

ROMANIAN INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN LIVE ANIMALS IN THE POST-ACCESSION PERIOD – WHAT WAS GAINED AND WHAT WAS LOST

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Abstract: *At the time of EU accession, the Romanian agri-food products entered the European Single Market without customs duties or export quotas. However, various types of restrictions related to product quality and sanitary-veterinary issues remained. For animal products, these types of restrictions have determined the increase in live animal exports at the expense of meat and meat products exports. This paper is exploring the evolution and trends of the Romanian international trade in live animals in the post-accession period, in terms of exports, imports, trade balance and geographical orientation of the trade flows.*

• Introduction

Although its value constantly decreased in share since 1990 from about half down to one third currently, animal husbandry was and still is an important part of Romanian agriculture.

• Material and method

The value and volume of trade flows were studied, in relation with the domestic production, for the main animal species: cattle, pigs, sheep, goats and poultry. Subgroups at 4-digit level in Combined Nomenclature breakdown were used, in order to analyze the exports and imports by relevant product groups.

• Results and discussions

The Romanian international agri-food balance has been mostly negative in the last three decades. When analyzing it by groups of products, there are 3 groups that show constantly positive balances: live animals, cereals and oilseeds.

Trade in live animals developed as a result of restrictions on meat and meat products in the pre-accession period, and sanitary and veterinary restrictions in the post-accession period, most importantly due to African Swine Fever, Avian Flu and Blue Tongue Disease. Nevertheless, commercial farms managed to become exempt of those zoonoses and were able to export live animals.

Exports to EU countries mainly consisted of cattle (35%), pigs (28%), poultry (16%) and sheep (4%), while exports to non-EU countries were distributed differently: bovines (31%), poultry (15%), sheep (8%), pigs (5%).

• Conclusions

Trade in live animals has shown overall a positive balance in the last two decades. Exports of live cattle generated the highest value, followed by sheep and poultry. After accession, the trade balance for cattle and sheep has been constantly positive, while for pigs and poultry it presented important fluctuations from positive to negative.

Exports of cattle, pigs and poultry were directed mainly to other EU Member States, while sheep were exported mostly outside the EU (Middle-East region).

