

STUDY REGARDING THE TENDENCIES OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOR AT NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEVEL

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Abstract: Following the result of some research at national level, it has been noticed that over the last two decades, more than half of the budget of a Romanian family has been spent on food, the number of calories needed within the normal effort limits to be consumed are 2700 calories. At local level (Timiș County) there was a relatively high percentage of the population, whose eating behavior is unhealthy, due to an increased supply of additives consumed through different foods.

Key words: consumers, trends, Western Region, Romania

INTRODUCTION

Our country is a European country, and presents a historical good regarding its resources, so that the climatic conditions and the relief of our country have always been favorable for ensuring the main food needs of the population [2,7,10]. But there are several factors [3,11, 14] that influence the eating behavior of Romanians, which often leads to the adoption of a life style that is not really healthy. Among these factors we mention:

- Higher food prices, which increases the share of food costs in total family consumption costs;
- Consumption of products that are apparently cheaper and nourishing, mainly potatoes and products based on cereals, which increases the risk of developing diseases such as diabetes [1,5,13];
- Consumption in excessive quantities of high-fat products, alcoholic drinks and products based on tobacco, resulting a serious of illness or exclusion from the social group due to the created vices [4,6,9];
- A small number of markets where products are marketed directly from the producer, domestic and organic products;
- Consuming very large quantities of processed food, semi-prepared foods or vegetable products grown in an intensive or super intensive production system having a very high content of harmful substances [8,12,15].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In order to accomplish this scientific work, studies have been conducted regarding the changes that have taken place in the field of food consumption over a certain period of time, both at national and regional level, meaning at the level of the western region.

RESEARCH RESULTS

As a result of studies carried out among the inhabitants of our country, it can be noticed that in recent years more than half of the budget of a Romanian family has been spent on food. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), FAO, considers that in Romania, because of the temperate climate, the number of calories needed to be consumed within the normal limits of efforts is 2700 calories. The average calories

consumed in our country was very close to FAO standards, but slightly higher in the period 2002-2007, with problems encountered by families with children.

Between 1991 and 2005, grain consumption at national level has increased slightly, potatoes have doubled, the consumption of livestock products, mainly meat, has been drastically reduced, due to the low budget of the population, much of it being designated for the payment of the compulsory periodic costs [60], while in the period 2015-2016, three quarters from the total calories consumed by the Romanians was provided by the consumption of vegetal products, this being not influenced by the residential area of the population, both in urban and rural environments, with a similar weight. A slight difference of four percent between the two residence environments was recorded with regard to meat consumption, aspect shown in Figure 1.

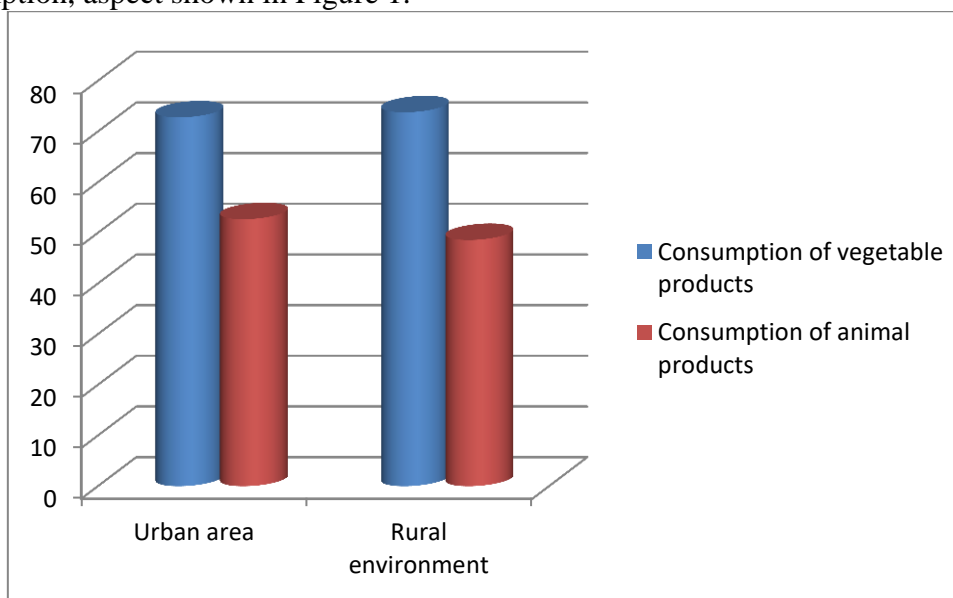


Figure 1. The calorific consumption of the population in the period 2015-2017

Depending on the food groups, in last three years, the caloric consumption trends have slightly improved, so the caloric intake of bakery products has fallen slightly, the meat has grown slightly, and the milk and eggs has remained constant (Figure 2).

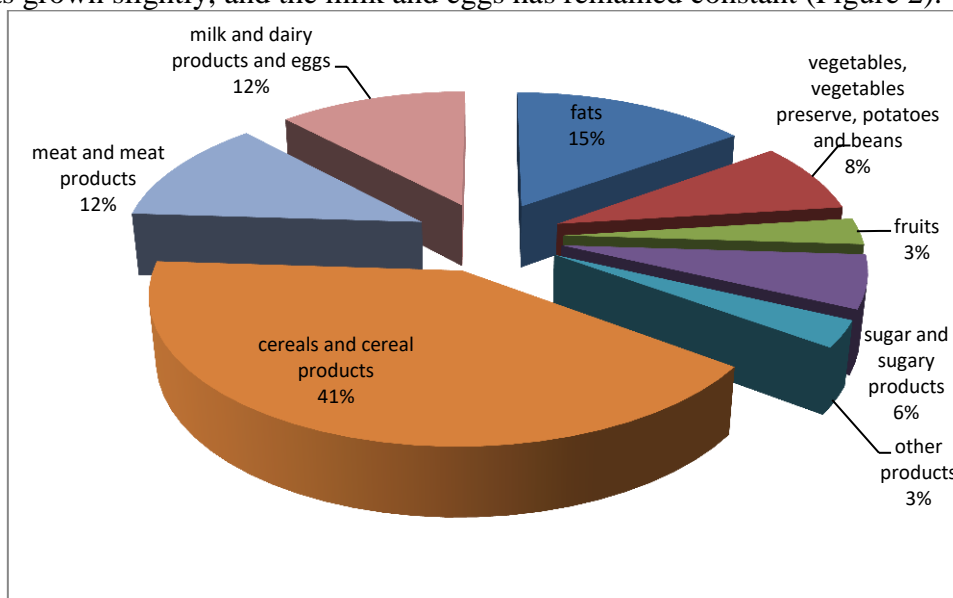


Figure 2. The caloric intake of the main food products, in the year 2016

Source: processing of statistical data

Concerning milk consumption, there is a slight increase registered at national level, reaching an average of 5.81 liters of monthly consumption per person among the employed persons, meaning 6.37 liters per person in the families of farmers, in case of the unemployed, milk consumption is slightly lower, standing around value of 4.43 liters per person, per month.

Depending on the consumer's environment, there may be a slight gap, so that the rural population is more consuming, meaning 6.06 liters per person monthly, compared to 5.60 liters consumed in a month, per person, in the urban environment. The largest amount of milk consumed on average over one month was about 7.46 liters of milk (figure 3) among families constitute from a single person, usually elderly.

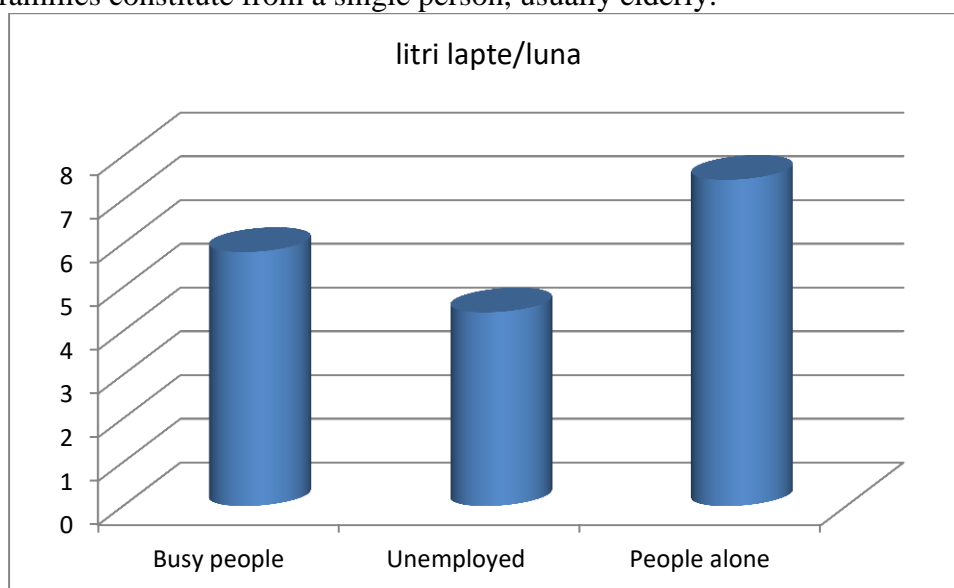


Figure 3. Monthly milk consumption among the population

The category of consumers of third age is high consumer of dairy products such as yoghurt and cream, consuming in average 1.46 kg of dairy products per month, noticing a significant difference from unemployed people who are slightly over one kilogram, in terms of this consumption, meaning they consume 1.03 kg of dairy products per month. Consumption of dairy products is differentiated according to family size, so that the single person provides a higher calorie intake consuming 1,97 kg of dairy products, on average, per month (Figure 4).

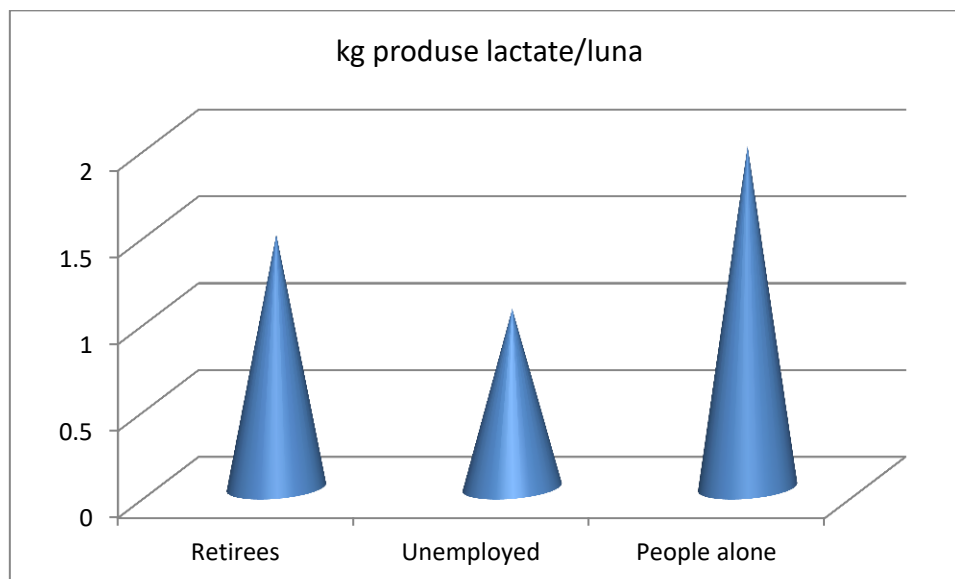


Figure 4. Monthly consumption of dairy products among the population

Donkey milk, which has recently appeared on the dairy market, has increasingly begun, to be purchased, especially in families with young children, due to its organoleptic and physicochemical characteristics, being 96% compatible with human milk.

After lowering VAT with five percent in 2017, the purchasing trend of Romanians has been heading since 2017, after a 5% drop in value of added tax, towards more expensive products than those acquired in previous years, with a focus on better quality produce. Thus, the population began to increase consumption of fish and seafood products, honey, certain dried fruits or whole grains.

Over the past five years, the phenomenon of „uptrading”, a new tendency in food, a shift from traditional to modern trade, the Romanians not buying so often, but at certain times, less often than before, but with a larger amount of money spent each time, as they began to buy some products more expensive, products of a better-quality.

Research has shown that there is a significant percentage of the population of west area, whose eating behavior is unhealthy due to increased intake of additives consumed through different foods, so that 1% of consumers claim that their main meals are consumed at fast food, and 9% do not establish a specific consumption place for these meals. Almost 10% of the population consumes sausages daily, preserve or sweets daily, and another 18% consumes daily carbonated beverages, energy drinks or instant teas, 80% of consumers, mostly girls, exaggerately use chips or other similar foods, 14.5% do not serve breakfast. There are also a significant percentage of those who say that they are consumers of products mostly healthy, environmentally friendly, namely 55% of respondents, some appreciating the taste or superior quality of these products, and others for health reasons.

CONCLUSIONS

Producers must constantly to adapt, to be always with one step ahead of customers' demands, through new products offered, by channeling the product format, by the packaging used, by the messages sent by them, or by the marketing activity applied, an ever more innovative way, so we can also mention the "sustainable" lifestyle, which is in fact an art of demonstrating that the population knows how to behave correctly in terms of resources, because that is the only way to give birth to some new sustainable structures, both economic and production or consumption.

The population's desire for knowledge, regarding the consumption of healthy products, ecologic products, has increased in recent years, so it has become more interested

in having clear and concise details about the products consumed but also about their producers and suppliers, which leads to creating a partnership between consumers, manufacturers and distributors.

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