

ASPECTS CONCERNING THE EVOLUTION OF THE
CULTIVATED AREAS IN ARAD COUNTY

ASPECTE PRIVIND EVOLU IA SUPRAFE ELOR CULTIVATE ÎN
JUDE UL ARAD

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The cultivated areas with different cultures in Romania after 1990 registered a fluctuating evolution. This fact is due to the social – economical transformations from the agriculture. Arad County also fits in the national evolution. In this study we will try to analyze the dynamics of the cultivated areas of this county which is part of the great agricultural area of the western part of the country and we will try to identify the caused of the registered fluctuations.

Key words: agriculture, land patrimony, cultures, cultivated areas

The western plain of the country which comprises Arad, Timis, Bihor and Satu – Mare Counties form the great area of agricultural production from the western part of the country. These four counties own a land patrimony of best quality, proper for all cultures of our country. Arad County has many natural pasture areas in the eastern half which, together with the other arable practiced cultures, represent important resources for ensuring the food for animal production.

The land patrimony of Arad County is presented in table 1.

In the following lines we will analyze the structure of the main cultures from the arable areas of Arad County in the period 1995 – 2005 (table 2).

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Table 1

The land patrimony of Arad County according to the usage on the 31st December 2005

Specification	Hectares
Total area	775409
Agricultural area, where:	511620
Arable	348827
Pastures	128237
Hay crops	25369
Vineyards and vineyard nursery	3613
Orchard and fruit growing nursery	5574

Source: the county office for statistics, Arad County

Analyzing attentively the data concerning the cultivated areas in 2005 we can notice that only 81.65% of the arable area was cultivated with different cultures. The difference of arable area left uncultivated is due, generally, to the lack of technical and especially financial means necessary to work the land.

Table 2.

The cultivated area as exploitation profile with the main cultures

Culture	1992	1995	2000	2001	2003	2005
Total cultivated area	310335	343164	287817	309998	334042	285252
Cereals for seeds, where						
- wheat and rye	200605	259078	220200	248546	235217	219506
- barley and two-row barley	26970	110839	62494	84312	69392	93178
- maize	21539	33284	19023	21908	18394	17349
Oil plants, where						
- sunflower	127945	101862	126455	128162	131250	97330
Sugar beet	32539	23896	22399	19069	31181	28517
Potato	20297	22274	10712	14577	25189	24764
Vegetables	9134	7936	2219	2155	1129	1273
	5884	4417	5153	4708	5354	5167
	11676	7575	8660	8507	9588	9182

Source: The county office for statistics, Arad County, 2006

From the dynamics presented above we can notice that the cereals for seed have the greatest percentage of the total cultivated areas (is higher than 70% in each year). In 2001 these area registered the highest percentage

(80.18%), we consider that this level is a very high level. The specialized literature mentions that the cereals should represent a maximum percentage of 60 – 62% of the cultivated area. This percentage should cover the necessary for these products and more important it would allow the practice of modern, ecological, performing agricultural systems where the role of the crop rotation could be reconsidered at its true value. We consider that the high percentage of cereals, mainly the stalky cereals is explained by the following:

- the lack of technical – material basis necessary to support the technologies for all acceptable cultures from the point of view of economical efficiency, of the private producers which are dependent on the service providers that equipped themselves with the machines necessary for cereals technology and less or at all with machines needed for other cultures like the technical cultures – the sugar beet, hemp, flax, tobacco, etc. in these conditions the private producer either individual or associated has to introduce in the cultures' structure only those plants where the technology can be technically supported by the service provider;

- the cereals have a great storage capacity for long time which allow the private producer to delay the valuation of the cereal products till he obtains the right price that should not be below the production price;

- the lack of agricultural policies which should stimulate the interest of private producers for the technical plants, their products are paid at very low prices and with big delays. In these conditions the private producers focused their attention and interest on other cultures than the technical ones.

We have to notice the fact that the areas cultivated with sugar beet continuously decreased reaching in 2005 only 0.44% of the total cultivated area while in 1992 it represented 2.94% of the total. This decrease is due especially to the liquidation of the processing units for sugar beet. We consider that these were bankrupted on purpose by some persons who had more to gain from the sugar importation. This hypothesis might be disturbing but the truth should be said.

Generally, the vegetable cultures have a relatively constant evolution. We consider that this evolution was strictly established by the need to ensure the minimum human consumption of the products obtained from this domain.

The increase of some cultivated areas with some cultures prejudicing other ones was realized at least from two reasons:

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- First because of the lack of some proper climatic conditions for some cultures and the low profit obtained;
- Second only those cultures are grown which do not need major investments in technology (as needed for the sugar beet, tobacco, medicinal or spicy plants and vegetables of seed cultures).

This structure of the cultivated areas creates disadvantages for the Romanian production negotiated with the European Union and in obtaining a support level similar with other member countries. An essential restructuring of the cultivated areas for the short crops is needed.

In table 3 we present the evolution of the usage categories as vineyards and vineyard nurseries and orchard and fruit growing nurseries in Arad County in the period 1992 – 2005.

We can notice that the percentage of both usage categories from the total agricultural area decreased in the analyzed period. At the orchard category there is a decrease from 1.45% in 1992 to 1.08% in 2005 and at the vineyard category there is a decrease from 0.80% in 1992 to 0.70% in 2005.

Table 3.
The land patrimony of Arad County for the period 1992 – 2005, on the 31st
December, in hectares

Nr	Specification	1992	1995	2000	2003	2005
1	Agricultural area, where:	511552	511635	511587	511620	511475
2	- fruit-growing plantations	7407	6477	5979	5574	5562
	% fruit growing plantations from total agricultural area	1,45	1,26	1,17	1,09	1,08
3	- vineyards	4082	4011	3726	3613	3603
	% vineyard from the total agricultural area	0,80	0,78	0,73	0,70	0,70

Source: Statistic summary of Arad County, 2006

We would like to analyze in detail the evolution of the vineyard areas of Arad County because it is known that this county has a high wine potential. We consider that this potential should become effective. To the

natural potential we should add the economical potential materialized in a modern infrastructure of the grapes' processing technology till the phase of high quality wine. Only then the producers of Arad County will become a "danger", in commercial sense, for the producers of Romania and even of the Western Europe.

In Arad County, in the last years, more exactly in the period 1992 – 2005, the total area of the vine cultures decreased. If in 1992 there were 2564 hectares, in 2005 in Arad County there were 2524 hectares of vine where 2104 grafted and indigenous vine and 420 hectares hybrid vine.

We consider that the decrease of the vineyard areas is due to the following causes:

- due to the fact that a part of the new owners appeared after the restoration of the areas owner before the year of collectivization 1962 were not viticulturists and did not know even the minimum technology for vine growing, large areas of vineyard were damaged and had to be cleared as a result of the inadequate exploitation, especially the sanitary maintenance, a very important aspect for the vine because it is very sensitive;

- a part of the vine plantations were old, over the economical age of exploitation. There were eliminated and the re-plantation of the areas needed high capital investments and the new owners, including the new organized exploitation structures, did not have the financial resources to reestablish the plantations;

- another cause is represented by the elimination of the hybrid productions, direct producer HPD, as a result of the Community Aquis provisions. The wine obtained from those grapes is a poor quality wine and some elements of the wine obtained by HPD are toxic.

The reestablishment of the vine plantations is a compulsory measure. The maintenance of the vineyard size and even its increase was also necessary, considering the profitability of the wine production.

Table 4.

Vineyard and orchard areas in Arad County, in hectares

Specification	1992	1995	2000	2001	2003	2005
Vine growing - total	2564	2887	2694	2592	2775	2524
Grafted and indigenous vine	2343	2561	2382	2262	2495	2104
Hybrid vine-total	221	326	312	330	280	420

Source: Statistic summary of Arad County, 2006

In conclusion, we can say that Arad County has a land patrimony with special qualities for the agricultural production which justifies the statement that together with the other counties represents the agricultural production area of the western part of the country. The agricultural production of the studied area is focused on the cereal production; the proof is the high percentage of the cereals in the culture structure which reaches 80 – 81% of the arable area.

Arad County has also, favorable conditions for the development of the most intensive agricultural domains: viticulture and fruit growing.

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