

Awareness and Level of Adaptation to Climate Change among Farmers in Romania. Social Empirical Study of Small Farmers in Northeast Romania

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(Master-Thesis, 2016, Fol. 650,443)**

The agricultural sector is vulnerable to climate change impacts, hence, to sustain global food security prompt farmers' adaptation is necessary. Small-scale farming is the most prevalent farming system in the Northeast region of Romania, securing livelihood of nearly half of the population and having a significant role for natural and cultural heritage. The region has been affected in past few years by prolonged periods of droughts and production losses that in combination with the problematic socio-economic situation decrease the subsistence of rural communities. Yet, the information on the level of awareness and adaptation to climate change is missing. To address this gap, the descriptive research design was used to determine the distribution of awareness among small farmers and investigate the adaptation strategies in use. Furthermore, the main barriers to adaptation with possible solutions were examined. The data was acquired by the methods of the qualitative approach, the study of literature, the direct observation with informal interviews, and semi-structured interviews. In total, 20 farmers from five rural sites of Botosani County were interviewed on the basis of purposive sampling, with the outcome of 7 farmers being fully aware of impacts on their production. Television and radio proved to be the tool of awareness raising since any other form of providing education to farmers is missing. Clear link to the age was found, as generation older than 63 was not familiar with the term, due to the traditional way of living. The adaptation to climate change was confirmed by 2 farmers, who depend for their livelihood entirely on the farming and possess a full level of awareness. Both have tried the strategy of diversification of production and one mentioned the shift of growing period. The main barrier to adaptation is considered by 11 farmers the insufficient infrastructure, 8 farmers are concerned about water availability and economic migration. The most prevailing solution of the problem, according to 9 farmers would be the improvement of the function of the government. Thus, the national government should implement efficient policies and programs that would raise awareness of small farmers and, at least, support creation of extension services with the aim to increase the local knowledge.

Keywords: small-scale agriculture, climate change, awareness, adaptation, Romania

Geprüft durch Jun.-Prof. Dr. Andrea Knierim