

ABSTRACT

Basic choices of the Romanian agriculture in this period are the reform and the adaptation of agricultural structures to the rules of the European Union. The most important objectives aim to increase the agricultural production and productivity, in order to develop an open and competitive market. The comparative advantages, such as the natural resources and the human potential, a certain material basis and organizational experience, can ensure the increase of agricultural production to cover the food needs of the entire population and the increase of the welfare.

The emergence of goods exchange and its evolution have created the market. The market and market processes will end with the end of humanity. Therefore, we aimed in this thesis to demonstrate the great importance of the potato market in the north region of Moldova from Romania and the strategies of potato producers in view to render profitable the potato production and to identify the most appropriate tools to face to competitors. The market is the meeting place between the retailers' offer and the consumers' demand and of their confrontation. In a modern economy, the market plays an essential place which influences the economic decisions and behaviors. The market reflects the real relationship between production and consumption through the categories related to supply and demand and price categories.

The market researches represents a strong concern of the trade companies, because both farmers and intermediaries are required and interested to have regard constantly to market evolution.

The food problem was and remains a major concern, both on national level and worldwide, aiming mainly to solve the most effective relationship between resources and consumption needs.

During people existence and its development, there have appeared more or less sustainable traditions, customs and eating habits, which continue and will continue to play a predominant role in feeding the concerned population, even and under the impact of modern food principles, based on the scientific and rational character of nutrition.

The potato has a high nutritional value. That's why potato represents a main food, being considered as a "second bread" and being chosen to participate in increasing quantities in the population food. Due to the importance of improving the food structure for the worldwide population, specialists concluded that the consumption indicators related to potato, meat, milk, eggs, butter, etc.. calculated per capita, beside those of consumption of electricity, metal, coal, textiles, etc.. represent important indicators in assessing the living standard of a country's population.

The purpose of this thesis is to determine the impact of market changes in the Northern region of Moldova due to Romania's integration into the European Union and to elaborate some proposals for potato growers' reorientation, based on the current European criteria, which arise from the performed study, adapted to the realities of the Romanian transition period and according to the new integration guidelines into the European Union structures.

There are presented the consumption needs for the main food products, the consumption minimum standards and the self-consumption and the population structure, as compared to the European Union. All these figures determine a more accurate knowledge of the problems facing the market of agricultural products in the North region of Moldova.

A methodological principle for a complex and systemic approach of the contemporary economic concepts underlies this study.

The theoretical part of the thesis is based on the fundamental marketing studies of some world renowned researchers, such as M. Porter, P. Drucker, Ph. Kotler, T. Levitt and also Romanian researchers, such as M. Constantin, C. Florescu, O. Nicolescu, V. Dragon, I. Cătoi, L. Anghel, N. Teodorescu, P. Stanciu, C. Criveanu, Gr Belostecinic, D. Moldovanu, who have written in the thesis issues.

The main objective of the thesis is to serve as a support in elaborating measures to increase the performance of potato producers, in view to ensure a sustainable development, including optimalization directions of the activities of all participants in the chain of potato producing, processing and manufacturing of finished products, based on marketing implementation. The necessity of this thesis consists in a detailed knowledge of potato consumption needs. It is well known that the potato represents one of the most important product in the nourishment of the population from the Northern region of Romania. At the same time, an objective of this thesis consists in a better knowledge of the studied area (Suceava), which is

famous for its richness, such as the "green gold", the famous monasteries of Bukovina and last but not least, one of the oldest preoccupations of the rural population, namely the cultivation of agricultural lands.

Potato production in Romania has decreased substantially since 1990, due to lower interest of producers for this crop and due to the decrease of total production and production per unit area.

The decrease of producers' interest was due to the high costs for establishing and maintaining a potato culture in the conditions where potato growers (80% of those cultivating less than 1 - 2 ha) don't have the financial strength for sustaining these cultures. That is why the potato cultures were replaced by grain. On the other hand, the potato has been replaced by grain, as raw material in the industry of spirits and starch. Even the quality of the finished products made from potato is higher, the cost obtained by processing grain is much lower. Also, the potato fodder used in livestock feed was largely replaced by grain, being more efficient.

With all obstacles and problems that occurred, the potato culture is a profitable culture and can generate substantial profits per hectare. Most of the small potato farmers (with up to 2 ha of cultivated area), can not face to market competition, by cultivating potatoes on small areas. So some of them have grouped in different forms of association in view to increase the total cultivated area. It is totally inefficient for a potato producer to acquire the full range of machinery needed, if the area cultivated with potato is less than 50 hectares.

The organization of a well designed storage and distribution system allows a potato storage in proper conditions, avoids losses during storage and provides quality products for selling on market during the winter and spring seasons, when the potato consumption is higher.

Potato production depends on a range of factors operating in the agricultural chain. Thus, **the production system** is represented by individual farmers, households non-specialized in potatoes producing, specialized companies, family farms and family associations.

The thesis is divided into two parts: the first part presents the first chapter named "State of knowledge in the field" and the second part presents three chapters treating the methods used in performing the related research for the preparation of the thesis and the analysis of the results obtained during the research.

The first chapter "**Bibliographic study in country and abroad on marketing strategies in potato production, promotion and profitableness**" represents an analysis of the scientific

literature in the field of potato marketing, but also in the field of management of the comparative advantages that can provide an increase of the agricultural production and the coverage of the food needs.

In the frame of the second chapter, there are presented the necessity, purpose, objectives, and research methodology which comprises both the research stages and the methods and procedures used in the research activity. The following methods were used: *the monograph, the inductive-deductive method, the comparison method, the division method, the chain substitution method, the graphic method, the method of correlations, the linear programming.*

The third chapter presents the „**Socio-economic and natural conditions of the studied area**”.

The study of the natural conditions in the studied area aimed at the evaluation of the favorability concerning potato cultivation, in order to ensure consumers’ demand and availability for the supply of domestic or foreign markets.

The administrative delimitation and territorial repartition of the potato culture in the Northern region of Moldova revealed a number of phenomena, such as:

- overgrowth of potato in the structure of the cultivated arable land;
- a large number of producers, who grow potatoes on small surfaces and who practiced and still use traditional technologies, which are totally non-performing and led to an unstable production, generated by low and variable yields per unit area;
- lack of a well organized framework concerning the potato distribution and sale systems;
- using of a routine management, which is totally non-performing;
- lack of projects or programmes for agricultural marketing implementation, especially potato marketing etc..

The issue broached in detail in the fourth Chapter aimed at determining the evolution of the main technical and economic indicators related to potato marketing, such as: demand, supply, consumption, imports, exports, inventories, prices, etc., worldwide, in the European Union and in Romania.

Also, several indicators were used in the performed research, in view to emphasize the evolution of the main technical and economic indicators at the main potato varieties, during the period 2007-2010, such as: *the structure of land by use category, the structure of arable land on*

crop groups; the surface structure of potato varieties grown, the yield per hectare and the total production, the unit cost and the average selling prices of potato.

Chapter V of the thesis treats theoretical and practical aspects of the strategic marketing and the potato production characteristics and economic efficiency. We presented, in general terms, the role of the marketing strategy to achieve the business objectives, the place of the market strategy in the marketing policy, the typology of marketing strategies and, not least the importance of the marketing mix and the marketing strategy implementation.

Also, there were broached current issues and threats on potato market in terms of the diagnostic analysis of the studied area, linking the market research to the marketing strategies.

This paper presents aspects related to the optimalization of potato cultures depending on varieties in the Northern region of Moldova, aiming at knowing the requirements imposed by this culture, in view to identify the ways leading to an optimal use of inputs and rationalization of culture techniques in this micro zone of Moldova.

The conclusions and the proposals formulated in the chapter VI substantiate that the work represents a source of information for both experts in the field and the small farmers who want to render more profitable the potato culture and to practice a commercial agriculture in order to increase the economic efficiency.