

Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives in Japan - A Model for Cooperativization of Agriculture from Romania

Remus Gherman¹, Ana-Mariana Dincu¹, Anda Milin¹, Ioan Brad¹

¹ Banat`s University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine, Faculty of Agricultural Management, Calea Aradului, 119, Timisoara, Romania

Abstract

Japan's agriculture provides only a part from the population's needs, in caloric terms Japan must impute 60% of foods. Arable land are few, but are worked very performant, rice being the main crop together with cotton, citrus, sugarcane, wheat, potato, soybean, sugar beet, other vegetables. Widely is practiced sericulture and fisheries, Japan being one of the leading producers of silk from the world and having over 600 ports specialized for fishing. Japanese agriculture has remained behind the industry and services, this trend being manifested after the very high economic growth from 1960-1970. The main focus of the movements from the Japanese cooperative system is represented by the creation of large specialized farms through the replacing of the traditional ones. The most important task of agricultural cooperatives from Japan is meeting the consumption needs of its members. Integrated leadership of Japanese cooperatives of farmers act at all levels, primary, at prefecture level and at national level. Contractual relationships play a decisive role in the integration of Japanese farmers. In Japan there are about 840 agricultural cooperatives very well organized with a balanced planning and efficiently conducted, agricultural cooperative MIKABI being the most developed, mainly focused on the production of mandarins. In Japan there are three large distribution centers of agricultural products, 29 distribution markets controlled by the prefecture and 1,000 local markets. Organization of cooperatives is the pyramid system on three levels: local, prefecture and national (National Federation of Agricultural Cooperatives).

Keywords: agriculture, agricultural cooperation, agricultural production, cooperative movement

1. Introduction

Japan, island country from East Asia has a highly efficient agriculture, even if it's arable lands are few, being situated somewhere around half of Romania's arable land. The main crop is rice, which is basic food in Japan, such as bread in Romania. According to some authors and agriculture of Japan is facing with a series of problems such as: decreasing population involved in agriculture, increasing the areas cultivated, lack of successors in farms, etc. [1-5]

Agricultural cooperatist movement in Japan coincides with solving of the auto insurance

problem with food and formation of an effective agroindustrial complex of the country. The cooperatist form of organization in Japan has brought a huge contribution both to the development of agriculture, and especially to the improvement of quality of farmer's life and development in Japanese villages.

2. Materials and methods

Working methods used by the authors of the paper are the following: identification and data collection, processing, analysis, observation and their interpretation.

* Corresponding author: Ana-Mariana Dincu, 0722.733.820, maridincu2004@yahoo.com

3. Results and discussion

Japan, island country from East Asia, which is located on a chain of islands located between the Pacific Ocean and the Sea of Japan. It is formed from four islands (Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu and Shikoku), which represents a percentage of approximately 95% from its territory, plus numerous smaller islands. Japan's climate varies greatly from cold-temperate, in the north, with harsh winters up to subtropical in the south.

Japan's agriculture provides only a part from the population needs in food. Under caloric aspect, Japan must import 60% from food. Arable lands there are few but worked very performant, the main branch being crops. Rice is the main culture that it is cultivated in small coastal plain, being obtained very rich crops. Other important crops cultivated by the Japanese are: cotton, citrus, sugar cane, tobacco, tea, wheat, potato, soybean, sugar beet, various vegetables.

In the livestock sector mainly are grown cattle and swine. [6]

It is practiced widely sericulture, Japan being next to China, the main producers of silk of the world. A basic Japanese occupation is fishing, the country having one of the most advanced fleets for fishing from the world, with specialized ports (over 600).

Japan has an arable area of 4.6 million hectares, meaning almost half from Romania's arable land, including 2.5 million hectares of rice fields. Rice production is 5 tons/hectare, this being basic food in Japan, such as bread in Romania. Also in Japanese agriculture there are some problems such as: lack of successors in companies, lowering the population involved in agriculture, increasing the areas cultivated, agriculture, remaining behind industry and services, in the years following the high economic growth recorded after 1960.

An unusual trend in Japanese agriculture is the cultivation of pearls, in the coast are cultivated pearls naturally, opening and a firm specializing their cultivation.

So the main distinguishing features of Japanese agriculture are: small dimensions of arable lands, a high degree of technologies, the full support of the state in agriculture, traditional activities, small farms but with an extremely high productivity.

Historically speaking, agrarian cooperatist movement in Japan has coincided with solving the problem auto insurance of food and formation of

an effective agroindustrial complex of the country. Even if it has harsh conditions for agriculture development, Japan is ranked on second place in the world in terms of agricultural average productions.

The main focus of the movements from the cooperatist Japanese system represents the creation of large specialized households.

This problem is solved in Japan not through the removal of the traditional households, but in terms of their functioning parallel and highly efficient.

Japanese agricultural cooperatives are represented by two types of organizations, namely those specialized and those with general profile.

Every inhabitant from the village or town can be a member of a specialized cooperative, the deliberative right to vote, having only those occupied in agricultural production, the others being associate members.

Credit cooperatist system in Japan is also a channel for grants from the state, through this state pays to the cooperatives the interest on long term loans. The predominant form of lending is the one on long term which is vital for realizing the process of modernizing and improving the efficiency of agricultural production.

The insurance of cooperatives in the field of mutual insurance presents distinct characteristics. This is a relatively new orientation in the functioning of Japanese cooperatives. The purpose consist in providing of the cooperatives with resources, in case of natural disasters, joint insurance funds are formed within an organization and are used as agricultural funds on medium and long term for the improvement of the life of farmers and construction of medical institutions.

The most important task of cooperatives from Japan is satisfying the consumption needs of its members.

Agricultural cooperatives are forced to face a serious competition from commercial and industrial firms. Precisely because of this in cooperatist system works a service well-developed of the control of quality of goods for individual consumption. Through it is seek strictly that the goods delivered by cooperative to be compete, but also inform cooperatives on the quality of most successful similar products delivered by the competition. Managing these activities of cooperatives is realized so that farmers do not bear the deficit of some or other from the goods.

The efficient functioning of agricultural cooperatives, in opinion of Japanese expert's dependent, in a decisive way on the condition of the governance system. For this purpose each company has counselors in agricultural production problems and of the social development. The functions of the management activity of cooperatives are the following:

- Improving the conditions of national programs
- Participation on the creation of national programs of agricultural development
- Creation of some special sectors of farmers
- Creation of the programs for development of farms
- Uniformization of materials
- Improvement and standardization of technical means
- Participation to the standardization, sorting and marketing of agricultural production.

The conception integrated management of Japanese cooperation of farmers acts at all levels, primary, at prefecture level and at national scale Multifunction cooperative are facing with complex problems of productive and social nature, thus foreshadowing the further development of the integration process at the level of 47 prefectures and two confederations categories, namely:

- Federations which coordinates the activity of economic multifunction companies of mutual insurance on social problems;
- Federations at prefecture level joining mainly the specialized cooperatives, federations representing the federations of the companies for dairy products, citrus, etc.

Each of the 47 prefectures has a union of agricultural cooperatives that meet the basic needs and federations on profiles of cooperatives activity. Unions have neither economic activity, in their component entering only the management, coordination, research, training, information and control of the activities of cooperatives and federations.

The cooperatives consider the union as authorized exponent of their interests in the national cooperatist movement and at prefecture level.

The contract between the farmer and the cooperative is a means of attenuation of market uncertainty. The appearance of the contractual system has led to the restructuring of market relations, of market itself developments and of its agents, to the appearance of new organizational

structures as the union of vertically integrated associations.

Classification of contracts is done after various factors: the number of participants in the contracting, the terms of availability, the degree of sales and production clauses inclusion, the type of discount with the farmers, type of activity, contractual subjects, etc.

The most representative contracts after the number of participants are the bilateral ones. They ended between farmers and cooperatives, between two cooperative or a cooperative and a private company for production delivery of the cooperative and its further sale.

There are tripartite conventions to which are added plus the companies that delivers the means of production or manufacturing companies.

Management contracts are ended between regional cooperatives and their local departments, and consist in insurance by the regional cooperative of services of a manager for local branch.

Contractual relationships play a decisive role in the integration of Japanese farmers. For irrigation of rice culture, the main plant cultivated from Japan's agriculture, the proper work of irrigation and maintenance of the system of irrigation is done at collective level, cooperative level and is granted a mutual support in order to get the best productions at community level, taking into account priority the welfare of the whole community and then on the individual. Just from here it can be concluded the so-called "Japanese economic miracle", in which the harmony and cooperation in all areas have led to a rapid economic growth, Japan being the second largest economy of the world at the end of 70s and the third after the USA and China, in present.

The cooperatist form of organization in Japan has brought a huge contribution not only to the development of agriculture, but also to the improvement of the quality of farmer's life and village development. Agricultural cooperatives were initiated and supported by the Japanese of production, investment in regional agricultural programs, financing of individual farmers and providing education for farmers in order to improve the living standards.

Japanese agricultural cooperatives have implemented a series of government policies contributing to the development of villages and providing functions, such as: lending or healthcare.

In Japan today there are about 840 agricultural cooperatives well organized, with balanced planning and efficient managed.

National Institute of Agricultural Cooperatives from Japan was created in the year 1962. Initially this institute was created for cooperative members, but later helped to the development of the cooperatist system from Asia and worldwide.

MIKABI agricultural cooperative, the most developed in Japan is focuses, mainly, on the production of mandarins. It has 142 employees and 4 managers. The organization of the cooperative is a small town type with all kinds of constructions and lands. The surface of the buildings is of 35,000 m² and in addition of offices there is a sorting center of the members, center of equipment repairing, center of car repairing of the cooperative members, nursery, demonstration plots, refueling stations, etc.

The cooperative has created associations that cultivate land allocating funds for this action. This land becomes the gage to the bank and enters in the form of rent.

The flow of mandarins is planned by farmers, quantity. The cooperative has the obligation to sell the merchandise contracted by farmers. The purchase price is established by the cooperative and is paid to the farmers after are deducted the taxes. If there is quality required farmers pay penalties. If it does not respect the delivery chart the price of mandarins reduces with 50%.

For technical services provided by the cooperative, the farmers have the obligation to pay.

The distribution center Zen-noh from the Yamato is the propriety of the Agricultural Cooperatives Federation from Japan. Here, the production plan is drawn up in advance with one year, and the price is established in advance. [7]

In Japan there are three large distribution centers of agricultural products, those 29 distribution markets controlled by prefectures and 1,000 local markets.

Hadano agricultural cooperative represent effectively the store in witch about 650 Japanese farmers open their production through direct sales. The organizational structure of agricultural cooperatives from Japan is the pyramid system, on three levels: local, prefectural and national (National Federation of Agricultural Cooperatives).

3. Conclusions

Under caloric aspect, Japan must import 60% from food, arable lands of the country being few but worked very performant.

Rice is the main crop of Japan, this being the basic food in Japan, such as bread in Romania.

The cooperatist movement from Japan's agriculture coincides with solving of the auto insurance problem with food and formation of an effective agroindustrial complex of the country.

Japanese agricultural cooperatives are represented by two types of organizations: those specialized and those with general profile.

The most important task of cooperatives from Japan is satisfying the consumption needs of its members, in this cooperatist system works a service well-developed of the control of quality of goods for individual consumption, exemplary model worth to following also for the cooperatist system from Romania.

Cooperativization of Japanese agriculture acts at all levels, primary, at prefecture level and at national scale, the cooperative form of organization leading beside the development of agriculture to improvement of the life of Japanese farmers and to the development of Japanese villages. These measures of support of the cooperation by the state may applied today also in Romania eliminating the huge gap between villages and towns of the country and between different regions of historical development.

References

- 1 Remus Gherman, Ana-Mariana Dincu, Tiberiu Iancu, Agricultural cooperative, fundamental condition for Romanian agricultural development, *Lucrări științifice Management Agricol*, Seria 1, vol. XIV (2), Timișoara, 2013, pg. 42-45
2. Sorin Mihai Stanciu, Conjunctural trends in the evolution of european and international trade legislation during the post-crisis period, *Lucrări Științifice Zootehnie și Biotehnologii*, 2015, vol, 48(1), pag. 349-354
3. Tabita Cornelia Hurmuzache, Diagnostic analysis of Timis county agriculture, *Research Journal of Agricultural Science*, Vol 46 (4), Timișoara, 2014
4. Iancu Tiberiu, Issues characterizing romanian agricultural production, *Journal of Horticulture, Forestry and Biotechnology*, Vol 18(3), Timișoara, 2014
5. Camelia Mănescu, Nicoleta Mateoc Sîrb, Ana Mariana Dincu, N. Văran, C. Matiaș, An analysis of

Romanian agricultural exploitations, *Lucrări științifice Management Agricol*, seria I, Vol. X (1), Timișoara, 2008

6. <https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japonia>
7. <http://www.tribuna.ro/stiri/actualitate/agricultura-japoniei-este-cooperativizata-17439.html>