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Market integration in selected agricultural product markets

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SUMMARY

The strong economic and trade relations between the countries are major driving force for economic development.

Free trade plays an important role in transferring price and other types of volatility from one market to another.

This is particularly true for agricultural markets. The agricultural and food price volatility is considered to be a common problem that raises concerns about serious adverse consequences.

In this respect, the analysis of price transmission and, hence, price shocks and volatility is an important part of the analysis of agricultural markets. The main aim of this report is to examine the degree of price cointegration for the main agricultural commodities - cereals, meat and milk in the Bulgarian and selected EU markets. Based on the cointegration approach and the Engle and Granger (1987) procedure, the existence and degree of price cointegration is demonstrated. For some of the products under consideration there is a strong cointegration and dependence, for example between the Bulgarian and

Granger (1987)

Engle

French prices of wheat and maize, while for others (eg. beef) there cannot be demonstrated the existence of cointegration. The analysis is carried out in the context of the main policy elements influencing production over the considered period. The data used in the analysis is from DG Agriculture and Rural Development of the European Commission for the period 2007-2016.

Keywords: agricultural markets, trade, prices, price transmission, cointegration, agricultural policy

INTRODUCTION

In the last ten years, Bulgarian agriculture has gradually lost its significance in the Gross Value Added of the country (GVA from agriculture is about 5% since 2007). This situation is related to more rapid development in the other sectors of the economy than to a decline in GVA, produced in the agriculture.

Agricultural production is concentrated in several major sectors, of which cereal production in 2015 accounts for about 30% of the GVA, and field crops (cereals, oil and fodder) make up to 58% of the GVA. Gross value added generated by horticulture and fruit production is less than 9%, while livestock farming accounts for the remaining 27%.

The importance of grain, meat and milk production, expressed through their share in the added value, makes them the most important sectors in Bulgarian agriculture.

Wheat and maize are the main grain crops produced in Bulgaria, accounting for over 25% of the Total gross output of agriculture.

The two crops are also the main part of our country's agricultural export. This makes their production key to the development of Bulgarian agriculture and determines the structure of agricultural

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2013 . (FAO, 2016).

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1989

exports. The EU-27 is the second largest wheat exporter in the world.

France is the EU country producing the largest amount of wheat and maize. It is the fifth largest producer of wheat in the world and the 9th largest for maize in 2013 (FAO, 2016). France is also the largest exporter of wheat and maize from the EU, ranked not only in a leading position in Europe but also among the top 5 of the world exporters.

Overall, the EU has a leading role in the wheat trade and plays an important price-setting role.

For maize, the EU and Europe as a whole have no dominating position, with the leading countries being the United States and Brazil, which have a major role in shaping the world price.

The French price for wheat, and to some extent, for maize, can be considered as leading the price for other regions in Europe. The relationship between grain prices in France and those in the Black Sea region (where the Bulgarian market belongs to) are of specific interest.

Bulgaria is among the top 10 wheat exporting countries in the world and one of the main exporters in the EU. Proximity to Black Sea region producers and major cereal markets plays an important role in price formation and trading.

The livestock subsector of the Agriculture sector is one of the most severely affected since the start of the transition to a market economy. After 1989, the decline in meat production was directly related to the sharp decline in livestock numbers and the livestock crisis as a whole. There is also a sharp decrease in consumption, due to the general unfavorable economic and financial conditions in our country.

	2007	<p>The difficulties for the sector continued even after the EU accession in 2007 despite the access to the open European market. Import of meat far exceeds export in almost all groups of meats, only in chicken meat imports and exports are almost in equal quantities, and in some years our country exported more chicken meat than imported.</p> <p>The countries importing the most poultry meat into Bulgaria are: Poland, Romania, Hungary, the Netherlands and Greece. The Bulgarian poultry meat exports are to the countries of the Balkan Peninsula.</p> <p>Bulgarian poultry meat production satisfies to a large extent the domestic demand. The dependence of our country on imports of meat and dairy products - whole milk and skimmed milk, determines the link with the international markets as the changes in the prices on the foreign markets are transferred to the domestic ones.</p> <p>Bulgaria's accession to the EU has given Bulgarian farmers access to the European market but, at the same time, higher integration has led to transmission of a variety of shocks and price fluctuations from both the European and the global markets.</p>
2010).	(Uchezuba,	<p>The way and the extent to which prices are passed between different actors also determine the level of market efficiency and integration (Uchezuba, 2010). However, this also creates prerequisites for transmitting different shocks along the value chain or between individual markets, which may prove particularly unfavorable in times of crisis. In terms of its place in the world trade, Bulgaria is a country that cannot influence the formation of world prices, which means that Bulgarian producers are at even greater risk of the transmission of the negative tendencies from the world to the domestic market.</p>

In this respect, the analysis of price transmission and, hence, price shocks and volatility is an important part of the analysis of agricultural markets. Being aware of the cointegration and price transmission is an important basis for a better understanding of the functioning of the markets.

The main aim of this report is to examine the degree of price cointegration for the main agricultural commodities - cereals, meat and milk in the Bulgarian and selected EU markets.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Price transmission integrates markets vertically and horizontally (Meyer and Cramon-Taubadel, 2004).

Spatial price transmission is linked to the notion of co-movement of prices of the same commodity in different locations.

It is related to the so-called "Law of One Price". According to this economic law, the ratio between the prices of two commodities expressed in national currencies is equal to the exchange rate.

Of course, this is possible in the presence of free market and trade. It is assumed that the prices of homogeneous and identical goods on two markets are in equilibrium in long-term, taking into account the transaction costs.

For the analysis of price transmission of individual product groups, an approach assessing price cointegration has been applied between individual markets. It is based on the specific characteristics of the time series - whether they are stationary or non-stationary. If two non-stationary price series move together over a long period of time and share a common trend, and any linear combination of them is stationary, we could say they are "cointegrated."

The examined price series need to be integrated in the same order. This is a

(Meyer and Cramon-Taubadel, 2004).

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(Adkins, 2014).

(1987),

(1)

$$P_i = (p_i^{FR}) - (p_i^{BG})$$

i-

$$P_i = p_i^{FR} - p_i^{BG}$$

(1)

mathematical expression of long-term market equilibrium. According to the economic theory, they should be connected through arbitrage, but this is not always the case (Adkins, 2014).

- Two approaches were used to determine the long-term co-integration between the prices of the different products under consideration in the different markets: First, a method based on the price relationship between two markets and a unit root tests and second - the Engle and Granger (1987) procedure, which includes three steps.

The first approach is applied to the price series of wheat and maize in France and Bulgaria.

- The analysis is based on a time series data comprised of the average monthly prices of wheat and maize in France and Bulgaria. The analysed variable is calculated by subtracting the Bulgarian price from the French price (1) of the respective crop for the two crops under consideration.

Where P_i is the difference between the French price (p_i^{FR}) and the Bulgarian price (p_i^{BG}) of the i-th crop. The new variable P_i , presents the dynamic of the relationship of the French and Bulgarian price.

- The new variable, which we call a *price base*, is analyzed for the presence of unit root to determine whether the new series is non-stationary.

In the case that the time series is stationary, it means that in the long run the ratio between the Bulgarian and the French price does not show a certain trend but fluctuates around a constant average level.

- This means that the two prices are cointegrated and move in the same

(Nestorov, 2015),
2 3.

$$P_t = a_0 + a_1 P_{t-1} + \varepsilon \quad (2)$$

$$P_t = a_0 + a_1 P_{t-1} + a_2 \Delta P_{t-1} + \varepsilon \quad (3)$$

P_t , P_{t-1}
t-1, a_0

a_1 , a_2
 ΔP_{t-1}

t t-1.

Engle Granger (1987)

direction at a similar rate.

If the time series are non-stationary, it means that there is a trend of development. In case of non-stationarity, the residual values in the regression equation (the error), which represents the difference and the change of the price base, as a function of the price basis itself (auto-regression equation), changes in a random, arbitrary order, indicative of low autocorrelation and the presence of other factors influencing the movement of the price base.

In this case, if there is, for example, an increasing tendency in the differences between the French and Bulgarian prices, that would mean that there is no symmetry between the two prices, they can move in a different direction or move with different cycles.

The analysis of the presence of unit root and the cointegration of the examined time series is performed by applying the Dickey-Fuller test (with an intercept) and applying the Augmented Dickey-Fuller test (Nestorov, 2015) – equations 2 and 3.

Where P_t is the price base, P_{t-1} is the price base in the t-1 period, a_0 is the intercept of the regression equation, and a_1 and a_2 are the regression coefficients, ΔP_{t-1} is the difference between the price base in t and t-1 periods.

The second approach, applied to meat and milk price series in selected markets is based on Engle and Granger's three-step procedure (1987).

The first step is to test the series for unit root through the Augmented Dickie-Fuller test as described above.

The second step is to calculate the long-term dependency between the considered time series pairs using the

following model:

$$P_t^l = \beta_0 + \beta_1 P_t^k + \varepsilon_t \quad (4)$$

P_t^l, P_t^k

Where P_t^l , are the prices in Bulgaria and in the other selected country.

The Log prices are used for the analysis. β_0 is the intercept, β_1 stands for the price transmission elasticity, (we have to be arinmind that structural changes and shocks could change the long-term equilibrium price, and that means the interpretation is with some degree of conditionality), and ε_t is the error term.

Engle Granger

$(\gamma_1 =$

In order to complete the Engle and Granger procedure, a test for the presence of unit root is also conducted for the residuals ε_t of the regression equation (4). Rejection of the zero hypothesis (that there is unit root) means that the prices are cointegrated, i.e. they move together in the long run, allowing us to interpret the value of the β_1 coefficient in the analysis.

Despite their widespread use and increased complexity, the cointegration models have a number of disadvantages that need to be taken into account when interpreting the results. For example, most of these models rely on price data only and therefore a number of assumptions need to be made for their specifications. Most often, transaction and transport costs are either considered to be zero or fixed share of the price.

They are also considered stationary and serially uncorrelated to each other. Price cointegration on two distinct markets is an indicator of market-related performance as it reflects the functioning of the spatial price arbitrage.

The price series used in the

2007-2016.
 2007
 Gretl MS Excel.

1.

2013
 2016).

70-80%

- analysis are from the Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development of the European Commission for the period 2007-2016. All series include monthly averages for the countries concerned after 2007. The specialized software Gretl and MS Excel were used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Integration of the wheat and maize market in France and Bulgaria

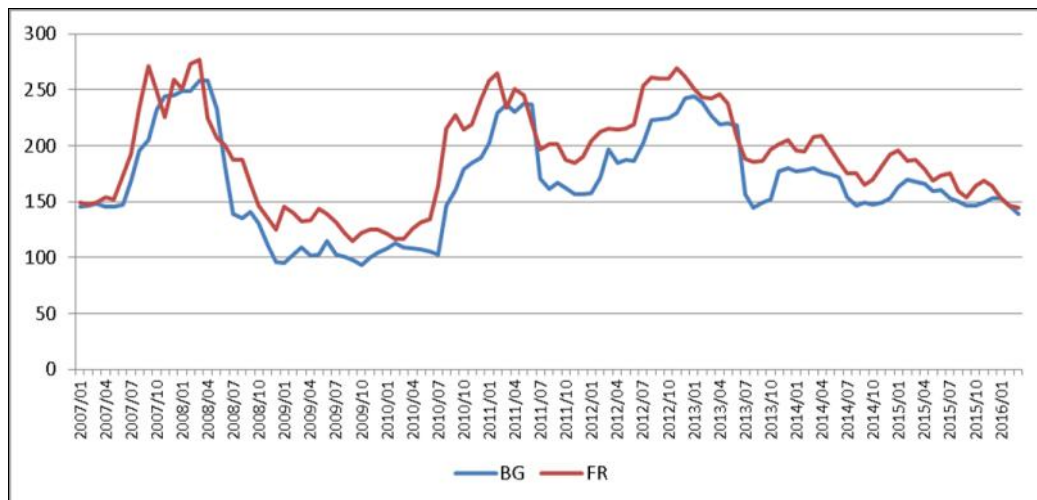
- Wheat is the main traded agricultural product. Producer prices in Bulgaria and France for bread wheat move with a certain prevalence of the French price, and for the period under consideration, the French price exceeds the Bulgarian by about 14%. Within this period, it is not possible to see certain trend in the development of the price base and, moreover, prices do not follow a particular trend. There are periods and separate months during which the Bulgarian price even exceeds the French, which shows disharmony in the relationship between prices and confirms the complexity of functioning of the free market (Figure 1).

- Maize is the second most commonly traded agricultural product. Leading countries in world maize export for 2013 are: Brazil, USA, Argentina, Ukraine, France (FAO, 2016). The main importers of maize are: EU, Japan, Korea, Egypt, and China. The EU is a net importer of maize, and there is usually a deficit on the market. At the same time Bulgaria exports the predominant quantity of the harvested maize, the main market being the rest of the EU. Between 70-80% of the maize export from Bulgaria is destined for intra-community supply, which is extremely favorable due to the free trade, low transport costs and a relatively more expensive European market.

- As in the wheat market, corn prices in

(2).

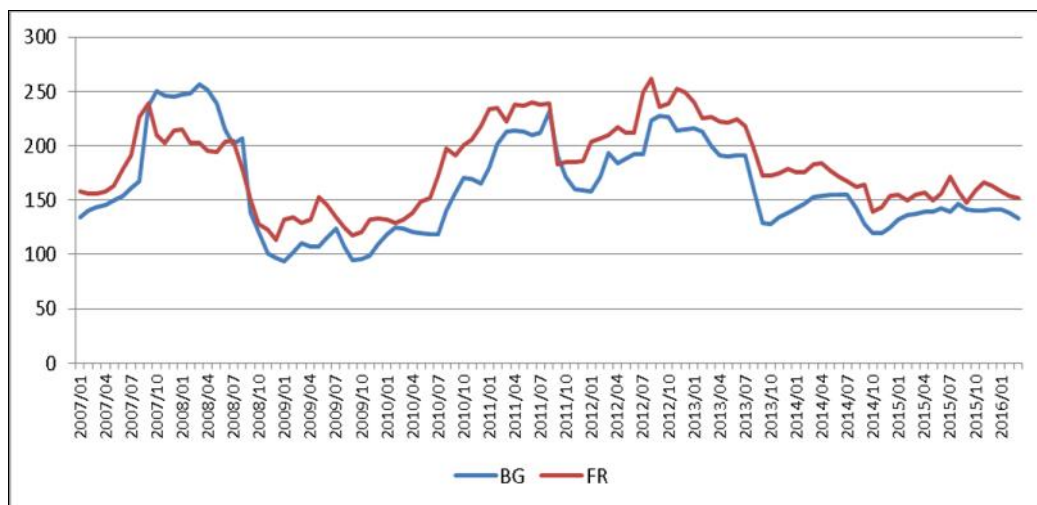
Bulgaria are lower than those on the French market (Figure 2).



Source: C, http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/markets-and-prices/price-monitoring/monthly-prices/index_en.htm

. 1.

Fig. 1. Dynamics of the average monthly prices of bread wheat in Bulgaria and France, EUR/tonne, 01.2007-03.2016



Source: C, http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/markets-and-prices/price-monitoring/monthly-prices/index_en.htm

. 2.

Fig. 2. Dynamics of the average monthly maize prices in Bulgaria and France, EUR/tonne, 01.2007-03.2016

Dickey – Fuller Augmented Dickey – Fuller

1.

β ,

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β

Dickey – Fuller Augmented Dickey – Fuller

- 2,92.

-2,89

t-

β ,

0

The results of the Dickey-Fuller and the Augmented Dickey-Fuller tests used in order to assess the co-integration between the two prices are presented in Table 1. They show values that are negative and which are above critical t-statistics values. The critical values for in the respective sample and the degrees of freedom performed with Dickey - Fuller and Augmented Dickey - Fuller tests with a constant and no trend, are -2.89 and -2.92, respectively.

The values measured in the models are lower than the critical values, which gives us a reason to reject H_0 and to accept the alternative hypothesis that there is no unit root in the stochastic error.

The lack of unit root between the Bulgarian and French prices for bread wheat and maize leads to the conclusion that there is cointegration between the observed Bulgarian and French prices.

1.

Table. 1. The results of the price series analysis

Dickey – Fuller Augmented Dickey – Fuller		DF	ADF	100 0,05 Critical values for time series of 100 elements, and 0,05 significance level (Enders, 2010)
Dickey – Fuller and Augmented Dickey – Fuller tests for price integration				
Difference between French and Bulgarian prices of bread wheat	P_{10}	-5,49	-6,50	-2,89
Difference between French and Bulgarian prices of maize	P_2	-3,62	-4,62	-2,92

Source: Own calculations

The established cointegration between the Bulgarian price of bread wheat and maize with the French price confirms the strength of the single world market where price parity is observed. In the future, a change in the price base between the European and Bulgarian prices will depend primarily on the

average purchase prices and, if they are kept relatively low, no increase in the price base can be expected.

- The gradual increase of the fixed costs in Bulgaria for this production will also lead to reduction of the price difference. Decrease in the price base can also be achieved by optimizing the logistic, transport and other business expenses, including the interest rates.

It is practically impossible to expect full price leveling on the two markets, and so we can talk about price parity between the observed prices, which suggests that the price base in the future will shrink, prices will get closer.

This does not exclude a higher variation of the price bases in certain periods and months.

2.

2. Integration of the meat market in Bulgaria and selected countries

The cointegration of the prices of three main groups of meat in the following markets has been assessed: pork (Bulgaria (BG) – Spain (ES), Bulgaria (BG) – Germany (DE)), beef (Bulgaria (BG) – Germany (DE) and Bulgaria (BG) – France (FR)); chicken (Bulgaria (BG) – Poland (PL), Bulgaria (BG) – Spain (ES)).

The countries are selected on the basis of the quantity of output produced by the respective group of meat. These are the countries with the largest volume of production (in tonnes).

The dynamics of the prices of the meat groups under consideration are presented in Fig. 3a, 3b; Fig. 4a, 4b; and Fig. 5a, 5b. Figure 3a and 3b present the dynamics of the price trend of pigmeat in Bulgaria compared to the selected EU countries. There is a high degree of instability in pig prices and significant fluctuations in the markets under consideration. More sustained growth is observed in 2012-2015. It is impressive

(ES); (BG) – (BG) – (DE)); (BG) – (DE); (BG) – (FR)); (BG) – (BG) – (PL); (BG) – (ES)).

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3 3

2012-2015

/100 kg

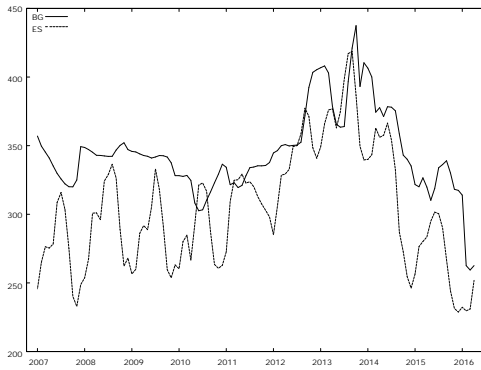
, that the prices of pigmeat in Bulgaria,
, expressed in euro/100 kg of carcass
weight, are higher than the average
monthly prices in the other considered
- markets. Traditionally, pork prices in
Bulgaria are higher than the average
- European pork prices.

- This is due to the established production
structure and specialization in the other
countries, which allow them to realize
- economies of scale and achieve lower
costs. Another traditional factor for price
- fluctuations in agricultural products is the
biological nature of production and losses
- caused by diseases and other
unfavorable conditions as well as the
inability to respond quickly to market
signals in a favorable market
environment.

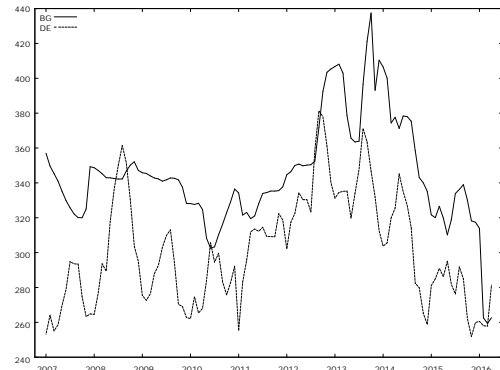
- Although the production of pigmeat in
Bulgaria is characterized by its more
- industrial organization, especially in
comparison with the other livestock
- sectors, producers still fail to achieve
lower costs.

- These relatively higher prices are among
the reasons for the high import of pork in
Bulgaria. Based on the graphs, apart
- from the sharp fluctuations in prices,
there are also differences in the direction
of price movements.

However, this does not automatically
mean that in the long run, prices are not
cointegrated. In order to be able to
determine the existence of such a link
between the analyzed price series, the
methodology described above is applied.



a



b

: / Source: C

3.

Fig. 3. Dynamics of the prices of pig meat in Bulgaria and the analyzed countries – Spain (a), and Germany (b), EUR/100 kg carcass weight

4 , 4 ,

Figure 4a and 4b presents the dynamics of beef prices in Bulgaria compared to the selected EU countries.

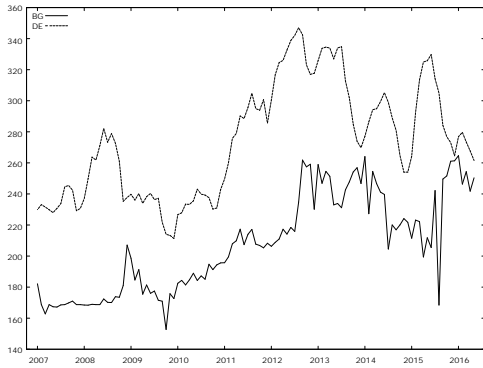
Traditionally, in our country there aren't many animals from breeds specialized in meat, which, after joining the EU, is further hampered by the low competitiveness of the domestic production compared to cheaper imports.

Beef production is historically not very well represented in Bulgaria. In recent years, there has been an increase in the interest in rearing cattle for meat, although most of the beef produced in Bulgaria still comes from dairy herds (male calves) and/or dairy cows. This makes the productivity low, and the quality of the meat is lower than that of the meat breeds. The beef price graphs for Bulgaria, Germany and France show the serious fluctuations in beef prices.

The price levels in Europe and in Bulgaria, besides the external factors, are also affected by the dairy cattle crisis and the increased slaughtering of dairy cows. However, average prices have been at higher level in the past 5 years compared to the previous five years.

5

5



a



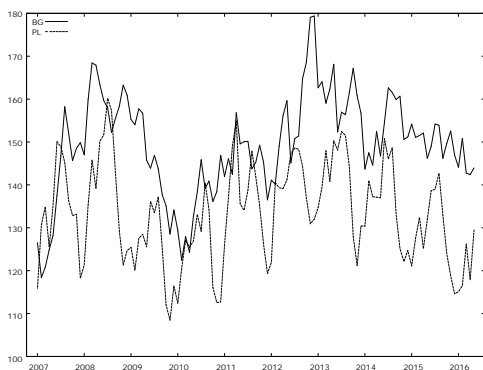
b

Source: C
4.

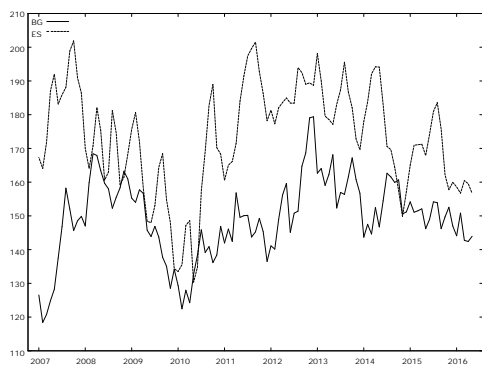
Fig. 4. Dynamics of beef prices in Bulgaria and analyzed countries – Germany (a) and France (b), EUR/100 kg carcass weight

5, 5

Figure 5a and 5b shows the dynamics in the evolution of the prices of chicken meat in Bulgaria compared to the selected EU countries. Chicken meat production is characterized by the strongest price fluctuations in the analyzed period. This is due to the fact that the production cycle is the shortest and changes can be made relatively quickly in response to price changes.



a



b

Source: C
5.

Fig. 5. Dynamics in the evolution of prices of chicken meat in Bulgaria and the analyzed countries – Poland (a), Spain (b), EUR/100 kg

Chicken prices in Bulgaria are moving close to the prices in EU. An important factor in this is that Bulgaria is also an active participant in the international trade in chicken meat, even as a net exporter.

Engel-Granger's approach prescribes in testing for co-integration to first determine whether the time series in question are non-stationary and integrated in the same order (Enders, 2010). For this purpose, Augmented Dickie-Fuller (ADF) has been applied to each group of price series and selected countries, firstly, to determine if the time series are non-stationary, and then to determine their order of integration.

The data are presented in Tables 2, 3 and 4 for the different groups of meat. Critical values used to interpret the results are from Enders (2010). For a series length of about 100 units, the critical values of t-statistic for the ADF at 0.05 degree of significance are -2.89 for series with constant, and for series with constant and trend: -3.45.

(i) (Enders, 2010).
 (ADF).
 2, 3 4
 Enders (2010).
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 t-
 ADF 0,05
 : -2,89,
 : -3,45.

2.

Table 2. Results of ADF for beef prices

Results of the unit root test in levels				Results of the unit root test using first difference			
	# # lags	ADF			# # lags	ADF	
		with constant	with constant and trend			with constant	with constant and trend
Bulgaria	5	-1,25952	-2,88137	Bulgaria	1	-9,76493**	-9,76493**
Germany	4	-1,8296	-1,54973	Germany	3	-5,39732**	-5,42429**
France	4	-1,37938	-1,31776	France	1	-5,75055**	-5,75221**

** At a significance level of 0.05 the price series are stationary and integrated in the first order (1)

3.

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Table 3. Results of ADF for pigmeat prices

Results of the unit root test in levels				Results of the unit root test using first difference			
	# # lags	ADF		ADF	# # lags	ADF	
		with constant	with constant and trend			with constant	with constant and trend
Bulgaria	5	-0,760122	-0,327795	Bulgaria	1	-6,73477**	-6,84988**
Germany	5	-2,25318	-2,09514	Germany	1	-6,36191**	-6,3703**
France	5	-1,84781	-1,60822	France	2	-5,36952**	-5,36999**

** At a significance level of 0.05 the price series are stationary and integrated in the first order (1)

4.

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Table 4. Results of ADF for poultry meat prices

Results of the unit root test in levels				Results of the unit root test using first difference			
	# # lags	ADF		ADF	# # lags	ADF	
		with constant	with constant and trend			with constant	with constant and trend
Bulgaria	5	-2,69389	-2,51849	Bulgaria	1	-7,59494**	-7,6774**
Poland	1	-4,81006	-4,81006	Poland			
Spain	4	-2,18119	-2,16441	Spain	1	-8,71841**	-8,68647**

** At a significance level of 0.05 the price series are stationary
– the series is stationary and integrated in 0-th order (0)

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2007-2016 ,
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From the implemented ADF tests, it is clear that the requirement of non-stationarity of the price series is met for all the series under consideration, with the exception of chicken meat prices in Poland in the period 2007-2016 where the hypothesis that the unit root is equal to 0 cannot be denied and the series is considered to be stationary. The lags are calculated automatically, with a maximum number of lags - 5. This result means that we cannot continue with the implementation of the Engle-Granger's

- procedure for the Bulgaria-Poland couple
 - because the first requirement is that the
 - two rows are non-stationary. Of course
 - this does not automatically mean that
 - there is no transmission of Polish prices
 - on the Bulgarian market. The trade
 - between the two countries, especially in
 - the poultry sector, is large and
 - undoubtedly it leads to connectivity, yet
 - there may be other factors that can
 - influence prices more.

The next step of the Engle-Granger's procedure is to build the model of long-term price relationship (Equation 4). The regression residues are tested for unit root. If the hypothesis is rejected, the residuals are stationary, the two price series are cointegrated, and the value of the coefficient β_1 represents the elasticity of the price transmission. The results are presented in Table 5 by type of meat. Since ADF test with trend and constant did not produce different results (i.e there is no change in the character of the line - it remains non-stationary), we will apply the procedure by including only a constant.

5.
Table 5. Results of Engle-Granger's co-integration test

Price series pairs	# # lags	ADF	Value of coefficients β_1
<i>Beef</i>			
Bulgaria - Germany	1	-2,26627	
Bulgaria - France	1	-2,81022	
<i>Pork</i>			
Bulgaria - Spain	5	-2,65206	
Bulgaria - Germany	2	-3,71322**	0,509123
<i>Chicken meat</i>			
Bulgaria - Spain	4	-3,66941**	0,312989

^aThe value of the coefficient is given only if price co-integration has been verified

Enders (2010).
 100
 t- ADF
 0,05
 : -3,398.

The critical values used to determine the results are from Enders (2010). For a series length of about 100 units, the critical values of t-statistic for the ADF at 0.05 degree of significance are -3,398.

Based on the applied methods we can reject the zero hypothesis for pork prices in Bulgaria and Germany, which means that the two price lines are cointegrated. The same can be said for the pair of price relations – Bulgaria-Spain in the case of chicken meat, which are also cointegrated. For the other series based on the available price information, there are not enough reasons to reject the zero hypothesis, which means that the residuals are not stationary. Thus, the requirement of the Engle-Granger’s approach is not fulfilled.

In beef, these results support our initial expectations, as beef and veal production in Bulgaria is at very low levels, most of which are realized on farms and do not enter the processing plants or the trading network. Meat harvested in slaughterhouses on the other hand is of low quality and yield compared to EU, which further affects the price structure. Also, in pork, a price transmission with Spain could not be proven, which may be due to the different production patterns in these countries.

In recent years, there has been a strong interest in the production of pork in Spain, which has led to a rise in the quantities produced. The way in which this production is organized and the implementation of contractual arrangements between processors and producers is further to provide additional incentives and security for manufacturers.

Since the pairs Bulgaria - Spain in chicken meat and Bulgaria – Germany in pork are cointegrated, this means that the regression results for the long – term price relationship can be interpreted.

Hence, the regression coefficient β_1 can be seen as the elasticity of the price transmission in the long run.

For all cointegrated groups the coefficient is positive, i.e. the relationship is also positive - as prices rise in the EU countries, the prices in Bulgaria are also rising.

3. Integration of the raw milk market in Bulgaria and selected countries

The production in few of the old member states (Table 6) represent about 60% of the total production of the EU.

Despite the restrictive effect of the quota system, the existence of surplus fines and the volatility of raw milk prices, the volumes produced in most EU-15 countries remain high or are increasing for the period 2007-2014. The exceptions are the southern European countries - Italy, Spain, Portugal and Greece.

This development of their production can be attributed to their economic problems.

6. -15

Table 6. Main cows' milk producers in EU-15 according to total production, thousand tons

Member state	2007	2010	2014	2014 Share of total EU production for 2014
Germany	28 402,77	29 593,88	28 779,00	19,09 %
France	23 425,69	24 032,48	25 084,00	16,64 %
Great Britain	14 073,00	13 960,00	14 679,64	9,74 %
The Netherlands	11 128,36	11 940,52	11 013,00	7,31 %
Italy	11 061,75	11 399,44	10 799,00	7,16 %

Source: EC, Milk Market Observatory, EU-Historical-production-series, table D1110A.

1990 . () .

2007

2009

de minimis

(0,77% 2014 .)

In the new member states, there is a different development - Poland's production is declining while the Czech Republic's and Romania's are growing. The high performance of the Czech Republic is due to the fact that the production structure of 1990 is largely preserved (farms are larger). In a sense, eastern European countries are late in joining the common market, as the CAP for the dairy market has changed its focus over the years by refusing to support production volume (under pressure from budget constraints and international agreements) and to a large extent – removing price controls. This uncertainty affects negatively the liquidity of farms due to higher price fluctuations especially after 2007, which negatively affects the profitability of production and the formation of fixed assets, including the improvement of the native structure and the genetic fund of herds. For this reason, the new Member States are less competitive in the common market.

The specificities of the support policy for the new Member States, such as SAPS, further aggravate the situation of cattle-breeding, as much of the support is related to the arable land, or is more targeted at the crop farms.

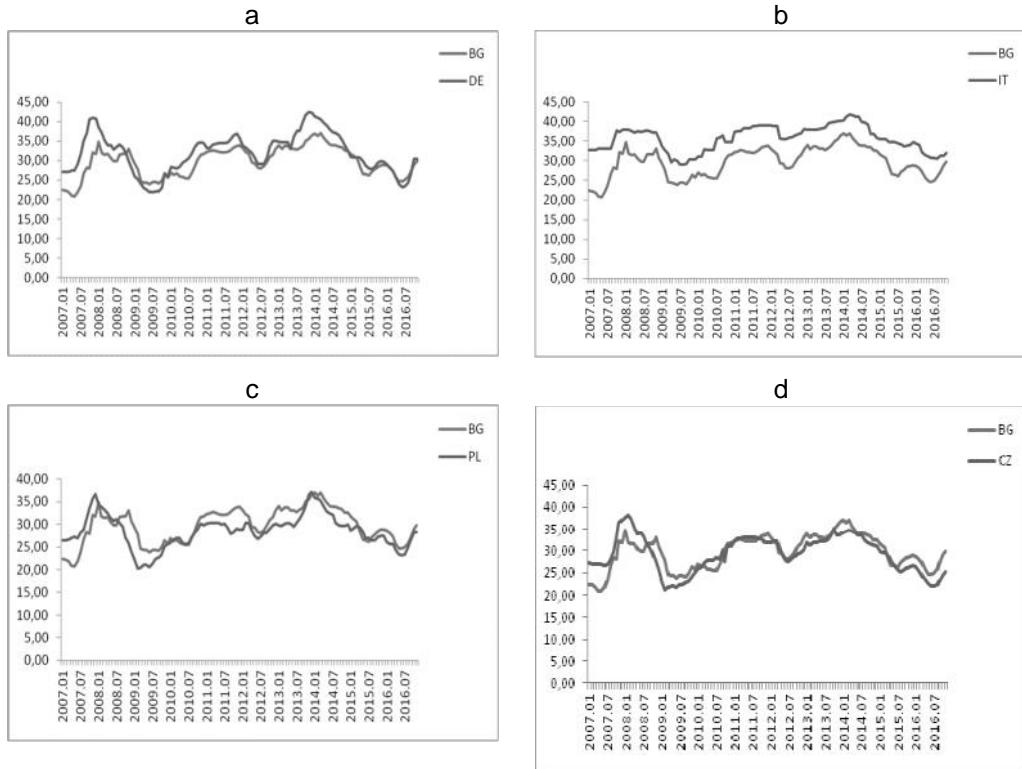
As a result, land prices and rents, as well as competition with plant holdings for limited land resources, are further hampering the development of cattle breeding. The increase in subsidies for coupled and untied support to cattle farms after 2009, as well as the increase in de minimis support for livestock feed, gradually offset this imbalance.

Due to the fact that Bulgaria is a small producer (0.77% of the total production by 2014) of raw milk and in order to simplify the analysis, only the impact of prices on the Bulgarian price of raw milk is examined.

(IT); (DE); (BG) – (BG) – (PL); (BG) – (CZ).

6.

The integration of the following markets is considered: Bulgaria (BG) – Germany (DE); Bulgaria (BG) – Italy (IT); Bulgaria (BG) – Poland (PL); Bulgaria (BG) – Czech Republic (CZ). The main characteristics of the studied time series are presented graphically in Figure 6.



/ Source: EC, Milk Market Observatory

6. (), (b), (c), (d)
Fig. 6. Dynamics in the raw milk prices in Bulgaria and analyzed markets - Germany (a), Italy (b), Poland (c), Czech Republic (d)

7
 ADF
 1 ()

Table 7 presents the results of the ADF test for the analyzed countries. A lag of 1 (one month) has been chosen, as raw cow's milk is a one-off product, the price of which is announced monthly by the commission.

7. ADF

Table 7. Results of ADF for each of the price series pairs

Purchase price raw milk	# # lags	t_{emp}	p- Asymptotic p-value
/ Bulgaria	1	-2,79	0,06
/ Germany	1	-2,69	0,08
/ Italy	1	-1,70	0,43
/ Poland	1	-2,81	0,06
/ Czech Republic	1	-2,05	0,26

The test is calculated with a constant. According to the methodology presented, we apply the next step of the Engle and Granger method and we get the following results (Table 8).

(8).

8.

Table 8. Results of Engle-Granger's co-integration test

	# # lags	t_{emp}	p- Asymptotic p-value
– Bulgaria–Germany	1	-2,783**	0,14
– Bulgaria–Italy	1	-3,657**	0,02
– Bulgaria–Poland	1	-2,987	0,11
– Bulgaria–Czech Republic	1	-3,040**	0,10

The test is calculated in the presence of a constant.

** At a significance level of 0.05 the price series are stationary

As a result of the Engle-Granger test, the co-integration coefficient between Bulgaria and Italy is outside the reference value range, which does not allow us to confirm the zero hypothesis, therefore there is no cointegration link between these two markets for the whole period under review. For the other analyzed markets, the values are in the reference range. Consequently, we can conclude that there is price co-integration and that the zero hypothesis is fulfilled. The Bulgarian price is most closely linked to the price in Germany, followed by Poland and the Czech Republic.

CONCLUSIONS

The production and marketing of agricultural products worldwide is characterized by fluctuations, price volatility and other shocks, which are transferred from one market to another.

The end decades of support measures in Europe makes farmers more vulnerable to uncertainty and volatility.

After the trade liberalization the 1990s and the accession to the EU in 2007, Bulgarian producers operate on the open European market and are also affected by the volatility of agricultural commodity prices.

The analysis of the cointegration of the prices of different products on the European and Bulgarian market was analyzed by applying an established methodology. Based on the approach used and on the basis of the available price information for the period 2007-2016, the hypothesis that there is cointegration between wheat and maize prices in Bulgaria with the main producer in Europe France is confirmed.

The hypothesis of linking the prices of beef, pork, chicken and raw milk in Bulgaria with prices in the most productive countries in the EU cannot be rejected. This gives us reason to conclude that markets are integrated and that there is a balance in the long run. However, they are integrated to varying degrees for different products.

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Long-term financial markets in agribusiness

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SUMMARY

The purpose of this article is to present the opportunities offered by long-term financial markets resources in agriculture as alternative sources for financing of farms. Researched is the impact of macroeconomic stability and agrarian policy as well as alternative sources for long-term financing of farms by the national agro-sector – Rural Development Program, National Guarantee Fund, commercial banks.

It is concluded that the studied markets play a key role for achieving long-term profitability and competitiveness of Bulgarian agribusiness.

Keywords: financial markets, long-term funds, agribusiness, profitability

INTRODUCTION

Achieving profitability as the primary long-term goal of any business is directly related to the opportunities to access markets of long-term financial resources. All agribusinesses in certain periods are in dire need of such funds because they have large investment costs that require access to long-term financing markets. The access

(Lyubenov, 2016).

– 2020,

problem, which is characteristic for these markets, is extremely relevant to the development of Bulgarian agribusiness in the conditions of international and European integration (Lyubenov, 2016). The level of provision of long-term financial resources and their rational use has a significant impact on the profitability achieved.

One of the objectives set out in the EU 2020 strategy is to make more effective use of financial resources. This objective is even more relevant to the agro-sector, taking into account the delayed return on fixed assets in agriculture – on one hand due to its sector specifics, and on the other hand – as a result of the lower profitability of non-agricultural sector enterprises.

Agro-sector companies need a larger amount of these funds, while having difficulty accessing long-term financial markets. The purpose of this article is to research the opportunities offered by markets of long-term financial resources in agriculture as alternative sources for financing of farms.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Secondary sources of information from sector ministries, bank institutions and specialized literature sources in the field of finance are used as an information base of materials. A desk study was conducted using the methods of induction, deduction, comparison, analysis and synthesis. Desk studies in their nature are an integral part of the empirical studies that they precede. To prove the reliability and comparability of the financial information, only validated and legitimate institutions and sources of information have been used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

2016 7,14
 7,3%
 (7,7),
 2012 8,14 (NSI,
 2017, Newspaper Capital, Special Edition,
 March 2017).
 2015
 (.)
 3,66
 2013 2014
 (. 2%),
 2015 6,4%.
 2015
 1,9
 30%
 1,44 (Newspaper
 Capital, Special Edition, March 2017).
 2014 - 2020
 2014
 112,2 2015
 (221,6)
 2014 (333,8).

The Bulgarian agro-sector has an important role in the national economy, providing food stability, export revenues, raw materials and work for many industries. In 2016, it generated an output worth 7.14 billion BGN, which is a decrease of 7.3% compared to the previous year (7.7 billion BGN), and in 2012 it was 8.14 billion BGN (NSI, 2017, Special edition of Capital, March 2017). According to data for 2015, the gross added value (GAV) in the agrarian sector was a total of 3.66 billion BGN, including the EU subsidies granted to producers but excluding tax. Although in 2013 and 2014 there is an increase in GAV (by about 2%), it decreases by 6.4% in 2015.

According to the latest data for 2015, tangible fixed assets amounted to 1.9 billion BGN. They increased by 30% compared to the previous year, when they were 1.44 billion BGN (Special edition of Capital, March 2017). The significant change is due to the EU funding cycle, because the start of the new 2014-2020 programme period was delayed by more than a year, so the purchase of equipment and other investments were less in 2014. On the other hand, foreign Investments in the sector decreased by 112.2 million BGN in 2015 (221.6 million BGN) following a period of growth that lasted until 2014 (333.8 million BGN).

1 50 20
 2014 94 950
 6% (www.mzh.government.bg, 2015).
 20-25
 2 % 0,005*92 460
 2014 - 2020 1.4 2,8
 400 / 2017 89
 41 (http://www.dnevnik.bg/evropa/zemedelie, 04.05.2017),
 3 (.) : 1)
 2014 - 2020 - 113 543 227 222 071 249,70 ; 2)
 - 88 066 622 172 243 341,3 ; 3)
 476 605 49 827 908,36 (www.mzh.government.bg, 2017). - 25

2016 .
10%
7,3 . .
- . .
70% . . (5,1 . .
) . . -
5 . . .
210 . . .
2014 . . . E . .
- 2,3 . .
(Newspaper Capital, Special
Edition, March 2017). - .
- . . (1.8 . .).

2014 – 2020 . .
5,35 . . ,
62% . . .
- 7,7 . . (MAF, 2017;
CAP 2014-2020, AGRI 2015-0230).
(.),
2,9 . . ,
38% . .

The country's export is increasing and by November 2016 the annual increase is 10% and is worth 7.3 billion BGN. The improvement is due to stronger trade with the EU, where 70% of the production is delivered (5.1 Billion BGN). At the same time, imports also grew - in the first eleven months of last year it reached 5 billion BGN, about 210 million BGN more than what was reported in 2014, and comes mainly from the EU. The trade balance is positive - 2.3 billion BGN (Special issue of Capital, March 2017). The biggest share of the export is attributed to cereals, mainly wheat (1.8 billion BGN).

Today, the financial markets in Bulgarian agribusiness are dominated by EU funds. The EU's Common agricultural policy gives some priority to short-term funding. For the 2014-2020 period, about 5.35 billion EUR is foreseen under the direct payment schemes, which represents more than 62% of the total financial resource for Bulgaria - 7.7 billion EUR (MAF, 2017 EU CAP 2014-2020, AGRI 2015-0230). Under the Rural Development Program (RDP) covering long-term financial markets, nearly 2.9 billion EUR is foreseen, which is less than 38%.

Alternative sources of long-term financing of agricultural companies can be various European and national state funds and programs, commercial banks and others. The access to finance is impacted by the business environment, macro-

⁴ Although not long-term funds, we will note that the top 20 Bulgarian grain producers receive more than 50 million BGN and the biggest one receives about half of them. For example, 94,000 farmers allocate 950 million BGN in 2014, with only 20 of them taking nearly 6% of this amount (www.mzh.government.bg, 2015). This shows that a significant part of this financial resource goes to about 20-25 large companies that mainly produce cereal and oilseeds.

⁵ Under the Farmers Support Act, financial support to the agro-sector amounted to about half a percent of the country's GDP. BGN 0.005 * 92 billion or BGN 460 million. National payments in the period 2014 - 2020 will be around 1.4 billion EUR, 2.8 billion BGN or about 400 million BGN / year. By comparison, in 2017 the SFA has transferred more than 89 million BGN of subsidies to more than 41,000 farmers under the Non-Decoupled Tobacco Transitional National Aid Scheme (<http://www.dnevnik.bg/evropa/zemedelie>, 04.05.2017), which exceeds the annual financial resources that the state spends on science.

⁶ An additional financial resource, separate from the Common Agricultural Policy of the EU, offers the Maritime and Fisheries Program (MFP). Its budget is divided into three parts: 1) total financial resource of the MFP for 2014-2020 - 113 543 227 EUR or 222 071 249,70 BGN; 2) European Maritime and Fisheries Fund - 88 066 622 EUR or 172 243 341,3BGN; 3) national co-financing - 25 476 605 EUR, 49,827,908.36 BGN (www.mzh.government.bg, 2017).

- economic stability, legislative base,
- agrarian and financial policies which will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

1.

2017 .

() ,

(<https://money.bg>, 22.02.2017).

1. Macroeconomic stability

- The macroeconomic stability of the country strongly influences the development of the Bulgarian markets for long-term financial resources. At the end of February 2017, the European Commission (EC) announced that Bulgaria is among the six countries with excessive macroeconomic imbalances in the EU (<https://money.bg>, 22.02.2017). The main weaknesses are in the management and supervision of banks and the insolvency legislation. Unlike other countries in its group, Bulgaria has strong public finances, but vulnerability in the financial sector is coupled with high corporate indebtedness in the context of unfinished labour market adjustment. It is pointed out that the country's net foreign indebtedness has declined and the banking sector has been stabilized, but the issues of "poor governance and oversight" and the legal framework for insolvency are not resolved, while debt reduction in the corporate sector is slow.

a

- Among the major challenges which Bulgaria still faces are the fight against difficult-to-assess assets and business malpractices, including related party crediting. According to the European Commission, there are also vulnerabilities in the insurance and retirement fund sectors, as well as in their oversight. Despite the generally stable performance, the review uncovers some weaknesses for some insurance companies and groups. The EC points out that still a challenge remain the investments of related parties, cross-ownership and certain insurance contracts. In addition, the sector review did not fully evaluate the strength of some companies at group level, which had led to additional vagueness.

- According to the analysis, despite

the continuing debt reduction, the high private debt, the bulk of which is borrowed by non-financial companies, continues to raise concerns. Bulgaria's high corporate debt may negatively affect the prospects for growth in the midterm. The reduction of indebtedness was limited by the delayed adoption of bankruptcy reforms and the lack of a developed market for the sale of non-serviced loans.

2.

56
40%

()

“

“)

4

2014 4

2-3

1,2
38
2017 1 1,6

()

94%

2007-2013
2,65
Capital Daily

(<http://www.capital.bg>,
07.01.2016) 5,2

2015

82%

e 3.1

- the continuing debt reduction, the high private debt, the bulk of which is borrowed by non-financial companies, continues to raise concerns. Bulgaria's high corporate debt may negatively affect the prospects for growth in the midterm. The reduction of indebtedness was limited by the delayed adoption of bankruptcy reforms and the lack of a developed market for the sale of non-serviced loans.

2. Common agrarian policy of the EU and national agrarian policy

Agriculture is one of the most resource-intensive EU policies in financial respect. The huge financial resource for EU agriculture is about 56 billion EUR a year, accounting for about 40% of its budget. In Bulgaria, the State Fund for Agriculture (SFA) is a key institution that allocates EU funds. SFA and two other agencies (Road Infrastructure Agency and National Railway Infrastructure Company) are managing more funds than half of the ministries taken together.

They allocate over 4 billion BGN/year in the national economy, as a comparison, we will point out that the bankruptcy of Corporate Commercial Bank (CCB) in 2014 cost similarly over 4 billion BGN. SFA allocates over 2-3 billion BGN/year under various schemes and programs of which over 1.2 billion BGN direct subsidies⁴ for 38 million decars of land and 1.6 million animals for 2017 and about 1 billion / year under the Rural Development Program (RDP).

It is estimated that Bulgaria has managed to utilize 94% of the EU budget initially approved for the RDP 2007-2013, which is worth 2.65 billion EUR (<http://www.capital.bg>, Capital Daily 07.01.2016) or 5.2 billion BGN. In comparison, we note that at the end of October 2015 the then Minister of Agriculture, Desislava Taneva, announced that 82% of the previous rural development program have been utilized, with a total budget of 3.1

		0,45
		-
		-
		-
		-
2014-2020	2,9	
5,7		
		-
		-
		-
		-
2017		
		-
		1/3
		1/3
		-
		2015
(http://www.capital.bg , 07.01.2016)	3,3 Capital	Daily
" "		
" "		
" "		2
		-
		-
		-
		-
		-
		-
160		
		100

billion EUR. Data from both sources has a difference of 0.45 billion EUR, which indicates the large amount of unutilized funds. Today, RDP is one of the largest European programs financing various and diverse projects with financial resources for the current reference period 2014-2020 of 2.9 billion EUR or 5.7 billion BGN. The funds are allocated among investment schemes for businesses, municipalities, compensatory payments, community-based local development strategies. Approved projects under the program show that the highest interest is in the business investment scheme for farms and small-scale infrastructure investments by municipalities. In 2017, the readiness of both business and municipalities is high and problems are mainly in the SFA administration, with funding reaching about 1/3 of business applicants and about 1/3 of municipal applications.

As a whole, the grant for farmers in 2015 alone was about 3.3 billion BGN (<http://www.capital.bg>, Capital Daily 07 January 2016) and includes direct area payments, RDP, operational program "Fisheries", agricultural market mechanisms, state aid,⁵ etc. The significant financial resource of the RDP stimulates agricultural production and the development of factor and product markets, but it generates high administrative costs, political and business appetite, and increases the prices of agricultural production and production factors. Domestic political crises, the vague and unstable financing criteria delay the utilization of funds under the RDP and lead to the loss of some of them. The European Commission has often imposed sanctions on Bulgaria under the RDP - more than 160 million EUR has been suspended this year, and 100 million EUR municipal pre-financing payments are cancelled.

During the new reference period, the planned changes to the RDP aim to increase the number of potential

2016	1,5	
1	60-70%	
2		
2020	3	
2017	21	
	1.	
	1.	
	(26%)	(21%)
	- 7,7	
	37,7%	
15%		
(3)

candidates eligible for funding. These concern the reduction of support ceilings, attracting more potential applicants under individual schemes or the addition of new selection criteria for projects. For example, in the autumn of 2016 Bulgaria officially received the European Commission's approval of its proposal, the maximum amount of eligible costs for a project and one applicant under the investment scheme for agricultural holdings to decrease from 1.5 million EUR to 1 million EUR, and the maximum grant amount per project is 60-70% if submitted by a group or an organization of producers. It is foreseen that if the correction is formally approved, the maximum eligible costs for one applicant will be already EUR 2 million by the end of the program in 2020 and not 3 million EUR, as it has been so far.

In 2017, 21 RDP measures are planned to be adopted, most of which are not yet available. Opportunity to finance small farms, organic producers, forestry enterprises working in the countryside companies that develop business other than agriculture, support of consultancy services, local development strategies and municipalities - Table 1. The main part of the measures in Table 1. occupy single-digit values as a relative share of total funding, and only two of them - fourth (over 26%) and seventh (over 21%) make an exception; They have the most funds for them, but they have the highest number of projects. During this reference period the RDP has a relative share of 37.7% of the total financial resource - 7.7 billion EUR. In addition, it is possible to transfer up to 15% of the funds from the first pillar (market support) to the second pillar - RDP.⁶

1.

2014-2020

Table 1. Public funds under the RDP for the period 2014-2020

Measures	EUR	Share
1. Measure 1. Transfer of knowledge and awareness actions	25 394 595	0.87
2. Measure 2. Consultancy services	4 254 531	0.15
4. Measure 4. Investments in tangible assets	776 047 703	26.60
6. Measure 6. Development of the economy and the economic activity	204 458 262	7.01
7. Measure 7. Basic services and village renovation in rural areas	625 725 910	21.44
8. Measure 8. Investments in the development of forest areas	63 527 375	2.18
9. Measure 9. Establishment of producer groups and organizations	7 795 946	0.27
10. Measure 10. Agroecology and climate	223 346 669	7.65
11. Measure 11. Organic farming	151 593 438	5.20
12. Measure 12. "Natura 2000" payments	139 676 037	4.79
13. Measure 13. Payments for less favoured areas	275 604 674	9.45
14. Measure 14. Human treatment of animals	56 859 510	1.95
15. Measure 15. Environmental services in forests	8 750 000	0.30
16. Measure 16. Cooperation	32 573 723	1.12
17. Measure 17. Risk management	36 720 054	1.26
19. Measure 19. LEADER - Community-led local development	131 484 276	4.51
20. Measure 20. Technical assistance	44 109 734	1.51
Thematic program for small farms	109 925 758	3.77
/ Total	2,918	100 %

3.

()

3.National Guarantee Fund

- The National Guarantee Fund (NGF) is part of the Bulgarian Development Bank Group. It offers indirect support in accessing finance by providing guarantees to businesses and farmers who are experiencing difficulties in crediting because of insufficient collateral or lack of credit history. The process of approving a guarantee from the NGF goes entirely through the banks. In the bank to which
- -
 -

5

250

6%

71-72%

40 (Newspaper Capital, Special Edition, March 2017).

50

2016 2018

2013-2015

2007-2013

2016-2018

they are applying for a loan, farmers only fill out a warranty claim, which is sent out of its own motion to the Fund for consideration and approval within 5 days. Banks share the risk with the fund and offer the NGF guarantees themselves free of charge to farmers. Guarantee schemes are very appropriate and necessary because agribusiness is characterized by a high risk.

The agricultural sector has sustained growth in bank lending since 2009 to date. Farmers are about 250,000 and are comparable to micro-enterprises in other sectors, but the sector is not large, given that it now accounts for around 6% of total bank funding. Under guarantee schemes, 71-72% of supported loans to farmers are investment, unlike other sectors, where they are only one third. The NGF's resource is approximately 40 million EUR (Newspaper Capital, Special Edition, March 2017). It is specific that small or micro enterprises are the main ones that need guarantee schemes because they do not have accumulated capital nor assets to serve as collateral. When they become bigger, they already have a credit history.

The NGF offers three basic guarantee schemes. The first is sector-driven and developed jointly with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry (MAF). The start-up capital of the new program is 50 million BGN and it will run between 2016 and 2018. The instrument is a continuation of the mandate scheme from 2013 to 2015, which was in operation under the RDP 2007-2013. Then the Fund had provided guarantees for investment projects of farmers who have used bank financing to implement their projects under the program. In the period 2016-2018, the scheme extends its scope and can also benefit registered farmers who are not beneficiaries of the RDP. In addition, they can use the Fund's guarantees not

50%

17

3

2018

50%

2017

20%

50%

1

COSME

2017

40

50%

1,5

1

4

2011

2016

1,2

1,8 (BNB, 2017).

only when seeking financing from banks for the realization of their investment intentions, but also when they need capital for business. This guarantee scheme covers up to 50% of the loans given by commercial banks. The NGF has signed an agreement with 17 banks that use this tool. For farmers, the ceiling of the guarantee that can be issued by the fund is 3 million BGN. They can join the scheme till the end of August 2018, with the fund taking on a 50% loan guarantee.

The second aid scheme for farmers NGF takes at its own risk. It was open until the end of March 2017 and although it covered all small and medium-sized existing or start-up companies, around 20% of the exposures were in the "Agriculture, forestry and fisheries" sector. The guarantee had covered 50% of the loan, but for no more than 1 million BGN. The funds could be used for investment or turnover purposes, and the partners are all larger Bulgarian banks.

The third instrument to support small and medium-sized businesses, from which farmers can also benefit, comes from the European Commission's COSME program (under the Juncker plan). At the beginning of 2017, the European Investment Fund and the NGF signed an agreement that provides 40 million EUR to companies experiencing difficulties in providing collateral required by banks. The guarantee covers up to 50% of the loan, and investment and operational loans and finance leases of no more than 1.5 million EUR are eligible. The minimum funding period must be 1 year, and the maximum is 10 years.

4. Bank loans and financial leasing

From 2011 to the end of 2016, the total volume of credits approved in the agriculture, forestry and hunting sector increased from 1.2 billion to 1.8 billion BGN (www.bnb, 2017). This growth is not affected neither by the instabilities in

2014 ., -
 ' -
 5
 -
 ' -
 ' -
 2011
 ' -
 4%
 2016 . 6%.
 ' -
 ' -
 20%
 (Newspaper Capital, Special
 Edition, March 2017).

the banking system during the bankruptcy of Corporate Commercial Bank in 2014, nor by other factors. The main reason for the upward trend is that this flow of funds is most often related to co-financing a given project with European funding or other grant schemes. Therefore, in the last 5 years, it has become the fifth most important lending business by banks after trade, processing industry, construction and real estate. In 2011, the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sector has a relative share of 4% in bank lending, and in 2016 its share is 6%. The forecasts are that this growth will be sustained for several major reasons. First of all, Bulgarian agriculture is among the few stable businesses that manage to generate an average return on investment of at least 20% per year (Newspaper Capital, Special Edition, March 2017). In the second place, the current farmers' level of indebtedness is very low compared to trade and construction, and therefore there has great growth potential.

-
 -
 -
 96%
 ' -
 ' -
 2011
 ' -
 ' -
 5%
 -
 -
 2016
 10%
 ' -
 2
 - 6%
 ' -

In the recent years, leasing of agricultural machinery has become an increasingly popular way of financing and has an ever-increasing share of all leasing transactions. In Bulgaria, the financial leasing concentrates more than 96% of the funds on all transactions in this business, so when we mention leasing of agricultural machinery, we mean financial leasing. At the end of 2011, leasing financing for companies engaged in agriculture, forestry and fisheries represented about 5% of all approved schemes. Only five years later, the picture has changed significantly. According to the latest data of the BNB at the end of the third quarter of 2016, the share of this sector has doubled to over 10% of all deals in Bulgaria. According to official statistics, transport and trade remain leaders, but there is a two-fold decrease in construction – less than 6% of the market. In recent years,

160

150

5

the amount for which leasing contracts are signed in agriculture is at levels between 150 million BGN and 160 million BGN. What is observed as a trend is that the pay-out periods are increased to more than 5 years, which is an additional convenience for the farmers.

CONCLUSIONS

The successful access of Bulgarian farms to international markets and their transformation into competitive players requires financial stability and profitability through access to long-term financial markets.

Today, the markets for long-term funds in Bulgarian agribusiness are markets for billions, dominated by EU funds, national state funding and bank loans. They have a strong impact on the development of many industrial markets as well as on agricultural factor and product markets, playing a key role in achieving profitability and competitiveness of Bulgarian agribusiness in the long run.

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