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MILK AND DAIRY PRODUCTS LABELING IN ROMANIA

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Abstract: The present communication contains research and experimental investigations regarding the labelling process of dairy products in tight relation with the national and European legislative requirements. Two methods have been used during the marketing research regarding the information present on the labels of alimentary products: the method based on documentation-observation and comparative analysis of data and information collected from the consume market in Sibiu. The method based on documentation and observation has been carried out using the observation sheet and contained the following analysis criteria: The name of the product, Country origin of the product (location of the producer). Synthesizing the results and the conclusions emerged as a result of the marketing research carried out with the purpose of contouring a labelling model of alimentary products, it can be stated that the dynamics of the alimentary products market in Romania is moderate and restrained by the economical and social factors and even by the still reduces promotion of a healthy alimentary education, with the complementary protection of human health and environment.

Key words: dairy product, labelling, European requirements, ingredients, languages

INTRODUCTION

The present essay contains the studies as well as the documentary analysis and theoretical documentations, the research and experimental investigation, results and obtained conclusions regarding the labelling process of dairy products in tight relation to the requirements imposed by the national and

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European legislation. The approached problematic is of high actuality and major attention on both a national and international scale and represents a fundamental requirement of the development and durable administration of the economy, and also of the sustainable development of agriculture and of the alimentary industry with an impact on the safety of the aliment. The improvement of the agricultural technologies as well as the processing technologies is directly influenced by the buying and consumption capacity of the consumer (Olaru, 2001).

In this context, the main aim of this essay is the improvement of consumer access to complete and correct information regarding the content and composition of the products, for the protection their health and interests (Regulation 1169/2011; Ene, 2009). the necessity of regulation improvement regarding the labelling of the alimentary products was accentuated frequently by the experts (Stanescu, 2009), so that the consumer benefits from essential information, readable and easy to understand, in order for them to be able to buy the products while being completely informed. This aspect is mentioned and debated in the regulation that brings together Directive 2000/13/CE, regarding the labelling of alimentary products and Directive 90/496/CEE regarding the nutritional labelling. In view of achieving the established goal and establishing the research plan, a documentary study and an analysis of different aspects regarding the information presented of labels of different monitored dairy products has been carried out, according to national and European legislative requirements.

METHODS

In the marketing research are used qualitative and quantitative information obtained directly and indirectly. This information is obtained through different investigation methods like the survey method; the inquiry method; the comparative analysis of collected data and information; the documentation and observation method; the interview method. Also, combinations of the enumerated methods are used too. The data which are collected are processed by different statistical method, according with the study's objectives.

From the investigation methods which were enumerated above we selected the method based on documentation and observation for the collection of data and information and we proceed to a comparative analysis of these data. We focused on food products which fall in the category of milk and dairy products.

1. Documentation and observation: the survey was taken in the Sibiu city, Sibiu County, Romania, during the period between 1st of January and the 1st of September 2013. We selected from the

food products present on the market only the milk and other dairy products. We registered and analysed the labels of products. The research consisted in two stages:

- a. Selection of observation point. We selected 15 locations which are representative for Sibiu: 3 warehouses for food products, 4 residential markets and 8 supermarkets and hypermarkets. From the information present on label we selected only the categories which present interest for consumers like:
 - Category of food
 - Food's name
 - Location of producer / the country where food originated
 - Ingredients list
 - Languages in which information is provided
 - b. Collection of data. We analysed the labels of food product and noted the data according with the selected categories of information mentioned above.
2. The comparative analysis of the collected data and information. We checked the presence or the absence of information from different categories of information and the degree in which the specific requirements of EU regulation were respected.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

As mentioned above, two methods have been used for the analysis of the milk and dairy products market has been used: the method based on documentation and observation and the comparative analysis of the collected data and information. The documentation and observation method has been carried out using the observation sheet in 15 analysis points in Sibiu and the comparative analysis of the collected data and information has been carried out using Microsoft Office – Excel.

The observation sheet has been framed after the establishment of the most representative criteria regarding the origin of the product, the presentation language of the information on the label but also the information regarding the presence or absence of the ingredient list (figure 1).

After collecting the information, the analysis has been carried out, the editing and interpretation of the graphics that have been built based on the collected data. By analyzing the obtained results after centralizing the observation sheets, some hypothesis could be emitted, regarding the variety of the discovered products in the 15 observation points.

| INGREDIENTS LIST | | | | |
|------------------|----------------------|--|--|---|
| Nr. | The name of the food | Country of food origin (location producer) | The list of ingredients mentioned on the product | Any special storage conditions and/or conditions of use |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

Figure 1. Model of observation sheet

The results of the centralization of the observation sheet regarding the country of origin of the aliments (the location of the producer) are shown in figure 2.

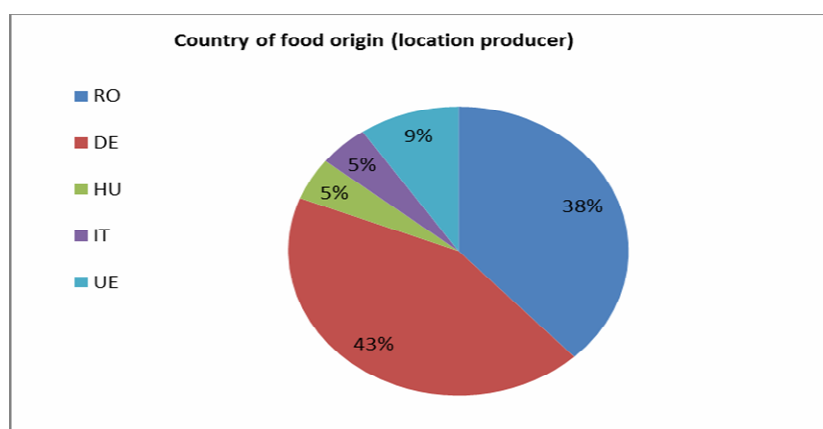


Figure 2. The main food producers in the milk and dairy products branch, resulted from the collection and processing of information from 15 observation points taken into consideration.

According to figure 2, it can be concluded that the main producers on the Romanian market are of German origin (43%), Romania coming second with 38%.

Most producers on the Romanian market indicate the list of ingredients on the label, 67% of the total analysed number, as figure 3 shows. However, negative aspects that can influence the decision of the buyer in the fact that 33% of the producers do not mention the ingredient list, so that the consumer can not be informed. This aspect should be corrected; the access to information should not be restricted.

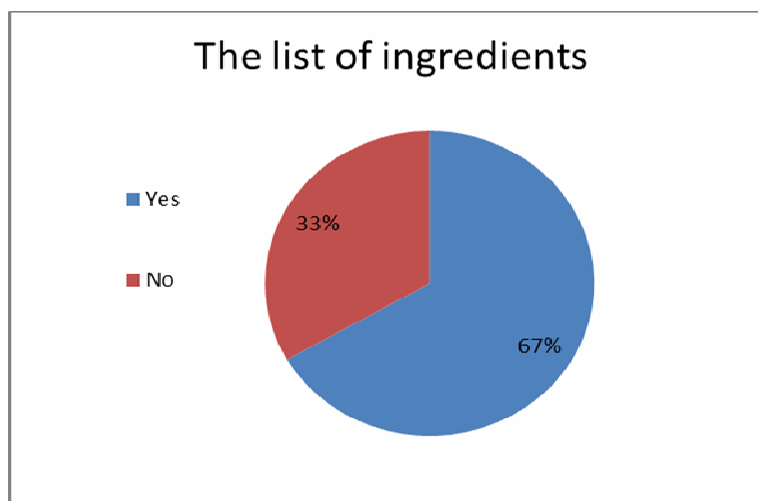


Figure 3. The frequency of the ingredient list on the label of the analysed products.

Even if only 38% of the analysed products have been declared as produced in Romania, 48% of them are labelled in Romanian only (figure 4). It is possible that part of the producers declared as being EU are from Romania, but they avoid declaring the country of origin based on marketing reasons. Even if all the producers declared as being EU would be Romanian, the 48% of the products labelled exclusively in Romanian would not be possible. This aspect shows that there are foreign producers that label their products for the Romanian market or that the products are produced in other countries but are labelled in Romania.

According to the press release dated the 2nd of February 2012, regarding the provisory results of the population and accommodation census – 2011, the ethnic entry has been done based on the declaration of the persons, the fundamental right of each individual being respected, the free declaration, without any constraint, of the ethnic affiliation. As a territorial profile, the population distribution regarding ethnic affiliation shows that Romanians are a majority in the city of Bucharest and in 39 counties (varying between 98.5% in Botosani and 52.6 in Mures), and in 26 of them, the Romanians count war above 90%.

This way, taking into account the above mentioned data, it can be stated that the information of presented on the studied labels are presented in Romanian in 48% of the cases and in 28% in several foreign languages, this way encouraging the access of foreign citizens.

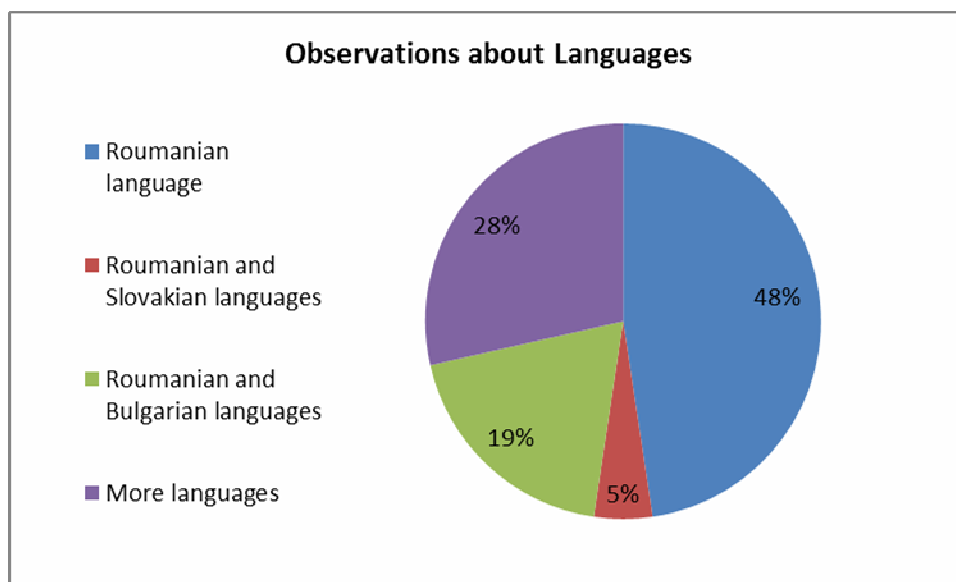


Figure 4. The weight of the language through which the information about the product are presented on their label.

CONCLUSIONS

The marketing research that has been carried out, regarding the information presented on the labels of the alimentary products milk and dairy products has been carried out during the 1st of January – the 1st of September 2013, through the method based on documentation and observation and comparative analysis of the collected data and information.

Based on the research carried out in the 15 study points in Sibiu and on the statistical processing of the collected data and information, the following conclusions have resulted:

1. The information and consumer protection level have to be improved by mentioning all the compulsory information on the label of the product.
2. The label of the product must not induce error to the buyer regarding the characteristics, proprieties and effects on the human health.
3. The information on the label must be legibly presented in the official language of the country where the product is sold, must be clear, precise, easy to understand by the consumer, indestructible.

Synthesizing the results and conclusions following the marketing research that has been carried out with the purpose of contouring a labelling model for the alimentary products, it can be stated that the dynamics of the market for the alimentary products in Romania is moderate and restrained by economical factors (the access of the producers regarding the compulsoriness of the information presentation on the label of the product according to regulation of the EU no. 1169/2011 - regarding the consumer information

regarding the alimentary products), by social factors (traditionalist and reserved spirit towards the Romanian consumer, but also indifference towards the nutritional and health mentions, as appointed in regulation EU no. 1924/2006) and even by the still reduced promotion of a healthy alimentation education with the complementary protection of the environment.

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