



FETEASCA NEAGRĂ: A SUCCESSFUL ROMANIAN WINE – TRADITION AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract

Leading wine-producing countries around the world often plan their wine ranges based on specific native grape varieties. These varieties not only ensure high quality wine production, but also ensure global recognition in the countries in which they are represented through effective marketing.

Material and method

The study investigated national wine production volumes derived from Fetească neagră grapes in the PDO, PGI, and varietal categories for the period 2019–2023. This analysis aimed to explore correlations between grape production and wine output, considering changes in processing capacity and market demand.

PDO (Protected Designation of Origin): high-quality grapes used for premium wine production; PGI (Protected Geographical Indication): grapes grown in recognized geographical zones but not meeting PDO standards and Varietal: grapes identified by variety without a specific geographical designation.

Figure 3 shows the areas cultivated with the Fetească neagră variety, intended for wines of the PDO, PGI and varietal categories, compared to the total areas cultivated with the Fetească neagră variety. The areas dedicated to quality wines are generally increasing Trending from 1695.41 hectares in 2019 to 2037.94 hectares in the year 2023.

However, due to the ratio between old cleared plantations and newly established plantations, 2021 shows a slight downward trend compared to last year, this year recording only 1882.8 hectares. In the category of grapes destined for quality wines, the areas dedicated to PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) wines predominate, occupying 1773.35 hectares of the total area dedicated to quality wines at the end of 2023. And the trend of areas dedicated to PDO wines is increasing over the period examined.

The vineyards for the production of wines of the PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) and varietals categories occupy much smaller areas, in this case 232 hectares at the end of 2023 of PGI wines and 32.57 hectares at the end of the same year, in the case of wines of the Category VV. Although a growth trend is also observed in plantations for PGI and varietal wines, the growth rate is much lower compared to plantations for PDO wines.

The production of grapes of the Fetească neagră variety, intended for the production of quality wines, generally recorded an increasing trend, from 99,739 q in 2019 to 180,728 q in 2023 (Figure 4). The year 2022 was the only one of the four years analyzed; the production trend was aimed at quality wines, a decline compared to the previous year.

Most of the grapes destined for quality wines belong to the PDO category, they recorded 138904 q in 2023 out of a total of 180728 q. Compared to the grapes destined for PDO wines, the other two categories (PGI and varietal) recorded significantly lower values during the mentioned period.

The quantities of Fetească neagră grapes intended for wines in the varietal category recorded a maximum value of 22137q in 2023. Among the years mentioned, the quantities of grapes intended for wines in this category were the lowest in 2020. The quantities of grapes destined for wines of the PGI category had fluctuating values over the four years, with the maximum value recorded in 2021 - 33754 q, and the minimum value in 2019 - 11808 q.

Fetească neagră is a high-quality variety characterized by superior grape quality parameters, while at the same time being a relatively sensitive variety to climatic conditions and the technological level applied. For the reasons mentioned above, this variety is not characterized by a very high production of grapes per hectare. In terms of production volume achieved, 2023 was the year with the highest production, with the national average exceeding 8800 kg/ha (Figure 5). The opposite was the year 2019 with a national average of 5,800 kg/ha, which was also the only year in which the national average per hectare fell below 6,000 kg/ha.

Medals received by Fetească neagră wines



References

- 1. Borca, F., Nan, R.D., Nistor, E., & Dobrei, A. (2019). Effect of different phytosanitary treatment schemes on the yield and quality of some wine grape varieties.

Introduction

All major wine-producing countries have specific grape varieties that are considered symbolic, often becoming synonymous with the country's viticulture and serving as ambassadors for its wines worldwide [Spiga]. For example, when talking about France, we inevitably refer to varieties such as Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot Noir, Gamay or Chardonnay.

Results and discussions

The areas cultivated with the Fetească neagră variety in Romania have increased significantly, especially in recent years due mainly to the quality of the wines from this variety, but also to the general trend of climate warming, which has generated favorable conditions for cultivating this variety in the vast majority of wine-growing areas in Romania.

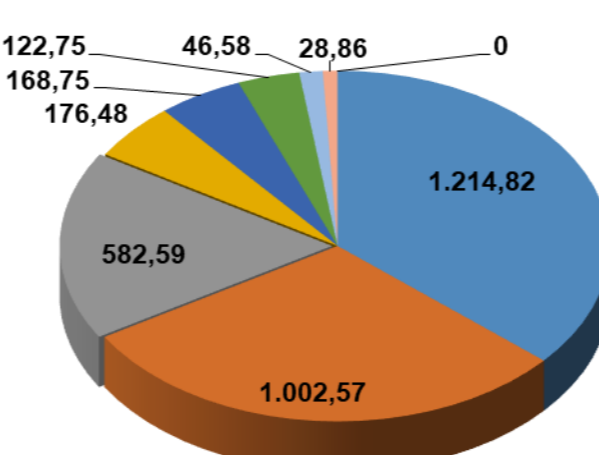


Figure 1. Total area of vineyards, cultivated with the Fetească neagră variety (hectares)

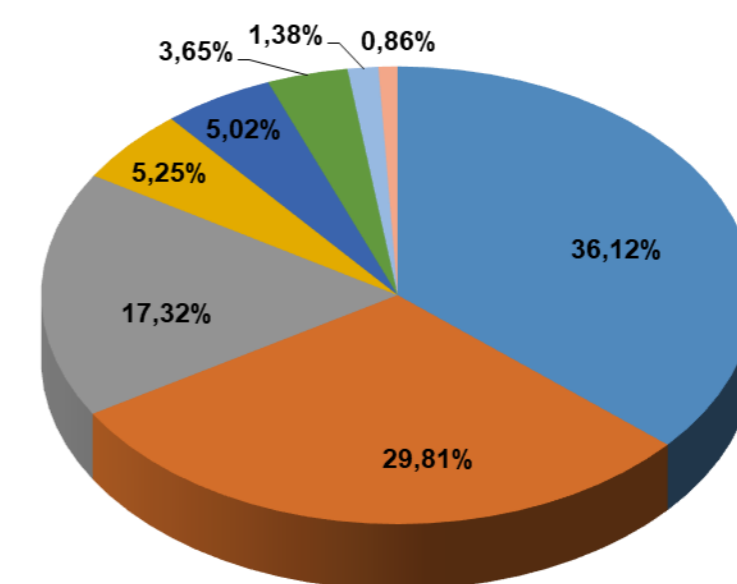


Figure 2. Total area of vineyards cultivated with the Fetească neagră variety (%)

While the Fetească neagră variety was mostly found in the vineyards of southern Moldova, Dobrogea, Oltenia, and Muntenia before the 2000, it is now present in nearly every vineyard, including those on the Transylvanian Plateau and the Maramureș region (Figure 1).

In 2022, according to the Romanian National Vine and Wine Office (ONVVPV) website, the total area under cultivation of the Fetească neagră variety in Romania was 3363 hectares. The largest areas are in the wine-growing regions of Dealurile Moldovei, Dealurile Muntenia and Oltenia and Clinele Dobrogei, and the smallest areas are in the Transylvanian Plateau and Nisipurile and other favorable areas in the south of the country.

The percentage of land planted to the Fetească neagră variety by wine-growing region is shown in Figure 2. Of the total vineyards, the share of the Fetească neagră grape variety is the highest in the Moldovan Hills wine region at over 36%, followed by the Muntenia and Oltenia hills with 29.81% and the Dobrogea hills with 17.32%.

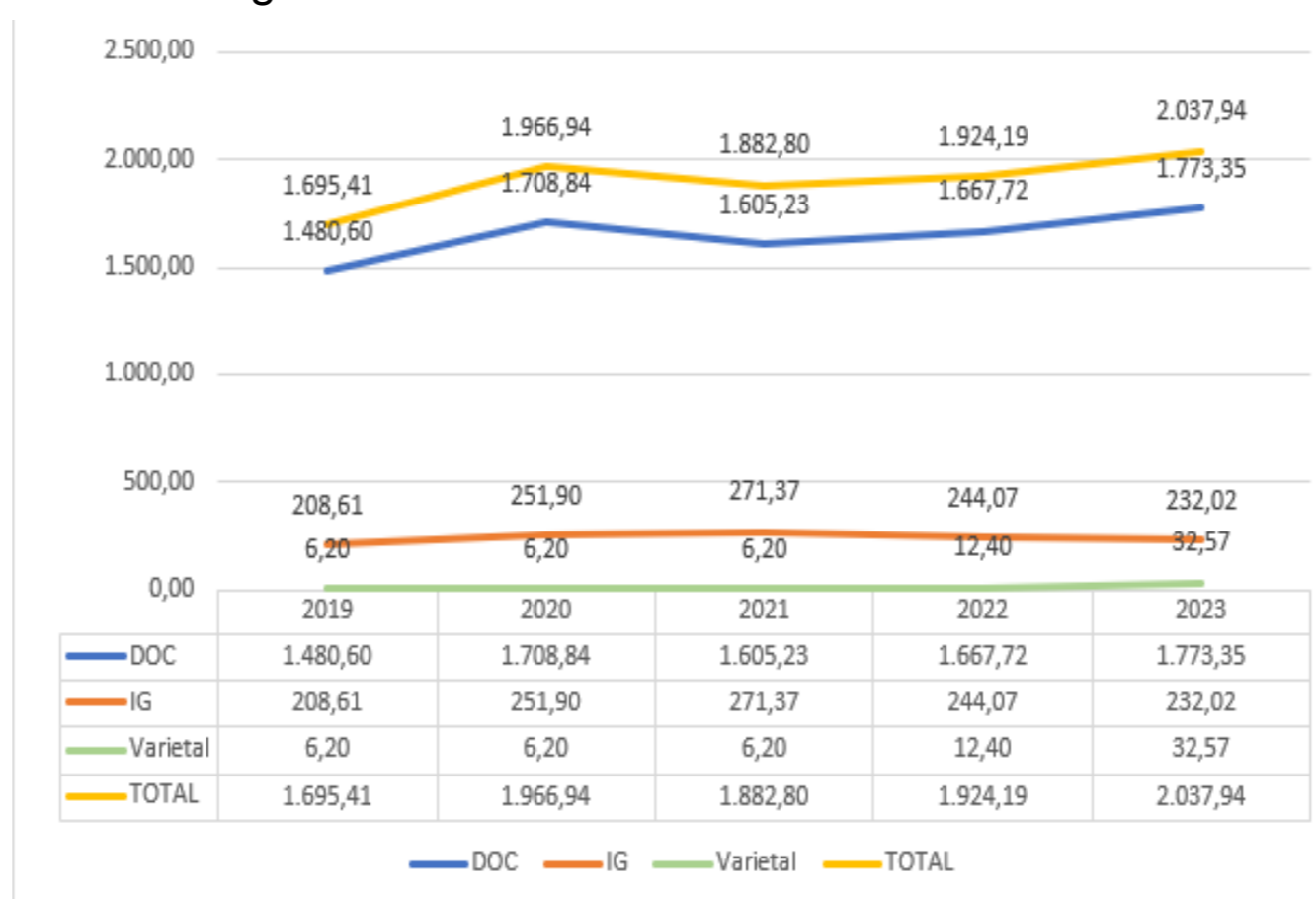


Figure 3. Planted area (hectares) with the Fetească neagră PDO(DOC) / PGI(IG)/ varietal (VV) variety

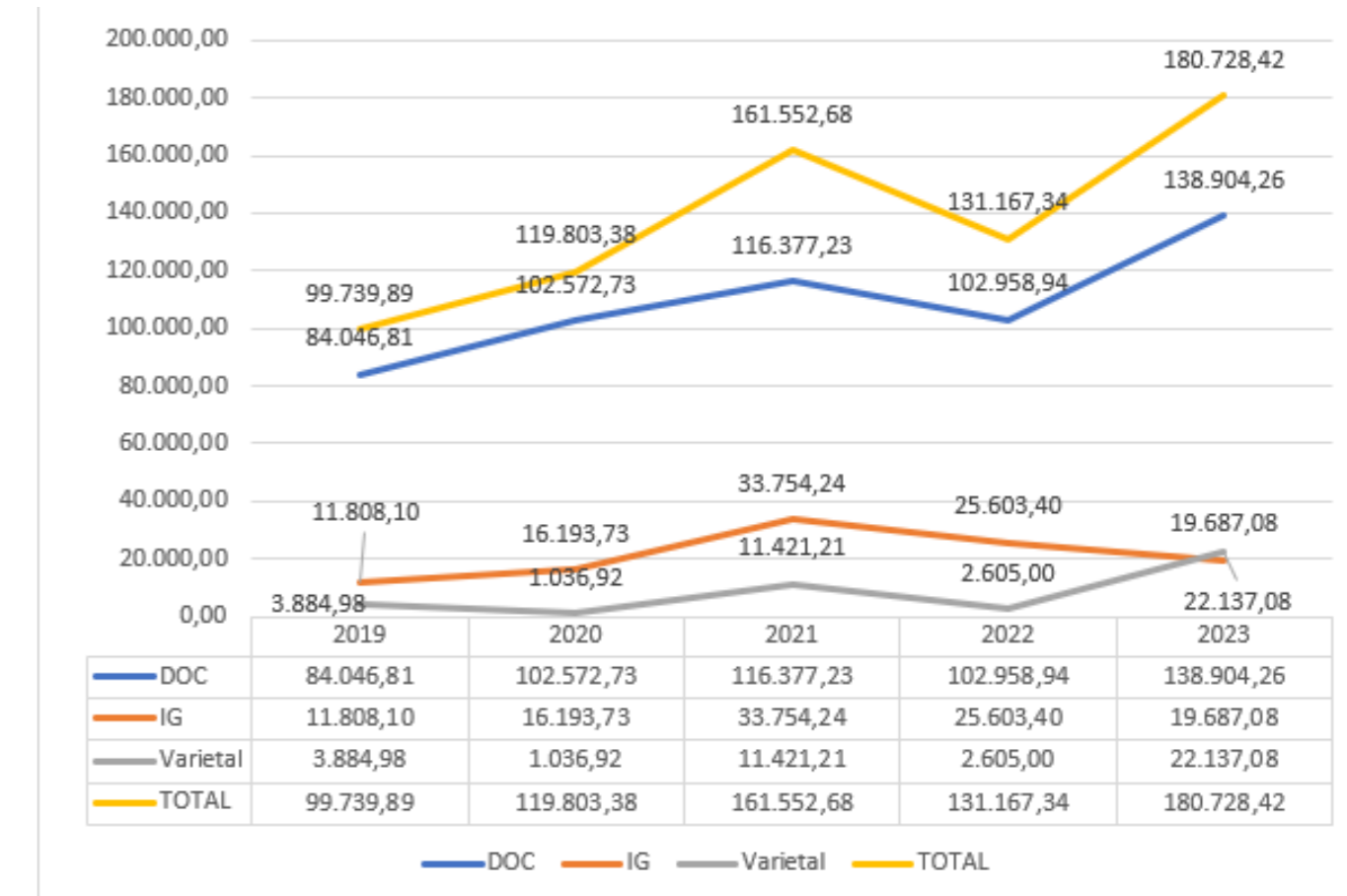


Figure 4. Grape production (q) of the Fetească neagră variety intended for the production of quality wines

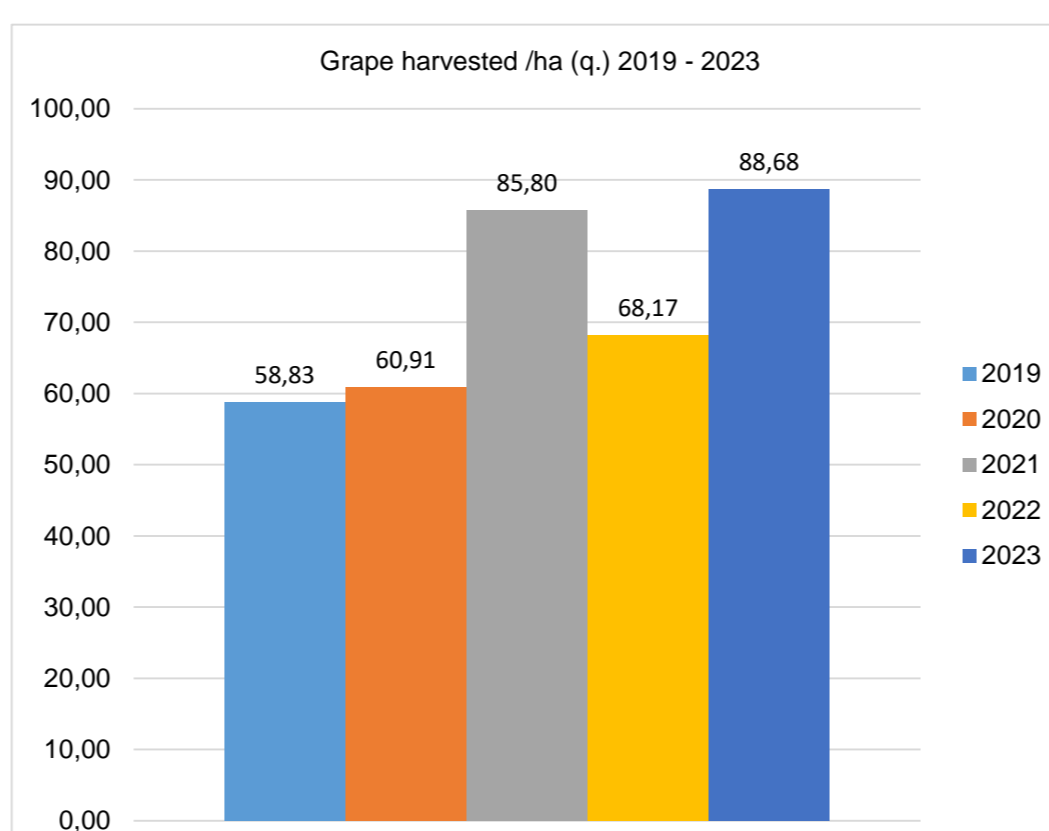


Table 1. Minimum and maximum grape production (CMD) and DOC wine yield (hl) in several wine-growing regions for the Fetească neagră variety

Table 1. Minimum and maximum grape production (CMD) and DOC wine yield (hl) in several wine-growing regions for the Fetească neagră variety (according to the Specifications Table 2. Sugar accumulation potential in Fetească neagră grapes harvested for PDO wines in force)

Table 2. Sugar accumulation potential in Fetească neagră grapes harvested for PDO wines in force

Conclusions

Just as the most famous wine-producing countries in the world have two or three very well-known varieties with which the viticulture of their respective countries is practically identified, we believe that Feteasca neagră can also become a representative variety for viticulture and winemaking in Romania due to the exceptional quality of the wines of this variety produced in recent years.

The vast majority of growers have managed to perfect and adapt the cultivation technologies according to the requirements of this variety, so that in most of the plantations, the productions obtained are more than satisfactory, balanced in quantity and quality. As a result of the new technologies of cultivation and winemaking, the quality of wines produced in Romania from the Fetească neagră grape variety is exceptional, appreciated and unanimously recognized by both consumers and specialists in the field.