

# TODAY'S CONSUMERS ON THE MARKET IN CSÍKSZEREDA (MIERCUREA CIUC)

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**Abstract:** Due to the geographical situation of Harghita County, farming mostly in small agricultural areas encourages farmers to engage in more integrated agricultural activities. As a result, more and more farmers who are open to development are starting to appear on local markets with processed products. The traditional knowledge passed down from generation to generation on small local farms is similar in families living in each area and therefore socially reinforcing. Older farmers in our countryside have mostly shied away from the new knowledge of the mega-manager, but their younger, more highly skilled counterparts are more willing to open up to new knowledge. The demand for local products with a historical basis has been gradually increasing in recent years. To save costs, they also sell their products at the market themselves. In order to meet today's consumer needs, in addition to the production, processing and packaging of raw materials, producers must also think about branding, logistics and design. Customer relations and quality communication are essential for a well-functioning business (PG Balogh et.al, 2021). In Harghita County, farmers running a traditional small-scale farm mostly face marketing problems. At the same time, the demand for high quality products produced in a sustainable way is increasing. The aim of our empirical study is to investigate the expectations of consumers visiting the Traditional Products Fair in Miercurea using artificial intelligence methods. These habits have their origins in the market habits of the past centuries, therefore, our research tries to reveal the atmosphere of the markets of the past.

**Keywords:** local markets, short supply chains, local products, small farms, data mining,  
(JEL code: Q12, Q13)

## INTRODUCTION

The role of short supply chains is manifested in the linking of agriculture, the food processing industry and the distribution sector. Bargaining inequalities within the supply chain can lead to unfair trading practices. Small farms or cooperatives, in the absence of other options, tend to establish economic links with large buyers, but these exert strong downward pressure on prices. It may happen that they can only sell their products at a loss. The European Parliament urges the Commission to bring forward proposals against unfair trade to ensure farmers' incomes and better choice. On average, farms in the EU sell more than directly to consumers. But these are mainly small farms. There are significant differences between countries: the share of farms involved in direct sales is around 25% in Greece, 19% in Slovakia, and around 18% in Hungary, Romania and Estonia, while the share of farms involved in direct sales is less than 5% in Malta, Austria and Spain. In France, 21% of farmers sell their products through short food supply chains (Short food supply chains and local food system in the EU, 2022).

The geographical location of production, manufacture and the origin of the raw materials play an important role in the

definition of local products. A local product can be a product that is produced and manufactured locally using local raw materials. Products that are mostly made on a small-scale basis are produced using locally developed processes. The product carries the characteristics and uniqueness of the place. The local producer meets the needs of people living within a radius of approximately 50 km. Short supply chains promote sustainable development. Products are mostly produced locally, reducing transport distances and costs. By using local resources, the added value of the product is increased, the origin of the product and local characteristics can be identified, and consumer demand for healthier food is increased. Typical local products are foodstuffs and handmade articles, which are mostly traditionally produced products, carrying the characteristics of the region (Dr. Fekete, 2009) (Pigeon Binder, 2023).

At the heart of short food chains is a process and structure whereby producers sell their products directly to consumers, minimising the number and distance of intermediaries in long supply chains. The key benefits of short food chains include supporting the local economy, access to fresh and quality food, and strengthening the link between consumers and producers.

Today's small producers cannot meet the many demands of large retail chains, mainly for reasons of economies of scale.

As a result of globalisation, we are witnessing the concentration of food trade, which is mostly carried out by a small number of economic units that are significantly larger in size. Free trade agreements have enabled the free movement of goods, which has led to the growth of multinational companies (Kiss, 2017).

In contrast, short supply chains involve few economic actors and are based on close geographical and social ties. Cooperation between food producers, processors and consumers is based on reciprocity (Benedek and Balázs 2014, Renting 2003).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The general perception of consumers is that the harmful substance content of food is extremely high. Consumers perceive local products as having higher quality nutritional biological characteristics and lower carbon footprints. These foods are fresher, cleaner, tastier, healthier and more nutritious than mass-produced foods. This does not mean that they always meet all food safety standards. Official bodies therefore carry out regular product testing. Producers are given training to correct any errors resulting from a lack of knowledge. As small producers sell their products directly on the market, it is important to have supportive legislation to simplify the marketing and sale of products. The effect of buying at local markets will be that the additional income of local, productive households will generate additional consumption, hopefully within the region (Kozák, 2014).

Due to higher product prices, the consumption of organic food is mostly concentrated in the upper and upper-middle classes. Due to their better financial situation, they have the opportunity to buy products with premium quality and special features. In contrast, people with lower incomes are less likely to buy organic products. Due to their financial situation, they tend to shop mostly in supermarkets (Lehota, 2012). For environmentally conscious consumers, it is essential to ensure fairness in the production of the product, paying attention to sustainability and indirect utility. Families with young children pay particular attention to the quality of the food they buy, to protect the health of growing children. When buying organic food, freshness and better quality are important considerations. For rural dwellers, freshness, food safety and helping producers are very important factors (LLazo, 2014). Rural consumers are more environmentally conscious and pay more attention to the seasonality of products, looking at the composition of products (Mancini, Simeone, 2017).

Consumers can only check the quality of the product they have chosen at the end of the purchase process. "When looking at trends in food consumer behaviour, it can be seen that the trends are shifting predominantly from experiential product attributes to trust product attributes." Returning consumers prefer familiar products and rarely try new products. In contrast, the new consumer relies on trust and consciously seeks out a product that is perceived as authentic. Consumption of traditional products increases in proportion to the increase in

consumers' income (Szakály et al 2010, p. 27,92,93). Consumers have more trust in locally produced products and consider them safer. For consumers of regular organic products, an important aspect is the identity of the producer, during which a relationship between producer and consumer can be established. This trust can be long-term (Benedek, 2014) (Szabó 2017)(Csordás,2022) According to the literature (Juhász and Szabó, 2012,2013), the typical buyers of markets are mostly urban, highly educated, family-oriented, economically active consumers over 30 years old (Benedek et. al., 2013). The studies showed that for market buyers, besides product expectations, the direct relationship between producer and consumer plays an important role, which is a key element of direct selling. For buyers, in addition to product quality, reliability, origin and choice, the external appearance of the point of sale, the personal characteristics of the staff, such as kindness and the services provided, all play an important role in customer satisfaction (Csíkné, 2014).

Consumer habits have changed dramatically in a relatively short time since 2000. Campaigns to encourage the consumption of local products and the widespread promotion of products containing local ingredients are not yet working properly. The adjective "traditional" is given a prominent place in the case of local products because it conveys confidence and "a centuries-old history" (Szakály, 2010, p. 151) Families with young children pay special attention to feeding their children, so they tend to buy healthy food. Nowadays, shoppers in traditional markets tend to buy fresh vegetables, fruit, bakery products and processed meat products. The main barriers to healthy food consumption are high prices and low consumer confidence in certification. Local products are generally perceived by consumers as healthier and safer than products sold through wholesale channels (Nagyné, 2019).

Short food chains can be a great opportunity for economic development in less developed regions. These types of supply chains are not only part of the economic life of urban areas, but also of urban areas, thus positively influencing urban and rural areas (Kiss, 2017).

As a result of the epidemic, disruptions have occurred on the supply side of global supply chains. The inadequate supply side changed consumption preferences, which subsequently affected the demand side. Some supermarket chains indicate on the product they sell the distance travelled by the product in km. Operating short food chains can be difficult due to the storage requirements of the products (long-term refrigeration, seasonalisation) (Szabó and Kása, 2022).

If producers/entrepreneurs manage to target a sub-market, short food chains are an advantage. The marketing of local ingredients to health-conscious, sustainability-conscious target audiences may be appropriate. For these customers, it is easier to accept a higher price because of the quality. Public catering businesses based on short food chains, which face price competition, may face long-term economic sustainability problems. The additional costs of purchasing can only be compensated by higher margins, which impose additional marketing costs on the businesses (Török and Agárdi, 2020).

### *Commodity exchange in the market of historic times*

Today's online shopping can take place without the buyer and seller meeting face-to-face, reminiscent of the "silent exchange" known to ethnologists, which was mostly practised by groups of farmers in the tropics and hunting in the forests. Both farmers and hunters deposited surplus products at a pre-determined place and time for the other party, after which they left. During this exchange, which was extremely important for both groups, the seller and the buyer could not even see each other, they may not have known each other's language, and they may even have been at war with each other, but the sellers and buyers tried to satisfy each other's needs in a mutual and fair way. If they had not done so, the next time there would have been no supply.

The farmers of the 20th century did not always buy the most essential goods at the market. When buying animals (as is still the case today), they personally visited the animal to be sold, its ancestors and the farmer's entire livestock. The sale was conducted in a relaxed atmosphere, without any hurry. The hawkers also sold their wares mostly from carts, mostly for produce. Similarly, in the villages of Transylvania (Harghita, Covasna and Mures counties), people nowadays also sell fruit, bakery products and processed meat products in converted commercial vehicles. In the last years of the 20th century, grapes, wine and cooking oil were exchanged for potatoes. The markets and fairs were attractive not only for the strict exchange of goods, but also because they provided a community experience for people from other localities and the countryside. These events, which were not only an economic but also a cultural and social experience, gave the visitors a sense of belonging to a larger community or ethnic group through the immediate, village community (Andrásfalvi, 2005).

The large quantities of valuables gathered at the periodic fairs attracted robbers, and great care was taken to protect them. As a result, the fairs became one of the most important institutions of the state, which helped to enrich the inhabitants, and the security of the fairs was guaranteed by the armed forces in case of need (Bácskai, 2005).

Historically, agricultural commodity production, together with the development of crafts, have been important building blocks of urban development, but the extent of urbanisation of field towns has mostly been measured in terms of the extent of industrialisation. The agricultural production of the settlements was considered to be rural in character. As field towns were mostly formed from market towns, the inseparability and interaction of these two activities was demonstrated in the production and exchange of goods in the 15th century. The gradually increasing supply of manufactured goods attracted visitors to the fairs, but the simpler products of the rudimentary crafts were mostly sold on the narrow local market, mainly among the inhabitants of the surrounding villages. Minors, to prevent vagrancy, were only allowed to enter the fair under parental supervision, but parents and godparents were expected to surprise children left at home with 'fairfair' gifts. As a rule, adults did not go alone either, mostly in groups (dolls for little girls and horse soldiers or swords for little boys.) Farmers and craftsmen mainly supplied the immediate market

area with their products. They usually sold their wares in the nearest town. Citizens who visited the local fairs also played a prominent role in the marketing of products they did not produce, since they did not fully consume the produce they bought and could sell the surplus as goods.

The towns that organised fairs influenced agricultural and industrial production thanks to their developing industries, and promoted the social division of labour. These settlements become not only a marketplace for their own products, but also a collection and exchange point for surplus products released in their vicinity. (Tivai, 2009) The raw materials that make up the vast majority of urban traders' turnover are procured in the markets of smaller settlements, freeing producers from having to transport them to distant markets. Thanks to the intermediation effect of local fairs, residents of municipalities with a right to buy are playing an increasingly important role in the widespread distribution of manufactured goods. As agricultural and industrial commodity production develops, settlements with market rights become important factors in the production of goods, in addition to the development of trade (Bácskai, 1964).

Bargaining was an essential and indispensable behavioural motive in the exchange of goods in the markets of the time, the essential difference being the origin. The difference between the sale of home-produced and purchased products was different. Buyers tended to be more attracted to home-produced products, and sellers were usually able to use this to their advantage in the bargaining process. In the case of an own-produced product, the seller has more information, which he is proud to share with the buyer. The quality of the product is also presented and referred to in the bargain, thus referring to his knowledge and expertise in the hope of obtaining a higher profit. Sellers of their own produce emphasise their diligence by sitting in the market (shelling peas, cleaning the paste, grouping products), as if to prove that they are worthy of the price they are asking from the buyer. Over time, specialisation has developed among those selling agricultural products. Some sold only seeds, or dairy products, or potatoes, or vegetables, or pots and pans. Retailers became mostly artisans, so they were specialised. For the others, specialisation was based on excellent knowledge of the goods and an outstanding knowledge of the conditions of production and purchase of the product chosen for sale.

When selling the product they buy, they do not conceal its origin, but they are not modest in their praise of its quality, and even praise the product they choose and sell in comparison with others. The promotional activity of sellers on the agricultural produce market is always focused on tasting. Here too, the vendor listed the good qualities of the product and paid particular attention to ensuring that the customer got the tastiest bite. Following a negative customer review, the unpurchased product was conspicuously put aside. Depending on the nature of the goods, other trials were carried out on the product to be sold. Clay pots were shaken, eggs were shaken. What these acts had in common was that the sellers tried to do it themselves, in an attempt to hide or reduce the defects of the goods. It was also a common practice to sing market or fair sayings in praise of a particular product, which became

known as folk poetry. In particular, it was an important ritual for the purchase of animals, an essential part of which was the drinking of a drink at the nearest tavern. In the agricultural produce market, the sellers tried to avoid having their customers sort the produce, because the remaining low-quality produce was a loss for them, so it was important for them to have a mixed product, i.e. to have a good quality product and a low-quality one in the customer's basket. If the buyer had noticed the fraudulent behaviour of the seller, the sale could have been cancelled.

At the time of payment, instead of giving change, the vendor tried to give goods, which was usually explained as being in a hurry. People returning home from the market, meeting people they knew, praised themselves by saying lower prices and punished the sellers because new customers wanted to buy at lower prices. According to traditional market public opinion, Sunday shoppers were considered careless and lazy and were offered high prices for products, whereas the Tuesday market was considered the best, as that was the time when new goods arrived but there were still some left over from the previous weekend. In Csíkszereda (Miercurea Ciuc), Wednesday was the biggest market day, while in Marosvásárhely (Târgu Mures), Thursday was the day with the most goods. In general, Tuesday market days were considered a day for buying larger quantities and buying cheap. Customers arriving too early in the morning were not served, as prices were not yet established in the early hours, but traditionally most customers were present at 10-12 o'clock, by which time the full range of goods was clear and prices had already been established. Late buyers were offered lower quality leftover goods. The fairs usually lasted until noon. The expectation at the fairs of the time was that a good buyer would look at the goods several times after having been through the whole market, preferably unobtrusively, and then look for defects by touching them.

The refusal to sort goods was a sign of distrust, which was mostly absent only in the permanent exchange relationships, which were mostly established for perishable foodstuffs and by eliminating fairs (e.g. dairy products, home delivery of fresh bakery products) (Dankó, 1980).

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The questionnaire survey, mostly online but also including face-to-face interviews in the market, was carried out in March 2022. The survey was carried out among the customers of the Traditional Products Market, which takes place monthly in Csíkszereda (Miercurea Ciuc). The obtained information was obtained using Likert scale, processed with SPSS software and the relationship between variables was examined by cross tabulation analysis. After cleaning the received data, we were left with a sample of 170 items (Péter and Illyés; 2018,2019). Almost 40 percent of the respondents live in a household of four persons. A quarter of the respondents live in a household with three persons and 16 percent (five persons) live in a large family household. The majority of households have at least three people living together, with 16 per cent of households with one or two people living together (Nagy,2022).

The diversity of data is typical of our research, thanks to the wide range of activities of farmers in Harghita County. The quality and quantity of the data collected required the use of data mining tools, as traditional statistical and regression methods proved to be limited (Péter and Illyés; 2018).

A data mining tool extracts information from data. This information is based on statistical methods and/or Shannon's (1948) information theory. Information is extracted using artificial-intelligence algorithms. This information cannot be extracted by classical statistical methods, data mining looks for patterns in the data that characterise it and serve to prepare decision support. The oldest classical artificial-intelligence method in the arsenal of data mining tools is regression analysis. Data mining is an extrapolation of this method, as it can not only provide predictions on numerical values, but also handle classification classifications. The data mining tool that we use Weka (Eibe, Hall, Witten; 2016) was developed at the University of New Zealand (The University of Waikato).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Harghita County*

The majority of farms in Romania are family farms, with a particularly high proportion of farms under 5 hectares in size. In family farms, the vast majority of the workforce is made up of family members (over 90%). Family farms in Harghita County are still characterised by small farm sizes. An important feature of land use is the uncertain legal situation, which is the difference between actual use and official records, mostly due to the way land is privatised. One of the most important issues to be addressed for the development of agriculture and the functioning of the land market is the clarification of land tenure. The nature of this task requires the involvement of the state and the legislator. Farmers' organisations and development agencies also have an important role to play. Legal clarification of tenure rights would also have a positive impact on the absorption of EU funds. This unclear ownership situation probably explains why some farms over 1 ha do not benefit from land-based subsidies. However, of the three main forms of support, the share of beneficiaries of land-based support (direct payments) is still the largest. Of the development aids, the purchase of machinery is the most important. This is because they are the easiest to tender, implement and finance. This form of support is likely to continue to be very popular, but because of the small size of farms, it would be worth considering ways of implementing it to help smaller farms become more mechanised.

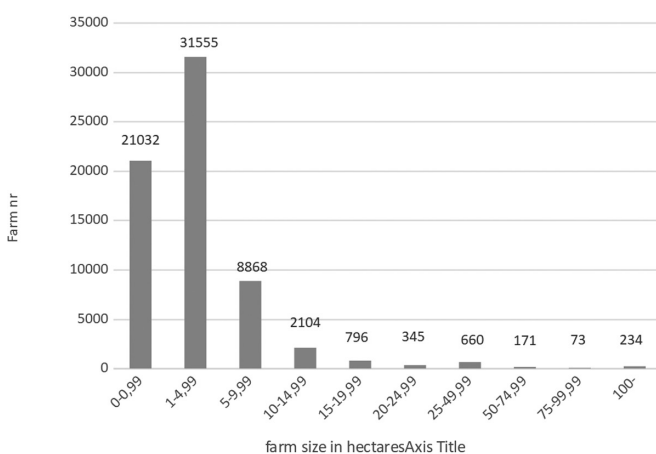
The agri-environmental subsidies are used by few, only by larger farms. However, in the next funding period up to 2027, the role of agri-environmental support in the EU will be enhanced. Agri-environment requirements will be used even more as a precondition for first pillar (land-based, direct) payments. Moreover, the share of agri-environment payments in total EU agricultural support is likely to increase. It is therefore essential to prepare for this change and to prepare farmers for it. Farmers in Harghita County are characterised by their commitment to agriculture. This is also reflected in their at-



tachment to this activity, with relatively few thinking about giving up, selling the farm or transferring the property. The latter is also more likely to be done within the family and, of course, more by the elderly. There is also an encouraging trend that younger, more skilled farmers have plans for development expansion (Elek et al, 2023).

Thanks to the characteristic agricultural land tenure system of Harghita County, the vast majority of farms are small family farms, which have preserved the land structure that has been established for more than three decades and inherited the basis of their farming knowledge from previous generations. According to data from the agricultural censuses (Fig.1.), there are 21 032 holdings under 1 hectare in the county, 31 555 holdings between 1 and 5 hectares and 8 868 farmers with a total area of between 5 and 10 hectares. In Harghita County, 234 farmers have an agricultural area of more than 100 hectares.

**Figure 1. Distribution of farms in Harghita County in terms of hectares in 2022**



Source: own editing based on Office for National Statistics data 2023

Thanks to the inheritance custom of local families, in Harghita County, farms under 1 hectare cultivate a total of 10,094 hectares of land, while farms with an area of between 1 and 5 hectares cultivate 79,125 hectares. Farms with between 5 and 10 hectares of agricultural land cover a total of 60,933 hectares.

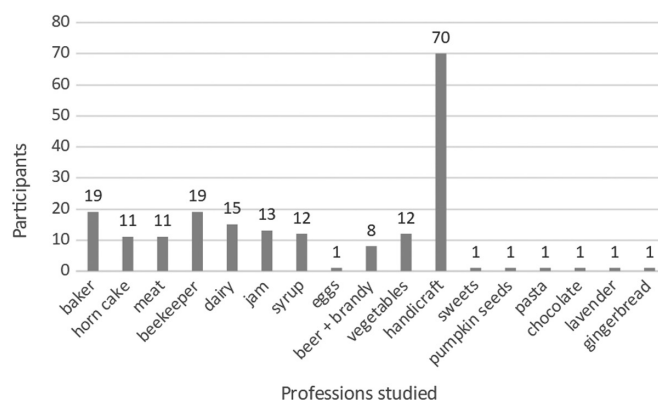
Farming in relatively small agricultural areas encourages farmers to be more integrated. As a result, more and more farmers are entering local markets with processed products. Traditional knowledge acquired on small local farms is shared by families in each rural area and therefore socially reinforcing. Older farmers in our countryside have tended to shy away from the new knowledge of the mega-manager, but their younger, more highly skilled counterparts are more open to new knowledge. In this context, however, the isolation of younger farmers from traditional knowledge and the predominance of managerial knowledge cannot be clearly stated. On the contrary, the short food chains are a good example of the Harghita County "Traditional Products Fair" initiative, which combines and promotes the spread of these two knowledge. Traditional, small-scale production and trade, alongside tradi-

tional environmentally conscious production, using new managerial knowledge, has grown into an example to be followed nationally (Péter, 2017).

The Chamber of Agriculture of Harghita County started to organise training courses for local farmers in the processing of agricultural products as early as 2000. The graduates sell their products at the monthly fairs. Between 2000 and 2023, more than 230 beekeepers, 1 622 farmers, more than 200 bakers, nearly 60 dairy and cheese processors, nearly 65 meat processors, 42 agro-tourists and 80 fruit producers learned the secrets of their chosen trade.

As a pioneer at the national level for newly qualified farmers, the Harghita County Chamber of Agriculture organised the first exhibition and fair of traditional and local products in 2009 in Miercurea. The aim of this pioneering initiative was to help farmers with small local farms. Thanks to this initiative, according to the Harghita County Council database, in 2023, 197 producers had the Szekler Product Trademark and more than 1300 products could bear the Szekler Product Trademark on their packaging (Fig.2.).

**Figure 2. Szekler product trademark holders by product category in 2023**



Source: Harghita County Council database

In most cases, the success of producers depends on satisfying the needs of their customers. If the producer manages to produce the values that customers are looking for in food during the production and marketing process. When buying traditional products, consumers are mostly looking for familiar tastes and safety, but also for a guarantee of quality. The Szekler Product Label helps to establish and preserve these values.

In our analysis, we used the J48 algorithm alongside OneR because the J48 algorithm is popular for its simplicity of decision tree and interpretable results, and can also give valuable results on a smaller data set.

J48 (Eibe Frank et. Al.) is a decision tree algorithm that is an enhancement of the C4.5 (J.R. Quinlan) algorithm in the Java programming language. Like C4.5, J48 can perform decision tree construction and classification decision making.

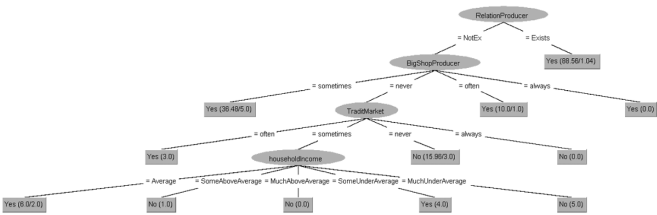
The J48 algorithm consists of the following steps:

- 1. Data pre-processing: this step involves data preparation, such as handling missing values and converting nominal variables into numeric format.
- 2. decision tree building: J48 builds a decision tree from the data, where each node represents a property or attribute, while the branches represent the values of the attribute.

Decision points definition: to navigate the decision tree, J48 assigns a value to each decision point. This value determines which branch in the decision tree to proceed to.

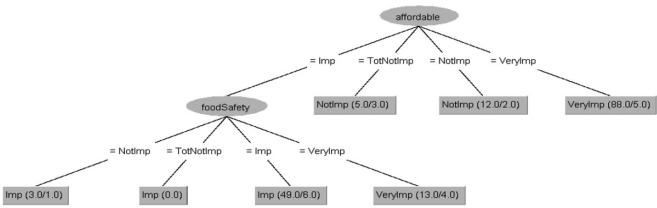
Decision making: When the end of the decision tree is reached, J48 evaluates the values on the branches. Based on this, it determines the decision to classify or categorise the data point.

Figure 3. J48 model where from small producer is the class attribute



In this model, the key finding about the lowest income individuals is that the lowest income individuals either do not do much shopping or do much shopping in supermarkets(Fig.3.). The rest of the decision tree is interpretable but does not have far-reaching implications. According to the results of the model under study, the shopping of traditional products in Csíkszereda for large purchases is mostly visited by higher income shoppers. These regular shoppers are also willing to pay a higher price, especially for better quality.

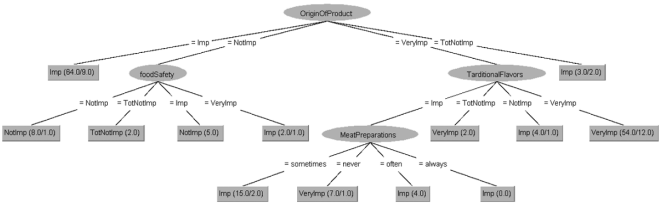
Figure 4. J48 model where the taste of the product is the class attribute



The class attribute is the taste of the product. The accuracy of the model is 84.7059 %.

The interpretation of this decision tree is that if affordability is important to the consumer, then the taste of the product is important, unless food safety is not important to the consumer (Fig.4.). The quality and flavour of the products with the Szekler Product trademark found on the traditional products market is favourable for the customers visiting the market, thanks to the training courses for local producers that have been held for more than 20 years.

Figure 5. J48 model where the local product attribute is the class attribute



The class attribute of the model is the ‘local product’. The accuracy of the model is 74.1176 %.

The main conclusions of this decision tree are:  
If the origin of the product is important, it is important that it is a local product (64)  
If the origin of the product is not important and the traditional flavours are not important, then it is not important that it is a local product (54).  
If the origin of the product is not important, but traditional flavours are important, then it is important that the product is traditional for those who sometimes buy meat products. (15)

The atmosphere of the fairs, which are held monthly, makes shopping an experience for consumers who visit the area (Fig.5.). With tables reflecting a unique character, customers believe in the uniqueness of the product on offer and are reassured of the local character of the product by talking to the producer. At the end of their purchase, they leave knowing that they have supported a local farmer. If the traditional flavour appeals to them, they will become a returning customer of the chosen producer. This applies in particular to meat products that are traditionally processed and flavoured with local spices.

CONCLUSION

Local food and short supply chains are becoming increasingly popular among social actors. Local fairs and markets have a historically proven tradition.

We studied the customer base of markets selling products produced by mostly self-sustaining and small-scale farms in mountainous, agricultural areas. In our study we have explored the new consumer demands to which small-scale producers have recently been increasingly trying to adapt, taking advantage of the traditions that exist. Due to the geographical location of Harghita County, the economic actors present at the regular fairs of traditional products in Csíkszereda (Miercurea Ciuc): sellers and buyers are geographically and culturally close to each other. The products offered for sale are uniformly characterised by the fact that they are grown and produced in an environmentally friendly way and from healthy raw materials. The freshness, flavour, reliable origin and price of the products are of paramount importance to consumers. In most cases, consumers who are looking at the market make their main purchasing decisions according to what is known from the literature (Kis, 2017), i.e. they are mostly influenced by the price of the product. We find that, in

some cases, the price of the product may be more important than the origin of the product.

The research has shown that consumers of local products are highly price sensitive. There is a tradition of self-sufficiency in agricultural produce and food in our countryside. Today's traditional producers are the heirs of historic small-scale farmers. For generations they have been practising a form of farming that has been integrated into the landscape and is therefore useful and valuable. These producers have a wealth of knowledge but a lack of knowledge of alternative food networks, making it difficult for consumers to obtain detailed and up-to-date information on the origin and usefulness of the product. The purchasing decisions of consumers of traditional products contribute to the continued farming activities of small producers. This type of purchase creates a deeper relationship of trust between producer and consumer. Research shows that middle-class consumers are able to pay a fair price to cover the costs of producers (Balogh et al. 2021). The focus on traditional food supply tends to be on small producers, which can disadvantage lower income earners by reducing their access to quality food.

Research on the market for traditional products has shown that consumers are concerned about the origin, quality, nutritional value, taste and price of products. It can be seen that the organisation of a fair for traditional products and the introduction of the Szekler Product Label, as a historically based initiative, has fulfilled the expectations placed in it. While preserving the characteristics and function of the traditional fair, it has grown into a social and cultural event and a community event.

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