

Evolution of Flowers Trade in Romania

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Abstract. The beauty of flowers has been noticed by people from all times, leading to the selection and cultivation of various ornamental plants decorating by leaves and flowers. In time, flowers trade became a way to make large profits by increasing the areas planted with flowers. As most economical areas, floriculture imports have (raised) leading to a real competition between domestic producers and stimulating them to adapt to the new markets in the European Union. A very important role in this process was played by the e-commerce which developed a lot recently, being an intermediate between producers, traders and the target customers. The statistical data presented by the National Institute of Statistics (NIS) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) in our country show that flower imports are higher compared to domestic production and export of flowers. In the current crisis, a specialized magazine appeared which tries to give "crisis" solutions, encouraging the unemployed population in Romania to work in agriculture, in their home country, instead of dedicating their time and energy to farmers from other countries. Therefore, the internal opportunities should be encouraged in the first place, followed by the international collaborations according to the European legislation.

Keywords: commerce, import, export, local production, opportunities

INTRODUCTION

Ever since antique times, people started cultivating flowers from spontaneous flora to beautify gardens and private interiors in the first place and later also public spaces. In our country various ornamental plants were brought from all geographical areas of the world, especially in recent decades (Cantor, 2003).

Beginning with the first part of this century, we can talk about promoting a policy related to propagation and cultivation of ornamental plants brought from the Orient. During this time, programs of promoting and cultivating various plants, such as chrysanthemums culture, annual crops, perennial and bulbs and others appeared (Glăman and Vlăduţ, 2003).

Romanians have always known how to combine business with leisure, a great advantage is represented by the varied landscape of the country. For humans, but especially for the creator, there is a strange philosophy of time. What is the present, past or future? (Morar *et al.*, 2008).

Romania imports thousands of tons of flowers from the European Union and other places, worth tens of millions of euro from countries like thus are the Netherlands, Hungary, Italy (<http://www.ziare.com/afaceri/idei-afaceri>).

An interesting aspect is represented by the fact that countries to which Romania exports flowers are generally those where we import plants from, imports are unfortunately bigger than exports. Some countries, even in times of financial crisis, were able to shift quickly, highlighting the most convenient conditions offered by nature: earth, sun and water, they created new jobs and have achieved a very high income. For example, Kenya, a country poorer than Romania, managed to produce large amount of flowers, and soon became a great

exporting power to Europe, in one year, achieving over 675 million dollars (<http://www.ziare.com/afaceri/idei-afaceri>).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this paper different data and information from various official statistics on domestic production of flowers, import, export and consumption of flowers in Romania were analyzed. The data presented by the National Institute of Statistics (NIS) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) in Romania show that flower imports are much higher compared to domestic production and export of flowers.

The main locations where flowers are grown in Romania are: Cluj-Napoca, Oradea, Târgu-Mures, Sibiu, Braşov, Arad, Timişoara, Piteşti, Craiova, Giurgiu, Ploieşti, Bucharest, Constanţa, Mangalia, Tulcea, Brăila, Galaţi, Bacău and Iaşi (EVD, map, 2007). The methods used for the present work were the analysis of literature reviews, statistical analysis and the study of various articles from the Internet, which are listed in the bibliography.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In Romania cut flowers have to be imported from another country because only few growers can grow economically the plants. In 2006 were imported 6.750 thousand tones and the most cut flowers are imported from Holland (3.635 thousand tones in 2006), followed by Turkey, Italy, Hungary and Thailand (Tab. 1).

Tab. 1

Romanian imports of cut flowers (EVD, 2007)

Cut flowers imports	2005		2006	
	Quantity (tones)	Value (thousand EUR)	Quantity (thousand tones)	Value (thousand EUR)
Total	5690	7170	6750	10785
Netherlands	2904	4579	3635	8127
Turkey	2011	1808	1713	1023
Italy	305	230	689	6248
Hungary	177	120	296	392
Thailand	103	292	110	273

According to the NACP site, current trends in Romania are to increase the surfaces planted with flowers, European standards require compliance with Regulation (EC) nr. 889/2008 in terms of organic production (NACP, laws, About product green, 127 Regulation (EC) 889/2008).

Since there are many fertile lands in Romania compared to other European countries, we have a good reason to increase the surface with flower crops for both domestic consumption and export growth. In general, due to consumers demand, the trade is made with cut flowers, because it is more easily distributed and used on different occasions.

Through digital communication, economical and political aspects of the flower trade have been made available to the public. In Romania, the first magazine, Florist only, gathers information about selling flowers at European level and encourages the economic growth by achieving higher flower production.

It also contributes to educating traders and customers according to European legislation(http://www.studentie.ro/campus/REVISTA_FLORIST_ONLY_REINVENTEAZ_A_COMERTUL_PE_TIMP_DE_CRIZA/c-64-a-52891).

Because electronic commerce developed in all sectors, the floral trade cooperation was made possible. This fast growth of floral cooperation is due to the need of aesthetics and because flowers are very sensitive to changes of transportation and temperature, requiring a careful selection and a very good communication between producer, retailer and target-customer.

After 1989, the area planted with flowers in the greenhouses decreased and the area planted with flowers in the field increased, especially in the private sector (Cantor and Dumitraş, 2007; Fig. 1).

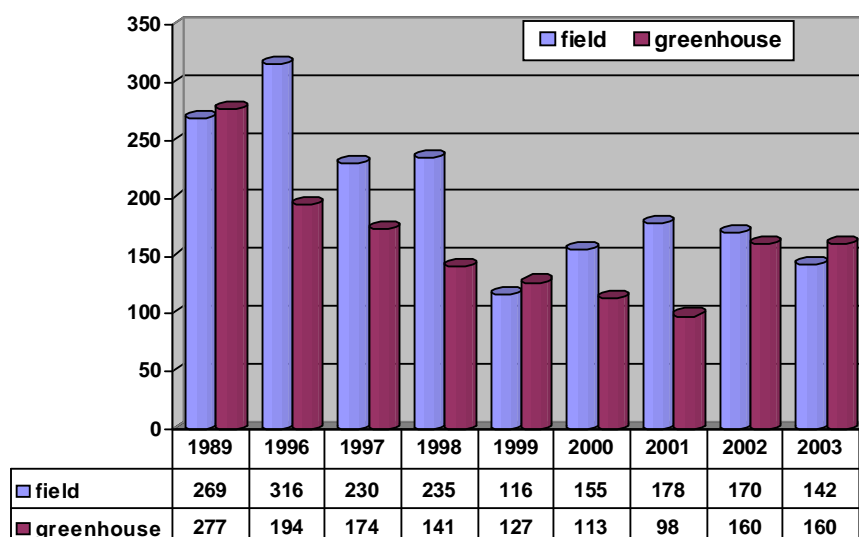


Fig. 1 The area cultivated with field flowers and greenhouses (ha) (Cantor and Dumitraş, 2007)

According to MAFRD, in 2008, Romania imported flowers worth 23.22 million Euros, 15% more than the value of 20.26 million Euros registered in the previous year. In 2008, local production of flowers was 2% lower than that of 2009.

Assortment structure of local area cultivated with flowers grown in greenhouses includes the following species: carnations 67%, chrysanthemum 6.7%, rose 4.9%, freesia 4.3%, gerbera 3.8% and other species 9.6%. In terms of fields and greenhouses area, the flower gene pool includes 241 species, most of them belonging to the genus *Rosa* (<http://www.money.ro/...>).

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Romania fell by 1.3% last year compared to the previous year, according to the National Statistics Institute (INS), which negatively revised the data about the economical developments in Romania. In mid-February 2011, INS announced that Romania's economy contracted by 1.2% in 2010.

According to INS, the GDP rose by 0.1% compared to the third quarter of 2010. Compared to last quarter of 2009, GDP decreased by 0.6% (http://economie.hotnews.ro/stiri-finante_banci-8355827).

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, it is particularly important to have a market study carried out continuously, adapting to new standards of quality in the European Union for a better cooperation and permanent analysis of the interaction of markets, flower production and domestic and international collaborations.

Ideal for Romania would be to increase the areas planted with flowers and adapt to the consumer's requirements concerning quality and variety of flower species. This will create new jobs opportunities, the internal market can be covered by domestic production and all these can also lead to the significant increase of exports. Like some states that made unimaginable profits thanks to flower trade, Romania could take the example of the Netherlands. Despite Holland's dominance of the flower market, there are many places with a better climate for growing flowers, and the climate of Romania is almost perfect. In Romania we have a great opportunity to develop this market plan, primarily because of the possibilities of cultivation with fertile land that is suitable for organic crops, which nowadays are most valuable in the world.

So far, the Netherlands remains the dominant flower market in Europe, having multiple opportunities for collaboration especially through private companies.

Although flowers are perishable merchandise, from a financial standpoint the flower market deserves large investments because it is a very profitable industry and it is always needed in people's lives as an esthetical tool in improving the quality of life.

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