



## **Romania's Agri-Food Trade With Mercosur Countries - Recent Facts And Figures**

Bucur Sorinel Ionel

Institute of Agricultural Economics - "Costin C. Chirițescu" – Romanian Academy

**Abstract:** *Established in 1991, the South American trade bloc – Mercosur - is the sixth-largest economy in the world. The importance of this trade bloc has recently come to public attention following the adoption of a trade agreement between the European Union and Mercosur. This study aims to analyze Romania's agri-food trade with the four Mercosur member states in the period 2020–2024, focusing on the agreement's impact on the Romanian agri-food sector.*

### • Introduction

The Mercosur agreement will have a significant impact on trade with the EU, including in the agri-food sector. In fact, it is estimated that the agreement will create a market of over 700 million consumers and reduce dependence on China. With regard to tariffs, the agreement includes provisions for reducing high customs barriers on certain types of industrial products. Furthermore, in the agri-food sector, the agreement includes limited tariff quotas as well as certain instruments to protect European farmers from imports of meat and grains from Latin America.

### • Material and method

From a methodological point of view, this study is based on statistical data provided by FAOSTAT regarding the evolution of foreign trade of Romania with the four Mercosur member states. The analysis covers the period 2020–2024.

### • Results and discussions

In 2024, compared to 2020, total imports from the Mercosur bloc decreased by 30.5%. While Brazil accounted for 83% of total imports from Mercosur in 2020, its share fell to 29.5% in 2024. During the period analyzed, there was an increase in the volume of imports from Argentina (from 16.7% in 2020 to 70.4% in 2024). As for agri-food exports, they declined by 22%, driven by a significant drop in exports to Argentina (-99.9%) and Uruguay (-89.9%). Over the entire period, the trade balance is negative, but is improving in 2024 compared to 2020.

### • Conclusions

Low import volumes from the four Mercosur countries (approximately 3 million tonnes in total for the 2020–2024 period); Very low Romanian exports of agri-food products (1,571.8 tonnes); High risk of significant imports of agri-food products that do not meet quality standards, to the detriment of Romanian producers.