ABSTRACT

Multifunctional agriculture represents a proactive approach of the role and effects of agriculture both on rural communities and traditions. The multifunctional agriculture passes beyond the classical functions of the agriculture bringing new gainful activities for the rural farmers. Understanding properly the multifunctional agriculture and farm diversity can offer all those involved new trends in valuing agricultural potential. This chapter presents a short but very comprehensive analysis regarding the multifunctional agricultural concept and farm diversity, in the context of the massive changes that have marked the actual evolution agrarian economy. It presents the evolution of multifunctional agriculture concept in the international approach and also analyzes the agriculture functions. In addition, it presents a short study case regarding the evolution of farm structure development in the Romanian agrarian sector.

THE CONCEPT OF MULTIFUNCTIONAL AGRICULTURE

In a general approach to the concept, multifunctional agriculture refers to all goods, products, and services resulting from agricultural activity. The transposition of the Rio Earth Summit documents (1992), in Agenda 21 of the EU has significantly contributed to the realization of this new concept, so the multifunctional agriculture obtained an increasingly important role in the scientific and political debate regarding the future of agriculture and rural development (Renting et al, 2009).

The concept of multifunctional agriculture is widely debated in scientific research and still rises living controversy at international level, nurturing over time with new meanings. Multifunctional agriculture is in the current economic development a defining element in the development of sustainable agriculture in the production relations.
Multifunctional Agriculture and the Green Economy

as a whole, encompassing both the economic, social and ecological functions but it especially is involved in reconciling different approaches to the role of agriculture in providing food security and the multivalent use of rural areas beyond its traditional functions. Referring to the term of multifunctionality, a group of Romanian authors (Luminița et al., 2003), claims that multifunctionality is the word that Europe uses to describe the fundamental link between sustainable agriculture, health security, natural balance, maintaining the quality of the landscape and of the environment, and all what is important for developing countries, particularly food security (Luminița et al., 2003).

The concept of multifunctional agriculture has recently appeared in literature, being defined for the first time in the Rio Earth Summit in 1992. The evolution of this concept has proved over time the adherence of agriculture to the changing demands imposed by practicing sustainable agriculture and to respect the multiple functions it is called to perform in terms of the role it plays in the national economy.

According to a British study (Marsden and Sonnino, 2008), the concept of multifunctional agriculture can be analyzed in terms of three approaches: as palliative to the productivist model and to reduce the price-cost ratio, as a form of regulation of consumption in rural areas and not least as part of the rural development process.

(Marsden and Sonnino, 2008) The first approach reduces the term multifunctionality of agriculture to the notion of agricultural pluriactivity, as a survival strategy of farmers less competitive on the market and to reduce the harsh conditions imposed by the demands of a competitive market, being form as well as palliative against poverty in rural areas.

Multifunctional agriculture defines a concept of particular significance that places agriculture at the confluence of the requirements imposed by the food security of the population and the multiple functions, social, environmental and cultural that it must realize at the level of rural communities by reconciling the conventional agricultural practices with the need for environmental protection and conservation of rural landscapes, imposing a new approach regarding the relation agriculture-environment-rural area.

Analyzing the concept of multifunctional agriculture, the British Professor Geoff Wilson states that this explains the multidimensional coexistence of the productivist regime and therefore of the post-productivist one and thereby it comes to represent an accurate description of the multidimensional nature of the changes in rural environment and in agricultural ones (Wilson, 2001). In the evolution of the concept of multifunctional agriculture are worth noted three fundamental concepts promulgated by bodies such as FAO-WTO, OECD and the EU-27.
Related Content

Aspects Regarding Detection of Sentiment in Web Content
www.igi-global.com/article/aspects-regarding-detection-of-sentiment-in-web-content/124935?camid=4v1a

The Role of Oil Fund and Institutional Quality in Moderating Volatility in Nigeria
www.igi-global.com/article/the-role-of-oil-fund-and-institutional-quality-in-moderating-volatility-in-nigeria/214006?camid=4v1a

Social Responsibility, Shared Value, and Business Modelling: An Integrated Approach
Alessandro Giosi, Eleonora Zaccaro and Silvia Testarmata (2018). *Value Sharing for Sustainable and Inclusive Development* (pp. 100-121).
www.igi-global.com/chapter/social-responsibility-shared-value-and-business-modelling/192219?camid=4v1a

Public-Private Partnership and Financing the Development of National Infrastructure:
Safeguarding Public Finance Sustainability
www.igi-global.com/chapter/public-private-partnership-and-financing-the-development-of-national-infrastructure/236964?camid=4v1a