

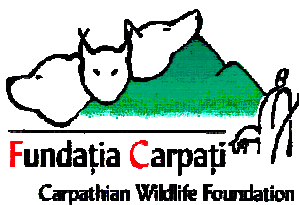
Vultures in Romania

Report on the status of livestock raising in the Romanian Carpathians

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1. Historical information

Agriculture has always had a great importance in Romanian economy. In past centuries the country used to be considered the “grain field” of Europe, due to its huge surfaces of fertile arable land and grasslands.

During the former communist regime, under Nicolae Ceausescu, which lasted until the revolution in 1989, the main farm types were the state farms (*Intreprindere Agricola de Stat*) and the collective farms (*Cooperativa Agricola Colectiva de Productie*). The state farms comprised land that before the beginning of the communist regime had been state owned, whereas the collective farms comprised so-said “privately” owned lands that were collectivised against the will of the population. After the revolution in 1989 privatisation of the collective farms began whereas the state farms remained state owned. According to the new law of land ownership (*Legea fundului funciar-18/1991*) former landowners, who had put their land into the farms, were given back up to 10 hectares land even if they had previously owned more. However, accurate records of former landownership had been destroyed during Ceausescus regime. Also, the descendents of the families that owned the lands before collectivisation in the 1940's now numbered more than the original owners. Therefore, the restitution process caused a relatively chaotic new form of private landownership. Starting from 2000, with the new law on reconstitution of the right of land property (*Pentru reconstituirea dreptului de proprietate asupra terenurilor agricole și celor forestiere-1/2000*), former owners received up to 50 ha land. However, by then the land surfaces were already fragmented and rarely an entire surface of 50 ha was available for the owners. The consequence was that people either received different smaller scattered patches of land or they received compensation in the form of wheat if no land was available. As a result of this policy and of the fact that already before collectivisation land had been very fragmented, most of it is now subdivided in small land parcels belonging to many different landowners.

One of the first steps of the new government after the revolution was to encourage agricultural production and to increase imports of food items. Output prices were kept artificially low and input prices were heavily subsidized. Still, the strong inflation lead to increasing impoverishment of farmers and to the use of obsolete technologies and of decreased investment.

When the old collective farms were dismantled private farmers did not take over the livestock because they could not afford to keep large animal numbers. Consequently, huge livestock numbers were slaughtered throughout the early 90ties. The 15% increase of livestock numbers in private hands did not manage to compensate for this huge decline. Therefore, the national flock decreased by 52% from 1990 to 2001. The most consistent decrease was among pig numbers (52%), followed by sheep and goats (37%) and cattle (22%).

In the year 2000 agriculture accounted only for 11.4% of the Romanian GDP, 41% less than in 1995. However, the number of people active in this sector had increased from 33.5% of the labour force in 1995 to 40.8% in 2000. This is probably due to the fact that the work that used to be done by machines in state farms has now been replaced by seasonally hired work force. Still, presently most people who work in the agricultural sector are self-employed (48.1%) or unpaid family workers (44.9%). Only 0.8% of all are regularly employed in state holdings or collective farms. Salaries in agriculture are low, the average in 2000 being of 76 EUR per month.

2. The present state of livestock raising

In 2001 in Romania 36% of the income from agricultural production was from livestock raising. In this country there are There were 2,9 million cattle, 8 million pigs and 8 million sheep and goats (Tab. 1), of which 97% were privately owned. Large proportions of these are kept ranging on mountain pastures during summer, especially sheep and cattle.

Table 1. Livestock numbers present in Romania in 2002, as recorded in the National Agricultural Census

	Number	Density (heads/100ha)
Cattle	2.870.782	12,04
Pigs	8.259.680	34,64
Sheep	7.238.404	30,36
Goats	744.272	3,12
<i>Total</i>	<i>19.113.138</i>	<i>80,17</i>

Source: General Agricultural Census 2002 (INSSE)

Main products from livestock raising are meat (1,5 million tons/year) and milk (5 million hl/year). Meat production is mainly from pigs (40%) and cattle (25%). In the dairy sector the vast majority is of bovine origin whereas sheep account only for 5% of the milk production. Sheep wool used to be an important product until the end of the communist regime. However, due to increasing imports of heavily subsidized wool from abroad, the Romanian market has suffered a serious collapse with a consequent drastic reduction of wool prices. Thus, the contribution of this product in the livestock market is minimal.

In the county of Hunedoara there is a livestock density of 19,6 cattle, 42,2 pigs and 42,2 sheep and goats per 100 ha. Since the county is made mainly of mountains and foothills, where livestock is usually raised extensively, it can be estimated that most of the cattle and of the sheep and goats are kept on the mountain pastures. In the Retezat National Park these densities are estimated to be slightly smaller (16,3 cattle and 20,1 sheep/ on 100 ha). However, the National Park territory is surrounded on the west, south and east by large mountain ranges on which livestock raising is practised.

In the territory of Retezat National Park the number and distribution of livestock changes from year to year. However, the main livestock activities, in this case the mountain camps, remain more or less the same. According to the last official census, of 2003, there were 18 different pastures in the park territory, on which a total of 10.990 sheep, 252 cattle, 245 horses and 14 donkeys (Tab. X) were kept. These pastures are all located in the higher altitudes of the Mountain range (Fig. X).

Name of the pasture	2003
Arades	970 sheep
Zlata	0
Secari	100 horses
Zanoguta	0
Zanoaga	700 sheep
Slavei	970 sheep
Bucura	140 cows; 30 horses; 4 buffalos
Peleaga	1100 sheep; 20 horses; 3 donkeys
Papusa	1100 sheep; 20 horses
Piciorul Coltului and Fata Retezatului	320 sheep; 14 horses
Stanisoara and Pietrele	108 cows
Valea Rea and Gales	61 horses
Dragsanu	2200 sheep; 11 donkeys
Stanuleti	1000 sheep
Dalma cu Brazi	800 sheep
Scorota	530 sheep
Buta	300 sheep
Piule and Plesa	1000 sheep

3. Organization of livestock raising

From the organizational point of view two main types of livestock raising systems can be identified.

- In the lowland areas most livestock raising is done intensively, in big private or state-owned commercial farms. High densities of livestock, mainly cattle, pigs and poultry, are kept on relatively small areas, most of the time in stables. The land is heavily exploited and fertilized so as to get as much return as possible. Big parts of this livestock are sold on the international market.
- In the mountain areas livestock raising is mainly done extensively. It is characterized by low stocking rates and the animals are mainly kept on grasslands rather than in stables. Livestock kept this way is mainly made up by local breeds sheep and cattle, particularly adapted to harsh

climatic conditions. Most of this livestock is managed in a way that is commonly known as pendulation: In winter the livestock is kept at home by the animal owners whereas in summer most of it is taken onto mountain camps by professional shepherds.

In few areas in the Carpathian Mountains transhumance is still practiced, “the alternate and periodic movement of flocks between two different geographic and climatic regions”. In Romania transhumance is done exclusively with sheep. They are taken 200-300 km on foot from mountain villages in the transhumant centres of southern Transylvania mainly to the lowlands on the south side of the Carpathians, but also to Moldavia and to winter pastures in Northern Transylvania. Transhumance used to be not only the main way of grazing livestock throughout centuries, but also an important means of communication between countries, and a way of transmitting cultures and uses.

A mountain summer camp typically consists of a wooden hut on a public pasture, the livestock (generally sheep and cattle), the fences used for controlling the livestock, and the shepherds who take care of the livestock.

The income of a summer livestock camp is made of the revenue from cheese production as well as of the grazing tax, the amount of money each animal owner pays for having his animals guarded. With this income all the expenses must be paid: the salaries and food for the shepherds, the food for the livestock guarding dogs and the general expenses of the camp. The leftover will be the personal earning of the person who administers the budget, usually called “summer camp organiser”.

The flocks in the camps can belong to one single owner, or, most commonly, can be composed by the livestock belonging to several people in the community.

Damage compensation and insurance

Article 15 of the Law of Hunting Grounds and of Protection of Game Species (103/1996) states that damage caused by protected game species (such as bears and wolves) on livestock has to be compensated by the authority in charge of the hunting ground, in cases where the domestic animals were properly guarded. However, the law does not state what criteria have to be fulfilled by the farmer for the livestock to be “properly guarded”. Also, procedures for requesting reimbursement for damage are extremely complicated. Furthermore, the number of livestock raisers who are aware of this law is limited. As a consequence very little public compensation is paid for livestock losses caused by wild animals.

Legal background

Livestock management is not regulated by one specific **law**, but most regulations can be found mainly in the following laws (see also chapter 3):

- Law of livestock raising (*Legea Zootehniei* - 76/2002)

- New law on reconstitution of the right of land property (1/2000)
- Lease law (*Legea arendarii* - 16/1994)
- Law of environmental protection (*Legea protectiei mediului* - 137/1995)
- Law of hunting grounds and game protection (*Legea fondurilor de vanatoare si protectiei vanatului* - 103/1996)
- Sanitary-veterinary law (*Legea sanitara-veterinara* - 75/1991)

These laws provide general guidelines on how livestock and pastures must be managed. The staff of the **Forest Administration** has the duty to prevent the shepherds to break the laws imposed by the law of forestry whereas the **Territorial Agricultural Centres** (CAT) are in charge of controlling the status of grasslands placed outside the settlements. On the other hand, the **Agricultural Consultancy Offices** (CCA) have the duty to provide technical and legal consultancy to farmers.

The local council, represented by the **community administration**, decides about details of the management of livestock that are not foreseen by the national legislation. These regulations are reported on the formal agreements that are made between the community administration and the summer camp organizers.

The agents of the **Sanitary-Veterinary Authority** are in charge of checking the health status of the animals, the hygienic status of the camp as well as the quality of the products that will be sold on the markets. This body underlies the MAFWE and is represented on the county level by Sanitary-Veterinary Directorates (DSV), which are subdivided into three services:

1. Service of prevention of epizooties and of sanitary-veterinary assistance: this body is responsible for the regular vaccination of livestock and for giving assistance to the livestock raisers about health issues.
2. Service of hygiene and food control: this body is responsible for the control of all food products that are sold and of the hygienic situation of farm holdings.
3. Sanitary-veterinary police: this is the body directly responsible for law enforcement, for applying fines and for penal prosecution.

The state, through the DSV, comes up for all clinical examinations, blood tests, organ tests, disinfection in the farms. In addition, it pays the obligatory prophylaxis for infectious diseases.

4. Challenges for future agriculture

Romania submitted its application for EU membership in 1995 and will probably be ready for accession by 2007. For this the country is in the process of aligning its legislation to EU requirements, which among others implies the development of rural development and agri-environment strategies. To achieve these objectives Romania signed a financing agreement with SAPARD (Special Accession Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development), a special EU tool made to assist the Accession States in the implementation of the community acquis.

The envisaged accession of Romania to the EU is making living conditions of small-scale livestock raisers increasingly difficult. Cheese, the main product of traditional livestock raising, could not at present be exported to EU Member States unless substantial investments in infrastructure are made to meet the rigorous EU hygiene, welfare and quality requirements. In the meantime, imports from the European Community, including cheese, are increasing at extremely fast levels. Thus, in the future there is likely to be a significant reduction in the demand for cheese produced at mountain livestock camps.

There is still a lack of an effective legislation that fights this trend. In the last decade the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) has foreseen a series of tools that aim at reducing the negative effects of agriculture on the environment and at the same moment promote small-scale farming in all Member States.

In order to align with the requirements of the EC the Romanian government has designed a National Development Plan for the period 2007-2013, which includes guidelines for "Development of the Rural Economy and the Growth of the Productivity in the Agricultural Sector". This strategy is based on the following legal background:

Law of mountain regions (*Legea muntelui* – 347/2004)

Government Decision about the approval of the strategy of sustainable development in mountain areas (*Hotarare de guvern privind aprobarea a strategiei de dezvoltare durabila a zonei montane* – HG 1779/2004)

Law about the stimulation of the use of SAPARD funds through risk absorption by the guarantee funds (*Legea privind stimularea absorbtiei fondurilor SAPARD prin preluarea riscului de catre fondurile de garantare* – 218/2005)

Common regulation of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and Rural Development and the Ministry of Administration and Interior Affairs about the definition and characterization of rural areas (*Ordin comun al MAPDR si MAI privind definirea si caracterizarea spatiului rural* – 143/610/2005)

Law about the enhancement of investments in agriculture (*Legea privind stimularea investitiilor in agricultura* – 231/2005)

Government Decision for the approvement of the Program for the support of agricultural associations and producers in mountain areas for the purchase of new specific equipment, financed by the state budget (*Hotarare de guvern pentru aprobarea programului privind sprijinirea asociatiilor si producatorilor agricoli din zona Montana pentru achizitionarea de dotari specifice, noi, cu finantare de la bugetul de stat* – 562/2005)

However, the on-the-ground implementation of this legal framework is still weak. Therefore, up to now efforts to support small-scale farmers and to environmentally protect agricultural land are still at their very first stages. Also the development of agri-environment schemes is in its initial phase and there is no guarantee that these will address the needs of traditional pastoral systems.