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## EVOLUTION OF PIG HERDS AND PORK PRODUCTION IN ROMANIA

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**Abstract:** This study analyses the evolution of pig herds and of pork production in Romania over a period representative for the structural transformations of the livestock sector. The research is based on statistical data provided by the National Institute of Statistics, Eurostat, and FAOSTAT, using indicators such as category herds, total herds, meat production, slaughter yield, and trade balance. The results highlight a significant decrease in pig herds in certain intervals, correlated with the epidemiological impact of African swine fever, the increase in dependence on piglet imports for fattening, and the restructuring of small farms. In parallel, domestic meat production has fluctuated, with trends of decline or stagnation in relation to domestic demand, which has led to an increase in the trade deficit. The comparative analysis with the European Union average shows important gaps in biosecurity, productivity, and technological integration. The conclusions emphasize the need to implement coherent policies, modernize farms, and strengthen production capacities to revitalize the pig sector, in order to increase competitiveness at European level and reduce vulnerabilities.

### • Introduction

The last two decades have been marked by profound transformations in pig farming, determined by economic, health, public policy, and technological factors. The epidemiological pressure generated by African swine fever, the intensification of concentration and specialization processes, the reduction in the number of small farms, and the vertical integration of large operators have significantly influenced the evolution of the herds. In parallel, increasing dependence on piglet and meat imports and stable domestic demand have accentuated the gaps between consumption needs and domestic production capacity.

The analysis of the evolution of pig herds and production in Romania is necessary to identify the determinants of fluctuations, to substantiate support policies, and to understand the structural trends of the sector aimed at increasing competitiveness, modernizing farms, and strengthening biosecurity.

### • Material and method

The analysis presented in this paper was based on official statistical data from the following sources: the Romanian National Institute of Statistics (INS) – time series on pig herds and pork production (Institutul Național de Statistică, 2025); Eurostat – comparative indicators at the European Union level on pig herds and pork production (Eurostat, 2025); and specialized literature – analyses, reports, and studies on the dynamics of the pig sector in Romania and the EU. The study covers the period 2007-2024, a period that includes Romania's accession to the European Union, the accelerated restructuring of livestock farms, the emergence and evolution of African swine fever, and the significant changes in the trade balance of pork. To assess the developments, the following indicators were calculated and interpreted: annual variation index for pig herds and pork production; pig herds by categories – sows, young pigs, fattening pigs; and total pork production (tons). The authors of the study used the following analysis methods: analysis of correlations between pig herd evolution and pork production and determining factors (epidemics, imports, prices); comparative analysis Romania – EU average and Romania – countries with similar pig profile (Denmark, Poland, Spain); graphical representations (comparative diagrams); and structural analysis of herds by production categories. The main limitations of the study are: possible gaps between national and European reporting; the lack of detailed data on the structure of small, unregistered farms; the significant impact of African swine fever, which introduces abrupt variations that are difficult to model.

### • Results and discussion

Pig herds include all pigs on the agricultural holding (including breeders, fatteners, and pigs in maternity wards, regardless of economic destination, sex, and weight category). INS and Eurostat data show that the total pig herds have registered a downward trend since 2007, with an acceleration of the decline after 2017 because of the emergence of African swine (Figure 1).

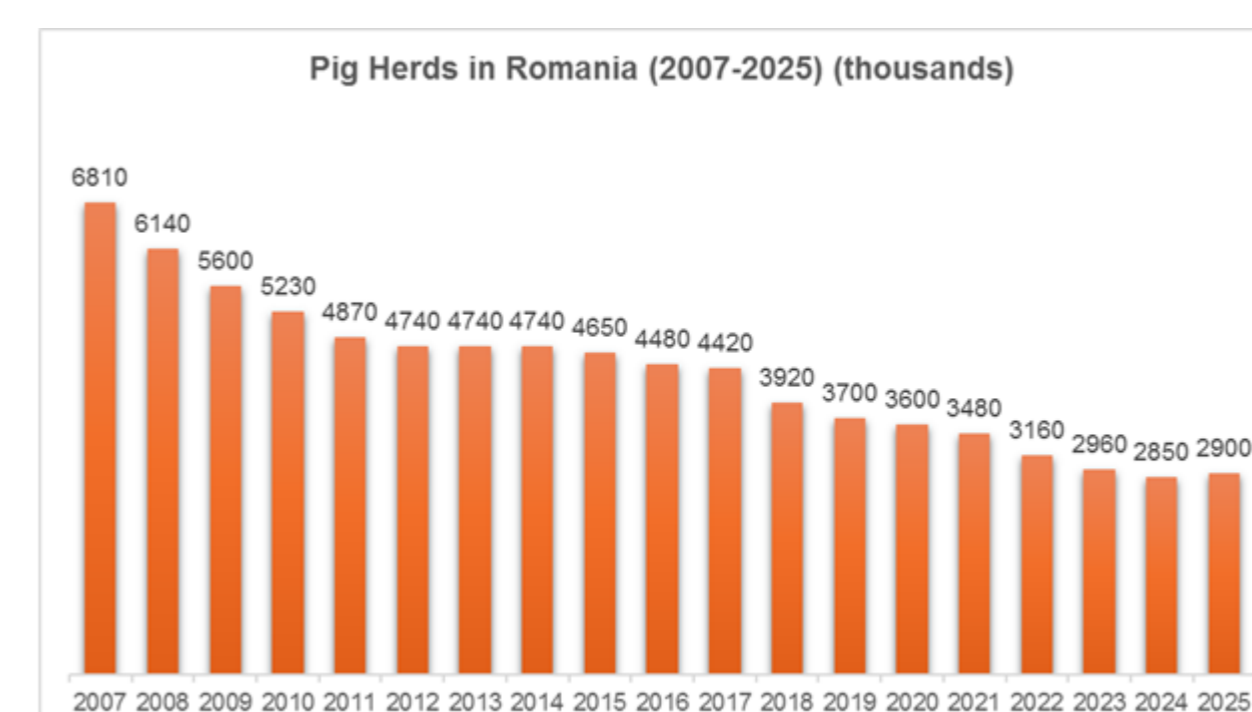


Figure 1. Pork herds in Romania between 2007-2024 (thousands) (Own construction based on data from Eurostat, 2025)

Time series from TEMPO-Online (INS) show that pork production fluctuated, but failed to return to pre-2017 levels (Figure 2). Production is reported annually in tons and it is influenced by availability of animals for slaughter, slaughter yield, and slaughterhouse capacity and farm structure.

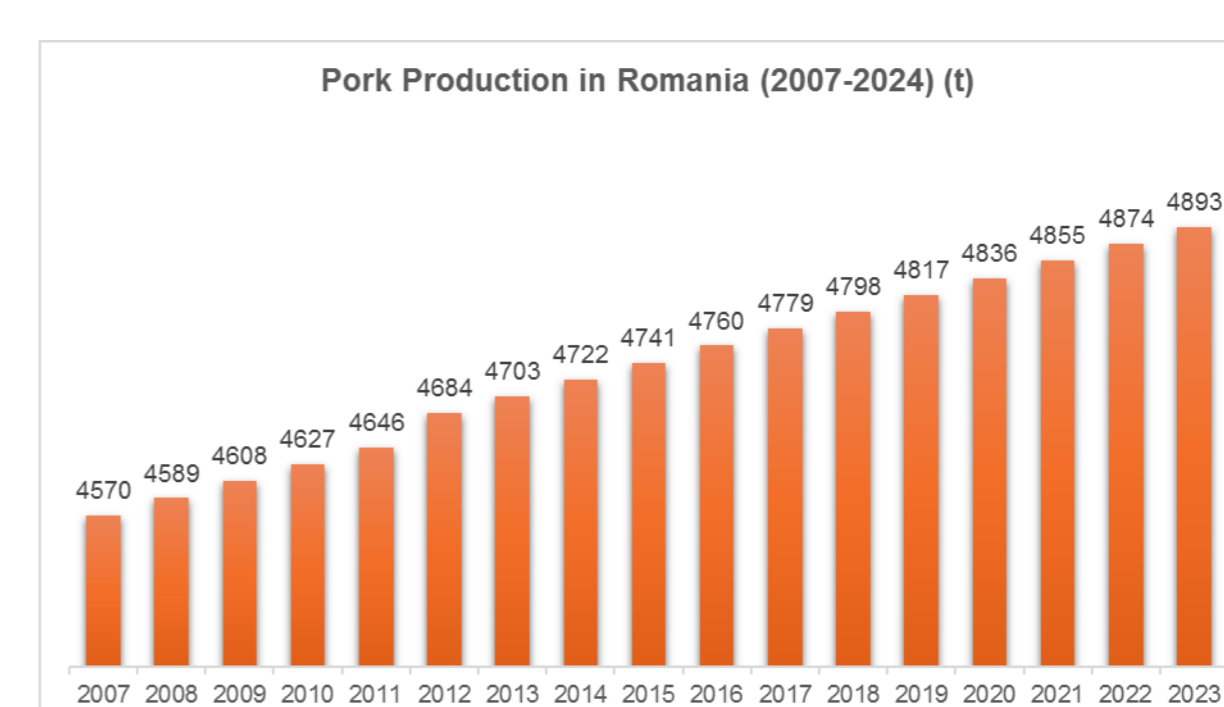


Figure 2. Pork production in Romania between 2007-2024 (t) (Own construction based on data from Institutul Național de Statistică, 2025)

### • Conclusions

The analysis of the evolution of pig herds and pork production in Romania for the period 2007-2024 highlights a coherent set of economic, epidemiological and structural trends that have profoundly shaped the pig sector. Without strategic interventions, the Romanian pig sector risks losing its competitiveness even more. However, the potential for recovery exists, especially through adoption of successful European models in biosecurity and management, development of local genetics, modernization of farms, and vertical integration.