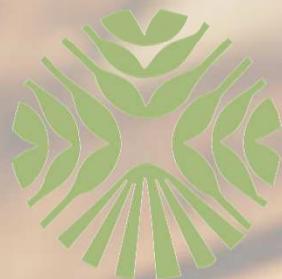


AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY-PLOVDIV



IMPACT OF THE COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY OVER THE SUSTAINABILITY AND COMPETITIVENESS OF BULGARIAN VEGETABLE PRODUCTION

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The CAP is directed towards the effective and sustainable development of agriculture in all member-states of the European Union (Bulgaria inclusive).

The vegetable production is an inseparable part of Bulgarian agriculture.

It is characterized by a great dynamism and intensity.

In this sense it is very important for our country to develop the potential of this sector as a basis for the development of rural areas and the increase of prosperity of Bulgarian vegetable producers.



The purpose

The purpose of this article is to analyze the impact of the CAP over the development of vegetable production in Bulgaria with a view to enhancing its competitiveness and sustainable development.

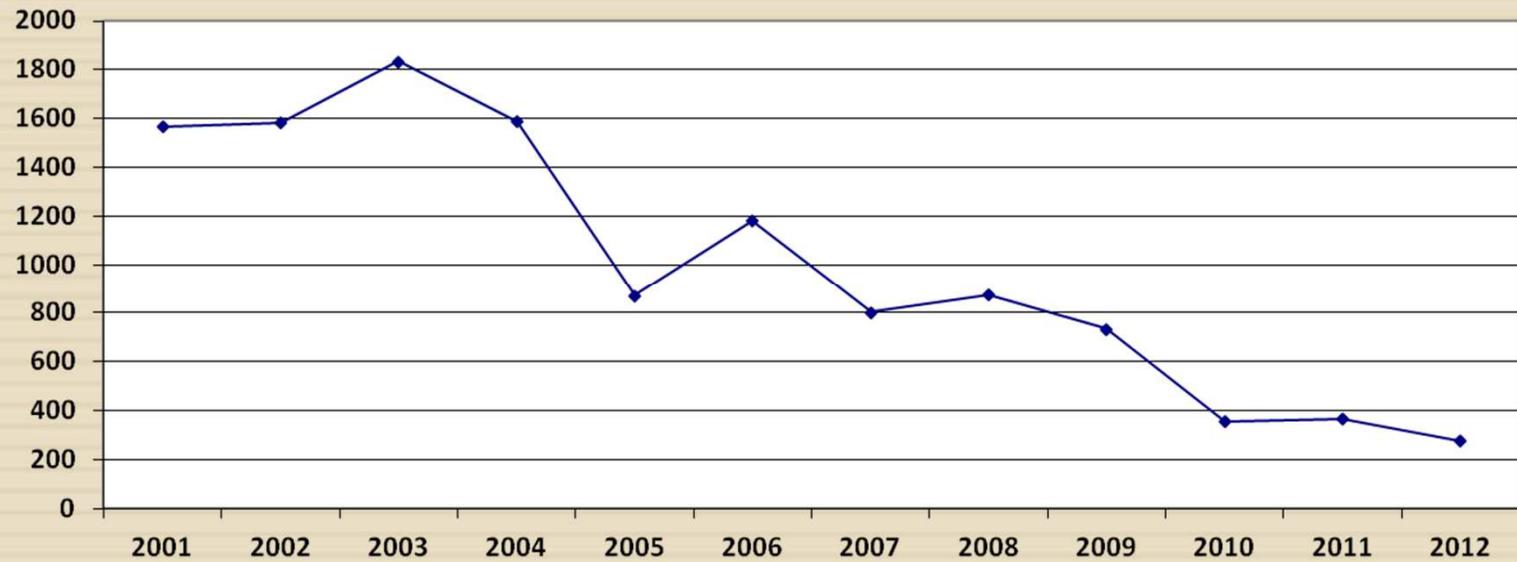
After the accession of Bulgaria to the European Union the basic goal of the ongoing policies has been a complete restructuring of the agricultural sector in accordance with the requirements of the Community.

A number of analysts identify the need to increase the competitiveness of agricultural production as a precondition for the sustainable development of the sector in view of the strong pressure of the European market.

The competitiveness and sustainable development of Bulgarian agriculture are essential for its integration in the common agricultural production in the context of CAP.

- The state of vegetable production is predetermined by the favorable natural and geographical conditions in our country.
- Due to its economic and social importance, vegetable production is a main sub-sector of Bulgarian agriculture.
- The production of fresh vegetables is of greatest significance for the sector.
- The analysis of vegetable production for the period 2001 – 2012 shows that the total production of vegetables follows an unfavorable trend of reduction of production output (Fig. 1).

Production of main vegetable crops for the period 2001 - 2012



- The reasons for the low level of efficiency in the production of vegetables and the relatively weak competitiveness of vegetable production, observed after the accession of Bulgaria to the EU in 2007, are rooted in the failure of the land reform.
- As a result of this reform:
 - small-sized farms which are ineffective due to the low degree of specialization;
 - insufficient availability of agricultural equipment;
 - modest level of production organization, dominate the structure of specialized vegetable outdoor farms.
- The strong competition of vegetable production from other European countries after the accession of Bulgaria to the Common European market in 2007 and the imports of fresh vegetables have pressed further Bulgarian vegetable producers.

- The fragmentation of the basic production resource – the land;
- The inevitable dependence of vegetable production on geographic and climatic conditions;
- The outdated agricultural equipment;
- The low level of mechanization of production process;
- The low wages of those employed in vegetable production are just a small part of the current issues that Bulgarian vegetable production is facing.

- A number of factors responsible for the economic situation in this sub-sector also have a negative impact on the competitiveness of vegetable production, namely:
- The unfavorable trend in demographic structure of population;
- A high concentration of population in large cities;
- High average age of the workforce;
- Relatively low degree of mechanization and low labor productivity; strong fragmentation of the arable land.

- For the period 2007 – 2012 the harvested areas of the studied vegetable crops tend to change - the areas planted with tomatoes, potatoes and green pepper are decreasing while there is an insignificant increase of the areas planted with the rest of the vegetable crops.
- The average yields obtained for the researched period are crucial for the final economic results. Taking into account Bulgaria's good opportunities and traditions in the sphere of vegetable production, the average yields of the main vegetable crops are relatively low, but they somehow manage to keep their cost at a lower level in comparison to the prices at which the production is realized.

The CAP

- The CAP is not a postulate value. It has undergone various changes of different priorities in its development.
- In recent years (after 2013) a main goal for its renewal has been the strengthening of market orientation of agricultural farms, with a focus on demand and consumers' requirements.
- The efforts should be directed towards a viable food production; sustainable management of natural resources and actions in relation to climate change; preservation of the territorial balance, diversity and identity of rural areas.
- Taking into account the analysis of the present condition of Bulgarian vegetable production, all of the above-mentioned measures for achieving the CAP objectives are adequate and extremely urgent.

- In this sense the vegetable sub-sector needs a combination of agricultural and economic strategies and innovations to contribute to its sustainable development and increase of competitiveness.

- Measures:

Improving the organization of vegetable production by means of establishing vegetable producers' associations;

Improvement of the specialization of vegetable production

Increase of vegetable production efficiency through consolidation of production.

- In order to promote the national identity products, a policy is needed that not only complies with the CAP, but also supports the development of dynamic and competitive agriculture.
- All these recommendations relate even more strongly to the vegetable production being one of the most intense and dynamic sectors of agriculture.

Conclusions

The opportunities for increasing the competitiveness and sustainability of vegetable production in Bulgaria are revealed by means of the effective implementation of the CAP in the EU.

The resources to achieve the European levels of these indicators can be identified in different areas:

- Rapid deployment of technological solutions and modern innovations developed by scientific organizations;
- Promotion of good agricultural practices;
- Encouraging vegetable producers to expand their vegetable repertoire by growing not only traditional vegetable crops but also new ones that are sought in the market and can be grown in our soil and climate;
- Improving the quality of the vegetable production;
- The national support for the vegetable production sector.



THANK YOU!