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Editor-in-chief
Cosimo Iacirignola
Director IAM of Bari
Via Ceglie 9 - 70010 VALENZANO (BARI)

Managing Editor
Giulio Malorgio
Dipartimento di Economia e Ingegneria Agrarie
Via Fanin, 50 - 40127 BOLOGNA
Tel. ++39 051 2096145
Fax ++39 051 2096162
e-mail: giulio.malorgio@unibo.it

Editorial office
Istituto Agronomico Mediterraneo del CIHEAM
via Ceglie, 9 - 70010 VALENZANO (BARI)
Tel. ++39 080 4606271
Fax ++39 080 4606271

Editorial secretariat
Stefania Lapedota: lapedotas@iamb.it

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CONTENTS / SOMMAIRE

- | | |
|---|---------|
| Editorial/Editorial | pag. 2 |
| JOSÉ M. GARCÍA ALVAREZ-COQUE
A new EU policy for fruit and vegetables | |
| LASSAÂD ALBOUCHI, MOHAMED SALAH BACHTA, FLORENCE JACQUET
Compared production efficiency in irrigated areas within a watershed
<i>Efficacités productives comparées des zones irriguées
au sein d'un bassin versant</i> | pag. 4 |
| GIULIO MALORGIO, ANNA HERTZBERG
Competitiveness of the Southern Mediterranean Countries
in the Italian agri-food market
<i>Compétitivité des pays méditerranéens du sud sur le marché
agroalimentaire italien</i> | pag. 14 |
| YOUSSEF CHAHED, BENOIT BERDYS
Impact of the reform of the European Union Sugar Common
Market Organization on sugar beet farms: the case of the Aisne farms
<i>Impact de la réforme de l'Organisation Commune de Marché du Sucre
sur les exploitations betteravières: le cas des exploitations de l'Aisne</i> | pag. 24 |
| GIOVANNI LAGIOIA, OTTILIA DE MARCO,
VERA AMICARELLI, ANTONELLA SGARAMELLA
Material Flow Analysis of Sugar Beet Cultivation.
<i>Analyse des flux des cultures de la betterave à sucre</i> | pag. 32 |
| YULIANA YARKOVA, IVAN GEORGIEV
Employment problems in the rural regions in Bulgaria
and possibilities for their solution
<i>Problèmes de l'emploi dans les régions rurales
en Bulgarie et solutions possibles</i> | pag. 37 |
| GIUSEPPE DE BLASI, ANNALISA DE BONI, ROCCO GIGANTE, ROCCO ROMA
Evolution of agricultural income in Puglia between
the Mac Sharry Reform and the Mid-term review
<i>Evolution du revenu agricole dans les Pouilles entre la Réforme
Mac Sherry et la révision de moyen terme</i> | pag. 42 |
| STAMATIS AGGELOPOULOS
Productive cost analysis and evaluation of cost-return models
of pig farms in Greece
<i>Analyse des coûts de production et évaluation des modèles
économiques des élevages porcins en Grèce</i> | pag. 54 |
| TAOUFIK GAMMOUDI, MONGI SGHAIER
Contribution to the evolution of the international migration impact
on the region of origin: the case of Fatnassa oasis, south-west Tunisia
<i>Contribution à l'évolution d'impact de l'émigration internationale
sur la région de départ: cas de l'oasis de Fatnassa, sud-ouest de la Tunisie</i> | pag. 60 |

A new EU policy for fruit and vegetables

JOSÉ M. GARCÍA ALVAREZ-COQUE*

In June 12, 2007, the Council reached a unanimous agreement on reforming the Common Market Organization (CMO) for fruit and vegetables (F&V). This reform, to enter into force in 2008, foresees a wide range of measures such as the progressive decoupling of the processing aids granted to certain F&V and their integration into the Single Payment Scheme; the complete phasing out of export subsidies for F&V; and higher EU funding of environmental measures; organic production and promotional measures. It is not the purpose of the present editorial note to carry out a deep assessment of the F&V reform but to pay attention to one of its most distinctive features: the continuing support to Producers' Organizations (POs).

The consensus around the F&V reform reflects a balance between two positions: on the one hand, the "transfer" option that meant the almost total dismantling of the EU contribution to POs and its subsequent transfer to the rural development programs, to the Single Payment Scheme (SPS) or to separate national envelopes; on the other hand, the so-called *PO+* option, which involves maintaining the support to the PO but making them more efficient and in line with the objective of the reform to build up a more competitive sector.

The assessment of the previous CMO with respect to POs reveals both positive and negative aspects. The share of total F&V production controlled by POs is close to 50%, which is an interesting level still below of that considered as desirable, taking into account the increasing concentration of retailers. Moreover, such share is not uniform across EU producing re-

gions, being lower in main producers such as Spain and Italy. Operational funds and programs have been an appealing tool to promote supply concentration but producers' groupings have yet to prove their attractiveness. Operational programs have also promoted quality improvements and taken account of environmental concerns but such steps still need to be appreciated by consumers. Market withdrawals have dramatically decreased, which in theory is a good indicator towards stronger market orientation. However, the F&V is increasingly subjected to market disturbances and price crises. In the past, processing aids were helpful in providing the agro-food industry with European raw materials. However, for some products, the processing industry has become an outlet for surplus in the fresh market. These measures will be decoupled from production after a transition period. Full market exposure of the F&V in the EU will be a fact in few years.

Overall EU demand for F&V has kept stable during the last years though in recent years there has been a decrease in per capita consumption levels, with large variations between EU countries. Reasons behind this fall in F&V consumption include changes in life style towards convenience and perceived lost of taste among consumers. In fact, there is a trend towards overproduction. And growers are in a relatively weak position facing the increasingly concentrated retailing sector. More dominant buyers increasingly depend upon more and more committed suppliers. These are forced to accept low prices and to supply large volumes. Economies of scale appear as growers assume investment costs related to the implementation of standards and production practices. Consequently, retailers tend to favour large scale farming and not dealing with small growers and shippers. The lack of market

* Universidad Politécnica de Valencia (UPV)

transparency across the value chain limits the ability of farmers to successfully negotiate with retailers. In addition, the definition of tools for crisis management represents a challenge for POs and for all F&V stakeholders.

It is true that, against the considerable magnitude of the aforementioned market problems faced by F&V growers, we are afraid that the new CMO will not be sufficient to correct the most important weaknesses affecting the F&V market. However, there is little alternative to the policy orientated to support the POs. In this context, the POs are not just a simple way of adding value to the marketing of F&V. POs are becoming one of the few feasible strategies to keep many small farmers in business through their insertion in large scale organisations, which can be able to collaborate with retailers on a balance basis.

The new CMO facilitates the creation of POs by simplifying the legal framework to form POs according to the national particularities. Moreover, the POs will assume: new measures for crisis management; an increased rate of EU financing in the Member States and regions where grouping of supply is low; and a minimum allocation of the operational funds to environmental measures. Special emphasis will be put on encouraging consumption of F&V, especially by the younger generation. There will be extra support for mergers of POs and associations of POs. Agricultural lobbies were successful in preventing the Council from adopting the “*transfer*” option that perhaps would have been more consistent with the mainstream economic policy addressing the growth and competitiveness objectives foreseen by the Lisbon strategy. But the cost of such choice would have been losing one of the only instruments that make it possible for EU’ F&V growers to take part in the distribution of rents within the modern value chains. The local impacts of the “*transfer*” option on specialized areas in the Mediterranean and Central Europe would have been dramatic.

However, it is still early to declare success. A significant part of the reform’s achievements will depend on the effectiveness of the POs in concentrating supply and on the right use of committed funds, which requires a closer monitoring and assessment of the operational programs. The reform CMO in-

cludes such reinforcement of monitoring within national strategies drawn up by Member States. Consequently, the programming period 2007-2013 represents a sort of last chance for the POs. A review of the CAP is planned for 2008 under the “*Health Check*” and we cannot rule out future adjustments in the CMO for F&V after 2013.

Explaining CAP reform’s process is still a great academic challenge. The F&V reform was path-dependant on the CAP reformed in 2003, on the EU position in the –at the moment suspended- Doha Round, and on the stand-by in the process of European political integration, which involves severe budget constraints. The F&V reform will be implemented in a context accompanied by a substantial reduction of border protection, the phasing out of export subsidies, and a market oriented policy coupled with a clear willingness to simplify the CAP and to allow freedom for the cultivation of F&V in the whole EU territory. It is logic that some farm groups were not extremely happy with the reform. However, the new F&V policy appears to be a sensible policy as it is targeted to cope with the lack of organization of the sector in many EU regions.

It is as well a policy that does not enter in conflict with the trading interests of developing countries, as it seems consistent with an increased market access for third countries’ products. This development will enhance competition but the problem for EU producers has to be faced by means of policies that upgrade domestic production, which means quality and organization. The new F&V policy is closer to what can be seen as an agricultural policy that is compatible with WTO obligations. EU farmers who wish to receive EU support will be forced to preserve the environment and the operational funds will likely be accepted as a “green box” policy. The EU might even encourage the creation of transnational POs where producers of the Southern and Northern shores of the Mediterranean basin can share commercial goals. In the current environment of lower public support within the EU, the new F&V policy can well be equipped with renewed legitimacy. Whatever the support granted by Brussels is, it seems to be time for the POs to show that they are responding to the high expectations created in the EU society.

▪ Efficacités productives comparées des zones irriguées au sein d'un bassin versant

ALBOUCHI Lassaâd
BACHTA Mohamed Salah
Institut National Agronomique de Tunisie

JACQUET Florence
INRA Economie Publique Paris-Grignon / Institut Agronomique Méditerranéen de Montpellier

JEI classification : q150, q120

Abstract

Tunisia is going to experience a shortage of water as a result of the inadequacy between the supply and demand. The reallocation of water between users and regions is worth studying in this context. The agricultural sector is the most concerned as it consumes about 80% of all the water. The administration concerns are double: on one hand it has to maximise the productivity of the water use; on the other reducing the unbalance between regions. Thus the interest of comparing the level of performance of two irrigated areas. The watershed constitutes the most adequate entity for the comparisons. We analysed the technical efficiency level in the Merguellil watershed. A stochastic frontier was estimated adapting a parametric approach. Efficiency was explained using several socio-economic parameters in the Tobit model. Empirical results show a differential of efficiency between the areas studied. The mean technical efficiency ranged from 64% to 96%. The examination of the determinant of the technical efficiency shows that the accessibility to credit and water saving systems did affect it positively. Meanwhile the small-sized farms as well as specialization did affect it negatively.

Key words: Merguellil watershed, production stochastic frontier, technical efficiency, efficiency determinants

Résumé

Suite à la saturation de l'offre et la croissance incessante de la demande, la problématique de l'eau en Tunisie est devenue un problème de réaffectation entre usagers et régions valorisant différemment la ressource. Le secteur agricole est le plus concerné par toute mesure d'amélioration puisqu'il accapare plus de 80% des volumes prélevés. Ainsi, le souci du gestionnaire est double, il doit, d'une part, assurer une amélioration de la productivité globale de l'eau et réduire l'inégalité entre les régions, d'autre part. D'où l'intérêt d'une comparaison des niveaux de performance des zones irriguées. Le bassin versant représente l'échelle la plus adéquate pour cette comparaison étant donné qu'il s'agit de la même ressource à partager. Ainsi, les politiques publiques envisagées et envisageables peuvent être analysées. Dans ce cadre, nous avons estimé et analysé le niveau d'efficacité productive des zones irriguées au sein du bassin versant du Merguellil en Tunisie Centrale. Une frontière de production stochastique a été estimée en adoptant une approche paramétrique. Les niveaux d'efficacité obtenus ont été expliqués par certains facteurs socio-économiques en utilisant un modèle Tobit. Les résultats empiriques illustrent l'existence d'un différentiel d'efficacité technique entre les zones étudiées.

L'efficacité technique moyenne, au cours de la période 1994-2003, varie de 64% à 96%. Enfin, l'examen des déterminants de l'efficacité technique montre que l'accès aux crédits et l'économie de l'eau affectent positivement le niveau d'efficacité technique des zones étudiées. Alors que le poids des exploitations de petites tailles et la spécialisation l'affectent négativement.

Mots Clés: Bassin versant du Merguellil, frontière stochastique de production, efficacité technique et déterminants de l'efficacité

▪ **Competitiveness of the Southern Mediterranean Countries in the Italian agri-food market**

**Giulio MALORGIO
Anna HERTZBERG**

Agricultural Economic and Engineering Department
University of Bologna, Italy

Jel classification: F130, Q170

Abstract

Political and economic changes over the last ten years have intensified agri-food trade among Mediterranean countries. This paper aims to examine the exchanges between Italy and these countries. The analysis of these exchanges highlight trends that indicate Italy's agri-food balance has deteriorated during the previous ten years. A Constant Market Shares Analysis has been performed on Italy's fruit and vegetable imports from Egypt, Turkey, Morocco and Tunisia, which aims to assess their competitiveness. The results are then compared with those of Italy's major fruit and vegetable suppliers, the EU and Latin America, which indicate some Mediterranean Partners have high levels of competitiveness.

Key words: competitiveness, Mediterranean region, agrifood trade, partnership

Resumé

Ces dix dernières années, les changements politiques et économiques ont intensifié le commerce agroalimentaire entre les pays méditerranéens. Cette étude examine les échanges entre l'Italie et ces pays. L'analyse de ces échanges montre que le bilan agroalimentaire italien s'est détérioré. On a appliqué la Constant Market Shares Analysis aux importations italiennes de fruits et de légumes à partir de l'Égypte, de la Turquie, du Maroc et de la Tunisie afin d'évaluer leur compétitivité. Les résultats ont été comparés avec les principaux approvisionneurs de fruits et de légumes pour l'Italie, voire l'UE et l'Amérique latine, ce qui indique que certains partenaires méditerranéens ont des niveaux de compétitivité élevés.

Mots clé : compétitivité, région méditerranéenne, commerce agroalimentaire, partenariat

▪ **Impact de la réforme de l'Organisation Commune du Marché du Sucre sur les exploitations betteravières : le cas des exploitations de l'Aisne**

Yousef Chahed

Institut Polytechnique Lassalle de Beauvais – France

Benoit Berdys

Centre d'Economie Rurale Aisne-Seine et Marne France

Jel classification : Q180

Résumé

Après la condamnation de l'UE par l'Organisation Mondiale du Commerce pour violation des règles de la concurrence, la réforme de l'Organisation Commune du Marché du Sucre européen était devenue inéluctable. L'une des principales mesures de cette réforme, adoptée en février 2006, a consisté à réduire le prix du sucre blanc de 36%, et, en contrepartie, à accorder aux betteraviers une compensation directe, intégrée dans le paiement unique, à hauteur de 64% de la diminution du prix. Ce qui pourrait contraindre plusieurs régions européennes à réduire, voire à cesser définitivement leur activité betteravière. L'Aisne, premier département betteravier français, risque également de subir de plein fouet l'impact de cette réforme. A l'aide de simulations sur des exploitations type, nous avons essayé d'en mesurer les effets sur la situation financière des exploitations, ainsi que sur le revenu des agriculteurs.

Mots clés : Organisation commune du marché, sucre, exploitations betteravières, simulations.

Abstract

After the condemnation of the EC by the World Trade Organisation for violation of the competition rules, the reform of the European Market Common Organization of Sugar became inevitable. Adopted in February 2006, the reform will lead to a decline of 36 % in the sugar price. In return, beet growers will receive a direct compensation of 64 % of the decrease of the price. Several European regions will be obliged to reduce, or to stop their beetroot activity. Aisne, the most important French beetroot department, also risks suffering from this reform. By means of simulations on typical farms, we tried to measure the impact of this reform on the financial situation of the farms, as well as on the income of farmers.

Keywords : Common Market organization, sugar, beetroot, beet farms, simulations.

▪ Material Flow Analysis of Sugar Beet Cultivation

Giovanni Lagioia
Ottilia De Marco
Vera Amicarelli
Antonella Sgaramella

Dipartimento di Scienze Geografiche e Merceologiche Università degli Studi di Bari (Italy)

Jel classification : Q 480 ; Q 410

Résumé

La croissance économique des dernières décennies a induit un grand prélèvement des matières premières de la nature, en favorisant, en même temps, le relâchement des quantités énormes de substances nuisibles. Une conséquence importante était l'altération de l'équilibre des écosystèmes, en causant aussi de dommage sur des êtres vivants. Ces problèmes ont produit une attention croissante à propos des flux de matières qu'ils traversent l'économie nationale entière ou un secteur industriel ou un cycle productif unique. La collection de ce type de données ou renseignements pourrait être utile pour définir la pression des marchandises sur l'environnement et prévoir les conséquences dues aux activités humaines sur les écosystèmes naturels. Ce document analyse les fluxes de matières et d'énergie de la culture (phase agricole) de la betterave sucrière. Il complète l'analyse de ce secteur industriel (phase industrielle) déjà présentée dans un article précédent. Les implications de la pression sur l'environnement seront aussi étudiées. Les fluxes entrants et sortants de ce processus seront analysées en prenant en compte de la photosynthèse de la betteraves sucrière, la consommation de CO₂, l'utilisation de l'énergie solaire et la production d'oxygène et biomasse.

Abstract

The economic growth of the last decades has induced a great withdrawal of raw materials from nature, favouring, at the same time, the release of a great amount of harmful substances. An important consequence has been the alteration in the equilibrium ecosystems as well as harm to living creatures. These problems have generated an increasing attention to the mass of materials that flows in the whole national economy, in single industries and in the life cycles of commodities. The collection of these kinds of data should be useful to define the environmental burden of a commodity and to prevent the detrimental consequences of human activities on the natural ecosystems. This paper analyses the material and energy flows of sugar beets cultivation. It completes the analysis of the beet sugar industry; a material flow analysis of the sugar production chain has been presented in a previous paper. Environmental aspects will be also studied. Photosynthesis in sugar beets will be considered; CO₂ consumption, sun energy utilization, biomass and oxygen production will be analyzed as inputs and outputs of this process.

Keywords: Material Flow Analysis, Sugar beet cultivation.

- **Employment problems in the rural regions in Bulgaria and possibilities for their solution**

**Yuliana Yarkova
Ivan Georgiev**

Department of Economics, Thrakia University, 6000 Stara Zagora, Bulgaria

Jel classification: O180; Q 180

Abstract

This contribution gives an overview of the current pressing problem of unemployment in rural Bulgaria and indicates approaches to how these problems might be solved. As similar problems seem to have been a topic in other EU-member countries for years this article also intends to start a dialogue between the Thrakian University at Stara Zagora (BG) and other universities and/or institutes that are involved in this field of research in order to exchange experience and ideas.

Key Words: sustainable development, rural policy, employment

Résumé

Cet article examine le problème urgent du chômage dans les régions rurales de la Bulgarie et donne des indications sur la possibilité de résoudre ces problèmes. Vu que ces mêmes problèmes ont été vécus par bien des pays membres de l'UE pendant des années, cet article envisage aussi un dialogue entre l'université de Thrakian à Stara Zagora (BG) et les universités et/ou instituts qui sont engagés dans ce domaine de recherche afin de promouvoir un échange d'expériences et d'idées.

Mots clé: développement durable, politique rurale, emploi

▪ **Evolution of agricultural income in Puglia between the Mac Sharry Reform and the Mid-term review**

**Giuseppe De Blasi
Annalisa De Boni
Rocco Gigante
Rocco Roma**

Dipartimento di Economia e Politica Agraria, Estimo e Pianificazione Rurale - Università di Bari

Jel classification: Q180, Q140

Abstract

Aim of this work has been the evaluation of the effects of common agricultural policies on primary sector income in Italy, in the Mezzogiorno and above all in Puglia. In order to see the effects of Mac Sharry reform, Agenda 2000 and the Mid-term review, we considered different periods from 1993 to 2004. The aggregate income trend was analysed considering variations in agricultural added value in money and real terms. Variations in real income were broken down into three components: productive, monetary and subsidies. Results showed that on the whole, from 1996 agricultural income in Puglia declined more than in Italy and in the Mezzogiorno and, whereas in Italy the main cause of falling income had a monetary origin, above all inflation, in Apulia this negative effect was mostly due to the reduction of subsidies. Changes in subsidy systems caused great variations in crop distribution: in Puglia a concentration of intensive farming has been established in the irrigated areas, while extensive crops converged on marginal areas with scarce water supplies.

Key words: PAC reform, farm income, Puglia region

Résumé

Le but de ce travail est l'évaluation des effets de la politique agricole commune sur le revenu du secteur primaire en Italie, dans le Midi et surtout dans la région des Pouilles. Afin d'évaluer les effets de la réforme Mac Sherry, de l'Agenda 2000 et de la révision à moyen terme, on a considéré la période entre 1993 et 2004. La tendance des revenus a été analysée à la lumière des variations de la valeur ajoutée agricole en argent et en termes réels. Les variations du revenu réel ont été divisées en trois composantes : productive, monétaire et des subventions. Les résultats ont montré qu'à partir de 1996 le revenu agricole s'est réduit dans les Pouilles plus qu'en Italie et que dans le Midi. En outre si en Italie la cause de la réduction était d'origine monétaire, voire l'inflation, dans les Pouilles cet effet négatif était lié à la réduction des subventions. Les changements du système des subventions a causé de grandes variations dans la distribution productive : dans les Pouilles, l'agriculture intensive s'est concentrée dans les zones irriguées alors que les cultures extensives dans les régions marginales avec des ressources en eau limitées.

Mots clé : réforme PAC, revenu agricole, région des Pouilles

▪ **Productive Cost Analysis And Evaluation Of Cost-Return Models Of Pig Farms In Greece**

Stamatis Aggelopoulos

Department of Farm Management, Institute of Thessaloniki, Greece

Jel Classification: Q 120

Summary

Pig farming is one of the most important sectors of animal production in Greece. One of the main problems that pig farming is faced with in Greece, in relation to the other countries of Europe, is the high cost of production, which affects the competitiveness of the sector both in the international and domestic market. From an analysis of the cost data, it is found that labour expenses decrease as the size of the farm increases, while the annual livestock, veterinary care and other expenses increase along with the size of the farms. The feeding expenses seem to be higher in medium-capacity farms, and lower in low-capacity farms. Furthermore, the analysis shows that the greatest effect and significance in the determination of the total cost is attributed to the cereal grain (raw feed material), that constitutes a basic part of the supplied livestock feed. This analysis serves to prove that there is a need for financing new building installations and for the purchase of modern mechanical equipment, since such a step will lead to increased productivity, lower the production cost and improve the working conditions for all those employed in this sector.

Key-words: pig farming, production cost, performance, principal components analysis, financing

Résumé

L'élevage de porcins est l'un des secteurs les plus importants de production animale en Grèce. Par rapport aux autres pays européens, la Grèce se trouve face à des coûts de production élevés qui se répercutent sur la compétitivité de cet élevage sur le marché national et international. L'analyse des données économiques montre que les coûts du travail se réduisent au fur et à mesure que les dimensions de l'exploitation augmentent alors que les frais pour les animaux, pour les soins vétérinaires augmentent avec les dimensions de l'exploitation. Les dépenses alimentaires sont plus importantes dans les exploitations moyennes et plus faibles dans les petites exploitations. De plus, l'analyse montre que l'effet le plus significatif dans la détermination du coût total est lié aux aliments céréaliers qui sont à la base de l'alimentation animale. Cette analyse met en lumière la nécessité de financer de nouvelles installations et d'acheter des équipements mécaniques modernes afin d'augmenter la productivité, de réduire les coûts de production et d'améliorer les conditions de travail de tous ceux qui sont employés dans ce secteur.

Mots clé : élevage de porcins, coûts de production, performance, analyse des composantes, financement

▪ **Contribution à l'évolution d'impact de l'émigration internationale sur la région de départ : cas de l'oasis de Fatnassa (sud-ouest de la Tunisie)**

**Taoufik Gammoudi
Mongi Sghaier**

Institut des Régions Arides (IRA), 4119-Medenine- Tunisie

Jel classification : R 580 ; R 230 ; J 620

Résumé

De nos jours, nous assistons à un regain d'intérêt à la question de l'émigration internationale et ses impacts socio-économiques sur les régions de départ. C'est ainsi que l'émigration peut jouer un rôle prépondérant dans le processus de développement comme elle pourra avoir des impacts négatifs. L'objet de ce travail est de contribuer à l'analyse du phénomène d'émigration internationale et son impact sur la région de départ en terme de changements économiques et sociaux. Ainsi, nous analyserons le phénomène migratoire dans une oasis continentale du sud-ouest de la Tunisie (oasis de Fatnassa) et ses impacts moyennant les résultats statistiques des enquêtes et des interviews au sein des ménages. Ce travail a finalement montré que l'accroissement des revenus des ménages émigrants à travers la rente migratoire a contribué à une amélioration des conditions de vie et à des investissements dans divers secteurs agricoles et non agricoles.

Mots clés : émigration internationale, rente migratoire, impact socio-économique, région de départ.

Abstract

At present, a renewed interest in the issue of international migration and its socio-economic impacts on the areas of origin is recorded. Migration can play both an important role in the process of development and have negative impacts. This work intends to analyse the international migration and its impacts on the area of origin in terms of economic and social changes. Particularly, it tries to analyze the impact of the international migration on the oasis of Fatnassa in the south-west of Tunisia. This analysis is based on the statistical results of socio-economic investigations and interviews with the migrating households. This work shows that the increase in migrating households' incomes through the migratory revenue contributed to the improvement of the living conditions of the households and to the investments in agricultural and non agricultural sectors.

Key words: international migration, migratory revenue, socio-economic impact, area of origin.