

ENHANCING THE VIABILITY OF FARMS BY PROMOTING INNOVATIVE AGRICULTURAL TECHNOLOGIES

Georgiana-Gabriela, Iacobuță¹

Abstract

Support for investments in innovative physical assets in the field of agricultural production, processing and agricultural and forestry infrastructure will improve the economic performance of exploitations, including fruit trees, and lead to obtaining high value processed products. In agriculture, support will mainly focus on the use of plant varieties more suitably suited for drought, more productive livestock breeds, efficient and modern technologies, innovative facilities. In the agri-food processing sector, those technologies and equipment of an innovative character will be encouraged, which will lead to the wider use of modern technologies.

Innovation remains the key principle of LEADER and, as the approach is developed, support for a wide range of innovative actions based on community needs will be strengthened. LEADER will encourage LDS promotion of projects, focusing on the identification of innovative solutions at local level.

Keywords: Infrastructure, rural communities in Romania, strategy, LEADER instrument

Agriculture is the main economic activity in the LAG territory, but its productivity is reduced due to existing conditions:

- lack of jobs at the level of the territory;
- non-familiarisation of agricultural producers with new technologies.
- low profitability due to land fragmentation, small production units, reduced mechanization;
- lack of a support system for the implementation of agricultural marketing and management concepts;
- equipping with equipment and machines are insufficient.

Many farmers have production systems based on obsolete, poor quality mechanisation and inadequate buildings / facilities. Also, agricultural product processing needs investments to create new processing capacities, upgraded equipments and technologies, technological flows to meet new community standards and improve productivity.

The Local Development Strategy of the DBSW Micro-Region aims to support small and medium-sized farms to harness their potential and become competitive. Priority will be given to livestock investment, fruit growing / fruit trees, apiculture and vegetables cultivation in greenhouses and solariums. These sub-sectors have a great potential in the territory and need investments in modernization and construction of facilities, equipment, machinery, means of production, etc. To improve standards and reduce GHG emissions, zootechnical farms will need to improve manure management.

Also, Dâmbovița South-West Micro-region LAG will support and prioritize farmers who modernize their holding to participate in a quality scheme, especially those who attest a traditional product, thus encouraging farm processing and marketing of local food. Priority will also be given to investment in processing units for milk, meat, fruit and vegetables.

The use of innovative technologies is reflected in socio-economic and environmental effects, such as: increasing production, reducing fuel consumption, improving working conditions for farmers, maintaining soil structure, preserving and improving soil characteristics, significantly reducing the risk of erosion, the increase of the soil water reserve, etc.

In general, agricultural activities are performed fragmented, on small, family lands, in private, with a fairly low yield from lack of access to new knowledge and production technologies (lack of information, lack of funds). There are no local brands and the processing of agricultural products is low.

¹ Ph.D.. av.

The number of agricultural associations, milk collection centres, meat and vegetables treating and processing centres is low in Gura Şuţei, a milk collection centre in Mogosani), agriculture being further developed in individual agricultural farms (traditional type).

In agriculture the number of employees is reduced, the population in the villages being occupied in agriculture organized in individual agricultural households, namely subsistence farms that produce agricultural (vegetal and animal) products for their own consumption or for the sale of agricultural products (milk, vegetables, cereals, fruit) on the market in the towns of Târgovişte, Titu and Găeşti. Agricultural own-account workers or unpaid family help predominate.

Small farms from the Dâmboviţa South-West Micro-region LAG's territory need support to become viable and market-oriented. To capitalize the potential of these farms, modernization investments such as construction, equipment, machinery, post-harvest facilities, access roads, means of production, etc. are needed.

This will improve cost efficiency, income diversification, increase work productivity and achieve quality standards.

The technical level of equipping existing agricultural equipments in the small farms in the DBSW Micro-region is insufficient, is not adapted to the production conditions and is not able to ensure the mechanical work in the optimal periods provided by the crop technologies. Existing capital is characterized by a high degree of wear, both moral and physical.

It is also necessary to orientate the farms production profile in line with the potential of the existing natural resources according to the zoning of the production and to promote the agricultural / food production with high added value (increase of the animal production, the production of vegetables and fruits, etc.), in order to increase the agricultural labour productivity and employment.

There is a need to diversify crops, especially vegetable crops, to meet market demands by diversifying the assortment range of production throughout the year and by improving marketing activity.

Meeting agricultural quality standards, environmental protection, hygiene and animal welfare standards is a prerequisite for market access to sustainable agricultural products, especially those from small livestock farms.

Farming also requires investment support to improve sustainability, adaptation to climate change, water protection and soil management.

There is a need to make energy consumption more energy efficient at farm level. Orientation to a more efficient consumption can be achieved by promoting the production and use of renewable energies based on the recovery of waste from agriculture and forestry.

The structural problems of agriculture in the area, the effects of climate change and the low degree of adaptation to market requirements can be addressed through innovative solutions that support the specific needs of farmers to increase agricultural productivity and resource efficiency.

The application and correlation of research and innovation results can be the solution to solve major agricultural problems such as the effects of climate change, varieties adaptation, conservation and improvement of soil characteristics, significant erosion risk reduction, and increase of the water reserve in the soil as a result of low soil work.

Implementation of innovative technologies also results in socio-economic and environmental effects such as: increasing production, reducing fuel consumption and improving working conditions for farmers.

In DBSW Micro-region LAG's territory there is a need for investment in the processing sector, particularly in the small-scale production of individual farms, to overcome the shortcomings of adapting to EU standards (food safety and traceability), increasing the share

of processed products with high added value on the market. Thus, an increase in added value in sectors such as livestock farming or horticulture is essential.

The types of investments that need to be implemented consist of modern production areas and technologies to increase efficiency and productivity, as well as the development of new local products and brands.

Also, supporting marketing actions and improving strategic business planning and resource management leads to a strengthened approach in a competitive way.

The promotion of technological and organizational innovation must be encouraged for those agri-food products for which the local offer is relatively small compared to the existing potential, thus contributing to the growth of jobs.

The sustainability of investments in the processing sector is conditioned by a close correlation between the production potential and the raw material processing capacity, an integrated and complementary local approach being needed.

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