

## CURRENT SITUATION OF ROMANIAN CERTIFIED PRODUCTS

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### *Abstract*

*Certification of agri-food products is a mechanism for consumer protection, providing confidence and product compliance. Certified products, depending on the type of certification and the shape of the relief, have unique characteristics such as safety and quality. In Romania, there are 1,201 certified products of the mountain product type, Vâlcea County holding a share of 15.9% of the total products at national level. There are 641 products of traditional product type, concentrating in Transylvania, Muntenia and Maramureş, Braşov county holding the share of 27% of the total products of this type certified nationally. There are 141 products of the established recipe type, and the products certified as Certified Wines are 130 products, concentrated in the sub-Carpathian area, due to the wine-growing areas owned.*

*Key words:* certification, agri-food, food safety, Romania

### INTRODUCTION

According to Pădure (2019), quality has become a strategic tool for producers, which consumers evaluate according to the level of quality that producers attribute to the product in different aspects: meeting quality standards, hygiene, ingredients, nutritional values, packaging [10].

Certification is an important aspect of the economic point of view for the producer, giving consumers confidence, the food sector being based on quality, organization and control [8], [2].

Food safety is an important feature of quality and must be an objective, a major responsibility of food producers. Food security is a disorder for some countries, standards intensify both strengths and weaknesses [12], [3].

Certified mountain products can be real opportunities for mountain producers. Due to the obtained products, which have superior characteristics compared to other products obtained in other relief areas, by certification, the products obtain higher added value, and the promotion can be achieved much easier [6], [7].

Certification of organic products can be a model for encouraging sustainable agriculture, helping to improve biodiversity and adapt to climate conditions [9].

According to Rabontu (2009), in the last decade, consumers are increasingly expressing their concern for food safety, being more and more interested in the origin of raw materials. The diversification of products on the market makes it difficult for consumers to understand, the results being felt by illness caused by poor nutrition [4], [11].

Geographical indications are basic tools, which offer property rights in relation to certain products, being regulated at the level of the European Union. Quality is a subjective term, the actors involved in the whole product chain may perceive and interpret quality differently, for consumers being closely related to meeting expectations regarding the product consumed [12].

The quality schemes for agri-food products encountered in the European Union are:

-Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) - the PDO is regulated by Regulation (EU) no. 1151/2012, which provides for the use of the geographical name and which aims to establish the criteria and the procedure for registration of products.

-Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) - Protected Geographical Indication is the name that identifies a product from a specific region, country, place. Products bearing the PGI logo must be associated with the geographical area and have characteristics specific to the area of origin. The raw materials used to obtain PGI products may have origins other than the established geographical area.

-Traditional Specialty Guaranteed (GSP) - are based on distinctive features based on traditional ingredients, as well as traditional methods of obtaining products.

-Mountain product - Products that benefit from the quality scheme called Mountain product must meet several conditions in force with European legislation.

-Organic products - Organic production involves best practices for the environment, conservation of natural resources and maintaining animal welfare.

-The product of the EU's outermost regions - The nine outermost regions, although thousands of kilometers away, are an integral part of the European Union. These regions benefit from specific measures, which support access to the internal market for economic growth [5].

The aim of the paper is to identify the geographical distribution of certified Romanian products with the role of identifying areas where these products are not certified and recognizing the reasons behind this, in the context in which such products can contribute to increasing incomes of agricultural producers who choose this type of certification.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The paper is based on data provided by the Agency for Financing Rural Investments (AFIR) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MADR) through the application Catalogue of Certified Food Products (CPAC) that helps consumers to easily identify producers whose products are product certificates certified qualitatively, but also comes to the aid of economic agents, who can certify their products through the

application. How to register a certified product is very easy. After creating an account, which involves entering an email, a password, and then a confirmation of the email, the manufacturers find all the necessary documents to complete in the application. After uploading the necessary documents, the producers are informed of each stage of the dossier submitted.

The research used the histogram method, which aims at the frequency and presentation of data. Also, using the comparative data method, it will be possible to identify information on development trends.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

According to the data provided by AFIR, in Figure 1, the products certified with the type of Traditional Product attestation in 2020 are represented geographically, so that at national level 641 products are registered.

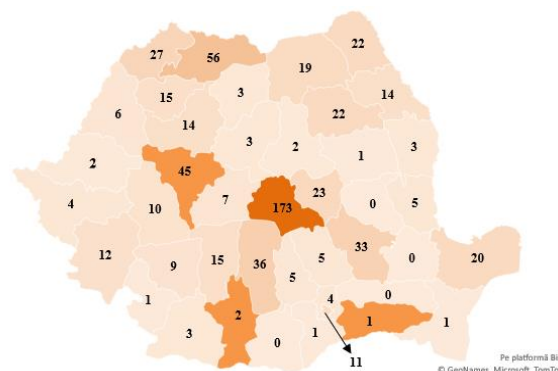


Fig. 1. Number of products certified with the type of certification as a Traditional Product

Source: Own processing based on AFIR data [1].

Most traditional certifications are registered in Brașov County with 173 products, in which the category of dairy products (59 products), the category of meat products (59 products) and bakery products (14 products) predominate. It is followed by Maramureș County, with a total of 56 certified products, of which 25 are part of the meat products category, 11 of the bakery products category, and the dairy products are 6. There are 45 products registered in Alba County. traditionally certified, the products in the bakery category number 27, and the products

in the vegetable-fruit category number 8 (Fig. 1.)

In Romania, the products certified according to the established recipes, number 141, these being found in the largest proportion in the North-East and Central region of the country.

In Ilfov County, 16 products certified according to traditional recipes were registered, all falling into the category of meat products. In Argeş County, 15 certified products are registered, 13 are part of the meat products category and 2 are in the bakery products category. Sibiu County presents 5 products certified according to established recipes, 2 are part of the category of bakery products, one product in the category of vegetables and fruits and one in other categories (mustard) (Fig. 2).

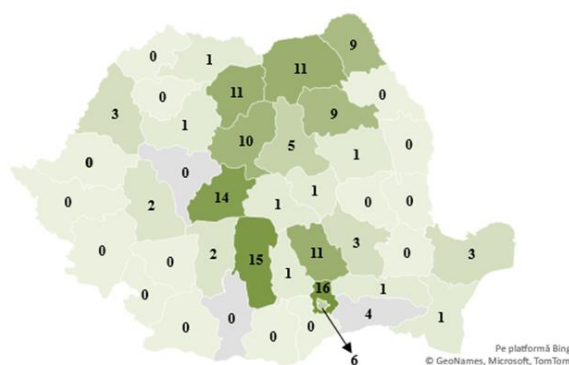


Fig. 2. Number of products certified with the type of certification as Recognized Recipe  
Source: Own processing based on AFIR data [1].

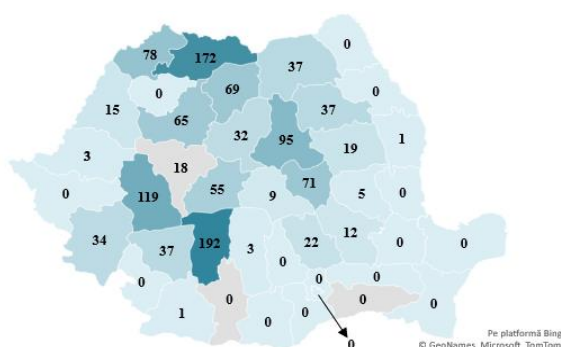


Fig. 3. Number of products certified with the Mountain Product certification type  
Source: Own processing based on AFIR data [1].

There are 1,201 certified products as a Mountain Product, most of them being located in the Center, North-West of Romania and South-West-Oltenia.

Vâlcea County produces the most products certified with the type of attestation Produs

Montan, 115 falling into the category of fruits and vegetables, 40 products in the category of bee products and 37 in the category of dairy products. (Fig. 3).

Maramureş County has 172 products registered as a mountain product, highlighting the category of fruit and vegetable products (166 products), followed by bee products (4 products) and dairy products (2 products) (Fig. 3).

Prahova County has the most certified wines, 24 in number, followed by Vrancea County with 11 certified wines and Arad and Constanţa counties with 10 certified wines, highlighting specific areas with a tradition in vine cultivation.

Products certified with Protected Geographical Indication, are found in 11 products, included in the category of meat products (5 products), dairy products (2 products), fish products (3 products), fruit and vegetable products (one product).

In Romania, only one product is registered with the type of Protected Designation of Origin certification, included in the category of dairy products located in Mureş County (Fig. 4).

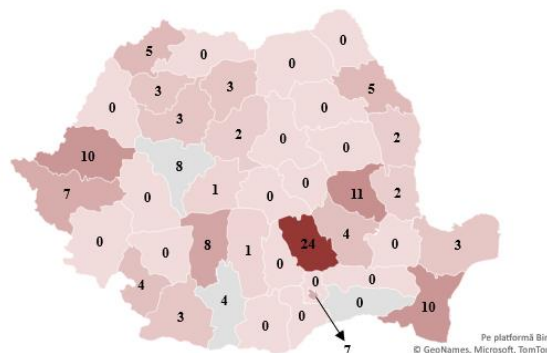


Fig. 4. Number of products certified with the type of certification Certified wines  
Source: Own processing based on AFIR data[1].

It is observed that following the analysis, the certified products of mountain type have the most certified products in number of 1,201, Vâlcea County holding the largest share of 15.99% of total certified products in Romania, thus, mountain products concentrating only in mountainous areas. The certified products of the type of products certified as Traditional Product are in number of 641 products in

2021, most of them concentrating in Transylvania, Muntenia and Maramureş. Braşov County has the most certified products, representing approximately 27% of the total products at national level (Table 1).

Table 1. Centralizing situation according to the type of certified products

Tip	TOTAL	County maximum value	% out of the total	Number of counties without no certified product
P.T.	641	173	26.99	4
R.C.	141	16	11.35	16
P.M.	1201	192	15.99	16
V.C.	130	24	18.46	19

Source: Own processing based on AFIR data [1].

It is observed that in the case of these types of certified products, there are 4 counties that do not present certified products, although the coverage area could be much wider.

There are 130 certified products of the Certified Wines type in Romania, most of them being concentrated in the part of the sub-Carpathian area, due to the wine-growing areas owned. Prahova County (24 products), has a share of 18.46% of the total certified products such as Certified Wines, and 19 counties without any certified product.

The products of the established recipe type present 141 products at national level, these being concentrated in Transylvania, Muntenia and Bucovina. Prahova County is in the top of the ranking, holding 11.35% of the total certified products of this type, 16 counties not holding any certified product (Table 1).

## CONCLUSIONS

Certified products have superior characteristics depending on the relief area in which the products are made, and due to the characteristics held, increased attention is required for promotion.

According to the Agency for the Financing of Rural Investments, Romania has an application that makes available to consumers, a certified product, distributed by counties according to their type. In the case of

products certified as a traditional product, Romania currently has 641 products, at the top of the ranking is Braşov County with 173 mountain products. For the products from the established recipe category, their total in Romania is 1201 products, in the Center, North-West of Romania and South West-Oltenia being located the most certified products. For the category of certified wine products, in Romania there are 130 certified products, Prahova county has the most certified wines, in number of 24. The certified products as Mountain Product are in number of 1201, the most locations are in the Center, North-West Romania and South-West-Oltenia.

Clearly, the attestation of these products by agricultural producers can help to increase the income obtained by them by providing a guarantee of the quality of the product marketed to consumers. The type of attestations differs from one area of the country to another, and from one form of relief to another, depending on the pedoclimatic conditions of the raw products obtained. For example, there is a concentration in the sub-Carpathian area, an area known for its vineyards, but in the case of products certified as a consecrated recipe, many counties are identified in which no such product is certified. This is mainly evident in the plain areas, where farmers are interested in obtaining large yields in terms of quantity, to the detriment of processing and obtaining a finished product.

Romanian products, respectively certified product have a higher price, accessibility in supermarkets/hypermarkets being difficult.

Following the location of the products, there is a link between small and medium-sized farms and certified products. By making products certified by farmers, they can increase their added value and can be a strategy for selling products, improving the image of the farm and diversifying their production. The high potential that is presented by each region, requires the implementation of cooperatives that can deal with the marketing of certified products depending on location. There is also a need to promote certified products that promote

authentic and natural products, health comes first when certified products are made.

Coming to the aid of producers, sub - measure 3.1. Support for participation for the first time in quality schemes, the sub-measure provides non-reimbursable financial aid of EUR 3000 for one holding per year, contributing to market integration. The strategy for the development of the agri-food system 2020-2030 also comes to the aid of producers, supporting certified products, providing support to promote product certification and training farmers to meet environmental challenges.

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