

Exploitation of Agricultural Land in Romania through Niche Crops, as an Alternative for the Development of Local Economy. Case Study: Rose Culture

**Iuliana VIJULIE^{1a}, Elena MATEI^a, Gabriela MANEA^a, Mihaela PREDA^a,
Octavian COCOȘ^a, Roxana CUCULICI^a**

*^aFaculty of Geography, University of Bucharest,
Bd. Nicolae Bălcescu no. 1, Sector 1, Bucharest, 010041, Romania*

Abstract: Rose culture has lately begun to expand in Romania, too, on the one hand due to the financial support offered by the European Union for agriculture, and on the other hand due to the favorable soils and climate conditions. Under the circumstances, the research problem resides in finding the arguments that plead for the opportunity of expanding rose cultures in Romania, as an alternative for the economic development of the rural communities, especially of those whose members own small-size agricultural plots. The fragmentation of agricultural lands properties is a rather well known phenomenon in Romania. At the same time, some crops, in order to be profitable, must be cultivated on large areas. Thus, an alternative for the local economic development could be to take into account the niche crops, which usually bring about significant profits for the small-scale producers, who own small plots of land. The objectives of this research aimed at the following aspects: identifying the main areas for rose culture; understanding the perception of the local communities about the niche crops in Romania; and the perspectives of rose culture in Romania. The research methodology relied on direct observations, on GIS techniques, as well as on survey method (semi-structured interview). The study results revealed the following: an expansion of rose culture in Romania during the past years, especially in Transylvania, where the main horticulture area is the Alba County; a different perception of the target groups about the expansion of rose culture in Romania, as long as the major problem is represented by the low market demands.

Key words: *Agriculture, Niche crops, Rose, Local economic development, Romania.*

¹ Corresponding author: Iuliana Vijulie, E-mail: iuliana.vijulie@g.unibuc.ro

Received: January 2017, Revised: May 2017, Published: June 2017