INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK OF THE
SEUROP CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM IN ROMANIA

SAVESCU Roxana Florenta[1]

Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to present the institutional framework developed by Romania in the process to implement the European Union legislation in the field of animal classification. It describes the organizations involved in the system, outlining their responsibilities related to various aspects of the sector. The results of the research are useful for other European Union candidate countries in their integration effort.

Keywords: institutional framework, SEUROP, classification system

JEL classification: Q00, Q02, O13

1. Introduction

In March 2006, Romania introduced the European Union (EU) system of grading carcasses (SEUROP) with the final purpose to determine animal breeders to grow animals that meet the growing consumers' preferences for high content lean meat. Nowadays, all Romanian slaughterhouses are required to weight the animal carcasses, to divide them into quality classes according to their estimated lean-meat content and to adequacy remunerate the producers.

The aim of this paper is to describe the institutional framework developed by Romania in order to implement the SEUROP classification system imposed by EU legislation.

The research methodology consisted in:

---

[1] *Lecturer, PhD, Department of Industrial Engineering and Management, roxana.savescu@ulbsibiu.ro*

- reviewing the normative acts regulating carcass classification activity and
- discussions held with the representatives of different stakeholders that operate on the Romanian classification market.

2. Institutional Framework of SEUROP Classification System

2.1. Carcass Classification Commission

Carcass Classification Commission (CCC) is a non-governmental organization of public interest that manages the classification system in Romania. It was set up under Government Decision No 267/2004 and its status was approved through the Order of the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development No 259/2004. Currently, CCC has 25 members, as follows: representatives of the swine, cattle and sheep breeders' associations - 44%; representatives of meat-processors' professional organizations - 40%; representatives of traders - 8%; representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MADR) and other central public administration authorities - 8%. CCC's responsibilities are related to the management and implementation of the carcass classification system in Romania:

- drafting the normative acts in the field of carcass classification, setting the reference level and developing grid prices, organizing training programs for classifiers, presentation in front of the MARD of the list of classifiers and classification agencies that meet the requirements for certification / authorization and the list with proposals for withdrawal or suspension of the classification certificate / authorization;
- processing the technical and market information related to classification activity: CCC centralizes in a national database all information from weekly reports received from classification agencies and independent classifiers; the reports generated from this database are sent to MADR and displayed on CCC website and are useful in monitoring the classification system and ensuring the market transparency;
- ensuring the correct application of the regulations in force: CCC appoints experts that either randomly or on demand check accuracy of the classification data and participate in resolving disputes that arise in classification sector;

- developing relationships of cooperation with various stakeholders: CCC represents Romania at national and international meetings on topics related to carcass classification, keeps contact with different educational institutions, professional organizations, equipment suppliers etc.

CCC's operational activities are carried out in three working groups (swine, cattle and sheep) which consist of specialists in various fields, which may not be members of the CCC (e.g. representatives of Classifiers Association, Sanitary Veterinary Directorate etc). CCC's activity is mainly financed from the percentage quota paid by independent classifiers and classification agencies (currently this rate is set at 8% from the income coming from classification activity; the rate has been gradually decreased from the level of 15% set initially). In addition to this quota, other sources of funding are: contributions and membership fees; selling various publications and other technical documents; grants, sponsorships etc; various forms of recovery of assets (dividends, rents, interest, etc.); rates and fees for the performance of different services (studies, surveys etc) employed on a contractual basis; in kind contributions; etc.

2.2. Classification Agencies and Independent Classifiers

Classification agencies (private organizations with legal personality) and independent classifiers (private organizations without legal personality) conduct carcass classification activities under a service-contract concluded with slaughtering units. They must also assume a commitment to neutrality towards all sectors involved in the system: animal breeders, meat processors and meat traders. In order to be able to provide classification services, the classification agencies must be authorized by CCC, must have as employees - certified classifiers and must have access to the special equipment necessary for the activity. Unlike classification agencies, independent classifiers are not allowed to have other employees, except as the entrepreneur himself who is actually a certified classifier authorized to perform commercial activities. The prices the slaughterhouses pay for classification services are established through negotiation between the parties and must be communicated to CCC. A certain percentage (8%) of the classification tariff must be paid by classification agencies and independent classifiers to CCC in order to cover its operating expenses.

The activity of the classification agencies and independent classifiers is regularly monitored by carcass classification inspectors and by the representatives of CCC. In Romania, part of the classification agencies and independent classifiers are associated in the Classification Association. Its purpose is to promote the interests and rights of its members.

3. Certified Classifiers

In slaughterhouses, the classification activity, as defined in the legislation (MADR Order No 548/2004): "… the operation of identification and sorting the carcasses from the same species of animal, taking into account their specificities (percentage of lean meat in the carcass, fat coverage, carcass conformation)", is performed by certified classifiers. They are either employees of a classification agency or they work as individual entrepreneurs – independent classifiers. In particular, the work of a classifier requires daily control of the devices that perform the classification operation, the animal carcasses grading, marking the carcasses, recording the results of the classification, generating the classification report and the transmission of the classification data to CCC every week. They way these activities must be carried out and the classifiers' professional obligations are regulated by law.

To be able to practice as a classifier, a person must have graduated at least the high-school and must hold a classification certificate issued by CCC on completion of a training program. Each 2 years, the classifiers must attend a refreshment course completed with a test. In case someone does not pass this test, the certificate is not renewed.

4. Technical Inspection in Animal Sector - Carcass Classification

Inspection for carcass classification system was established under Government Decision No 1829/2005. Currently, this activity is performed by 10 area inspectors, each of them covering an area of 3-5 counties. The inspectors' offices are located in the County Directorate for Agriculture. Technically, they are subordinated to the Chief Inspector of Technical Inspection Service in Animal Sector - Carcass Classification, within MARD. The zonal inspectors are people with higher education in the field of zootechny who graduated a specialized training course for classification activity. All inspectors must be appointed by order of MARD and their attributes cover all areas of classification (pigs, cattle and sheep).

The main task of inspection service is checking of the correct application of the classification system in all its stages, in accordance with the stipulations of the law. The inspector is required to randomly conduct minimum two unannounced checking / quarter / slaughter / species and one unannounced checking / quarter / independent classifier or classification agency, within the assigned inspection area. If there is a complaint in an area, the solution is done by an inspector coming from another area. During one control, the inspector should be checked at least 40 randomly selected carcasses or as many carcasses as they exist at the time of inspection. If the abattoir slaughtered more than 50,000 cases / year, the inspector is required to verify at least 100 carcasses. In case the control was made on request, the results should be communicated to all stakeholders.

The main aspects that are sanctioned during the inspection refer to: failure of performing the carcass classification activity according to technical norms in force; performing the classification activity by persons other than certified classifiers; non-paying by classification agencies and independent classifiers of the monthly compulsory quota to CCC; lack of displaying the pricing grid by the slaughterhouses; failing to submit weekly classification results to CCC; inappropriate carcass grading; equipment non-functioning to the corresponding parameters; failure to register the classification results; not issuing the classification report for the animal owner and the slaughterhouse; not maintaining the archive of classification reports, as stipulated by law; preventing inspection activity etc.

5. Slaughterhouses (abbatoires)

Slaughterhouses are involved in the classification system both as beneficiaries of the results and as participants with an active role in the classification activity itself. Slaughterhouses involvement is limited to i/ creating the conditions for performing the classification activity in accordance with the rules stipulated in the regulation and ii/ making subsequent payment to the supplier of animals, in accordance with classification results.

In this regard, the technical classification norms stipulate the following main obligations for the slaughterhouses: to display the pricing grid at the gate of the abattoir; to weigh individual carcasses and to ensure that they are presented in standard as required by law. The abattoirs that slaughtered more than 200 pigs / week in the previous year must use homologated equipment in the classification activity. All required documents must be made

available so that the classifier has access to the information needed for the report (information about the supplier / producer, carcass weight, negotiated prices etc). The classification report must be handed to the supplier and the payment for the animals must be performed based on the value determined by the classifier and registered in the classification report.

3. Conclusions

Developing a proper institutional framework was seen as a precondition for the successful implementation of SEUROP system in Romania. Over the time, it passed through different phases that were imposed by changes into the economical environment. The most important thing about the actors of the institutional framework is that they need to have clear definitions of their roles and responsibilities and to work transparently and in dialogue with each other. Weather the current system fulfils these requirements, it is hardly to say at this moment and requires further investigation.

4. References

- Guvernul României (2004), Hotărârea de Guvern Nr. 267 privind instituirea Sistemului de clasificare a carcaselor de porcine, bovine şi ovine, *Monitorul Oficial Nr. 228 din 16.03.2004*
- Guvernul României (2005), Hotărârea de Guvern Nr. 1829 **pentru modificarea şi completarea Hotărârii Guvernului Nr. 267/2004 privind instituirea Sistemului de clasificare a carcaselor de porcine, bovine şi ovine**, *Monitorul Oficial Nr. 11 din 05.01.2006*
- Ministerul Agriculturii, Pădurilor şi Dezvoltării Rurale (2004), Ordinul Nr. 259 pentru aprobarea Statutului Comisiei de Clasificare a Carcaselor de porcine, bovine şi ovine, *Monitorul Oficial Nr. 379 din 29.04.2004*
- Ministerul Agriculturii, Pădurilor şi Dezvoltării Rurale (2004), Ordinul Nr. 548 pentru aprobarea Regulamentului privind regimul atestatelor de clasificator şi al autorizaţiilor de clasificare, *Monitorul Oficial Nr. 752 din 18.08.2004*
- Ministerul Agriculturii şi Dezvoltării Rurale (2014), Ordinul Nr. 839 pentru aprobarea Normelor tehnice de clasificare a carcaselor de porc, *Monitorul Oficial Nr. 394 din 28.05.2014*

- Ministerul Agriculturii şi Dezvoltării Rurale (2014), Ordinul Nr. 1972 privind modificarea anexei la Ordinul Nr. 839/2014 pentru aprobarea Normelor tehnice de clasificare a carcaselor de porci, *Monitorul Oficial Nr. 15 din 8.01.2015*
- Savescu, R., Institutional Problems of Pig Carcass Classification Sector in Romania, *Journal Scientific Papers Series Management, Economic Engineering in Agriculture and Rural Development*, Vol.15(1)/2015, ISSN 2284-7995, E-ISSN 2285-3952, p. 455-458