

## CEREAL AND CEREAL PRODUCTS' CONSUMPTION TENDENCIES IN ROMANIA

### SITUAȚIA CONSUMULUI DE CEREALE ȘI PRODUSE DIN CEREALE ÎN ROMÂNIA

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**Abstract:** The consumption general tendency was oriented to an active support of the population nutrition with high nutritional quality products (meat, fish, milk, eggs, fruits and vegetables) and to reduce gradually the cereal products' consumption, but in Romania the situation was not always like this.

**Rezumat:** Tendința consumului, în general, a fost întotdeauna orientată spre o mai mare participare în alimentația populației a produselor cu calități nutritive superioare (carne, pește, lapte, ouă, fructe, legume) și printr-o reducere treptată a consumului de produse din cereale, dar situația în România nu a fost întotdeauna așa.

**Key words:** tendencies, consumption, cereals

**Cuvinte cheie:** tendințe, consum, cereale.

#### INTRODUCTION

The lack of balance in the food consumption is generated by the high percentage of vegetal origin food and the low percentage of animal origin food, compared to the limits established by the modern nutritional science for a balanced food pattern; for all types of families but also for each type separately this pattern was for a long time the Romanian specific food pattern (for at least 20 years).

#### MATERIAL AND METHOD

Finally, we will present the evolution of the annual average consumption in Romania during the period 1950 – 1989 for the main food products and also the tendencies of the cereal consumption.

Table 1

The average annual consumption evolution in Romania in the period 1950 - 1989

Specification	UoM	1950	1965	1970	1975	1980	1989
Milk and dairy products (excluding butter)	L	107.6	105	111	133	200	331
Meat and meat products	Kg	16.7	26.6	31.2	45.7	62	59.22
Fats	Kg	5.35	11.3	14.1	17.0	19.0	18.65
Eggs	Pcs	59	115	142	214	270	216
Sugar and products	Kg	6.9	15	19.3	20.3	30	25.46
Cereals (equivalent: flour )	Kg	130.5	208	196	189.3	187	162.65
Vegetables and products	Kg	63.6	75.3	86.7	112.6	160	163.63

Source: information from the Agriculture Economy Institute – the evolution and the tendencies of the main food products of Romania, job specification no. 144, EX TERRA AURUM publishing house, Bucharest 1982

It can be noticed that the annual average available for consumption of cereals is decreasing. So, if in the 1970s the annual available for consumption of cereals was 189.71 kg/person, in the 1980s this average was 162.65 kg/person compared to the 1950s when it was 130.5 kg/person.

In 2000, according to the information from the annual statistic records, the cereals and the cereal products represented 24.3% of the expenses for food and drinks of a person; this is an average for all types of families. Analyzing each type of family separately we can notice that the highest expenses for this food category is registered by the employee families, professionals, unemployed and pensioners. It can be noticed that the bread and the bakery products represent almost 19% of the total expenses used for buying food and alcoholic drinks. This percentage is 24% for the families of unemployed and farmers, but also in the case of the families from the rural environment.

*Table 2*

The annual average consumption per inhabitant, in Romania, for cereals and cereal products, in the period 1990 - 2005

	UoM	1990	1995	2000	2005	2005/2000 +/-
Cereals and cereal products						
- beans equivalent	kg	213.6	215.82	219.7	214.8	- 4.9
- flour equivalent	kg	158.5	162.4	165.8	162.6	- 3.2

Source: the annual statistics of Romania 1991-2006

Comparing the cereal and cereal products consumption in bean equivalent, it can be noticed that the consumption in 2005 was higher only by 1.2 kg compared to 1990 and in flour equivalent it was higher only by 4.1 kg. If we compare 2005 versus 2000, we can notice a decrease of 4.9 kg of bean equivalent and 3.2 kg in flour equivalent.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Normally, the economical development is followed by the improvements of the food products and services offer. This should lead to the gradual elimination of the poor diets and to the increase of the nutrition status for the entire population.

This kind of changes can occur only by introducing some successive changes in the following areas: agricultural production, food processing, distribution and marketing. The increase of the urbanism degree will have irreversible consequences for this matter, by changing the life style of the individuals – this fact does not always have positive connotations from the perspective of the food safety. The changes occurred in the employees' diet or in the diet of those having different leisure time activities in the urban area are classified under the concept of "nutrition transition" – concept that includes both the quantitative and qualitative changes of the diet. Some of these changes can be recommended from the perspective of maintaining a healthy diet (for example increasing the contribution of complex hydro-carbonates, the contribution of fibers, vegetables and fruits), other changes can have negative consequences (for example: the abuse of fat consumption, of carbohydrates, etc). Generally, the diet should evolve in time, considering the various factors influencing the food necessities of the human being and mainly considering the biological cycle. Even more, the diet change must be according to the tendencies of reducing the physical activities at the work place or during some outdoor activities. The level of incomes and of the prices, the individual believes

and the food preferences, the cultural traditions and also a series of geographical, environmental, social and economical factors are interacting in a very complex manner in order to structure the agro-alimentary patterns.

The comparison of the possible differences between the food consumption from Romania and the consumption from other countries of the world, heterogeneous from the point of view of the economical development, can be realized in two ways: quantitatively – considering the average food consumption per inhabitant and qualitatively – considering the daily average consumption expressed in calories and other nutritional values.

So, for the cereals category, the annual average consumption per inhabitant in Romania is 209.87 kg/inhabitant, while the average of the European Union countries is 114.83 kg/person and the average cereal consumption per inhabitant in the developed countries is 129.1 kg.

**Table 3**

The annual average consumption of cereals and cereal products in 2002 (kg/inhabitant)

No. crt	Country	Annual average consumption of cereals and cereal products kg/inhabitant	
1	Romania	209.87	100%
2	Estonia	123.37	58.7%
3	Malta	179.21	85.4%
4	Lithuania	160.23	76.3%
5	Poland	154.03	73.4%
6	Slovakia	127.02	60.5%
7	Hungary	122.27	58.2%
8	Cyprus	98.91	47.1%
9	Check Republic	123	58.6%
10	Bulgaria	151.47	72.1%

Source: information from din FAO Statistical Databases Online, 2001-2003

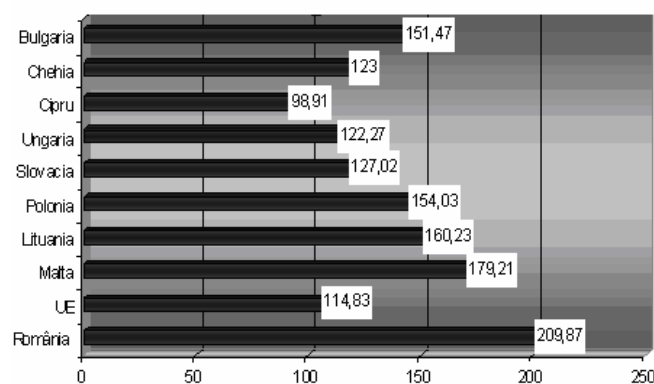
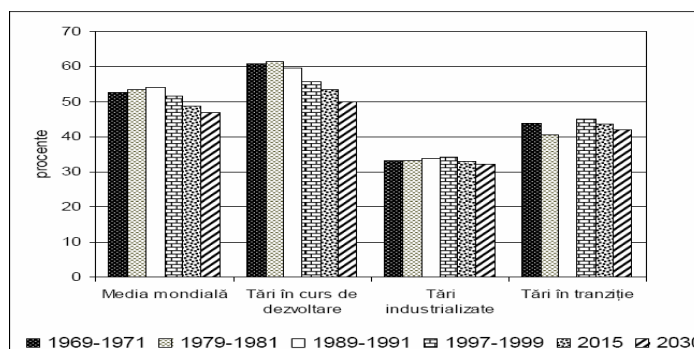


Figure 1 The annual average consumption of cereals and cereal products in 2002 (kg/inhabitant)

The FAO studies regarding the cereal consumption emphasize that, at international level, the percentage of the nutritional contribution of cereal consumption compared to the total food consumption is relatively constant – 50% - in the period 1969 – 2005. Considering the international average, it decreased a little after 1991, mainly as a result of the evolutions from the developed countries. Even if there are traditional differences, regarding this chapter, between the industrialized countries (where the nutritional contribution of cereal consumption was constantly around 30%) and the developing countries (the percentage was 55 – 60%), they tend to remain at the same level and to diminish.



Source: FAO, 2003, Diet, Nutrition and the Prevention of Chronic Diseases: report of a joint WHO/FAO expert consultation (website, 2003)

Figure 2. The percentage of the energetic contribution derived from the cereal consumption in the food diet

## CONCLUSIONS

At the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as a result of the development of the food industry and services, there was a change in the consumption pattern which consisted in changing the food diet based on cereals, vegetables and fruits with a diet based on fats and sugars obtained in the half cooked products industry and in the fast food restaurants. We can notice, in the developed countries, a second nutritional transition, from the diet based on fats and sugar products to a diet based on natural products, cereals, vegetables, fruits and dairy products.<sup>1</sup>

The statistic information show that there are some differences between Romania and the European countries, these differences are sometimes minor and show that, despite the low purchasing power of the Romanian people, the food consumption is almost at the same parameters as the European Union countries.

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