

## **STUDY ON THE HUMAN RESOURCES DYNAMICS IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR FROM SOUTH-MUNTENIA REGION, 2016-2021**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The aim of the study was to analyze the labor resource involved in agricultural activity in the South-Muntenia Region, as well as to highlight the existing trends in this sector as a result of the health crisis we are going through. Existing statistical data indicate annual fluctuations in the number of employees in agriculture in the period 2016-2019, up to 1-2%, after which between 2019 and 2020 there is a decrease of 1.29%, considered insignificant. In Romania, there is a decrease of 1.8%, amid economic uncertainties, but also the capricious climate, avoiding employment. On the other hand, the average gross salary increases by 12.45% in 2020, compared to 2019, and the forecasts so far for 2021 follow the same trend.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

In Romania, the South-Muntenia Region is the leader in terms of population number (Popescu and Chiripuci, 2020) and, implicitly, in terms of labor resource (Condei et al., 2015; Stoicescu et al., 2013). The entire region is mainly agricultural (ADR Sud-Muntenia, 2021; Davidescu et al., 2020), the human resource employed in agriculture exceeding 30% of the total active population (Gheorghe and Sima, 2014; Vladu et al., 2016).

The COVID-19 pandemic crisis, started in early 2020, led to major changes in people's lifestyles worldwide, especially influencing the way of professional activities (Vladu et al., 2017). Studies in this

regard have been conducted all over the world (Khamis et al., 2021; Radulescu et al., 2021; Paweenawat and Liao, 2021), and the result is the same, in terms of the fact that the labor resource in each sector of activity suffered and was forced to adapt to new demands and needs.

Agriculture has also been affected to a small extent, especially in terms of dependence on other sectors of activity, but also by the declining demand for products and services (Chivu and Georgescu, 2020; Summer, 2021). However, specialists insist that, in the period 2020-2021, when especially in rural areas, employment in many sectors of activity was stopped (De Roy and Bose, 2021), agriculture was an available option for many people (Cortignani et al., 2020; Summer, 2021), who resumed their agricultural activities.

## **MATERIAL AND METHOD**

Starting from the realities we live in today, we chose to analyze the human resource involved in the agricultural sector in the South-Muntenia Region, in order to highlight its dynamics in the period 2016-2020 and perspectives for 2021.

In order to achieve as concretely as possible what we set out to do, we used the data provided by the National Institute of Statistics (Tempo-Online database) for the period 2016-2020. Based on the indicators taken in the analysis, respectively the number of employees in agriculture and the average gross monthly salary, it was possible to calculate the dynamics from one year to another.

The dynamics was calculated by reference to the previous year, and not to a precise year, taken as a control. It was considered that the reporting to the previous year was much more conclusive, as in this way the existing trend in the period 2016-2020 could be better highlighted.

For both indicators, the evolution at national and regional level has been followed, the calculations being presented in tables, and then the graphic representations have been made.

Regarding the year 2021, the forecasts were made based on the articles from the profile journals, which show a stagnation or even an increase in the number of employments, amid salary increases.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The first analyzed indicator was the one referring to the number of employees in agriculture. In this case, we used the data for the whole of Romania, as well as those related to the South-Muntenia Region and the component counties (Table 1).

Table 1

**Dynamics of the agricultural employees at national, regional and county level, 2016-2020**

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Total Romania</b>	124331	128622	129368	131372	129010
<b>Dynamics (%) at national level</b>	-	+3.45%	+0.58	+1.55%	<b>-1.80%</b>
<b>Total South-Muntenia</b>	24644	25183	24734	24973	24652
<b>Dynamics (%) at regional level</b>	-	+2.19%	-1.78%	+0.97%	<b>-1.29%</b>
<b>Regional/national ratio</b>	19.82%	19.58%	19.12%	19.01%	19.11%
<b>Arges</b>	2696	2856	2910	2850	2805
<b>Calarasi</b>	4651	4826	4739	4822	4695
<b>Dambovita</b>	1963	2081	2044	<b>2072</b>	<b>2205</b>
<b>Giurgiu</b>	2257	2344	2405	2479	2365
<b>Ialomita</b>	5198	5311	5299	5261	5244
<b>Prahova</b>	3699	3538	3196	3260	3174
<b>Teleorman</b>	4180	4227	4141	4229	4164

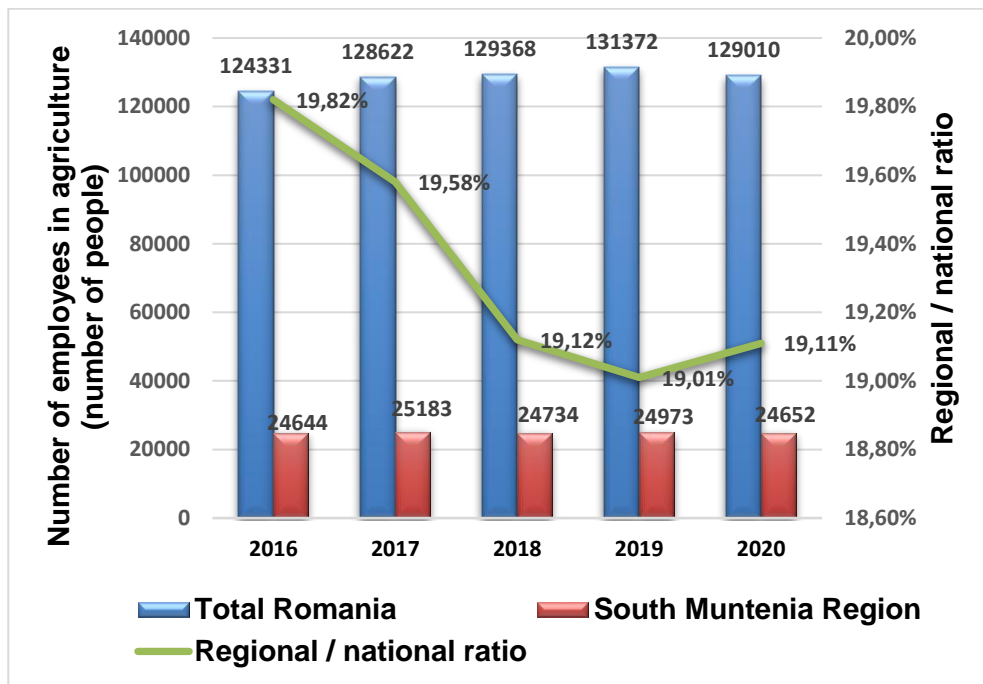
Source: INSSE, Tempo-Online database

From the calculation of the dynamics there is a decrease in 2020, compared to 2019, both nationally (-1.80%) and regionally (-1.29%), but following the upward and downward fluctuation between 2016-2020, we consider that these aren't significant, falling within the limits of random variation.

It is important to mention that these dynamics isn't maintained at county level, as in Dambovita county there is even an increase in the number of people employed in agriculture in 2020, compared to 2019.

As shown in Table 1, but also in the graph shown in Figure 1, the value of the share of the South-Muntenia Region in the national total remains relatively constant, the largest difference being recorded

between 2016 (maximum) and 2019 (minimum), respectively 0.81%, which is also insignificant.



**Figure 1. Number of employees in agriculture in Romania and South-Muntenia Region (2016-2020) and their ratio**

Regarding the salary of the labor resource employed in agriculture, Table 2 shows that it increased from one year to another, both regionally and nationally, in 2020 the South-Muntenia Region surpassing the salary obtained nationally in agriculture. This aspect should be mentioned, as it indicates a greater attractiveness of this sector for the local population, especially as agriculture was included, during the health crisis, at the forefront of activities necessary for life (along with the health system and food industry).

Although 2020 was almost entirely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the imposed restrictions, the increase in the salary level of employees in agriculture was higher than in 2019, by +12.45%.

There are also big differences between the component counties of the South-Muntenia Region, where Dambovită county must be mentioned again, this time for the lowest evolution of the salary level (+2.59%), at the opposite pole being Prahova county (+17,71%).

Table 2

**Dynamics of gross monthly salary of employees in agriculture at national, regional and county level, 2016-2020**

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Total Romania</b>	2236	2571	3530	3773	4002
<b>Total Romania</b>	-	+14.98%	+37.30%	+6.88%	+6.07%
<b>Dynamics (%) at national level</b>	2143	2546	3398	3670	4127
<b>Total South-Muntenia</b>	-	+18.80%	+33.46%	+8.00%	+12.45%
<b>Arges</b>	2184	2503	3524	3782	3956
<b>Calarasi</b>	2094	2522	3406	3747	4346
<b>Dambovita</b>	2116	2579	3551	<b>3984</b>	<b>4087</b>
<b>Giurgiu</b>	2071	2405	3076	3480	3720
<b>Ialomita</b>	2055	2668	3510	3580	4126
<b>Prahova</b>	2422	2848	3405	3828	4506
<b>Teleorman</b>	2094	2269	3263	3449	3947

Source: INSSE, Tempo-Online database

In 2021, the law according to which, starting with 2022, the minimum wage in agriculture will no longer be taxed (Agrimanet, 2021) was approved. This initiative has to encourage people to work in this field of activity, as there is a great lack of qualified staff in agriculture (Agrointelligenta, 2021), according to farmers who say they can no longer be effective in these conditions.

## CONCLUSIONS

In 2020, compared to 2019, the dynamics of the agricultural employees registered a decrease both at national (-1.80%) and at regional level (-1.29%), but following the upward and downward fluctuation in the interval 2016-2020, we consider that these aren't significant at all for our analysis, so we can conclude that the pandemic crisis didn't affect the field of agriculture so far.

The salary of the labor resource employed in agriculture, increased from year to year, at the level of the South-Muntenia Region, from the value of 2143 lei in 2016, reaching the value of 4127 lei in 2020. Overall, the average gross salary in agriculture increases by 12.45% in 2020, compared to 2019.

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