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**Black Sea Basin ENI CBC programme 2014-2020**

***“Local Development and Cross Border Cooperation in  
the area of Agricultural Products and Traditional  
Food”***

***“LOC-FOOD”***

**STUDY ON THE CURRENT  
SITUATION OF TRADITIONAL  
PRODUCTS IN ROMANIA**





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THE REPORT PRESENTS THE  
SE ROMANIAN ELIGIBLE AREA  
BRĂILA, BUZĂU, CONSTANȚA,  
GALAȚI, TULCEA, VRANCEA

LOC

FOOD

## Black Sea Basin ENI CBC programme 2014-2020

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## ABBREVIATIONS

ANPC – National Association for Consumer Protection

APAR - Association for the Promotion of Romanian Food

CAPC - Catalog of Certified Food Products

CC - Chamber of Commerce

EC – European Commission

DGIA – National Direction for Food Industry

PDO – Protected Designation of Origin

FEADR – European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development

IFOAM - International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements

PGI – Protected Geographical Indication

EU – European Union

MADR - Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development

MS - Ministry of Health

OPC – Office of Consumer Protection

RNPT – National Register of Traditional Products

RNRC - National Register of Consecrated Recipes

TSG – Traditional Speciality Guarantee



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

*"The way of the nations depends on the way they know how to eat."*

[Bacalbaşa C., *Dictatura gastronomică*]

By definition, Romania is a country with a developed agriculture. There are documents that mention that our ancestors the Getae and then the Dacians cultivated millet, wheat, barley (for brewing), pumpkins, peas, onions, lentils and garlic, a species of wild garlic - leurda (*Allium ursinum*) (Nedelea, 1997) and spices thyme, dill, marjoram and sage.

The pastoral economy ensured the production of milk, butter, cheese and meat. These concerns continued in the *Middle Ages* and into the *modern era*. In the fifth century Herodotus mentioned that "*the lands north of the Danube are littered with bees and no one can pass by*" (Roman, 1998). Honey is another traditional product of the area, the diversity of plants and the skill of beekeepers allowing the production of a wide range of types of honey.

Fishing in the Danube and the Black Sea offered several products that were not missing from the Dacian table.

The vineyards covered large areas and the Dacians were known as masters of wine. All these concerns have been preserved over time, they have been taken over from one generation to another, delighting the taste buds of gourmets even today (Cazacu, 1999).

In the SE area of Romania, all these crops are found on larger or smaller areas, as well as herds of animals with unique breeds. Buzău - Vrancea area with miraculous hills (Istrița) for growing grapes and wine production, Galați - Brăila with milk, cheeses, traditional meat dishes. The Dobrogea area with Tulcea - Constanța is located at a cultural intersection, here the Romanian, Greek, Turkish, Russian culture meet (Teodoreanu, 1977).

The SE area is a conservative area in terms of food traditions. They keep their habits at different times of the year, when traditional products directly related to the Christmas or Easter holidays are obtained, for example.

Local small and medium-sized producers focus more on the actual production and less on marketing, the latter operating locally or regionally. Tourism in the area is developed if we talk about the area of Vrancea, Buzău, Danube Delta, Black Sea coast.

Promotion makes sustainable the marketing of a product, thus making it known to customers, for example associating the product with an image of it and a description of the area of origin of the product in marketing materials such as brochures, radio spots, leaflets, international festivals.

The LOC-FOOD project “*Local development and cross border cooperation in the area of agricultural products and traditional food*” will have a decisive role in product promotion, participation in discussions between partners and local representatives, exchanges of experience, and all project activities will lead to an increase in the visibility of each producer and of the SE area of Romania and of the Black Sea area.



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## 2. DEFINITIONS AND ROMANIAN LEGISLATION ON TRADITIONAL PRODUCTS

According to the Order MADPR 112 / 24.04.2020 on amending and supplementing the Order of the Minister of Agriculture and Development, the Minister of Health and the President of the National Authority for Consumer Protection no. 724 / 1.082 / 360/2013 regarding the attestation of traditional products, the definitions for the traditional product, respectively traditionality are:



**TRADITIONAL PRODUCT** - food product for which local raw materials are used, does not contain food additives, has a traditional recipe, a traditional mode of production and / or processing and is distinguished from other similar products belonging to the same category.

Attestation of traditional products means the recognition of the traditionality of a product through its registration in accordance with the laws in force.

Traditional foods are published in RNPT, a register established and administered by DGIA, through the specialized department with responsibilities in the field of traditional products within MADR.



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To be included in the National Register of Traditional Products, the product must be manufactured from local raw materials; present a traditional recipe specific to the place of processing, which reflects a traditional type of production and / or processing, have in the process of obtaining the product and processing operations performed manually and prove a traditional way of working. In order to be certified as a traditional product, it must be in accordance with a specification drawn up by the economic operator. This document is the main element of the documentation that a manufacturer must prepare in order to certify a traditional product.

A special category recognized at national level is that of products obtained using a well-established recipe. Joint Order MADR / MS / ANPC no. 394/290/89/2014 on the attestation of food products obtained according to Romanian established recipes regulates the conditions that must be met by food business operators producing and selling food products, obtained according to Romanian established recipes, for registration in the National Register of Consecrated Recipes (<https://agrintel.ro/32716/reteta-consacrata-procedura-documente-necesare-legislatie/>).



**ROMANIAN CONSECRATED RECIPE** represents the Romanian food product manufactured in compliance with the composition used more than 30 years before the date of entry into force of the Order on attestation of foodstuffs obtained according to Romanian established recipes (April 2, 2014), to which food operators voluntarily adhere in order to be registered in the National Register of Consecrated Recipes (RNRC).

Traditional products are also included in this category.

Another category of certified products is that of products specific to the mountain area.



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**PRODUCT SPECIFIC TO THE MOUNTAIN AREA** - product intended for human consumption, in which case:

- the raw materials, but also the fodder for farm animals come mainly from mountainous areas;
- in the case of processed products, processing also takes place in mountain areas (Good Practice Guide, 2019).

At European level, the products are certified as follows:

**PROTECTED DESIGNATION OF ORIGIN (PDO)** - identifies a product originating in a specific place, region or country, the quality or characteristics of which are essentially or exclusively due to a particular geographical environment with inherent natural factors (raw materials, environmental characteristics, location) and human factors (traditional and artisanal production) whose stage of production, processing and preparation takes place in the defined geographical area and in accordance with strict regulations



Product names registered as PDOs are the ones that have the strongest links to the location where they were registered.

### Label

- Mandatory for food and agricultural products;
- Optional for wines.



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**TRADITIONAL SPECIALTY GUARANTEED (TSG)** - defines a traditional agricultural or food product whose specificity has been recognized by the Community by its registration in a register, in accordance with EC Regulation no. 509/2006. It is a certificate that protects products obtained from traditional ingredients or by traditional methods.



TSG highlights traditional aspects, such as how the product is manufactured or its composition, without linking it to a specific geographical area. The designation of a product registered as a TSG protects it against counterfeiting and misuse.

#### Label

Mandatory for all products.

**PROTECTED GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION (PGI)** - a product originating in a particular place, region or country whose given quality, reputation or other characteristic is essentially attributed to its geographical origin and at least one of the production stages taking place in the defined geographical area.



The PGI emphasizes the relationship between a specific geographical region and the name of the product, if a certain quality, reputation or other characteristic can be essentially attributed to the geographical origin of the product.



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## Label

- Mandatory for food and agricultural products
- Optional for wines.

All these regulations make the products safe, healthy, original, linked to the traditions of each area of Europe, of a superior quality and through those involved and interested to be known to consumers.

A database published on 10 January 2020 (Brussels, Belgium, Agriculture and Rural Development) can be found at:

<https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/quality/door/list.html?locale=en>

In particular, there are two more product labels in Romania one offered by the Royal House of Romania and the second by Guild of Fine Foods.

**Supplier of the Royal House** - The Royal House offers the quality of Supplier of His Majesty's House as a sign of recognition and appreciation of the special quality of the products or services offered by a person or a commercial company. Thus, the awarding of Supplier Quality implies a high standard of products and services, constancy, seriousness and high professionalism on the part of the commercial company or the supplier.



Alcovin the wine producer from Tulcea had this label from 27.10.2011, 30.11.2014 and 13.03.2018. Wines (Rhein Extra), meat and chicken products, Borsec mineral waters, dairy products and jams (Magiunul de Topoloveni - the first product which obtained PGI in Romania) benefited from this inscription.



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**The Great Taste Award**, organized by the Guild of Fine Food, is a recognized landmark for specialty food and beverages. He has been described as the "Oscars" of the food world and the "Epicurean equivalent of the Booker Prize".

The Great Taste logo is simply the sign you can trust when buying food and beverages from your local quality retailer. More than 400 judges, including 40 specially trained food writers who introduce judges' comments, meet at 50 trial days from April to mid-July. 10,000 products were entered this year and only 34% received awards.

#### What do the stars mean?

3 golden stars = Refined

2 gold stars = Remarkable

1 gold star = Simply delicious



Magiun of Topoloveni (Arges county in the south of Romania) received this distinction.

Until 2014, Romania had over 4,400 traditional products nationally certified. In the official documents of MADR, the most numerous products were those of milk, followed by those of meat, jams and other sweet specialties. Currently, more than 4,000 products have been removed from the list, and registering a product as traditional has become a more rigorous process than ever before.

According to MADR data, the dynamics of registration of traditional products in the attestation register has increased significantly in the last ten years, their number doubling or even tripling in one year.

If in 2005, 280 products were registered at MADR in just one year, in 2011, their number exploded reaching 1,050. The registration system was voluntary, non-taxable and did not benefit from national or Community protection. Most products, 1,474, were milk and dairy products, and 1,441 were meat and meat products.

Several producers notified MADR that not all those who received the certificate for the production of traditional products comply with the legislation in force.

Many have complained that there are farmers who produce huge quantities, impossible to achieve under the conditions imposed by law, and that the ingredients used are not always exclusively natural. Once the number of complaints increased, the authorities adopted new regulations for sector regulation.

There were other changes, but on April 24, 2020, order 112 was issued, which modifies and completes the Order of the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Minister of Health and the President of the National Authority for Consumer Protection no. 724 / 1,082 / 360/2013 regarding the attestation of traditional products.

All amendments have been made in the light of Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 January 2002 laying down the general principles and requirements of food law, establishing the European Food Safety Authority and establishing procedures in the field of food safety, Regulation (EU) no. 1,305 / 2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on support for rural development provided by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) as well as a series of government ordinances and decisions in accordance with current legislation.

Registering a traditional product is not currently simple, but it is essential to encourage the diversification of production, but also to provide customers and those who want quality assurance. Order MADR 112/24.04.2020 makes a number of changes in this way. Article 2 redefines a number of terms used in obtaining and certifying traditional products.

a) **traditional product** - food product for which local raw materials are used, does not contain food additives, has a traditional recipe, a traditional mode of production and / or processing and which differs from other similar products belonging to the same category;

b) **traditionality** - the element or set of elements by which a product is distinguished from other similar products belonging to the same category; traditionality may not be limited to a qualitative or quantitative composition or to a mode of production established by Community or national rules or by voluntary standards; however, this rule does not apply if the regulation or standard in question has been established in order to define the traditionality of a product;

c) **attestation of traditional products** - recognition of the traditionality of a product through its registration and issuance of the document "Certificate of traditional product" in accordance with this order;

d) **local raw material** - the raw material used to obtain the traditional product and which is produced on the territory of the state where the traditional product is manufactured;

e) **traditional product certificate** - a document certifying that the holder meets the legal conditions for the production / processing / processing of local raw material in order to obtain a traditional product.

Another amendment was made to Article 6 which. It presents the contents of the specifications that must be submitted to certify the traditional product.

#### Article 6

(1) In order to be certified as a traditional product, the product must meet the conditions in the specifications.

(2) The specifications must contain the following elements:

a) the name of the product. If the product is already registered under a custom, unique name, it is no longer registered;

b) description of the characteristics of the traditional product, indicating the main organoleptic properties: colour, taste, odour, aroma, consistency, appearance, physicochemical: moisture, protein content, fats, carbohydrates, salt, pH, porosity and microbiological, as appropriate, define its traditionality / specificity;

c) the description of the characteristics of the raw materials, which should not contain in their composition additives obtained by chemical synthesis and not only, such as: food additives, flavours, vitamins, minerals; the origin of the raw materials;

d) description of the characteristics of the ingredients used in the manufacturing process, which do not present in their composition food additives, except for natural additives, respectively dyes, flavours, vitamins, minerals, sweeteners; indication of the ingredients used and of the main organoleptic, physico-chemical and microbiological properties, where applicable, of them;



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e) the description of the specific local, authentic and invariable production method, as well as the description of the traditional technological process, where all the production phases will be passed, specifying the operations executed manually;

f) the description of the specific elements regarding the packaging, in order to ensure the quality, the origin and the identification elements, respectively the material from which the packaging is made, its properties and its influence on the finished product;

g) the picture and the description of the product on the section, as the case may be, which should represent the specific characteristics of the product, the shape; the mode of production and / or processing which reflects a traditional technological process of production and / or processing by which the product is distinguished from other similar products belonging to the same category;

h) the minimum requirements and the procedures for verification and control of the traditionality of the product;

i) production capacity achieved - reported for one year, respectively 365 days, which may not exceed the average quantity of 150 kg / litre per day total certified traditional product and not more than 400 kg / litre per day total certified traditional products, except for the production of traditional bread and bakery products - which may not exceed the average quantity of 300 kg per day total certified traditional product and not more than 800 kg per day total certified traditional products;

j) data, documents, bibliographic references indicating the historical origin of the product, demonstrating the transmission of a tradition from one generation to another and resulting in the historical link of the traditional product with the place of production or a statement of notoriety from an association of traditional producers of products signed by its governing bodies.

There are some series of specifications that refer to documents that must accompany the specifications (product analysis bulletin made at an accredited laboratory, list of production equipment, proof of ownership of the space where the activity takes place, outline of the space with the location of used equipment, registration certificate / single registration certificate from the trade register, proof of registration in the Register of associations and foundations and / or producer certificate issued by the



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town hall where the product is manufactured, the way in which the documentation can be submitted), the format in which the documentation can be submitted, where , deadlines for communicating the existence of non-conformities, how and under what conditions controls are carried out, conditions for producers from other European Economic Area, measures in case of non-conformities and legislation for product labelling.



### 3. PROFILE OF THE ROMANIAN BLACK SEA REGION

#### 3.1. An overview at the physical and demographic aspects

Romania, one of the largest Balkan countries, is located on the shores of the Black Sea and has as neighbours Ukraine in the north, Bulgaria with which it borders along the Danube in the south and the Republic of Moldova in the east. There are common traditions with Greece, since ancient times when colonies (apoikiai) and commercial settlements (emporia) were established in Dobrogea (fig.2.1.).



(<https://www.newstrategycenter.ro/programe-de-cercetare/>)

Figure 3.1. Romania in the Black Sea Region

Of the 447 million inhabitants of Europe on January 1 2019, there were 19,4 million in Romania (Key Figures in Europe, 2020).

From the published data - United Nations (<https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/romania-population>) on November 30, 2020, there were 19,183,921 inhabitants in Romania, the equivalent of 0.25% of the population of the world. Of these, 54.6% live in urban areas, and the density is 84 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>, with an area of 230,170 km<sup>2</sup>. From the gender point of view, 51% are women and 49% men, respectively, and the average age is 43.2 years.

Romania has a varied feature of land, a symmetrical feature of land, arranged in concentric steps, the transition from one form to another is made gradually, which determines a high degree of population in the area and the varied use of land. The proportionality of the lands is presented in figure 2.2.



Figure 3.2. Proportionality of the relief in Romania

Romania has a temperate-continental climate with moderate features which is characteristic for Central Europe. with hot summers, long, cold winters and very distinct seasons. Abundant snowfalls may occur throughout the country from December to mid-March, especially if you are in the mountainous areas of Romania.

Daytime temperatures vary from 0-5°C in the winter and 25-30°C in summer months. In the southern areas it can be warmer, in the northern and eastern mountainous districts it can be cooler with moderate daytime temperatures and cool nights in the summer and temperatures far below zero in the winter.

Annual average rainfalls about 700 mm, more in the mountains (up to 1000 mm) and less on the coast (around 400 mm). It can rain throughout the year; spring is the driest season. In summer, showers and thunderstorms are common, especially in the mountains.

(<https://www.weatheronline.co.uk/reports/climate/Romania.htm>)

The SE area includes the Counties of Galați, Brăila, Buzău, Vrancea, Constanța, Tulcea.

Brăila county is a port on the Danube, with an area of 4,766 km<sup>2</sup> - occupies 2.00% of the country's surface. The population of the county is 588,366 inhabitants (last census 2011), of which 48.9% are men and 51.1% women. In the urban area there are 64.1% and in the rural area 35.9% (<http://rogeo.ro>). The relief is dominated by the plain. In the eastern part it is bordered by the Danube river.



(<https://www.forajeapa.ro/braila-braila/>)

The climate is in line with the climatic conditions in Central Europe. With maximum rainfall in May - June (rains) and December - February (snow).

Galați is also a port on the Danube. The surface is 4,466 km<sup>2</sup> - 1, 87% of the surface of Romania. The population of the county is 619,522 inhabitants (last census 2011). Of these, 49.5% are men and 50.5% women. In the urban area there are 56.8% and in the rural area 43.2% (<http://rogeo.ro>).

The feature of land is dominated by the plain. In the eastern part it is bordered by the Danube river. The meadow (Lunca Prutului, Lunca Siretului, Lunca Dunării) along with the plain and the plateau harmonize here.



The climate is in line with the climatic conditions in Central Europe. Slightly higher temperatures in summer and slightly lower in winter. With maximum rainfall in May - June (rain) and December - February (snow). (<https://www.worlddata.info/europe>) .

**Vrancea** is half located in the historical region of Moldova, south of the Milcov River being in the Muntenia region. It has an area of 4,857 km<sup>2</sup> which represents 3.57% of the country's surface.

The population of the county is 390,268 inhabitants (last census 2011). Of these, 49% are men and 51% women. In the urban area there are 38.4% and in the rural area 61.6% (<http://rogeo.ro>).

The relief is very varied. There are mountains that reach a height of 1700 m, Subcarpathian hills, hilly depressions, high plateau hills, high plain area (125 m) and low plain (20 m).



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Vrancea County has a temperate climate, with great variations, determined by the confluence of the feature of land. In the plain, hill and mountain are as with average temperatures from 9°C to 2-6°C in the mountainous area on the highest peaks reach -1°C.

Buzău is a county located at the foot of the Eastern Carpathians. It has an area of 6,103 km<sup>2</sup> which represents 2.56% of the country's area. The population of the county is 494,982 inhabitants (last census 2011). Of these, 48.8% are men and 51.2% women. In the urban area there are 38.7% and in the rural area 61.3% (<http://rogeo.ro>).



<https://romania-montana.ro/en/proprietate/judet/buzau/>

Located in south eastern Romania, this county stretches over almost the entire river basin of the Buzău River and harmoniously brings together three forms of relief: mountains to the north, plains to the south and the rest area of sub-Carpathian hills.

Like the whole country, Buzău County is part of the temperate continental climate. The feature of land steps, as well as its position at the curvature of the Carpathians, introduce a series of local shades, which lead to three main types of climate: mountain, hill and plain.

**Constanța** is a county located on the shores of the Black Sea. It has an area of 7,071 km<sup>2</sup> which represents 2.97% of the country's surface. The population of the county is 715,172 inhabitants (last census 2011). Of these, 49% are men and 51% women. In the urban area there are 70.2% and in the rural area 29.8% (<http://rogeo.ro>).

In Constanța, the low-altitude plateau feature of land predominates - the Casimcea Plateau in the northern part and the Dobrogea Plateau in the southern part, which resembles a high plain.



<http://www.itmconstanta.ro/>

Constanța is one of the hottest cities in Romania. It has a humid subtropical climate. The existence of the Black Sea and, to a lesser extent, of the Danube, with a permanent evaporation of water, ensures the humidity of the air and at the same time causes the regulation of its heating.

**Tulcea** is a county that in the west and north has the Danube as its border, and in the east - south east the Black Sea. Also here is the wonderful Danube Delta. It has an area of 8,499 km<sup>2</sup> which represents 3.57% of the country's surface.



<http://christianferoviarul.blogspot.com/2009/04/harta-fizica-judetului-tulcea.html>

The population of the county is 258,639 inhabitants (last census 2011). Of these, 50.1% are men and 49.9% women. In the urban area there are 47.8% and in the rural area 54.2% (<http://rogeo.ro>).

In Tulcea there are two well-defined geographical areas: a typical plateau area with the Măcinului Mountains and plateau and a plain area in the Danube Delta area.

The climate in the Tulcea area is temperate continental with sub-Mediterranean influences. In winter, the Arctic air from the north is felt, which causes the temperature to drop.

For a better view of the region the significant data are presented in table 3.1.

**Table 3.1.** Demographic characterization and relief of the southeastern part of Romania

County	Surface [km <sup>2</sup> ]	Nr. inhabitants	Gender		Urban/Rural		Relief
			Men [%]	Women [%]	Urban [%]	Rural [%]	
Brăila	4,766	588,366	48.9	51.1	64.1	35.9	plain
Buzău	6,103	494,982	48.8	51.2	38.7	61.3	mountain hill plain
Constanța	7,071	715,172	49	51	70.2	29.8	plateau
Galați	4,466	619,522	49.5	50.5	56.8	43.2	plain plateau
Tulcea	8,499	258,639	50.1	49.9	47.8	54.2	plateau plain
Vrancea	4,857	390,268	49	51	38.4	61.6	mountain hill plateau plain

It is highlighted that Tulcea has the largest area but the smallest number of inhabitants in a proportion of more than 50% in rural areas, Constanța has a large area but also the largest number of inhabitants living in a proportion of 70 % in the urban environment. Brăila also stands out with a large number of inhabitants in the urban area. Instead, Buzau has a large number of inhabitants in rural areas. The gender ratio is relatively balanced in all areas, being slightly higher the percentage of women except for Tulcea County where the percentage of men is higher.

## 3.2. The production system

### 3.2.1. Agricultural production

Romania has an agriculture that can boast of productions on certain crops in the first place in the European Union. Agriculture is a strategic sector of the Romanian economy.



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It has a share of 5.2% of the Gross Domestic Product and about 23% of the population is employed in this field, which places Romania on the first place in the European Union. The total turnover of companies operating in agriculture increased in 2019 by half a billion euros compared to the previous year, according to the company Keys Fin, reaching 43.5 billion euros. This in not exactly favourable weather conditions and with a modest level of use of new modern technologies for the surveillance and protection of agricultural crops.

The last agricultural years have been very challenging for farmers because of the drought in the region.

The cultivated area in Brăila is 372,481 ha, in Buzău 268,699 ha, in Constanța 474,344 ha, in Galați 275,685 ha, in Tulcea 267,195 ha, and Vrancea is a cultivated area of 122,767 ha. (Reporting is made for 2018 by the [National Institute of Statistics](#)).

Farmers work either individually on small areas, associated in cooperatives or grouped in associations.

The cereals grown in the eligible area of the project are presented in figure 3.3.

Constanța with the largest cultivated area has the highest production of wheat and barley. Buzău and Brăila are on the first place for corn production. Rye production slow in all areas, Galați has a higher production. Tulcea has the largest production of triticale in the area.

The sunflower is still cultivated in this area. Brăila in 2018 was worth a harvest of 252,635 tons, Buzău - 105,491 tons, Constanța - 296,519 tons, Galați - 147,179 tons, Tulcea - 180,811 tons and Vrancea 15,981 tons.

Vegetable production covers a very wide range. The respective productions reported in 2018 are presented in table 3.4. Galați stands out in tomatoes and cucumbers. In the Barcea area being the largest producers. Good harvests were also obtained for cabbage, autumn potatoes, beans, peas, cauliflower and broccoli. Eggplant, roots, onions, garlic, peppers are also cultivated, the crops varying from one area to another.



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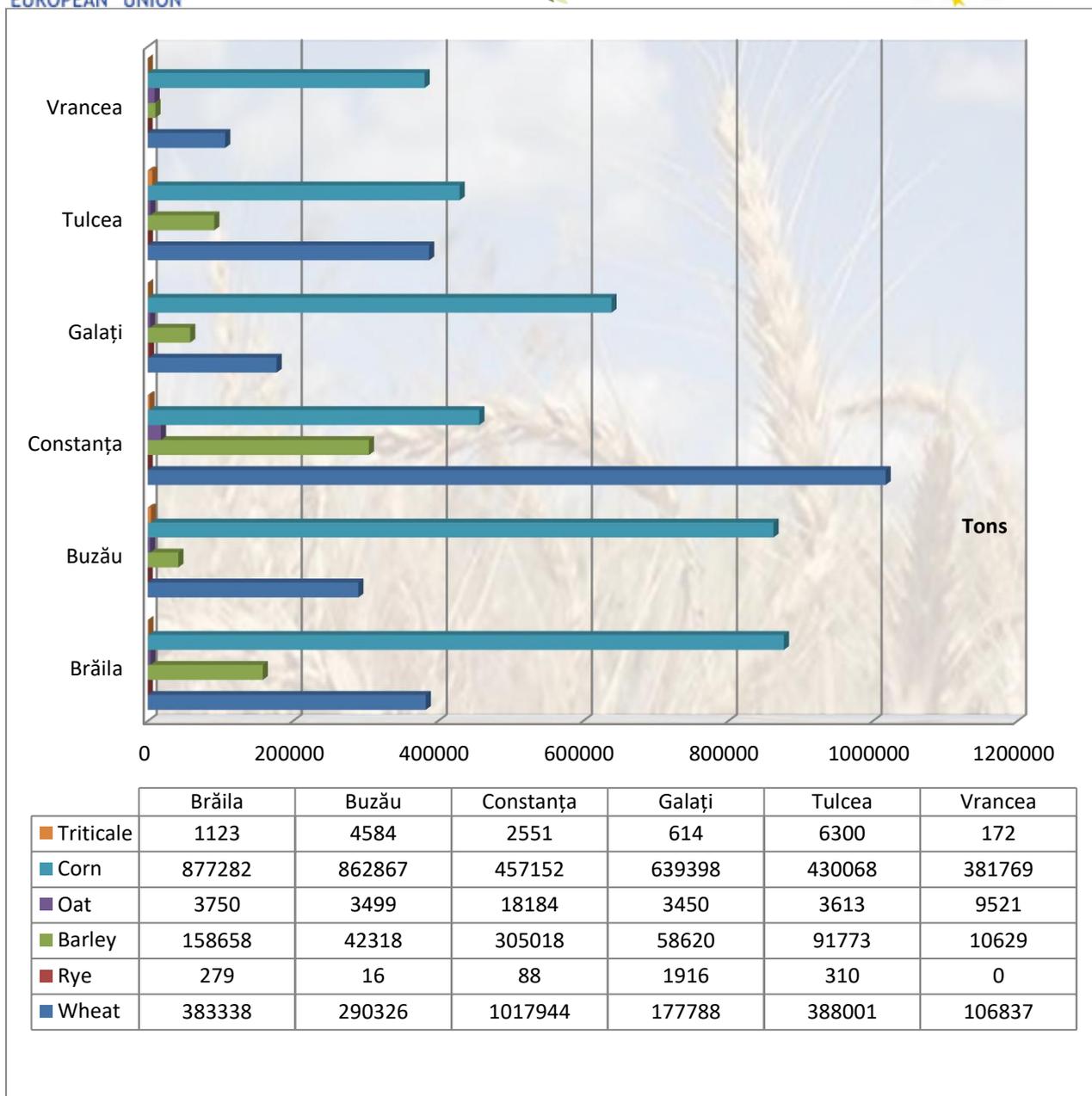


Figure 3.3. Cereal production in the SE area of the country (National Institute of Statistics)

If we talk about fruit, in 2018 Brăila obtained 15,532 tons, Buzău - 98,896 tons, Constanța - 53,324 tons, Galați - 73,873 tons, Tulcea - 36,076 tons and Vrancea 206,598 tons.



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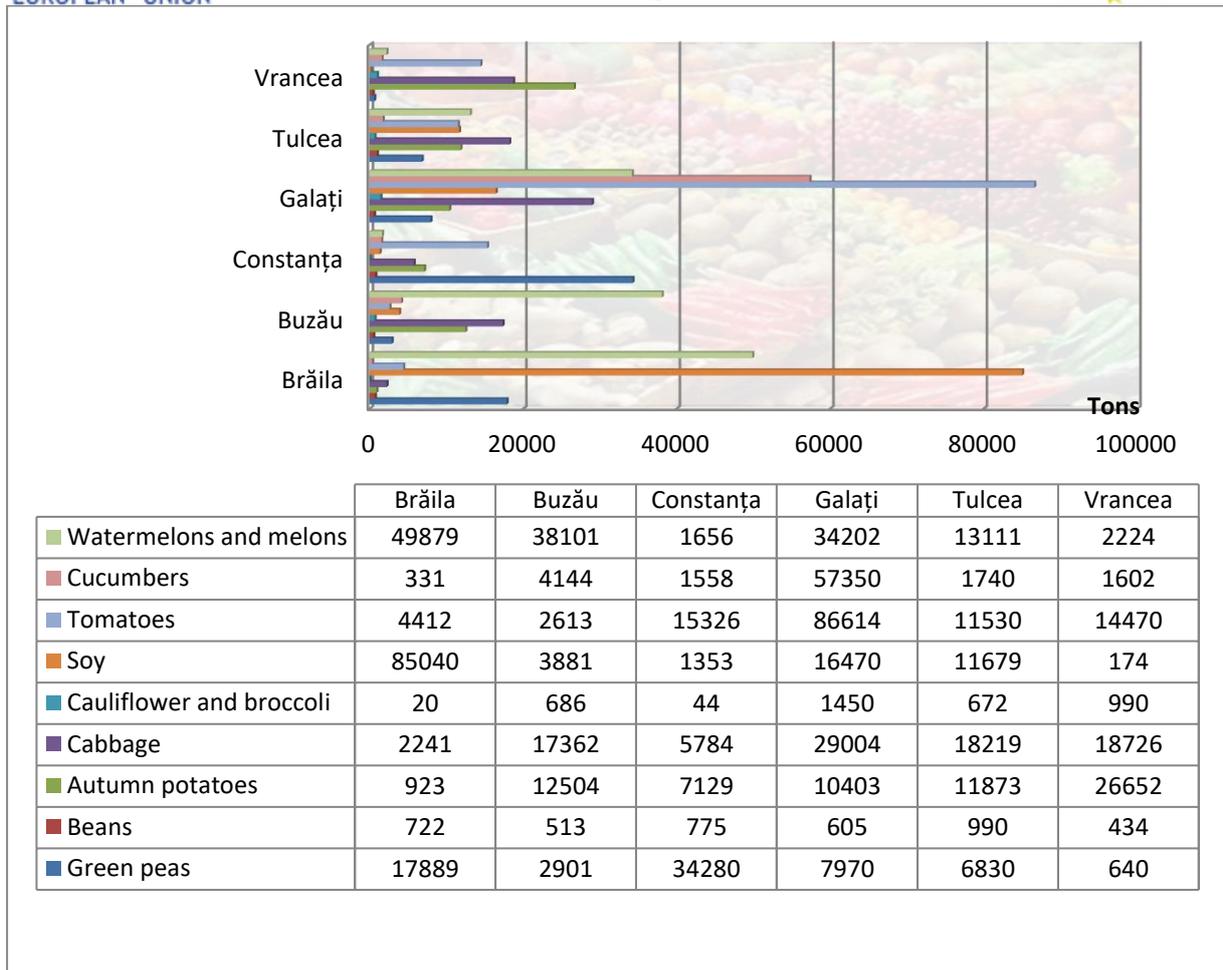


Figure 3.4. Vegetable production in the SE area of the country (National Institute of Statistics)

Among the harvested fruits, we enumerate apples with the highest productions in Buzău and Vrancea, pears with a high production in Buzău, plums with high productions in Buzău and Vrancea, apricots with a production of 3,628 tons in Constanța, cherries and sour cherries with productions large in Buzău, Galați and Vrancea, peaches and nectarines with a record production in Constanța 4,633 tons and nuts with a large production in Buzău and Vrancea (the latter being famous for their quality).

Grapes are a special category because we are talking about grapes for consumption and grapes for vinification (fig.3.5.). Due to the relief and climate, Vrancea has the highest production of grapes for winemaking and table. In each county there are small and large wine producers.

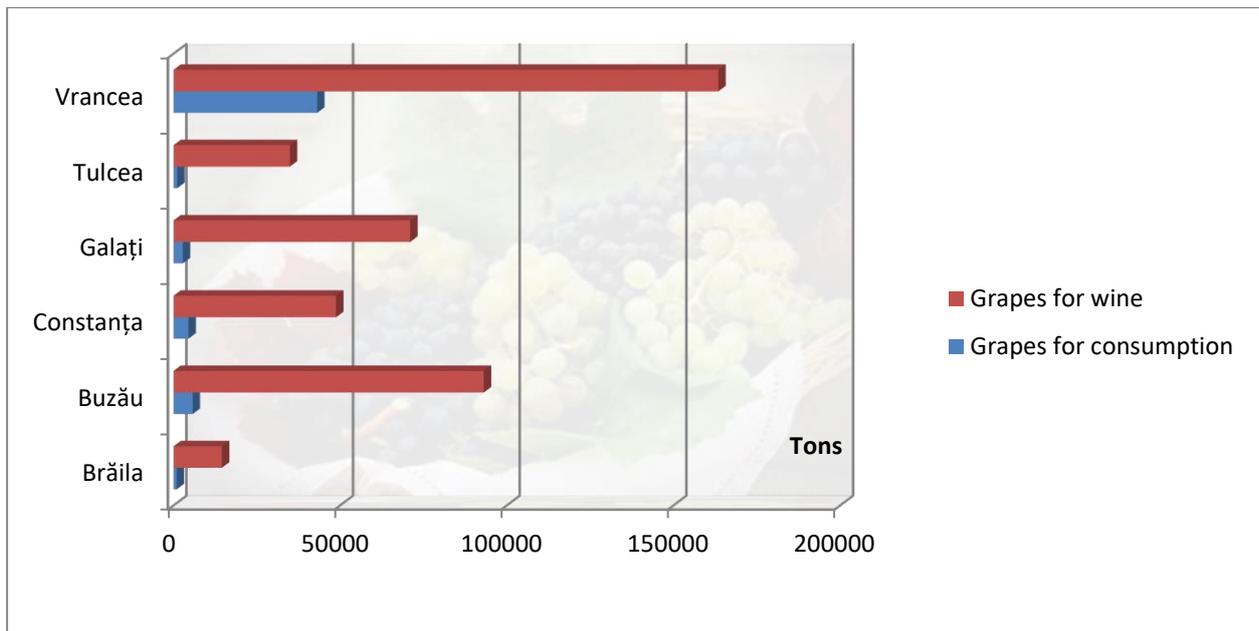


Figure 3.5. Grapes production in the SE area (National Institute of Statistics)

Rapeseed, mustard or alfalfa are also grown, as well as green fodder in quantities ranging from 18,023 tons in Galați to 153,624 tons in Vrancea, as well as fodder beet in Buzău (1,046 tons) and Vrancea (4,845 tons).

From the point of view of crops, the SE area is rich in assortment and significantly helped by climatic zones.

### 3.2.2. Organic farming

Organic farming is a production system that supports the health of soils, ecosystems and people. It is based on ecological processes, creates favourable conditions for biodiversity conservation, by adapting development cycles to local environmental conditions, avoiding the use of raw materials with adverse effects. Organic farming combines tradition, innovation and science for the benefit of the environment, by promoting fair living relationships for all those involved in the system (IFOAM, 2008).



“Ecologic farming”, a term protected and assigned by the EU to Romania for defining this system of agriculture and is similar to the terms “organic farming” or “biological farming” used in other Member States.

During the production period on the farm, the use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs and their derivatives) of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, growth stimulants and regulators, hormones, antibiotics, etc. is prohibited.

In the food processing stage, the use of food additives, complementary substances and synthetic chemicals for the preparation of organic food is prohibited. Organic farming has a major contribution to the sustainable development of agriculture, to the growth of economic activities with an important added value and to the increase of the interest for the development of the rural area.

In order to obtain and market organic products bearing specific labels and logos, manufacturers must go through a strict process that must be followed exactly, on the entire traceability of the product.

The national logo “ae”, specific to organic products, together with the Community logo are used to complete the labelling, in order to identify by consumers the products obtained in accordance with organic production methods.



The “ae” logo, owned by M.A.D.R, guarantees that the product, thus labeled, comes from organic farming and is certified by an approved inspection and certification body. Consumers who buy products bearing the national logo and the Community logo can be confident that: at least 95% of the ingredients of the product have been obtained in accordance with the organic production method and the product complies with the organic production rules.

In addition, the product shall bear the name of the manufacturer, processor or seller and the name or code of the inspection and certification body.

Starting with 2010, agricultural producers have started to certify organic products, understanding and respecting the norms imposed by the national and European legislation in force and putting quality first.

At national level the dynamics is represented in table 3.2.

Table 3.2. Dynamics of operators and areas in organic farming

Indicator	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Number of certified operators in organic farming	3155	9703	15544	15194	14470	12231	10562	8434	9008	9821
Total area in organic farming (ha)	182706	229946	288261	301148	289252	245924	226,309	254871	326259	395228

Source: MADR - Communications inspection and certification bodies  
\* EUROSTAT classification

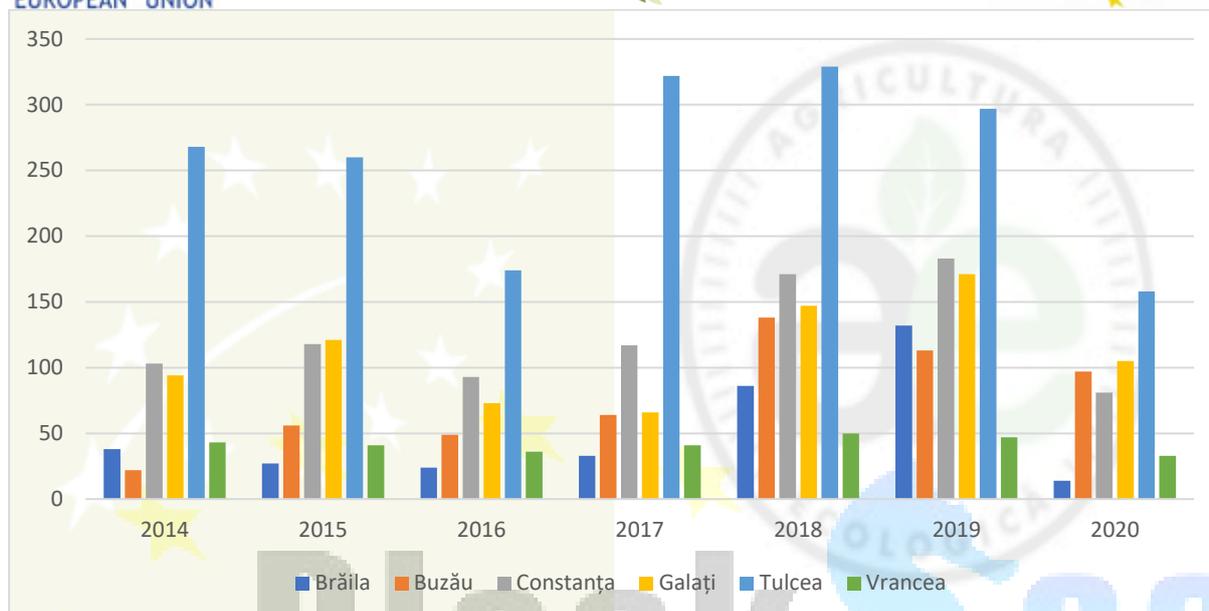
Until 2016, only producers were certified, starting with 2016, processors, traders, exporters, spontaneous flora, aquaculture began to be certified, and in 2017, importers are also certified.

In the SE area, during the period 2014 - 2020, the number of certified operators shows variations, the Dobrogea area (Tulcea - Constanța) stands out clearly in the ranking. Also, Galați - Brăila presented an increase in the number of certified operators in the period 2018-2019.

Buzău showed a visible increase in 2018, and Vrancea in 2019 (figure 3.6). Most certified products were cereals and technical plants, honey and bee products. Numerous operators in the field of vegetables and fruits, especially the Galati and Constanța area, had certified organic products.



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**Figure 3.6.** Variation of the number of certified operators for organic products in the SE region, during 2014-2020.

In table 3.3. the variation of the number of certified operators for production, processing, aquaculture and certified products (selectively) in the eligible area in the period January 2014-December 2020 is presented.

**Table 3.3.** Variation in the number of certified operators and certified products

	Number of certified operators - organic products							Products
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	
<b>Brăila</b>								
<b>Producers</b>	38	27	24	33	86	132	18	Fruits and vegetables (nuts, hazelnuts, sea buckthorn, rosehips, blackberries, plums, pears, chickpeas, tomatoes). Sunflower, fodder plants, alfalfa, triticale. Honey..



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<b>Processors</b>			2	2	1	1		Corn, sea buckthorn and sage, alfalfa, cereals. Plants and plant products. Mushrooms, seaweed, mollusks. Dehydrated fruits, aromatic herbs. Seeds. Food supplements. Honey.
<b>Buzău</b>								
<b>Producers</b>	22	56	49	64	138	113	97	Fruits (cherries, sour cherries, plums, apples, sea buckthorn, strawberries, currants, raspberries, blackberries, honeysuckle) and fresh vegetables. Grapes for wine (Merlot), Sunflower, alfalfa. Honey.
<b>Processors</b>			2	2	2	1	2	Corn, popcorn for microwave, wafers, durum wheat pasta, cocoa powder, brown cane sugar. Sauces and mustard, food supplements, tofu, oils and fats.
<b>Aquaculture</b>			1					Fishes common in the area



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Constanța

<b>Producers</b>	103	119	93	117	171	183	81	Fresh fruits (blueberries, sea buckthorn, apples, pears, plums, apricots, cherries, peaches, grapes, nuts, hazelnuts) and vegetables (cucumbers, garlic, bell peppers, paprika, tomatoes, melons, onions, peas). Noble grapes for winemaking (Cabernet Sauvignon, Fetească Neagră). Alfalfa, corn, sunflower, barley, wheat, clover, flax for oil, fodder plants, Bakery products. Lavender. Honey different assortments and bee products.
<b>Processors</b>			2	4	2	1	1	Sunflower, wheat, rapeseed, coriander, wine (Chardonay, Fetească Neagră, Pinot Noir, Syrah, Pinot Noir Rosé). Sea buckthorn, walnut flour, grape seed flour, hemp meal. Storage, transport of grain.
<b>Aquaculture</b>							1	Fishes common in the area.



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Galați								
Producers	94	121	73	66	147	171	105	Standing meadows, quince, raspberries, nuts, tomatoes, spinach, green beans, peas, sea buckthorn, chokeberry, alfalfa, rape, beans, barley, sunflower, wheat, corn. Noble grapes for wine (White Clock, Black Baby, Merlot). Aromatic plants - coriander. Honey different varieties.
Processors				2	2	2	1	Trade, handling - processing. Processing - trade in wheat flour. Trade - handling apples. Wheat flour, apples. Cow's milk yogurt, cow's milk sana, kefir, bifidus yogurt, milk, cheese.
Aquaculture			1					Fishes common in the area.



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Tulcea								
Producers	268	260	174	322	329	297	158	Sea buckthorn, watermelons, melons, apricots, plums, cherries, sour cherries, walnuts, hazelnuts. Peas, beans. Sunflower, wheat, alfalfa, barley, spelta, fodder, corn, oats, rape, soybeans, linseed for oil, triticale. Grapes for winemaking. Lavender. Honey a very rich assortment and bee products.
Processors			1	1	2	1	2	Honey. Rosé wine, Cabernet Alcovin
Aquaculture			1					Fish farms and fishes common in the area
Vrancea								
Producers	43	41	36	41	50	47	33	Plums, sea buckthorn, grapes Peas, watermelons and melons Wheat, fennel, alfalfa, corn, rapeseed, mustard, flax for oil, fodder plants, millet, chickpeas, spelta, coriander, Grapes for winemaking (Riesling, Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonay)
Processors				1				Odobești wineries.

The types of products are very varied, but predominate cereals, technical plants, honey and bee products, fruits and vegetables and grapes for winemaking. The processors are not numerous, but they also cover the processing of cereals, vegetables and fruits, dairy products, bakery and pastry products, winemaking but also storage and transport services.

Aquaculture, although with huge potential due to its geographical area, is still shy in the field of organic products and their processing.

### 3.2.3 Animal husbandry

Animal husbandry has enormous potential for improving food security and reducing poverty in rural areas, and increasing productivity in this sector depends on the efforts of sustainable agriculture.

The pandemic-dominated 2020 has led to major changes for farmers and the eating habits of meat and meat consumers. Limited access to products, the closure of restaurants has led to changes in the interaction of producer, trader, consumer. It even created a so-called "short chain" sometimes the trader disappearing from this chain and the products are delivered directly by the manufacturer. Groups were created on social networks that constantly consumed and promoted certain products of farmers.

On the other hand, store chains have updated their websites, applications and developed click and collect services. Phil Lempert, the so-called Supermarket Guru, considers that this trend is temporary, because in terms of meat and dishes, the consumer prefers to choose his own products.

From the INS data in 2019 (the last published data) in Romania, in the animal farms there were: cattle, pigs, sheep, goats, horses, birds, rabbits. In addition to well-known species, in the farms in the SE area, for example, guinea fowls grow for their extremely valuable meat from a nutritional point of view, quails for eggs and meat and ostriches (Buzău, Dobrogea).

The following is a list of livestock at national, regional and local level. Each species is well defined.



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**BOVINE** - represents the totality of bulls and buffaloes, males and females, by different age groups and economic destination (table 3.4.). This includes **COWS AND BUFFALOS** - females that, regardless of age, weight or production, have calved at least once (dairy cows and buffaloes for breeding) and **HEIFERS** - females that are in their first gestation and have been diagnosed pregnant by specialty (breeding heifers);



Table 3.4. Number of head of cattle, total, SE region and distributed by eligible area (source INS, 2020)

Categories of animals	Area	Heads number 2019
Cattles	Total nationally	1,923,283
	SE region	216,180
	Brăila	34,443
	Buzău	52,380
	Constanța	35,063
	Galați	24,375
	Tulcea	29,639
	Vrancea	40,280

**PIGS** - represents all pigs on the farm (including pigs in maternity wards, breeders and fatteners), regardless of sex, weight and economic destination (Table 3.5.). This category includes: **BREEDING SOWS**- females who have calved at least once and sows after 48 hours of calving, if they have given birth to viable piglets and can provide adequate breastfeeding and **REPRODUCTIVE SOWS** - young female sows over 4 months, without the one from the breeders and the fatteners one.

**SHEEPS** - represents all animals of the sheep species, regardless of sex, age, economic destination and location (table 3.6.). This includes **SHEEP AND LAMBS** - females that have calved at least once and young ewes born in the previous year, intended for breeding and which have been bred, are considered.



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Table 3.5. Number of pig heads, total, SE region and distributed by eligible area (INS source, 2020)

Categories of animals	Area	Heads number 2019
Pigs	Total nationally	3,834,136
	SE area	482,007
	Brăila	66,026
	Buzău	137,471
	Constanța	98,754
	Galați	61,645
	Tulcea	13,095
	Vrancea	105,016

**GOATS** - represents all goats regardless of sex, age, economic destination and location (table 3.7.). **GOATS** - are considered females that have given birth at least once.



Table 3.6. Number of sheep, total, SE region and distributed by eligible area (INS source, 2020)

Categories of animals	Area	Heads number 2019
Sheeps	Total nationally	3,834,136
	SE area	482,007
	Brăila	66,026
	Buzău	137,471
	Constanța	98,754
	Galați	61,645
	Tulcea	13,095
	Vrancea	105,016

**HORSES** - represents work horses, breeding stallions, youth up to 3 years, other horses. Not included, are racing horses and riding horses, used for entertainment (table 3.8.) **WORK HORSES** are included - all horses intended for agricultural work and traction.



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**Table 3.7.** Number of goat heads, total, SE region and distributed on the eligible area (INS source, 2020)

Categories of animals	Area	Heads number 2019
Goats	Total nationally	1,293,664
	SE area	334,482
	Brăila	33,746
	Buzău	44,319
	Constanța	112,964
	Galați	46,409
	Tulcea	70,272
	Vrancea	26,772



**Table 3.8.** Number of working horse heads, total, SE region and distributed on the eligible area (INS source, 2020)

Categories of animals	Area	Heads number 2019
Work horses	Total nationally	383,025
	SE area	67,025
	Brăila	12,084
	Buzău	17,784
	Constanța	6,419
	Galați	12,478
	Tulcea	7,244
	Vrancea	11,016

**POULTRY** - represents all categories of birds existing in the agricultural holding (chickens, turkeys, ducks, geese, other birds: quails, guinea fowl, etc.) (table 3.9.).

**ADULT LAYING BIRDS** are included - birds over 24 weeks old exploited for egg production.



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**Table 3.9.** Number of bird heads, total, SE region and distributed on the eligible area (INS source, 2020)

Categories of animals	Area	Heads number 2019
Poultry	Total nationally	75,364,575
	SE area	13,754,726
	Brăila	2,280,079
	Buzău	5,810,415
	Constanța	1,242,470
	Galați	2,059,372
	Tulcea	541,223
	Vrancea	1,821,167

**BEE FAMILIES** - represents the number of bee families, intended for honey production (table 3.10.).



**Table 3.10.** Number of bee families, total, SE region and distributed by eligible area (INS source, 2020)

Categories	Area	Number of families 2019
Bee families	Total nationally	1,843,026
	SE area	323,671
	Brăila	11,837
	Buzău	93,703
	Constanța	52,560
	Galați	33,413
	Tulcea	96,167
	Vrancea	35,991

**RABBITS** - all domestic rabbits raised for meat, fur, hair (Table 3.11.)

The SE area has an approximately balanced distribution in case of animal husbandry. The Buzău area is on the first places in terms of the number of cattle, pigs, sheep, horses, rabbits and bee families. Vrancea is on the first places in number of cattle, pigs and sheep heads but on the last place in number of goat heads.



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**Table 3.11.** Number of rabbit heads, total, SE region and distributed on the eligible area (INS source, 2020)

Categories of animals	Area	Heads number 2019
Rabbits	Total nationally	275,094
	SE area	12,842
	Brăila	250
	Buzău	5,850
	Constanța	3,300
	Galați	1,572
	Tulcea	1,870

Tulcea and Constanța are on the first places in number of goat heads, but on the last places in number of horse heads (Constanța) and birds (Tulcea). Galați and Brăila are on the first places for birds and horses, but on the last places for cattle (Galați) and rabbits and bee families (Brăila).

### 3.2.4. The agri-food industry

All the data presented above have a purpose in the processing area which is very diversified in the SE area. The whole range of food is covered.

**Brăila** - there are producers of raw materials for bakery (flour and corn), producers of bakery and pastry products (pretzels, cakes), cereal flakes and breakfast cereals. Processing of poultry, beef, pork, game as well as natural and artificial intestines and membranes for sausages. Milk and dairy products occupy an important place in the field of food in the area the range is varied from cheeses, cream, butter, yogurt, ice cream, sorbet. Cocoa, chocolate and sugar products and eggs and egg products is also a producer of buckwheat bran.



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**Buzău** - here too the producers of bread, bakery and pastries occupy an important place, but also here we find producers of pasta (macaroni, noodles, spaghetti). In Buzău are produced Buzău pretzels, recognized as a traditional product in Romania. Production and marketing of poultry, sheep and beef, game meat, meat delicacies, prepared in this category including the famous Pleșcoi sausages. Eggs and egg products are also obtained in the Buzău area. Another range of products obtained in the area are canned fruits and vegetables, mustard, soups and extracts. There are oil producers in the area, one of the largest in the country along with those from Constanța and Galați, as well as sugar and sugar products. There are also producers of quality wines and beer.

**Constanța** - In this area there is a producer of medicinal and aromatic plants. Producers of bread and bakery products have numerous representatives, of course, with fresh pastries and bakery products, biscuits, biscuits and canned pastries. There are many producers of cheese and dairy products in the Constanța area, including ice cream. Farm and game meat and meat, molluscs, shellfish and seaweed are represented by many producers in the area. They are producers of smoked, processed, canned and caviar fish, but also of edible fish, molluscs and shellfish by-products. Milk and dairy products are also represented here with a large number of producers and if we take into account the fact that there are many goats in the area, we can also talk about diversity. There are also producers of sugar and oil, but also dietary foods for diabetics and products for a healthy diet. Manufacturers of refrigerated food, fresh and very fresh. And here are also famous producers of wines of world-renowned varieties. Tobacco and tobacco products are also processed here.

**Galați** - This area has a tradition for canned vegetables and fruits with a wide range of canned fruits and vegetables, frozen fruits and vegetables, candied fruits, sauces, dressings, mustard, borș (a liquid ingredient for the sour soup). Milk and dairy products occupy an important place in the range of products obtained in the area, and meat and meat preparations from farm and game animals and unprocessed slaughter products. In this area are obtained and processed spices and herbs and herbal and fruit teas. Bakery and pastry products are obtained by a large number of manufacturers and come in a wide range. In the producers' market there is also an oil producer that obtains a series of oils, improved in quality. There are producers of wines of good quality in the north-east.



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**Tulcea** - area that includes the Danube Delta, has traditions in obtaining smoked fish and processed fish, caviar, shellfish and algae.

Bakery, pastry and confectionery products with traditional products certified at national and European level as well as dairy products (cheeses with national specificity, butter, yogurt) are found in the concerns of many producers.

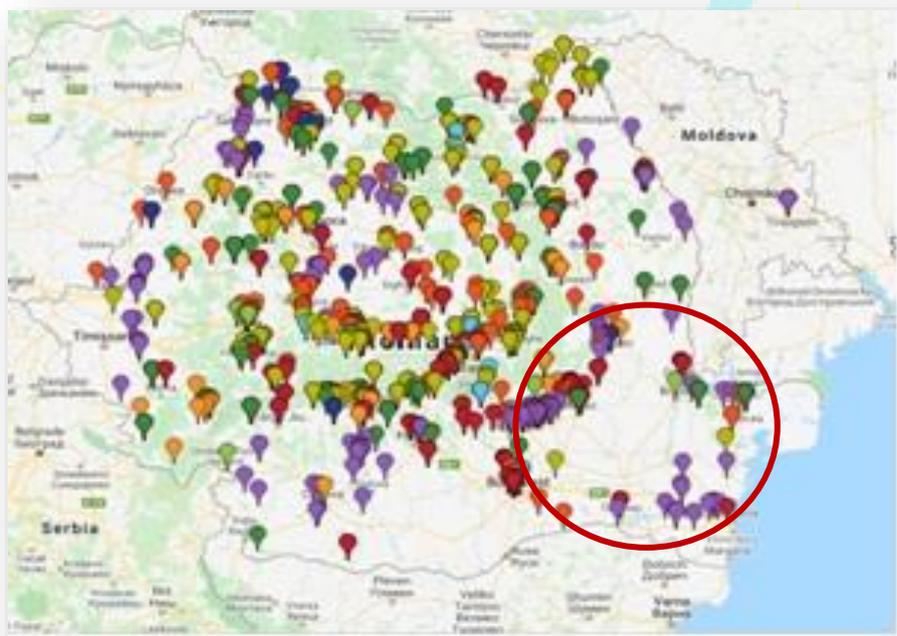
Slaughtering and meat preparations cover a fairly large area in the field of products (fresh, smoked, dried sausages), frozen meat and fish, unprocessed slaughter products, as well as natural and artificial intestines and sausage membranes. Wine producers are also well represented, being present on the market of eco products.

**Vrancea** - In this area the wine producers are extremely numerous, with very good quality wines and a wide assortment, in the Panciu area being also the oldest sparkling wine producer according to the traditional method. Animal and poultry farms with the use of meat and meat products and frozen products. Producers of bread and bakery products are numerous with a wide range. Producers of fruit juices and dried fruits as well as freeze-dried foods operate in the area.

## 4. AN OVERVIEW OF TYPICAL ROMANIAN PRODUCTS: BRANDS, CERTIFICATIONS AND COOKING RECIPES

”Traditional products are a true country brand that, when valued, can bring economic benefits to the rural environment and the national economy.” said the Minister of Agriculture Nichita Adrian Oros during a fair of traditional Romanian products opened in Bucharest. In Romania, at the end of 2019, 1669 products were certified. Of these, 740 carry the traditional product label, 139 the Consecrated Recipe label, 639 mountain product, 1 PDO, 11 PGI, 9 TSG. In terms of wines, 130 are certified with PDO and GI.

Analyzing the official distribution of products on the surface of Romania (Fig.4.1.), an imbalance is found.



(<https://cpac.afir.info/Harta-Produsurilor>)

Figure.4.1. Distribution of certified products in Romania.



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There is a concentration of them in the area of Transilvania and the west of the country, with uncovered areas in the mountainous areas, where the population density is low due to the relief.

The northern area and that of the Eastern Carpathians have a relatively high density of certified products, as well as the area of the Southern Carpathians, with a higher concentration in tourist areas (Braşov, Prahova Valley, Sibiu). The east-southeast area has a very small number of certified products, due on the one hand to the presence of agricultural areas and on the other hand to the absence of tourism. Although the Danube Delta and Constanţa are touristic areas, they benefit from these seasonal activities and have local products based on fish, shells and seafood preferred by tourists in season.

## 4.1. TRADITIONAL PRODUCTS

### 4.1.1. Agro products



**WALNUTS** - is one of the fruits widely used by Romanians. It is consumed as such, their consumption being beneficial for maintaining the health of the heart and arteries but also in a series of traditional products: cakes, rolls, pies but also in fasting products (sarmale). Walnut oil is very valuable. Also, the core due to its very high energy value (636 calories / 100 g core), walnut is a complete food, very caloric and concentrated, especially valuable for anemic children, the elderly, convalescents. Walnuts are grown throughout the SE area.



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**APPLES** - are valuable products in terms of composition (an apple a day keeps doctor away) but are also the most marketed products, on the one hand because of the many farmers especially in the area of Vrancea and Buzău, but also the price that tek price is not very high compared to other fruits. In the Buzău area there are producers of juice and concentrated apple juice.



**PLUMS** - intended for fresh consumption for their high nutritional value (vitamins C and K). Dried or dried and smoked plums are in high demand. Jams, juices are made, they are used in pastry products. Plums are also the raw material for a traditional alcoholic beverage - țuica.

**GRAPES FOR FETEASCĂ NEAGRĂ WINE** - Local variety, long cultivated on large areas in the south of Moldova, in the Vrancea area and in the eastern part of Muntenia. From this variety can be obtained both special rose and red wines that can be aged in quality wood and later in glass, resulting wines of great brand, with a pronounced typicality. Depending on the vinification techniques, wines with various aromas and fine tannin structure, good acidity, medium to full body and a medium to high alcohol level can be obtained.



**SEA BUCKTHORN** (*Hippophae rhamnoides* L.), is a very branched and thorny shrub that grows in Romania from coastal sands and gravels to mountainous regions, sometimes forming fairly large groves and bushes. It is used to prepare jams, sea buckthorn juices very rich in vitamin C. Dried and it is used in pastry.



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**TOMATOES** - Varieties of tomatoes intended for fresh consumption are produced in the commune of Matca in Galați county. The tomatoes here are sought for their special taste and have already conquered part of the European market but also that of the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.



**WATERMELONS** - varieties with seeds and without cultivation in the Tulcea area, Vrancea on larger areas, but also in the rest of the localities in the eligible area. Consumption is very high during the summer, being indispensable at any meal, but also a small diameter variety that is pickled with various spices and which seasons the steaks in the winter.

**ICRE** - generic name given to fish eggs, they are very valuable from a nutritional and sensory point of view. They come from different species of fish. In the Danube Delta area we can find caviar, pike fish eggs, carp or combinations - eaten as such on toast greased with butter or in the form of fish roe salad with finely chopped onion. Lately, the trout eggs from the Vrancea area, where the breeders are in the mountain areas, have started to be very appreciated.



**CARP** - a fish that can be found in all localities on the Danube (Brăila, Galați, Tulcea), recently a series of farms have been set up where those with a passion for fishing can buy dinner. Carp brine is a delicacy, baked carp or fried polenta are dishes that must be tried.

**SHELLS AND RAPANE** (*Rapana venosa*) - are delicacies of the Black Sea coast but are consumed with pleasure in all restaurants in the SE area and beyond. Prepared by skilled chefs they can create special taste pleasures.



**TROUT** (*Salmo trutta fario*) a species of fish that lives mainly in mountain waters, waters with relatively low temperature, but in the Vrancea area there are trout farmers that imitate very well the natural conditions. It has fine meat, and can be prepared in a multitude of delicious and healthy ways.

**MANGALIȚA PIG** - also called "salmon pig" or "four-legged olive oil" a breed of pig that is now being rediscovered, with a content of polyunsaturated fats approximately equal to that of olive oil. Delicious dishes are prepared according to traditional recipes and delight the taste buds of any type of consumer.



**ANGUS COW**- Black Angus beef is very tasty, juicy, due to the alternation of layers of meat with those of fat. It is increasingly used to obtain traditional dishes and adds value to the plates of those who want traditional products from the area.

**SUNFLOWER** - is a raw material for the three major oil producers in Buzau, Constanta and Galati, but the core is used in salads and fried for consumption as such.





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**BEE HONEY** - the first sweet substance used by man, is found in these lands, in a variety of flavors, colors and tastes. The nutritional value, the dietary value, and the therapeutic value should not be neglected. Honey consumed as such at breakfast, dessert, in pastries, sauces, drinks has a long tradition in the area of Brăila, Galați, Tulcea - in the Danube Delta area and in Vrancea.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j\\_w62OxqrhU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j_w62OxqrhU)

#### 4.1.2. Processed products



**BORȘ** - product obtained from the fermentation of wheat bran, with various additives for flavoring, is used to impart sour taste to soups or can be consumed here for other beneficial effects for the digestive tract. The certified traditional producer is in **BRĂILA COUNTY** (<https://cpac.afir.info/Produs?id=11>).

**MICI DE CASĂ GABIOTI** - (meaning "little ones,, or "small ones,, - grilled ground meat rolls in cylindrical shape). Starting from the structure of the raw material, namely: mutton, beef, pork, spices, all products in the country, they managed to get a natural, traditional product with an unmatched and unmistakable flavour.



(<https://cpac.afir.info/Produs?id=280>) **BUZĂU COUNTY**



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**PLEȘCOI GHIUDEM GABIOTI** - The adequate quality of the sheep meat chosen for the preparation of the guide is obtained by manual deboning, which allows the complete removal of the tendons during processing. In addition to the aroma given by the hot pepper, the flavor is complemented by the aroma specific to the smoking operation. Pressing the product with the rolling pin is a very important operation that must be paid a lot of attention as the finished product must not have air gaps.

(<https://cpac.afir.info/Produs?id=248>) **BUZĂU COUNTY**

**PLEȘCOI PASTRAMA NEA POPA** - The secret of preparing this product is kept in the family for years and years. All stages of preparation are important. In addition to the fact that everything is prepared manually, attention is paid to the salting operation, with the necessary time. The way the product matures is also important, defining its tenderness.

(<https://cpac.afir.info/Produs?id=380>).

**BUZĂU COUNTY**



**COVRIGI DE BUZĂU** - round shape, smooth, glossy skin, golden brown, porous core, without gaps, well baked, and the taste and aroma are pleasant, characteristic of the product.

(<https://cpac.afir.info/Produs?id=794>)

**BUZĂU COUNTY**



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**SMOKED SHEEP SAUSAGES “AT BUNICA GINA”** - The sausages have a clean, non-sticky surface, in a mosaic structure section, without agglomerations of fat, pieces of 18-22 cm in sheep's gut.

(<https://cpac.afir.info/Produs?id=794>) **BUZĂU COUNTY**

**GHIUDEM TĂTĂRĂSC MOȘ IOSIF** - dry product, of the form: flat, flattened, horseshoe-shaped. Color: specific to the assortment, on the outside brown to black, on the inside dark red, a thin slice seen in the light is a dark ruby. Taste and smell: pleasant, specific to the range of matured meat and spices used, slightly salty and slightly spicy.



(<https://cpac.afir.info/Produs?id=782>) **CONSTANȚA COUNTY**



**SHEPERD SAUSAGES TATAIA GICĂ** - differ from other products in the same category by the quality of the raw material that comes from animals raised in the area of Covurlui de hill and hills. To this is added the use of the specific method of preparation, the processing of meat by old, traditional methods passed down from generation to generation. (<https://cpac.afir.info/Produs?id=132>).

**GALAȚI COUNTY**

**OUTLOW CHOP (COTLET HAIIDUCESC) of ZAMFIR** - the product is obtained from pork chop matured in spice stain, for 6-14 days, with salt and traditional natural spices (hot peppers, garlic sauce (mujdei), pepper, thyme). The finished product is obtained by smoking pieces of meat in classic smokers (<https://cpac.afir.info/Produs?id=1206>).

**GALAȚI COUNTY**





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**TOBA LUI IGNAT** - the product is obtained according to a traditional recipe by boiling pork heads, pork skin and internal organs as well as fresh pork stomach, the permeability of natural membranes allowing a proper smoking, the product breathing in this way, facilitating the process of flavoring and fermentation. (<https://cpac.afir.info/Produs?id=538>) **GALAȚI COUNTY**

**DELTAICA SALAD WITH PIKE EGGS** - it is prepared by manual operations: the removal and separation of the fish eggs from the membrane, the salting and maturation of the fish eggs being carefully controlled. The product has a creamy consistency, with a high frequency of caviar grains (30%), white-yellow cream in which golden pike caviar grains are distinguished, combined with reddish berries of the tarama, in a pleasant contrast (<https://cpac.afir.info/Produs?id=448>).

**TULCEA COUNTY**



**SILVER CARP BATOG DELTAICA** -- is a product in which the preparation process is done manually by taking whole fillets from the silver carp, total deboning, dry salting. The fillets are cut into pieces lengthwise, rolled cylindrically and tied with linen thread until a brown product is obtained, with an enticing aroma that is due to the quality of the silver carp fillet and the way it is prepared.

(<https://cpac.afir.info/Produs?id=7>). **TULCEA COUNTY**

**ZACUSCĂ MOESIS** - baking eggplants on a embers' bed and frying kapia / donut peppers gives the product the traditional element of taste and aroma. Fry the chopped onion, add the fried and chopped peppers and the cooked and chopped eggplant, and at the end add the tomatoes and spice. The product has a pasty consistency, opalescent red-brick color, and the taste is pleasant, slightly sweet, characteristic of vegetables, with a slight smoke aroma. (<https://cpac.afir.info/Produs?id=589>).

**TULCEA COUNTY**





**COZONAC COMOARA MĂCINULUI-** is based on an old recipe from the Italian community in Greece (panfrutto) where the proportion of eggs and butter gives a specific color and consistency, combined with oriental products from the native Turkish in the area (lemon, Turkish delight, raisins and cocoa) and walnut kernel. From the mixture of the three influences (Italian, Turkish, Romanian) it gives the product a wealth of flavors. The cake has a reddish-brown crust, creamy filling, loose dough with fermentation bubbles, buttery aroma with a hint of lemon peel, cocoa and rum, with a sweet taste.

(<https://cpac.afir.info/Produs?id=205>) **TULCEA COUNTY**

**PITIȘ BREAD-** all operations in the production process are performed manually. The taste is given by 100% high quality wheat flour, without the addition of additives. The bread is kneaded by hand. The recipe is simple, contains the basic products and has no chemical or processed additives. The incomparable taste of real bread, made at home, is also given by the positive energy of the man who kneads the bread who knows in its dough only the flour from the wheat grain of the Vrancea plains, the yeast, the salt and the water. Another procedure that complements the traditional taste is given by the fact that the bread is kneaded in a wooden bowl and baked in black tin trays. Another important element that contributes to the perfection of the traditional bread taste is given by the chamotte oven, in which we use beech wood, which contributes to the browning and taste of the bread from grandma's time.



(<https://cpac.afir.info/Produs?id=783>) **VRANCEA COUNTY**



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## 4.2. LABELS IN THE REGION (PDO, PGI OR PSG)

The traditional products recognized at European level are few, compared to the potential of the area. It is only one product with PDO certificate from 2016. TELEMIA DE IBĂNEȘTI is a cheese coming from cow's milk from the mountain area and brine - salt water from the Orșova fountain in the Gurghiului Valley - mountain area - are special compared to other similar products and due to the fact that no salt is used but salty water. The producer is Mirdatod Prod SRL (source: <https://cpac.afir.info>).

In table 4.1. traditional products from the region certified with the PGI label are presented. There are still products in the process of being certified or that still have to take a step until obtaining certification.

Table 4.1. PGI certified traditional products in Romania SE area (source: <https://cpac.afir.info>)

No	Product name	Producer	Product description	Year
1	Pleșcoi raw dried sausages	Gabioti	Whether we are talking about mutton or beef, for the preparation of these sausages is obtained by manual deboning, which allows the complete removal of the tendons during the processing of the entire amount of meat. In addition to the aroma of garlic and paprika, the flavor is complemented by the taste of thyme.	2019
2	Valmar Pleșcoi sausages	Valmar	The consistency is bound, dense and uniform, both on the edges and in the middle. You can see the presence of red hot peppers. The smell and taste are specific to spicy sausages due to the spices used.	2019



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3	<b>Casa Papuc Pleșcoi sausages</b>	Tri 94 Com	The sausages have a clean surface, in a mosaic structure section, without fat agglomerations, without air gaps, bound consistency, pleasant smell and taste, slightly spicy. The color varies from light reddish brown to dark reddish brown, specific to beech smoke.	2019
4	<b>Plescoi sausages</b>	Asociația pentru Promovarea Cârnaților de Pleșcoi	The specificity of the product consists in the quality of the meat used to obtain the specific taste, being necessary meat from sheep raised in the region. This is because the soil has a high salinity and the sheep's meat is "salted" naturally.	2019
5	<b>Smoked Danube mackerel (<i>Alosa immaculata</i>)</b>	Asociația "Ro- Pescador"	It has a golden colour with a precious metal shine, the meat of the fish traditionally smoked in the Danube Delta is dense to the touch. The aroma and taste are enticing, specific to smoked fish due to the superior quality of the mackerel, the way it is prepared: dry salting, cold smoking, elements that undoubtedly determine the specificity and traditional character.	2018
6	<b>Pike (<i>Esox lucius</i>) eggs salad</b>	Asociația "Ro- Pescador"	A cream obtained from at least 29% fish eggs of which min. 15% whole grain pike eggs and 14% deltaic fish eggs, without the addition of technological additives, mixed with sunflower oil, carbonated water, fresh iodized salt and lemon juice. Characteristic for this product is the prevalence of pike eggs taste, which is valued by deltaic fish eggs.	2018

The delicious Dobrogean pie produced by Moesis by Angelo has gone through all the stages and will receive the certificate signed for PGI.

TSG certified products are not listed in the CPAC.

### 4.3. TADITIONAL COOKING RECIPES

**BORȘ PESCĂRESC (CIORBĂ PESCĂREASCĂ)** - delicious product, a sour soup that is prepared in all localities on the Danube and beyond.

**Short history** - *We find the best recipes in the Danube Delta, where the product seems to have its' origin. Why here? Because in the other cities on the river side, there were farms where birds, cattle, pigs, sheep were raised, but in the Delta they were harder to raise due to the isolation and the only means of transport available - the boat. Easy to prepare, very tasty and healthy was one of the main dishes in Danube landscapes.*



**Ingredients:** carp and any fish in the fishermans' net some recipes recommend crayfish and shells; oil;  
Vegetables - onions, carrots, tomatoes, celery, bell peppers, potatoes, garlic, parsley, celery, dill and lovage leaves;  
For the sour taste Vinegar or bors (described at pag. 50).

**Preparation:** Along with the onions, boil a carrot, two tomatoes, a celery, a bell pepper, three potatoes, garlic, all cut into small pieces to boil as quickly as possible. Add all species of freshwater fish (one part water, two parts fish). After ten minutes of cooking add the greens (parsley, celery, dill, lovage). After another 20 minutes of cooking, the work is ready ([Roman, 1998](#)).



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## SARMALE

**Short history** *Sarmale* are known to have appeared in the Ottoman Empire, from where they spread almost everywhere they left their mark. Today, no less than 25 countries adopt sarma as their national food, including Romania, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Greece, Ukraine, Moldova, Iraq, Lebanon and Jordan. Even the term sarma comes from the Turkish language. "Sarmak" is a roll in Turkish and refers to a package wrapped in a filling. The name sarma, common to Romanians and Croats, is similar to "sarmi" in Bulgarian and "sarmalaki" in Greek.

The other stuffed vegetables also come from Turkish sarma. Peppers, tomatoes or beets stuffed with various compositions, have the same roots as the classic sarma.

Anyone you ask what is the most popular traditional food, any area, the answer will be sarmale. In each area a different type of meat is used or there are even sarmale in the nest that involve 5 types of meat (beef, pork, chicken, turkey and duck). Or the vegan version, with rice, nuts, raisins and mushrooms. Pickled cabbage is also used as a wrapper, but an alternative is the vine leaf coating.



**Ingredients:** minced meat (beef, pork, chicken or mixture);  
onion;  
rice;  
eggs;  
spices (pepper, coriander, paprika, cumin) and  
aromatic herbs  
(dill, parsley, thyme, bay leaf) salt.  
tomato paste.  
peppers,  
preferably a clay pot.

<https://savoriurbane.com/>

**Preparation:** Put the onion in oil with a drop of water, at a moderate temperature until it becomes translucent, add garlic, rice and salt, ground pepper, thyme and cook until it starts to smell enticing. The mixture, after cooling, mix with the minced meat, many spices and flavours (dill, coriander, cumin, pepper and a little salt). At the end add egg that will bind the composition during boiling. Pickled cabbage leaves are unfolded and cut into equal sizes. And patiently roll the larger or smaller sarmales as you wish. Bring to the boil (preferably in the oven to mix all the flavours). Add when they are almost ready, tomato paste, peppercorns, thyme.

## MICI

**Short history** *Micii are a national culinary symbol. There is no unanimously accepted version of their appearance. Their oriental origin brought them to our lands quite late and they seem to be inspired, some authors claim from adana kebab, others from köfte prepared with history of Turkish cuisine, which in turn took it from the Persians, who also l they took from the Indians.*

*Throughout this route, the composition of the mince followed the local recipes, each nation adding its own note of involuntary originality, using ingredients from the garden or pantry. In Romania, but probably in other parts of the Balkans, pork was a self-evident option, but the maximum originality probably comes from baking soda, which is the main ingredient. The first recipe written about mici is from around 1902. It specifies baking soda, not very large quantities, around 2-3 grams per kilogram and is used to soften, loosen the composition and keep the color inside.*

*Regarding the predominant pork meat mici in Romania, there is a funny story that says that we paid to the Ottoman Empire tribute with birds, cattle and sheep, the pig being the only one left for cooking.*

*The story of today's mici, it is said that begins in 1900, at the restaurant of lordache Ionescu - a Transylvanian who had a great recipe for sausages. One day, because she had a restaurant full of guests and she didn't have enough gut to wrap the minced meat, he took a piece of minced meat prepared for sausages and put it on the grill. The clients were very excited, and in a short time micul became the "star" of his place, in the centre of Bucharest.*

Micii are really delicious and very popular on barbecues, street food, weekends in cottages and birthday parties. It is a traditional Romanian dish, made from a mixture of beef, lamb and pork with spices, such as garlic, black pepper, thyme, coriander, anise, salt and sometimes paprika and formed into rolls grilled with charcoal.



### Ingredients:

minced meat (pork, beef, sheep or mixture);  
spices - garlic, black pepper, and anise  
paprika, coriander or cumin depend on the area.

**Preparation:** Over the minced meat, prepared according to the area and preferences, add all the spices. Homogenize. The paste should be soft and airy. "The small ones,, are formed and all we have to do is prepare the grill to spread the wonderful flavours. French fries and mustard complement the traditional plate very well.

**CRAYFISH BOILED IN WINE** - a delight of the Danube areas. They can be served as an appetizer or as a main course.

**Short history** - Crayfishes were cooked in rich people houses at the end of XIX<sup>th</sup> century. Fried, with cream, the recipes being brought by those who had the opportunity to visit western countries. In the towns on the Danube side and in the Danube Delta, were boiled in water with white wine, vegetables and garlic sauce. It is recommended to be consumed only in the months containing the letter R.



**Ingredients:**

crayfish  
water;  
white wine;  
garlic;  
peppercorns;  
bay leaves;  
ground pepper;  
thyme;  
salt;  
parsley;  
maize;  
potatoes;  
lemon;  
onion.

**Preparation:** Wash the crayfish several times, keep them in coarse salt water for about 10 minutes, then rinse until the water comes out perfectly clean. The corn is boiled whole. One part of the garlic is boiled, and one part is used for the garlic sauce, and the onion is washed and cut. In a fairly large pot, boil water, wine, salt, garlic, chopped onion, peppercorns, ground pepper and thyme, bay leaves, pieces of lemon, parsley, corn and potatoes.

When the potatoes and corn are ready, remove and add the crayfish. Boil until it turns red. Serve with garlic sauce with boiled potatoes and boiled corn.

## COZONAC

**Short history** - The favourite dessert of the Romanians, the cozonac, has a long history. At the origin of the cake is bread, and fermentation and baking techniques have evolved over time. Yeast has been used since ancient times. According to archaeological discoveries, there were baking ovens in ancient Egypt. There are also drawings dating back almost 4,000 years that show that the Egyptians knew how to make several kinds of bread, some of which were sweetened with honey. Also in antiquity, the Greeks made a type of cake sweetened with honey and sprinkled with nuts, which was called "plakous". Chrysippus of Tyana mentioned, according to sources, a recipe for cozonac with nuts and honey, which he also mentioned, he tasted in Crete.

The Romans, who took over the use of yeast from the Egyptians and Greeks, diversified and enriched the recipe for cakes, adding, for example, eggs, butter, dried fruit. In the beginning there were two kinds of cake that were offered as an offering to the gods: "libum", a smaller cake and "placenta", a cake with cheese, raisins and hazelnuts. In the Middle Ages, European bakers often made dried fruit cakes because they lasted longer.

In Great Britain, the first cake recipe appeared in a cookbook in 1718, with the recommendation to be baked in long and narrow forms, a recommendation that has remained valid today. In fourteenth-century England, Geoffrey Chaucer mentions, in *Canterbury Stories*, huge cakes made for special occasions. One of the cake-shaped cakes had been made from 13 kilograms of flour and contained butter, cream, eggs, spices, raisins and honey.

The French, those who in the nineteenth century added the third course to the table, the "dessert", are those who valued the cake, more than others. Marie Antoinette remained in people's memory through the phrase she uttered when she was told that people did not even have bread on the table because of poverty. The future queen of France would have said: "To eat cozonac, if they have no bread."

Mrs. Mary Eales, a well-known author of cookbooks in Great Britain, wrote in 1718, as a recommendation, that this preparation be baked in long and thinner forms. The classic shape of the cake dates back to that time. Gastronomy experts almost all agree that the cake recipe, as we know it today, was established in the nineteenth century by Europeans.

Romanian tradition says that if you have a cake on the table, it means that you are celebrating.

It is a traditional Romanian cake but it is also found in the traditions of Bulgaria (kozunak). It is traditionally cooked for Easter or Christmas, but it is also eaten outside these holidays. A similar cake is Panettone, which is cooked for Christmas in Italy in the Lombardy region. The visible difference being its round and high shape.

Ingredients:



**Dough:** flour, salt, milk, sugar, yeast, yolks, butter, rum and vanilla.

**Filling:** walnut, egg white, sugar, cocoa, raisins, rum

<https://moesis.ro/produs/cozonac-comoara-macinului/>

**Preparation:** From yeast, sugar, milk and flour, prepare fermentation agent. Flour with raised fermentation agent, flavours, egg yolks rubbed with oil, warm milk in which you dissolved the butter and salt. Knead gradually incorporating the rest of the warm milk, then the remaining butter. After hours of kneading, let the dough rise hot, 1 hour. For the filling, beat the egg whites with the sugar, then add the walnuts, essences and cocoa. Spread 4 sheets of dough 1 cm thick. Put the filling and the raisins, roll and knit. After they have grown for an hour in the greased and paper-lined trays, bake the cozonac over medium heat for about 1 hour. Hot, grease them with egg yolk.



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## 5. CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF THE TRADITIONAL FOOD SECTOR

The demand for food products in Romania is high. All activities revolve around daily meals, and religious holiday meals (Christmas, Easter) or on the occasion of various events (birthday, wedding, baptism) are very rich. Due to the rapid diversification of products, due to travel in the country and abroad, Romanian consumers identify new combinations of flavors and ingredients.

The analysis of the European and Romanian market, made by one of the most important suppliers of ingredients in Romania and world leader in the distribution of substances and chemical ingredients (Brenntag Food & Nutrition), pointed out the presence of 7 mega trends that dominate the food industry. The first two of these are closely related to the objectives of the project:

**1. All natural / organic, no artificial colors / flavors, no additives / preservatives,** Clean Label - meaning to require foods containing natural ingredients, familiar, with simple names, easy to recognize, understand and pronounce, no artificial ingredients or synthetic chemicals.

**2. Crafts, authentic, local, traditional** - the market of Romanian manufactured products has experienced a significant increase in the last 10 years.

Food consumption needs are influenced by a number of factors that differentiate individual demand, both quantitatively and qualitatively. (Diaconescu, 2003; 2002; 2000).

In the Strategy for the development of the agri-food sector in the medium and long term 2020-2030, MADR analyzes the situation and proposes a series of strategies to make agricultural production generally efficient and sustainable, but also targeting local and traditional products.

A first objective is: **Accelerate the structural transition to economically viable agriculture in parallel with the application of environmentally friendly agricultural practices and the gradual reduction of the agricultural workforce.**

Proposed measures to achieve the objective:

- Encouraging land consolidation and stimulating farmers' association - integrating small and medium-sized farms into producer groups or organizations / agricultural cooperatives can be the safest way to gain access to markets and, at the same time, to obtain loans for production or investment in common facilities.
- Ensuring the balance between extensive, more environmentally friendly and intensive agriculture. It involves maintaining the natural landscapes of rural areas, by continuing agricultural practices in a traditional way, practices still applied by farmers for animal husbandry and land management.
- Reduced market integration and inefficient agri-food chains. The existence of long distribution chains, which involve at least two intermediaries (wholesaler + retailer) between producer and consumer makes the benefits reach a small proportion of farmers. This inefficiency involves the development of short supply chains. That is why it is important for producers to plan their supply and better adapt to market demand (quantity, quality, rhythm and short delivery times, compliance with traceability principles, etc.).
- Support for banking / certification of agricultural products and their marketing on international markets. For traditional agri-food products, the following are taken into account:
  - Financial support for the promotion of traditional Romanian products on the domestic and European market (participation in fairs, exhibitions and other domestic and international events);
  - Ensuring and guaranteeing the conditions for the protection of the names of traditional Romanian products on the domestic and European market and for their promotion. The PGI, PDO, TSG quality system also provides manufacturers with the appropriate tools to identify and promote those products whose specific characteristics are protected at national and European level. The new opportunity offered by the "Mountain Product" label offers suitable alternatives for small and medium-sized farms, as well as the small food processing industry.

They represent a selection of measures that should be taken at national and regional level, which can have a positive impact on agriculture, farmers, producers, consumers, tourism in the area.

Traditional regional foods can bring a competitive advantage and, we must recognize that the place of origin has a great importance on the value of agricultural production and implicitly on the development of the region.

Consumers, producers and public authorities around the world are showing a growing interest in food and agricultural products related to their place of origin. (Vandecandelaere *s.a.* 2018).

Consumers are willing to perceive and evaluate the quality of a product based on its place of origin and share opinions and attitudes towards the related goods or services. The image of a country can determine the perceived quality of a category of products, stimulating sales. This phenomenon is known as the country of origin effect - COO and generates in turn, customizing the effect of the place of origin - POO.

The concept of “country of origin” has been and is used by consumers and producers to link the national specificity of a country to a product. Most studies indicate country of origin as an important attribute in food evaluation. Consumers are tempted to use country of origin information as a quality identifier (Forek & Gazda, 2021).

Geographical indications are defined by the EU as "a sign used on products which have a specific geographical origin, have certain qualities or a reputation due to that origin". The qualities, characteristics or reputation of the product must be essentially due to the place of origin. The Geographic Information record shows us that geographical conditions contribute to product quality. Related to the origin, we can refer to the product as a product from a certain area, as a traditional product, regional product, authentic product, etc.

The connection with the origin is made in a combination of local environmental resources, climatic conditions, soil, species and animal breeds. For the implementation of the GI, several factors must be taken into account: the existence of the quality indicated in the specifications or a code of good practice, good governance, an effective marketing strategy and an adequate legal framework.

In order to give GI to the products, an agreement must first be reached with all those involved, in order to increase the visibility of the product.



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The type of GI approach (aggressive or defensive) or the marketing channel (niche or mass), influences the marketing strategy.

The economic impact is seen when the GI organization adopts a supply volume management strategy to prevent prices from falling due to the significant increase in the volume of products when production exceeds demand.

GI ensures access to new markets, which ensures product promotion, encourages online commerce, and avoids the effects of a crisis.

GI registration acts as an incentive to create value chain stakeholders as well as the involvement of public authorities to generate and improve quality and promotion. And last but not least, the experience of 2020 has brought new challenges to traditional producers and consumers.

Increasing the diversity of consumer expectations, consumer contact with other cultures, focusing on a healthy life and consuming quality products, increasing time spent at work (even if it is at home), an increase in the number of leisure opportunities - which means less time for shopping. When choosing food, consumers are increasingly taking into account the principles of rational nutrition and their expectations of raw materials and methods of obtaining food. Consumers are becoming more aware and feel a greater sense of responsibility for the state of the natural environment of their local community. Products seen as natural or local are perceived as environmentally friendly enough to influence the purchasing decision.

Even if when he says traditional product, the consumer thinks of "freshness", the social relationship with the producer, slowly traditional products began to convince the consumers. They started to prefer in this system also traditional products that come in personalized, attractive packaging and that give confidence and the desire to buy the product again (Barska & Solis, 2020).

Romanian traditional food marketers should consider a better adaptation and orientation towards the behavior and profile of traditional food consumers, but also towards the components of the environment that influence their consumption behavior.



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In conclusion, we can say that the potential of the eligible area in terms of traditional products is a real opportunity to increase exports of agri-food products to the EU and regional markets, with beneficial effects on both the revenues of producers of such products and the economy, respectively the increase of the national income and the image of the country.





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The image on the cover; Facebook A taste of Romania @atasteofromania9 · Ethnic food shop