

ROMANIA'S COMMERCIAL PARTNERS IN CORN AND WHEAT TRADE

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Abstract: Romania is an important agricultural producer in the Eastern European region and has commercial partners in the corn and wheat trade both within the European Union and outside of it, for example from the Balkan region, the Middle East, North Africa and Asia. The paper presents the main importers and exporters of corn and wheat worldwide, in terms of quantity, as well as Romania's quantitative exports for this categories, for the period 2017-2021. At the same time, Romania's main partners and its position in grain trade are highlighted. The applied methodology contains a statistical analysis of trade quantities, based on data series provided by the International Trade Center. The results of the study show that our country had positive developments in terms of corn and wheat exports. Thus, in 2021, Romania occupied the 5th place in the list of corn exporters worldwide and the 9th place in the list of wheat exporters worldwide - in terms of quantity.

Key words: corn, exports, imports, Romania, trade, wheat

INTRODUCTION

Over time, the global production of cereals has increased and diversified through the major contribution of two factors: the increase in the areas cultivated with cereals and the technological progress highlighted by the increase in productivity per surface unit [3].

An important aspect is represented by the fact that in the European Union the cereal sector is one of the best represented sectors related to the agro-food industry, which was evident through a constant expansion [15].

It must be noted that Romania is one of the countries of the European Union, which offers favorable climatic conditions for growing food. This is one of the reasons why agriculture is an essential element of the Romanian economy [5]. Cereal cultivation is especially important to Romanians as it provides part of the food for humans and animals [8,13,14].

But in the near future, Romanian farmers will have to face the effects of climate change, and it is expected that the most affected species will be cereal crops and pastures. Thus, they will have to grow cereal varieties with tolerance to high temperatures and water stress and apply agricultural technologies that conserve water in the soil. [6].

Since significant grain productions were obtained, they had a double destination, such as: to cover a significant part of internal demand and for intra- and extra-community trade. The most representative cereals exported by Romania are corn and wheat [7, 11, 12].

In 2018, wheat was the most exported agri-food product, representing 16.1% of Romania's total exports. 5,886 million tons of wheat were exported for which 1,037 billion euros were collected. Also in 2018, corn was the second exported product (4,680 million tons), bringing in revenues of 869.3 million euros [1].

Another example in this regard is represented by the fact that, in 2019, the share of wheat and rye exports from the total resources was approximately 54%, and in 2020, it was 53%. Regarding corn, export represented 37.6% of the total corn resources (2019) and 46.6% in 2020. According to official statistical data for 2021, it was highlighted that 82.9% of the amount of corn and 82.6% of the amount of wheat that were traded on the foreign market had national origin [2, 9].

In 2021, Romania ranked first in the European Union in terms of both the cultivated area and the corn production achieved. In terms of wheat, Romania ranked fourth in the European Union, in the ranking of growers and producers [10].

In this context, the article will highlight Romania's quantitative imports and exports of wheat and corn, as well as the main commercial partners of our country - the states where Romanian cereals arrive and from where they come from.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The world grain trade was analyzed, highlighting the main importers and exporters of corn and wheat and the position occupied by Romania in this ranking was identified. Romania's main partners were highlighted and 2017–2021 is the period covered by the study.

The bibliographic method was used. The analyzed indicators, which were processed based on statistical data obtained from the International Trade Centre (ITC) website, were:

- the quantities of corn and wheat exported and imported by Romania,
- the quantities of corn and wheat exported and imported by the main partners of Romania in the trade for these grains.

The statistical data were processed and then represented graphically or in tables.

RESEARCH RESULTS

At global level, the main exporter of corn is the USA, which recorded in 2021 a quantity of 70,042,258 tons and was followed by Argentina, with approximately half of the quantity of the first country in the ranking, and Ukraine – 24,539,481 tons (Fig. 1).

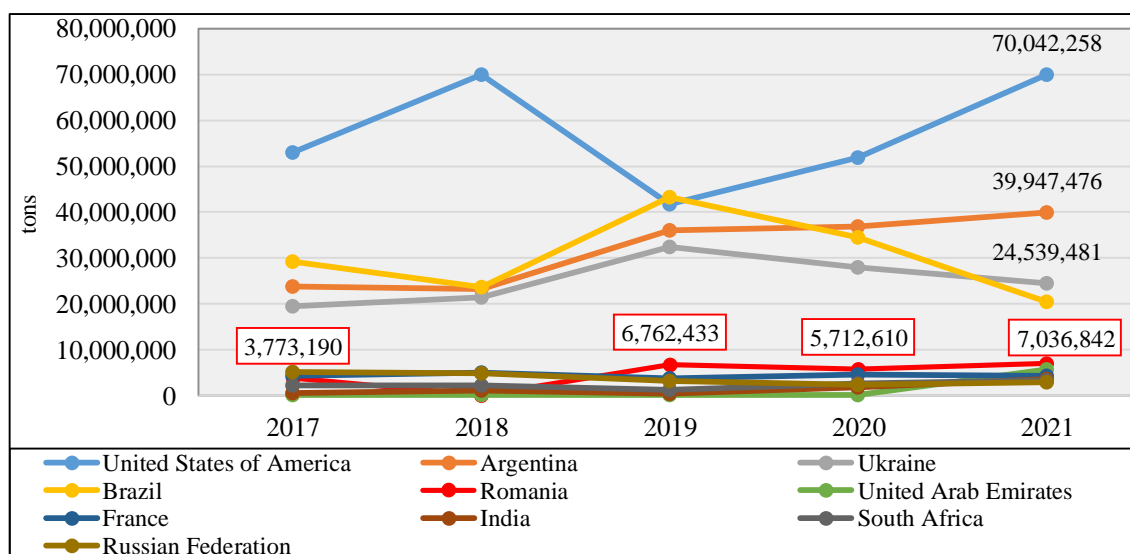


Figure 1. Main corn exporters worldwide (tons)

* For the year 2018, the data are unavailable

Source: own representation after [4]

Romania took an honorable 5th place, being the second European state and the first in the European Union in the top of the world corn exporters, with 7,036,842 tons in 2021 and an increase of 186.5%, compared to 2017.

The commercial partners, who imported corn from Romania, are presented in figure 2. Summing up the year 2021, we find that the largest quantity was imported by Spain - 1,376,724 tons of corn, followed by Iran - 1,288,245 tons and Egypt - 597,287 tons. We note that the list of Romanian corn importers contains countries from Europe, Asia and Africa.

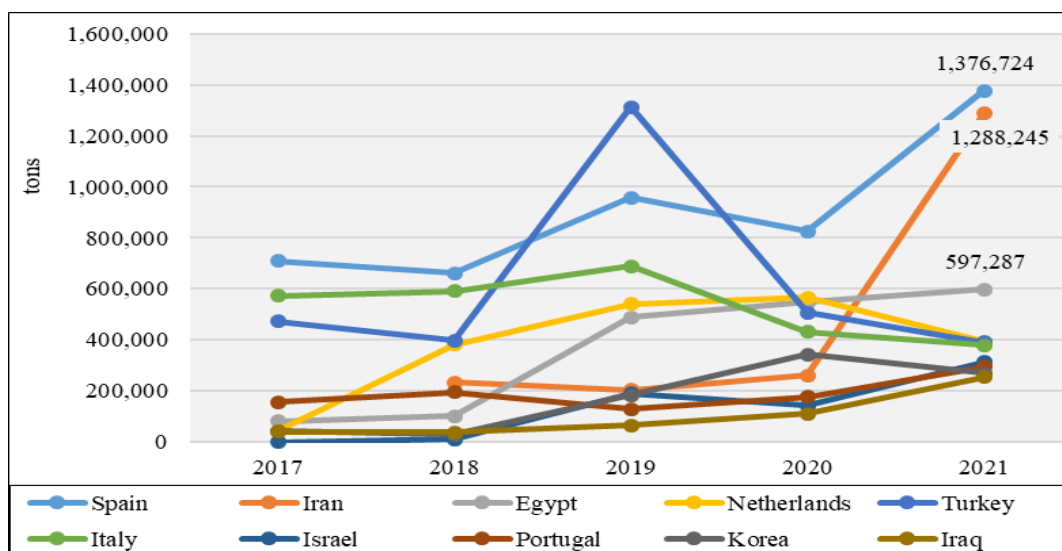


Figure 2. Main countries that import corn from Romania (tons)

Source: own representation after [4]

In general, the quantities imported by the main partners in the corn trade increased during 2017-2021, but there are also exceptions: Netherlands, Turkey, Italy and Korea.

The main exporters of wheat for the analyzed period can be found in figure 3. The Russian Federation (27,366,371 tons), Australia (26,176,094 tons) and the United States (24,014,798 tons) occupied the first 3 positions, and Romania took the 9th place, with 6,941,076 tons.

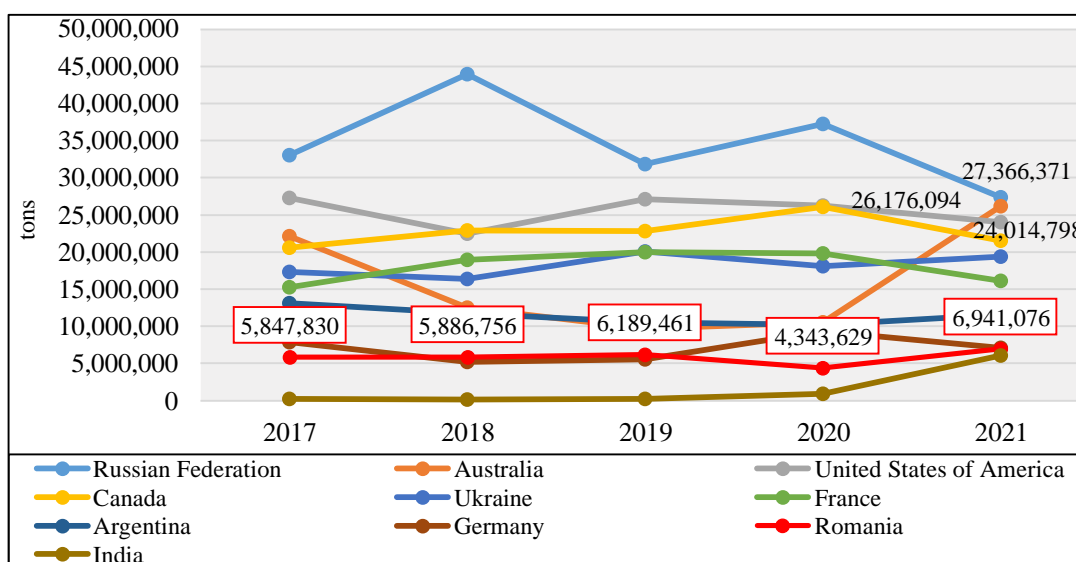


Figure 3. Main wheat exporters worldwide (tons)

Source: own representation after [4]

Romania's quantitative wheat exports increased in 2021 by 118.69% compared to 2017. At the same time, Romania was the 3rd country in the European Union, after France (6th place worldwide) and Germany (8th place worldwide), in the top wheat exporters.

Figure 4 shows the states that imported wheat from Romania, states that come from Asia, Africa and Europe. In 2021, the largest amount of wheat was purchased by Egypt, 2,019,000 tons, followed by Jordan (658,477 tons) and Korea (431,358 tons).

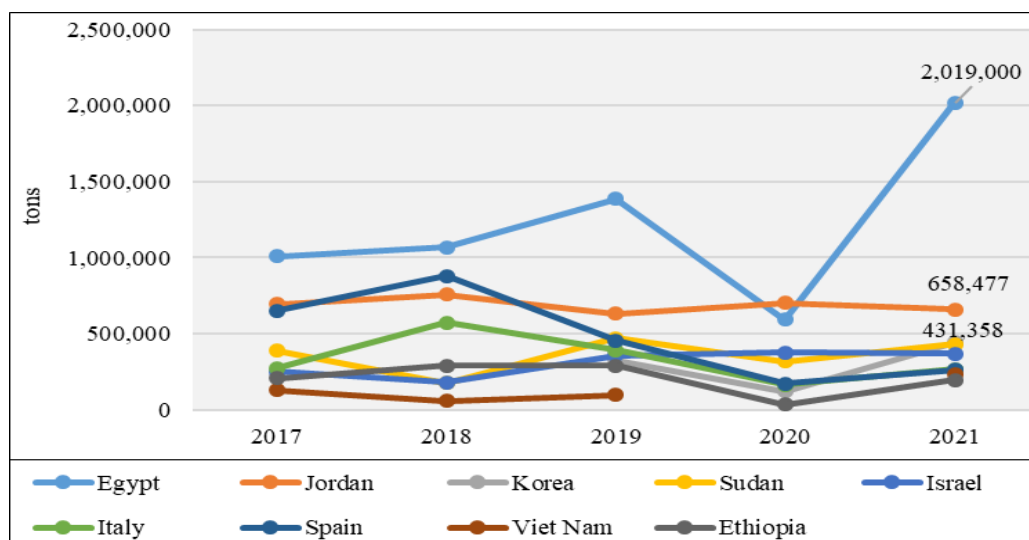


Figure 4. The main countries that import wheat from Romania (tons)

Source: own representation after [4]

Romanian wheat imports fluctuated between 2017-2021 and generally decreased in 2021 compared to 2017. Egypt, Korea, Sudan and Israel recorded increases.

The analysis of data on world corn imports (Figure 5) indicated that Trinidad and Tobago was in 2021, on the first place in the top importers, with 83,433,259 tons. In second place was China, with about a quarter of the amount of corn imported by Trinidad and Tobago and Japan – 15,239,624 tons.

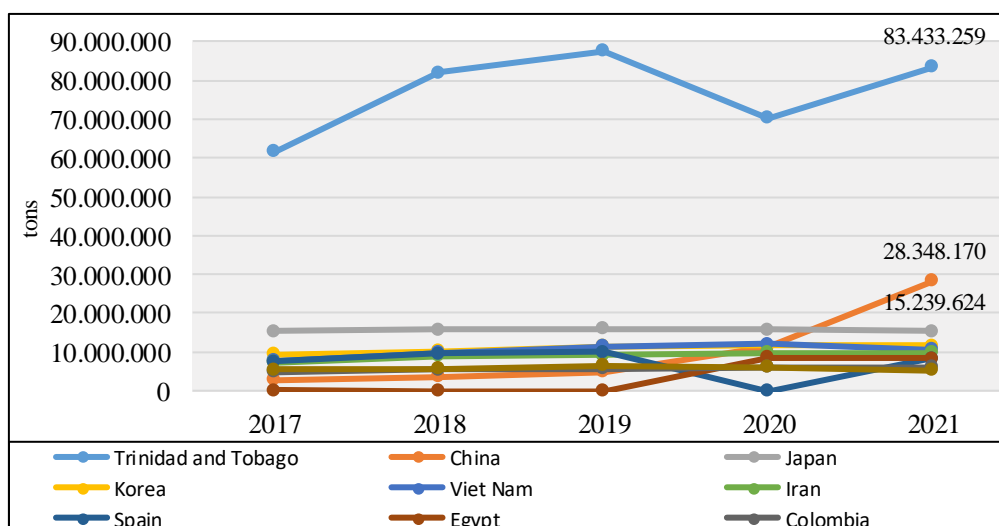


Figure 5. Main corn importers worldwide (tons)

Source: own representation after [4]

Among the EU member states, the presence of Spain stood out, being ranked 7th.

Romania, an important corn exporter, was not in the top 10 corn importers and, according to the data available on the ITC website [4], occupied the 199th position in 2020, with 1,338,839 tons (Figure 6).

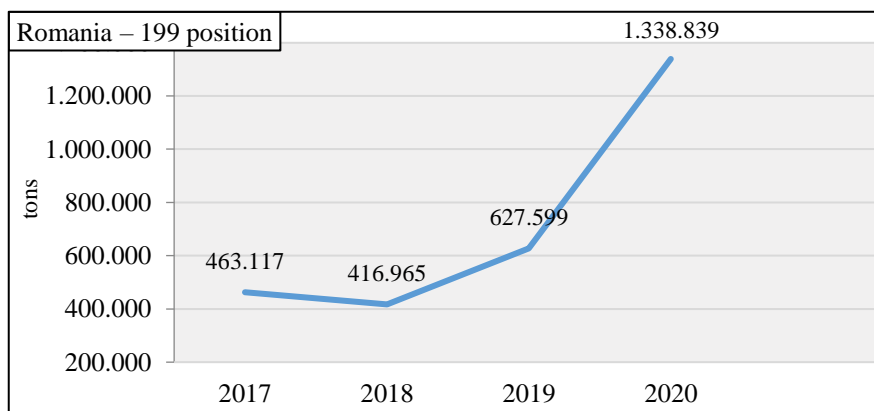


Figure 6. Romania's place in the top main corn importers worldwide (tons)

Source: own representation after [4]

In the period under analysis, Romania's corn imports increased by 289.09% in 2020, compared to 2017, in parallel with the increase in exports. Romania imported corn from neighboring states (Hungary, Bulgaria, Republic of Moldova and Serbia) and from other EU member states (Croatia, Slovakia, France and Germany) – Figure 7.

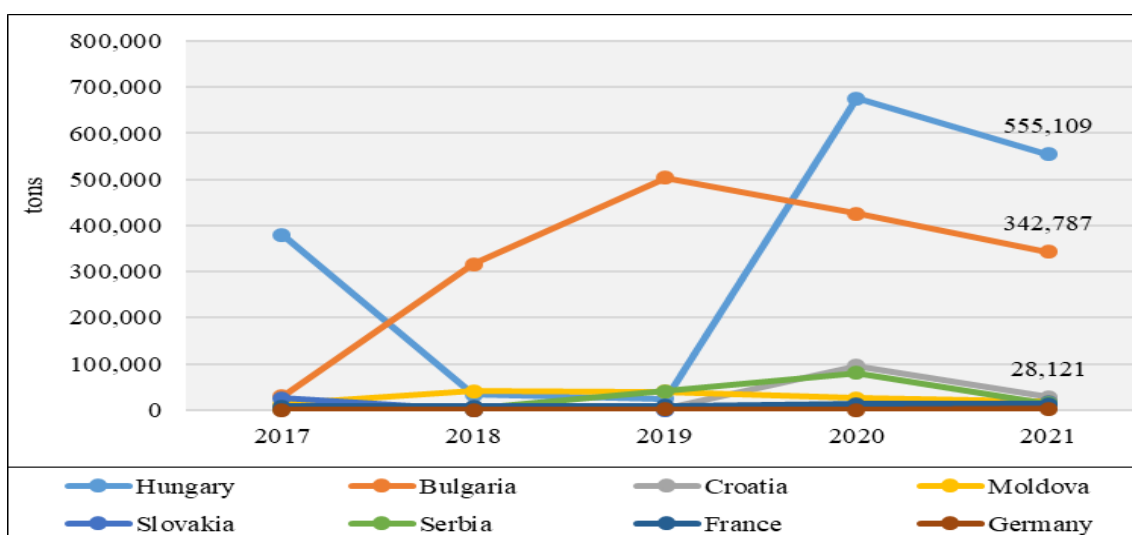


Figure 7. Main countries from which Romania imports corn (tons)

Source: own representation after [4]

Hungary and Bulgaria were Romania's most important partners in corn imports, from which it purchased, in 2021 - 555,109 tons and 342,787 tons, respectively. The quantities imported from the other states were below 30,000 tons.

Regarding the world importers of corn (Table 1), Burkina Faso and Trinidad and Tobago held the first 2 places with 199,012,216 tons and 116,599,104 tons, respectively. They were followed by Indonesia, China and Turkey. On the 6th place was a state from the EU, Italy.

Table 1.

Main wheat importers worldwide (tons)

Place	Country	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
1	Burkina Faso	159,605	150,829	132,741	149,874,175	199,012,216
2	Trinidad and Tobago	120,975,707	112,106,309	112,712,587	108,145,384	116,599,104
3	Indonesia	11,434,134	10,096,299	10,692,978	10,299,699	11,481,354
4	China	4,296,486	2,876,127	3,204,806	8,151,217	9,711,384
5	Türkiye	4,990,864	5,781,059	10,008,146	9,659,191	8,877,309
6	Italy	7,430,202	7,453,384	7,368,558	-	7,298,494
7	Bangladesh	6,639,761	4,839,307	6,879,079	6,027,570	7,152,727
8	Republic Islamic of Iran	73,862	360	548,621	3,284,650	7,075,228
9	Brazil	6,022,221	6,817,138	6,575,607	6,159,925	6,225,072
10	Philippines	5,294,054	6,695,010	6,647,558	6,138,664	6,036,242
...
186	Romania	1,249,985	695,333	880,290	-	-

Source: [4]

* For the years 2020 and 2021 data is unavailable

ITC [4] presented for Romania only valid data for the period 2017-2019, which indicated a decrease in wheat imports by 70.42%.

Figure 8 shows the states from which our country imported wheat. We can see that they are roughly the same partners as in the case of corn imports, more specifically neighboring countries and EU member states.

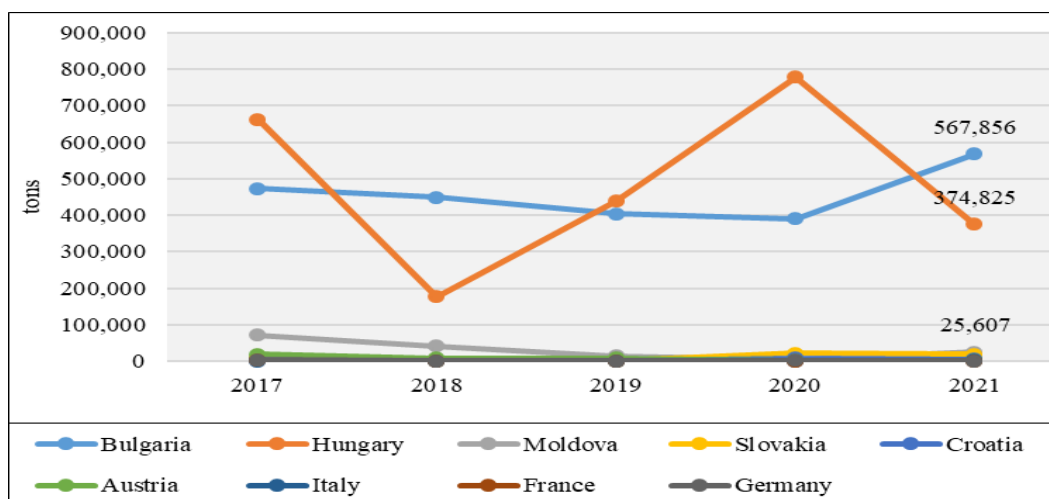


Figure 8. Main countries from which Romania imports wheat (tons)

Source: own representation after [4]

As in the case of corn, Bulgaria and Hungary were the main partners from which Romania imported wheat. While the quantities imported from Hungary decreased, Bulgaria recorded an increase in wheat exports to Romania. The quantities of wheat imported from the other trading partners were below 30,000 tons.

CONCLUSIONS

Following the analysis of Romania's main commercial partners in corn and wheat trade for the period 2017-2021, the following conclusions were drawn:

- Romania, worldwide, was ranked 5th in the list of corn exporters - in 2021;
- The largest amount of corn exported by Romania was 7,036,842 tons (2021)
- The main destination countries for domestic corn exports were: Spain, Iran, Egypt, Holland, Turkey and Italy;
- In 2021, Romania was ranked 9th in the ranking of registered exporters worldwide for the "Wheat" category;
- The largest amount of wheat exported by Romania was in 2021 (6,941,076 tons);
- The main destination countries for Romanian wheat exports were: Egypt, Jordan, Korea, Sudan, Israel and Italy;
- Romania's partner countries for the import of corn were: Bulgaria, Hungary, Moldova, Slovakia, Croatia and Austria;
- Romania was ranked 186th in the list of wheat importers worldwide and 199th in the list of corn importers.

It is important to note that Romania's trading partners in the corn and wheat trade may vary from year to year depending on fluctuations in demand and supply on international markets, as well as factors such as prices, climatic conditions and agricultural policy.

In the medium and long term, Romania will represent an important actor on the grain market, especially at the level of the European Union, with the condition of making substantial investments both in the infrastructure, and in order to build modern warehouses for the cereals that will be sold on the foreign market.

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