality: organic food containing up to 40% more antioxidants, a higher level of essential minerals such as iron and zinc, and an amount greater than ordinary food nutrient. Organic products are characterized by a high content of amino acids, vitamins and trace elements; protection of animals - extracts from animals and animal tests are prohibited in BIO cosmetics. Only animal derived ingredients (organic farming) are accepted (ingredients which do not affect animal health, ec: honey, eggs, milk, etc.),
- saving the environment - organic farming is a production that respects biodiversity and natural balance;
- biological cosmetic product is highly nutritious. It contains active ingredients important for our body with lasting effect.

4. GENERAL ASPECTS OF ORGANIC MARKET IN ROMANIA

The organic market in Romania is composed of: manufacturers; processors; exporters; importers; traders; stores.

Manufacturers:

There are about 3 million producers, most individuals and also producer companies: farmers - growers and breeders. They engaged in organic farming: crops of vegetables, fruits, grains, soy etc. animals and pastures.

If France is now the most important agricultural producer among the 27 Member States, Romania, thru the agricultural potential that it has, would be expected to compete it. The reason why eco-agriculture would be relatively easy to apply in Romania is just the poorest of farmers, who did not have enough resources to buy pesticides or chemical fertilizers.

Over 50% of organic Romanian production is exported.

Processors: much less numerous than producers (tens).

The main weakness of organic food industry at the moment is the processing, packaging and marketing. This handicap of industry is mainly determined by the high costs of industrial and packaging that it correspond to the standards of organic farming. Romania have an acute shortage of processors channeled in this field. The increasingly large demand and lack of processors in the country determines the organic product to follow the external routes, only a small part of the food of this type found its place in the internal market.

It processing:

- vegetable products - wheat, sunflower, corn, peas, soybeans, mushrooms, fruit (cherries, raspberries, blueberries, sea buckthorn, nuts etc).
- animal products - eggs, milk, meat;
- milk products - sheep cheese, cheese;
- bee products - honey, honeycomb, wax, propolis, pollen.

Some of processors Registered: LaDorna, Can Serv, radix, Deltanav, Apidava, Arfungo Comimpex, LTA World Petras Bio - which is the first trial of whole grain pasta and green in Romania.

Exporters: MARD list in 2007 were 37 exporters whose number, from then until now has increased significantly.

The majority of Romanian organic products exported are raw materials and often returns to the country as a finished product more expensive. Over 90% of production is exported BIO Romania. Berries, herbs, nuts, mushrooms, grains and honey are rated on the European market in countries such as Italy, Germany, Switzerland and the Netherlands. The quantity of products for export increases every year. Some exporters representative Romania: Dorna Lactate, Delta Organics, Apiprodex, Tremot Dobre and children.

Importers: fewer than exporters (only 14 MARD registered in 2007). Most products sold by health food stores come from imports, because in Romania can not talk now about a sustained production for this area.

The biggest problem of an importer is the distribution, have signed contracts with hypermarkets, creating online shops and stores. Investing in this type of business can start at several thousand euros and can reach 100,000 euros

Some importers name: Mega Image, Sano Vita, Nutrimold, Eco fruit, Apiprotex, Nature Land.

Retailers: many small traders, individuals, unorganized, many directions forest and several large companies are generally producers and processors. These stores sell the food and cosmetics for children, vegetables, fruits, meat and meat products, milk and dairy products, basic food, bread, juices, sweets and delicacies, beverages, pet food and ending with personal care and cosmetics, detergents and cleaning products.

5. ROMANIA'S FOREIGN TRADE WITH ORGANIC PRODUCTS

Lack of promotion strategies was the main problem faced by the domestic market in terms of organic products. Businesses with organic products seems not yet caught locally, local market amounting to a million euros annually. In contrast, exports are booming.

Currently, both international and national aims as organic food production is realized in the framework of sustainable farming systems, diversified, balanced and to safeguard natural resources and consumer health. Also, specialists consider the impact of the production of sustainable farming systems on the environment is minimal.

Practice shows that the products obtained in organic farming are almost always more expensive than the conventional products. However, it appears that more and more consumers are willing to offer a higher price on food, if they have quality and food safety guarantee. With about 10 years ago, organic food was quite hard to find - only in specialized shops and local markets. Currently, these products are found in almost all stores included in major retail chains. Also the range of organic food products offered on the market has diversified, so that consumers can currently supply and relatively easy with organic products. These are reasons to confirm that the market expanding consumption of organic products is a key factor in encouraging Romanian farmers to convert their systems to crops organic farming field.

Romania is already known as a country producing organic products, most, until a few years ago, was intended for export, 90-95%. The annual level of exports of organic products reached 100 million. In this regard, the experts in organic agriculture in our country believe that "Romanian agricultural entrepreneurs could become among the largest exporters of organic products in Europe", the natural potential of our country and the land being particularly conducive to achieving organic products with superior nutritional qualities. In achieving this goal, although natural conditions can reach target there are a number of impediments to the general lack of material resources and rural poverty.

Experts believe that, given the favorable natural conditions and agronomic, there is a chance to Romanian farmers can actively participate in the overall development of Romanian agriculture by reconsidering organic farming as an important source of income, and this opportunity should not be missed. To benefit from these opportunities requires that Romanian farmers who want to practice this type of agriculture to adopt specific technologies that are required for organic production rules and regulations and meet the requirements of the European Union for the products obtained to be competitive in foreign markets. Almost all Romanian organic products go to export because in Romania, there is a niche of consumers of such products.

The main Romanian organic products to be exported to the European market are low processing commodities: wheat, corn, sunflower, soy, honey, milk, pork cams, vegetables, herbs such as fennel seeds, anise, coriander and mustard oil, cold pressed oils, fruits and wild mushrooms, fruits for industrial processing, nuts, oilseeds etc..

A successful record our country to export organic products Swiss cheese and honey, which are certified to the EU market and high demand. Although there is an upward trend, market developments organic products for export are some unfavorable situations the current situation facing Romanian producers of these products. For example, the European market is "closed" for almost 1,600 Romanian producers of meat processing plants and milk. They will not have access to the European market with products they carry because they have not developed a restructuring program and not asked for specific periods of transition from conventional agriculture organic farming takes so as to meet the relevant Community rules. Restrictions imposed by European regulations relating organic agriculture are quite rigid because even if these units have drawn up in 2007 restructuring program, they can sell their products on the local market only, not on European.

Organic food market is not yet well developed in Romania, while in most European countries has a special scale, western consumers are followers of consumption of such products widely. A consumer motivation this habit may be that people in developed countries are much better informed in this respect and high income per capita. High prices of organic products makes consumer access in Romania on such products to be quite limited compared to consumers in EU countries.

In Romania there is major confusion among consumers about organic products, however, it appears that Romanians demand for such products is growing. To outline a clear conclusion in this respect there is yet sufficient information. For example, it is difficult to quantify the consumption of natural products if we refer to the manufacturers in small individual holdings that produce almost exclusively for consumption.

Previous statement concerning consumer confusion about organic products, is strengthened by a series of confusions created by traders. Thus, in some stores, stands for "green products" are just substitutes for commodities (eg meat substitutes, milk, eggs, coffee, etc.). For this reason we can say that this is not the goal of organic agriculture, because some of these products are more expensive, less tasty and less nutritious than traditional products. We believe this is a major influence consumer choice in the West and the Romanian market could be much better stocked with local organic products, superior quality.

Significant quantities of all domestic organic products, but also processed products into Italy, Greece, Germany, France, Switzerland and the Netherlands.

The most popular export products are cereals, sunflower, soybean oil, sunflower, vines and wine, mushrooms, herbs, honey, processed milk products, canned vegetables. Local organic producers find foreign customers participating in international fairs where they can connect with each other and sign contracts of intent. Hence to export there is only one step.

Although the number of processors increases, Romania still has much invested in this chapter because we have no unity and meat slaughter animals reared organically. The chickens are bred eco yet only eggs and cows, sheep, goats and

buffaloes for milk. Bred animals i bio system are sacrificed and is valorified as conventional. We have bio slaughterhouses and bio processing lines. Food safety and hygiene requirements are very high in the classic too, requiring massive investment. In bio system these are higher.

By the number of producers Suceava County leads the top "green" in Romania, according to the Ministry of Agriculture, following Mures, Bacau, Tulcea, Sibiu, Bihor county; Arad and Teleorman. The area under organic system, first place is occupied followed by Virginia Tulcea, Constanta, Timis and Arad counties in the latter two being involved in organic farming more foreign investors.

5. CONCLUSIONS

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