

Some Trends and Risks of Pastoral Occupation and Agricultural Consequences for the Romanian Mountain Village – The Results and Conclusions from a Sociological Research in Rucăr Village (Argeş)

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Abstract

During the sociological research and in the elaboration of this paper, the authors were challenged by a number of threats to the existence and development of the Romanian mountain village, especially to the pastoral occupations. The major trend and risk are the abandonment of sheep breeding, with negative effects on the local food products and the drastic decrease of the sheep breeding population, which will never be able to provide alternatives to the development of the agriculture by promoting certain agro-tourism activities in Rucăr village. The analysis of the traditional occupational impact requested the application of a sociological research, effected on the field, in order to gain statistic decision support, adjusted to the specific of animals breeding activities and especially to sheep. The most important risk is that traditional sheep breeders tend to become mere historic references and are not replaced by other professions or occupations in rural areas, which seem to disintegrate due to lack of support, to much too high burdens... The final remark underlines that profitability of the sheep breeding occupation was never limited to its specific food products, and covered, instead, sometimes unimaginable, in terms of social and even cultural forms.

Keywords: pastoral occupation, sociological research, sheep breeding, agro-tourism.

1. Introduction

Under conditions of prolonged recession, there can be observed multiplying threats to livestock, thereby, farming traditions related to this particular national economy or traditional rural mountain type, such as:

- grazing abandonment with negative consequences on the food derived from local and memorable traditions;

- severe diminishment of the pastoral mountain people number and the average number of household members;

- disjunction hostel - Stan is maintained only in the context of artificial family relationships between the two types of unit owners of traditional or modern type ;

- excessive aging of rural population, lack of a reasonable replacement rates among young people as compared with the old ones , allowing survival of the main rural occupations related to animal husbandry [1];

- the imminent disappearance of traditional local food, culinary originality default loss in programs, projects or agro- services;

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- change of the original usefulness of agricultural land by desertification processes, non systematic;
- gradual changes in specific occupational and traditional pastoral trends under the impact of tourism, in order not to encourage but to enable preservation of customs, traditions, etc. home products. This paper tries to identify some of these real threats in the area recognized by the village livestock Rucăr and to become a national agro-tourism attraction.

2. Materials and methods

The geographical area of research was represented by Rucăr city (with the following villages: Rucăr, Săticul Săticul top and bottom), where agro-tourism development and specific features are known as local and traditional pastoral "ugurenilor" name under which they are known as shepherds in the villages located in the southern slope of the Carpathians, at the east of the Olt river bed [2]. The research method used was that of individual semi-structured interview (table no. 1) effected in 23 households (10 households are owned by traditional shepherds, 9 households guesthouse owners and craftsmen, four households owners with traditional grazing coats and hats woven traditional lamb) which were only pre- themes around which the discussion was to act respecting the specific methodological requirements that distinguish it from alternative structured interview (questions for observing excessive, but their pre-established order [3]). Semi-structured interview guide that was the basis of sociological research

Major topics detailed in writing from the dialogue family farm livestock (shepherds) and owners of guesthouses.

1. Knowledge of traditional pastoral traditions
Note: It will identify key local religious holidays pastoral impact (related to climbing in the mountains, calving lambs, barren sheep buck, or feast of local Nedeia Campeneasca for shepherds wives and other holidays). Usually everything which is connected to identify whether shepherds remained traditionalists within the meaning of knowledge in the area of occupational habits.
2. Fairs traditional religious and mythological occupations marked in the calendar. Note: The fairs represent a double impact in the area (a religious holiday is backed by a traditional

shepherd custom related to the sale of specific sheep breeding products, from cheese to wool,

- I. Nedeia Nedeia or local tourism and its impact
 - II. Other religious events and specific pastoral area
 - III. Other festivals (focusing on the sacrality, mythology, etc.).
 3. Sheepfold products and their organoleptic characteristics, method of preparation, storage, recovery (average price), specific consumption per unit of product
 4. Working on use of products obtained from milk (whey, buttermilk, scrap cashier)
 5. Fold increase in the pigs with left cashier
 6. Animals housing (animals sheltered overnight in fenced areas)
 7. Recovery current celebrations of local rural tourism
 8. Number of service tourist accommodation structures, and pastoral products or habits (type, capacity of existing accommodation and in function, the average occupancy rate, the origin of tourists, average length of stay, charges, services offered to tourists)
 9. Occupations new-onset traditional pastoral exploitation in local rural tourism
 10. Workshops and crafts connected with the activities of pastoral and livestock products (pastoral)
 11. Missing or endangered trades that were part of the occupational and traditional public religious and mythological holidays
 12. Tradition in harnessing other resources offered by the mountainous area (wood, water, wild fruits, herbs, etc.).
- In order to correlate information on animal husbandry in the area (with emphasis on grazing sheep) was also effected a type-specific statistical survey of household budget, with major sociological impact, where the final rate exceeded 35% (of 14 household pills only 9 complete response). The reasons were related to the economic crisis, transhumance, distrust, fear of taxes and charges etc. Content summary and key indicators monitored by the survey [4] are detailed in box 1.

Table 1 Main indicators of the average household budget in February 2010 subject research

Name indicates
Total revenue (lei)
1. Input money
2. Output products
2.1. commodities (milk)
2.2. milk preparations
3. Sales slaughtered animal meat
4. Sales of meat
5. Sales livestock
6. Alcoholic drinks
Total expenditure (lei)
I. Household Expenditure
1.1. Consumer Expenditure products
1.2. Petrol expenses
1.3. Household expenditure
II. Direct Expenditure livestock (hay, feed)
III. Other indirect costs
3.1. Expenditure on food animals (costs related to grazing)
3.2. Salaries animal caretakers
3.3. Expenditure on veterinary treatments
3.4. Expenditure on maintenance of grassland owned or leased
3.5. Other expenses
Final financial results

Some of the results of this research are presented below in summary, respecting the confidentiality of data on income and expenditure per family (data shown here has been analyzed and the mean of the family who responded fully on budget).

3. Results and discussion

Some of the alarming results of the analysis, based on structural and biased approach to these data, affected by a relatively reasonable percentage of error in research of this type, about 35-40% (data for the month of February was relatively more stable, data which are not annualized [5] in the form of presentation) are:

- pastoral average household falls below 5 members;
- place the number of sheep reported 100-300 majority in the head;
- increase the number of animals declared and placed in the 8-10 heads;
- the activity has a pronounced seasonality of revenue by distributing the vast majority of the

proceeds into two periods, marked by the Easter holidays and Nedeea pastoral transhumance at the end (March-April and the end of August to September);

- for 10 months a year, pastoral household budget results in a loss, which turns itself into the need for support or subsidy (or through state or other tourist-type activities where funds, programs and projects focusing on European resources could finance the necessary investments);

- medium and long-term trend removed is a very serious income, about 71.4% being the result of occupational self-destruction by killing animals for survival, well above normal rates (average budget that sales of meat from animals slaughtered have resulted 30.1% and 41.3% of live animals);

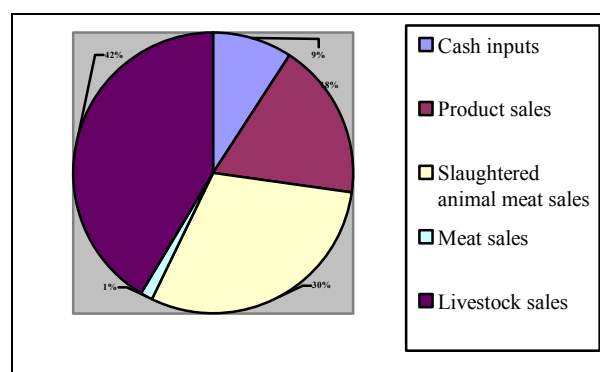


Figure 1. The main income of the average household budget in February 2010 subject research

- local meat products tend to disappear faster than one could expect the pastoral tradition in times of crisis (of meat sales in the average budget cease only 1.3% of revenue);

- increase the level of household own consumption owing to insufficient revenue expenditure during periods of high pressure (the average cost per person for food purchases are on the level of about 160 lei per person per month, the rest of the food necessary for a physically demanding activity, offering a clearly increased self-consumption);

- about 85% of costs are those related to animal feeding cover direct expenses in relation to livestock breeding (hay, feed and livestock investments) or indirect (expenditure related to grazing, the sheepfold, the caretakers, pasture maintenance, etc..);

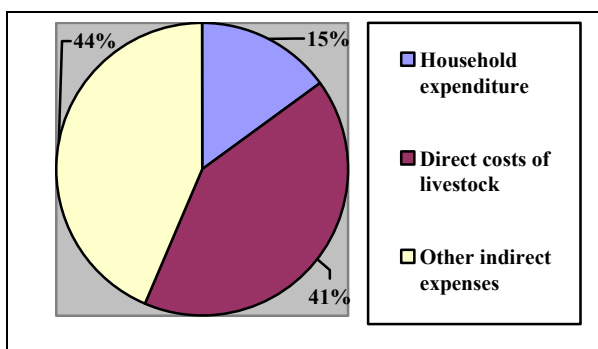


Figure 2. The main expense in the average budget of a household under investigation in February 2010

Fold the unit off or "traditional pastoral economic enterprise" no longer has a stable and efficient business is increasingly becoming bankrupt;

- Survival time solution to dilate the importance of livestock farming, but the structural impact of the herd is one pastoral mix to break up the traditional (cattle become more numerous and mixed cattle and sheep flocks decrease), so it seems that sheep are not "middle of the main traditional pastoral production" [4].

The last two decades have brought changes in flapped and excessive grazing because of a milk product marketing.

- Prepare the butter is anyway less difficult than other milk products; - Preparation of curd, cheese and is a process that is interrelated with rural tourism area;

- Produce changes in the timing of the classic milk and cheese production, relatively continuous effort to provide tourists with the effect of certain abandonment of tradition, changing the structure of livestock, change in quality home products (traditional grazing livestock was limited respectively with the end of April and early May than start preparing cheese curd or normal in August and early September to prepare and store cheese, and in the sour milk or milk products in winter, coming from autumn, from late September and early October is moved to production and maintenance of these specific products).

Rucar area was and it has remained famous due to its present smoked and salted curd. In the archives, there are mentioned three merchants from Brasov Rucăr, since 1503, which have traded wool, skins and cheese [6]. Their place was scrapping Rucăr north of the village today, the land of Idoñoşoiu families, and Simon Sandru. By 1672, the Rucăr Istratie bail was placed at a Turkish merchant, the bail was represented by

3000 lbs curd, providing for and anticipating the rich traditions of present Rucar smoked curd. Smoked curd is prepared from fresh or green, or unleavened bread, cut into pieces which are salted and then left a few days in brine, then put in conservation to smoke.

The curd is smoked so it can be preserved for the winter. The way curd is prepared is salted curd or green fresh unleavened, which is placed in a pot with fresh whey, stirring well with a large spoon, place slices of cheese or green in a pot with boiling water and knead until obtain a dough that can be given shape. After several days, the curd is removed from the pattern and put for the later few weeks to smoke. Here's a story told by Parnate Dumitru, a Rucar shepherd in the mountain corridor, who describes how cheese is put in the basket: „As the shepherds and the food was dealing with known locations around the world though only the shephard. After milking, milk them, then slips and gives shape. But do not put anything other than lamb rennet. Afterwards, it is put on the tableto squeeze well to rise, and put in a bark, which we the Rucar people call buttle. When it yeasts long enough, remove the well-roun weigh, put salt and cheese is laid in a basket of pine or burd. If you want only burd is given a little more salt ..."

Rucăr, as in much of rural Romania, yet still made so many popular Romanian traditional products as well as foreigners. As a result, these traditional products should be protected in order not to be manufactured in other countries and even intellectual theft by forgery. In this context, the Community Policy accession negotiations, Romania has requested protection for more traditional products such as milk, yogurt, cheese, cheese, cheese, cheese, sausage, black pudding, assortment of hams, drums, ham, beverages distilled from fruit, etc. The legal framework to protect traditional Romanian products on geographical indications, appellations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs as well as certificates of specific protection was initially bounded and then were shaped by the orders issued by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and Rural Development. Order 233/2004 for approving the certificates of specific rules and the Order 212/2004, which defines geographical indications and appellations of origin in Romania (some examples in this regard appear in Annex 1).

Normality of development should we move towards local produce important for nature conservation (Nature High Value Products). They are products that help maintain natural landscapes in rural areas, continuing agricultural practices in a way traditional practices are still used by farmers for livestock and land management. Local products also act as an important principle of local economic development. An attempt to define them to qualify as food, goods and services produced and consumed locally. Food and agricultural practices through which land, pastures, meadows and orchards are managed, and how animals are raised and cared for, played a key role both in developing and maintaining local culture, landscape, and especially to human health and children. Thus, obtaining and selling local food as a catalyst for community development and maintenance and at the same time, a source of sustainable benefits for local economies. A locally produced important for nature conservation is a product which helps preserve the rural biodiversity (species and associations of plants and animals dependent on that environment), conservation of habitats and rural landscapes and natural resources protection (using friendly practices with the environment), local economic development, supporting semi-subsistence farmers, maintaining agricultural activities in the system of farm /household.

Background survival of pastoral in Rucăr traditional occupations reveals growing importance of agro-tourism, which constantly restructure business structure and profitability of products shepherds shepherd's hut, changing livestock, cattle for the sale of traditional products from animals over the wool, degrading some of retained products of time (milk, yogurt, cheese, cheese, cheese, cottage cheese).

In terms of keeping the traditional pastoral patterns, one can highlight some positive aspects about the habits of girls hoping to marry, practiced on the very evening of the new year, the custom of Ciurlezul, Brezaia a kind of folk, etc. Sumedru's fire, but the significance of their pastoral tends was gradually lost. Enshrined today sheep festival, which takes place a week after the Fixed Holy Mary, on September 15, is the most important religious and traditional occupational, growing in importance to the development of local tourism as an event, managing this successfully by focusing on pastoral festival, being in the area now known

as "Expo Pastoralis. A gourmet exhibition, focusing on pastoral products and symbolically called "A meal in a dish" replaces the area's large tourist requirements

Table 2 2010 Holiday calendar by ANTREC

MARCH	March 21-22-A meal in one dish, Rucăr, Arges county
APRIL	Palm Sunday April 12-National Day of Rural Tourism Rucăr, Arges county Fair ecotourism and traditions
MAY	Rucăr, Arges county
SEPTEMBER	September 12-13-Expo Pastoralis / Parade cheese Rucăr, Arges county 'Il Cry September 26 to 27 sheep / Festival cheese and pastrami, Bran, Brasov county and Rucăr, Arges county
DECEMBER	December 6 – Here Comes Santa Claus, Bran, Braşov country and Rucăr, Argeş country

4. Conclusions

If agriculture is analyzed in terms of modernity, with all his operations in a supply chain that begins with founders and producing companies and ends with trades and food processors, traditional rural agriculture seems to be endangered, its place being taken by the agro-food industry [7]. Sociological research undertaken in Rucăr eloquently points out the danger of disappearance of traditional activities and occupations in the medium term, with negative impact in the area. The crisis has demonstrated that tourism was heavily affected by the recession and the lack of tourist revenue generated in a rural area historic and attempt to return to old traditional farming activities almost impossible without the support of national programs and projects in this regard. The analysis of modern tourism, tourism can offer longer survival, but only in the context of its correlation with agricultural activities to streamline it in purely economic terms, by offsetting the seasonality and maintaining occupational traditions and specific consumption, giving originality habits tourist product, animal origin products to attract the consumers with their quality and recognition of their special value in relation to modern farming. A final remark may be the one that only a balanced program focused on keeping tourism products such traditional occupations and

occupations related to animal breeding farm, giving its originality can, in fact, be the main starting point for the sustainable development of the Romanian village pastoral mountain type.

Acknowledgements

This work represents a synthesis of one of the statistical surveys conducted within the European funded project entitled "Mountain Resources and Sustainable Development" (EN 0010 PMS 29 – Small Grants Application approved project proposals under Round II projects of the Financial Mechanism. European Economic Area (EEA), the NGO, 2010) and financed by the Governments of Iceland, and Norway Liechtenstein.

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