Chapter 46
Analysis of Serbian Production and Export of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants

Svetlana Ignjatijević
University of Business Academy in Novi Sad, Serbia

Drago Cvijanović
University of Kragujevac, Serbia

ABSTRACT

The emphasis of the research in this chapter was put on the analysis of production and export/import of MAP (Medical and aromatic plants) from Serbia. After reading this chapter, readers will find out that the production of MAP in a long time period has been steady, although has been present fluctuations per years. They will know that indigenous and cultivated MAPs are equally present on the market, and will notice that they are equally present in export as well, i.e. that there is no such register. They will be familiar with the positive effects of planned production and the significance of scientific and technological achievements implementation. Readers will be able to recognize the dynamics of changes in export and import of MAP. They will find out which products are the most significant in export and import and will notice the connection between the export structure of MAP sector and earned value - foreign exchange inflow. They will be able to understand the character of exchange, value of export/import and the comparative advantage of export. Readers will be especially familiar with experiences and recommendations of other authors on the development of MAP sector and directives of authors for deepening the research within this chapter. They will know the connection between a low foreign exchange inflow and types of products in export and will understand the need for new organization models and education of manufacturers.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-3546-5.ch046

INTRODUCTION

Thanks to its geographic position and climate, rich tradition in cultivation of medicinal and aromatic plants, Serbia has rich phytocenoses and the diversity of plant species. The region of Vojvodina, in the vicinity of Hungarian border, is one of the most productive in the Balkans, but unfortunately the potentials in Vojvodina and Serbia have not been sufficiently used. Although Vojvodina and entire Serbia were significant manufacturers of medicinal and aromatic plants, and have successfully competed with leading world exporters, nowadays it has been noticeable the reduction of plant species. In the past, Serbia had imported significant amounts of medicinal and aromatic plants, which grown in our meadows or cultivated successfully. Serbia has also imported significant amounts of essential oils and distillates, while at the same time raw materials have exported from Serbia. Statistical data shows that Serbia nowadays imports the significant amounts of medicinal and aromatic plants and extracts, although export is more significant than import. If it is well known that flora of Serbia comprises over 700 species of medicinal plants, while officially was registered 420 species of medicinal plants researched until now, there could be noticed the increased needs for these plants research, as a commercial commodity. As the Serbian market is unstable and dependable on impact of political, economic and social changes, it is hard to speak on reliable indicators for collecting medicinal plants. Some of medicinal plants still grow on areas as they were grown over 15 years ago, and some medicinal plants lost their previous significance. For example, chamomile and linden from Vojvodina are of best quality and all manufactured quantities can easily sell. The second group of medicinal plants makes juniper and wormwood - plants with strong physiological effect, and there are also important yarrow, primrose, Saint John's wort, etc. The problem which pickers meet is a price on international market, as well as a quantity. The second problem that should be pointed out is insufficiently developed key and synthetic chemical industry, so the potential of raw material from this point of view has also been unused.

Contemporary life, accelerated industrialization, technological development, new insights and achievements in the field of chemistry, pharmacology and medicine cannot be imagined without medicinal plants. People wonder about the skills of centuries-old treatments return to nature and natural raw materials, i.e. medicinal plants. In pharmacopoeia of Sweden, Germany, Denmark etc. there are more drugs than in Serbia and they import significant amounts of medicinal and aromatic plants (Ignjatijević, 2010). The medicinal plants are a part of Serbian plants potential and raw material of the industrial sector. Drugs or medicinal plants (organic or inorganic origin) use today both in folk and school medicine. Of the organic medicinal raw material, today mostly use herbal drugs and sources of A and D vitamins – drugs of animal origin. Naturally, the medicinal raw material of mineral origin also uses and those are: salt, clay, algae, bromine, iodine, etc.

Through the introduction, the authors of this chapter were introduced readers with the fact that Serbia and the region of AP Vojvodina were the carriers of export in the previous period, but also the fact was that they have lost a leading position in the region and the production hasn't been significantly increased in last 15 years. Other authors' research was presented, their conclusions and especially recommendations for the improvement of MAP sector. Special contribution of this chapter is the presentation of one more field of agri-foodsector of Serbia to readers. As Serbia is prevalently a rural country, the development of beekeeping (discussed in the last chapter) or MAP production, the organic-oriented production, can be i.e. should be a profitable activity. In the text below the authors tried to recapitulate all sources and suggestions of measures for the improvement of MAP sector. There was pointed out to issues that were