



Pork production in Romania

^{1,2,3}I. Valentin Petrescu-Mag, ¹Remus O. Stoian, ¹Ciprian Todoran

¹ University of Oradea, Oradea, Romania; ² Faculty of Agriculture, University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine Cluj-Napoca, Romania;

³ SC Bioflux SRL, Cluj-Napoca, Romania.

Corresponding author: I. V. Petrescu-Mag, zoobiomag2004@yahoo.com

Abstract. The pork production is one the largest and the most important sector of livestock production both in Romania and European Union. This paper is a synthesis based on news, statistics and literature on pig production in Romania. The Romanian market was banned from exporting live pigs in 2007. After almost ten years, in 2016, the restriction was stopped, but the market needs more time to be relaunched. At present, the Romanian livestock is decreasing in numbers, but the specialists believe that Romania has a great potential to become a major player in this sector of meat production.

Key Words: pork production in Romania, pig farms, EU, households, meat production, major player.

Introduction. Pork and related pork products provides some 25% of the energy and 9% of the protein human beings get from animal sources (Pond 1983). The pork production is one the largest and the most important sector of livestock production both in Romania and European Union (Stan 2000; Bonneau et al 2011; Marquer 2010).

The prime agricultural purpose of the pig is to provide human food (Whittemore & Kyriazakis 2008). In Romania, the pork consumption rate recorded in 2015 is of 29.1 kg per head. This value is well below the European average, which is 40.9 kg per capita in the same year. According to the 2015 statistics, the Austrians consumes the highest amount of pork in Europe at 56.4 kg per capita closely followed by the Czechs at 45.6 kg per capita (McCullough 2017).

However, Romania can be a major player in the pork production sector, as there is plenty of space for this activity, an important pork consumption tradition and history proves that it is possible (McCullough 2017).

This paper is a synthesis based on news, statistics and literature on pig production in Romania.

Pork producers and pig numbers in Romania. There are in Romania companies of pig genetic improvement and they sell valuable biological material for the large, medium or small size pig farms. PIC, DanBred and Topigs are Top-3 genetics used in Romania. Imported breeds include breeds such as Large White, Landrace, Piétrain and Duroc (Plate 1) (Socol & Sonea 2015; McCullough 2017). Many farms in Romania are small sized, and therefore local breeds for extensive production are present. Backyard farming often includes indigenous breeds such as Mangalica, Bazna, Albul de Banat and Albul de Rușețu (Plate 2) (Ciobanu et al 2001; Drăgănescu et al 2008; Dornea et al 2012; Nagy et al 2012; McCullough 2017; Botha et al 2014, 2016; Oroian & Petrescu-Mag 2014; Rusu et al 2016).

Total pig livestock, numbers and weight of animals slaughtered (2015) and top ten producers in Romania (2016) are presented in Tables 1-3.

Table 1

Total pig livestock in Romania, December 1, 2015

<i>Pig size</i>	<i>Total number</i>	<i>Private sector, out of which:</i>	<i>Non-commercial (households)</i>
Piglets (<20 kg)	796.477	795.019	376.919
Young pigs (20-50 kg)	1,140,510	1,138,989	634.809
Pigs for finishing (total)	2,609,758	2,606,557	1,897,653
- 50-80 kg	837,414	836.135	472.897
- 81-110 kg	986,003	985.321	740.736
- >110 kg	786,341	785.101	684.02
Breeding pigs over 50 kg (total)	380.183	379.305	231.373
- Boars	5,560	5.498	4.4
- Breeding sows - total	374.623	373.807	226.973
-- Mated sows	225,230	224.722	129.208
-- Non-mated sows	149.393	149.085	97.765
Total pig stock	4,926,928	4,919,870	3,140,754

Source: NIS (cited by McCullough 2017).

Table 2

Numbers of animals slaughtered in Romania and their liveweight, 2015

<i>Pig size</i>	<i>Number of heads</i>	<i>Live weight (kg)</i>	<i>Average weight (kg)</i>
Total pigs	4,870,317	562,276,547	115.4
Young pigs (<50 kg)	16,140	608.801	37.7
Other pigs	4,854,177	561,667,746	115.7

Source: NIS (cited by McCullough 2017).

Table 3

Top-10 largest swine producers in Romania, 2016

1. Smithfield Prod	>1,000,000
2. Premium Porc	380,000
3. Tebu Braila	>200,000
4. Nutricom	170,000
5. Palota	150,000
6. SC Agrisol International	100,000
7. SC Fermeplus	90,000
8. Suinprod Roman	80,000
9. Landbruck	75,000
10. SC Europig Sercaia	75,000

Source: NIS (cited by McCullough 2017).

Pork market evolution. Romania was banned from exporting live pigs in 2007 when it was hit by CSF (Classical Swine Fever) (disease presented in Edwards et al 2000). This decision drastically affected the Romanian pork sector between 2007 and 2016. The doors to the European Union opened again in October 2016 after confirming that Romania had been free of the disease for almost ten years. Later, in May 2017, Romania was granted the status of a country free of CSF by the World Organisation for Animal Health (McCullough 2017). At this point, Romania was ready to relaunch this sector.

However, Romania's national pig herd numbers are decreasing. In 2016, Romania has over 4.7 million pigs of which 361,200 are breeding sows. Total pig numbers that year fell by just over 4.4% or 219,200 head and breeding sows down by 3.6% of 13,400 head (McCullough 2017).

The decrease of these figures was initially due to the trading embargo with Russia, which was established as a consequence of the geopolitical conflict in the Crimea region.

Data from the Romanian Pork Producers Association (APCPR), say the country was suffocated by pork imports from Europe, which were introduced at very low prices, forcing the non-commercial producers to sell below costs (McCullough 2017).

In fact, both these statements are true. Due to the Russian food embargo, loads of cheap pork ended up in Romania's markets of late. In 2014, pork imports increased by 9.5%, as compared to 2013 and by 11% in 2015, compared to 2013. In 2015 to 2016, pork imports increased by 46,000 t as compared to 2013, therefore, that year, Romania spent around € 343.6 million on imported pork. From 2015 to 2016, the pig farming sector registered a loss of € 75.8 million (McCullough 2017).

Although Romania has a good potential for pig farming and pork production, in the last twenty years Romania's pig production changed but did not grow.

Future perspectives of Romanian pork production sector. Mr. Ioan Ladosi is the chairman for the Romanian Pork Producers Association. He also works full time for PIC Central and East Europe. He predicted Romania having a great perspective for pork production. One reason is the fact that companies are expanding in Romania, while feed is plentiful. In an interview, Ioan Ladosi told the Pig Progress journalist: "The pig industry here has been consolidating fast in the last five years and there are great prospects ahead. This is proven by the large investments in pig farming, including through EU funding schemes. Most of the Romanian farms are brand new facilities with state-of-the-art design and technology. Therefore, they are able to compete with any pig producer in Europe"... "But not everything is bright. There is a growing need for skilled stockpersons and proficient farm managers as well. Top producers, in terms of annual volumes, have already announced development plans for increasing production capacities. Integrating farming with slaughter and processing activities is growing as well. There are on the public domain, intentions for cumulated investments in excess of € 100 million on the short and medium term." He stated at the end, "Based on the above we have reasons to believe that Romania has a golden future ahead. A good climate, as well as excellent availability of grains at affordable prices, are extra reasons that give us high hopes" (cited by McCullough 2017).

To implement a controlled and accurate reproduction strategy at national level in the Romanian pork production sector, the national artificial insemination training programmes shall be strongly intensified in the future. For increasing the swine livestock and the pork meat production towards a balanced national offer/demand ratio the reproductive programmes shall make more use of the authorized boars reproducers referred in the national register while diminishing clandestine or natural reproduction (Socol & Sonea 2015).

Conclusions. The Romanian market was banned from exporting live pigs in 2007. After almost ten years, in 2016, the restriction was stopped, but the market needs more time to be relaunched. At present, the Romanian livestock is decreasing in numbers, but the specialists believe that Romania has a great potential to become a major player in this sector of meat production.

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- *** <http://www.roysfarm.com/duroc-pig/> [last view: December, 2017]



Plate 1. Imported breeds found in Romania. From the left to the right and from up to down: Large White, Landrace, Piétrain and Duroc. Sources: <https://www.stiriagricole.ro/> <http://www.roysfarm.com/duroc-pig/>



Plate 2. Local breeds found in Romania. From the left to the right and from up to down:
Mangalica, Bazna, Albul de Banat and Albul de Rușețu. Sources:
<http://www.monitorulcj.ro> <http://agrintel.ro> <http://www.meat-milk.ro>

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Authors:

Ioan Valentin Petrescu-Mag, University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine Cluj-Napoca, Faculty of Agriculture, Romania, Cluj-Napoca 400372, 3-5 Calea Mănăştur Street, e-mail: zoobiomag2004@yahoo.com

Stoian Remus Octav, University of Oradea, Romania, Oradea, 1 Universităţii Street, e-mail: remusoctav@yahoo.com

Todoran Ciprian, University of Oradea, Romania, Oradea, 1 Universităţii Street, e-mail: cipri.todoran@gmail.com

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