

ASPECTS REGARDING SUPPLY CHAINS IN ECOLOGICAL PRODUCTS MARKET

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Abstract: *Ecological agriculture represents one of the farming systems from our country that gains more and more ground lately, as a proof standing the land surfaces cultivated. In order to cultivate in ecological system and in order to label the products with "ea" must be completed certain conditions regarding the production, processing, labelling, selling. In the present paper, we will analyse the evolution of certified operators in ecological agriculture depending on the place in supply chain, respectively the producer, processor, seller. But some ecological products that are sold in our country may come from abroad and that's why, we will analyse also the ecological products importers.*

Key words: *ecological agriculture, product, supply chain, operators*

INTRODUCTION

Our country aligned lately to the newest tendencies regarding the ecological agriculture and so we can notice a dynamics of the numbers of actors from ecological farming.

Ecological agriculture is one of the healthiest and strongest systems in agriculture today and it is expected to continue to grow and to play a larger part in feeding the world [1,4].

Respecting the principles of ecological agriculture as "food production should be ecological in both origin and destiny" we considered welcomed an analysis of the supply chain in ecological products market [5,15].

Ecological agriculture delivers equally or more nutritious foods than conventional agriculture and these foods contain less or no pesticide residues, and also they come with greater social benefits than the conventional ones [2,6].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

To highlight the situation present in the supply chain in ecological agriculture we conducted a diagnostic analysis based mainly on statistical data from Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. The research carried out is focused on the certified producers, processors, sellers, importers and exporters from ecological agriculture.

RESEARCH RESULTS

In 2013 the total surface for ecological agriculture, more precisely 310,148 ha, represented only 2.06% from total surface for agriculture at national level. In a relative short period of time, only 3 years, the surface designated to ecological agriculture decreased to 226,309 ha as it can be observed in figure 1[9].

The evolution of the total surface for ecological agriculture is not accompanied by the similar evolution of the number of operators from ecological agriculture. So, regarding the numbers of operators the year 2012 represents the top point of the number of the operators registered, with over 15,000 operators, but after this year the tendency was for decrease but not in the same rhythm as the surface. There were registered only 7315 operators in 2017, meaning almost half of year 2012.

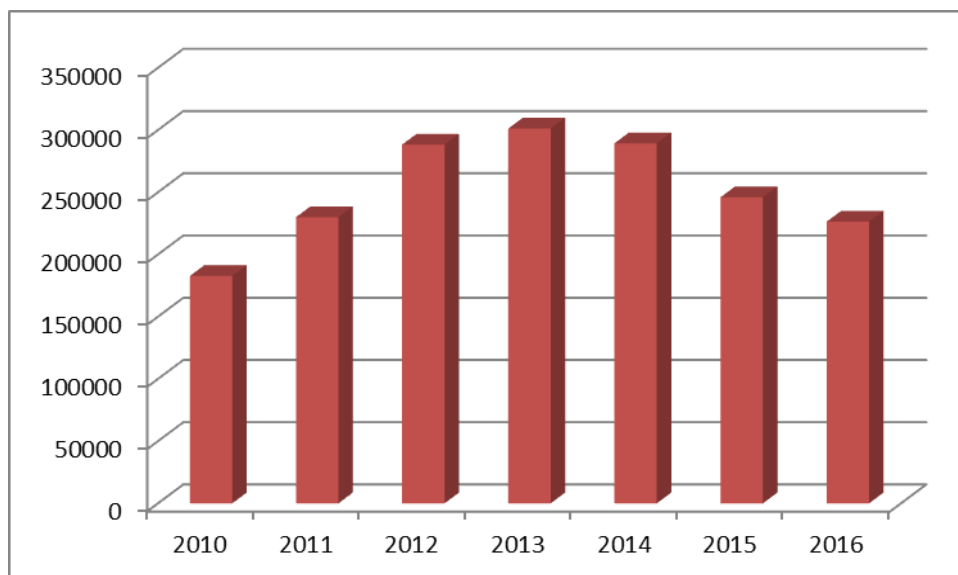


Figure 1. The evolution of total surface in ecological agriculture

Source: *Dinamica operatorilor si a suprafetelor din agricultura ecologica, 2018*

From 201- till 2012 the number of operators known a strong increase starting from 3,155 in 2010 and reaching 15,544 in 2012, and this increase was followed by a low decrease of the number of operators in the following years, as it can be noticed in figure 2 [3].

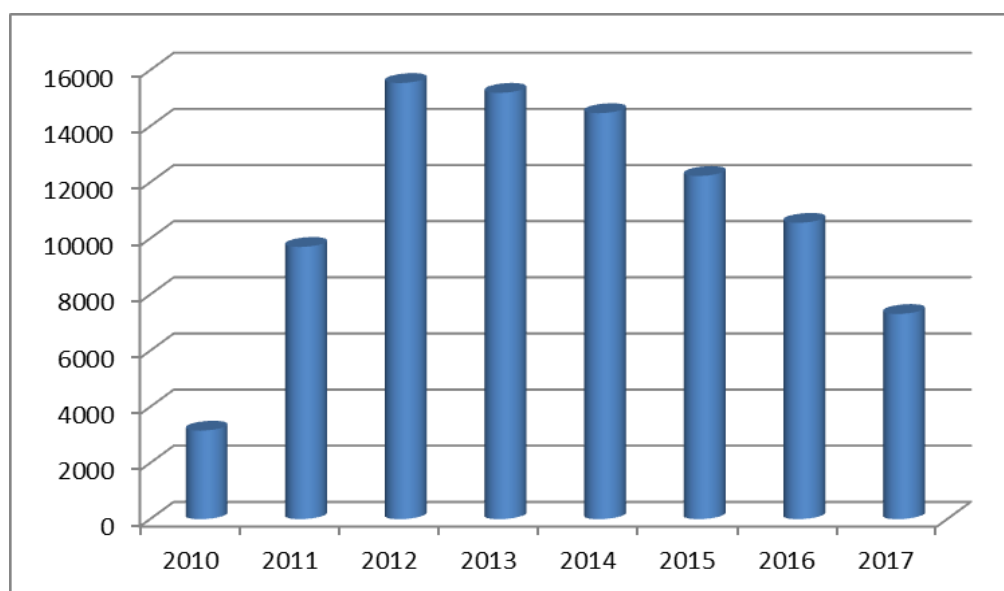


Figure 2. The evolution of number of operators in ecological agriculture

Source: *Dinamica operatorilor si a suprafetelor din agricultura ecologica, 2018*

In order to realise a more detailed image over regarding the operators from ecological agriculture, there must take in consideration the producers, the processors, the sellers, the importers and the exporters from this field.

There were only 2 importers certified in ecological agriculture in the year 2016, while in the year 2017 their number reached to 10.

Also, a similar situation was met in the exporters' case, but here the increase was only from 3 exporters in 2016 to 4 in 2017, accordingly to data supplied by Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. There is a huge gap between the number of exporters

and the number of producers, and without the data referring to the domestic consumption of ecological products and the quantities for export; it is hard to say if the gap is due to the preference for domestic consumption or to the dimension of the exports.

The highest dynamics was noticed in the case of the producers certified in ecological agriculture. The producers must follow a strict process on the all process in order to assure the product traceability and to obtain and sell ecological products labelled “ae”[13,14]. There are provisions at European Union level regarding the labelling of products obtained from ecological agriculture, established by the Council Regulation (CE) no. 834/2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products and Commission Regulation (EC) No 889/2008 of 5 September 2008 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products with regard to organic production, labelling and control and which are very sharp and they aim to support the customer’s full trust in ecological products, as products obtained and certified accordingly to strict rule of production, processing, inspection and certification [7,8].

Before to be allowed to obtain and sell products with the mention “ecological product”, the agricultural exploitation must follow a conversion period of minimum two years [12].

The period 2016-2017 brought a decrease in the number of producers certified in ecological agriculture, as it can be observed from table 1. At country level, in 16 counties the number of producers was lower in the year 2017 in comparison with the year 2016, and this decrease was retrieved in the total number of the certified producers. The factors that determined these farmers orientation towards other farming systems are various and they cannot be quantified at national level.

Table 1.

The evolution of producers certified in ecological agriculture

County	Year		County	Year	
	2016	2017		2016	2017
Alba	1897	682	Harghita	217	220
Argeș	22	61	Hunedoara	445	163
Arad	107	137	Ialomița	52	34
București	87	90	Ilfov	14	14
Bacău	100	109	Iași	562	311
Bihor	216	212	Maramureș	326	249
Bistrița-Năsăud	513	351	Mehedinți	15	16
Brăila	22	40	Mureș	332	285
Botoșani	163	166	Neamț	42	55
Brașov	315	288	Olt	14	23
Buzău	50	72	Prahova	28	39
Cluj	560	434	Satu Mare	640	704
Călărași	37	36	Sălaj	556	528
Caraș	526	395	Sibiu	57	74
Constanța	97	119	Suceava	875	216
Covasna	173	128	Teleorman	51	55
Dâmbovița	23	31	Timiș	110	150
Dolj	58	60	Vâlcea	13	37
Gorj	12	10	Vrancea	46	50
Galați	73	110	Vaslui	36	48
Giurgiu	39	34	Total	9693	7095

Source: Operatori certificați în agricultură ecologică, 2018 [10,11]

Because Romania is divided in development regions and today the politics and the support measures are based on this structure, there was taken in consideration the

evolution of producers at development region level, as in figure 3. For the period 2016-2017 the largest variation of the dynamics index of producers' number was noticed in South region and South-West, while in the region North-West and București was the lowest variation of the number.

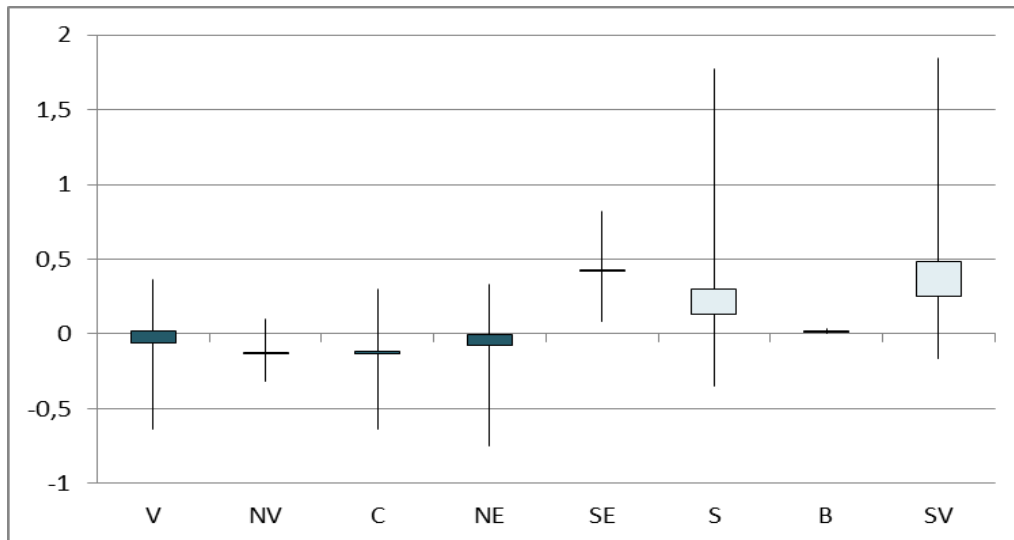


Figure 3. The evolution of producers' number on regional development regions

Referring to the certified processors from ecological agriculture remained constant in the analyzed period, being very low in comparison with the number of certified producers. Unfortunately, between the processing capacity and the production capacity is a big gap being necessary supporting measures for processors and also for producers in the sight of an integrated approach of the ecological production.

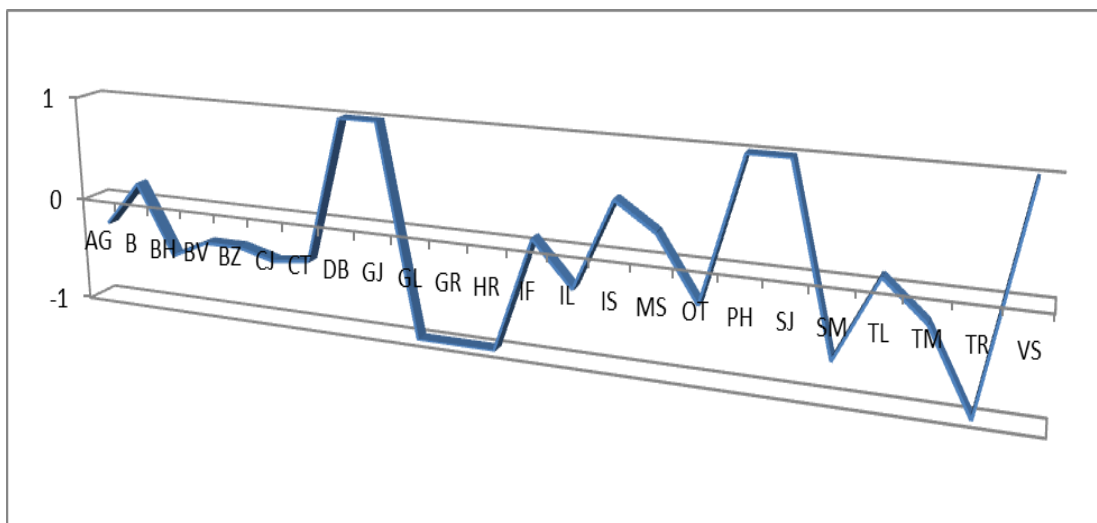


Figure 4. The evolution of the dynamics index of sellers

The evolution of the sellers certified in ecological agriculture in period 2016-2017 registered only small variations, and there can be observed from figure 4 only in almost half of the counties from Romania there were positive or negative variations,. But following the general trends in ecological agriculture, the number of the certified sellers reduced from 196 in 2016 to 193 in 2017.

CONCLUSIONS

At national level, the surface for ecological agriculture is decreasing, due to the fact that farms choose for other farming systems and maybe due to the consumers' attitude towards certified ecological products.

Simultaneous with the surface decrease, there was registered also a regression regarding the number of the certified producers. The changes in the production field are determined by the situation from processors field, in our country being only few certified processors. The same situation is also met on the supply chain, as it can be observed if we move our attention on seller, importers and exporters, their number being very low.

The ecological agriculture may represent a niche for farmers because at European Union level, but not only, the demand for ecological product is increasing [3]. But in order to have access to the market, the all supply chain must be developed accordingly.

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