

TERRITORIAL DISTRIBUTION OF TRADITIONAL ROMANIAN FOOD PRODUCTS

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Abstract

The sector of traditional products from Romania has been regulated since 2004, but it was not until 2013 that stricter licensing rules were introduced, resulting in a small number of certified products (171 in 2013). However, the sector has developed continuously and in 2022 there were 735 certified traditional products at national level. The purpose of this paper was to analyse the distribution of these products at regional level so we can emphasize a Romanian regional model based on their main characteristics. We used the database created by the Romanian Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural, respectively, the "National Register of Traditional Products", which can be found in the "Catalogue of Certified Products and Activities". The research showed the following profile of distribution: the most important traditional products are the ones made from meat and milk; in Brasov county was, it in the first place with almost 24% of total products; the certified products per producer reached an amount of 14 products in Galati county; most of the products are in Center, north-West and North-East regions. The regional model of distribution is characterized by a concentration of producers in mountainous and rural areas.

Key words: traditional products, regional distribution, counties, development regions

INTRODUCTION

The sector of traditional products in Romania was regulated for the first time in 2004 [5]. In 2008, the National Office of Romanian Traditional and Ecological Products was established in Brasov to promote the concept of "quality products" as well as the concept of "ecological products" [3]. Until 2013, when new restrictions and regulations to obtain certification were approved, there were over 4000 traditional products approved at the national level. In 2013, after the implementation of the new regulation [6], only 171 products received certification. Since then, only 24 traditional products were still certified in 2022 after the annual verification by authorities. In November 2017, the Catalog of Certified Food Products [1] was made available to producers, which allows online attestation of producers, including on national and European quality schemes. Through the mobile and desktop applications, you can view the list of certified products and view their position on the Romanian map. In 2022 are 735 certified products, but there are many problems with current regulation

and the logistics of valuation, which have led to large gaps between counties and regions [2] [10]. There is also a high concentration of traditional products due to the fact that "over 55% of the traditional products registered in NRTP come from just two Romanian regions, respectively the NW and the Center Region" [7]. So, there are major differences between product categories, counties, and regions [8]. Even if the development of these products has a proven direct impact at the local level (job creation, increase in revenue, diversification of local economies, etc.), it is very difficult for producers to remain on the market due to the lack of resources for marketing [11]. Also, the prices are very high, so they are usually consumed by people in the 34–65 age category with an income over 1,000 euros [4]. In these conditions, the aim of the paper was to present the distribution at regional level by landforms, counties, and development regions. The objective was to identify a model of distribution based on the main characteristic of traditional products sector.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this paper we analysed the traditional product offer from Romania. We used the database created by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (“Catalogue of Certified Products and Activities” [1]) based on the registration of producers in the “National Register of Traditional Products” [9]. We analysed the regional model of distribution of product by categories, landforms (plain, hill, and mountain), counties and development regions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Traditional products are "foods that use local raw materials, do not contain food additives, have a traditional recipe and a traditional production and/or processing method, and are different from other similar products in the same category." [6]

The main characteristics of traditional products

In 2022, 735 traditional products were registered by 192 producers from 156 villages (49 cities and 107 coomunes).

Around 47.3% of the traditional products come from mountain areas (348 products), 11.6% from hill areas (85 products) and 41.1% from plain areas (302 products) (Table 1).

Table 1. The evolution of traditional products in 2013-2022 period by types of products

	Plain	Hill	Mountain	Total	%
Producers	79	20	93	192	26.1
Beverages	17	1	11	29	3.9
Meat and meat products	150	22	134	306	41.6
Milk and milk products	29	15	90	134	18.2
Vegetables-fruits	34	35	49	118	16.1
Bread, bakery and pastry products	56	7	51	114	15.5
Fish	12	4	12	28	3.8
Other	4	1	1	6	0.8
Total	302	85	348	735	100.0
%	41.1	11.6	47.3	100.0	-

Source: Own determinations based on National Register of Traditional Products 2022 [9].

Most of the traditional products are obtained from meat (41.6%) and milk (18.2%), like sausages, pastrami, smoked products, bacon, cheese, etc. We also have: 26.1% beverages (strong beverages like *tuica* or *palinca*); 16.1% vegetable-fruit products (like compote, vegetable stew, syrup, jam, etc.); 15.5% bakery products (like bread, pie, noodles, etc.). In mountain areas the structure is almost similar with the one from national level, with 38.5% products in meat category, 25.9% in dairy category, 14.1% products from vegetables or fruits and 14.7% bakery products (Figure 1).

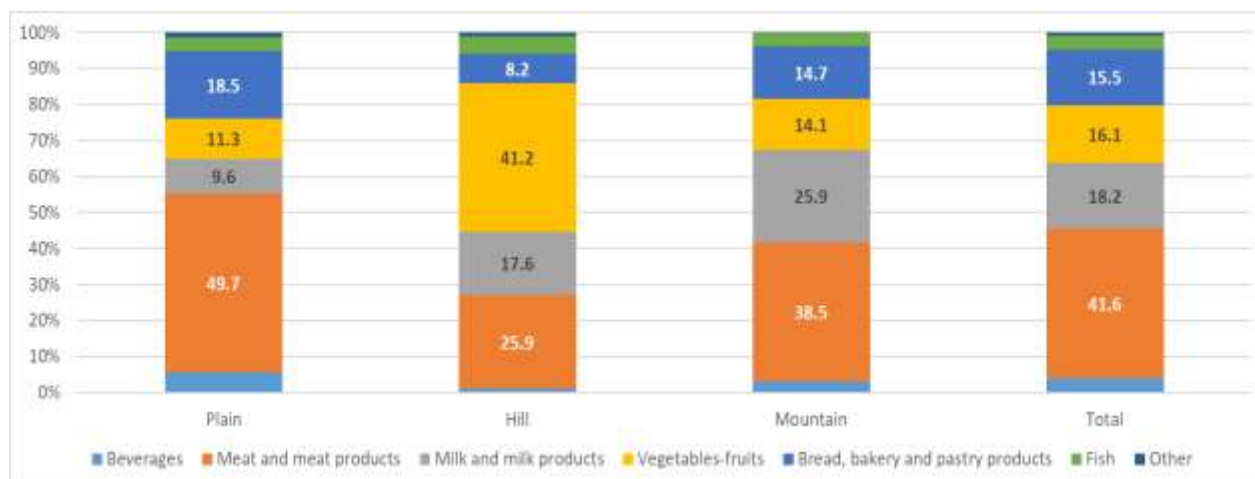


Fig. 1. The structure of traditional products by landforms (2013)

Source: Own determinations based on National Register of Traditional Products 2022 [9].

In plain areas meat products represent almost 50% of the certified traditional products and beverages represent 18.5%. On the other hand, in the villages and cities from hill area

we find especially specialties from vegetables and fruits (41.2%) and from meat (25.9%).

The main characteristics of producers

Like we mentioned before, in the traditional products sector are certified 192 producers,

with 735 products. From them 56.8% are Limited Liability Company, 16.1% are Sole Proprietorship and 14.1% are Self-employed Persons. Other forms include familial societies, natural persons, NGOs etc.

The regional distribution of traditional products

Romania has certified traditional products in 37 from 42 counties. On the first place we find Braşov with 173 products (Figure 2).

Also, we may observe that there are five counties with 30-60 approved products (Maramureş, Bistriţa-Năsăud, Alba, Argeş and Buzău) and 9 counties with 15-30 products. They are situated in the center and north of the country and many of them have a mountain landform or integrate territories with a strong local identity like Bucovina and Maramureş.

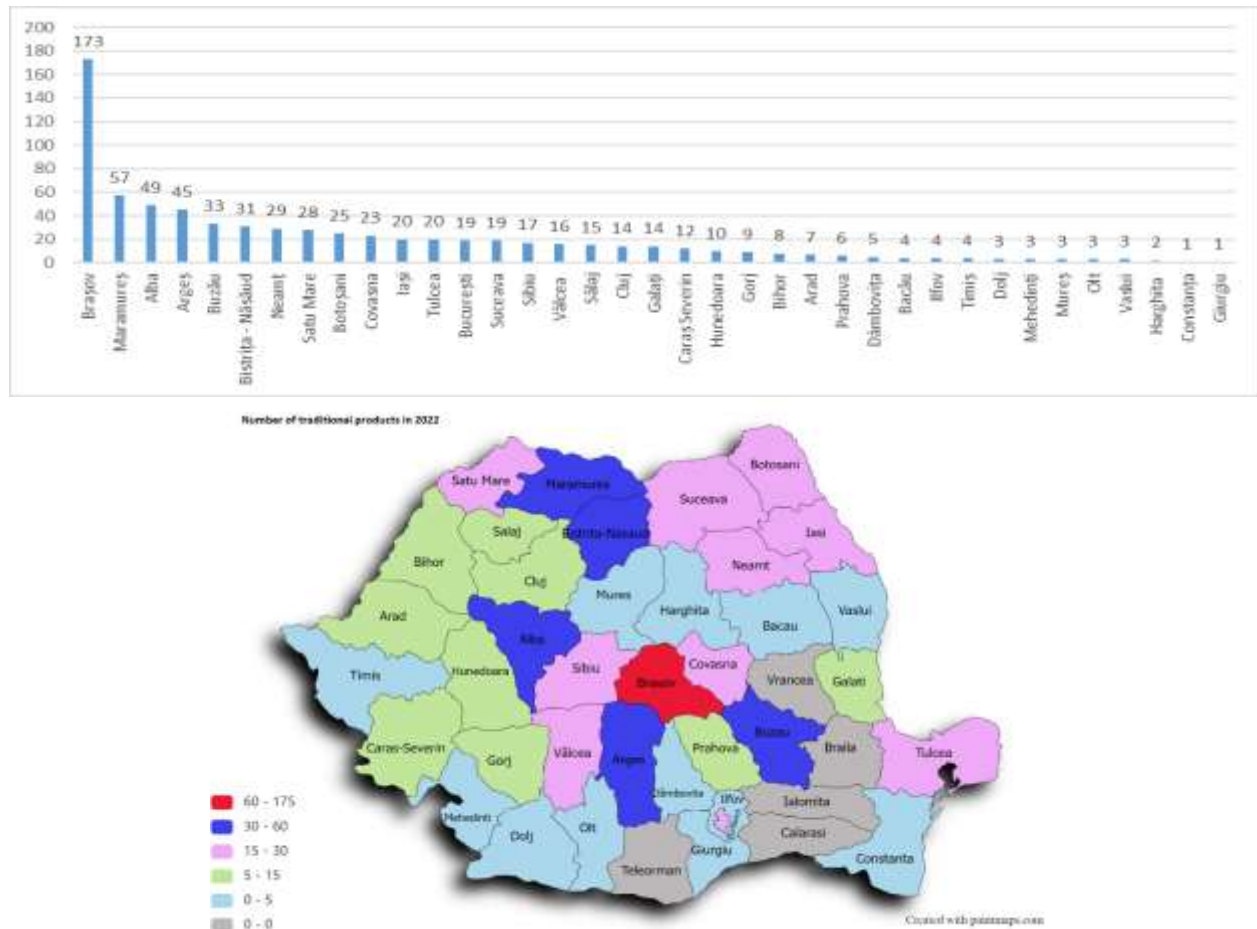


Fig. 2. The traditional products by counties (2022)

Source: Own determinations based on National Register of Traditional Products 2022 [9].

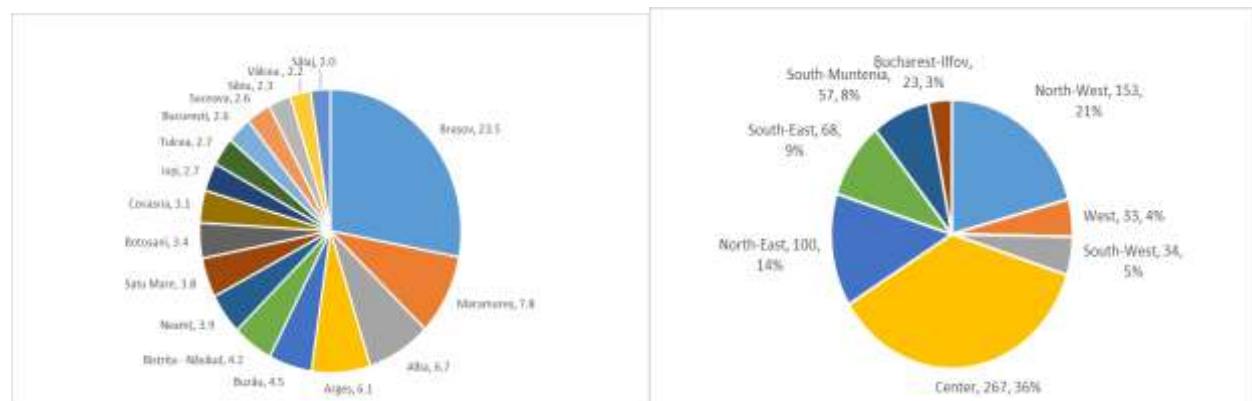


Fig. 3. Regional distribution of traditional products (2022)

Source: Own determinations based on National Register of Traditional Products 2022 [9].

Looking at the regional distribution, we find that 36% of the products are produced in the Central region (267 products), 21% in the North-West region (153 products) and 14% in the North-East region (100 products) (Figure 3).

The regional distribution of producers in 2022

Brasov County has the most producers of traditional products (23), 4 counties have 10-20 producers (Maramureş, Alba, Argeş and Buzău) and 6 counties have 5-10 producers. Most counties have less than 5 producers (Figure 4).

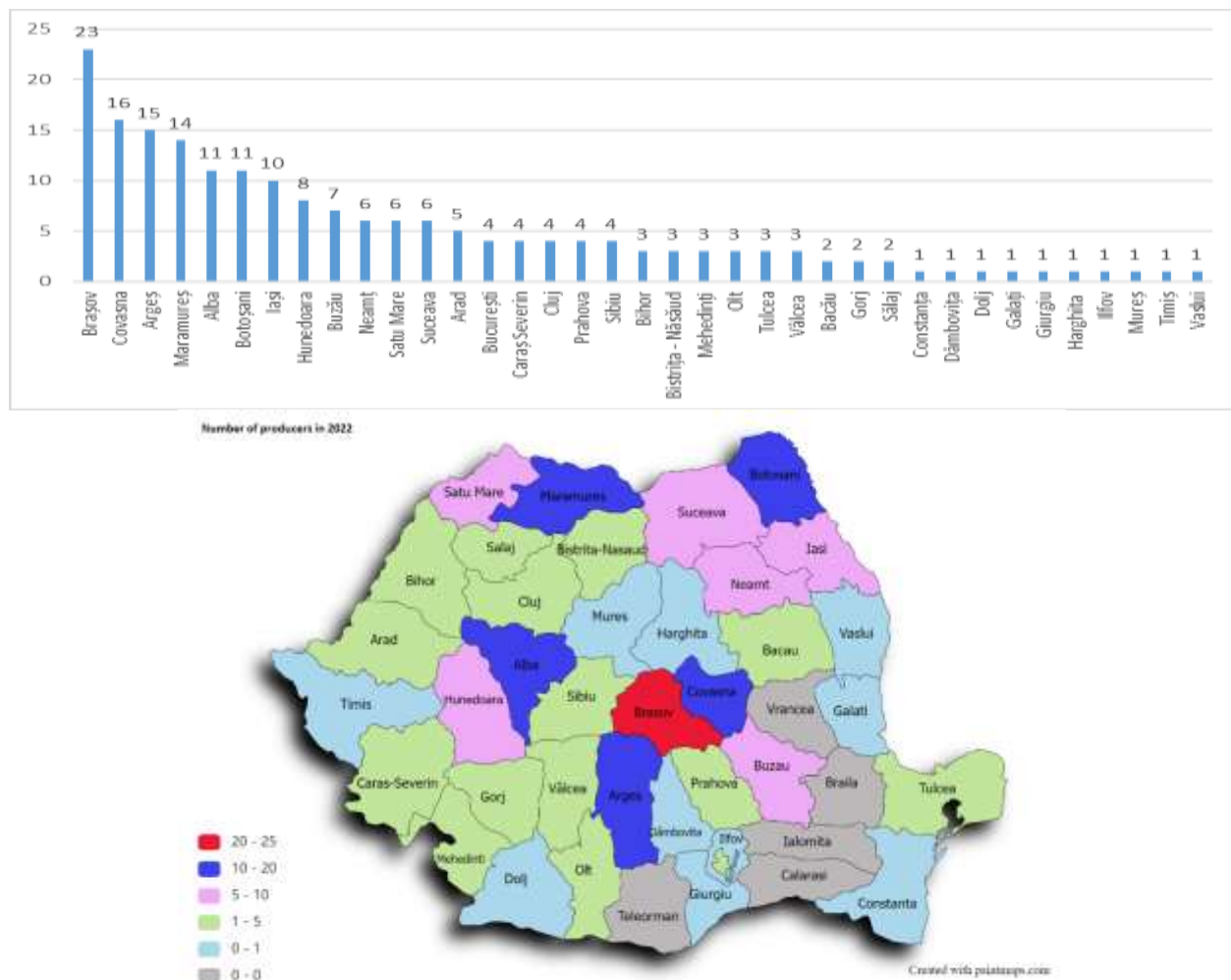


Fig. 4. The producers by counties (2022)

Source: Own determinations based on National Register of Traditional Products 2022 [9].

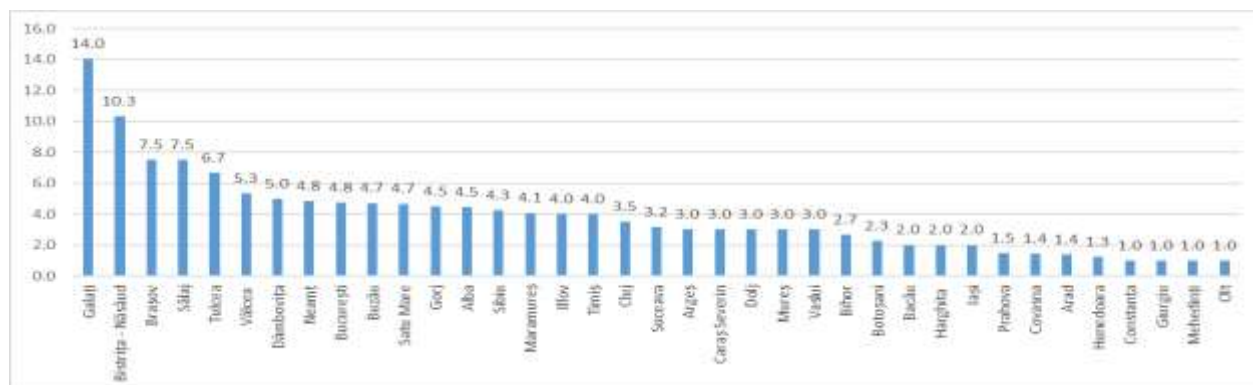


Fig. 5. The average number of traditional products per producer by county (2022)

Source: Own determinations based on National Register of Traditional Products 2022 [9].

If we analyze the average number of certified products of a producer, we find that Braşov County is only on the third place (Figure 5). The first place is occupied by a producer from Galati County, which has 14 approved products. Half of the counties have, on average, around 3-5 products approved per producer.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the traditional products from Romania have developed in the last decade, reaching a value of 735 products in 2022. These products are primarily obtained from meat and milk, but we observe a high development of products from vegetables and fruits in the Sub-Carpathian hills. The regional model of distribution is characterized by a concentration of producers in mountainous and rural areas. Most of the products are obtained in the Center, North-West, and North-East regions, especially in Brasov County (24%).

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