

DISCREPANCIES IN DAIRY FARMS STRUCTURE BETWEEN ROMANIA AND THE EU-28 TOP COUNTRIES RAISING COWS IN THE PERIOD 2010-2017

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Abstract. *The paper analyzed dairy farms structure in Romania comparatively with the top EU-28 countries growing dairy cows. The period of reference was 2010-2017 and the main studied indicators have been: number of dairy cows, number of dairy farms, dairy farms structure by farm size (ha) and by herd size (cows/farm), and yield (kg/cow/year). The number of dairy cows declined in Romania by 17.27% from 1,441.4 thousand heads in 2010 to 1,192.5 thousand heads in 2017, while milk yield increased by 16.16% from 2,750.7 kg/cow/year in 2010 to 3,198 kg in 2017. Romania has 531,851 dairy farms of which 81.58% were raising 1-2 cows, 10.97% between 3 and 5 cows, and just 0.09% are farms with over 100 cows. The average herd size is 2.4 cows/farm compared to United Kingdom (143), Netherlands (97.4), Ireland (76.2), Germany (61.7), France (57.1), Italy (37.6), and Poland (9). Herd size is a key factor for getting yield performance. Romania comes the penultimate position in the EU for its cow yield, which reflects the inappropriate dairy cows farm structure. Farmers have to join in associative forms for better managing farm inputs, increasing yield and production, reducing production cost and selling raw milk efficiently.*

Keywords: farm structure, dairy of cows, milk yield, Romania, discrepancies, EU countries

1. Introduction

Dairy sector is a strategic field of activity assuring milk, a basic food for the population and raw milk for processing industry, as well as giving an important contribution to agricultural output and sustaining producers' income.

Cow milk has the highest share in raw milk delivered to dairies. Its production depends on the number of dairy cows and their performance in terms of yield. In its turn, milk yield is the result of a large range of factors such as: farm size, herd size, breed, feeding, reproduction, animal health and welfare etc. [16, 23].

The economic efficiency in dairy farming is quantified by gross margin resulting as difference between gross product and variables costs, which in this area have a high percentage about 70% [9, 10, 11, 13].

The practice proved that the higher milk yield, the higher gross product and as a result gross margin as well [12, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21].

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