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## ANALYSIS AND IMPACT OF APIA ACTIVITY ON DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT OF AGRICULTURAL SECTOR IN ROMANIA

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**Abstract.** Agriculture is a very important sector for Romania, providing food and products of vegetable and animal origin, jobs for people in villages and business opportunities for enterprises and investors. Romania's agricultural area is in permanent change, influenced by European money that was attracted through support measures and community policies, and environmental protection and the need to ensure a sustainable development of agriculture in Romania made the activity of the Agency for Payments and Intervention for Agriculture (APIA) stands out as an important factor in aligning modern agriculture with the environment. Through this study, we aim to analyze the way in which APIA promotes sustainable agricultural practices and provides support to farmers to protect the environment and whether the agency's activity has brought benefits to the economic development of Romania and Neamț County. We thus demonstrate the important role that the agency has for the economy, for supporting farmers and agricultural producers in Romania, but also for the country's agricultural policy, the institution participating in the development and implementation of national agricultural policies and strategies, as well as in the process of negotiating subsidies and projects within the European Union (EU) agricultural financing system.

**Keywords:** *environment, European funds, farmers, programs, subsidies.*

**Abstract.** Agricultura este un sector foarte important pentru România, oferind alimente și produse de origine vegetală și animală, locuri de muncă pentru oamenii din sate și oportunități de afaceri pentru întreprinderi și investitori. Zona agricolă a României este într-o permanentă schimbare, influențată de banii europeni care au fost atrași prin măsuri de sprijin și politici comunitare, iar protecția mediului și nevoia de a asigura o dezvoltare durabilă a agriculturii în România au făcut ca activitatea Agenției de Plăți și Intervenție pentru Agricultură (APIA) să se remarce ca un factor important în alinierea agriculturii moderne la mediul înconjurător. Prin acest studiu ne-am propus să analizăm modul în care APIA promovează practicile agricole durabile și oferă sprijin fermierilor pentru protejarea mediului și dacă activitatea agenției a adus beneficii dezvoltării economice României și județului

Neamț. Demonstrăm astfel rolul important pe care îl are agenția pentru economie, pentru sprijinirea fermierilor și producătorilor agricoli din România, dar și pentru politica agricolă a țării, instituția participând la elaborarea și implementarea politicilor și strategiilor agricole naționale, precum și în procesul de negociere a subvențiilor și proiectelor în cadrul sistemului de finanțare a agriculturii Uniunii Europene.

**Cuvinte cheie:** *mediu, fonduri europene, fermieri, programe, subvenții.*

## 1. Introduction

The Agency for Payments and Intervention for Agriculture (APIA) was created in 2004, it is responsible for the management and implementation of the agricultural policies of the European Union in Romania since 2007, but its activity is not limited only to environmental protection, but also has a social dimension and economic importance. Sustainable rural development is supported, supporting farmers in diversifying their activities and finding new income opportunities, it fosters agri-food excellence, by providing financial support for the implementation of food quality and safety standards, it supports the conservation of biodiversity within agricultural holdings, through agri-environment and climate payment schemes, with farmers being encouraged to implement measures to conserve natural habitats and protect rare and threatened species. These actions contribute to the maintenance of an ecological balance and the preservation of biological diversity, essential for the viability and resilience of agricultural ecosystems.

The main services offered by this agency are:

- Direct payments within the EU common agricultural policy, plant and animal husbandry.
- Subsidies and European funds for agricultural projects and rural development areas, such as the modernization and expansion of farms, the consolidation of agricultural infrastructure and land development.
- Registration and updating of information on agricultural land owners, land areas and farm animals.
- Administration of the pasture control system.
- Providing technical assistance and consulting services for farmers.
- Granting certificates to facilitate obtaining bank loans.

## 2. Materials and Methods

One of the main roles of APIA is the management and distribution of European funds intended for agriculture in Romania, ensuring the correct implementation of direct payment schemes, as well as other support programs such as rural development measures, thus contributing to the support of farmers and communities agricultural, promoting investments in agricultural infrastructure, modernization of holdings and diversification of activities.

Lima and Cardenete investigated the effects of European funds on a regional economy, in a study for Andalusia from 2000-2006, and concluded that Community payments brought many benefits to the area [1]. Following their model, through the present research we aim to identify the importance of the payment agency for the economic development of Romania and the effects of European funds for the economy, by analyzing its activity at the national level and at the local level in Neamț county. To carry out the research, we analyzed the national and community legislation, as well as the official documents made available by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and by the Payments and Intervention Agency

for Agriculture. Numerous research endeavors are concentrated on investigating the elements that influence Romania's ability to utilize European Union funds, encompassing both the European and domestic perspectives [2] and on national level [3]. Economists contend that the agricultural sector serves a role beyond mere product supply and unlike numerous other commodities and services, agricultural goods possess a social dimension, accompanied by a societal demand that necessitates fulfillment [4-6]. The majority of these studies are oriented towards offering policy suggestions to enhance the absorption rate of European funds.

### 3. Results

According to official data, APIA uses the European funds - European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) and the national budget (NB) to support farmers and for the development of the agricultural sector in Romania [7]. These funds provide payments and subsidies to farmers, promote rural development, protect the environment and encourage the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices.

Although certain recipients of EAFRD benefits express concerns about the duration between submitting a funding proposal and its eventual approval, there is room to explore ways to expedite this process [8], and undoubtedly, these funds play a pivotal role in jumpstarting new enterprises, thereby actively fostering economic expansion within rural areas [9].

European funds represent a vital component in supporting Romanian agriculture and in ensuring a sustainable development of the agricultural sector in accordance with the regulations and policies established by the European Union:

- EAFRD

One of the main European funds used in Romania for agricultural payments is the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, with the objective of promoting rural development and supporting the diversification of agricultural activities, and implementing programs and measures aimed at modernizing and protecting the environment, as well as promoting the quality of agricultural products.

- EAGF

Romania also uses the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund to ensure financial support in the agricultural sector, a fund intended to support agricultural production and ensure the stability of the agricultural market in the European Union, and through this fund, APIA grants direct payments to farmers and finances specific programs, including market measures and agricultural insurance.

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) of the European Union represents the main financing framework for the agricultural sector in Romania and other member states, APIA playing a crucial role in the implementation of the CAP, ensuring the efficient distribution and management of European funds to the beneficiaries in the agricultural sector.

We will continue to follow the procedure for receiving applications for the granting of European funds through APIA. Applications are accepted annually from March 1st to May 15th via the Land and Parcel Identification System (LPIS). This program registers all applications submitted by farmers and economic agents, replacing manual registration systems. LPIS has modernized data management, computerized millions of hectares of land, supported the provision of e-services and e-mobilization, and improved the transparency and efficiency of fund utilization by beneficiaries.

In 2023, APIA implemented a simplified file submission procedure, with the aim of facilitating farmers' access to agricultural support, this new approach representing an important step towards streamlining and digitizing the application process, bringing benefits to both farmers and the institution. Having access to the institution's official data [10], we will present the procedure for submitting the file to APIA in 2023, highlighting the advantages and key stages of this change:

- in the context of digitization, farmers have the opportunity to access the online platform to start the file submission process, through a personal account, they can access all the necessary information, guides and relevant forms;
- farmers must ensure that they meet the eligibility criteria to apply for agricultural support and will prepare the necessary documents, such as identity documents, ownership or land use documents, as well as other specific documents depending on the chosen support program;
- the simplified filing procedure allows farmers to complete forms online, eliminating the need to fill out physical documents or visit APIA headquarters. These forms contain essential information about the holding, cultivated areas, animals owned and other relevant details;
- if additional documents are required, such as certificates of compliance or certificates, farmers can upload them electronically, this approach eliminates the need for physical submission of documents and reduces the time and effort involved in the application process;
- officials will carry out a check of the submitted files to ensure that they are complete and comply with the requirements of the chosen support program and if problems or ambiguities are identified, farmers will be notified and given the opportunity to correct or complete the information necessary;
- APIA will communicate the outcome of the evaluation of the files to the farmers and, if all the criteria are met, will initiate the payments. This communication will be done through the online platform, thus ensuring transparency and effective communication.

The simplified procedure for submitting the file to APIA in 2023 is a beneficial initiative for farmers, eliminating administrative barriers and reducing the time and effort required in the application process for agricultural support. Access to the platform, filling in online forms and submitting documents electronically facilitate the interaction of farmers with the institution, increasing the efficiency and transparency of the process. This approach represents an important step in the direction of modernization and adaptation to new technologies, contributing to the sustainable development and competitiveness of the agricultural sector in Romania.

The support measures implemented by APIA are:

- direct payments;
- coupled support schemes in the vegetable and animal husbandry sectors;
- market measures and promotion of agricultural products;
- environmental and climate measures;
- support for the creation of forested areas;
- support for silvoenvironment commitments;
- animal welfare measures;
- transitional national aids in the vegetable and zootechnical sector;

- state aid [11].

APIA also offers a series of support measures for the development and modernization of agriculture in Romania. These include:

- the measures contained within the National Support Program for the Wine Sector (NSPWS) to support the development of the winemaking sector in Romania and increase the quality and quantity of high-quality wines in Romania;
- subsidies for the neutralization of animal waste, which can be converted into organic fertilizer for plants;
- financial activities for the development of agricultural infrastructure and the restoration of lands affected by calamities.

APIA is an essential structure for Romanian agriculture and provides essential support for meeting the requirements and needs of the country's agricultural sector, provides important funds for Romanian agriculture and operates with professionalism and transparency.

Thus, during the 2007-2013 period, APIA achieved a 98% absorption rate of European funds relative to the annual financial allocation [7]. Although there were initial challenges, the utilization of these funds has significantly accelerated in recent years and Romania has effectively supplied the required public co-financing [12]. As can be seen in Table 1, the amounts absorbed by Romania have increased every year since 2007, even if the number of holdings has decreased.

Table 1

**Funds spent, euros and number of farmers submitted APIA 2007-2016**

Campaign	Total funds spent, euro	Number of farmers who submitted an application
Campaign 2007	749,126,908	1,241,934
Campaign 2008	1,057,324,142	1,130,404
Campaign 2009	1,182,866,854	1,122,046
Campaign 2010	1,404,305,740	1,093,167
Campaign 2011	1,523,890,364	1,088,809
Campaign 2012	1,716,175,762	1,079,899
Campaign 2013	1,808,696,364	1,048,728
Campaign 2014	1,911,776,088	1,027,874
Campaign 2015	2,088,057,161	944,076
Campaign 2016	Not available	901,268

**Note:** Source: developed by the authors based on [13].

Table 2

**Funds spent, lei and number of farmers submitted APIA 2017-2022**

Campaign	Funds spent, lei	Number of farmers who submitted an application
2017	14,903,674,170.79	884397
2018	13,988,795,361	866749
2019	14,835,611,096	846619
2020	16,559,771,685.77	830898
2021	15,599,905,275	815286
2022	Not available	790000

**Note:** Source: compiled by the authors based on APIA activity reports.

The significant evolution of the fund spent by APIA between 2007 and 2021, from 749,126,908 euros to 3,157,875,561 euros, indicates a substantial increase in the support given to Romanian agriculture and this increase could be interpreted as a positive sign of the government's commitment to the agricultural sector and the recognition of its importance to the economy.

According to official APIA data, in 2022 there were 36,417 young farmers registered, the amount for the 2022 campaign was 48.1398 euros/hectare, and the total amount authorized in the calendar year 2022 was 16,391,715.91 euros [14]. According to the data in Table 2, the total number of farmers who applied to APIA in 2022 was 790000, the number of young people representing 4.6%, which means a low percentage and additional measures should be taken to attract them to the agricultural sector.

Next, we will analyse APIA's activity in Neamț county in Romania and whether it brings benefits to the rural area.

To assess whether this activity is beneficial for the rural area, we outlined several aspects:

- 1) The agency's objectives are outlined in the European Union Common Agricultural Policy, with APIA Neamț implementing all the measures regulated by the specific legislation aimed at supporting farmers and rural development. These measures include direct payments to farmers, subsidies for young farmers, investments in agricultural infrastructure, and environmental protection schemes.
- 2) The economic impact of APIA's activity in Neamț County results from the allocation of sums of money through direct payments to farmers and support for investments in agricultural infrastructure that have a positive effect on the local economy, by stimulating the growth of agriculture, generating jobs and developing rural businesses.

In 2007, APIA Neamț County Centre received an impressive number of 34,810 applications for agricultural support. This reflects the importance given by the farmers in the area and their trust in the institution. According to the data in Table 3, in 2023, the number of submitted applications decreased significantly to 10,295, but the requested area for payment remained constant, which means that the amounts attracted increased.

Table 3

**Number of farmers submitted APIA Neamț 2007 and 2023**

Campaign	Number of farmers who submitted an application
2007	34810
2023	10295

Source: compiled by the authors according to APIA activity reports 2007 and 2023.

According to official data, in 2020, Neamț County Center APIA made payments to beneficiaries in the total amount of 40,342,661.95 euros [15], an important amount that reached the users of agricultural land and animal breeders.

Table 4 shows the amounts granted by APIA Neamț in 2020, by payment schemes, direct payments and payments for agricultural practices beneficial to the climate and environment having the highest amounts.

Table 4

**The situation of the amounts authorized for payment in 2020 on payment schemes,  
APIA Neamț**

Scheme	Total	
	Lei	Euro
ANC_SEMN	3,831.37	801.06
ANC_SPEC	2,145.18	448.51
ANC_ZM	17,583,231.78	3,676,198.29
M10_P1	11,287,820.43	2,359,991.57
M10_P1.2.1	1,405,188.67	293,788.00
M10_P1.2.2	348,285.63	72,818.97
M10_P3.1.1	614,517.34	128,479.67
M10_P3.1.2	390,837.79	81,713.99
M10_P3.2.1	34,967.65	7,310.83
M10_P4	482,377.42	100,852.48
M10_P7	4,783.01	1,000.00
M10_P8_S	76,169.29	15,925.00
M11_S1_P1	1,131,590.66	236,585.81
M11_S1_P2	789.20	165.00
M11_S1_P3	363,417.10	75,981.00
M11_S1_P4	456.29	95.40
M11_S1_P5	785.61	164.25
M11_S1_P6.1	476,719.68	99,669.58
M11_S1_P6.2	833.82	174.33
M11_S2_P1	590,258.65	123,407.65
M11_S2_P2	5,875.20	1,228.36
M11_S2_P3	201,134.04	42,051.91
M11_S2_P4	549.85	114.96
M11_S2_P5	6,294.42	1,316.00
M11_S2_P6.1	175,927.23	36,781.77
M11_S2_P6.2	41,305.53	8,635.90
PPABCM	49,011,293.94	10,058,752.15
PR1	1,385,218.29	284,375.16
PR2	8,149,381.19	1,672,523.27
PTF	1,378,378.47	282,889.44
SAPS	83,922,112.05	17,223,624.55
SCZ_C	97,716.64	20,054.72
SCZ_O	4,109,857.27	843,480.05
SCZ_TC	1,116,010.79	229,042.76
SCZ_VL	11,509,916.98	2,362,219.56
<b>Total</b>	<b>195,909,978.46</b>	<b>40,342,661.95</b>

**Note:** ANC\_SEMN – support for areas affected by significant natural constraints; ANC\_SPEC – support for areas affected by specific natural constraints; ANC\_ZM – support for areas affected by natural constraints - mountain area; M10\_P1 – measure 10, package 1, high nature value meadows; M10\_P1.2.1 – measure 10, package 1.2.1; M10\_P1.2.2 – measure 10, package 1.2.2; M10\_P3.1.1 – measure 10, package 3.1.1, important grasslands for birds; M10\_P3.1.2 – measure 10, package 3.1.2; M10\_P3.2.1 – measure 10, package 3.2.1; M10\_P4 – measure 10, package 4, green crops; M10\_P7 – measure 10, package 7, arable land important as feeding grounds for the red-necked goose; M10\_P8\_S – measure 10, package 8, rearing farm animals of local breeds at risk of abandonment; M11\_S1\_P1 – sub-measure 11.1 – support for conversion to organic farming methods, package

1; M11\_S1\_P2 – sub-measure 11.1 – support for conversion to organic farming methods, package 2; M11\_S1\_P3 – sub-measure 11.1 – support for conversion to organic farming methods, package 3; M11\_S1\_P4 – sub-measure 11.1 – support for conversion to organic farming methods, package 4; M11\_S1\_P5 – sub-measure 11.1 – support for conversion to organic farming methods, package 5; M11\_S1\_P6.1 – sub-measure 11.1 – support for conversion to organic farming methods, package 6.1; M11\_S1\_P6.2 – sub-measure 11.1 – support for conversion to organic farming methods, package 6.2; M11\_S2\_P1 - submeasure 11.2 – support for maintaining organic farming practices, package 1; M11\_S2\_P2 - submeasure 11.2 – support for maintaining organic farming practices, package 2; M11\_S2\_P3 - submeasure 11.2 – support for maintaining organic farming practices, package 3; M11\_S2\_P4 - submeasure 11.2 – support for maintaining organic farming practices, package 4; M11\_S2\_P5 - submeasure 11.2 – support for maintaining organic farming practices, package 5; M11\_S2\_P6.1 - submeasure 11.2 – support for maintaining organic farming practices, package 6.1; M11\_S2\_P6.2 - submeasure 11.2 – support for maintaining organic farming practices, package 6.2; PPABCM - payment for agricultural practices beneficial to the climate and environment; PR1 - redistributive payment 1-5 ha; PR2 - redistributive payment 5-30 ha; PTF - payment for young farmers; SAPS - single area payment scheme; SCZ\_C – goat coupled support; SCZ\_O – sheep coupled support; SCZ\_TC – coupled support taurine meat; SCZ\_VL – coupled support for dairy cows.

**Source:** developed by the authors based on [15].

Table 5 shows all payments made by APIA Neamț in 2020, payments that include, in addition to payment schemes, outstanding payments from previous years and other financial aid.

Table 5

#### Payments made in 2020 to APIA Neamț beneficiaries

	Amount, lei	Amount, euro
Total – all schemes	303,458,598.94	63,220,541.45

*Source: developed by the authors based on [15].*

The funds attracted by farmers from Neamț County have increased because the amounts granted are constantly increasing. Table 6 shows the amounts scheduled for the following years for the area payment.

Table 6

#### APIA SAPS planned amount 2023-2027

Year	Planned amount euro/ha
2023	96.47
2024	97.85
2025	99.27
2026	100.66
2027	103.06

*Source: developed by the authors based on the National Strategic Plan [16].*

- 3) By supporting young farmers, the agency contributes to the generational promotion of agriculture and maintaining life in rural areas, and by preserving traditions and the rural way of life, APIA's activity can contribute to social cohesion and the maintenance of cultural identity. The agency is a catalyst for young farmers who are starting their careers in agriculture in Europe, through initiatives and facilities tailored to their specific needs, young people are supported to embrace their passion for agriculture and realize their dreams.
- 4) Fruit and milk measures in schools also have a significant social impact, these measures encourage fruit and dairy consumption and help create healthy eating habits



for children in school institutions. APIA bridges the gap between farmers and schools through its fruit and milk distribution program. While children benefit from healthy food and nutritious snacks every day, local farmers enjoy a stable market and secure a sustainable income.

- 5) APIA implements measures that have beneficial effects on the rural environment, one of them being Measure 11 - support for ecological agriculture. Through the CAP reform, the goal was to create a European agriculture oriented toward the market and to place greater emphasis on environmental protection [17]. This reform is an important achievement towards a more modern and responsible European agriculture. Organic farming and changes in orientation demonstrate the commitment of EU member states to sustainable development and align with people's need to protect the natural environment and guarantee a prosperous future for agriculture. The amounts granted for the practice of ecological agriculture in 2022 were those in Table 7, and, according to official data, the total amount authorized in the calendar year 2022 for the entire country was 41,481,343.84 euros [14].

Table 7

<b>Amounts granted by APIA 2022 measure 11, euro/ha/year</b>		
	<b>Submeasure 11.1</b>	<b>Submeasure 11.2</b>
Arable land	293	218
Vegetables	500	431
Orchards	620	442
Vineyard	530	479

*Source: developed by the authors based on [18].*

- 6) Another important aspect of APIA's activity is the fact that the agency grants certificates for bank loans, and their granting can be considered an important step in the financial support of farmers. These certificates can serve as essential tools for farmers in obtaining bank loans necessary for the development and modernization of their agricultural businesses and can lead to the removal of financial and administrative obstacles that can prevent the development of agricultural businesses or the implementation of modernization projects. With the support and recognition of an official and specialized institution in the agricultural field, farmers can more easily obtain approvals and favorable conditions for bank loans. APIA's certification process may involve a rigorous assessment of the eligibility of beneficiaries and projects for which funding is sought, helping to ensure responsible use of funds and adequate monitoring of the progress and impact of supported agricultural projects.

Furthermore, we have aimed to discover the impact of European funds granted by APIA.

Thus, during the period 2018-2022, Neamț County experienced a significant oscillation in terms of the number of unemployed individuals, showing a general downward trend, Table 8. This phenomenon is a result of labor market dynamics, which can also be influenced by European funds allocated for the economic and social development of the county. These funds have contributed to stimulating investments in various sectors, improving infrastructure, supporting entrepreneurship, and creating job opportunities, thereby contributing to the reduction of unemployment.

Table 8

**Unemployment Numbers in Neamț County, 2018-2022**

<b>year</b>	<b>numbers</b>
2018	8153
2019	7346
2020	9034
2021	6483
2022	5495

*Source: developed by the authors based on [19, 20].*

During the period between 2016 and 2020, there was a significant increase in the number of young farmers in Romania, highlighting a possible positive influence of European funds and policies aimed at supporting young agriculture in the development of this segment of the agricultural sector (Table 9).

Table 9

**Young Farmers, Romania, 2016, 2020**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Numbers</b>
2016	41220
2020	155740

*Source: developed by the authors based on [21].*

The consistent increase in the amounts allocated by APIA for Measure 11 - organic agriculture in Romania during the period 2017-2021 reflects a strong commitment to the development and promotion of a more sustainable agricultural model. This model contributes to the conservation of biodiversity, the protection of the environment, and the provision of high-quality food products, aligning with environmental and public health objectives at both the national and European levels (Table 10).

Table 10

**Amounts Granted by APIA, Romania, Measure 11 - Organic Agriculture 2017-2021, Million Euros**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Amount</b>
2017	47,57
2018	33,87
2019	61,8
2020	80,5
2021	97,5

*Source: developed by the authors based on [22-25].*

The main conclusion based on the data from Table 11 is that, between the years 2016 and 2020, APIA significantly increased the financial support provided to young farmers in Romania. This increase reflects a strong commitment to promoting and supporting the new generation of farmers, thereby contributing to the sustainability and continuity of agriculture in the country.

The analysis of the impact of European funds granted by APIA reveals a series of significant developments in Neamț County and the agricultural sector in Romania.

Table 11

**Amounts Granted by APIA, Romania, Young farmers, Euro/ha**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Amount</b>
2016	22,87
2020	36,61

*Source: developed by the authors based on [27, 28].*

These funds have contributed to the reduction of unemployment in Neamț County, reflecting their positive influence on the local labor market. Additionally, there have been clear signs of growth in the young farmer segment, suggesting that the policy supporting young agriculture and European funds have had a beneficial effect on attracting the younger generation to farming. As for organic agriculture, the consistent and increasing allocation of funds by APIA has underscored Romania's commitment to developing a more sustainable and environmentally-friendly agricultural model.

#### **4. Discussion**

APIA is a key institution in Romania, responsible for the administration and implementation of agricultural support policies, having a significant role in supporting farmers and the agricultural sector in general and playing an essential role in ensuring a sustainable and prosperous development of Romanian agriculture. With a mission to ensure equity and efficiency in the distribution of European funds intended for agriculture, the agency makes a significant contribution to the development and modernization of the agricultural sector.

There are several possible reasons for the decrease in the number of applications for subsidies in Neamț County and in Romania in general:

- **Modernization and diversification:** In recent years, Romanian agriculture has gone through a process of modernization and diversification, with many farmers investing in advanced technologies, irrigation systems and high-performance equipment, which has reduced the need for additional support.
- **Agricultural policy changes:** Agricultural policies and support programs from the European Union and the Romanian government have changed over time, these changes influencing the way farmer's access and request European money.
- **Migration of the rural population:** The migration of the rural population to urban areas or other fields of activity is a factor that contributes to the decrease in the number of applications, with agriculture becoming less attractive for some people, and this can be reflected in the number of applications submitted.
- **Absorption of small farmers by big ones in terms of filing.** It is important to approach this issue with caution and to understand that not all situations of absorption of small farmers by large ones are negative or disadvantageous. There are cases where collaboration between small and large farmers can bring mutual benefits, such as sharing knowledge, access to advanced technologies and improving the agri-sector's outcome. However, there are possible negative consequences of the absorption of small farmers, with the risk of small farmers being marginalized or even closing their agricultural businesses due to strong competition from large farmers who have more resources and financial capacity.

## 5. Conclusions

In light of these changes, it is important that the agency and competent authorities consider the following recommendations to maintain agricultural support and stimulate farmers' interest:

- Information and education: comprehensive information and agricultural education should be constantly provided to farmers, more training sessions, seminars and informative materials to help farmers understand the new agricultural policies, eligibility criteria and benefits offered.
- Promotion of benefits: actively promoting the benefits of agricultural support programs through awareness campaigns, success stories and case studies that highlight the positive impact of support on farmers and agricultural communities.
- Supporting innovation and sustainable development: encouraging innovation and sustainable development in agriculture can be done by providing additional support or bonuses for ecological agricultural practices, adopting advanced technologies and diversifying production.
- Constant monitoring and evaluation: APIA should carry out constant monitoring and evaluation of agricultural support programs to ensure their effectiveness and relevance, feedback from farmers and analysis of results can provide valuable information for continuous improvement of programs.

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