THE INFLUENCE OF ECONOMICAL POLICY ON THE
DEVELOPMENT OF ECOLOGICAL AGRICULTURE IN ROMANIA

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Abstract: The European Union considers very important the ecological agriculture, from the point of view of rural development. The main objective of the agricultural policy of EU regarding rural development is to promote and develop a compatible relationship between agriculture and environment. A successful integration of ecological objectives in sectorial policies depends on three different aspects: a careful projection of the policy frame, a proper applying of the policy and also the monitoring and assessing the policy.

The government, civil society and business environment from our country realized the necessity of promoting ecological agriculture. Some steps were already made in this direction and the harmonization process with acquis-ul comunitar is almost finished.

In order to develop the agroecological sector in Romania and to improve the competitiveness of ecological products on the export markets need to be identified and implemented following: implementing the legislation elaborate for this sector in order to strengthen the control system through additional measures which have to supervise the controlling and certifying organisms in order to rise the quality of exported products, creating of a special producing, processing and marketing system for ecological products that will satisfy the internal and external market needs; promoting the export of Romanian ecological products through developing research activities, improving trainings for those who act on the ecological sector.

INTRODUCTION

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is one of the European Union basement. As it shows today it was built around two major pillars, initially the common market organisations and recently the pillar of rural development. The reason for this policy inside of European Economic Comunity is the necessity of some measures in order to solve general problems regarding food after the second world war.

Thus, through a common agriculture policy follows:
- more fluid transactions of European trade with agricultural products and essentially a guarantee of the exporting countries that they will have certain customers for their products;
- maintaining the agricultural income at a certain level comparing with those existing in industry, even when the labor force released because of agricultural process mechanization won’t be absorbed by the other economical fields.

A special role of the common agricultural policy is emphasized through some specific features as following:
- it is most of all an integration policy being even major than the internal market where the harmonized standards have replaced only 10% from the national ones.
Concerning CAP, the national agricultural policies were replaced, for the most of the agricultural production, by common rules of the market and trade;

-it is a great consumer of financial resources. The agricultural policy absorbs through a complex subventions system and other financial incentives, around a half from the common budget;

-it has a high level of vulnerability to the lobbying pressure, in making decisions regarding agricultural policy being more important other reasons than the economical ones (traditions, historical roots, etc.)

The actual common agricultural policy direction goes to a natural agriculture having as core the ecological agriculture concept. It has been demonstrated that the ecological agriculture has a great role on the long term economical development and plays an important role in improvement of the environment, preserving soil, improving water quality, etc.

The European Union considers very important the ecological agriculture, from the point of view of rural development. The main objective of the agricultural policy of EU regarding rural development is to promote and develop a compatible relationship between agriculture and environment.

A successful integration of ecological objectives in sectorial policies depends on three different aspects: a careful projection of the policy frame, a proper applying of the policy and also the monitoring and assessing the policy.

The common agricultural policy of EU gives an important chance for the improvement of the management environment in the agricultural sector because the agricultural incomes depend on a great extent on the common agricultural policy assistance.

In this context it is necessary to increase the promoting efforts for the ecological agricultural practices and a large information campaign concerning the importance and the role of the ecological technologies and not in the last the economical advantages and also those efforts regarding the improvement of the environment where we do live.

At the European level an important objective is that the strategies and agricultural policies and also their implementation drive to the increase of the ecological agriculture contribution to a long term agriculture development.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

In accordance with OUG 34/17.04.2000, the ecological production means obtaining the agroalimentary products without using the synthesis chemical substances according to the ecological production rules established in the mentioned legislative document which take into account standards, guidelines and national task books and they are certified by an specialized organism.

The ecological agriculture objectives are:

-developing production and an internal market for ecological agroalimentary products;

-harmonizing the production and controlling rules;

-creating a stock for export divided on different kind of products;

In accordance with the above mentioned ordonnance are considered as ecological products the unprocessed vegetal and animal products for human use prepared from one or more vegetal/animal ingredients and composed fodders and raw materials.

The basic principles of an ecological agroalimentary production take into account following:

-remove any pollutant technology
-creating the production structures and crop rotation where the main role is held by the races, species and sorts with high level of adjustment;
-a continuous protection and improvement of the natural fruitfulness of the soil;
-creating a system between rising animals and plants products
-an economical usage of conventional energetic resources;
-applying technologies both for plants culture and for rising animals in order to satisfy the requirements for species, sorts and races.

The conversion process from the conventional production to the ecological production will take, depend on the type of production, starting from 10 weeks (for hens- eggs and meat-) to 3 years (for plants culture).

Romania may become a leader in Europe regarding ecological agriculture because has proper conditions to promote it as follows:
-a fertile and productive soil;
-an intensive usage of chemical substances and specific technologies has not a negative influence like that from developed countries;
-the romanian traditional agriculture bases on different aproaches which does not influence the environment and there are many possibilities to identify unpolluted ecological areas where ecological agriculture coul be developed.

The government, civil society and business environment realized the necessity of promoting ecological agriculture. Some steps were already made in this direction and the harmonization process with _acquis-ul comunitar_ is almost finished.

In 2002 has been introduced the registering sistem of agents which practice ecological agriculture (producers, processers, importers). Since then were authorized to verify and certify ecological agriculture food in Romania seven european specialized organisms and also were set up a romanian specialized organism, ECOINSPECT.

The government policy regarding promoting and stimulated measures of the ecological agriculture is elaborated and coordinated by Agricultural, Forest and Rurale Development Ministry, where is acting the National Authority of Ecological Products Bureau– NAEP – an authority responsible for the ecological agriculture sector.
- NAEP cooperates with agencies, research and education oficcess, foundations;
- NAAC - The National Agency for Agricultural Consultance
- AFSA - Agricultural and Forest Science Academy
- Universities, Institutes and Agricultural Research Stations
- NFEA - National Federation for Ecological Agriculture, its activity is based on a „long term development” principle, a development able to give a chance for the next generations to live in a proper environment.

Starting with 2004, farmers for ecological products are suitable for public financial support through a special scheme of state support. Together with finance received from state, the ecological agriculture sector will benefit of financing through EU and World Bank programs.

In the private sector was set up the National Federation for Ecological Agriculture (NFEA), including five producers associations (Agroecological, The Romanian Association for Long Term Agriculture, Biotera, Ecological Agriculture Society, Ecorural), its purpose is to promote and develope the ecological agriculture in Romania. This will offer and promote the rules or ecological agriculture production, organic agriculture principles (for plants and vegetal products, animals and beens rising), the list of the products which may be used in ecological agriculture, ingredients and processing methods necessary for preparing the organical products.
In Romania there are more than 10000 ecological agroalimentary producers, most of them farms and small family associations.

Terms for producing and trading agroalimentary products are very strict and because of that their price is higher with 50% to 100% than conventional products. First of all that is because the local producers obtain grains, honey, eggs and ecological milk with almost 30% bigger costs than conventional products because using natural fertilizer and special plants treatment and also because of high level of work force costs.

However, comparing with imports the romanian products are much cheaper. This is one of the reason for that Romania has been included in 2004 on the third party countries list emitted by European Commision in order to export ecological agroalimentary products with romanian logo.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Strategically, the economical policy of our country intend to have as a main qualitative objectiv to place the ecological agriculture in the middle of the national agriculture. That is considered as a major pillar for a long term development in the rural environment.

Studying the ecological agriculture issue we can see that from methological point of view there was made a lot of steps. Thus, there is a Government Urgency Ordonnance (no 34/17.04.2000 approved by Law no 38/07.03.2001) regarding ecological agroalimentary products, a Government Resolution (no 917/13.09.2001) for approving the Methodological Norms regarding the ecological agroalimentary products.

Also it was emitted The Agriculture, Food and Forest Order no 70/2002 regarding setting up the „Commision for ecological agriculture development in Romania”. In conclusion, it was made an legislative frame which to set up the responsible authority for the ecological agriculture, the rules and general principles of the ecological production, the period of conversion, labeling, the verifying and certifying system, the punishments applied to those that gone out of these rules.

Also were set up the ecological production rules and principles, the list with the products allowed to be used in the ecological agriculture and the ingredients and processing methods which can be used to prepare the ecological foods.

Practically, the statistical data show a scetical situation. Therefore, taking into account the recent studies of the Romanian Academy the sales of ecological agroalimentary products on the internal market are around 2 mil. euro yearly in Romania, that meaning only 1% from total agroalimentary market. And most of sold ecological products are imported because the number of companies that produce this kind of products is very small.

On the other side, more than 95% from ecological vegetables and grains harvested in Romania goes to export mainly in Germany, Swiss, Italy and . The annual sales toward tese countries are around 10-15 mil euro.

Even though at the National Authority for Ecological Products are registered over 10000 producers of agroalimentary products, in fact in Romania there are around 260 farms which practice ecological agriculture. The total cultivated surface is only 74000 ha (from a agriculturat surface of 14,8 mil ha) and regarding zootechnical sector there are farms where are more than 7000 horned cattle, 20000 sheep and around 5000 hens. The figures are insignificant and according to the National Federation of the Ecological Agriculture that means around 0,5% form the entire gricultural potential of our country.
For 2007 the Agriculture and Environment Ministry intend to have strong projects regarding enlargement of the cultivated surface through ecological methods and also to create an internal market with ecological products.

For now there are discussions about projects regarding encouragement of ecological agriculture sector. We can afford to be suspicious regarding the way they will be fulfilled taking into account that the necessity of finance is very high even though the European Union announce an important financial support after Romania will join the EU.

The budget estimation of European support for Romanian agriculture in the first 7 years after Romania will join EU is around 7,1 mld euro. Around 25% from this budget intend to be placed for getting the objectives regarding environment protection and financing some projects in ecological agriculture. Also, from this amount will be some projects for giving support to the farms from mountain areas, projects to afforest agricultural lands and damaged lands.

The estimations refers, for example, to 800000 ha of agricultural cultures from the mountain areas (which will be supported with amount around 25 and 250 euro/ha) or around 70000 ha which will be afforested (a medium financing of 5000 euro/ha).

In conclusion, the amount is offered generally for the environment protection and in this case for promoting the ecological agriculture and if this branch intend to be developed the Romanian government has to participate with much more money until today (only for implementing the environmental European standards Romania has to invest around 30 mld euro).

CONCLUSIONS

1. The Romanian agricultural policy has to frame in the general direction of European Union in order to penetrate on the external competitive markets and to register the necessary efficiency for economical relaunch in the next years, after joining EU. We consider that the main measures needed to be made, refers to:

   ■ improvement and modernization of agrarian and production structures; taking over the agricultural land owned by old persons, of town people that practise "weekend farming" or by the people who are unable to work; this should be done either by full payment of land, by the state, or by providing monthly incomes depending on the value of land which is given up and transferring these areas to young people who settle in the rural area, preferably to people who have land in the neighbourhood.

   ■ development of services for agriculture and absorption of a part of the population employed in agriculture in this sector. We mainly refer here to the collective services for the mechanized agricultural works and agricultural machinery and implements maintenance; we have to consider here the fact that the scarce financial resources and the small farm size resulted in most farm owners not having modern production means.

   ■ stimulating the development of alternative, complementary activities (small industry, also including on-farm processing of agricultural products, tourism, handicraft), that should contribute both to the best use of rural resources and ensure a most efficient and complete use of working capacity and labour time, known the seasonal character of an important part of activities in this sector (mainly in crop production).

   ■ reconsideration of a strategy for increasing the training level and the skills of population involved in farming activities.

   ■ competitiveness also implies suitable, dynamic correlations between quality and price.
diminution in the number of the population employed in agriculture and providing alternative jobs and income sources, in the larger context of addressing the problems from rural development perspective, correlated with the establishment of viable economic units, through efforts made for the diminution of land operation fragmentation;

- development of infrastructure and services specific for the rural areas, supporting the development of these regions, from the perspective of the commercial character of agriculture and providing employment and income alternatives for the rural population. We refer here to the road and communication networks, as well as to health, education and consultancy services;

- increase of administrative-institutional capacity to attract the financial resources necessary to the development and best use of the local resources.

2. In order to develope the agroecological sector in Romania and to improve the competitivy of ecological products on the export markets need to be identified and implemented following:

- implementing the legislation elaborate for this sector in order to strengthen the control system through additional measures which have to supervise the controlling and certifying organisms in order to rise the quality of eported products, creating of a special producing, processing and marketing system for ecological products that will satisfy the internal and external market needs

- promoting the export of romanian ecological products through developing research activities, improving trainings for those who act on the ecological sector.

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