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ANALYSIS OF THE MAIN FACTORS INFLUENCING THE EVOLUTION OF ROMANIAN FAMILY FARMS

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Abstract: Family farms are essential elements of the Romanian rural space, having a significant position in the agricultural structure of the country. The role of Romanian family farms is given by the fact that they ensure diversified plant and animal production, thus contributing to food security, contributing to the consolidation of the agri-food system, their activity has a favorable effect on climate change, ensuring economic and social balance, etc. Family farms faced major challenges in the interval 2000-2025 related to the transition from the “subsistence type” to the “commercial performance type”. The article analyzes the factors that determined the evolution of this sector.

Introduction

Family farms represent the backbone of national agriculture, having a multidimensional role that goes beyond simple food production, being essential for the vitality of rural areas.

Material and method

The research method starts from the reality that although Romania has a dual structure (very large farms and millions of small farms), family farms contribute significantly to the national economy, ensuring food security, short supply chains, a source of income for a large part of the rural population, combating depopulation, etc.

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Results and discussions

Farmers can opt for various forms of organization depending on the size of the farm and the amount of subsidies:

- Individual Person (PF): Often used for small farms, below the 5,000 euro subsidy threshold.
- PFA / Individual Enterprise (II) / Family Enterprise (IF): Recommended for farms exceeding 5,000 euro, registration with ONRC is required to demonstrate the quality of active farmer.

Current issues for family farms

1. Slow concentration - there is a slight trend towards consolidation, with the total number of farms gradually decreasing as younger farmers take over and consolidate land.

2. Ageing workforce - the high age (over 65) of farm managers on family farms is still a major challenge

3. Low digitalization - access to technology and innovation remains limited for small family farms due to lack of capital and low degree of association.

To become more competitive, family farms are supported through **various mechanisms**:

1. **Commercial transformation** - The Ministry of Agriculture aims to support farms to overcome the subsistence state and start producing directly for the market.

2. **The National Strategic Plan (NSP) 2023-2027** - Provides for investments in the integrated knowledge and innovation system (AKIS), facilitating small farmers' access to technology and expertise.

3. **Financing and certification** - There are dedicated programs to facilitate access to financing and to certify traditional products, thus providing added value to their own production.

4. **Integration into the value chain** - Emphasis is placed on the association of farmers in cooperatives to increase their bargaining power vis-à-vis large retailers

Conclusions

Summarizing the role of family farms in national agriculture, we can draw the following essential conclusions:

1. **Pillar of social stability**
2. **Guarantor of food security**
3. **Sustainability model**
4. **Link of short chains**
5. **The need for modernization**
6. **Cooperation** is the only viable solution for family farms in Romania to move from subsistence to a profitable and sustainable business model