

HEMP – TRADITION, PRESENT, AND PERSPECTIVES IN ROMANIA

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Abstract

Hemp is part of a structure of agricultural cultures known on Romanian territory since times immemorial (N. Ceapoiu, 1958)

Besides the fields of use – fabrics, clothes, oil, medicine – hemp has always been a basic element in various folk crafts: weaving, all sorts of clothes, tools for processing hemp (weaving looms, distaff and spinning, warping, and weaving equipment). Hemp has created along the centuries the ground for traditions in some regions of the country (group work, spinning, warping, and weaving loom installing) (V. Butura, 1978).

Until 1991, hemp used to be one of the most important technical plants in Romania, as it was cultivated on 40,000-48,000 ha. This ranged Romania 2nd after the Soviet Union.

Hemp produced in Romania has been processed (rotting, fiber extraction, primary and secondary processing into fine or coarse fiber) both under the form of fabrics and of boon (wood from fiber extraction) into agglomerated plates used in furniture and in building.

Until 1992, there were about 40 hemp-processing units in Romania, of which 30 rotting units.

Romania also had the largest hemp-processing unit in the world (the Sânnicolaul Mare Unit). Part of the products (over 40,000 t of fiber per year) was exported.

Dioic and monoic hemp cultivars have been created in Romania: ...

In Romania there are two centres for improving hemp: S.C.D.A. Lovrin (County of Timiș) in the western part of the country, where they improve and produce dioic hemp seed, and S.C.D.A. Secuieni (County of Neamț) in the eastern part of the country, where they improve and produce monoic hemp seed (...).

After 1990, hemp, as well as other technical plants, has collapsed. From over 40,000 ha cultivated with hemp in 1990, it went down to about 1,000 ha in 2002, cultivated in the western part of the country and in northern Moldavia. In these areas there still are some working hemp rotting units (...).

The cultivated hemp cultivars have been created in Romania (...). They all have a great stem-producing capacity (over 10 t/ha) with a high fiber content (28-31%) and seed (600-1,100 kg/ha). All cultivated cultivars have a THC content below 0.2%.

Bearing in mind the increase of the demand for natural fabrics (clothing), the diversifying of use fields (automobiles, cellulose and paper, agglomerate plates and other building materials), hemp is coming back both in Romania and in other countries.

As a soil-amending plant, hemp shouldn't be excluded from any biological agricultural system.

Also bearing in mind the development of agri-tourism and of rural space, hemp is the one that can contribute to the re-launching of crafts, traditions and high-value natural products. Hemp and flax fiber can become essentials in the revival of some clothing models and high-value fabrics.

In Romania, there are extremely favourable pedo-climatic conditions for the hemp to thrive. It can be cultivated with good results on about 100,000-150,000 ha and its stems can give over 10 t/ha. It all depends on the financial and supports resources repealed by the government and by the E.C. and concerning particular technical value crops.