

ROMANIAN PIG FARMING IN TERMS OF BUSINESSES PERFORMANCE

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Abstract: Pig farming is a complex agricultural activity with significant economic and social implications. Pig farming requires a careful and responsible approach that takes into account many aspects, from genetics and nutrition to animal health and environmental impact. Efficient production management and adaptation to market changes are essential for business success and a positive contribution to the economy.

Based on desk research, this article analyzes the main financial performance indicators for the pig farming sector in Romania. In Romania, the growth registered by companies active in the field of pig farming is constant. In 2023, 481 companies were registered whose business is pig farming, with a total number of 2,579 employees, 510,429,168 euros in net turnover and 37,203,496 euros in net profit. Compared to 2022, the turnover registered an increase of 15.10%. Pig farming is concentrated in some counties of Romania. In counties such as Vrancea Neamț, Brașov, Teleorman, Vâlcea, Hunedoara and Bihor, there are companies that register the highest turnovers at the national level.

Key words: financial dynamics, swine, Romania.

INTRODUCTION

The transition of humans from the "status" of nomads to that of farmers occurred about 10,000 years ago, with the domestication of plant and animal species, when most of their time was spent sowing, maintaining crops and herding animals. With the Agricultural Revolution, the population experienced rapid growth due to the increase in the amount of food available to humans. In addition to plants, domesticated animals were the ones that provided food for humans, and were a source of leather, fur, wool, being used for traction and even guarding households. Even though in agricultural societies, animal husbandry was a secondary activity alongside plant cultivation, in some places societies based on the exploitation of animals emerged. As humans spread around the world, so did the animals they raised. If about 10,000 years ago, several million sheep, cattle, goats and chickens were found in limited areas of the world, today the number of sheep is approaching one billion heads, pigs number one billion, and cattle exceed one billion [6,8].

The Romanian people have a rich history in terms of agriculture and animal husbandry. Various documentary sources provide information on the existence of pigs in the Romanian space, both in terms of food economy, as well as in fairy tales, beliefs, popular customs and religious representations. Pig breeding aims to produce meat and fat and presents a series of advantages (relatively short development cycle, high prolificacy, pigs have a varied diet, they make very good use of concentrated feed, high yield at slaughter, by-products resulting from slaughter can be used, low housing requirements, ensuring income through capitalization). Pig breeding has presented and presents great economic importance, proving to be one of the most profitable branches of the zootechnical sector [3,4,6,9,10].

However, the Romanian pig industry has faced and continues to face significant challenges, in particular African swine fever, which has had a devastating impact on livestock and led to an alarming increase in pork imports. For example, in December 2024, despite a slight increase in the total pig population (3.6%) to 3,268,000 heads compared to

2023, Romania remains the largest net importer of pork in Central Europe and the Balkans. This situation highlights the need for an in-depth analysis of the business performance of this sector [1,2,7,13].

This article aims to analyze the main financial performance indicators for the pig farming sector in Romania, based on desk research. It also identifies the key counties where pig farming is concentrated and where the highest turnover figures are recorded at the national level. Through this analysis, we aim to provide a clear picture of the current state of the Romanian pork industry and the factors that influence business success in this complex field.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was conducted based on a desk research methodology, aiming to analyze the financial performance of the pig farming sector in Romania. This approach involved the collection, synthesis and interpretation of publicly available data and information, coming from various sources.

In order to ensure the widest possible coverage and accuracy of the information, the following were consulted: sector reports, economic studies, market analyses published by national and international institutions relevant to the agricultural and zootechnical sector, financial and commercial databases, press articles and specialized publications, legislation and regulations.

The analysis of business performance in pig farming focused on the following financial and operational indicators: number of active companies, number of employees, turnover, net profit, geographical distribution.

The research process involved the following stages: data collection, data analysis and interpretation, drawing conclusions.

The methodology applied allowed for a systematic and rigorous approach to data collection and analysis, basing the conclusions of this article on solid evidence and relevant information from the field.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The analysis of business performance in the pig farming sector in Romania reveals a complex dynamic, marked by both steady economic growth and significant challenges, especially related to African swine fever. The information collected highlights the resilience and potential of this sector, despite the obstacles encountered [12,15].

The pig farming sector in Romania has demonstrated robust financial performance in recent years. In 2023, 481 companies were registered whose main activity is pig farming - CAEN Code 0146 (Figure 1) [5,11, 14].



Figure 1. Evolution of Romanian pig farming companies

Source: data processed following Sectorial Study. Raising of swine pigs, 2023

These companies generated a cumulative net turnover of 510,429,168 euros and a total net profit of 37,203,496 euros (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Main financial indicators of Romanian pig farming companies

Source: data processed following Sectorial Study. Raising of swine pigs, 2023

Compared to 2022, turnover recorded a notable increase of 15.10%, indicating a positive development trend in the sector (Figure 3).

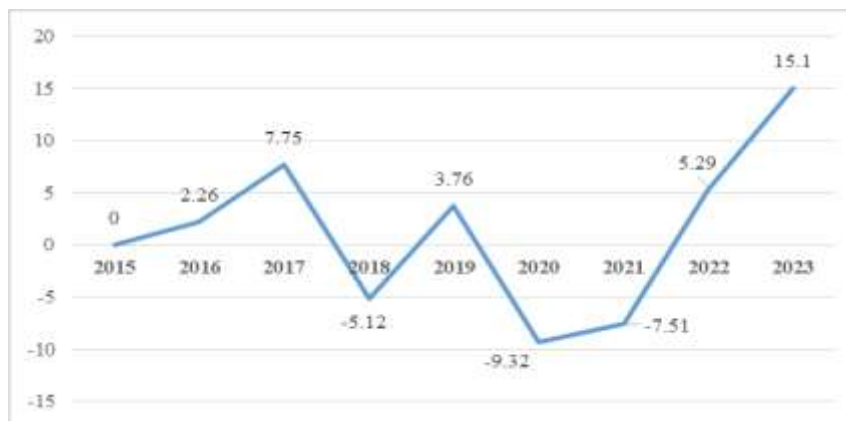


Figure 3. Evolution of annual increases of Romanian pig farming companies (%)

Source: data processed following Sectorial Study. Raising of swine pigs, 2023

It is important to note that the number of active companies in 2021 was 543, they generated a total turnover of 421 million euros and a total net profit of -21 million euros. This discrepancy in net profit between 2021 and 2022 (-21 million euros vs. 17 million euros) is possibly related to fluctuations in feed prices, increased operational costs or the ongoing impact of African swine fever, which generated significant costs for biosecurity

and compensation. However, the increase in turnover in 2023 suggests an expansion in the volume of activity, even if overall profitability was affected.

The sector employed a total of 2,579 employees in 2023, which underlines its contribution to the labor market and the rural economy. Data provided by Sectorial Study. Raising of swine pigs, indicates that in 2023 an employee in the pig farming industry generated 196.17 thousand euros in sales and 14.32 thousand euros in net profit. This individual productivity, even in the context of challenges, demonstrates the operational efficiency of the farms.

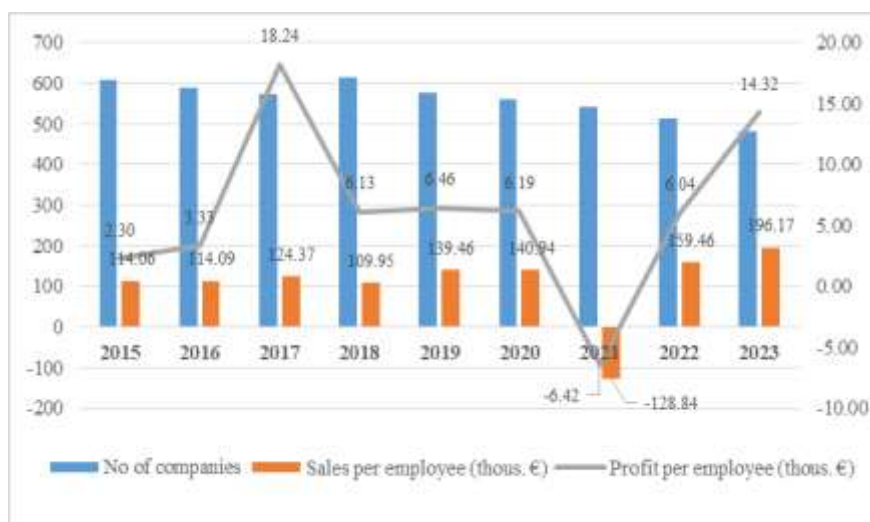


Figure 4. Evolution of employee productivity from Romanian pig farming companies

Source: data processed following Sectorial Study. Raising of swine pigs, 2023

Pig farming in Romania is concentrated in certain counties, where the companies with the highest turnovers at national level are located. These include Vrancea, Iflov, Neamț, Sălaj, Satu Mare, Brașov, Teleorman, Vâlcea, Hunedoara and Bihor. This geographical polarization can be attributed to several factors, including the existence of developed agricultural infrastructure, access to resources (feed, water), tradition in animal husbandry and the presence of important investors [13].

A major factor that has influenced and continues to influence the performance of the pig industry in Romania is African swine fever. This disease has had a devastating impact on livestock, leading to the slaughter of millions of pigs and significant economic losses. Romania has been and remains one of the European countries most severely affected by African swine fever, which has generated a drastic decrease in domestic pork production [12,15].

The direct consequence of this situation was the massive increase in pork imports. Romania became the largest net importer of pork in Central Europe and the Balkans, a situation that highlights the vulnerability of domestic production and dependence on foreign markets. Although in December 2024 there was a slight increase in the total pig population to 3,268,000 heads compared to 2023, the recovery is slow and requires sustained efforts in implementing biosecurity measures and restocking farms [7].

The impact of African swine fever is not limited to direct animal losses, but also affects investor confidence, production costs (through the need for strict biosecurity measures) and competitiveness on the European market. However, the resilience of the sector, demonstrated by the increase in turnover in 2023, suggests that farmers and companies are adapting and looking for solutions to overcome these challenges. Investments in farm modernization, the implementation of strict biosecurity protocols and

government support are essential for a full recovery and sustainable development of the Romanian pig industry [12,13,15].

In addition to African swine fever, the Romanian pig industry also faces other challenges, such as volatile feed prices, competition on the European market and the need to align with European animal welfare and environmental standards. However, there are also significant opportunities. Domestic demand for pork remains high, and the potential to increase domestic production to reduce dependence on imports is considerable. Also, the development of short supply chains, the valorization of by-products and investments in modern technologies can contribute to increasing efficiency and profitability.

In conclusion, the Romanian pig farming sector is in a period of transition and adaptation. Although African swine fever was a major blow, the financial performance in 2023, marked by an increase in turnover, indicates a capacity for recovery. Long-term success will depend on the industry's ability to effectively manage health risks, adapt to market demands and capitalize on development opportunities, with the support of national and European agricultural policies.

CONCLUSIONS

The pig farming industry in Romania is an agricultural sector of considerable economic and social importance, with a history deeply rooted in local traditions. The analysis of business performance in this field, especially based on 2023 data, reveals a complex picture, characterized by both a remarkable increase in turnover and persistent challenges, in particular related to African swine fever. In 2023, the sector demonstrated notable vitality, with 481 active companies generating a net turnover of over 510 million euros, registering an increase of 15.10% compared to the previous year. This expansion in the volume of activity, together with a net profit of over 37 million euros and a number of 2,579 employees, underlines the significant contribution of the industry to the national economy and the labor market. The geographical concentration of high-performing farms in counties such as Vrancea, Neamț, Brașov, Teleorman, Vâlcea, Hunedoara and Bihor indicates the existence of centers of excellence and favorable conditions for development in these regions.

However, the devastating impact of African swine fever remains a pressing reality. Massive livestock losses and the consequent increase in pork imports have highlighted the vulnerability of domestic production and dependence on foreign markets. The fact that Romania is the largest net importer of pork in Central Europe and the Balkans underlines the need for urgent and effective measures to strengthen biosecurity and repopulate farms. Although a slight recovery in livestock numbers was observed in 2024, the road to full recovery and food autonomy is long and requires sustained efforts.

In the long term, the success and sustainability of the Romanian pig industry will depend on its ability to effectively manage health risks, adapt to market demands and capitalize on development opportunities. Investments in infrastructure modernization, implementation of strict biosecurity protocols, consistent government support and promotion of innovation are essential to ensure sustainable growth and increased competitiveness on the European market. By strategically addressing these aspects, the Romanian pig industry can overcome current challenges and consolidate its position as a fundamental pillar of national agriculture.

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