

THE ANALYSIS OF THE POTENTIAL FOR THE ECONOMIC RE-LAUNCH OF CĂLĂRAȘI COUNTY

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Abstract

The Romanian society being affected by the restructuring process, the economy of Călărași county has a potential to re-launch, based on the following strengths: agricultural potential, technical potential, water resources that can enhance the development of fish breeding, commercial, industrial and tourism activities on the Danube and inner rivers; the geographical position at the border and at the crossroads of the transit roads between Asia and East Europe; access to the navigable way. Calarași county being close to the Danube creates a remarkable tourist attractiveness, but insufficiently used. The big number of islands with a unique picturesque, the ramification of the main waters through unique braches, create both a natural scenery which involves relaxation but also good conditions for the sportive hunting and fishing. The present research analyses the natural, economic and human potential that Calarași county posses, starting from the premises that its agriculture constitutes a main sector in the occupied county economy (47.2%) as well the agricultural surface (84%) from the total county surface.

Key words: active rural population, agricultural structures, county natural potential, employment rate, migration in the rural area

INTRODUCTION

Calarasi is situated in South-East part of Romania, on the left branch of the Danube, on the border with Bulgaria, the central part is intersected by the parallel of 44 ° north latitude and the meridian of 27 ° east longitude. The county has 5,088 km², representing 2.13% of Romania's surface.

The main natural wealth is the agricultural lands which occupy about 84% of the county surface (CJ Calarasi, 2012).

The industry is mainly focused on manufacturing activities. Main branches represented in the county are: food and beverage industry, textile, pulp and paper, non-metallic mineral products industry, metallurgy and metal products, industry transport activities. In the manufacturing industry, the share is held by the food industry, which in the first six months of 2011, contributed with 59.1% to the county's industrial production, followed by textile clothing industry, with 19.7%, pulp and paper industry 9.8% and other non-metallic mineral products by 4.2% (County Department of Statistics, 2012).

Agriculture is the main economic activity. Its base is the agricultural area of 420,780 ha, respectively, 2.9% of the agricultural area of the country, the 8th place in size among counties. Of this area, 413,135 ha is arable land, respectively, 4.4% of arable land and 5th place among counties (DARD Department of Agriculture and Rural Development Călărași, 2012)

MATERIALS AND METHODS

For the study of rural realities of Călărași three specific research methods were used: dynamic economic analysis, deductive and quantitative, SWOT analysis, economic survey or participative research that involves collecting information on site using the research techniques "questionnaire" and "interview".

The study on analysis the economic potential of Călărași county had as starting point the analysis and processing of data and information from the following sources: Statistical Yearbook Călărași - Edition 2012 Socio - economic profile of Călărași county, Romania's pre-accession economic plan, statistical data of the Chamber of Commerce

and Industry and the County Agency of Labour Force Training and Employment, Statistics of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development; Călărași county Development Strategy, elaborated by the county council, Publications of the National Institute of Statistics and data obtained following the questionnaire.

The starting point in identifying potential development of the county was to analyze the social, economic and institutional situation that led to the identification of key issues the county faces with, and its potential in order to establish strategic directions that support and is in line with the general purpose the development strategy at regional level.

The collaboration with local and county stakeholders allowed the development of a partnership vision of economic and social particularities of the county, identifying the problem tree and SWOT analyses.

The results obtained from the interpretation of this set of data led to the elaboration of a research report, based on which action directions were identified for business development, human resources development, development of local public administration; social services development.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The immediate effect of the application of the Land Law in Călărași county agriculture, the restructuring of the farming units by small individual land prevalence has diminished positive implications of the privatization process, generating an economic model less viable in terms of resources and efficiency. These structures determined high consume of labour, which attract a trained unemployed labour force in other sectors of activity, in agriculture, representing the small farmers who produce for their own consumption and for selling products on the agri-food market. Further on (Figure 1.) presents the evolution of production and agricultural services and its dynamics, on industry and sectors, during 2003-2011, expressed in thousand lei prices of the period. It is found out thus an increasing trend of the total production from

7797059000 thousand in 2003 to USD 16,884,651,000 in 2005 and 2,041,731,000 RON in 2011 (County Department of Statistics, INS, 2012). Within the total production, the share is held by crop production, followed by animal production, and agricultural services.

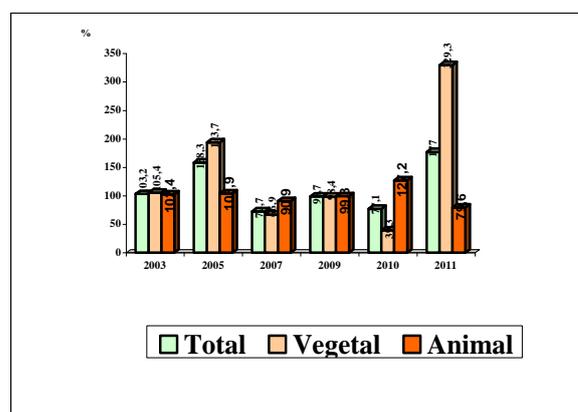


Figure 1. Dynamics of total agriculture sector production and sectors (previous year = 100)

Of the total area of 292,154 ha, 112,895 ha are operated in associative system, 93,609 hectares are exploited and 85,650 ha lease system are constituted as individual holdings. On land use categories, we note that the individual holdings of the 85,650 ha, 77,646 ha are arable land, 7,750 hectares are vineyards, 198 hectares are occupied by pastures and meadows and 56 ha of orchards. Within farms of associative type (SA + SC + AF) of the 112,895 ha, 112,777 ha is arable land and 118 ha are covered with vineyards.

The same situation is met in companies established by leasing land where, in the 93,609 ha, only 2 ha are covered with vineyards and 5 ha of pastures 93,602 ha difference, is arable land. Although in most towns in the county the system of land operating is made by leasing and associations, such as localities: Cuza Vodă - 74% and 9% rented association, Lupșanu - 78% and 14% leased association, Ulmu - 95% in association Ulmeni - 81% and 9% rented association and so on, there are localities where over 50% of the agricultural area is operated in individual system, such as Căscioarele - 85%, Tămădău - 65% ,

Belciugatele - 60%, Fundulea - 61% Budești - 59%, Frumușani and Nana - 58% etc (DARD Calarasi). Given the current size of individual farms in Romania, the rational use of land lease requires stimulation of the partnership and ownership concentration by buying farmland.

The Legislation in force enables local increase in the size of farms and encourage land use directly by the owner or lessee ([http://www.scribub.com/economie/agricultur a/](http://www.scribub.com/economie/agricultur)). The aging of rural population, as well as the population in general has implications in many areas of agricultural structures, the quality of labour resources, managerial leadership, organization of production, the type of technical progress. In terms of main demographic indicators, the population of Călărași county has a number of features which give generally a balanced character to its structures and its evolutionary processes.

Regarding the total population of the county, it is on a declining level from 341,631 persons in 1990 to 310,823 persons in 2011. On the same level it is also situated the total population on average: urban-rural, so the urban population declined from 131,260 persons in 1990 to 120,483 persons in 2011, while the rural population reduced to 210371 to 192396 persons in the same period (County Department of Statistics, INS, 2012).

Therefore, within 21 years, the county population as a whole showed a continuous decline. The general context of demographic aging, the share remained relatively constant, varying from 63.0% in 2002 to 61.1% in 2003, and in 2011 reached to 61.5% of the population; as regards the population age structure, population is found in the age group of 60 years and over increased from 16.6% in 2003 to 17.31% in 2011, while the population in the age group 0-14 years, registered a declining trend (County Department of Statistics, INS, 2012).

The aging rural population, as well as the general population has implications in many areas on agricultural structures, on the quality of labour resources, managerial leadership, organization of production, the type of technical progress. In the total population,

gender distribution is relatively normal: 49.0% men and 51.0% women, the same proportion as the national level. Further on Below we will present the evolution of the population employed in agriculture compared to other sectors of the economy, the Calarasi, where, with a continuing trend of steady employment (Figure 2) on the county economy as a whole (from 101,4 thousand persons to the end of 2003 it reached 101, 3 thousand persons in 2011), the agriculture developed specifically as a result of land privatization and inadequate technical facilities (County Department of Statistics, INS, 2012). Significant changes occurred in the structure of the active population on activity sectors, but also within each sector separately. The number of persons employed in agriculture in the period 2003-2011, showed an accentuated decline from 56.1% to 47.3%.

In terms of industry and constructions, the number of persons employed in these activities had little oscillating evolution from 16.9% to 16.6% for industry and from 2.7% to 4.1% for construction in the analysed period. Instead, services increased from 24.3% to 32% in the same period. Note that the number of employees increased in the analyzed period, respectively from 43,975 persons in 2003 to 47,498 persons in 2011 (Figure 2).

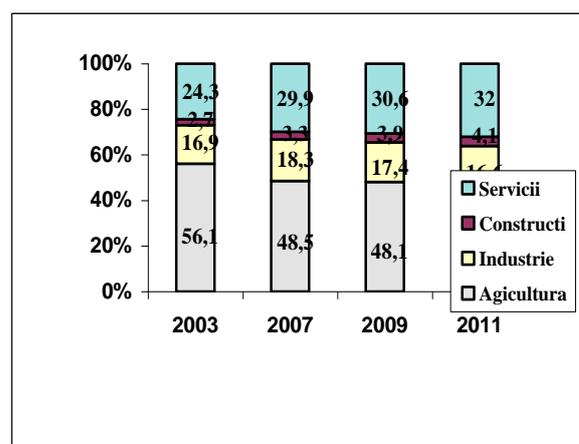


Figure 2. Structure of civil employed population on main economy sectors according to CAEN Rev. 1, in Călărași county

Note the activity population structure by age and sex in 2011, this proportion holds persons aged between 30 and 40 years followed by persons between 40 and 50 years in both sexes, satisfactory aspect for agriculture characterized by aging and feminization (AJOFM Calarasi, 2012). The share of women in total employed population is between 15% (Fundeni locality) and 45% (localities: Oltenița, Modelu, Ulmeni, Sărulești, Roseți and Radovanu).

Compared with the situation until 2003, there is a significant decrease, with positive socio-economic consequences, of the participation of the population in the age group over 65 years, in the social and economic activities of agriculture and a relatively high proportion; an increasing trend of persons looking for work or those able and unemployed.

The trends on immediately following period make us appreciate the active employed population will continue to decrease, while increasing the number of unemployed persons. If during the period 2003 - 2006 the number of unemployed has increased by 1.4 thousand persons (from 8,600 persons to 10,000 persons), with an unemployment rate rising from 7.8% to 9% in five years, the number of unemployed decreased by about 5,000 people, the unemployment rate reaching 4.6% in 2009, rising to 5.1% in 2011.

This is the result of development in the county textile industry and food industry, which attracted particularly labour among women, female unemployment rate is 4.3%, the rate of unemployment among men is 6% (figure 3).

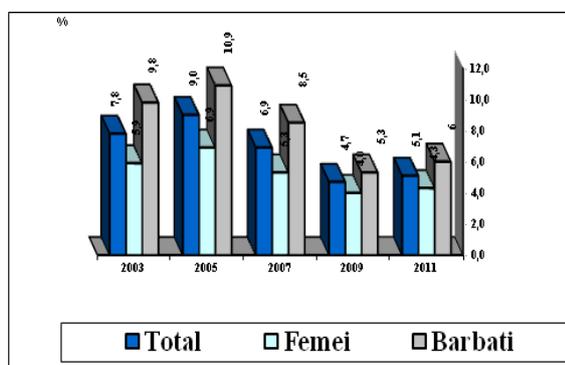


Figure 3. Unemployment rate registered at the end of the year in Călărași county

Special attention is needed for the harmonious development of the rural areas in the European area by encouraging private initiative for processing, marketing, distribution, storage of agricultural production and agriculture related services and activities in order to raise the living standards of rural community members (Current Situation Analysis NDP 2007-2013).

We elaborated for this purpose, intervention sectors, on measures, with the aimed objectives, which include the main aspects on which action must be taken in order to relaunch the economy of Calarasi county (Table 1).

In rural areas 49.1% of Calarasi county lives in the county's total population, mostly employed in agriculture and related activities (ADR Muntenia Sud, 2012).

Table 1. Intervention sectors in economic re-launch of Călărași county

<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Intervention sectors</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure a natural environment for improvement and development of activities in agricultural sector; facilitate access of the rural community members to support, social, physical infrastructure; business support in agriculture and rural development sector; stimulate transformation of peasant houses in family farms with commercial character, that bring substantial incomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> modernisation of technical infrastructure of rural communities investments and modernisations in agricultural and fish product marketing, purchase of new agricultural equipment for vegetal farms, etc. rehabilitation and modernisation of education and medical units in the rural area. forestation of some areas under continuous degradation by creating protection forest areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attract specific funds in order to increase the economic potential of related important activities within county economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> development and modernisation of fish farms, as well as extension of activities in aquaculture sector exploitation of food industry potential
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> diversification of alternative activities, non agricultural ones, less developed at present: rural tourism, local brand products preservation, with positive impact on communities in the rural area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> development of crafts (production of construction materials: bricks, lime, wood, bean, etc.); construction of agro tourist pensions; preservation of traditions and local brand products.

For this reason, strategic objectives for efficiency and diversification in agriculture and rural development mean development of

the education, health, the municipal technical and business development in agriculture. Encourage conversion of farms in family farms with commercial character, bringing substantial revenue, will be an important process in reducing the flow of young labour force migrating to urban areas.

Agriculture-related activities represented by forestry, fisheries, aquaculture, beekeeping, veterinary and phytosanitary sector, food industry, etc. are important for the development of county economy, especially rural economic development by creating opportunities, helping rural harmonious development of the whole European area (situation analysis NDP 2007-2013). Strengthening and diversification of agriculture related complementary nature allows achieving local priorities to promote job creation, poverty reduction, community economic stabilization and final results raise the standard of living and quality of life.

The human resource development in Romania implies the existence and implementation of a strategy that is based on capital investment in basic infrastructure, provision of equipment for training courses and training schemes for trainers.

This strategy implies the development of institutional structures for the efficient management of the Structural Funds and strengthening of regional and local authorities to develop policies to reduce regional imbalances in the labour market. Human resources development strategy is based on increasing adaptability of workers to the market and actively combat social exclusion. The conditions for successful strategy are improvement of education system and stopping its decline and its adaptation to the market requirements.

In the rural area of Călărași there are local development plans aiming especially the infrastructure, requiring more complex development plans, taking into account all elements relating to rural concerning traditions, culture, natural resources, human resources, community and social relations. Among these are related to the demographic policy of the county, and the country for

which the negative natural increase is a concern (CJ Călărași, 2012)

CONCLUSIONS

One way to revive the rural area in regional economic context is the development and promotion of its specific sector of services and activities based on the exploitation of local resources.

The potential of the rural area, largely viewed only through the context of existing agricultural areas and activities related to their work relies on the existence of specific resources not sufficiently used so far and that can be an alternative and also an opportunity to diversify the rural economy related to activities such as agriculture and with non-agricultural specific in agro-food processing, manufacturing and agro processing.

In the current economic situation, the development of this sector and exploitation based on the revival of traditional crafts and using skilled labour is essential for reviving the socio - economic development of the rural area.

The population aging observed in the region requires implementing policies that lead to active aging adults. Retired population growth means national development and expansion of services for the specific needs of the elderly (community care, home care, pain relief, medical centers, day centers, community psychiatric, medical and social facilities) offer development services travel for elderly (quantity and quality by providing travel agents - experienced guides take care of retirees), the development of aesthetics and beauty. It is recommended to increase school registration to qualified areas: tourism and food, cosmetic and hygiene of the human body

South Muntenia Region is a region with high growth opportunities with superior economic results than the national average, being on the third pace at national level. Sectors that will improve in the next period: construction, financial transactions, tourism and agriculture. We recommend an increase in the level of education in these areas.

Industry in Calarasi county is characterized by a high degree of diversity. Calarasi county is considered a less industrialized town than Argeş and Prahova counties, Northwest and Central Regions, which are highly industrialized. In industrial production of the county manufacturing industry dominates, mainly the activities of metallurgy, clothing, food, textiles etc.

If on the whole there is a decline in demand for work in this area, instead, there is a lack of specialists in almost all areas related to manufacturing industry. It is recommended the education for vocational qualifications in the industry.

In order to eliminate the disparities existing in the rural area, actions are necessary that can promote rural development dynamism and that can allow using all types of its potential. In order to improve the situation in the rural area it is needed to support specific activities and to improve the economic value of agriculture.

The region agriculture plays a decisive role in creating and maintaining within the rural communities the environment for specific activities development. Following the market demand for a higher quality and diversified products it is necessary to develop and modernize productions based on modern and ecological technologies, able to ensure the increase of the agriculture competitiveness.

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