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DIRECT SALE OF PRODUCTS FROM THE FARM

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Abstract: Direct sales from the farm can be a solution for small farms, but the action of certain factors influences the success of direct sales. The direct sales activity of some farmers in Timis County has been analyzed, aiming to establish the causal relationships between the influence of certain factors and the results of the farm.

Key words: Farms, direct sales, results, county level

INTRODUCTION

Small farms play an essential role in the rural economy, as they involve a large number of people in agricultural activity and generate income in rural areas [1,6]. However, in the current context, there is a need to improve economic and social conditions in these farms [2,7]. An opportunity to support small farms is to provide new opportunities for young farmers and stimulate their work by including them in the supply chain, stimulating direct sales and better linking producer and consumers [3,8].

Lately, the possibilities of buying vegetables, fruits, milk and dairy products, meat and meat products, eggs directly from farmers are increasing. The number of farmers selling their products through roadside stands, rolling farmer markets, farm shops, or via the internet through different sales schemes based on either single order or subscription is increasing [4,5,9]. The development of social networks has contributed greatly to the development of pick your own farms and the organization of various events within farms [10].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

But speaking about agricultural products selling, there must be mentioned the main differences between wholesale and direct marketing channels.

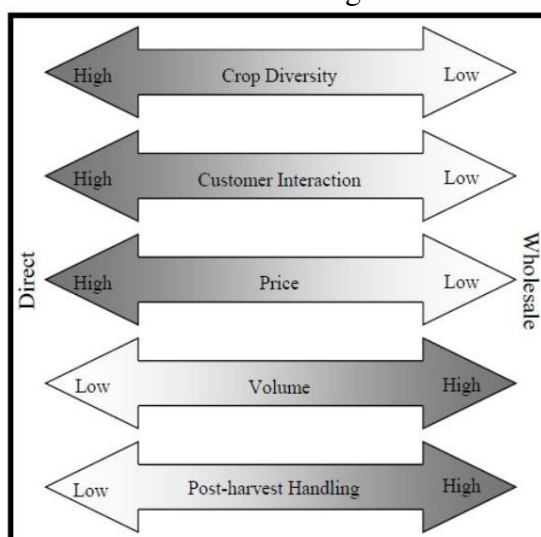


Figure 1. Main differences between wholesale and direct marketing channels

Source: *Guide to Marketing Channel Selection: How to Sell Through Wholesale and Direct Marketing Channels* (LeRoux, 2012)

From the farmer’s point of view, direct sale from the farm requires preparation and thus can be differentiated arguments pro and contra, as shown in figure 2 [12,15].

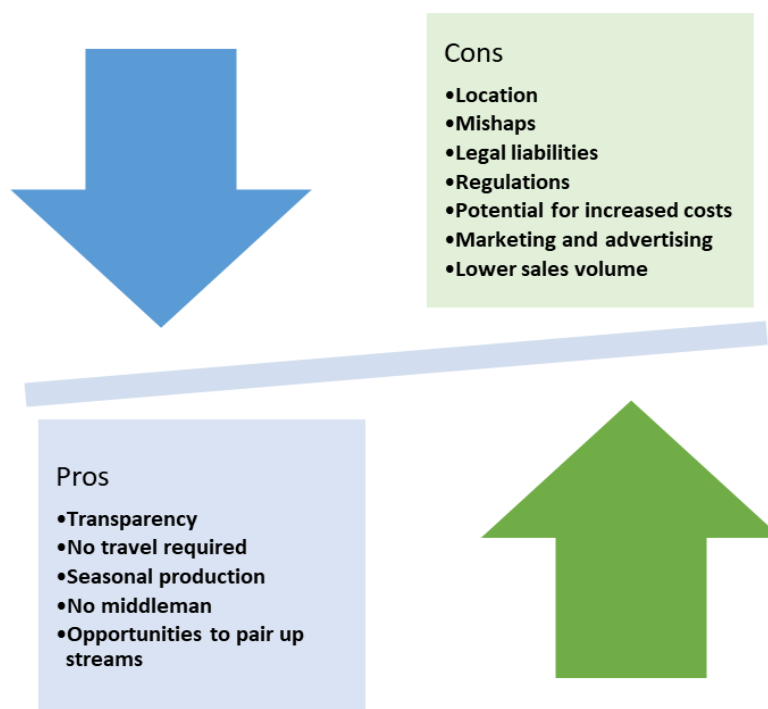


Figure 2. Pros and cons for direct sale from the farm

Source: <https://cf-blog-wp.azurewebsites.net/en/blog/2021/08/13/the-five-benefits-of-direct-selling-for-farmers/>

There is real debate referring to the direct sale from producer to consumer if the carbon footprint is higher or lower of these deliveries comparing to the products’ selling through mass channel with middlemen [14].

For this article, there have been prepared a questionnaire with 10 itmes, that have been applied via internet to farmers. For the study have been selected farmers from Timiș county, located at fareset 50 km from the city Timișoara. Their participation to the study has been voluntary. From the filled questionnaires, 75 totally, only 70 have been validated, 5 of the questionnaires being incomplete.

RESEARCH RESULTS

In direct sales, the location of the farm is very important [13]. The study area was 50 km around Timișoara. Figure 3 shows the number of farmers after the distribution in the area. The Periurban area, up to 10 km, is the area with the most producers selling directly from the farm. The farmers from this area sell all kind of products. Also, the farmers located 11-20 km away are selling fruits, vegetables, milk, meat and eggs.

The farmers 41-50 km away are the fewest to sell direct fro the farm, only 4 farmers from this study. But is important to underline that 2 of them are selling via subscriptions and they try to cultivate different vegetables in order to cover the whole year.

So, 70% from farmers that are practicing directs sales from the farm 20 km around Timișoara, are located.

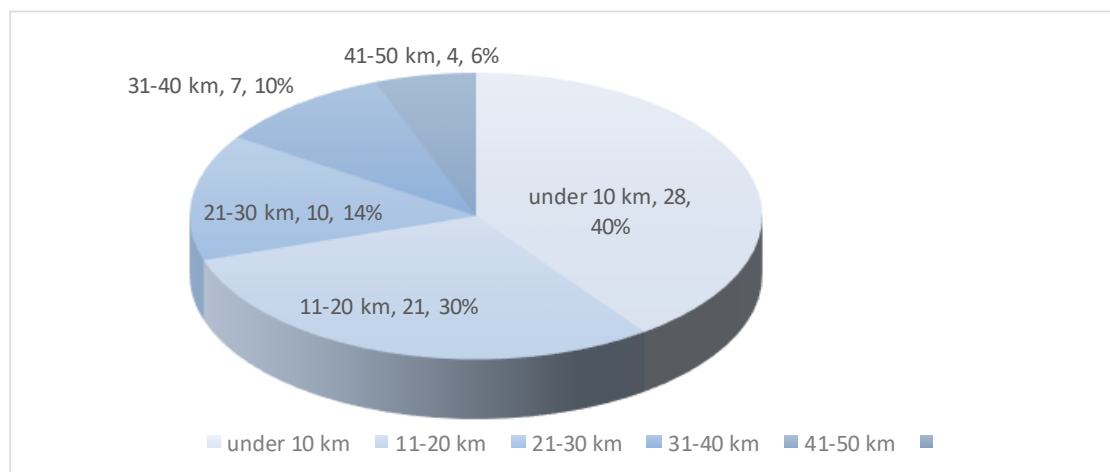


Figure 3. Spatial distribution of farmers

Direct sales from the farms usually means according much time to the selling activity, and 12 from the farmers in study affirmed that they also sell to intermediaries, having not always the opportunity to sell directly to the final consumer.

Asked on the type of products they sell, the largest number is represented by vegetables, followed by fruits, milk, eggs and different type of meat, including pig, chicken, duck, lamb, goose, turkey, as shown in figure 4.

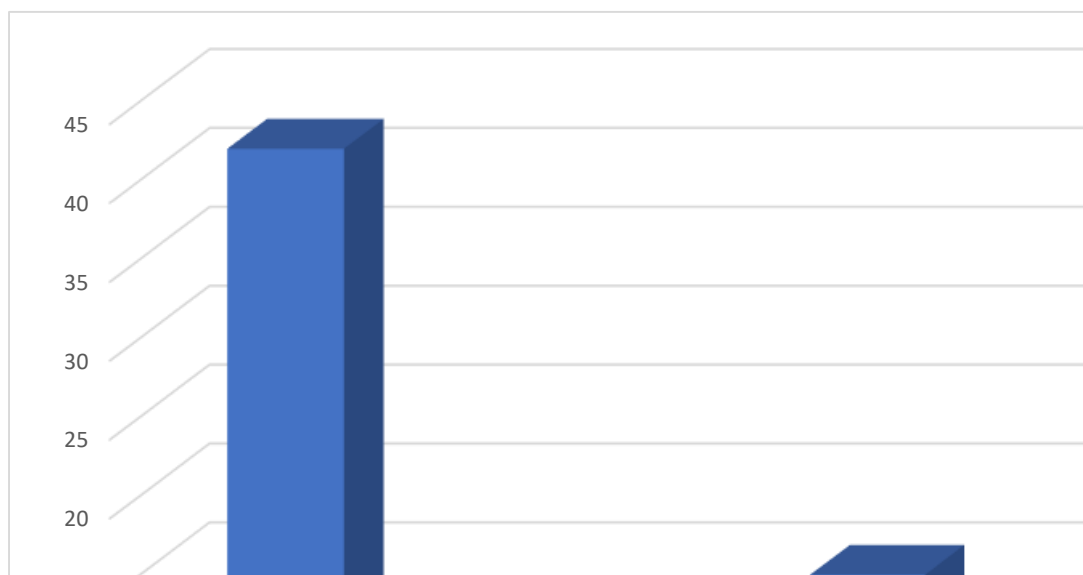


Figure 4. Number of farmers selling different types of products

The largest number of farmers are selling to friends, neighbours or acquaintances representing the largest number of farmers, 52 more precisely. Only 9 farmers use a stand at farm entrance or on the road side, 12 of them use internet to sell, posting in social media. The organized sales are usually practiced around different holidays, Christmas or Easter, but also lately there are noticed organized sale as "pick your own veggies" or "one day in the orchard" (figure 5).

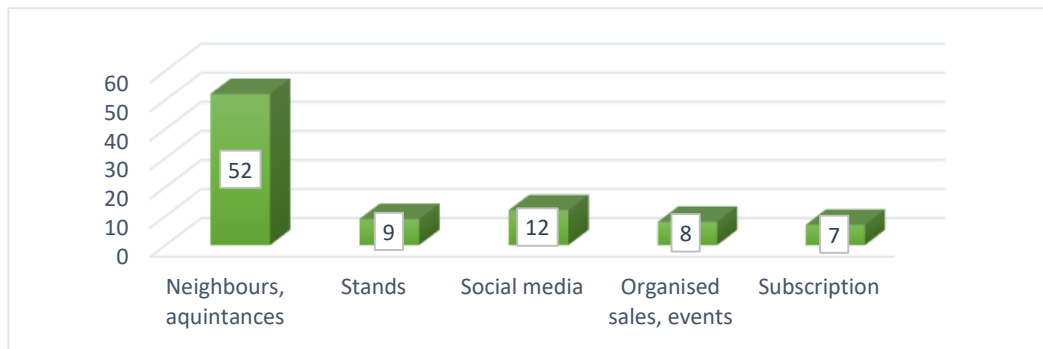


Figure 5. Preferred channel for direct sales

A very high percent of the farmers in study affirmed that since the beginning of selling activity, they have expanded their range of commercial products, more precisely 62 farmers.

For many of the farmers, the benefits of direct sales are very important, and usually they refer to financial and social benefits. While selling directly from the farm they can organise their activity, as usually in the farms are involved family members and the direct sales can bring a better price for the products as between them and consumers are no middlemen.

Agriculture is the only income sources for 28 farmers from the study, while in 42 cases there is at least one family member that has a job in other field or they have another income source. The situation of income sources has analyzed at farm level, that was often equal to family level.

As main problems met by the farmers, must be mentioned lately the decreasing buying power of population, the higher prices of inputs, the climate change and perishability of products.

Asked about what kind of support they need in order to develop their activity, the financial aspects were placed on the top, so many of them are counting on the financial support as subventions, followed by administration support.

The last question referred to the future of their activity and less than 75% of the answers stated that in the farm is a new generation to carry on the activity.

CONCLUSIONS

The direct sale of fruits, vegetables, milk and dairy products, meat and meat products, eggs from the farm is a way to ensure the income for farms with social benefits, due to building a healthy relation with the consumer.

Presently, there are pros and cons for this kind of activity, and the situation has to be analysed according to the specific of each farm, cause it depends a lot on the place where is located the farm, the products from the farm, the experience in sales, use of new technologies to reach the consumer as social media platforms, local producers groups, etc.

The lack of intermediaries in the supply chain has benefits also for producers and for consumers, mainly due to the lowest prices asked by the producers, the freshness of products, but has also disadvantages if referring to the time and transport needed in order to buy different kind of products.

The use of social media can be a solution for reaching easier to the consumers, but is a solution that requires time and the knowledge to use such instruments, that is available for all farmers, but not suitable for all of them.

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