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MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

2025

ANNUAL REPORT ON THE STATE AND DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURE

AGRICULTURAL REPORT `2025

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List of abbreviations used

AGC	Administrative Grant Contracts
AEP	Agri-environment payments
AACS	Administrative Assistance and Cooperation System
AEAV	Act to Establish an Administrative Violation
BFSA	Bulgarian Food Safety Agency
BANSIC	Bulgarian Survey for Monitoring the Agricultural and Economic Conjuncture
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GVA	Gross value added
BDS	Bulgarian State Standard
Buffaloes	Coupled with production support for buffaloes
BNB	Bulgarian National Bank
BEP	Biological and economic qualities
BRC	Bulgarian Red Cross
Grants	Grants
RES	Renewable energy sources
VMP	Veterinary medicinal products
VOC	Verification of Official Controls Directorate General
CLLD	Community-led local development
HNV	Restoration and maintenance of grasslands of high natural value
C-mr	Coupled with production support of cattle in mountain regions
BIP	Border inspection posts
BCP	Border crossing points
GMO	Genetically Modified Organism
PG	Producer Groups
FRM	Forest reproductive materials
FMPP	Forestry management plans and programs
SG	State Gazette
SF units	State forestry units
VAT	Value Added Tax
SSF	Payments for small farmers
SHU	State hunting farms
SE	State enterprise
SMR	Coupled with production support of ewes and goats in mountain regions
AR-BISS	Additional Redistributive Income Support for Sustainability
SLF	State Land Fund
SMR-EB	Coupled with production support of ewes and goats of endangered breeds
SMR – BP	Coupled with production support of ewes and goats included in breeding programs
SFA/ SF Agriculture	State Fund Agriculture
SFA-PA	State Fund Agriculture - Paying Agency
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development:
EC	European Commission
Eco-OF	Organic farming (livestock) eco scheme
Eco-BEI	Eco scheme for maintenance and improvement of biodiversity and ecological infrastructure
Eco-FE	Eco scheme for maintenance and improvement of biodiversity in forest ecosystems
Eco-PRSP	Eco scheme for preservation and restoration of soil potential - promoting green manuring and organic fertilization
Eco-RPU	Eco scheme to reduce pesticide use
Eco-MPG	Eco scheme for extensive maintenance of permanent grasslands

Eco-DCC	Eco scheme for diversification of cultivated crops
Eco-MP	Eco scheme for ecological maintenance of perennials
MNCP	Multi-annual national control plan of the Republic of Bulgaria
EISA	Electronic information system in agriculture
EFSA	European Food Safety Authority
EERP	European Economic Recovery Plan
EU	European Union
ESF	European Social Fund
EAGF	European Agricultural Guarantee Fund
EMFF	European Maritime and Fisheries Fund
EFF	European Fisheries Fund
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
GMOA	Genetically Modified Organisms Act
AFM	Agricultural and forestry machinery
PGI	Protected geographical indication
SMR	Statutory management requirements
IND	Infectious nodular dermatitis
PDO	Protected designation of origin
SPMA	Seed and Propagating Material Act
OUALA	Ownership and Use of Agricultural Land Act
LICOAMEU	Law on the Implementation of the Common Organization of Agricultural Markets of the European Union
EFA	Executive Forest Agency
EAVW	Executive Agency on Vine and Wine
EAFA	Executive Agency for Fisheries and Aquaculture
EAVTASC	Executive Agency for Variety Testing, Approbation and Seed Control
EASRLB	Executive Agency for Selection and Reproduction in Livestock Breeding
CV-TCGE	Coupled support for vegetables (tomatoes, cucumbers, gherkins and eggplant)
SV-POG	Coupled support for vegetables (onions and garlic) and starch potatoes
SV-CCWM	Coupled support for vegetables (carrots, cabbage, watermelons and melons)
SVg	Coupled support for vegetables - Greenhouse Production
SV-P	Coupled support for vegetables (pepper)
UAA	Utilized agricultural area
SVF-mr	Coupled support for fruits and vegetables in mountain regions
IIS	BFSA Integrated Information System
SF	Coupled support for fruits
SF-C	Coupled support for fruit crops until fruiting
IACS	Integrated Administration and Control System
SPC	Coupled support for protein crops
CPI	Consumer Price Index
UMIS 2020	Unified Management Information System for the EU structural instruments In the in Bulgaria 2020
C-EB	Coupled with production support of cows of endangered breeds
Traffic police	Traffic police
CP	Consulting packages
CN	Combined Nomenclature
MC of RDP 2014-2020	Monitoring Committee of the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020
MoI	Ministry of Interior
RRM	Recovery and Resilience Mechanism
YFS	Additional income support for young farmers
MeC	Coupled with production support for meat cows

MeC-BP	Coupled with production support of meat cows included in breeding programs
DaC	Coupled with production support for dairy cows
DaC-BP	Coupled with production support of dairy cows included in breeding programs
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Food
LAG	Local action groups
FLAG	Fisheries local action groups
MEW	Ministry of Environment and Water
NRA	National Revenue Agency
HACCP	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point
NB	National budget
NGF	National Guarantee Fund
NDRVMI	National Diagnostic Research Veterinary Institute
NMP	National Monitoring Program for Control of Pesticide Residues in and on Foods of Plant Origin
NMPRC	National Monitoring Program for Residue Control
PD	Penal Decree
NRRP	National Recovery and Resilience Plan of the Republic of Bulgaria
NPCGMF	National Program for Control of Genetically Modified Foods
NPCPRF	National Program for Control of Pesticide Residues in and on Foods
NBP	National Bee-keeping Program
HP-1	Payments for mountain areas
HP-2	Payments for areas other than mountain areas with significant natural constraints
HP-3	Payments for areas with specific restrictions
NRL	National Reference Laboratory
NSI	National Statistical Institute
NAAS	National Agricultural Advisory Service
TNM	Total number of microorganisms
TNSC	Total number of somatic cells
OG	Operational groups under the Obligations and Contracts Act
RD Agriculture	Regional Directorates of Agriculture
RDFS	Regional Directorate for Food Safety
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CMO	Common Markets Organization
PO	Producer organizations
BISS	Basic Income Support for Sustainability
OPIC	Operational Program "Innovation and Competitiveness"
OPSESG	Operational Program "Science and Education for Smart Growth"
CFP	Common Fisheries Policy
OPE	Environment Operational Program
OPRD	Regional Development Operational Program
OPFSD	Fisheries Sector Development Operational Program
OPHRD	Human Resources Development Operational Program
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
Cotton	Special support for cotton
MAFP	Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Program
MAFAP	Maritime Affairs, Fisheries and Aquaculture Programme
TMSA1	Transitional national aid for cattle, decoupled with production
TMSA3	Transitional national aid for ewes and/or does, coupled with production
TNST	Transitional national aid scheme for tobacco, decoupled with production
IRALOUA	Implementing Regulations for the Agricultural Land Ownership and Use Act

PPP	Plant protection products
RDP	Rural Development Program
Priority	European Union Priority
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
RDF	Regional Directorate of Forestry
CMD	Council of Ministers Decision
DUS	Distinctness, uniformity and stability
ESS	Electronic services system
LPIS	Land Parcel Identification System
LDS	Local development strategies
IA	Irrigation associations
SPARD	Strategic Plan for Agricultural and Rural Development
AA	Agricultural Academy
FCA	Physical and chemical analysis
FBI	Food and beverage industry
FTST	Food of traditional and specific taste
CLVSEE	Central Laboratory for Veterinary Sanitary Expertise and Ecology
CLPQ	Central Laboratory for Plant Quarantine
CLCTC	Central Laboratory for Chemical Testing and Control
FCRAC	Food Chain Risk Assessment Center
DOM	Digital orthophoto map
PTC	Professional Training Center
HQ	Headquarters
CPVO	Community Plant Variety Office
ESVAC	European Surveillance of Veterinary Antimicrobial Consumption
OIE	International Office of Epizootics
PPPAMS	Plant Protection Products Authorization Management System
RASFF	Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed

SECTION A

I. STATE AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATIONAL ECONOMY. MACROECONOMIC FRAMEWORK. PLACE OF THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR IN THE NATIONAL ECONOMY

According to updated NSI data, in 2024 the gross domestic product generated in the country grew by 3.4% compared to the previous year in real terms.

The nominal volume of GDP for the year is worth BGN 204,907 million (EUR 104,767 million).

The average annual inflation, measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), for 2024 is 2.4%, with inflation slowing to 2.2% as of December compared to a year earlier.

According to data of the BNB for the country's balance of payments, in the course of 2024, a negative trade balance for Bulgaria amounting to BGN 9,874 million (EUR 5,049 million) was formed.

Foreign direct investments in Bulgaria during the year totaled 5,504 million BGN (EUR 2,814 million), which represents 2.7% of GDP.

Table I.1. Main macroeconomic indicators of the Republic of Bulgaria

Indicator	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
GDP at current prices, BGN million	120,979	139,537	168,354	184,875	204,907
GDP at current prices, EUR million	61,856	71,344	86,078	94,525	104,767
Annual real rate of change in GDP,% *	-3.1	7.8	4.1	1.7	3.4
Average annual inflation (CPI), %	1.7	3.3	15.3	9.5	2.4
Inflation at the end of the year (CPI), %	0.1	7.8	16.9	4.7	2.2
Trade balance, BGN million	-3,796	-5,646	-9,943	-7,688	-9,874
Trade balance, EUR million	-1,941	-2,887	-5,084	-3,931	-5,049
FDI, BGN million	5,400	2,808	8,073	9,064	5,504
FDI, EUR million	2,761	1,436	4,128	4,635	2,814

Source: NSI – GDP and inflation, current data for 2024; BNB – data on trade balance, and FDI (according to the principle of the initial direction of investment), preliminary data for 2024.

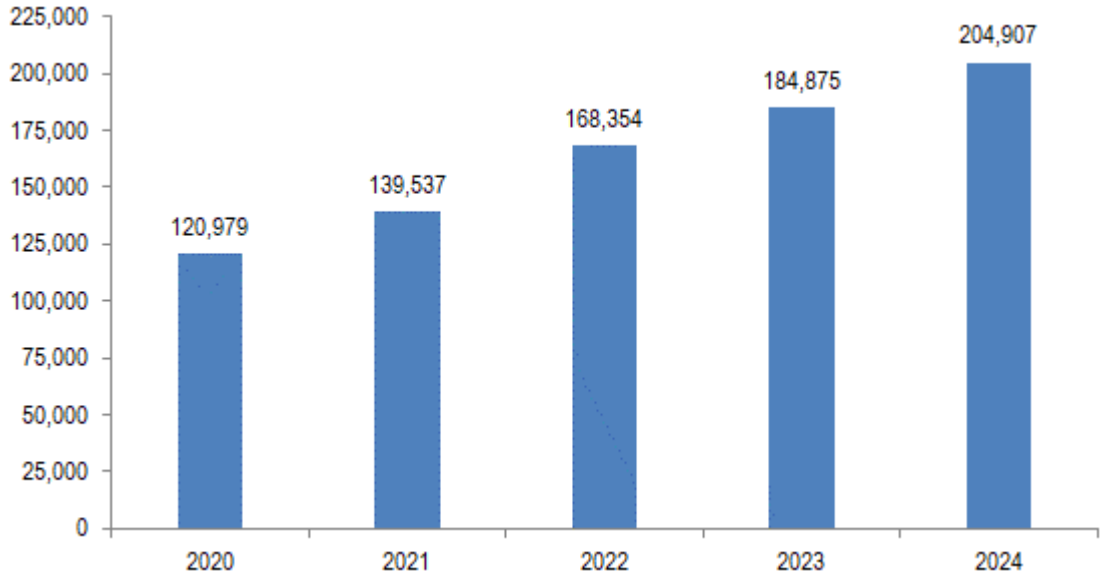
* The real rate of change of GPD was calculated at comparable prices in 2020.

Note: Due to the different methodologies used, the export, import and trade balance data, compiled by the BNB for the balance of payments statistics differ from the export, import and trade balance data, compiled by the NSI for foreign trade statistics.

Gross Domestic Product

Updated data for 2024 indicate real GDP growth of 3.4% on an annual basis. At current prices, the GDP for the year amounted to BGN 204,907 million (EUR 104,767 million), with BGN 31,810 (EUR 16,264) per capita.

Figure I.1. Amount of GDP for the period 2020 - 2024, BGN million



Source: NSI (updated data for 2024)

Gross value added

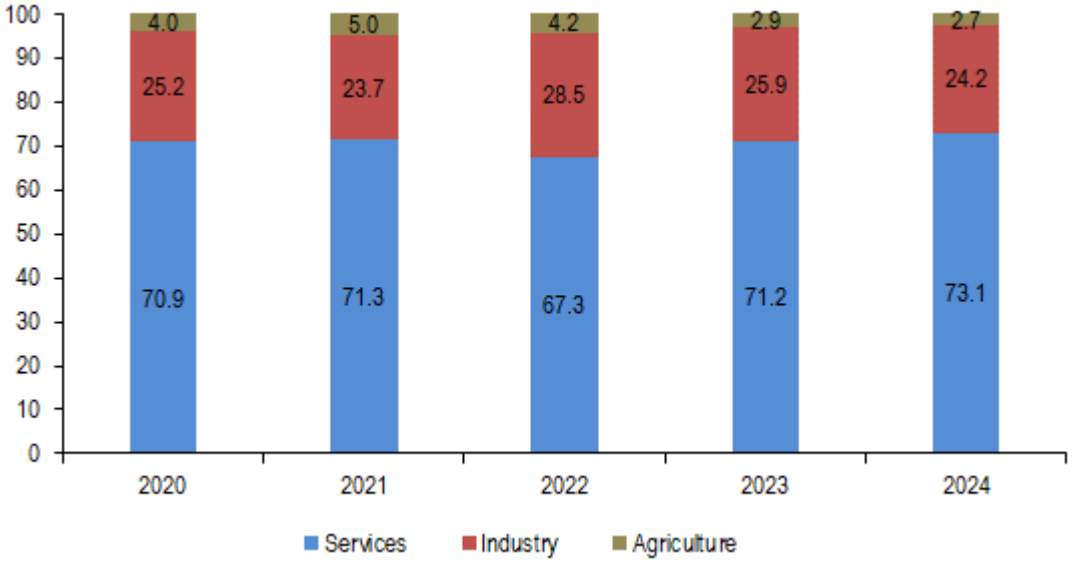
The gross value added generated by the sector of the national economy in 2024 amounted to BGN 178,772 million (EUR 91,405 million) at current prices, showing a real growth of 2.8% compared to the previous year. The added value of the entities from the agricultural sector in 2024 amounted to BGN 4,817 million at current prices. In real terms, it increased by 7.3% on an annual basis.

By economic sectors, the GVA for 2024 is distributed as follows:

- Industry (including construction) - 24.2%;
- Services - 73.1%;
- Agricultural sector (agriculture, forestry and fisheries) - 2.7%.

Comparing with the previous year, the share of the agricultural sector in total GVA shrinks by 0.2 percentage points.

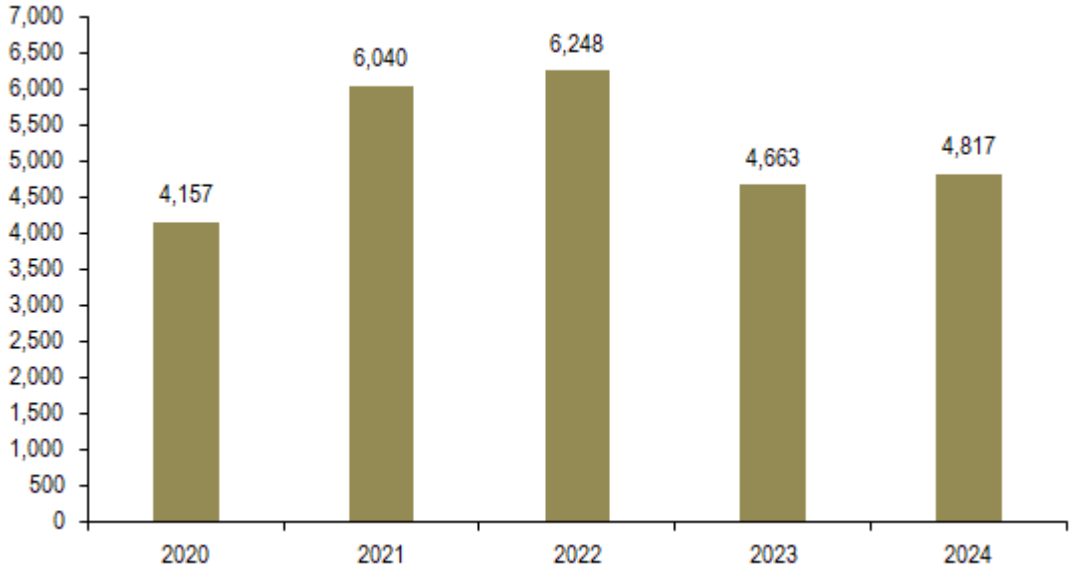
Figure I.2. GVA share by economic sectors for the period 2020 - 2024, %



Source: NSI (updated data for 2024)

According to preliminary seasonally adjusted data from the National Statistical Institute, in the first two quarters of 2025, the annual real growth of the total GVA for the country's economy compared to a year earlier was 2.8% and 2.7%, respectively. With regard to GVA formed by the agricultural sector, for the first quarter of 2025 an increase of 0.3% on an annual basis is reported, and for the second quarter - a decrease of 2.3%.

Figure I.3. GVA in the Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries sector, 2020 - 2024, BGN million

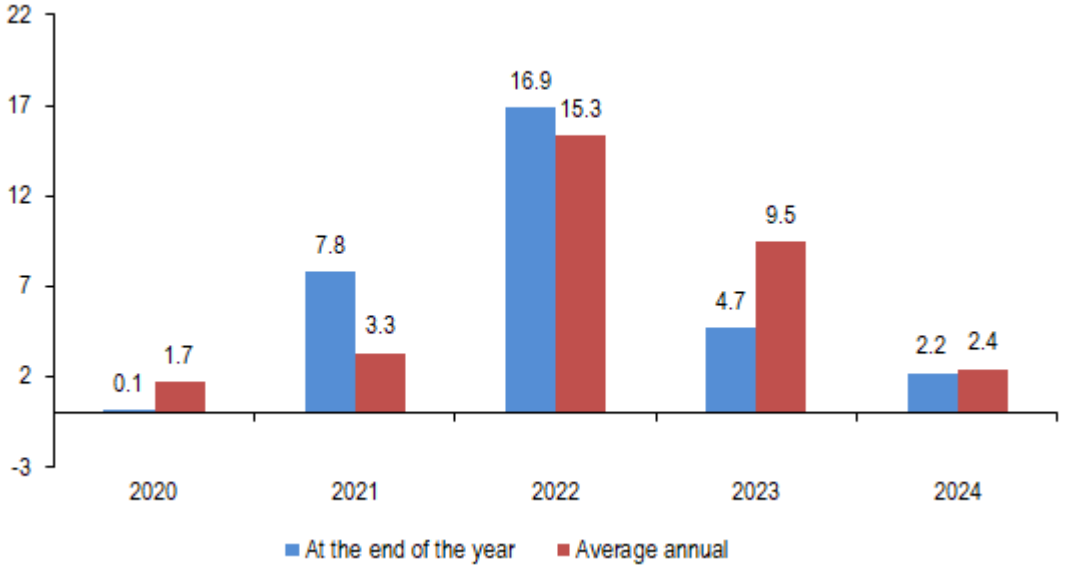


Source: NSI (updated data for 2024)

Inflation

Within 2024 a gradual slowdown in the rate of inflation is observed in the country. Average annual inflation for 2024 is 2.4%, where for December annual inflation compared to the same month of the previous year was 2.2%. As of December 2024, food prices increased by 2.7% on an annual basis, catering prices by 7.3%, and services prices by 4.5%. At the same time, non-food prices decreased by 0.7%.

Figure I.4. Inflation, 2020 - 2024, %



Source: NSI

Employment and unemployment

According to NSI data, in 2024 the total number of employed persons aged 15 and over in the country was 2,932.9 thousand, one thousand more than the previous year. The number of employed persons in the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sector decreased by 14.7% on an annual basis, to 141.9 thousand, which led to a decrease in the relative share of the sector in the employment structure by economic activities to 4.8%.

In 2024, the number of unemployed persons is 127.4 thousand, and the unemployment rate is 4.2%, 0.1 percentage points lower than that reported for 2023.

According to preliminary NSI data, in 2024 the average annual salary of employees under employment contracts was 27,881 levs, which is BGN 3,396 or 13.9% more than the previous year. In the sector of agriculture, forestry and fisheries there was a bit smaller increase on an annual basis - by 11.5%, up to an average of BGN 19,628 per person.

Export and import

According to preliminary data of BNB on the balance of payments, in 2024 Bulgaria's exports amounted to BGN 85,554 million (EUR 43,743 million) - 0.5% above the level of the previous year, representing 41.8% of the country's GDP. Imports increased by 2.8% year-on-year, to BGN 95,428 million (EUR 48,792 million) or 46.6% of GDP.

Thus, in 2024, the negative trade balance for Bulgaria reaches 9,874 million leva (5,049 million euros), with a deficit of 7,688 million leva (3,931 million euros) for 2023.

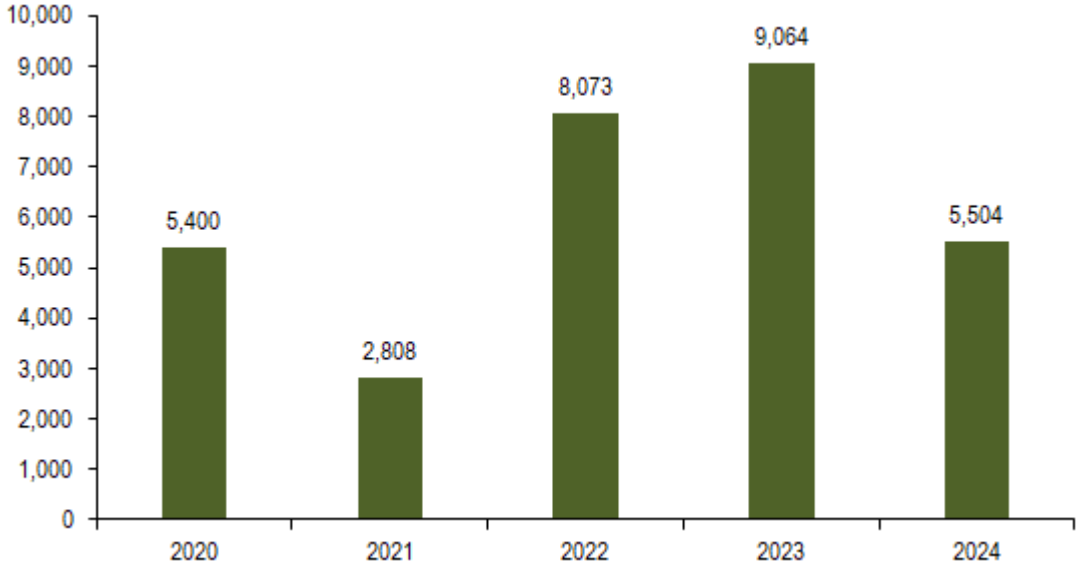
Figure I.5. Export, import and trade balance for the period 2020 - 2024, BGN million

Source: BNB (preliminary data for 2024)

Foreign Direct Investment

According to preliminary data from the Bulgarian National Bank, foreign direct investments in the country for 2024 amount to 5,504 million leva (2,814 million euros), which is 39.3% less than the previous year. Direct investment during the year represented 2.7% of GDP, up from 4.9% in 2023.

Figure I.6. Foreign Direct Investment, 2020 - 2024, BGN million



Source: BNB (preliminary data for 2024)

Within 2024, the most investments were attracted in the sectors "Financial and insurance activities" (EUR 1,506 million) and "Trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles" (EUR 638 million).

II. DEVELOPMENT OF THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR IN 2024 AND FORECASTS FOR 2025

1. Use of agricultural land and structures in agriculture

1.1. Use of agricultural land

The area designated for agriculture in 2024 was 5,215,876 ha, which is about 47% of the territory of the country.

Table II.1. Arable land, utilized agricultural area and land designated for agriculture for the period 2020 - 2024, ha

OCCUPANCY	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
wheat	1,203,964	1,247,453	1,207,969	1,301,482	1,207,279
barley	131,340	139,109	127,270	151,880	190,649
rye and triticale	25,875	35,053	31,327	42,042	29,323
oats	11,386	10,421	13,632	15,210	24,710
corn	642,373	633,735	572,048	595,560	595,092
other cereals	22,757	21,903	14,549	19,930	18,123
sunflower	888,200	840,185	985,591	892,956	984,895
tobacco	5,440	3,015	3,207	2,502	2,399
industrial oilseed crops	120,055	142,838	146,800	86,532	68,744
other industrial crops	65,209	64,261	48,837	45,574	51,575
potatoes	11,524	12,363	10,285	8,948	8,301
peas, beans, broad beans, lentils and other legumes	24,989	30,584	22,198	14,934	28,757
fresh vegetables	25,705	31,015	21,206	23,681	28,293
annual crops for feed	8,345	8,115	5,940	8,528	16,693
meadows sown with legumes	119,134	119,942	104,618	103,168	104,847
meadows sown with cereals	8,152	7,345	5,010	4,402	4,399

OCCUPANCY	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
fallow land	161,565	137,707	132,752	153,480	112,700
greenhouses	1,502	1,704	1,904	2,006	2,105
ARABLE LAND:	**3,477,514**	**3,486,748**	**3,455,143**	**3,472,814**	**3,478,885**
Kitchen gardens	14,231	13,728	13,332	12,739	12,730
orchards	91,339	90,261	83,572	82,561	83,281
vineyards - axenic culture	51,356	50,252	47,551	46,948	46,258
mixed perennials	7,120	6,820	6,310	6,016	5,918
nurseries	1,703	1,709	1,907	1,506	1,508
Total perennials:	151,518	149,042	139,341	137,031	136,966
Permanent grasslands and meadows-orchards	1,403,988	1,397,079	1,414,246	1,380,408	1,385,473
UTILIZED AGRICULTURAL AREA:	**5,047,252**	**5,046,597**	**5,022,062**	**5,002,992**	**5,014,053**
Non-cultivated land	180,651	180,753	204,026	205,490	201,823
LAND DESIGNATED FOR AGRICULTURE:	**5,227,902**	**5,227,350**	**5,226,087**	**5,208,482**	**5,215,876**

Source: MAF, Agrostatistics Department

The **utilized agricultural area (UAA)** is formed by arable land, permanent crops, nurseries, permanent grasslands and kitchen gardens. In 2024, the UAA amounted to 5,014,053 ha (45.2% of the country's territory), an increase of 0.2% compared to the previous year.

The **arable land** includes the areas where crop rotation is applied, the temporary meadows with cereals and legumes, the fallow land and the greenhouses. In 2024, arable land increases by 0.2% annually, to 3,478,885 ha or 69.4% of the country's utilized agricultural area.

Orchards - axenic culture in 2024 form 1.7% of the country's UAA. The areas occupied by them are 83,281 ha or 0.9% more compared to a year earlier.

Vineyards - axenic culture in 2024 there are over 46,258 ha, which is 1.5% less on an annual basis. The share of vineyards in the country's UAA is 0.9%.

Non-cultivated land includes both abandoned permanent crops and arable land, which have not been used for agricultural production for more than five years, but their operational recovery is possible with minimal resources. In 2024, uncultivated land occupied 201,823 ha (about 1.8% of the country's area) - 1.8% below the level of the previous year.

1.2. Use of agricultural parcels

1.2.1. Land Parcel Identification System

The Land Parcel Identification System (LPIS) is a main part of the Integrated Administration and Control System (IACS), on the basis of which areas are declared for support and administrative control is carried out on the submitted applications for support, based on area. Therefore, the data in it must be as up-to-date and reliable as possible.

In 2024, the maintenance of LPIS data covers the following activities:

Update of the digital orthophoto map (DOM) of the country based on aerial photography in 2024 is 32.62% (35,087.46 sq. km);

- Update of the physical blocks under the new DOM - boundaries, method of permanent use, which are used when submitting applications for assistance and carrying out administrative checks on them;
- Carrying out field inspections, using GNSS devices, to measure and survey the inspected physical blocks with a total area of 2024 362,206.37 ha (13 282 physical blocks);
- Recording the findings and measurements from these field inspections in the LPIS databases;

- Updating of digital data on time-stable landscape elements in agricultural lands, as part of the requirements for the information contained in the LPIS;
- Carrying out an assessment of the quality of data in the system and preparing the annual report on the status of the LPIS, as part of the Integrated Administration and Control System to the European Commission;
- Updating of a specialized layer "Permanent grassland" by issuing orders on individual applications.

Planned activities in 2025 related to updating and maintaining the data in the LPIS include:

- Aerial survey of 41,276, 90 sq. km, which is 37.20% of the country's territory;
- Updating the data on boundaries and the way of permanent use of physical blocks;
- Recording the findings and measurements from these field inspections in the LPIS databases;
- Creation and updating of data on time-stable landscape elements;
- Updating of a specialized layer "Permanent grassland" by issuing orders on individual applications;
- Conducting an assessment of the quality of data in the LPIS and preparing an assessment report.

1.3. Registration of farmers

Pursuant to Ordinance No. 3 of 1999, the Register of Farmers serves to collect information about farmers and their activities in order to support agriculture and rural development.

The activity on keeping of a register of farmers covers registration of new farmers, re-registration and updating of the data for already registered ones, as well as deregistration of farmers upon termination of their activity.

In the 2023/2024 business year, the total number of registered farmers was 67,742, and by June 2025 - 66,310, with the deadline for registration of new farmers in the 2024/2025 business year being 30.09.2025.

Table II.2. Farmers registered under Ordinance No. 3/1999

Business year	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025*
Total number of registered farmers	80,905	76,965	72,371	70,677	67,742	66,310*

Source: MAF, LPIS
**Data as of June 2025.*

1.4. Participation of the State Land Fund in land relations in Bulgaria

1.4.1. Provision of State Land Fund own terrains for rent or lease

Agricultural lands from the State Land Fund (SLF) are provided for lease and rent following a tender procedure in accordance with the provisions of the Agricultural Land Ownership and Use Act (ALOUA) and the Rules for implementation of the ALOUA (RIALOUA). As of 2024, the total amount of agricultural properties provided for rent or lease by the SLF to individuals and legal entities amounted to 90,017 ha.

In 2024, based on the provisions of Art. 24a, para. 1 of the ALOUA and Art. 47b, para. 1 of the RIALOUA, tenders were held for renting and leasing of available agricultural lands from the SLF in the country for business year 2024/2025 business year. Of the announced 51,598 ha of available agricultural land, 41,048 ha were contracted, and a total of 2,366 lease/rental agreements were concluded.

1.4.2. Distribution of pastures, grasslands and meadows, part of a state and municipal land fund pursuant to art. 37 and the ALOUA

The pastures, grasslands and meadows part of the state and municipal land fund are leased or rented to owners or users of livestock facilities with grazing farm animals registered in the Integrated Information System of the BFSA, according to the number and type of registered animals, at prices determined by a market mechanism.

The areas determined for the 2023/2024 economic year from the municipal land fund (MLF) are 145,992 ha for general use and 367,113 ha for individual use. The submitted applications for allocation are 3,788 for 123,477 ha, with 76,887 ha allocated for general use, and 107,009 ha for individual use of pastures and meadows. The pastures and meadows declared by order of the Minister of Agriculture and Food from the DPF amount to 28,120 ha, 272 applications have been submitted. The concluded contracts for the use of properties by the SLF, after distribution, are 129 for 3,138 ha. The tender procedures carried out pursuant to Article 37i, Paragraph 13 of the Law on the Land Use and the concluded one-year lease contracts for properties from the SLF are 202 for 7,168 ha.

1.4.3. Establishment of limited rights in rem in SLF lands

In 2024, 52 requests from mayors of municipalities, legal entities and individuals were considered in relation to investment intentions for construction or expansion of site and/or linear sites affecting lands owned by the SLF, were considered. Pursuant to Art. 24c of the ALOUA, 35 preliminary consents were prepared for assigning the elaboration of a detailed development plan for the design of sites and routes in connection with the construction of water supply and sewage networks, routes of power lines and elements of the technical infrastructure.

5 contracts for establishment of limited rights in rem in lands from the state land fund were concluded on the grounds of art. 24 (1) of the ALOUA, Art. 47 (20, 21, 24) of the IRALOUA.

1.5. Activities on the transfer of registered legal grounds for the use of agricultural land

In relation to ensuring the implementation of the Direct Payments 2024 campaign, digital, text and geographic data from the restored property map and cadastral maps and registers of legal grounds for use were periodically collected, processed, verified and loaded into the Integrated Administration and Control System of State Fund Agriculture - Paying Agency. Pursuant to the provisions of the Farmers Support Act, 52,302 applications have been submitted by applicants under interventions for direct support for 3,873,070 ha.

During the campaign, a total of 13,673,039 registered legal grounds for 4,659 lands passed through a pre-specified set of checks, processing and controls. Of these, 8,287,730 properties are within actual boundaries for area of 4,430,283 ha and 5,385,309 are in land consolidation areas under voluntary agreements and/or allocations over an area of 3,027,350 ha.

For the Direct Payments 2024 campaign, 290 farmers were subjected to additional checks on the presence or absence of legal grounds for the use of agricultural land, as a result of which adjustment data was submitted to SFA-PA.

1.6. Agricultural Land Protection Activities

In 2024, the Agricultural Land Commission considered a total of 1,208 proposals for changing the designation of agricultural land, issuing decisions for a total area of 11,640 ha. Of these, 1,167 have entered into force for an area of 11,260 ha.

The commissions at the District Directorates of Agriculture have considered a total of 1,868 proposals for changing the purpose of agricultural land. Decisions have been made for an area of 5,910 ha in total, of which 1,755 have entered into force, for an area of 5,508 ha.

The procedure for changing the purpose of agricultural land for non-agricultural needs in accordance with the Agricultural Land Protection Act is two-stage and it includes: first stage - approval of a design site; second stage - changing the purpose of the agricultural land. A mandatory document for the first stage is an effective decision or opinion issued pursuant to chapter six of the Environmental Protection Act and under Art. 31 of the Biodiversity Act of the respective Regional Environment and Water Inspection Agency (REWIA) - requirement of Art. 21 (1) of the Occupational Safety and Health Act and Art. 30 (1.6) of the Regulations for the implementation of the Agricultural Land Protection Act. The commissions under Art. 17 (1) of the Agricultural Land Protection Act do not approve sites and do not change the purpose of agricultural land if there is an opinion issued by REWIA/MoEW, in which it is recorded that the construction of the site will have an adverse effect on species and habitats.

Within 2024, no new areas were determined for reclamation and no reclaimed land was accepted to be added to lands for agricultural use.

2. Economic and Production results in 2024 and forecast data for 2025

2.1. Economic Accounts for Agriculture for 2024

Table II.3. Main economic indicators for agriculture for the period 2022 - 2024, BGN million

	Indicators	2022	*Change 2023/2022 %*	2023	*Change 2024/2023 %*	2024
1	Value of crop and livestock production (at producer prices*), including:	12,113.7	-20,3%	9,649.2	-8,8%	8,798.0
1.1	Crop production	9,796.1	-27,1%	7,137.9	-9,5%	6,456.7
1.2	Livestock production	2,317.6	8,4%	2,511.3	-6,8%	2,341.3
2	Agricultural services	595.3	0,1%	595.7	-8,0%	547.8
3	Non-agricultural inseparable secondary activities	273.2	9,4%	299.0	-0,3%	298.1
4	Value of gross production from the Agriculture sector (at producer prices *) (line 4 = line 1.1 + line 1.2 + line 2 + line 3)	12,982.20	-18,8%	10,543.90	-8,5%	9,643.90
5	Value of final production from the Agriculture sector (at basic prices**)	12,901.9	-18,2%	10,554.4	-8,0%	9,707.5
6	Intermediate consumption (excluding internal turnover)	6,988.7	-9,3%	6,337.4	-10,0%	5,700.8
7	Gross value added at basic prices	5,913.2	-28,7%	4,217.0	-5,0%	4,006.7

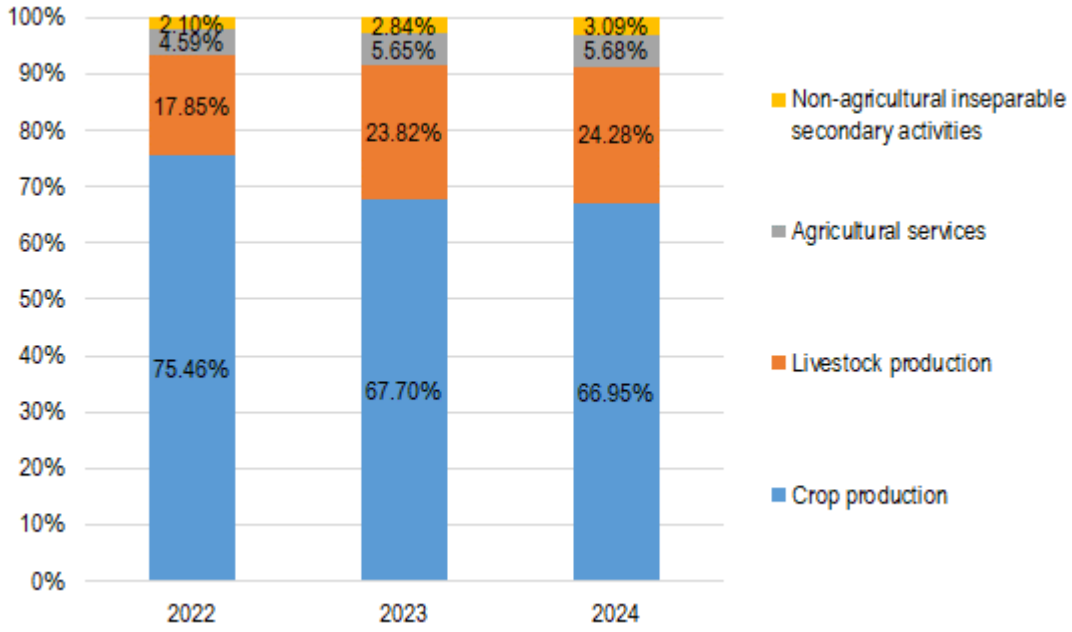
Source: NSI
* Producer prices - prices, excl. subsidies on products
** Basic prices - prices, incl. subsidies on products

2.1.1. Value of gross production of the Agriculture sector

The value of the gross production of the Agriculture sector for 2024 at current producer prices amounted to BGN 9,643.90 million, showing a decrease of 8,5% compared to the previous year (Appendix 2). It is formed by the value of:

- Crop production - BGN 6,456.7 million (with a share of 66.9%);
- Livestock production - BGN 2,341.3 million (with a share of 24.3%);
- Agricultural services - BGN 547.8 million (with a share of 5.7%);
- Production from inseparable secondary activities - BGN 298.1 million (with a share of 3.1%).

Figure II.1. Structure of the value of gross production from the Agriculture sector for the period 2022 - 2024, %



Source: MAF calculations based on NSI data

The decrease in the total gross agricultural output in 2024 is mainly due to the decline in the Plant Production sub-sector (by BGN 681.2 million or 9.5% compared to the previous year). The value of production from the Livestock sub-sector also decreased - by 170.0 million leva or 6.8%, and that of Agricultural Services - by 47.9 million leva (8.0%). Gross output from non-agricultural inseparable activities remains at the level of the previous year.

A significant decline compared to 2023 was recorded in the leading direction of the plant growing sub-sector - grain production - by 690.0 million leva (16.4%).

An increase in gross production in value terms is observed in the direction of Vegetables (excluding potato production) - by 30.7 million leva (6.2%), Fruits - by 28.5 million leva (9.0%) and Protein crops - by 11.3 million leva (41.7%).

In the Livestock sub-sector in 2024, growth was observed compared to the previous year only in the Cattle sector - by BGN 13.4 million (7.6%).

The largest decrease is in the poultry sector:

- Egg production - by 93.6 million leva (23.6%);
- Poultry farming - by 31.5 million leva (7.2%).

Gross production in the dairy sector decreased by 19.2 million leva (2.7%), and in the Sheep and Goats sector by 15.4 million leva (8.4%). The value of pig production remains at the previous year's level.

The total amount of agricultural products sold (crop and livestock products) in 2024 amounted to BGN 8,631.3 million or 89.5% of the gross production of the Agriculture sector (Annex 1). The crop production sold during the year amounted to BGN 6,450.3 million (66.9% of the gross production), and the sold livestock production - amounted to BGN 2,181.0 million (22.6% of the gross production). Outside the sector, crop and livestock production were sold for BGN 7,942.4 million (including export), and within sales between agricultural enterprises - for BGN 689.2 million.

The agricultural units used for production purposes agricultural products (seeds, planting material, feed, etc.) produced during the year in the amount of BGN 362.3 million (3.8% of gross production).

Agricultural production was used for self-consumption on farms - mainly agricultural products processed on the farm, worth 340.0 million leva (3.5% of gross production).

Produced goods - fixed capital (production of perennial crops and productive animals/livestock) for own needs amounted to BGN 154.0 million (1.6% of gross production).

2.1.2. Final Production Value

The value of final production from the Agriculture sector (value of production after deducting internal turnover) at basic prices (prices including subsidies by products) for 2024 amounted to BGN 9,707.5 million and showed a decrease of 8.0% (by BGN 846.9 million) compared to the previous year (Appendices 4 and 5). The decline is due to the simultaneous decrease in the physical volume and purchase prices of agricultural production.

The structure of the final production in agriculture for 2024 preserved the formed ratios between the branches of the sector, outlined in terms of the gross production value. And in the final production the relative share of the crop production is the largest - 66.4%. For 2024, the relative share of livestock production was 24.9%%, of agricultural services - 5.6%% and of the production of inseparable non-agricultural secondary activities - 3.1%.

Cereals and oilseed crops remain with the largest share in the final production value in the sector. The two groups of crops together (respectively cereals - amounting to BGN 3,411.5 million and oilseed crops - BGN 1,547.9 million) account for 51.1%% of the value of production in the Agriculture sector. Out of these, the following had the greatest contribution to the formation of the final production in the sector in 2024:

- Soft wheat - a share of 24.3% with BGN 2,356.5 million final production;

Despite the registered growth of 2.7% in the physical volume of soft wheat production, the value of production decreased by BGN 274.1 million (by 10.4%) compared to the previous year, under the influence of price factors (a decrease in production prices of 12.8% compared to 2023 levels).

- Sunflower - share of 14.4%, with 1,402.0 million leva;

In sunflower production, a decline in the physical volume of production by 8.8% was observed, accompanied by an increase in prices by 8.5% on an annual basis. As a result, in value terms, the direction remains at almost the same level as the previous year.

- Corn for grain - share of 5.8% with 563.6 million leva;

In the case of grain corn in 2024, there is a serious decrease in final production on an annual basis - by 43.8% or by 440.1 million leva. It is the result of a decrease in prices (by 15.5%) combined with a serious contraction in the physical volume of production by over a third compared to the previous year (by 33.5%).

The Vegetables subsector (excluding potato production) creates production worth 559.2 million leva and forms a share of 5.8% of the final production in the sector. There was an increase in the value of the final production of vegetables of 5.0% (26.6 million leva) on an annual basis as a result of the increased physical volume of production (by 6.5%), despite the slight decrease in prices (by 1.4% in total).

In 2024 the Fruit sub-sector occupies a share of 4% (with BGN 391.9 million) of the value of final production from the Agriculture sector. The subsector recorded a growth of 10.3% (by 36.5 million leva) as a result of the increase in the physical volume of production of all types of fruit (except dessert grapes) by 13.7% despite the known decrease in prices by 3% in total.

The final output of the Livestock sub-sector in 2024 amounted to BGN 2,414.0 million and marked a decrease of 4.8% compared to the previous year as a result of both a slight decrease in the physical volume of livestock production - by 1.7%, and a slightly more significant decrease in prices by 3.1%.

Growth is observed only in the Cattle sector - the value of production increases compared to the previous year 2023 by 8% as a result of an increase in physical volume (by 3%) and producer prices (by 4.8%).

The divisions of the livestock sub-sector with the largest contribution to the total value of final production from the Agriculture sector in 2024 were:

- Milk production - a share of 7.5%, with BGN 725.5 mln final production (with BGN 9.4 million less compared to 2023);

Milk production in value terms decreased by 1.3% on an annual basis - as a result of the contraction of the physical volume at a rate of 2.6%, outpacing the rate of increase in purchase prices (1.4%).

- Pig farming - share of 4.9%, with 478.8 million leva;

The value of final pig production in 2024 remains at the level of the previous year, despite the growth in the physical volume of production by 7.4%. The negative impact is the decrease in purchase prices at a rate of 7%, similar to the rate of increase in production.

- Poultry farming - share of 4.2%, with 405.4 million leva;

Despite the slight increase in the physical volume of production (by 1.8%), the sub-sector recorded a decrease of 7.2% in value terms compared to the previous year, 2023, under the influence of a significant decrease in purchase prices (by 8.9%).

- Egg production - share of 2.9%, with 276.7 million leva;

In the egg-laying sub-sector, there is a contraction in the physical volume of production by 9%, accompanied by an even more significant decrease in purchase prices by 12%. As a result, the value of production in 2024 decreases on an annual basis significantly by 20%, or by 69.1 million leva.

- Sheep and goat breeding - share of 2.2%, with 213.2 million leva.

The physical volume of production fell by a significant 14.5% on an annual basis, which could not be compensated by the increase in purchase prices (by 8.7%). As a result, the value of the final output from the Sheep and Goat Breeding sector decreased by 7.1% (by 16.2 million leva) compared to the previous year, 2023.

2.1.3. Intermediate consumption

The intermediate consumption used to generate the final production in the sector in 2024 amounted to BGN 5,700.8 million (Appendices 3 and 4).

The most significant share in its structure is occupied by the costs of feed - 21.1% (1,203.8 million BGN), fuels and oils - 18.4% (1,051.0 million BGN) and fertilizers and soil improvers - 16.7% (950.1 million BGN), followed by the costs of agricultural services 9.6% (547.8 million BGN) and for plant protection products and pesticides - 8.9% (506.1 million BGN).

Intermediate consumption contracted by 10% (636.6 million leva) compared to the previous year as a result of a decrease in the physical volume of almost all goods and services consumed for production purposes (by 7.3% in total), as well as in their prices (by 2.9% in total).

In value terms, the decrease was largest in fertilizers and soil improvers - by BGN 202.6 million - as a result of the drop in prices compared to the previous year. The decrease in feed (by 147.2 million leva) is a consequence of both the decrease in the volume of feed consumed and the decrease in their prices. The group of fuels and oils reported a decline of BGN 120.5 million, driven by a contraction in the consumption of energy carriers, combined with a slight decrease in their prices during the year.

In 2024, intermediate consumption represents 58.7% of the value of production, or 58.7 units of intermediate consumption are used to create 100 units of final output from the Agriculture sector.

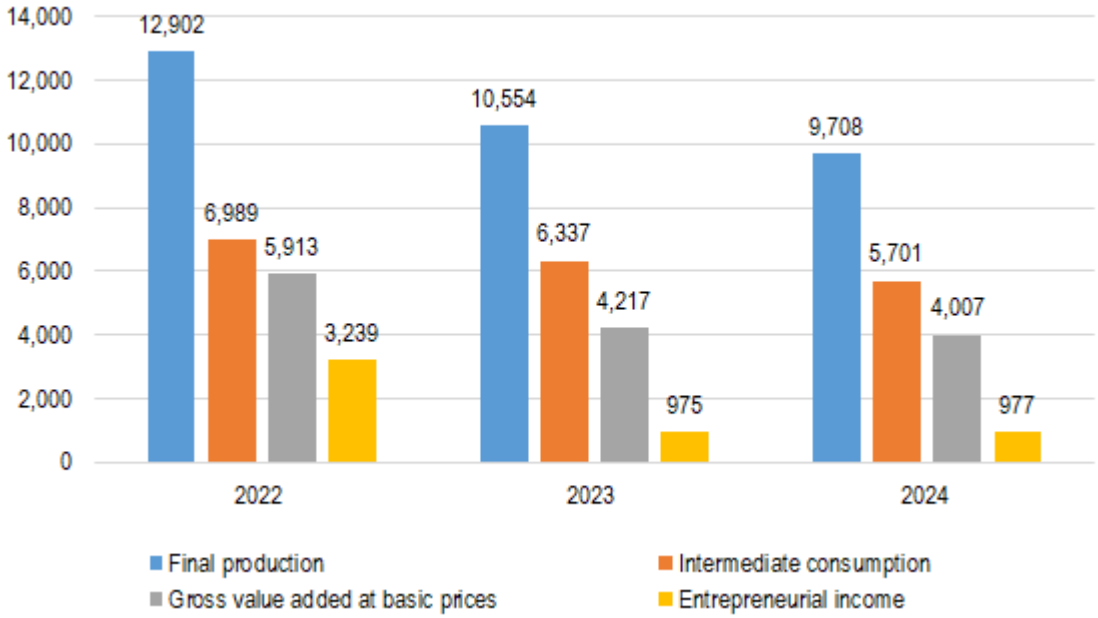
2.1.4. Gross value added

The gross value added created in the Agriculture sector in 2024 amounted to 4,006.7 million BGN (at current basic prices) and marked a decrease of 5% (210.3 million BGN) on an annual basis (Appendices 4 and 5).

2.1.5. Entrepreneurial income

For 2024, entrepreneurial income in the sector amounts to BGN 977.0 million, remaining at the level of the previous year (Appendix 4).

Figure II.2. Basic economic indicators for the Agriculture sector for the period 2022 - 2024, BGN million



Source: NSI

2.2. Plant Growing Production Results

The reporting year 2024 is characterized by dynamic agro-climatic conditions.

In January 2024, periods with temperatures above and below climatic norms alternated. The sharp cold snap in the second half of the second ten days prevented the resumption of vegetation processes in wheat and barley. During the third ten days, the average daily temperatures were within limits that kept the autumn crops dormant.

On most days of February, agrometeorological conditions were determined by temperatures 4–6°C above the biological minimum necessary for the resumption and progress of vegetation processes in winter grain crops. Precipitation was around and below normal in all agricultural regions of the country.

In March, temperatures were above climatic norms and precipitation in most field regions was below the norm for the month, with the exception of places in Western and Central Bulgaria. At the beginning of the third decade, negative minimum temperatures and critical values for the flowers and young buds of stone fruit species were recorded in separate places in the eastern and southern regions.

After the high temperatures in mid-April, which reached values above 33°C in places in the Danube Plain, in the second ten days there was a decrease in daily temperatures and a change in agrometeorological conditions. The rainfall had a favorable effect on the vegetation of autumn crops and the initial phases of the development of sunflower and corn.

In most of the country, with the exception of places in the extreme northeastern and southwestern regions, the above-average May precipitation had a beneficial effect on autumn crops, which were undergoing critical moisture phases. The increase in temperatures, reaching and exceeding 30°C in the last days of the month, accelerated the development of agricultural crops. In places in Western, Central Bulgaria and the Upper Thracian Lowland (Vidin, Kyustendil, Lovech, Troyan, Plovdiv region) hailstorms were registered during the month, which caused varying degrees of damage to agricultural crops.

The agro-meteorological conditions in June were characterized by hot weather with extremely high temperatures, reaching 39–40°C, as well as frequent hailstorms, which caused serious, and in many places in the country, irreparable damage to agricultural crops. In the regions of Botevgrad, Veliko Tarnovo, Lovech, Shumen, Haskovo, Sliven, Yambol, the fallen hailstones reached the size of a walnut and destroyed a significant part of the spring and vegetable crops, as well as the areas with fruit trees and vineyards. Damage was also recorded to winter grain crops - lodging of crops and scattering of the ripe grain harvest. Above-normal temperatures in June, with maximum values of 35-40°C, shortened the interphase periods in the development of

agricultural crops and caused heat stress in field crops, especially crops grown under non-irrigated conditions.

During most days of the second and third ten days of July, relatively dry and hot weather was recorded, which led to shortening of the interphase periods. A limiting factor for the development of corn and sunflower was the deficit of soil moisture. The recorded maximum temperatures between 35-40°C had a negative impact on the crops during the reproductive stage. At the beginning of the month, short-term precipitation, thunderstorms, and hail were recorded in many parts of the country.

In August 2024, below-normal precipitation was measured in almost all field regions of the country. At the beginning of the month, due to the passage of a cold atmospheric front, intense precipitation, accompanied by storms and hail, was reported in some parts of Central, Northeastern Bulgaria and the Rhodope Mountains. During the first ten days of August, a limiting factor for the development of late crops was the deficit of soil moisture. During the second ten days, dry and hot weather, with extremely high maximum temperatures up to and above 40°C, put late-season crops in a state of heat stress. The deepening summer drought and prolonged periods of extremely high temperatures also caused damage to perennial crops - leaf scorch and premature leaf fall in some fruit species. High temperatures combined with low atmospheric humidity caused the buds to drop in late-season vegetable crops. Due to the deepening soil moisture deficit, a significant portion of the late corn hybrids were ensiled before they completed their development.

High temperatures at the beginning of September, with maximum values in most of the field regions up to and above 34-35°C, led to a shortening of the final phases of development and accelerated ripening in late field crops. In the middle of the month, thermal conditions normalized. In places in the eastern parts of the country, the regions of Silistra, Dobrich and Stara Zagora, precipitation of economic importance fell, which improved the conditions for the development of second crops and late-season vegetables.

In October, the drought in most of the country deepened, which prevented the sowing of winter cereals and the normal course of the initial phases of the vegetation of the sown autumn crops.

The rainfall in early November was of economic importance and the conditions for the initial phases of the wheat and barley vegetation in Northeastern Bulgaria and in the regions along the Black Sea coast improved. In the rest of the country, soil moisture deficit remained a limiting factor for the development of winter grain crops. The precipitation during the third ten days was of extreme importance for the survival of some of the late-sown crops that germinated in Southern Bulgaria.

During most of December, above-normal temperatures and improved water reserves in the soil created conditions for extending the autumn vegetation of winter grain crops in the Polish regions of the country. The unusually high temperatures at the end of the astronomical autumn had an effective impact on the late-sown crops, which were in the early stages of development. Some of the sprouted winter grain crops reached the necessary temperature sum to enter the first-second leaf formation phase. At the beginning of the third decade, there was a decrease in temperatures, a slowdown and cessation of vegetation processes in winter grain crops. In the last days of the month, agrometeorological conditions took on a winter character, with no critical minimum temperatures recorded for wintering agricultural crops.

The reported damage to agricultural crops in 2024 is the result of adverse weather events - frost/frost, storm/continuous rain, flood, hail and drought/drought.

2.2.1. Grain production

In 2024, there was an increase in the production of wheat, barley, oats and rice compared to the previous year, contributed by both the larger size of harvested areas (except for wheat) and increased productivity per unit area. Lower production during the year was harvested from grain corn, rye and triticale.

Table II.4. Cereal production from harvests `2023 and `2024

Crop	Harvested areas (ha)			Average yield (tons/ha)			Production (tons)		
	2023	2024	Change 2024/2023	2023	2024	Change 2024/2023	2023	2024	Change 2024/2023
Wheat	1,220,906	1,194,507	-2,2%	5.43	5.73	5,5%	6,623,700	6,846,316	3,4%
Rye	7,655	6,438	-15,9%	1.81	1.99	9,9%	13,858	12,800	-7,6%

Crop	Harvested areas (ha)			Average yield (tons/ha)			Production (tons)		
	2023	2024	Change 2024/2023	2023	2024	Change 2024/2023	2023	2024	Change 2024/2023
Triticale	35,150	20,867	-40,6%	3.22	3.05	-5,3%	112,993	63,728	-43,6%
Barley	149,980	196,376	30,9%	5.14	5.36	4,3%	770,347	1,052,483	36,6%
Oat	13,005	23,573	81,3%	2.25	2.26	0,4%	29,318	53,348	82,0%
Corn for grain	534,637	503,025	-5,9%	4.48	3.18	-29,0%	2,393,122	1,597,935	-33,2%
Rice	11,203	12,153	8,5%	6.08	5.68	-6,6%	68,070	69,010	1,4%

Source: MAF, Agrostatistics Department

Wheat

Wheat production in 2024 amounted to 6,846.3 thousand tons - 3.4% more than in 2023, which is due to the favorable climatic conditions in the process of crop development, which led to an increase in the average yield by 5.5%. The areas sown with wheat in 2024 were 1,197,036 ha, 2.2% less year-on-year, of which 1,194,507 ha were harvested (-2.2% compared to a year earlier). The relative share of wheat areas to the total amount of arable land is 34.7%.

The Northwestern region has the largest share of harvested wheat areas in the country - 22.6%, followed by the Northeastern region - with 22.3% and the Southeastern region - with 20.7%.

According to data from a BANSIC survey by the Agrostatistics Department, in 2024, wheat after wheat was grown on 6.4% of the areas with grain crops, compared to 4.8% in the previous year. Good crop rotation has been carried out on about 92.7% of the areas with wheat - harvest `2024. After trench crops, 79.8% of the areas were sown with wheat, compared to 79.3% in 2023. 3.2% of fallow land was included in the wheat crop rotation during the year.

Rye and triticale

Rye grain production - harvest `2024 is 7.6% below the previous year's level, as a result of a 15.9% decrease in harvested areas.

The harvested area of triticale in 2024 decreased by 40.6% compared to 2023, and the average yield decreased by 5.3%, leading to a 43.6% drop in production, to 63,728 tons.

The largest harvested areas of rye and triticale are observed in the Southeast region - 2,437 ha and 5,993 ha, respectively.

Barley

In 2024, the country produced 1,052.5 thousand tons of barley. This represents a growth of 36.6% on an annual basis, reporting an increase in both harvested areas - by 30.9% - and average yield - by 4.3%.

The largest area of barley in 2024 was harvested in the Southeastern region (24.3% of the total for the country), followed by the Northeastern region (23.4%).

From the perspective of predecessors, good crop rotation was done on 72.9% of the barley areas. The highest share is again that of sunflower - 40.9%. The fallows included in the barley crop rotation in 2024 are 5.6%. After trench crops, 58.5% of the areas were sown with barley.

Oat

With 81.3% more harvested areas and a 0.4% higher average yield per hectare, oat production in 2024 increased by 82% compared to the previous year. The largest area of oats was harvested in the Southwestern region (23.2% of the total for the country).

Corn for grain

The corn grain produced in 2024 shrinks by 33.2% year-on-year, to 1,597.9 thousand tons. The dry and hot weather during the summer months adversely affected the development of the corn hybrids - premature

yellowing of the leaves and poor seeding of the cobs, which led to a decrease in the average yield by 29%.

The areas sown with grain corn in 2024 are 511,555 ha, of which 503,025 ha were harvested - 5.3% and 5.9% less, respectively, compared to 2023.

The Northwestern region has the largest share in the total harvested corn fields during the year (36.3%), followed by the North-central region (28%) and the Northeastern region (25.6%).

In corn, the largest share of predecessor wheat is 63.2%. Barley, included in the corn crop rotation this year, represents 4.9%.

Rice

In 2024, the country produced 69,010 tons of rice paddy - 1.4% more than the previous year. There was an increase in harvested areas by 8.5%, but a decrease in average yield by 6.6%.

2.2.2. Oilseed crops

The main oilseed crops grown in our country are sunflower and winter rapeseed.

Table II.5. Oilseed crop production from harvests `2023 and `2024

Crop	Harvested areas (ha)			Average yield (tons/ha)			Production: (tons)		
	2023	2024	Change 2024/2023	2023	2024	Change 2024/2023	2023	2024	Change 2024/2023
Sunflower	869,907	929,145	6,8%	2.03	1.73	-14,8%	1,764,594	1,609,367	-8,8%
Rapeseed	79,794	64,264	-19,5%	2.57	2.46	-4,3%	204,788	158,134	-22,8%

Source: MAF, Agrostatistics Department

Sunflower

Sunflower production in 2024 amounted to 1,609.4 thousand tons. The quantity is 8.8% below the previous year's level, with the increase in harvested areas (by 6.8%, to 929,145 ha) partially compensating for the decrease in average yield (by 14.8%, to 1.73 tons/ha). The sown areas with sunflower in 2024 are 933,532 ha, 6.8% more on an annual basis.

Sunflower areas in the Northeast region represent 23.9% of the total harvested sunflower areas in the country in 2024. The Northwest region follows with 23.1%.

The largest share of sunflower is located on a wheat predecessor - 68%. Barley included in the sunflower crop rotation during the year is 7.4%. The share of sunflower grown as a monoculture is 2.7%, compared to 2.3% in the previous year.

Rapeseed

In 2024, 158.1 thousand tons of rapeseed were harvested in the country, which is 22.8% less than in 2023. The sown areas with rapeseed in 2024 were 66,343 ha, of which 64,264 ha were harvested, respectively 17.6% and 19.5% below the level of the previous year. The average yield also decreased by 4.3%.

2.2.3. Grain market monitoring

In 2024, there is a slight increase in the total grain storage capacity in Bulgaria.

During the year the Register of grain storage sites in the country was updated, as 42 new grain storage sites were entered, 183 circumstances of the registered sites were changed and 28 were deleted. As of 31.12.2024 there are a total of 4,245 active grain storage facilities in the country, with a capacity of 18,930,027 tons.

2.2.4. Quality grading of harvest 2024

In order to carry out a representative characterization of wheat, barley, sunflower, corn and rice husk from the 2024 harvest, 3,248 samples of 3,871,906 tons of the harvested grain were taken and analyzed.

Wheat quality grading in the 2024 harvest

The final results of the laboratory analyses of average wheat samples from 2024 harvest conducted by the BFSA show that 73% of the wheat produced in the 2023 harvest is of high baking quality and is classified as First, Second and Second B group, respectively, with 48.7% in the previous year. In 2024, there was a significant increase in the quantity of high-quality wheat compared to a year earlier, due to good metrological conditions.

The allocation of grain in groups is as follows:

- First group - 4.7%, compared to 1.6% for 2023;
- Second group - 15.8%, up from 11.8% in 2023;
- Second B group - 52.5%, with 35.3% for 2023;
- Third group - 27.0%, up from 51.3% in 2023.

The average values of the main indicators that determine the quality characteristics of the grain from the 2024 harvest for the country are:

- moisture content: 10.3% ± 0.5%, compared to 11.1% ± 0.5% for 2023;
- hectolitre mass: 77.0 kg / 100 dm3 ± 2.2 kg / 100 dm3, at 75.2 kg / 100 dm3 ± 2.3 kg / 100 dm3 for 2023;
- wet gluten yield: 25% ± 3.0%, at 21.3% ± 2.6% for 2023;
- gluten release: 7.7 mm ± 1.7 mm, at 6.9 mm ± 1.2 mm for 2023;
- baking strength: 55.4 cond. units ± 5.5 cond. units, compared to 55 cond. units ± 4.6 cond.units for 2023;
- protein content: 12.1% w.w. ± 1.1% w.w., at 11.7% w.w ± 1.1% w.w for 2023;
- falling number: 385.9 sec. ± 36.5 sec., compared to 372.8 sec. ± 38.5 sec. for 2023;

Barley quality grading in the 2024 harvest

The average values of the main quality indicators of the barley harvest in 2024 were as follows:

- protein content: 11.5% ± 0.8%, at 11.5% ± 0.7% for 2023;
- hectolitre mass: 62.9 kg/100 dm3 ± 2.3 kg/100 dm3, compared to 61.1 kg/100 dm3 ± 2.0 kg/100 dm3 in 2023.
- equality of batches: 88.5% ± 7.9%, at 84.6% ± 7.0% for 2023;
- humidity: 10.4% ± 0.8%, at 11.5% ± 0.6% for 2023;
- crop impurities: 1.6% ± 1.3%, at 1.1% ± 1.5% for 2023;
- other impurities: 1.0% ± 1.0%, at 1.1% ± 1.2% for 2023.

Sunflower quality grading in the 2024 harvest

The final results show that 69.6% of the analyzed samples meet the conditions of the sunflower seed quality standard, compared to 70.8% established in the previous year. The final results show that 76.6% of the sunflower seeds analyzed meet the oil content standard, up from 87.3% in 2023.

The average values of the main quality indicators of sunflower harvest in 2024 are:

- moisture content: 5.8% ± 0.5%, at 5.8% ± 0.5% in 2023;
- fat content: 43.9% ± 2.5%, at 44.8% ± 2.1% in 2023;
- crop impurities: 1.4% ± 1.1%, at 1.4% ± 0.8% in 2023;
- other impurities: 2.8% ± 1.6%, at 3.1% ± 1.8% in 2023.

Corn quality grading in the 2024 harvest

The final results show that 78.6% of the analyzed batch meets the requirements of the maize grain quality standard in terms of moisture and impurities, compared to 90% in 2023.

The average values of the main quality indicators of the corn harvest in 2024 are:

- moisture: 11.8% ± 0.5%, at 12.3% ± 0.6% in 2023;
- crop impurities: 3.6% ± 1.6%, at 2.9% ± 1.7% in 2023;
- other impurities: 1.3% ± 0.6%, at 1.0% ± 0.5% in 2023;
- starch content: 72.6% ± 0.8%, at 72.5% ± 0.7% in 2023;
- hectolitre mass: 70.6 kg / 100 dm3 ± 2.6 kg / 100 dm3, at 72.0 kg / 100 dm3 ± 1.9 kg / 100 dm3 in 2023

Rice husk quality grading in the 2024 harvest

The final results show that in 2024, 100% of the analyzed batch met the conditions of the rice barley quality standard in terms of moisture and impurities, compared to 94.1% in 2023. In 72.7% of the analyzed amount of barley, a red grain content of less than 1% was recorded, i.e. it met the requirements for first quality, compared to 82.4% in 2023.

The average values of the main quality indicators of rice paddy from the 2024 harvest are:

- moisture: 12.4% ± 0.9%, at 12.6% ± 1.2% in 2023;
- crop impurities: 1.4% ± 0.5%, at 1.1% ± 0.7% in 2023;
- other impurities: 1.6% ± 1.3%, at 0.6% ± 0.3% in 2023;
- red grains: 0.8% ± 0.5%, at 0.6% ± 0.4% in 2023;
- yellowed grains - none, same as in 2023, 2022, 2021, and 2020;
- bare grains - 1.3% ± 0.8%, down from 1.5% ± 1.0% in 2023;
- hectolitre mass: 57.0 kg / 100 dm3 ± 3.2 kg / 100 dm3, at 59.0 kg / 100 dm3 ± 1.4 kg / 100 dm3 in 2023

2.2.5. Industrial Crops

Tobacco

Tobacco production in 2024 amounted to 3,380 tons, which is 14.3% less than the previous year. The decrease in production is due to a 16.5% decrease in planted areas - from 2,425 ha in 2023 to 2,026 ha in 2024.

Cotton

The amount of cotton fiber harvested in 2024 amounted to 1,385 tons, marking a growth of 20.7% on an annual basis. The harvested areas are 1,958 ha - 50.6% more than in 2023, while the average yield decreases by 19.3%, to 0.71 tons/ha.

Fiber hemp

In 2024, the areas sown with fiber hemp in the country were 13,8 ha.

2.2.6. Medicinal and aromatic plants

In 2024, the areas occupied by major medicinal, aromatic and essential oil crops such as oil-bearing rose (pink flower), lavender (fresh flower), lemon balm (dry mass), coriander (seed), fennel (seed), milk thistle (seed), etc., amounted to 42,771 ha, which is 0.6% more compared to 2023. The harvested areas increased by 0.8%, to 39,990 ha.

Table II.6. Production of basic essential oil crops from the 2023 and 2024 harvests

Crop	Harvested areas (ha)			Average yield (tons/ha)			Production (tons)		
	2023	2024	Change 2024/2023	2023	2024	Change 2024/2023	2023	2024	Change 2024/2023
Lavender	10,710	8,598	-19,7%	3.45	3.76	9,0%	36,898	32,298	-12,5%
Oil-bearing rose	4,208	4,325	2,8%	2.50	2.69	7,6%	10,517	11,642	10,7%

Crop	Harvested areas (ha)			Average yield (tons/ha)			Production (tons)		
	2023	2024	Change 2024/2023	2023	2024	Change 2024/2023	2023	2024	Change 2024/2023
Lemon balm	472	408	-13,6%	3.19	3.67	15,0%	1,504	1,496	-0,5%
Coriander	21,370	22,751	6,5%	1.26	1.06	-15,9%	26,942	24,173	-10,3%
Fennel	564	681	20,7%	0.27	0.26	-3,7%	154	174	13,0%

Source: MAF, Agrostatistics Department

The planted areas with oil-bearing roses during the year amounted to 4,639 ha, of which 4,325 ha were harvested (2.9% and 2.8% more on an annual basis, respectively). With a 7.6% higher average yield, rose production increases by 10.7% compared to 2023, to 11,642 tons.

Lavender recorded a decrease in planted areas by 19% compared to 2023. Production contracted more moderately - by 12.5%, to 32,298 tons, due to an increase in the average yield by 9%.

In 2024, 24,173 tons of coriander were produced - 10.3% less than the previous year. This is due to the reported lower average yield (by 15.9%), although an increase in harvested areas is observed (by 6.5%).

Lemon balm has reported a 13.6% annual decline in areas, which is offset by a 15% increase in average yield. Production amounted to 1,496 tons - a negligible 0.5% below the 2023 level.

Fennel production increased by 13% year-on-year, due to a 20.7% increase in harvested areas.

2.2.7. Fruits

The total areas with fruit, nut and berry plantations in agricultural holdings in 2024 are 59,584 ha, which is 0.5% below the level of the previous year. Of these, 44.7 thousand hectares were harvested - 9.6% more on an annual basis. Due to climatic and other reasons, about 11% of the fruit-bearing areas with fruit species have not been harvested. 24% of the areas planted with fruit species are irrigated.

The largest share of the harvested areas in 2024 was occupied by cherries - 22.8%, followed by plums and cherries - 21.4% and walnuts - 16.9%. Most of the main fruit crops recorded an increase in harvested areas compared to 2023, ranging from 0.7% (walnuts) to 70.8% (almonds). There was a decrease only in raspberries (by 3.1%), apples (by 1%) and hazelnuts (by 0.2%).

The areas with young, unfruitful fruit plantations during the year are 6,920 ha. The largest relative share of them is occupied by walnuts - 32.3%, followed by plums and prunes - 20.2%.

Of the newly established plantations in the 2023/2024 business year, 73% are stone fruit species, 15% - shell fruit species, and 12% - seed and berry species. Of the stone fruit species, the largest share is plums and cherries - 38%, followed by apricots and cherries with 28% and cherries with 22%. In the areas with shell species, the largest share falls on walnuts - 91%, followed by almonds with 6%.

In 2024, a total of 204,913 tons of fruit were produced in the country - 14.1% more than the previous year, with an increase reported for almost all crops. Significant growth in production was observed for almonds - by 83.8%, apricots and plums - by 71.8% and peaches and nectarines - by 62.4%, and less pronounced - for walnuts, pears, cherries, hazelnuts, apples, plums and sour cherries - by between 2.5% (sour cherries) and 22.8% (walnuts). Only the harvested quantities of raspberries and cultivated rose hips are less - by 9.5% and 0.8%, respectively.

The largest relative share of the total fruit production during the year is formed by plums and cherries - 29.7% and cherries - 24.6%, followed by apples - 18%, apricots and plums - 9.1% and peaches and nectarines - 8.6%.

The leading place in fruit production in 2024 is occupied by the Southeast region with 26.3% and the South Central region with 24.4%. The production of peaches (65.6%), cherries (43.3%) and walnuts (32.8%) is concentrated in the South-Eastern region, and that of apples (35.9%) and plums and apricots (29.6%) is concentrated in the South-Central region. The North Central region produced 89.1% of the country's apricots, while the North Eastern region accounted for the highest share of raspberry production - 39.8%.

Table II.7. Fruit production from harvests `2023 and `2024

Fruit crops	Harvested areas (ha)			Average yields (kg/ha)			Production (tons)		
	2023	2024	Change 2024/2023	2023	2024	Change 2024/2023	2023	2024	Change 2024/2023
Apples	3,562	3,527	-1,0%	9,807	10,442	6,5%	34,933	36,830	5,4%
Pears	468	551	17,7%	5,365	5,290	-1,4%	2,511	2,915	16,1%
Peaches and nectarines	1,483	2,322	56,6%	7,282	7,554	3,7%	10,799	17,540	62,4%
Apricots	2,199	3,224	46,6%	4,936	5,784	17,2%	10,855	18,649	71,8%
Plums and cherry plums	9,256	9,579	3,5%	6,238	6,347	1,7%	57,737	60,796	5,3%
Cherries	9,648	10,213	5,9%	4,791	4,938	3,1%	46,222	50,435	9,1%
Sour cherries	934	1,003	7,4%	3,505	3,346	-4,5%	3,274	3,356	2,5%
Walnuts	7,509	7,559	0,7%	459	560	22,0%	3,450	4,235	22,8%
Almonds	1,077	1,840	70,8%	578	621	7,4%	622	1,143	83,8%
Hazelnuts	1,727	1,724	-0,2%	463	502	8,4%	799	865	8,3%
Raspberries	1,572	1,524	-3,1%	3,598	3,360	-6,6%	5,656	5,121	-9,5%
Cultivated rose hips	851	1,007	18,3%	1,496	1,254	-16,2%	1,273	1,263	-0,8%
Other fruit species	530	645	21,7%	-	-	-	1,482	1,765	19,1%
Total:	**40,816**	**44,718**	**9,6%**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**179,613**	**204,913**	**14,1%**

Source: MAF, Agrostatistics Department

In 2024, a significant increase in the average yields of walnuts (by 22%) and apricots and green beans (by 17.2%) was reported compared to the previous year. The average yields of plums and cherry plums, cherries, peaches and nectarines, apples, almonds and hazelnuts increased more moderately - within 1.7% - 8.4%, while those of pears, sour cherries, raspberries and cultivated rose hips decreased by between 1.4% and 16.2%.

97% of the produced fruits have been sold. The largest share of production is intended for direct sales and in the retail network - 52%, and the quantities for processing are 41%.

2.2.8. Vegetables

In 2024, the main areas used for vegetable production on agricultural holdings are 35,566 ha, which is 15.9% more than the previous year. Open areas planted with fresh vegetables, strawberries, potatoes and legumes amounted to 34,350 ha, marking a growth of 16.4% on an annual basis. Greenhouse areas increase by 5.4% compared to 2023, to 1,216 ha.

Table II.8. Main areas used for vegetable production – harvests `2023 and `2024, ha

Main areas	2023 harvest	2024 harvest	Change 2024/2023
Open areas with fresh vegetables, strawberries, potatoes, and legumes	29,520	34,350	16,4%
Total greenhouse area	1,154	1,216	5,4%
Total area	**30,674**	**35,566**	**15,9%**

Source: MAF, Agrostatistics Department

The harvested open areas with vegetables in 2024 amounted to 33,970 ha, 17.2% over the previous year's level. By crop groups, an increase in harvested areas was observed in tuber and onion vegetables (by 7.2%), fruit vegetables (by 32.7%) and fresh legumes (by 81%), and a decrease in vegetables of the genus Brassica (by 12.2%), leaf or stem vegetables excluding those of the genus Brassica (by 1.4%), potatoes (by 3.5%) and strawberries (by 6.7%).

The largest relative share of the total harvested open areas with vegetables during the year are those occupied by potatoes - 19.9%, watermelons - 15.7%, melons - 12.1%, onions (onions - ripe) - 9%, tomatoes - 8.6% and peppers - 7.9%.

By type of vegetable crops, in 2024, a significant increase on an annual basis in the harvested open areas with leeks, spinach and green garden beans is reported - within two to three times. The harvested areas of pumpkins and gourds (by 85.1%), gherkins (by 70.3%), garden peas - green (by 65.8%), carrots (by 48.2%), melons (by 46.6%), watermelons (by 43.5%) and eggplant (by 39.2%) are also significantly higher. On the other hand, the harvested open areas occupied by zucchini, cucumbers, broccoli, green onions, salads and lettuces and cauliflower are decreasing - by between 12.3% (zucchini) and 63.1% (cauliflower).

Table II.9. Areas, production and average yields of vegetables - harvests `2023 and `2024

Crops	Open harvested areas (ha)		Greenhouse harvested areas (ha)		Production (tons)							Average yield from open areas (kg/ha)	
					From open areas		Greenhouse production		TOTAL				
	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	Change 2024/2023	2023	2024
Fruit and vegetables, including:	**13,735**	**18,232**	**1,181**	**1,253**	**250,794**	**325,567**	**106,534**	**109,034**	**357,328**	**434,601**	**21,6%**	**-**	**-**
Tomatoes	2,540	2,912	639	653	59,537	71,086	56,113	57,058	115,650	128,144	10,8%	23,440	24,411
Cucumbers	324	261	389	415	5,603	5,263	44,528	45,427	50,131	50,690	1,1%	17,293	20,165
Gherkins	128	218	c	1	2,383	3,740	c	20	c	3,760	-	18,617	17,156
Eggplants	357	497	5	c	10,106	14,599	132	c	10,238	c	-	28,308	29,374
Zucchini	154	135	1	43	3,034	2,459	15	853	3,049	3,312	8,6%	19,701	18,215
Pumpkins and gourds	704	1,303	-	-	9,343	12,191	-	-	9,343	12,191	30,5%	13,271	9,356
Melons	2,794	4,095	c	c	29,487	37,575	c	c	c	c	-	10,554	9,176
Watermelons	3,714	5,330	-	-	80,130	122,930	-	-	80,130	122,930	53,4%	21,575	23,064
Pepper (incl. hot pepper)	2,371	2,697	147	139	46,264	51,602	5,741	5,567	52,005	57,169	9,9%	19,512	19,133
Sweet corn	649	784	-	-	4,907	4,122	-	-	4,907	4,122	-16,0%	7,561	5,258
Fresh legumes, including:	**610**	**1,104**	**2**	**c**	**1,710**	**3,801**	**20**	**c**	**1,730**	**c**	-	**-**	**-**
Garden peas - green	529	877	-	-	1,408	1,887	-	-	1,408	1,887	34,0%	2,662	2,152
Garden beans - green	81	227	2	c	302	1,914	20	c	322	c	-	3,728	8,432
Vegetables of the Brassica genus, incl.	**2,003**	**1,758**	**-**	**-**	**47,090**	**33,274**	**-**	**-**	**47,090**	**33,274**	**-29,3%**	**-**	**-**
Headed cabbage	1,847	1,684	-	-	44,963	32,522	-	-	44,963	32,522	-27,7%	24,344	19,312
Cauliflower	122	45	-	-	1,878	503	-	-	1,878	503	-73,2%	15,393	11,178
Broccoli	34	27	-	-	249	221	-	-	249	221	-11,2%	7,324	8,185
Other Brassica vegetables (kohlrabi and Brussels sprouts)		2		-		28		-		28			-

Crops	Open harvested areas (ha)		Greenhouse harvested areas (ha)		Production (tons)							Average yield from open areas (kg/ha)	
					From open areas		Greenhouse production		TOTAL				
	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	Change 2024/2023	2023	2024
Leafy or stem vegetables (excluding vegetables of the Brassica genus), including:	**633**	**624**	**31**	**14**	**9,945**	**5,426**	**302**	**219**	**10,247**	**5,645**	**-44,9%**	**-**	**-**
Salad greens and lettuce	197	102	22	12	3,623	1,665	215	173	3,838	1,838	-52,1%	18,391	16,324
Spinach	36	95	1	c	153	586	5	c	158	c	-	4,250	6,168
Leek	70	140	-	-	1,033	1,551	-	-	1,033	1,551	50,1%	14,757	11,079
Green onions	133	77	2	1	3,146	637	32	36	3,178	673	-79%	23,654	8,273
Other leafy or stem vegetables (artichoke, asparagus, savory, dill, parsley, celery, garlic - green, etc.)	197	210	5	c	1,990	987	41	c	683	c	-	-	-
Tuber and onion vegetables, including:	**3,890**	**4,172**	**1**	**c**	**51,698**	**48,306**	**17**	**c**	**51,715**	**c**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Onions - ripe	3,016	3,069	-	-	38,956	35,816	-	-	38,956	35,816	-8,1%	12,916	11,670
Carrots	446	661	-	-	9,707	10,196	-	-	9,707	10,196	5,0%	21,765	15,425
Garlic - ripe	266	273	-	-	1,073	781	-	-	1,073	781	-27,2%	4,034	2,861
Other tuber and bulb vegetables (salad beets, chives, turnips, radishes, celery, etc.)	*162*	*169*	*1*	*c*	*1,962*	*1,513*	*17*	*c*	*1,979*	*c*	-	-	-
Other vegetables (okra, etc.)	**407**	**665**	**-**	**-**	**1,490**	**1,387**	**-**	**-**	**1,490**	**1,387**	**-6,9%**	**-**	**-**
Potatoes	**7,019**	**6,770**	**5**	**-**	**119,135**	**113,935**	**104**	**-**	**119,239**	**113,935**	**-4,4%**	**16,973**	**16,829**
Strawberries	**691**	**645**	**68**	**65**	**4,061**	**3,985**	**1,145**	**742**	**5,206**	**4,727**	**-9,2%**	**5,877**	**6,178**
Total vegetables	**28,988**	**33,970**	**1,288**	**1,332**	**485,923**	**535,681**	**108,122**	**109,997**	**594,045**	**645,678**	**8,7%**	**-**	**-**

Source: MAF, Agrostatistics Department
c – confidential data

Total vegetable production in 2024 amounted to 645.7 thousand tons - 8.7% more than the previous year, due to the increased production of fruit vegetables. Outdoor production increased by 10.2% year-on-year, to 535.7 thousand tons, and greenhouse production increased by 1.7%, to 110 thousand tons.

In 2024, the largest production was of tomatoes - 128.1 thousand tons (19.8% of total vegetable production), watermelons - 122.9 thousand tons (19%) and potatoes - 113.9 thousand tons (17.6%), followed by pepper - 57.2 thousand tons (8.9%), cucumbers - 50.7 thousand tons (7.9%), onions - mature - 35.8 thousand

tons (5.5%) and head cabbage - 32.5 thousand tons (5%). For the first time since 2016, potatoes are not in first place in terms of quantity produced.

By vegetable groups, an increase in the quantities harvested from open areas compared to the previous year was reported for fruit vegetables (by 29.8%) and fresh legumes (more than twice), and a decrease - for tuber and onion vegetables (by 6.6%), Brassica vegetables (by 29.3%) and leaf and stem vegetables (excluding Brassica vegetables) (by 45.4%).

Among the more significant crops, a significant increase in the production obtained from open areas was observed for watermelons (by 53.4%), eggplants (by 44.5%), pumpkins (by 30.5%), melons (by 27.4%), tomatoes (by 19.4%) and carrots (by 5%), and a decrease - for potatoes (by 4.4%), cucumbers (by 6.1%), mature onions (by 8.1%) and head cabbage (by 27.7%).

In 2024, mixed changes in the average yields of open areas of the main vegetable crops are observed. Average yields of eggplants, tomatoes, strawberries, watermelons and cucumbers increased by 3.8% - 16.6% on an annual basis, while those of potatoes, peppers, melons, head cabbage, carrots and pumpkins decreased by between 0.8% (potatoes) and 29.5% (pumpkins).

Table II.10. Total production of basic vegetables from harvests `2023 and `2024, tons

Types of vegetables	2023 harvest	2024 harvest	Change 2024/2023
Tomatoes	115,650	128,144	10,8%
Pepper (sweet and hot)	52,005	57,169	9,9%
Cucumbers	50,131	50,690	1,1%
Potatoes	119,239	113,935	-4,4%
Headed cabbage	44,963	32,522	-27,7%
Onions ripe	38,956	35,816	-8,1%
Strawberries	5,206	4,727	-9,2%

Source: MAF, Agrostatistics Department"

Greenhouse production in the country is determined by several main vegetable crops - tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, salads and lettuces, and in 2024 a relatively large amount of zucchini was also reported. Part of the production is intended for export.

The total production of greenhouse vegetables in 2024 is 110 thousand tons, which is 1.7% more than in the previous year 2023.

Among the main greenhouse vegetables, the production of tomatoes and cucumbers increased by 1.7% and 2% respectively on an annual basis, while zucchini saw a multiple increase. At the same time, greenhouse production of pepper and salads and lettuces contracted by 3% and 19.5%, respectively.

Table II.11. Greenhouse production of basic vegetables from harvests `2023 and `2024, tons

Types of vegetables	2023 harvest	2024 harvest	Change 2024/2023
Tomatoes	56,113	57,058	1,7%
Pepper	5,741	5,567	-3,0%
Cucumbers	44,528	45,427	2,0%
Zucchini	15	853	5586,7%
Salad greens and lettuce	215	173	-19,5%
Other vegetables (excluding mushrooms)	1,510	919	-39,1%
Total	108,122	109,997	1,7%

Source: MAF, Agrostatistics Department

The trend for modernization of existing greenhouses with the application of new and more modern technologies for quality vegetables from greenhouse production continues.

There is a diversification of the types of vegetable crops grown in greenhouses. In addition to the main greenhouse crops, gherkins, garden green beans, eggplants, green onions, melons, strawberries and others are also produced.

2.2.9. Forecast data for the production of main cereals and oilseed crops from the 2025 harvest

According to forecast data as of the end of September, in 2025 the production of the three main autumn grain and oilseed crops will increase compared to the previous year, as follows: wheat - by 6.9%, barley - by 4.3% and rapeseed - by 82.8%. In the case of wheat and rapeseed, this is mainly due to the larger size of harvested areas, and in the case of barley - to the increased average yield.

At this stage, grain corn production is expected to be a significant 43.4% below the previous year's level, as a result of a combination of smaller harvested areas and a serious decrease in the average yield per hectare due to adverse weather conditions during the marketing year. Regarding sunflower, a more moderate decrease in production is expected - by 7.5%.

Table II.12. Forecast for the production of major cereals and oilseeds in 2025.

Crop	Indicator / year	2024	2025 (forecast)	Change 2025/2024
Wheat	Areas (thousand ha)	1,195	1,266	6,0%
	Average yield (tons/ha)	5.73	5.78	0,9%
	Production (thousand tons)	6,846	7,318	6,9%
Corn for grain	Areas (thousand ha)	503	410	-18,5%
	Average yield (tons/ha)	3.18	2.21	-30,6%
	Production (thousand tons)	1,598	905	-43,4%
Barley	Areas (thousand ha)	196	194	-1,2%
	Average yield (tons/ha)	5.36	5.66	5,6%
	Production (thousand tons)	1,052	1,098	4,3%
Sunflower	Areas (thousand ha)	929	949	2,1%
	Average yield (tons/ha)	1.73	1.57	-9,2%
	Production (thousand tons)	1,609	1,489	-7,5%
Rapeseed	Areas (thousand ha)	64	106	64,9%
	Average yield (tons/ha)	2.46	2.73	11,0%
	Production (thousand tons)	158	289	82,8%

Source: MAF, Agrostatistics Department (forecast data for 2025).

2.3. Livestock Breeding Production Results

Livestock breeding is an important sub-sector of Bulgarian agriculture, with particular importance for ensuring basic raw materials for the processing industry and ensuring food security for the population.

The state policy in the field of livestock breeding is aimed at creating conditions for sustainable development of the sector and protection of the interests of farmers. As one of the priority sectors in the agricultural sector, livestock farming is supported through various financial instruments with funds from the European budget under both pillars of the CAP (for direct payments and market measures and for rural development), as well as with national funds.

In 2024, the classification of carcasses of cattle, pigs and sheep (lambs) according to the EU Scales continued to be applied. The classification aims to improve market transparency and increase the competitiveness of meat products on the European market, as well as to provide feedback to farmers on the results of their livestock production methods.

By the end of 2024, there was a decrease in the number of farms raising farm animals, and the process of their consolidation continued. The largest decline compared to a year earlier was reported in pig farms - by 33.3% and goat farms - by 29.4%, followed by those with cattle - by 16.0% and sheep - by 15.7%. The number of buffalo farms remains unchanged compared to 2023. Poultry farms raising hens and growing laying hens are 8.7% fewer on an annual basis, and those raising chickens for meat - 23.5%. The number of farms with bee colonies is shrinking by 5.4%.

In 2024, the total number of all types of farm animals decreased compared to the previous year. The number of goats decreased more significantly - by 14.3%, and more moderately that of poultry - by 6.6%, sheep - by 5.2%, buffaloes - by 4.6%, pigs - by 3.3% and cattle - by 2.6%. At the same time, the number of bee colonies increased by 2.6%. During the year, a 16.9% increase in ewes for meat production was reported.

For most types and categories of farm animals, there was an increase in the average size of farms in 2024 compared to the previous year. The average number of pigs in total, raised on a farm, is 45.1% more on an annual basis (reaching 1,168), although a decrease of 11.9% (to 238) is reported for sows. The average number of goats in total increased by 21.6% (to 41.7), and that of female goats - by 22% (to 35.5). Cattle follow with a total increase of 15.7% (up to 35.4 units) and cows - with 15.6% (up to 23.5 units). The increase in the average number of sheep in total is 12.4% (up to 95), and in ewes - 12.9% (up to 81.4). The average size of buffalo farms decreased (by 4.3%) and buffaloes (by 4.7%), to 40 and 36.5 animals, respectively.

Table II.13. Number of animals in 2023 and 2024

Type of animals	2023	2024	Change 2024/2023
Cattle - total, including:	553,363	538,793	-2,6%
cows - total, including:	355,565	338,754	-4,7%
- milk cows	187,096	174,970	-6,5%
- beef cows	168,469	163,784	-2,8%
buffaloes - total, including:	20,941	19,980	-4,6%
female buffaloes	15,317	14,624	-4,5%
sheep - total, including:	1,072,768	1,016,698	-5,2%
ewes - total, including:	901,209	862,929	-4,2%
- milk sheep - ewes	718,303	649,185	-9,6%
- meat sheep - ewes	182,906	213,744	16,9%
Goats - total, including:	174,952	149,999	-14,3%
Does	145,265	127,774	-12,0%
Pigs - total, including:	724,745	700,779	-3,3%
total breeding sows over 50 kg	79,577	70,359	-11,6%
Poultry - total, thousand, including:	14,522	13,560	-6,6%
hens and growing laying hens	6,583	6,743	2,4%
chickens for meat	5,947	5,509	-7,4%
ducks	1,919	1,248	-35,0%
other poultry	73	60	-17,6%
Bee colonies	816,673	838,038	2,6%

Source: MAF, Agrostatistics Department

Note: the data on animals of the genus LR (large ruminants), SR (small ruminants) and pigs are as of 1 November, for poultry - as of 31 December, and for bee colonies - as of 1 October.

The total yield of dairy raw materials in 2024 is 770,520 thousand liters - 2.7% below the previous year's level, due to the reduced number of all types of dairy animals. A more significant decrease was registered in the production of buffalo and sheep milk, by 5.6% and 4.2%, respectively, and less pronounced in cow (by 2.6%) and goat milk (by 0.8%).

Table II.14. Milk production for the period 01.11.2023 - 31.10.2024 by planning regions, thousand liters

Regions	Total milk	Including:			
		Cow milk	Buffalo milk	Sheep milk	Goat milk
Northwestern	103,182	82,954	6,976	8,797	4,455
North Central	122,483	113,018	856	4,870	3,739
Northeastern	143,415	134,778	885	5,072	2,680
Southeastern	152,222	135,414	3,299	10,769	2,740
Southwestern	63,142	53,056	698	6,554	2,834
South Central	186,076	168,364	2,730	12,063	2,919
Total for the country	**770,520**	**687,584**	**15,444**	**48,125**	**19,367**
Change 2024/2023	**-2,7%**	**- 2,6%**	**-5,6%**	**-4,2%**	**-0,8%**

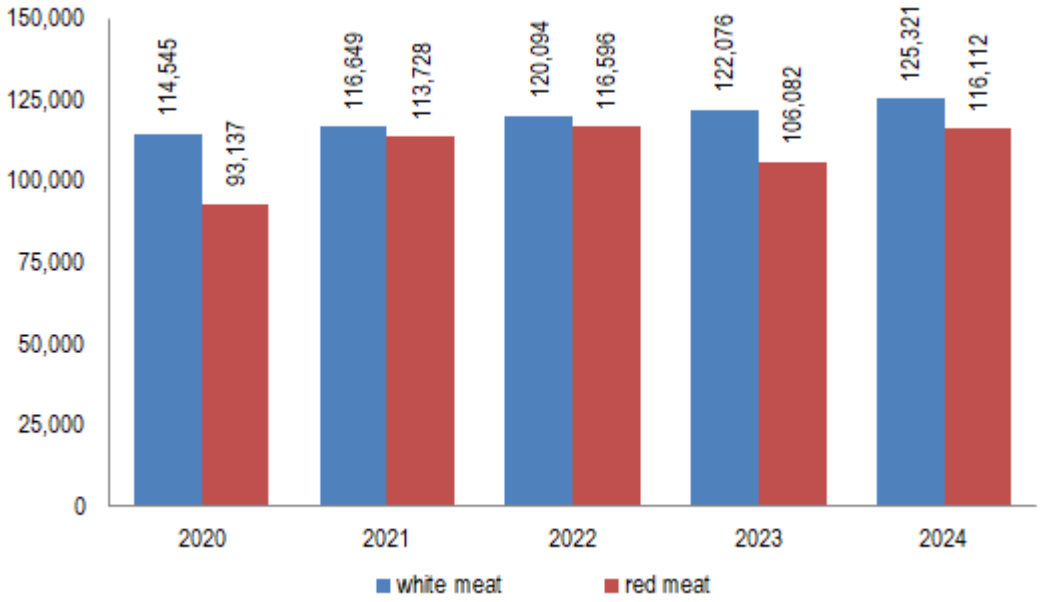
Source: MAF, Agrostatistics Department"

Traditionally, the largest share in the total yield of dairy raw materials is formed by cow's milk - 89.2%. Sheep's milk accounts for 6.2%, goat's milk - 2.5%, and buffalo milk - 2%.

The leader in total milk production in 2024 remains the South Central Region, representing 24.1% of the total volume, followed by the South Eastern Region with 19.8%. With a share of 8.2%, the Southwestern region registered the lowest yield.

In 2024, the total meat yield in the country increased by 5.8% compared to the previous year, reaching 241,433 tons of carcass weight. Red meat production increased by 9.5% year-on-year, to 116,112 tons, with slaughterhouse production increasing by 5.6% and farm production by 28.5%. The total white meat produced is 125,321 tons - 2.7% above the 2023 level, with an increase in both industrial production (by 2.2%) and farm production (by 45.4%).

Figure II.3. Meat production in the period 2020 – 2024, tons



Source: MAF, Agrostatistics Department

The amount of honey produced in 2024 is 10,440 tons - 6.7% less on an annual basis, with an average yield per bee colony of 15 kg.

The total production of poultry eggs decreased by 15.8% compared to the previous year, to 1,175,817

thousand pieces, of which 1,157,097 thousand pieces (98%) were from hens.

Table II.15. Animal production in 2023 – 2024

Product	2023	2024	Change 2024/2023
1. Milk - total (thousand liters), including:	791,757	770,520	-2,7%
Cow milk	705,618	687,584	-2,6%
Buffalo milk	16,354	15,444	-5,6%
Sheep milk	50,255	48,125	-4,2%
Goat milk	19,530	19,367	-0,8%
2. Meat - total carcass weight (tons), including:	228,158	241,433	5,8%
Red meat	106,082	116,112	9,5%
White meat	122,076	125,321	2,7%
3. Eggs (thousand pieces)	1,397,098	1,175,817	-15,8%
4. Bee honey (tons)	11,189	10,440	-6,7%

Source: MAF, Agrostatistics Department

Expected data for 2025

In the period January - June 2025, a total of 138,005 tons of meat were produced in the country's slaughterhouses - by 12.5% more on an annual basis, including 60,422 tons of red meat and 77,583 tons of white meat.

Industrial red meat production increases by 16.7% compared to the same period in 2024, mainly due to the reported growth of 18.5% in pork, to 54,848 tons, which represents just over 90% of the total red meat production in slaughterhouses. During the first seven months of the year, industrial beef production also increased - by 9.8% (up to 4,582 tons), while that of meat from wild boars, buffaloes and equines decreased by 23.8%.

The total white meat yield in slaughterhouses for the first seven months of 2025 amounted to 77,583 tons, 9.5% above the level reported a year earlier. About 83% of this quantity is meat from broiler chickens of the hen species - 64,122 tons, which represents an increase of 19.3% on an annual basis. Industrial duck meat production decreased by 27.7%, to 10,471 tons, due to the reduced number of birds.

Given the data for the period January - July, it can be expected that the yield of red and white meat for the entire 2025 will be above the level of 2024.

In the first seven months of 2025, a total of 430.2 million liters of milk were processed in dairy enterprises, including 405.9 million liters of cow's milk, which is 1.7% and 2.1% more, respectively, compared to the same period in 2024. At the same time, the quantities of sheep's milk (by 2.8%), buffalo and mixed (by 5.9%), and goat's milk (by 7.7%) used for processing decreased.

Considering the smaller number of dairy animals in the main herd at the end of 2024, the total yield of dairy raw material in 2025 can be expected to be slightly below that reported for the previous year.

Egg production in 2025 is expected to increase on an annual basis, while honey production is expected to remain unchanged.

2.3.1. Cattle breeding and buffalo breeding

Cattle breeding is a sub-sector of livestock breeding of great economic importance, providing the main share of materials required for the dairy production in the country.

As of November 1, 2024, a total of 538,793 cattle were raised in the country - 2.6% less than a year earlier. The total number of cows decreased by 4.7%, to 338,754, as a result of a decrease in both dairy cows - by 6.5% (to 174,970) and meat cows - by 2.8% (to 163,784). The share of beef cows in the total number of cows increases to 48.3%, up from 47.4%, in 2023.

Table II.16. Distribution of cattle by region in 2023 and 2024

Regions	11/1/2023				11/1/2024			
	Cattle		Cows		Cattle		Cows	
	thousand heads	thousand heads	thousand heads	thousand heads	thousand heads	share	thousand heads	share
Northwestern	58.5	10,6%	37.4	10,5%	56.2	10,4%	35.7	10,5%
North Central	61.2	11,1%	35.7	10,0%	60.6	11,3%	34.3	10,1%
Northeastern	61.2	11,1%	33.7	9,5%	58.2	10,8%	32.0	9,5%
Southeastern	106.1	19,1%	68.2	19,2%	104.0	19,3%	65.0	19,2%
Southwestern	86.9	15,7%	56.7	15,9%	85.3	15,8%	54.1	16,0%
South Central	179.5	32,4%	123.9	34,8%	174.6	32,4%	117.6	34,7%
Total for the country	**553.4**	**100%**	**355.6**	**100%**	**538.8**	**100,0%**	**338.7**	**100,0%**

Source: MAF, Agrostatistics Department

Cattle breeding is concentrated in Southern Bulgaria, where 67.5% of the country's total number of cattle is reared in 2024. Over one third of cows are reared in the South-central region, including 28.2% of dairy cows and 41.3% of beef cows.

Table II.17. Distribution of dairy cows by number of farm animals on a farm as of 01.11.2024

Number of animals on a farm	Farms		Dairy cows	
	heads	Change 2024/2023	thousand heads	Change 2024/2023
1 - 2	3,300	-31,8%	4.1	-29.3%
3 - 9	1,299	4,8%	7.8	2,6%
10 -19	645	-13,8%	9.2	-8,0%
20 -49	1,322	-12,2%	42.5	-12,0%
50 - 99	532	-5,7%	35.8	-7,5%
100 and more	324	-2,7%	75.6	-1,4%
Total	**7,422**	**-19,6%**	**175.0**	**-6,5%**

Source: MAF, Agrostatistics Department

As of November 1, 2024, there were 7,422 farms raising dairy cows, 19.6% less than a year earlier. There is a decrease in almost all categories of farms, most significantly in small farms with 1 - 2 animals - by 31.8%, as well as in the number of dairy cows raised in them - by 29.3%. In the other categories of farms, the decrease was between 2.7% and 13.8%, with the animals raised in them decreasing by between 1.4% and 12%. Only farms with 3-9 animals are increasing on an annual basis - by 4.8%, and cows in them - by 2.6%. In 2024, 43.2% of all dairy cows in the country are raised on large farms with 100 or more animals.

As a result of the reduced number of dairy cows, in 2024, cow's milk production will decrease by 2.6% compared to the previous year, to 687,584 thousand liters.

Traditionally, the largest share in the total cow's milk production is occupied by the South Central Region - 24.5%, followed by the South Eastern Region with 19.7%. The smallest share of cow's milk produced is in the Southwestern region - 7.7%.

The number of buffalo farms by the end of 2024 decreased by 7.6% year-on-year, to 355, and the number of buffaloes raised in them decreased by 4.6%, to 14.6 thousand. A serious decline was registered in small farms with 1-2 animals - by 21.9%, as well as in buffaloes in them - by 17.6%. Farms with 10-19 animals (by 13.1%) and 20-99 animals (by 8.2%) are also decreasing, where the number of buffaloes raised is respectively 17.3% and 6.7% less. Farms raising 3 to 9 animals and large farms with 100 or more animals recorded an increase of 8% and 3.1% respectively compared to a year earlier, with buffaloes in them increasing

by 10.3% and 0.8% respectively. About 90% of the buffaloes in the country are raised on farms with 20 or more animals.

Table II.18. Distribution of buffaloes by region in 2023 and 2024

Regions	11/1/2023				11/1/2024			
	Buffaloes total		Female buffaloes		Buffaloes total		Female buffaloes	
	thousand heads	share	thousand heads	share	thousand heads	share	thousand heads	share
Northwestern	6.7	31,9%	4.9	32,3%	6.2	31,1%	4.6	31,7%
North Central	1.8	8,8%	1.1	7,0%	1.6	8,2%	0.9	6,2%
Northeastern	1.4	6,6%	0.9	5,8%	1.4	7,0%	1.0	6,5%
Southeastern	5.2	24,8%	4.1	26,5%	5.2	25,8%	4.0	27,2%
Southwestern	1.4	6,6%	0.9	6,0%	1.2	6,2%	0.8	5,7%
South Central	4.4	21,4%	3.4	22,4%	4.3	21,7%	3.3	22,7%
Total for the country	**20.9**	**100%**	**15.3**	**100%**	**19.9**	**100,0%**	**14.6**	**100,0%**

Source: MAF, Agrostatistics Department"

Leaders in buffalo breeding in 2024 remain the Northwestern, Southeastern and South-central regions, where about 79% of the livestock are concentrated.

In 2024, a total of 15,444 thousand liters of buffalo milk were produced in the country - 5.6% less on an annual basis, as a result of the reduced number of buffaloes. The Northwestern region is a leader in the production of buffalo milk, accounting for 45% of the total volume for the country. This is followed by the Southeastern (with 21.4%) and South Central regions (with 17.7%).

Total beef production in 2024 is 18,818 tons, 16.2% above the previous year's level. The yield in farms increased by 26.5%, to 11,422 tons, and that in slaughterhouses - by 5.3%, to 7,397 tons. Beef accounts for just over 16% of the total volume of red meat produced during the year.

Table II.19. Beef production in 2023 and 2024 (tons of carcass weight)

Categories of animals	In slaughterhouses			In farms			Total production		
	2023	2024	Change 2024/2023	2023	2024	Change 2024/2023	2023	2024	Change 2024/2023
Calves and young cattle	491	529	7,8%	4,318	5,638	30,5%	4,809	6,166	28,2%
Other cattle	6,536	6,868	5,1%	4,848	5,784	19,3%	11,384	12,652	11,1%
Total for the country	**7,027**	**7,397**	**5,3%**	**9,166**	**11,422**	**24,6%**	**16,193**	**18,818**	**16,2%**

Source: MAF, Agrostatistics Department

In 2024, a total of 15,973 cattle over 8 months of age were classified according to the Union classification scale, which is 12.7% more than in 2023. The slaughterhouses that classified cattle carcasses during the year were ten, unchanged from the previous year. The largest share of cows is category "D" - 62.1%, followed by cattle with category "A" - young bull (17.4%), "E" - heifer (12.6%), "B" - bull (4.8%), "Z" - animal aged 8 to 12 months (3.2%). Once again there are no cattle classified as category "C" for the year. The main part of the classified beef was from dairy animals, whose carcasses have a low yield and poorly developed conformation. Therefore, the largest share of classified carcasses is from cattle with conformation class P (poor) - 59.5%, followed by O (good) - 29.5%, class R (fairly good) - 10.8% and U (very good) - 0.3%. When determining the classes by degree of fatness, the largest number of carcasses is with class 1 (very weak) - 38.6%, class 2 (weak) - 37.9%, class 3 (medium) - 21.7%, class 4 (high) - 1.8% and class 5 (very high) - 0.01%.

2.3.2. Sheep and goat breeding

The development of sheep breeding in the country is favored by the suitable environmental and climatic conditions and long-standing traditions. It is widespread in the plains as well as in the mountainous and semi-mountainous areas, providing livelihood for a large part of the population in rural areas.

As of November 1, 2024, a total of 1,016,698 sheep were raised in the country - 5.2% less than a year earlier. The total number of ewes decreased by 4.2%, due to the registered decrease of 9.6% in dairy animals, while meat ewes increased by 16.9%.

The number of farms raising sheep and ewes is 15.7% and 15.2% below the number reported at the end of the previous year, respectively.

Traditionally, sheep farming is concentrated mainly in Southern Bulgaria, where in 2024 65.1% of the total livestock is raised. Over a quarter of ewes are reared in the South-central region.

Table II.20. Distribution of sheep by region in 2023 and 2024 (thousands of units)

Regions	Sheep in general			Including ewes		
	01.11.2023	11/1/2024	Share (2024)	01.11.2023	11/1/2024	Share (2024)
Northwestern	125.3	124.0	12,2%	107.6	105.4	12,2%
North Central	107.6	106.0	10,4%	87.7	84.4	9,8%
Northeastern	135.8	125.1	12,3%	106.2	104.7	12,1%
Southeastern	219.3	208.9	20,6%	186.5	184.3	21,4%
Southwestern	200.5	180.1	17,7%	164.0	147.1	17,0%
South Central	284.3	272.6	26,8%	249.1	237.1	27,5%
Total for the country	**1,072.8**	**1,016.7**	**100%**	**901.2**	**862.9**	**100%**

Source: MAF, Agrostatistics Department

The number of farms with inseminated sheep and goats decreased by 15.2% on an annual basis (to 10,636), and the animals in them - by 4.9% (to 896.6 thousand). The largest decline was in small farms with 1 - 9 animals (by 29.7%) and 10 - 19 animals (by 28.5%), and in the sheep and goats raised in them - by 31.3% and 28.3%, respectively. For the other categories of farms, the decrease is between 0.7% and 10.6%, and for the animals in them - between 1.2% and 12.8%.

Table II.21. Distribution of goats by regions in 2023 and 2024 (thousand heads)

Regions	Goats total			Including does		
	11/1/2023	11/1/2024	Share (2024)	01.11.2023	11/1/2024	Share (2024)
Northwestern	27.6	23.3	15,5%	23.8	21.2	16,5%
North Central	24.4	22.6	15,1%	19.8	18.1	14,2%
Northeastern	20.2	17.6	11,7%	15.6	14.0	10,9%
Southeastern	29.1	26.8	17,9%	25.8	23.7	18,6%
Southwestern	40.4	30.6	20,4%	30.6	25.3	19,8%
South Central	33.3	29.1	19,4%	29.6	25.5	20,0%
Total for the country	**175.0**	**150.0**	**100%**	**145.3**	**127.8**	**100%**

Source: MAF, Agrostatistics Department

By the end of 2024, the total number of goats was 14.3% lower year-on-year. In all categories of goats, a decrease was observed compared to the previous year as follows: female goats - by 12%, young goats impregnated for the first time - by 16.7%, goatlings - by 28.6% and he-goats - by 27.4%.

There has been a significant decline in goat farms - by 29.4% in farms raising goats in total and by 28% in those with female goats.

In 2024, 3,615 farms with impregnated goats were registered, which is 27.2% less than the previous year, and the number of animals in them decreased by 12.3% (to 134.5 thousand). The most serious decline is in small farms with 1 - 9 animals - by 36.6% and 10 - 19 animals - by 28.9%, as well as the goats in them, by 38.8% and 31.7%, respectively. Farms with 20 - 49 inseminated goats are 7.5% fewer, and the animals in them - 9.4%. Large farms with 100 or more animals are shrinking by 15%, and the goats raised on them are shrinking by 13.9%. Despite the reported decrease, this category of farms retains its share of about 60% of the total number of goats bred. The exception is farms with 50 - 99 heads, which increased by 2.5%, and the number of animals in them - by 7.3%.

About 60% of the goat population in 2024 is raised in the southern regions of the country. The Southwestern region remains the leader with a share of 20.4% of their total number and about 19.8% of the sows. The largest number of female goats is raised in the South Central Region - 20%.

In 2024, a total of 67,492 thousand liters of raw milk from small cattle were produced in the country, including: 48,125 thousand liters of sheep and 19,367 thousand liters of goat, which is 4.2% and 0.8% less on an annual basis, respectively.

The meat yield from the SR in 2024 is 9,674 tons (about 8% of the total red meat production during the year) - 3.3% above the 2023 level, with an increase in both mutton (by 2.6%) and goat meat (by 8.3%). The production of meat from SR in slaughterhouses fell by 25.3% compared to the previous year, to 1,518 tons, while that in farms increased by 11.3%, to 8,156 tons.

In 2024, the classification of light and heavy sheep (lamb) carcasses is applied in five slaughterhouses, the same as in the previous year. A total of 7,205 sheep (lamb) carcasses were classified, which is 40.8% less than in 2023. The classified light carcasses (up to 13 kg) are 5,776, with about 94.5% classified as first quality and 5.5% as second quality. The largest share is of light carcasses weighing from 7.1 kg to 10 kg - category B with 57.5%. Next are those weighing from 10.1 kg to 13 kg - category C - 41.7%, and lambs weighing up to 7 kg, classified in category A, are 0.8%. The classified carcasses of sheep aged under 12 months and over 13 kg were 1,429.

2.3.3. Pig breeding

The pig sector in the country is well structured and specialized, which is a prerequisite for its sustainability. The trend of concentrating production in a smaller number of consolidated farms continues.

As of November 1, 2024, the number of farms raising pigs in total decreased by 33.3% on an annual basis, while the number of farms with main sows remained unchanged.

The total number of pigs decreased by 3.3% compared to the previous year, to 700,779. The total number of female pigs (70,359) is 11.6% lower, and the number of main sows (47,552) is 11.9%.

About 86% of all pigs during the year are raised in three planning regions - Southeastern (33.8%), North Central (27.6%) and Northeastern (24.4%). The same regions also contain the largest number of main sows, 20.2%, 34.2% and 22.7% respectively. The Southwestern region has the smallest share of total pigs (1%) and sows (2.5%).

Table II.22. Distribution of pigs by regions in 2023 and 2024 (thousand heads)

Regions	Pigs total			Incl. primary sows		
	01.11.2023	11/1/2024	Share (2024)	01.11.2023	11/1/2024	Share (2024)
Northwestern	46.9	53.8	7,7%	3.6	4.6	9,6%
North Central	183.3	193.1	27,6%	13.1	16.2	34,2%
Northeastern	163.8	171.3	24,4%	19.4	10.8	22,7%
Southeastern	244.8	237.2	33,8%	11.4	9.6	20,2%
Southwestern	10.3	6.9	1,0%	1.2	1.2	2,5%
South Central	75.6	38.5	5,5%	5.3	5.2	10,8%
Total for the country	**724.7**	**700.8**	**100%**	**54.0**	**47.6**	**100%**

Source: MAF, Agrostatistics Department

By the end of 2024, the total number of farms raising breeding sows (over 50 kg) decreased by 16.5% compared to a year earlier, and the number of animals in them increased by 11.6%. Although small farms with 1-2 animals decreased by 40.6%, the total number of pigs raised in them remained unchanged. Farms with 3 - 9 sows are 24.4% fewer on an annual basis, and the animals in them - by 33.3%. Only the number of large pig farms with 200 or more animals increased by 15.4%, but the number of pigs in them decreased by 11.4%. These farms raise about 95% of all female breeding pigs in the country.

Table II.23. Distribution of breeding sows over 50 kg according to the number of animals bred on a farm as of 01.11.2024

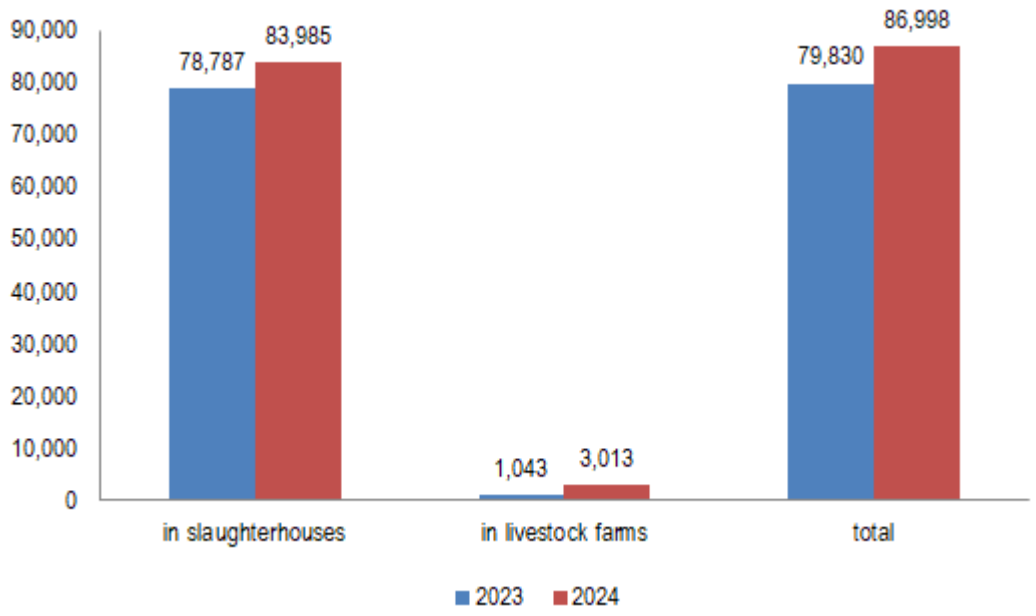
Number of animals on a farm	Farms		Breeding sows over 50 kg	
	Heads	Change 2024/2023	Thousand heads	Change 2024/2023
1-2	41	-40,6%	0.1	0,0%
3-9	31	-24,4%	0.2	-33,3%
10-49	51	-7,3%	1.0	0,0%
50-199	24	-7,7%	2.2	-18,5%
200 and more	45	15,4%	66.9	-11,4%
Total	**192**	**-16,5%**	**70.4**	**-11,6%**

Source: MAF, Agrostatistics Department"

In 2024, the state aid scheme for implementation of the five-year voluntary commitments on swine welfare will continue to apply. Subsidies are granted annually and cover the additional costs or lost income related to these commitments.

Total pork production in 2024 amounts to 86,998 tons (about 75% of the total red meat output during the year), marking an increase of 9% year-on-year. The yield in slaughterhouses increased by 6.6%, and that in livestock farms (which is generally limited) - nearly three times.

Figure II.4. Pork production in 2023 and 2024, tons



Source: MAF, Agrostatistics Department

In 2024, a total of 150,689 pig carcasses were classified according to the Union's scale for the classification of pig carcasses, which is 12.6% more than in 2023. As in the previous year, classification was carried out by one slaughterhouse.

Table II.24. Classified pig carcasses by lean meat content

Year	**S** 60% and above	**E** from 55 to 60%	**U** from 50 to 55%	**R** from 45 to 50%	**O** from 40 to 45%	**P** 40% less	**Total (heads)**
2018	318	70,422	18,888	134	0	0	89,762
2019	151	37,081	9,491	35	0	0	46,758
2020	161	33,079	7,050	31	0	0	40,321
2021	218	61,580	6,130	80	0	0	68,008
2022	2,370	57,240	13,182	11	0	0	72,803
2023	4,355	110,141	19,297	17	0	0	133,810
2024	9,605	127,276	13,804	4	0	0	150,689

Source: MAF, Animal Husbandry Directorate

Over 84.5% of pigs classified in 2024 are of class E, with a lean meat content of 55% to 60% of the carcass weight, 9.2% are of conformation class U - from 50% to 55% lean meat content and 6.4% of conformation class S, with a lean meat content of over 60% of the carcass weight.

According to the regression equation applied in Bulgaria, only steam processed fattened pig carcasses were classified. During the year, nearly 89% of the total slaughtered and processed fattened pigs were classified, but only 12.4% of the total fattened pigs slaughtered in industrial conditions in the country.

2.3.4. Horse breeding

According to expert estimates, in 2024 the number of equidae (including horses) in Bulgaria remained at about 116 thousand. Their main purpose is as draught power in agriculture.

Kabiyuk stud is the only state-owned enterprise operating in the sector, which breeds Bulgarian and foreign tribal horse breeds, such as Karakachan horse, East Bulgarian horse, Pleven horse, Thoroughbred English horse, Thoroughbred Arabian horse, Arabian Shagia and others. The remaining horses are bred in the private sector.

The work related to the conservation and development of genetic resources in horse breeding continued in 2024.

2.3.5. Poultry farming

Poultry farming is an intensive sector, with widespread mechanization and automation of production processes, which allows for highly efficient industrial production.

As of December 31, 2024, a total of 13,560 thousand birds were raised in the country - 6.6% less than a year earlier, including: 6,743 thousand hens and laying hens, 5,509 thousand chickens for meat (of hen variety), 8.7 thousand turkeys, 1,248 thousand ducks, 3 thousand geese and 48 thousand other poultry. About 90% of all farmed birds are chickens.

Almost all bird species have seen a decrease compared to the previous year, most significantly in turkeys - by 42% and ducks - by 35%. Chickens for meat from the hen species are 7.4% less, and birds from the other category (geese, quail, ostriches and guinea fowl), which are not of great economic importance, are 11.3%. Only in the category of hens and growing laying hens there was an increase - by 2.4%.

Table II.25. Number of birds at the end of the year, thousand

Type of poultry	2022	2023	2024	Change 2024/2023
Adult and young laying hens	7,139	6,583	6,743	2,4%
Chickens for meat	6,673	5,947	5,509	-7,4%
Turkeys	8	15	8.7	-42,0%
Ducks	1,627	1,919	1,248	-35,0%
Other birds (geese, quail, ostriches and guinea fowl)	60	58	51	-11,3%
Total	**15,507**	**14,522**	**13,560**	**-6,6%**

Source: MAF, Agrostatistics Department

By the end of 2024, about 68.4% of poultry were raised in the North Central and North Eastern regions of the country, and only 2.5% in the South Western region.

Table II.26. Number of poultry by species and regions in 2024, thousand heads

Region	Adult and young laying hens	Chickens for meat	Hens and chickens total	Turkeys	Ducks	Other poultry	Poultry, total	Change 2024/2023 Poultry, total
Northwestern	c	c	769.5	1.6	115.0	2.0	888.1	-47,1%
North Central	2,219.6	3,882.4	6,102.0	0.2	123.4	1.1	6,266.7	29,1%
Northeastern	1,686.8	1,220.0	2,906.8	0.7	93.0	1.3	3,001.8	-3,7%
Southeastern	c	c	970.3	1.2	299.3	13.1	1,283.9	-50,4%
Southwestern	c	c	300.3	1.3	1.9	31.3	334.8	2,1%
South Central	c	c	1,202.6	3.7	615.6	2.3	1,824.2	-7,9%
Total for the country	**6,742.7**	**5,508.8**	**12,251.5**	**8.7**	**1,248.2**	**51.1**	**13,559.5**	**-6,6%**
Change 2024/2023	**2,4%**	**-7,4%**	**-2,2%**	**-42,0%**	**-35,0%**	**-11,3%**	**-6,6%**	

Source: MAF, Agrostatistics Department, c - confidential data

In 2024, farms raising laying hens and broodstock decreased by 8.7% on an annual basis, to 13,093. The most significant decline was observed in industrial poultry farms with 100,000 or more birds - by 11.1%, but the number of laying hens in them decreased slightly - by 0.9%. Small poultry farms (with 1 to 99 birds) are 8.8% fewer, and the birds raised in them are 6.6%. Although poultry farms with 100-9,999 laying hens and pullets increased by 1%, the number of birds in them decreased by 24.9%. The number of farms raising between 10,000 and 99,999 birds is 4.4% higher than reported for 2023, and that of laying hens in them is 17.2%.

By the end of 2024, the number of farms raising chickens for meat had shrunk by 23.5% compared to a year earlier. Small farms (1 - 199 units) decreased by 54.1%, and chickens for meat in them - by 50%. Poultry farms with 200 - 9,999 birds are also significantly smaller - by 33.3%, as are the birds raised in them - by 34.3%. For farms with 10,000 - 99,999 birds, there was an increase in both the number of farms - by 23.1%, and the number of chickens in them - by 10.8%. Industrial poultry farms (100,000 and more) grew by 18.2%, but by the end of the year they had 19.2% fewer birds.

Table II.27. Egg production in 2024 by planning regions, thousand pieces

Region	Eggs from hens	Eggs from other birds	Total eggs	Change, total eggs, 2024/2023
Northwestern	83,004	447	83,451	2,4%
North Central	290,971	1,621	292,592	-26,2%
Northeastern	283,431	60	283,491	-25,1%
Southeastern	248,786	9,202	257,988	19,3%
Southwestern	54,306	4,496	58,802	-12,6%
South Central	196,599	2,894	199,493	-22,3%
Total for the country	**1,157,097**	**18,720**	**1,175,817**	**-15,8%**

Source: MAF, Agrostatistics Department

Total egg production in 2024 amounted to 1,175,817 thousand pieces, 15.8% below the previous year's level. Of these, 1,157,097 thousand (98%) are hen eggs, including 205,279 thousand - breeding eggs (3.2% more on an annual basis) and 951,818 thousand - for consumption (19.6% less).

The leader in egg production during the year is the North Central Region, representing 24.9% of the total volume for the country. This is followed by the Northeast, Southeast and South Central regions, with a share of 24.1%, 21.9% and 17%, respectively.

The total production of poultry meat and by-products in the country in 2024 increases by 2.7% annually, to 125,320 tons. Industrial production (forming almost 99% of total output) is 2.2% higher. Meat produced on farms increased by 45.4%, but remained insignificant in quantity. About 82% of the meat produced in the country in 2024 was chicken.

Table II.28. Production of poultry meat and by-products in the period 2023 - 2024

	Slaughtered poultry - thousand heads			Total meat and by-products - tons		
	2023	2024	Change 2024/2023	2023	2024	Change 2024/2023
In slaughterhouses	61,145	63,691	4,2%	120,883	123,585	2,2%
In farms	558	929	66,5%	1,193	1,735	45,4%
Total	**61,703**	**64,620**	**4,7%**	**122,076**	**125,320**	**2,7%**

Source: MAF, Agrostatistics Department

The development of poultry farming in recent years has been contributed by the scheme of state aid for the implementation of voluntarily undertaken commitments for the humane treatment of birds (for fattening and for egg production) for a period of five years, the implementation of which continues in 2024.

2.3.6. Beekeeping

The development of beekeeping in Bulgaria is favored by the appropriate natural, climatic and ecological conditions in the country, as well as by long-standing traditions. Given the irreplaceable medicinal properties of bee honey and bee products, there is increased interest and demand from consumers, and the good quality parameters of Bulgarian honey make it largely export-oriented.

Beekeeping is an alternative employment for the population in underdeveloped rural areas, providing additional income.

Table II.29. Number of bee farms and bee colonies as of 1 October

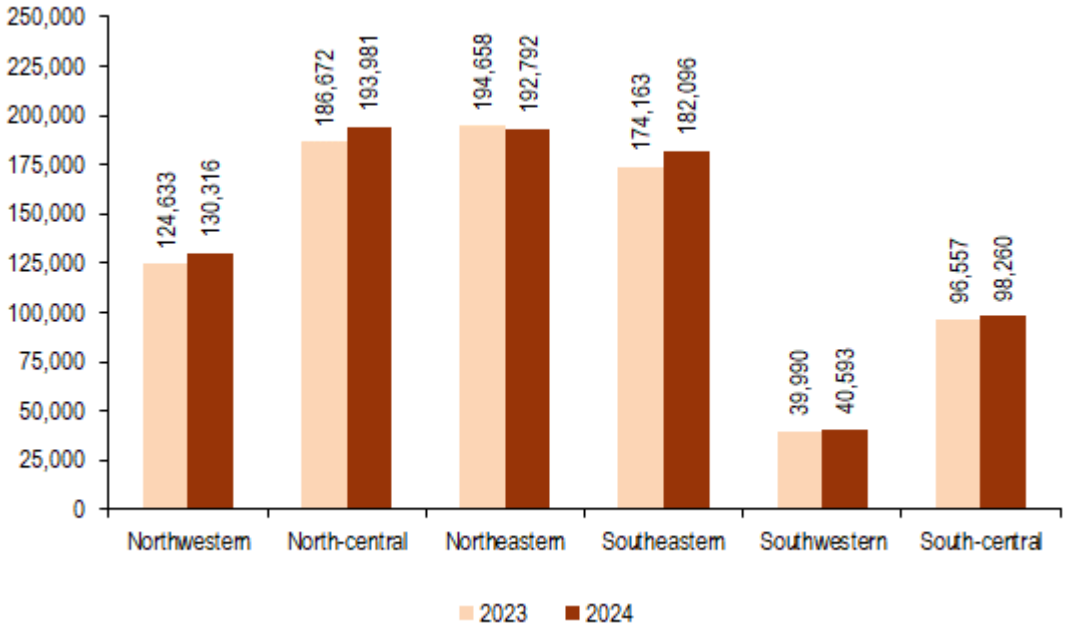
Number of bee colonies on a farm	Number of farms			Number of bee colonies			Average number of bee colonies		
	2023	2024	Change 2024/2023	2023	2024	Change 2024/2023	2023	2024	Change 2024/2023
from 1 to 9	949	804	-15,3%	4,108	3,526	14,2%	4.3	4.4	2,3%
from 10 to 49	3,136	2,595	-17,3%	73,792	61,404	-16,8%	23.5	23.7	0,9%
from 50 to 149	3,112	3,261	4,8%	277,730	296,921	6,9%	89.2	91.1	2,1%
150 and more	2,236	2,263	1,2%	461,043	476,187	3,3%	206.2	210.4	2,0%
Total	9,433	8,923	-5,4%	**816,673**	**838,038**	**2,6%**	**86.6**	**93.9**	**8,5%**

Source: MAF, Agrostatistics Department

As of October 1, 2024, there were 8,923 bee farms in the country, which raised 838,038 bee colonies. The number of bee farms decreased by 5.4% year-on-year, while bee colonies increased by 2.6%. The average number of bee colonies on a farm increases by 8.4%, reaching 93.9 (up from 86.6 in 2023).

Beekeeping is more widespread in Northern and Southeastern Bulgaria, where in 2024 about 83% of all bee colonies were raised, including: North Central Region - 23.1%, Northeastern Region - 23%, Southeastern Region - 21.7%, Northwestern Region - 15.6%.

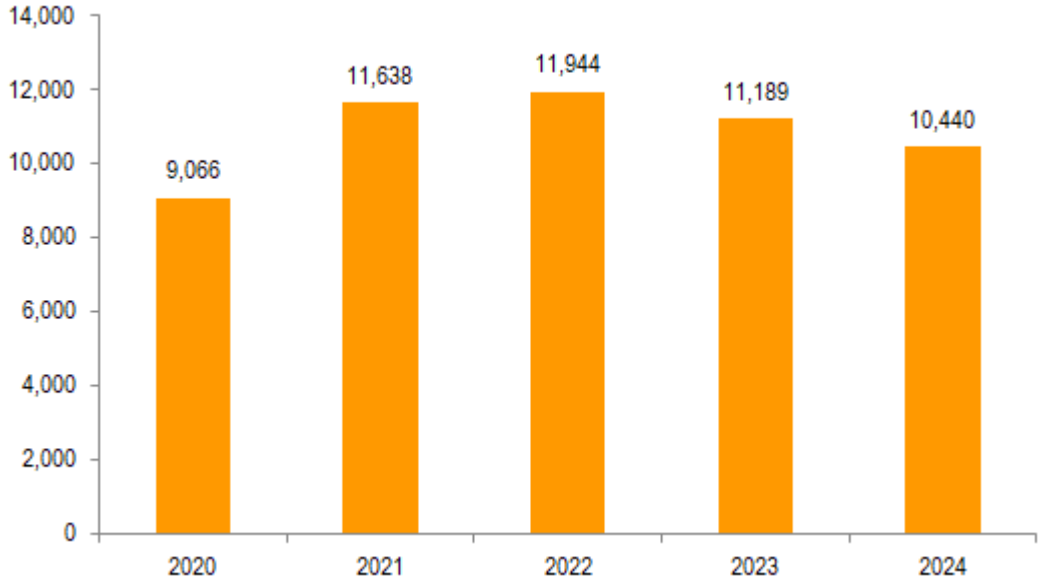
Figure II.5. Number of bee colonies by regions in 2023 and 2024



Source: MAF, Agrostatistics Department

In 2024, the number of bee colonies from which honey was produced was 695,244, 5.5% more than the previous year. With an 11.8% lower average yield of 15 kg/bee colony, honey production decreased by 6.6% on an annual basis, amounting to 10,440 tons.

Figure II.6. Honey production in the period 2020 - 2024, tons



Source: MAF, Agrostatistics Department

The sales of honey and the average selling prices (excluding VAT) in 2024 are as follows (including quantities produced in previous years):

- Direct sales to end consumers - 2,248 tons - 8.90 leva/kg;
- Direct sales to retailers - 470 tons - 7.78 leva/kg;
- Sales of processing plants - 6,992 tons - 4.40 leva/kg;
- Sales to industry - 744 tons - 4.23 leva/kg;
- For own consumption and nutrition of bees - 1,410 tons.

The total amount of honey sold in 2024 increased by 21.3% year-on-year (to 10,454 tons), mainly due to the registered growth in sales of processing enterprises by 43.6%. Direct sales to end consumers, sales to industry and direct sales to retailers decreased by between 2.7% and 14.4%. Reflecting the lower yield during the year, the amount of honey intended for own consumption and feeding of bees is 1.5% below that reported for 2023.

As a result of poisoning, disease, hunger and other causes, a total of 34,603 bee colonies were destroyed in 2024 - 15% less than the previous year, including: 6,930 - from poisoning, 5,906 - from disease, 5,431 - from hunger and 16,336 - from other causes.

Varroasis is a common disease in Europe, including Bulgaria. Its invasion significantly affects yields, and the related treatment measures - on the quality of honey. In 2024, 820,793 bee colonies were treated (97.9% of their total number), at an average cost of treatment of 6.26 BGN.

The nutrition of bee colonies during the year includes: autumn - 545,594, winter - 499,191 and spring feeding - 555,350 bee colonies.

In 2024, the farms practicing mobile beekeeping decreased by 27.2% compared to the previous year, to 193, and the number of bee colonies in them - by 9.7%, to 19,323. The value of transport costs and veterinary certificates during the year is 14.00 BGN/bee colony - 1.3% lower than in 2023.

In 2024, the second year of implementation of the interventions in the beekeeping sector, set out in the Strategic Plan for the Development of Agriculture and Rural Areas for the period 2023-2027, 1,729 applications were submitted, about 21% more than in 2023. After carrying out the relevant administrative checks, 1,583 contracts were signed with the applicants. Of the total budget of BGN 10,091,365 (40% from EAGF and 60%

from NB), the available budget for the 2024 intake is BGN 6,286,800, due to payments made in the financial year 2024 on applications for support and payment submitted by beneficiaries in 2023 (BGN 3,798,512). The total amount of aid paid for the financial year 2024 is BGN 9,397,733 for the individual interventions.

2.3.7. Rabbit breeding

Despite the good natural and climatic conditions and the presence of traditions in breeding, in recent years the development of rabbit breeding was poorly represented in the country being more of a hobby. According to expert estimates, the total number of rabbits in 2024 was about 115 thousand.

The main difficulties for the development of the sector are: obsolete equipment; high production costs; lack of stable export markets and partners; strong dependence of the export of rabbit meat on the conjuncture of foreign markets; lack of direct subsidies for rabbit farmers; insufficiently developed scientific potential for securing the sector; insufficient marketing and management of the Bulgarian market.

2.4. State of organic production in Bulgaria in 2024

Thanks to its positive impact on the environment and climate - through improved carbon sequestration, soil health, biodiversity protection, animal welfare and the provision of additional ecosystem services - organic farming contributes to achieving the objectives of the European Green Deal, the EU Farm to Fork Strategy and the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030.

Organic production is a sustainable management system that preserves elements of the natural landscape and uses energy and natural resources responsibly.

The planned rate of increase in areas under organic farming, combined with agro-ecological measures, leads to high and multifaceted benefits, both for achieving the goals of biodiversity conservation, and for mitigating the impact of climate change and for improving the quality of water, soil and soil biodiversity, due to the non-use of mineral fertilizers and chemical pesticides. The implementation of organic production practices has an indirect positive impact on improving or maintaining the good condition of natural habitats and species from Natura 2000.

The development of organic production in Bulgaria is favored by the availability of quality land resources, suitable climatic conditions and established traditions in the agricultural sector. Defining the organic farming sector is the specific method of production that maintains ecological balances and produces production covering the principles of ecological cycles for the continuous movement in nature by converting substances such as water, minerals, nitrogen, oxygen and carbon into different forms between living beings , water, air and soil.

The information on the state of organic production in Bulgaria in 2024 is based on the data from the annual reports of a , total of 17 controllers of organic production, approved by the Minister of Agriculture and Food, who monitor rule keeping for bio production.

2.4.1. Control System Operators

The collection of information from the organic production control system is done within the calendar year.

At the end of 2024, the total number of organic operators registered with the MAF was 5,646 - 620 more than a year earlier, of which 4,978 were agricultural producers. The number of operators with the main and/or additional activity of processing is 391, with the activity of trade - 706, with the activity of import - 114 and with the activity of export - 119. In 2024, the number of biological operators in a control system represented 7.3% of the total number of registered farmers under Ordinance No. 3 of 29 January 1999 on the establishment and maintenance of a register of farmers. There is an increase of nearly 1 percentage point compared to the previous year.

2.4.2. Organic plant growing

The total areas on which organic production methods are applied (areas in conversion and organic areas) in 2024 amounted to 198,050.9 ha, 34% more than those reported for 2023 and represented 3.95% of the utilized agricultural area in the country. Organic areas with cereal crops increased by 24.8% compared to the

previous year, and the total areas in the control system occupied by this group of crops - by nearly 60%. The areas under control system with grain, legume and protein crops are also significantly higher - by 15.9% and with fresh vegetables, melons, strawberries and cultivated mushrooms (greenhouse and field production) - by over 39%. There was also an increase in industrial crops, although smaller - by 4.6%.

Table II.30. Areas under a control system, including "in transition" and "organic" (ha)

Type of crops	2023	2024
Cereals, incl. rice	18,439.2	29,418.2
Cereals, protein crops for grain production	7,839.9	9,087.7
Root crops	226.2	155.7
Industrial crops - total	18,753.9	19,625.4
Green/Forage crops from arable land	1,171.0	2,236.6
Fresh vegetables, melons, strawberries, cultivated mushrooms (greenhouse and field production)	1,726.4	2,402.1
Perennials	22,503.6	23,022.0
Permanent meadows and pastures	69,894.7	94,110.7
Fallow land	7,243.3	17,992.5
Total areas in a control system	**147,798.2**	**198,050.9**

Source: MAF, according to data from the controlling persons, entered in the register under Art. 16a, para. 1, item 1 of the Act on the Implementation of the General Organization of the Markets of Agricultural Products of the European Union.

Table II.31 Areas of agricultural crops grown organically and areas in conversion (ha)

Type of crops	Areas in transition		Areas that have passed the transition period		Total area	
	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024
Cereals, incl. rice	8,087.9	16,504.7	10,351.3	12,913.5	18,439.2	29,418.2
Cereals, protein crops for grain production	3,911.6	5,128.5	3,928.3	3,959.2	7,839.9	9,087.7
Root crops	50.8	37.2	175.4	118.6	226.2	155.7
Industrial Crops	6,240.1	4,228.4	12,513.8	15,397.0	18,753.9	19,625.4
Fresh vegetables, melons, and strawberries	622.2	630.3	1,104.1	1,771.8	1,726.4	2,402.1
Perennials	5,639.5	5,985.5	16,864.1	17,036.5	22,503.6	23,022.0
Permanent meadows and pastures	57,038.6	71,059.8	12,856.1	23,050.9	69,894.7	94,110.7
Fodder crops from arable land (green crops)	448.3	672.0	722.7	1,564.7	1,171.0	2,236.6
Fallow land	5,523.4	15,180.7	1,719.9	2,811.8	7,243.3	17,992.5

Source: MAF, according to data from the controlling persons, entered in the register under Art. 16a, para. 1, item 1 of the Act on the Implementation of the General Organization of the Markets of Agricultural Products of the European Union.

2.4.3. Organic Livestock Breeding

In 2024 there is a positive development in the organic livestock sector. The total number of sheep raised organically increased by 81.6% compared to the previous year. The number of cattle and buffaloes under control

has increased significantly - by 32.8%, as well as goats - by 34.6%. A more moderate annual increase is reported for bee colonies - by 10.6%.

Table II.32. Livestock in a control system

	Number of animals raised organically (in-conversion and organic)		Total number of animals as of November 1, 2024	Share of organically raised animals from the total number of animals as of 1 November 2024
	2023	2024		
Cattle and buffaloes	30,494	40,500	558,773	7,2%
Sheep	39,497	71,713	1,016,698	7,1%
Goats	7,951	10,700	149,999	7,1%
Bee colonies*	233,920	258,776	838,038	30,9%

Source: MAF, according to data from the controlling persons, entered in the register under Art. 16a, para. 1, item 1 of the Act on the Implementation of the General Organization of the Markets of Agricultural Products of the European Union.

*Data on the total number of bee colonies is as of October 1, 2024.

In 2024, 11,239.4 tons of raw milk were received from certified livestock farms, 371 670 number of eggs, 2,951.6 tons of honey and beekeeping products.

2.4.4. Organic products market

The overwhelming majority of organic foods produced in the country are intended for export, primarily to the European market. Bulgaria mainly exports certified wild dried berries and herbs. Frozen fruits (strawberries, raspberries and blueberries), honey, cheese, yellow cheese, jams, essential oils of rose, lavender and mint find good market positioning in international markets. In 2024, the trend of increasing the number of specialized stores selling organic foods, as well as the retail outlets involved in their distribution, continues. The Ministry of Agriculture and Food carries out effective supervision and control in the field of organic farming, which guarantees the legitimacy and trust in Bulgarian organic products on the EU common market. The development of the sector is also supported by conducting information campaigns and events to promote the benefits and advantages of organic farming.

2.5. Viticulture and wine production

2.5.1. Grapes production

Areas

In 2024, the areas with vine plantations in the agricultural holdings, including the fruiting ones (incl. the abandoned ones with the possibility of restoration) and the young orchards that have not started fruiting amounted to 31,536 ha. Of these, 1.4% are young, unfruitful vineyards.

The newly planted vineyards are 213 ha.

The harvested area of vineyards in 2024 totals 27,728 ha, 2.4% less than the previous year.

The total harvested areas with red wine varieties are shrinking by 3.6% on an annual basis, with a decrease in almost all planning regions, most significantly in the North Central and Northwestern regions, by 8.3% and 7.1%, respectively. Only in the Southwestern region did the harvested areas with these varieties increase - by 3.5%.

For white wine grape varieties, the total harvested areas are observed to remain at the level of 2023. The decrease in these areas in the North Central region (by 7.8%) and in the North Eastern region (by 5.3%) is offset by an increase in the North Western and South Western regions (by 11.8% and 9.5%, respectively).

The total harvested areas with dessert grape varieties are 4.3% below the 2023 level. In the South Central, North Eastern, South Western and North Central regions, the harvested areas with dessert grape

varieties are between 1% and 7.5% more on an annual basis, while those in the South Eastern and North Western regions decrease by 16.2% and 37.2%, respectively.

Due to poor weather conditions, no production was harvested from 1,023 ha of fruit-bearing vineyards.

Table II.33. Distribution of harvested vineyards in 2023 - 2024 by statistical regions

Regions	Red wine varieties (ha)		White wine varieties (ha)		Table varieties (ha)		Total vineyards (ha)	
	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024
Northwestern	1,280	1,189	743	831	43	27	2,066	2,047
North Central	424	389	615	567	67	72	1,106	1,028
Northeastern	615	603	1,687	1,597	80	83	2,382	2,283
Southeastern	4,312	4,046	5,353	5,391	647	542	10,312	9,979
Southwestern	1,717	1,777	169	185	127	133	2,013	2,095
South Central	7,728	7,489	1,574	1,574	1,221	1,233	10,523	10,296
Total	**16,076**	**15,493**	**10,141**	**10,145**	**2,185**	**2,090**	**28,402**	**27,728**

Source: MAF, Agrostatistics Department

Of the total harvested vineyard areas in 2024, 55.9% were with red wine varieties, 36.6% with white wine varieties and 7.5% with dessert varieties.

Average yields

In 2024, there was a decrease in average vineyard yields compared to the previous year, both for wine varieties - by 6.2%, to 4,843 kg/ha, and for dessert varieties - by 11%, to 5,011 kg/ha.

The highest average yields for wine varieties were recorded in the Northeastern region - 6,214 kg/ha, and for dessert varieties in the Southeastern region - 5,642 kg/ha.

Table II.34. Average yields of grapes from vineyards - 2024 harvest

Regions	Average yields from vineyards (kg/ha)	
	Wine varieties	Table varieties
Northwestern	3,120	2,815
North Central	4,410	4,125
Northeastern	6,214	4,795
Southeastern	5,642	5,642
Southwestern	3,340	4,564
South Central	4,433	4,896
Bulgaria	**4,843**	**5,011**

Source: MAF, Agrostatistics Department

Production:

Total grape production in the country in 2024 amounted to 134,749 tons, which is 8.8% less on an annual basis. Grapes harvested from vineyards amounted to 134,634 tons - 8.9% below the previous year's level, with a ratio of wine - 92% and dessert - 8%. Compared to 2023, the harvested production of wine grapes decreased by 8.3%, to 124,161 tons, and that of table grapes - by 14.8%, to 10,473 tons. The production of grapes from vines increased by 18.6%, to 115 tons.

Traditionally, the largest production from vineyards is reported in the Southeastern and South-Central regions, where about 76% of the total production is concentrated.

In almost all regions of the country, there is a decrease in grape production from vineyards compared to the previous year, 2023, ranging from 5.4% in the North Central to 12.1% in the South Central region. The exceptions are the Northeastern and Southwestern regions, where an increase in grape production from vineyards was reported by 4.5% and 5.5%, respectively.

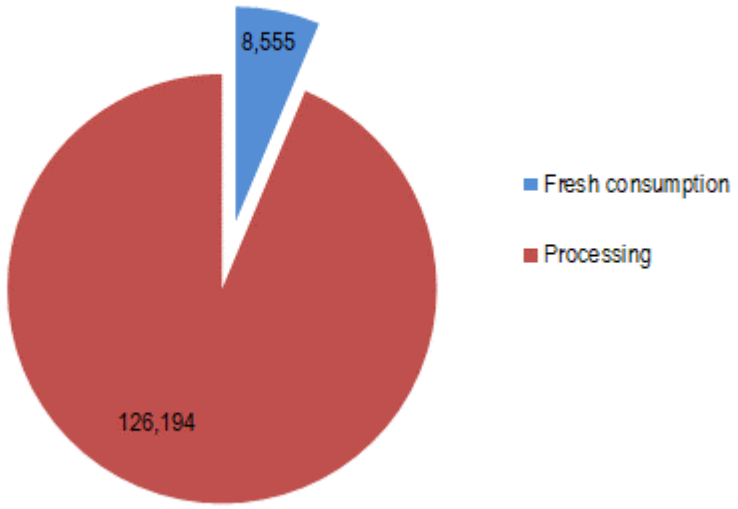
Table II.35. Grape production - harvest `2024

Regions	Grapes from the vineyards			Grapes from vines (tones)	Total grapes produced (tones)
	Wine (tones)	Dessert (tones)	Total grapes produced from vineyards (tones)		
Northwestern	6,303	76	6,379	-	-
North Central	4,216	297	4,513	-	-
Northeastern	13,671	398	14,069	-	-
Southeastern	53,239	3,058	56,297	-	-
Southwestern	6,554	607	7,161	-	-
South Central	40,178	6,037	46,215	-	-
Total	**124,161**	**10,473**	**134,634**	**115**	**134,749**

Source: MAF, Agrostatistics Department

Of the total grapes produced during the year, 126,194 tons were destined for processing, and 8,555 tons - for fresh consumption.

Figure II.7. Distribution of grapes produced - harvest `2024, tons

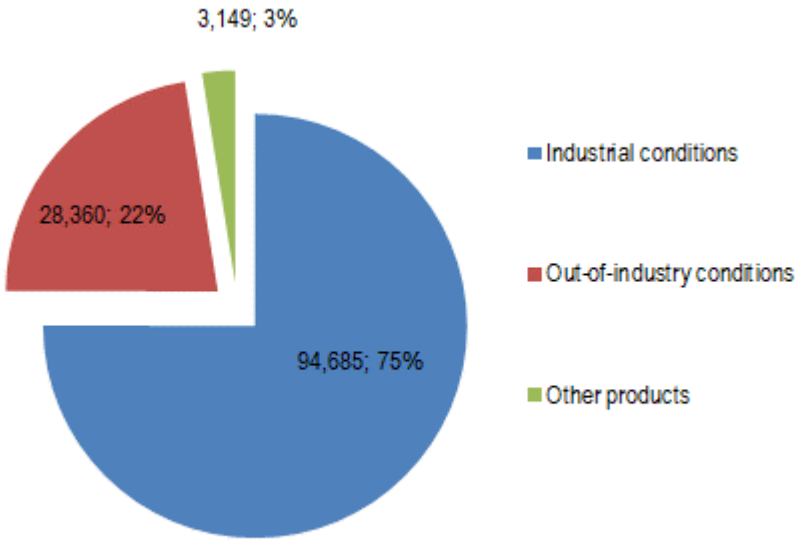


Source: MAF, Agrostatistics Department

According to the data of the Executive Agency for Vine and Wine, in 2024 the quantity of wine grapes purchased and processed by wine enterprises amounted to 94,685 tons, which is 6,118 tons less than the previous year.

Grapes intended for processing in non-industrial conditions amounted to 28,360 tons and 3,149 tons of processed grapes were used for products other than wine and grape must.

Figure II.8. Distribution of grapes - harvest 2024, intended for processing, tons and percentage



Source: MAF, Agrostatistics Department

2.5.2. Wine production

The total wine production from the 2024 harvest, declared by registered wine producers, amounts to 634,649 hectoliters, 6.1% less than the previous year. The production of red and rosé wines fell by 4.2% year-on-year, to 259,039 hectoliters, and that of white wines - by 7.3%, to 375,610 hectoliters.

The largest share of industrial wine production - harvest `2024 are table wines (wines without a protected designation of origin or protected geographical indication) - 56.8%, followed by regional wines (wines with a protected geographical indication) with 42.9%. The share of wines with a protected designation of origin is only 0.3%.

The leader in wine production in 2024 is the Southeast region with 57.5% of the total, followed by the South Central region with 18.5%. The smallest share of wine produced is in the Northwestern region - 2.7%.

Table II.36. Quantity of wine and grape must produced by wine-making enterprises, harvest `2024

Region	Quantity of wine and grape must produced, hectoliters								
	Wines with PDO* (quality)		Wines with PGI** (regional)		Other wines (incl. table wines)		Must	Total wine	
	white	red and rosé	white	red and rosé	white	red and rosé		white	red and rosé
Northwestern region	0	0	6,970	4,179	1,498	4,203	131	8,468	8,382
North Central Region	0	0	9,144	7,764	16,915	8,114	490	26,058	15,878
Northeastern region	58	0	31,516	10,152	17,454	5,134	220	49,027	15,286
Southeastern region	296	814	75,906	55,407	159,310	73,401	14,742	235,512	129,622
Southwestern region	180	552	4,465	10,169	7,072	6,797	0	11,717	17,519
South Central Region	0	0	21,531	35,201	23,297	37,151	18,089	44,828	72,352
TOTAL WINE:	**534**	**1,366**	**149,532**	**122,872**	**225,546**	**134,800**	**33,672**	**375,610**	**259,039**

Source: Executive Agency on Vine and Wine
*PDO - Protected designation of origin; **PGI - Protected geographical indication

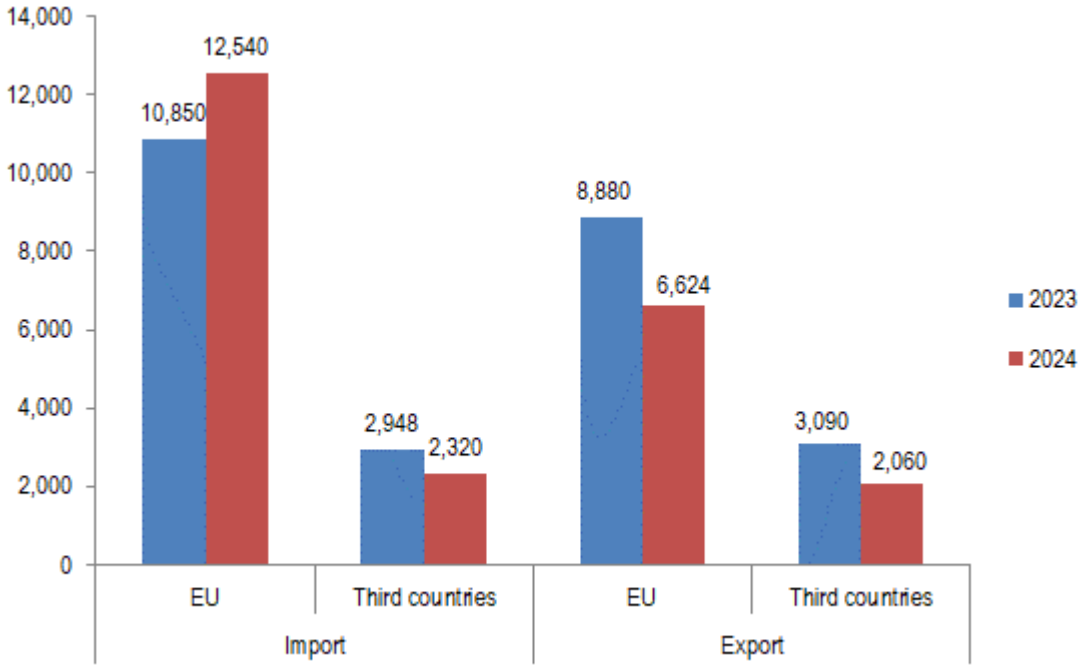
128,661 hectoliters of wine were produced in non-industrial conditions in 2024, compared to 168,695 hectoliters for the previous year.

Thus, the total wine production - harvest `2024 amounts to 763,310 hectoliters, 10% less compared to the 2023 harvest.

2.5.3. Export and Import of Wine

In 2024, there was a significant increase in wine imports into the country and a simultaneous decrease in exports. Thus, for the second consecutive year, a negative balance has been formed in Bulgaria's foreign trade in wine.

Figure II.9. Foreign trade in wine during the 2023 - 2024 period, thousand liters



Source: NSI

Export

According to NSI data, in 2024, wine exports amounted to 8,684 thousand liters - a significant 27.5% below the level of the previous year. In value terms, exports decreased slightly less - by 26.4%, to 16,670 thousand euros, due to the reported 1.4% higher average export price of 1.92 euros/liter.

The total amount of wine destined for the EU in 2024 shrinks by 25.4% year-on-year, to 6,624 thousand liters (76.3% of all exports). Leading destinations within the EU during the year were Sweden and Poland, although shipments there decreased by 8.4% and 34.1%, respectively. Most of the other major partners in the Union also reported a decrease in exports compared to the previous year, ranging from 7% (Italy) to 93.6% (Czech Republic). At the same time, shipments to Greece have increased manifold - from 7 thousand liters in 2023 to 366 thousand liters in 2024. The quantities sold in the Netherlands (by 36.5%), Spain (by 46.2%) and Romania (by 54.5%) are also significantly higher.

Wine exports to third countries in 2024 saw an even more serious decline compared to the previous year - by 33.3%, to 2,060 thousand liters. The quantities destined for the markets of the United Kingdom (by 7.1%), Japan (by 12.9%), the Russian Federation (by 65%), Norway (by 74%) and Nigeria (by 93.5%) decreased significantly, which was only partially offset by the expansion of sales in the USA, Switzerland, Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana.

Table II.37. Wine exports in 2023 and 2024, liters

Countries	2023	2024	Change 2024/2023	
			liters	%
EU - total, including:	**8,880,005**	**6,623,700**	**-2,256,305**	**-25,4%**
Sweden	3,138,775	2,875,047	-263,728	-8,4%
Poland	3,620,856	2,386,996	-1,233,860	-34,1%
Greece	6,649	366,206	359,557	5407,7%
Belgium	428,602	359,798	-68,804	-16,1%
The Netherlands	183,611	250,554	66,943	36,5%
Italy	117,315	109,064	-8,251	-7,0%
Czech Republic	1,042,302	66,656	-975,646	-93,6%
Germany	136,457	61,630	-74,827	-54,8%
Denmark	60,888	37,830	-23,058	-37,9%
Romania	13,981	21,600	7,619	54,5%
Cyprus	19,135	19,250	115	0,6%
Lithuania	24,764	17,748	-7,016	-28,3%
France	24,538	13,264	-11,274	-45,9%
Spain	7,480	10,936	3,456	46,2%
Luxembourg	18,940	10,562	-8,378	-44,2%
Slovakia	12,129	6,848	-5,281	-43,5%
Others	23,583	9,711	-13,872	-58,8%
Third countries, including:	**3,090,119**	**2,060,476**	**-1,029,643**	**-33,3%**
United Kingdom	530,041	492,655	-37,386	-7,1%
USA	410,588	414,534	3,946	1,0%
Japan	371,561	323,700	-47,861	-12,9%
Russian Federation	658,013	230,149	-427,864	-65,0%
Côte d'Ivoire	61,479	99,450	37,971	61,8%
Ghana	14,175	92,561	78,386	553,0%
Benin	126,252	52,650	-73,602	-58,3%
Brazil	42,523	37,201	-5,322	-12,5%
Norway	135,677	35,303	-100,374	-74,0%
Switzerland	25,839	33,414	7,575	29,3%
China	57,956	26,012	-31,944	-55,1%
Nigeria	325,148	21,168	-303,980	-93,5%
Togo	0	19,476	19,476	-
Canada	12,398	17,856	5,458	44,0%
Kazakhstan	48,047	10,686	-37,361	-77,8%
Mongolia	21,276	10,584	-10,692	-50,3%
Malaysia	7,283	10,190	2,907	39,9%
Republic of Korea	18,540	9,000	-9,540	-51,5%
Lebanon	91,778	8,348	-83,430	-90,9%
Central African Republic	20,840	0	-20,840	-100,0%
Others	110,705	115,539	4,834	4,4%
Total	**11,970,124**	**8,684,176**	**-3,285,948**	**-27,5%**

Source: NSI

Import

In 2024, a total of 14,859 thousand liters of wine were imported into the country, which is 7.7% more than in 2023. With a 7.6% lower average import price of 2.71 euros/liter, the value of imports decreased by 1% on an annual basis, to 40,006 thousand euros.

Table II.38. Imports of wines in 2023 and 2024, liters

Countries	2023	2024	Change 2024/2023	
			liters	%
EU - total, including:	**10,850,058**	**12,539,879**	**1,689,821**	**15,6%**
Italy	3,380,658	3,100,537	-280,121	-8,3%
Spain	2,145,898	2,011,573	-134,325	-6,3%
France	1,898,509	1,983,289	84,780	4,5%
Romania	820,034	1,927,928	1,107,894	135,1%
Germany	1,478,461	1,572,689	94,228	6,4%
Hungary	615,260	1,473,674	858,414	139,5%
Portugal	44,754	125,019	80,265	179,3%
Czech Republic	103,814	95,124	-8,690	-8,4%
Austria	50,282	65,965	15,683	31,2%
Lithuania	2,146	58,579	56,433	2629,7%
The Netherlands	39,927	52,592	12,665	31,7%
Greece	76,803	50,807	-25,996	-33,8%
Poland	0	12,768	12,768	-
Belgium	27,380	4,952	-22,428	-81,9%
Sweden	154,749	0	-154,749	-100,0%
Others	11,383	4,383	-7,000	-61,5%
Third countries, including:	**2,947,819**	**2,319,510**	**-628,309**	**-21,3%**
New Zealand	877,928	786,847	-91,081	-10,4%
Northern Macedonia	1,060,204	654,058	-406,146	-38,3%
Moldova	197,761	245,915	48,154	24,3%
South Africa	296,811	209,376	-87,435	-29,5%
Chile	173,849	184,435	10,586	6,1%
Argentina	49,850	75,270	25,420	51,0%
Georgia	40,751	57,614	16,863	41,4%
United Kingdom	33,042	27,230	-5,812	-17,6%
Australia	30,966	26,097	-4,869	-15,7%
Turkey	17,666	23,805	6,139	34,8%
USA	5,832	20,022	14,190	243,3%
Kosovo	150,000	0	-150,000	-100,0%
Others	13,159	8,841	-4,318	-32,8%
Total	**13,797,877**	**14,859,389**	**1,061,512**	**7,7%**

Source: NSI

Wine supplies from EU member states increased by 15.6% compared to 2023, amounting to 12,540 thousand liters (84.4% of total imports). The most significant quantities were imported from Italy, Spain, France, Romania, Germany and Hungary. Imports of wines from Hungary and Romania more than doubled compared to the previous year, and those from Germany - by 6.4%. Volumes from Italy and Spain were down 8.3% and 6.3% year-on-year, respectively. Among the other partners, the multiple increase in imports from Lithuania is striking - from 2 thousand liters in 2023 to 59 thousand liters in 2024. In 2024, no wine was imported from Sweden (compared to 155 thousand liters in the previous year).

Imports of wine from third countries in 2024 amounted to 2,320 thousand liters - 21.3% below the previous year's level, mainly due to smaller quantities imported from North Macedonia (by 406 thousand liters or 38.3%) and the lack of imports from Kosovo (compared to 150 thousand liters a year earlier). A decrease is also reported in imports from leading suppliers such as New Zealand (by 10.4%) and South Africa (by 29.5%), while volumes from Moldova, Chile, Argentina, Georgia, Turkey and the USA are increasing.

III. TRADE IN AGRICULTURAL GOODS

1. Key trading indicators

According to NSI data, in 2024, Bulgaria's agricultural trade amounted to 13,476.8 million euros, which represents a decrease of 4.7% on an annual basis. Exports of agricultural goods are worth 6,739.5 million euros - 15.1% below the 2023 level, mainly due to a decline in the sale of cereals and oilseeds and derived products such as sunflower oil, oilcake and other residues used for animal feed. The lower export of these products is mainly due to the relatively weak harvest in `2024 for some of the grain and oilseed crops (for sunflower, corn and rapeseed - for the second consecutive year), in most cases combined with a decrease in average export prices. At the same time, agricultural imports increased by 8.6%, to 6,737.3 million euros. Thus, in 2024, the traditionally positive balance in Bulgaria's trade in agricultural goods drops to 2.2 million euros, compared to 1,740 million euros in 2023.

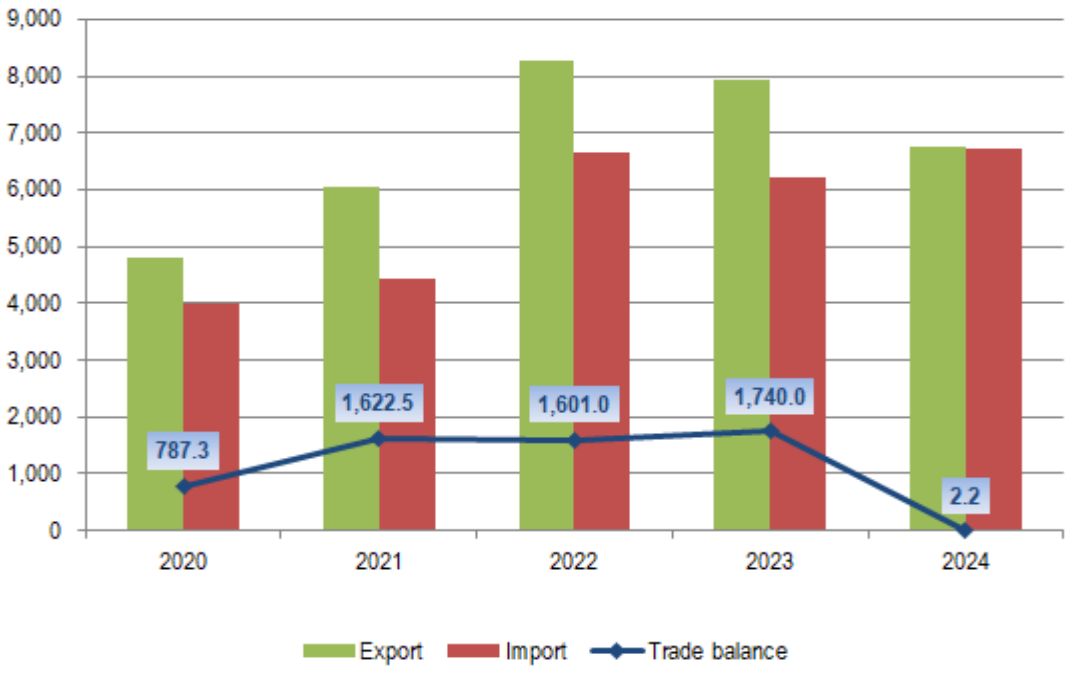
In 2024, the agricultural sector accounted for 14.1% of the country's total trade for the year, including 15.2% of total exports and 13.2% of total imports.

Table III.1. Agricultural trade of Bulgaria in the period 2020 – 2024 (thousand euros)

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Change 2024/2023 (%)
Agricultural export	4,786,052	6,041,007	8,269,923	7,941,122	6,739,500	-15,1%
Share of total exports	*17,1%*	*17,3%*	*17,4%*	*17,9%*	*15,2%*	
Agricultural imports	3,998,783	4,418,463	6,668,884	6,201,085	6,737,329	8,6%
Share of total imports	*13,0%*	*11,3%*	*12,1%*	*12,5%*	13,2%	
Balance	787,269	1,622,544	1,601,039	1,740,037	2,171	-99,9%
Commodity exchange	8,784,835	10,459,470	14,938,807	14,142,207	13,476,829	-4,7%

Source: NSI and MAF calculations.

Figure III.1. Agricultural trade of Bulgaria (million euros)

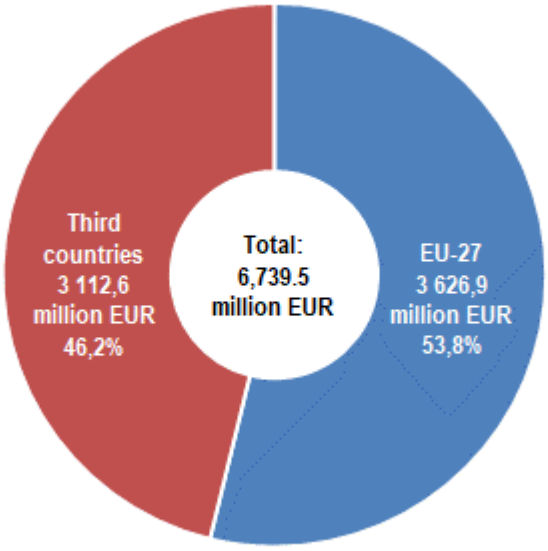


Source: NSI and MAF calculations

2. Structure of Bulgaria's agricultural trade by country

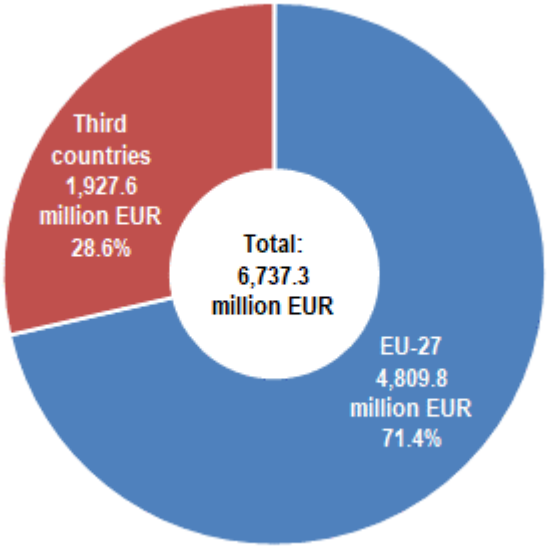
Bulgaria's main trade partner in agricultural goods is the European Union. In 2024, trade with the Union countries represented 53.8% of the country's total agricultural exports and 71.4% of total agricultural imports, compared to 52.6% and 72.0% respectively in the previous year.

Figure III.2. Structure of agricultural exports from Bulgaria in 2024 by country



Source: NSI and MAF calculations

Figure III.3. Structure of agricultural imports into Bulgaria in 2024 by country



Source: NSI and MAF calculations

2.1. Exports by country

The most significant share in the export of agricultural goods from Bulgaria in 2024 is occupied by neighboring Greece (11.4%), Romania (10.3%) and Turkey (9.5%). Among the leading destinations are also Germany and Algeria, followed by Spain, the Netherlands, Italy, France, etc.

The total value of shipments to the EU decreases by 13.2% compared to 2023, mainly due to weaker sales of sunflower, wheat, sunflower oil, sugar and poultry meat. For most of the more significant partners within the Union, there is a decrease ranging from 6.8% (France) to 51.4% (Spain). There was a significant increase in exports to Belgium (43%), and a smaller increase in exports to Hungary (5.1%), Romania (3.8%) and Poland (2.8%).

Exports to third countries also decreased - by 17.2%, reflecting a significantly lower value of shipments of wheat, corn, sunflower, sunflower oil, oilcake and other solid residues obtained from the extraction of vegetable oils. The significant decline in exports to China (-69%) and Indonesia (-77%) is striking. Sales of agricultural products also decreased in Algeria (-11.3%), Egypt (-10.9%) and the United States (-6.1%). On the other hand, exports to Turkey increased by 26.4% on an annual basis (mainly as a result of a several-fold increase in the value of cocoa butter sent there), and those to the United Kingdom - by 10.2%.

Table III.2. Exports of agricultural goods by country (EUR thousand)

	2022	2023	2024	Share in total agricultural exports (2024)	Change 2024/2023	
					EUR thousand	%
TOTAL, including:	**8,269,923**	**7,941,122**	**6,739,500**	**100,0%**	**-1,201,622**	**-15,1%**
EU-27 total	**4,953,404**	**4,179,895**	**3,626,886**	**53,8%**	**-553,009**	**-13,2%**
Greece	1,003,727	855,590	766,247	11,4%	-89,343	-10,4%
Romania	813,944	669,176	694,355	10,3%	25,179	3,8%
Germany	476,626	468,007	426,473	6,3%	-41,534	-8,9%
Spain	616,227	565,037	274,398	4,1%	-290,639	-51,4%
The Netherlands	398,557	289,373	228,810	3,4%	-60,563	-20,9%
Italy	395,915	292,816	224,370	3,3%	-68,446	-23,4%
France	333,333	224,718	209,545	3,1%	-15,173	-6,8%
Poland	203,751	191,186	196,489	2,9%	5,303	2,8%
Belgium	140,621	83,973	120,052	1,8%	36,079	43,0%
Czech Republic	55,721	73,599	73,721	1,1%	122	0,2%
Hungary	84,052	69,996	73,580	1,1%	3,584	5,1%
Others	430,931	396,424	338,846	5,0%	-57,578	-14,5%
Third countries total	**3,316,519**	**3,761,227**	**3,112,614**	**46,2%**	**-648,613**	**-17,2%**
Turkey	346,887	507,604	641,497	9,5%	133,893	26,4%
Algeria	456,666	456,942	405,131	6,0%	-51,811	-11,3%
United Kingdom	198,080	172,405	190,042	2,8%	17,637	10,2%
USA	182,175	176,893	166,151	2,5%	-10,742	-6,1%
China	247,710	480,339	148,822	2,2%	-331,517	-69,0%
Morocco	37,787	132,217	134,789	2,0%	2,572	1,9%
Iraq	140,547	99,383	128,000	1,9%	28,617	28,8%
Egypt	94,939	134,939	120,285	1,8%	-14,654	-10,9%
Thailand	7,508	97,219	104,658	1,6%	7,439	7,7%
South Africa	181,956	97,469	84,794	1,3%	-12,675	-13,0%
Serbia	72,443	82,030	83,922	1,2%	1,892	2,3%
Kosovo	34,171	40,977	58,830	0,9%	17,853	43,6%
Indonesia	63,383	249,510	57,377	0,9%	-192,133	-77,0%
Saudi Arabia	25,275	21,591	50,104	0,7%	-416	-0,8%
Northern Macedonia	60,859	50,520	48,464	0,7%	-912,725	-95,0%
Others	1,166,131	961,189	689,748	10,2%	-271,441	-28,2%

Source: NSI and MAF calculations.

2.2. Import by country

In 2024, the leading suppliers of agricultural goods on the Bulgarian market are Romania, Germany and Greece (representing 13.1%, 9.6% and 9.2% of all agricultural imports, respectively), followed by Ukraine, Poland, the Netherlands, Turkey and others.

The value of agricultural imports from the EU increased by 7.8% compared to the previous year. The largest contribution to this is made by shipments of sunflower, cigarettes, chocolate products, sunflower oil and cocoa butter. Regarding sunflower and sunflower oil, a serious increase in quantities is reported, and for the other products - mainly higher import prices. Almost all major partners in the Union have seen an increase in imports, ranging from 2.5% (Czech Republic) to 17.8% (Austria). Arrivals from Denmark (-0.7%), France (-6.0%), Ireland (-7.2%) and Italy (-11.2%) are decreasing.

Total imports of agricultural goods from third countries are 10.9% above the previous year's level, with the most significant increase in the value of imported sunflower oil, coffee, cocoa and cocoa mass. Among the more important non-EU suppliers, imports from Ukraine (8.5%), Turkey (11.8%), Serbia (18.9%), the United Kingdom (33.4%) and Moldova (41.9%) increased, while imports from Côte d'Ivoire (-15.2%) and China (-36%) decreased.

Table III.3. Imports of agricultural goods by country (EUR thousand)

	2022	2023	2024	Share in total agricultural imports (2024)	Change 2024/2023	
					EUR thousand	%
TOTAL, including:	**6,668,884**	**6,201,085**	**6,737,329**	**100,0%**	**536,244**	**8,6%**
EU-27 total	**4,186,910**	**4,463,674**	**4,809,753**	**71,4%**	**346,079**	**7,8%**
Romania	875,101	796,589	884,094	13,1%	87,505	11,0%
Germany	546,208	584,919	644,286	9,6%	59,367	10,1%
Greece	530,169	543,793	620,749	9,2%	76,956	14,2%
Poland	378,135	401,888	441,962	6,6%	40,074	10,0%
The Netherlands	321,940	353,611	390,982	5,8%	37,371	10,6%
Italy	320,584	369,570	328,041	4,9%	-41,529	-11,2%
Spain	217,332	284,675	301,202	4,5%	16,527	5,8%
Hungary	231,492	258,078	268,505	4,0%	10,427	4,0%
Belgium	124,319	174,266	199,185	3,0%	24,919	14,3%
France	157,603	170,504	160,348	2,4%	-10,156	-6,0%
Austria	112,640	106,244	125,141	1,9%	18,897	17,8%
Czech Republic	91,755	101,803	104,359	1,5%	2,556	2,5%
Denmark	53,625	64,904	64,426	1,0%	-478	-0,7%
Lithuania	40,822	48,355	50,029	0,7%	1,674	3,5%
Slovakia	29,015	46,134	49,824	0,7%	3,690	8,0%
Ireland	39,501	46,864	43,483	0,6%	-3,381	-7,2%
Others	116,669	111,477	133,137	2,0%	21,660	19,4%
Third countries total	**2,482,000**	**1,737,411**	**1,927,575**	**28,6%**	**190,164**	**10,9%**
Ukraine	1,106,200	434,345	471,245	7,0%	36,900	8,5%
Turkey	278,878	344,775	385,337	5,7%	40,562	11,8%
Serbia	151,898	141,556	168,336	2,5%	26,780	18,9%
Moldova	121,489	70,234	99,672	1,5%	29,438	41,9%
United Kingdom	48,072	57,828	77,155	1,1%	19,327	33,4%
China	202,132	113,606	72,723	1,1%	-40,883	-36,0%
Brazil	54,223	36,720	64,263	1,0%	27,543	75,0%
Côte d'Ivoire	39,898	75,414	63,927	0,9%	-11,487	-15,2%
Northern Macedonia	43,562	43,690	44,191	0,7%	501	1,1%
USA	27,589	33,102	42,730	0,6%	9,628	29,1%
Vietnam	28,590	25,990	37,946	0,6%	11,956	46,0%

	2022	2023	2024	Share in total agricultural imports (2024)	Change 2024/2023	
					EUR thousand	%
Ecuador	27,926	25,287	35,969	0,5%	10,682	42,2%
Egypt	26,752	18,451	23,796	0,4%	5,345	29,0%
Canada	11,911	12,112	20,445	0,3%	8,333	68,8%
Others	312,880	304,301	319,840	4,7%	15,539	5,1%

Source: NSI and MAF calculations.

3. Structure of Bulgaria's agricultural trade by products

3.1. Export by products

Cereal plants remained the leading group of products in the structure of the agrarian exports in 2024, although their share in the total value of agricultural goods sold abroad declined from 26.9% in 2023 to 22.2%. In second place is the group of fats of vegetable or animal origin with 9.5%, followed by cocoa products (9%), which displace oilseeds and fruits (8.5%, compared to 10.6% the previous year). The export of residues from the food industry and animal feed; food products prepared based on cereals; milk and dairy products; meat and offal; various food products used in the food industry; tobacco products and non-alcoholic and alcoholic beverages is also relatively large.

Table III.4. Agricultural exports from Bulgaria by product groups in the period 2023 - 2024 (EUR thousand)

		2023		2024		Change 2024/2023 %
		EUR thousand	*share of total agricultural exports %*	EUR thousand	*share of total agricultural exports %*	
	Total agricultural goods, including:	**7,941,122**	**100%**	**6,739,500**	**100,0%**	**-15,1%**
1	Live animals	210,974	2,7%	195,414	2,9%	-7,4%
2	Meat and edible offal	285,962	3,6%	250,615	3,7%	-12,4%
3	Fish and crustaceans, mollusks and other aquatic invertebrates	50,942	0,6%	41,820	0,6%	-17,9%
4	Milk and milk products; poultry eggs; natural honey; edible products of animal origin, not elsewhere specified	278,712	3,5%	253,772	3,8%	-8,9%
5	Other products of animal origin, not elsewhere specified	21,459	0,3%	22,769	0,3%	6,1%
6	Live plants and flower products	7,396	0,1%	7,346	0,1%	-0,7%
7	Edible vegetables, plants, roots and tubers	170,197	2,1%	129,975	1,9%	-23,6%
8	Edible fruit; citrus or melon peels	155,513	2,0%	159,552	2,4%	2,6%
9	Coffee, tea, maté and spices	113,275	1,4%	146,228	2,2%	29,1%
10	Wheat plants	2,135,774	26,9%	1,495,141	22,2%	-30,0%
11	Milling products; malt and starch; inulin; wheat gluten	82,101	1,0%	73,512	1,1%	-10,5%
12	Oilseeds and oleaginous fruits; seeds for sowing and fruits; industrial or medicinal plants; straw and feed	842,643	10,6%	574,642	8,5%	-31,8%
13	Natural varnishes, glues, resins and other plant juices and extracts	3,066	0,0%	3,607	0,1%	17,6%
14	Weaving materials and other products of vegetable origin, not elsewhere specified or included	521	0,0%	1,181	0,0%	126,7%
15	Fats and oils of animal or vegetable origin; processed fats for food purposes; waxes of animal or vegetable origin	880,390	11,1%	638,197	9,5%	-27,5%
16	Products of meat, fish or crustacean products, mollusks or other aquatic invertebrates	133,328	1,7%	130,875	1,9%	-1,8%
17	Sugar and sugar confectionery	291,204	3,7%	192,939	2,9%	-33,7%
18	Cocoa and cocoa products	404,097	5,1%	604,333	9,0%	49,6%
19	Food prepared from cereals, flour, starch, farina or milk; pastry confectionery	424,604	5,3%	449,984	6,7%	6,0%
20	Food products from vegetables, fruit or other parts of plants	202,492	2,5%	199,186	3,0%	-1,6%
21	Various types of food products	214,902	2,7%	233,806	3,5%	8,8%

		2023		2024		Change 2024/2023 %
		EUR thousand	*share of total agricultural exports %*	EUR thousand	*share of total agricultural exports %*	
22	Non-alcoholic and alcoholic beverages and vinegars	245,968	3,1%	231,754	3,4%	-5,8%
23	Residues and waste from the food industry; prepared animal feed	555,482	7,0%	470,305	7,0%	-15,3%
24	Tobacco and processed tobacco substitutes	230,121	2,9%	232,548	3,5%	1,1%

Source: NSI and MAF calculations.

The decrease in total agricultural exports in 2024 is mainly related to the significant decline in wheat (by EUR 484.4 million or 31.0%), sunflower oil (by EUR 247.6 million or 31.0%), sunflower (by EUR 227.2 million or 32.7%) and corn (by EUR 169.5 million or 48.0%). The value of exported oilcake and other solid residues (by EUR 76.6 million or 30.0%), poultry meat (by EUR 62.2 million or 29.8%), sugar (by EUR 36.0 million or 22.7%) and cattle (by EUR 16.7 million or 9.3%) is also significantly lower. This is only partially offset by an increase in the export of some other products such as cocoa butter, chocolate products, barley, bakery, pastry or biscuit products, preparations used for animal feed, coffee, etc.

Table III.5. Leading products in agricultural exports from Bulgaria (EUR thousand)

	2023		2024		Change 2024/2023	
	Quantity (tons)	Value (EUR thousand)	Quantity (tons)	Value (EUR thousand)	Quantity	Value
Wheat and a wheat and rye mix	6,422,378	1,564,501	5,016,645	1,080,058	-21,9%	-31,0%
Sunflower oil, cottonseed oil or safflower oil	783,361	798,608	572,013	550,978	-27,0%	-31,0%
Sunflower seeds, even crushed	874,490	695,191	576,506	468,033	-34,1%	-32,7%
Bakery, pastry or biscuit products	105,284	367,469	111,625	391,861	6,0%	6,6%
Chocolate and other food products containing cocoa	53,256	289,608	54,592	336,420	2,5%	16,2%
Preparations used in animal feeding	137,427	213,152	152,552	227,235	11,0%	6,6%
Food preparations not elsewhere specified or included	43,493	189,356	47,355	208,794	8,9%	10,3%
Corn	1,364,853	353,248	889,013	183,704	-34,9%	-48,0%
Oil cakes and other solid residues	843,159	254,847	656,475	178,271	-22,1%	-30,0%
Cocoa butter, fat and liquid cocoa butter	7,011	34,371	10,694	172,354	52,5%	401,5%
Live bovine animals	43,666	179,167	35,607	162,483	-18,5%	-9,3%
Barley	525,295	110,044	859,082	156,873	63,5%	42,6%
Poultry meat and offal	34,384	209,059	31,518	146,850	-8,3%	-29,8%
Sugars, including lactose, maltose, glucose and fructose	192,586	158,442	179,792	122,410	-6,6%	-22,7%
Coffee, whether or not roasted or decaffeinated; coffee shells and husks; coffee substitutes containing coffee, regardless of the ratio in the mix	13,683	91,095	17,367	121,007	26,9%	32,8%

Source: NSI and MAF calculations.

3.2. Import by products

In 2024, there was a relative preservation of the structure of imports of agricultural goods compared to that of the previous year. In first place remains the group of meat and offal, fit for consumption, with a 9.5% share of total agricultural imports (up from 10.4% in 2023). This is followed by the groups of fats and oils of animal or vegetable origin (8.7%); oilseeds and fruits (8.5%) and cocoa products (8.4%), which report a certain increase in relative weight compared to 2023. The value of imported soft and alcoholic beverages and vinegar;

tobacco and processed tobacco substitutes; milk and dairy products; food products prepared from cereals; fruits and food products used in the food industry is also significant.

Table III.6. Agricultural imports from Bulgaria by product groups in the period 2023 - 2024 (EUR thousand)

		2023		2024		Change 2024/2024 %
		EUR, thousand	*share of the total agricultural import %*	EUR thousand	*share of the total agricultural import %*	
	Total agricultural goods, including:	**6,201,085**	**100%**	**6,737,329**	**100%**	**8,6%**
1	Live animals	38,935	0,6%	15,791	0,2%	-59,4%
2	Meat and edible offal	643,741	10,4%	640,640	9,5%	-0,5%
3	Fish and crustaceans, mollusks and other aquatic invertebrates	128,179	2,1%	136,067	2,0%	6,2%
4	Milk and milk products; poultry eggs; natural honey; edible products of animal origin, not elsewhere specified	413,118	6,7%	454,734	6,7%	10,1%
5	Other products of animal origin, not elsewhere specified	27,629	0,4%	25,466	0,4%	-7,8%
6	Live plants and flower products	45,290	0,7%	37,265	0,6%	-17,7%
7	Edible vegetables, plants, roots and tubers	298,981	4,8%	297,683	4,4%	-0,4%
8	Edible fruit; citrus or melon peels	350,909	5,7%	385,057	5,7%	9,7%
9	Coffee, tea, maté and spices	184,758	3,0%	243,516	3,6%	31,8%
10	Wheat plants	159,988	2,6%	139,627	2,1%	-12,7%
11	Milling products; malt and starch; inulin; wheat gluten	35,818	0,6%	38,949	0,6%	8,7%
12	Oilseeds and oleaginous fruits; seeds for sowing and fruits; industrial or medicinal plants; straw and feed	475,734	7,7%	569,481	8,5%	19,7%
13	Natural varnishes, glues, resins and other plant juices and extracts	16,806	0,3%	16,094	0,2%	-4,2%
14	Weaving materials and other products of vegetable origin, not elsewhere specified or included	2,021	0,0%	7,946	0,1%	293,2%
15	Fats and oils of animal or vegetable origin; processed fats for food purposes; waxes of animal or vegetable origin	491,579	7,9%	585,485	8,7%	19,1%
16	Products of meat, fish or crustacean products, mollusks or other aquatic invertebrates	109,870	1,8%	122,301	1,8%	11,3%
17	Sugar and sugar confectionery	249,972	4,0%	222,805	3,3%	-10,9%
18	Cocoa and cocoa products	419,635	6,8%	568,458	8,4%	35,5%
19	Food prepared from cereals, flour, starch, farina or milk; pastry confectionery	368,511	5,9%	412,472	6,1%	11,9%
20	Food products from vegetables, fruit or other parts of plants	220,826	3,6%	239,446	3,6%	8,4%
21	Various types of food products	374,054	6,0%	381,677	5,7%	2,0%
22	Non-alcoholic and alcoholic beverages and vinegars	465,233	7,5%	495,688	7,4%	6,5%
23	Residues and waste from the food industry; prepared animal feed	255,301	4,1%	226,528	3,4%	-11,3%
24	Tobacco and processed tobacco substitutes	424,197	6,8%	475,153	7,1%	12,0%

Source: NSI and MAF calculations.

The comparison with the previous year 2023 shows a significant increase in sunflower oil imports (by EUR 110.7 million or 48.2%), mainly including crude sunflower oil from Ukraine. Among the other leading products in agricultural imports, a more significant increase on an annual basis was recorded in the value of supplies of coffee (36.8%), cocoa (33.6%), tobacco products (27.7%), cheese and cottage cheese (17.2%), chocolate products (16.9%), sunflower (16.3%) and bakery, pastry, confectionery or biscuit products (12.6%). Imports of sugar (-14.6%) and pork (-5.2%) are decreasing.

Table III.7. Leading products in agricultural imports in Bulgaria (EUR thousand)

	2023		2024		Change 2024/2023	
	Quantity (tons)	Value (EUR thousand)	Quantity (tons)	Value (EUR thousand)	Quantity	Value
Sunflower seeds, even crushed	656,768	357,109	732,393	415,326	11,5%	16,3%
Pork	126,995	374,459	126,763	354,885	-0,2%	-5,2%
Sunflower oil, cottonseed oil or safflower oil	257,783	229,838	378,768	340,560	46,9%	48,2%
Chocolate and other food products containing cocoa	46,947	260,494	46,910	304,493	-0,1%	16,9%
Bakery, pastry or biscuit products	77,357	252,700	86,195	284,583	11,4%	12,6%
Cigars (including those with cut ends), cigarillos and cigarettes of tobacco or of tobacco substitutes	16,571	219,547	17,013	280,384	2,7%	27,7%
Coffee, whether or not roasted or decaffeinated; coffee shells and husks; coffee substitutes containing coffee, regardless of the ratio in the mix	34,073	159,306	40,469	217,898	18,8%	36,8%
Waters, including mineral waters and aerated waters, and other non-alcoholic beverages	221,069	176,092	259,691	205,491	17,5%	16,7%
Food preparations not elsewhere specified or included	28,776	203,650	30,139	203,118	4,7%	-0,3%
Cheese and curd	37,586	160,186	41,637	187,693	10,8%	17,2%
Undenatured ethyl alcohol of an alcoholic strength by volume of less than 80% vol; distillates, liqueurs and other spirituous beverages (excluding alcoholic preparations for making beverages)	25,132	169,709	25,490	172,534	1,4%	1,7%
Poultry meat and offal	103,223	162,131	102,501	171,653	-0,7%	5,9%
Cane or beet sugar and chemically pure sucrose, in solid form	233,885	176,223	231,188	150,421	-1,2%	-14,6%
Preparations used in animal feeding	98,547	139,431	102,548	138,624	4,1%	-0,6%
Cocoa beans, whole or broken, raw or roasted	37,451	91,135	34,828	121,780	-7,0%	33,6%

Source: NSI and MAF calculations.

4. Development of foreign trade in agricultural goods in 2025

According to preliminary data from the National Statistical Institute, in the first six months of 2025, the export of agricultural goods amounted to 3,576.7 million euros - 15.1% more compared to the same period in 2024, mainly due to an increase in the value of wheat sold outside the country (by 93.5%), sunflower (by 76.5%), chocolate products (by 45.5%) and coffee (more than twice). At the same time, exports of corn (by 39.1%), sugars (by 17.3%) and meat and offal (by 3.4%) decreased.

The leading product groups in the structure of the country's agricultural exports during the period January - June 2025 are cereals and oilseeds, followed by fats of vegetable or animal origin; cocoa products; food products prepared on the basis of cereals; residues and waste from the food industry and prepared animal feed; tobacco and tobacco products; dairy products, bird eggs and honey; food products used in the food industry; non-alcoholic and alcoholic beverages; coffee and tea; meat and offal, etc.

Imports of agricultural goods for the first six months of 2025 increased by 16.4% year-on-year, to EUR 3,585.5 million. This is mainly due to increased supplies of rapeseed, chocolate products and cigarettes.

Thus, for the first half of 2025, a negative trade balance was formed for Bulgaria in the amount of EUR 8.8 million, compared to a positive balance of EUR 21.4 million for the same period of the previous year, 2024.

Main partners in the country's agricultural trade remain the EU countries. In the first six months of 2025,

the exchange of agricultural goods with the EU increased by 15.5% compared to a year earlier, representing 55.1% of the country's total agricultural exports and 68.9% of total agricultural imports.

5. Activities to support the export of agricultural products

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food traditionally organizes the country's participation in various international events and exhibitions for the food industry in order to promote and build a recognizable image of Bulgarian agricultural products, support exports and develop international contacts between business operators in the sector.

In 2024, national stands of the Republic of Bulgaria with the participation of producers of honey, wine, dairy and meat products, organic products, jam, essential oils and other attended the Green Week International Exhibition in Berlin, Federal Republic of Germany, BIOFACH 2024 International Exhibition of Organic Food in Nuremberg, Federal Republic of Germany, the International Wine and Spirits Exhibition "Prowein" and the International Agriculture and Food Exhibition "AGRA 2024", city of Gornja Radgona, Republic of Slovenia.

IV. SUPPORT OF THE AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY

1. Support under the First Pillar of CAP

1.1. Area-Based Direct Payments, Transitional National Aid and Coupled Support

2023 campaign

Financial support under the schemes and interventions for direct payments is provided by the EAGF and the NB. During the calendar year 2024, funds totaling BGN 1,845,800,575 were authorized in the form of direct payments under applications for support submitted for Campaign `2023 and Campaign `2024.

Table IV.1. Authorized funds for the 2024 campaign in 2023

Intervention	Number of valid applications submitted	Number of applications with authorized payments	Percentage distribution of budget (%)			Authorized amount (BGN)
			EAGF	EAFRD	NB	
BISS	48,306	48,048	100	-	-	186,718,302
AR-BISS	46,799	46525	100	-	-	164,252,023
SSF	5,124	5,113	100	-	-	9,857,232
YFS	2,039	1,568	100	-	-	14,716,468
Cotton	39	38	100	-	-	1,867,081
Eco-OF	111	86	100	-	-	7,281,824
Eco-BEI	6,027	5,535	100	-	-	3,744,565
Eco-PRSP	3,686	3,663	100	-	-	108,281,032
Eco-RPU	14,510	14,405	100	-	-	201,896,148
Eco-MP	2,863	2,468	100	-	-	5,086,283
Eco-MPG	1,457	1,449	100	-	-	9,748,916
Eco-FE	142	128	100	-	-	248,136
Eco-DCC	19,552	19,535	100	-	-	80,432,866
DaC	2,694	2,667	100	-	-	20,765,269
DaC-BP	741	735	100	-	-	32,706,638
MeC	3,939	3,900	100	-	-	26,632,027
MeC-BP	195	194	100	-	-	4,331,893
C-EB	454	449	100	-	-	4,221,650
C-mr	514	496	100	-	-	925,871
Buffaloes	249	242	100	-	-	3,899,146
SMR – BP	1,218	1,208	100	-	-	15,599,923
SMR	1,513	1,479	100	-	-	1,969,218
SMR – EB	850	847	100	-	-	6,545,498

Intervention	Number of valid applications submitted	Number of applications with authorized payments	Percentage distribution of budget (%)			Authorized amount (BGN)
			EAGF	EAFRD	NB	
SF	7,510	7,475	100	-	-	39,457,003
SF-C	1,875	1,869	100	-	-	2,375,333
CV-TCGE	1,492	1,480	100	-	-	4,577,549
SV-P	1,061	1,051	100	-	-	5,212,678
SV-CCWM	2,709	2,694	100	-	-	8,726,288
SV-POG	728	710	100	-	-	4,271,781
SVg	1,215	1,200	100	-	-	12,538,087
SVF-mr	159	154	100	-	-	412,316
SPC	14,191	14,096	100	-	-	31,121,176
TMSA1	6,060	6,052	-	-	100	285,725
TMSA3	4,984	4,976	-	-	100	78,937
TNST	8,110	8,104	-	-	100	69,768,665
Total:						**1,090,553,547**

Source: SFA-PA

Campaign `2024

For Campaign `2024, farmers are supported under the following interventions for direct payments from the Strategic Plan for the Development of Agriculture and Rural Areas in the Republic of Bulgaria for the period 2023-2027, financed with European and national funds:

- Basic income support for sustainability;
- Additional redistributive income support for sustainability;
- Payments for small farmers;
- Additional income support for young farmers;
- Organic farming (livestock) eco scheme;
- Eco scheme for maintenance and improvement of biodiversity and ecological infrastructure;
- Eco scheme for preservation and restoration of soil potential - promoting green manuring and organic fertilization;
- Eco scheme to reduce pesticide use;
- Eco scheme for ecological maintenance of perennials;
- Eco scheme for extensive maintenance of permanent grasslands;
- Eco scheme for maintenance and improvement of biodiversity in forest ecosystems;
- Eco scheme for diversification of cultivated crops;
- Coupled with production support for dairy cows;
- Coupled with production support of dairy cows included in breeding programs;
- Coupled with production support for meat cows;
- Coupled with production support of meat cows included in breeding programs;
- Coupled with production support of cows of endangered breeds;
- Coupled with production support of cattle in mountain regions;
- Coupled with production support for buffaloes;

- Coupled with production support of ewes and goats included in breeding programs;
- Coupled with production support of ewes and goats in mountain regions;
- Coupled support for sheep and goats of local endangered breeds;
- Coupled support for fruits;
- Coupled support for fruit crops until fruiting;
- Coupled support for vegetables (tomatoes, cucumbers, gherkins and eggplant);
- Coupled support for vegetables for vegetables (pepper);
- Coupled support for vegetables (carrots, cabbage, watermelons and melons);
- Coupled support for vegetables (onions and garlic);
- Coupled support for vegetables for seed potato production;
- Coupled support for greenhouse production;
- Coupled support for fruits and vegetables in mountain regions;
- Coupled support for protein crops;
- Specific support for cotton;
- Transitional national aid for cattle- decoupled with production;
- Transitional national aid for ewes and/or does, coupled with production;
- Transitional national aid scheme for tobacco, decoupled with production.

A total of 63,198 applications for support have been received for all interventions, and the area applied for support is 3,867,028 ha.

Payments for Campaign `2024 started in October 2024 with the payment of subsidies under the intervention for transitional national aid for cattle, not linked to production. In November 2024, authorization was made for the intervention for transitional national aid for ewes and/or she-goats, coupled to production, and in December of the same year, funds were paid for the intervention for basic income support for sustainability and the interventions for coupled support in the livestock sector.

Table IV.2. Authorized funds for the 2024 campaign in 2023

Intervention	Number of valid applications submitted	Number of applications with authorized payments	Percentage distribution of budget (%)			Authorized payments (BGN)
			EAGF	EAFRD	NB	
BISS	52,166	46,014	100	-	-	584,716,777
DaC	2,495	2,483	100	-	-	21,611,432
DaC-BP	703	697	100	-	-	32,648,597
MeC	3,841	3,804	100	-	-	26,026,476
MeC-BP	219	218	100	-	-	4,954,862
C-EB	484	484	100	-	-	6,170,994
C-mr	579	571	100	-	-	1,086,647
Buffaloes	237	233	100	-	-	4,682,427
SMR – BP	1,200	1,191	100	-	-	17,068,753
SMR	1,407	1,404	100	-	-	1,635,320
SMR – EB	802	798	100	-	-	6,067,702
TMSA1	5,764	5,732	-	-	100	28,791,404
TMSA3	4,627	4,615	-	-	100	19,785,637
Total:						**755,247,028**

Source: SFA-PA

Area support interventions

Basic Income Support for Sustainability

During Campaign `2024, the Basic Income Support for Sustainability intervention is being implemented, which is a natural continuation of the Single Area Payment Scheme implemented in the previous period. The minimum size of an eligible for support farm is 0.5 ha and of a parcel - 0.1 ha. With the aim of a more balanced distribution and targeting of support in accordance with the prioritized needs in the 2023- 2027 SPARD, an upper limit has been set for the amount of basic income support for sustainability, which is granted to a farmer for a given calendar year. The reduction is 100% for the amount exceeding 100,000 euros under the BISS intervention. Before applying the reduction, from the amount of direct payments for the relevant calendar year, the costs of salaries and insurance for each employed person in the farm are deducted, in the amount of no more than 2.5 times the average gross monthly salary, determined by the National Statistical Institute for Economic activity "Agriculture, forestry and fisheries" for the year of application.

The submitted applications for assistance under the BISS for Campaign `2024 are 52,197. As of June 30, 2025, the total amount of authorized funds is BGN 750,654,132. The amount of support per unit of area is 199.3 BGN/ha with an annual indicative allocation of financial resources (indicative budget) in the amount of 758,141,798 BGN.

Additional Redistributive Income Support for Sustainability

The intervention aims to promote economically more vulnerable small and medium-sized farms. Support is provided as additional financial support for the first 30 hectares of agricultural holdings with a maximum size of up to 600 hectares.

For Campaign `2024, the intervention has an indicative budget of BGN 182,718,934 and has been applied for by 44,797 farmers. At a fixed rate per unit area of 231.82 BGN/ha, as of June 30, 2025, payments in the amount of 163,464,352 BGN have been authorized.

Payments for small farmers

The intervention is aimed at small farmers who have applied under the basic BISS intervention, with the aim of supporting their sustainability and increasing their development potential. The support is provided in the form of a lump sum of 1,000 to 1,250 euros per farm, under simplified administrative conditions.

For Campaign `2024, 5,944 farmers have submitted an application for participation in the intervention. As of the end of June 2025, 14,203,998 leva have been authorized under it.

Additional income support for young farmers

Support is provided to farmers who are no more than 40 years old in the first year of submitting an application for support, have started agricultural activity in the last 5 years and have professional skills and competences in the field of agriculture. The eligible age of applicants and the period of establishment of the holding are basic requirements that ensure effective targeting of funding to the target group of beneficiaries, contribute to the attraction and retention of young farmers in agriculture and the renewal of generations in the sector. The requirement for professional skills and competences in the field of agriculture and/or veterinary medicine and/or economic education with an agricultural focus also contributes in a qualitative way to the correct targeting of support.

For Campaign `2024, 2,058 young farmers have submitted applications for support. As of June 30, 2025, BGN 20,412,635 was paid under the intervention, at a rate per unit area of BGN 219.51/ha.

Climate, environment and animal welfare schemes (Eco schemes)

With the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy, introduced in 2024, the "green" direct payments provided during the 2014-2020 programming period have been replaced by voluntary schemes for the climate, the environment and animal welfare - Eco-schemes. Eco-schemes aim to improve the environmental and climate performance of the CAP and go beyond the mandatory requirements already provided for under the ex ante conditionality system. According to the approved SPARD 2023-2027, the following eco-schemes will be implemented during the 2024 Campaign:

Organic farming (livestock) eco scheme

The intervention is aimed at supporting farmers who raise farm animals (organic and in-conversion) of the following species: cattle, buffaloes, sheep and/or goats, pigs for pasture farming (Eastern Balkan pig, according to applicable national legislation) and manage permanent grassland areas and/or areas occupied by forage crops (organic and in transition).

For Campaign `2024, 339 farmers have submitted applications for support. The intervention has an annual indicative allocation of financial resources (indicative budget) in the amount of BGN 14,382,673. By the end of June 2025, 26,314,094 BGN have been authorized, at a rate of 699.88 BGN/ha.

Eco scheme for maintenance and improvement of biodiversity and ecological infrastructure

The action of the intervention is aimed at creating conditions for achieving the goals of the "Green Deal" and, above all, at the goal: “Returning at least 10% of agricultural land to high diversity landscape features by 2030".

In 2024, 5,199 farmers submitted an application for intervention support. The determined indicative budget amounts to 8,551,537 leva.

Eco scheme for preservation and restoration of soil potential - promoting green manuring and organic fertilization

The intervention aims to reduce the use of artificial fertilizers and replace them with natural nutrients formed as a result of the introduction of external natural organic matter.

Under the intervention, with an indicative budget of BGN 78,407,659 for Campaign `2024, 6,975 applications have been submitted. As of June 30, 2025, 77,108,784 BGN have been authorized, with a payment per unit of area of 39.09 BGN/ha.

Eco scheme to reduce pesticide use

The intervention requirements ensure a reduction in the quantities of plant protection products used when growing crop production. The support contributes to the goals of the Green Deal and, in particular, to the goal of: “Reduce pesticide use and risk by 50% and reduce the use of more dangerous pesticides by 2030."

For Campaign `2024, 16,555 applications for assistance have been submitted under the intervention. The determined indicative budget amounts to 168,162,047 leva. By the end of June 2025, 166,417,192 BGN had been paid, at a rate of 61.15 BGN/ha for arable land, 321.55 BGN/ha for permanent crops and 11.50 BGN/ha for permanent grassland.

Eco scheme for ecological maintenance of perennials

The intervention supports farmers cultivating permanent crops. It aims to improve the nutritional balance and reduce the amount of nutrients applied with fertilization by maintaining nitrogen-fixing crops in the inter-rows, as well as creating a natural barrier against the leakage of PPP residues outside the perennial crop plot by maintaining strips of natural vegetation along the edges of the perennial crops.

The number of applications submitted for intervention assistance is 4,559. The determined indicative budget amounts to 6,987,080 leva. As of June 30, 2025, 11,617,463 BGN have been paid, with a payment amount per unit area of 330.39 BGN/ha for maintaining the row spacing and 129.71 BGN/ha for maintaining strips along the edges of the plot.

Eco scheme for extensive maintenance of permanent grasslands

The intervention improves the quality of the permanent grasslands and introduces an extensive management regime for the pasture ecosystem. It contributes to preventing pasture loss by reducing trampling and erosion processes, ruderalization and the development of atypical species, significantly improving the ability of pasture systems to absorb carbon and mitigate climate change.

An indicative budget of BGN 34,422,080 has been determined for the 2024 Campaign under the intervention. 2,260 farmers applied for funding under it. The funds authorized until the end of June 2025 amount to 14,826,678 BGN, at a rate of 156.46 BGN/ha.

Eco scheme for maintenance and improvement of biodiversity in forest ecosystems

The intervention aims to maintain and improve biodiversity in forest ecosystems by introducing a practice in border agricultural lands to grow crops that have reached a level of maturity that is favorable for feeding wildlife. The crops grown are not treated with plant protection products, which reduces the chemical pressure on the agricultural area. The crops grown within the intervention are not used for production, but are left to feed wild animals and birds.

The indicative annual budget under the eco-scheme is BGN 840,994. 201 farmers have submitted an application for support for Campaign `2024. As of June 30, 2025, 776,937 BGN have been paid, at a rate of 420.50 BGN/ha.

Eco scheme for diversification of cultivated crops

The requirements within the eco-scheme ensure a greater number of crops grown on the farm. This contributes to minimizing the risks to the farm due to climate change, increasing the content of humus and nutrients in the soil and protecting against erosion. Natural corridors and a food base for protected species, including birds, are created.

The intervention has an annual indicative budget of BGN of 86,440,416 For the 2024 campaign, 21,848 applications for funding were submitted. Payments per unit area amount to 67.59 BGN/ha for agricultural holdings up to 10 ha, 52.10 BGN/ha for agricultural holdings between 10 and 30 ha and 27.61 BGN/ha for agricultural holdings over 30 ha. As of the end of June 2025, authorized funds amounted to BGN 85,265,182.

Coupled support interventions

Coupled with production support for dairy cows

The intervention with an annual indicative allocation of financial resources in the amount of BGN 21,863,198 is aimed at supporting farms in the dairy sector to maintain the level of milk production. For Campaign `2024, 2,497 farmers have submitted applications for support. The determined rate per animal is BGN 316.59/head for the first 150 (inclusive) eligible animals and BGN 253.28/head for animals above the 150th eligible animal. As of June 30, 2025, BGN 21,611,432 were authorized under the intervention.

Coupled with production support of dairy cows included in breeding programs

For Campaign `2024, 704 farmers have submitted applications for support. The annual indicative budget for the intervention amounts to BGN 32,906,324, and the payments designated for support per head of animal - BGN 472.73/head for the first 150 (inclusive) eligible animals and BGN 378.18/head for animals above the 150th eligible animal. The authorized funds until the end of June 2025 amount to 32,648,597 BGN.

Coupled with production support for meat cows

The intervention has an indicative budget of 27,117,851 BGN. 3,845 farmers have applied for support under the 2024 Campaign. The support rate per head of animal is 250.01 BGN/head for the first 150 (inclusive) eligible animals and 200 BGN/head for animals above the 150th eligible animal. The funds paid by the end of June 2025 amount to 26,026,476 leva.

Coupled with production support of meat cows included in breeding programs

The indicative budget of the intervention for the 2024 campaign was BGN 5,020,872 219 farmers applied to participate in it. At a rate of 384.18 BGN/head for the first 150 (inclusive) eligible animals and 307.35 BGN/head for animals above the 150th eligible animal, the funds authorized until June 30, 2025 amount to 4,954,862 BGN.

Coupled with production support of cows of endangered breeds

The intervention with an indicative budget of BGN 6,231,688 for Campaign `2024 has been applied for support by 484 farmers. The amount of payment per head of animal amounts to 251.32 BGN/head for the first 150 (inclusive) eligible animals and 201.06 BGN/head for animals above the 150th eligible animal. The authorized funds as of June 30, 2025 under this intervention amount to BGN 6,170,994.

Coupled with production support of cattle in mountain regions

An indicative budget of BGN 1,092,875 has been determined for the 2024 Campaign under the intervention. 579 farmers have submitted an application for support under it. Payments in the amount of BGN 1,086,647 have been authorized at a fixed rate per animal of BGN 277.45/head.

Coupled with production support for buffaloes

Support for buffalo breeding, as a vulnerable sector, is provided through a separate direct payment intervention. The support is aimed at farmers who breed 10 or more buffaloes.

The annual indicative budget for the intervention for Campaign `2024 is 4,896,719 BGN. Applications for support were submitted by 237 farmers. The support rate is BGN 408.19/head for the first 150 (inclusive) eligible animals and BGN 326.55/head for animals above the 150th eligible animal. The funds disbursed as of June 30, 2025 amount to BGN 4,682,427.

Coupled with production support of ewes and goats included in breeding programs

The intervention is aimed at farmers who raise 50 or more ewes included in breeding programs of one breed, and/or 20 or more goats included in breeding programs of one breed.

The indicative budget for this intervention for Campaign `2024 is BGN 17,286,316. Applications for support were submitted by 1,203 farmers. The support rates for one animal are 84.24 BGN/head for the first 300 (inclusive) eligible animals and 67.40 BGN/head for over the 300th eligible animal. The authorized funds as of June 30, 2025. amount to BGN 17,068,753.

Coupled with production support of ewes and goats in mountain regions

The intervention with an indicative budget for Campaign `2024 in the amount of BGN 1,642,294 supports farmers who raise from 10 to 49 ewes and/or goats, with the aim of maintaining the level of production in this category of farms. 1,408 beneficiaries have submitted an application for assistance. The amount of payment per animal amounts to 42.71 BGN/animal eligible for support. As of June 30, 2025, payments in the amount of BGN 1,635,320 have been made.

Coupled support for sheep and goats of local breeds included in breeding programmes

803 farmers have applied for Campaign `2024 under the intervention with an annual indicative allocation of financial resources in the amount of 6,196,058 leva. The determined rate is BGN 48.19/head for the first 300 eligible animals and BGN 38.55/head for every animal over 300. By the end of June 2025, 6,067,702 leva had been paid.

Coupled support for fruits

For Campaign `2024, applications for intervention support were submitted by 7,581 farmers. The determined indicative budget is BGN 45,211,822. The amount of payment per unit of area is BGN 1,836.07/ha for the first 30 eligible hectares and BGN 1,224.06/ha for eligible areas above the 30th hectare. As of June 30, 2025, the authorized funds for the intervention amount to BGN 44,768,680.

Coupled support for fruit crops until fruiting

The indicative intervention budget for Campaign `2024 is BGN 2,365,677, of which BGN 2,273,730 have been paid by the end of June 2025 at a rate per unit area of BGN 679.99/ha. An application for support was submitted by 2,103 farmers.

Coupled support for vegetables (tomatoes, cucumbers, gherkins and eggplant)

1,467 farmers have applied for Campaign `2024 under the intervention with an indicative budget of BGN 5,319,891. The amount of payment per unit of area is 1,993.43 BGN/ha for the first up to 30 ha of the farm and 1,328.95 BGN/ha for areas over 30 hectares. As of June 30, 2025, the authorized funds amount to BGN 5,156,513.

Coupled support for vegetables (pepper)

The determined annual indicative budget for the intervention is 4,407,386 leva, and the rate for Campaign `2024 is 2,265.52 leva/ha for the first up to 30 ha of the farm and 1,510.35 leva/ha for areas over the

30th hectare. Applications for support were submitted by 1,050 farmers. By the end of June 2025, 4,310,622 leva had been paid.

Coupled support for vegetables (carrots, cabbage, watermelons and melons)

For Campaign `2024, 3,070 farmers have applied for participation in the intervention. The indicative budget for the campaign is 8,499,131 leva, and the amount of payment per unit of area is 863.66 leva/ha for the first up to 30 ha of the farm and 575.77 leva/ha for areas over 30 hectares. The authorized funds as of June 30, 2025. amount to BGN 8,264,095.

Coupled support for vegetables (onions and garlic)

705 farmers have applied for the intervention with an indicative budget of BGN 3,718,669 for Campaign `2024. The rate for the first up to 30 hectares of the farm is 1,284.77 leva/ha, and for areas over 30 hectares - 856.52 leva/ha. As of June 30, 2025, BGN 3,608,098 had been paid.

Coupled support for vegetables for seed potato production

The intervention with indicatively allocated financial resources for Campaign `2024 in the amount of 869,405 leva has been applied for support by 92 farmers. With a payment per unit area of 1,529.44 BGN/ha, by the end of June 2025, payments in the amount of 827,855 BGN were made.

Coupled support for vegetables - Greenhouse Production

Due to the specific nature of greenhouse production, areas with a minimum farm size of 0.5 ha are eligible for funding, which can be combined with field and greenhouse production.

1,278 farmers have applied for the 2024 Campaign under the intervention. The annual budget is set at 12,015,075 BGN. As of June 30, 2025, funds in the amount of BGN 11,929,043 have been authorized at a rate of BGN 16,007.13/ha.

Coupled support for fruits and vegetables in mountain regions

The intervention is aimed at the smallest farmers, with farms up to 1.5 ha of agricultural land, located in mountainous areas.

For Campaign `2024, 164 farmers have submitted applications for intervention support. From the annual indicative budget of BGN 384,964, as of June 30, 2025, BGN 367,487 has been authorized, at a payment per unit area of BGN 2,375.48/ha.

Coupled support for protein crops

The intervention indirectly aims to assist livestock farmers by supporting the production of protein crops for feed. The indicative budget for Campaign `2024 under it amounts to 31,853,350 leva. Applications for support were submitted by 14,090 farmers. The funds authorized by the end of June 2025 amount to 31,718,667 BGN, and the determined rate per unit of area is 254.74 BGN/ha.

Special payment for cotton

The amount of the special payment for cotton per unit of eligible area, as defined in European legislation, is 1,492.96 BGN/ha. Financial resources amounting to BGN 5,002,584 have been allocated for the intervention for Bulgaria. Applications for support for Campaign `2024 have been submitted by 64 farmers. As of June 30, 2025, funds in the amount of BGN 3,079,827 have been disbursed.

Transitional national aid

In 2024, following the consistency in the policy for supporting the Livestock and Tobacco sectors with national funds, Bulgaria takes advantage of the opportunity to continue support through the implementation of transitional national aid interventions for cattle, buffaloes, ewes, goats and tobacco, under the conditions of the national payment schemes applied in 2013.

Transitional national aid for cattle - decoupled with production

The intervention budget for Campaign `2024 is BGN 28,857,927. 5,768 farmers have applied for assistance. The payment per animal for cattle is 70.29 leva/head, and for buffaloes - 123.00 leva/head. As of June 30, 2025, BGN 28,791,404 has been authorized.

Transitional national aid for ewes and/or she-goats (coupled)

4,634 farmers have submitted an application for the intervention with a budget of 24,145,818 leva. The support rate was BGN 41.07/head. The authorized financial resource until June 30, 2025 amounts to BGN 19,860,713.

Transitional national aid scheme for tobacco, decoupled with production

For Campaign `2024, 8,404 farmers applied for intervention for the quantities of tobacco delivered in the reference year. The budget for the campaign is 70,897,261 leva. The support rate for the "Basmi" variety is 5.40 leva/kg for quantities up to 2 tons and 4.10 leva/kg for quantities over 2 tons. The payment for the varieties "Kaba Kulak" and "Burley" is 4 leva/kg, and for the variety "Virginia" - 3 leva/kg. As of June 30, 2025, 70,821,367 leva have been paid.

Table IV.3. Amount of assistance under direct payment interventions and transitional national assistance for the 2024 campaign

Intervention	Annual indicative allocation of financial resources (BGN)*	Valid applications submitted (unit)	Rate, BGN/1**		Authorized payments (BGN)****
			to/ha, no.	above/ha, no.	
BISS	758,141,798	52,197	199.30		750,654,132
AR-BISS***	182,718,934	44,797	231.82		163,464,352
SSF	14,233,335	5,944	2,444.75		14,203,998
YFS	23,895,573	2,058	219.51		20,412,635
Cotton	5,002,584	64	1,492.96		3,079,827
Eco-OF	14,382,673	339	699.88		26,314,094
Eco-BEI	8,551,537	5,199	-		-
Eco-PRSP	78,407,659	6,975	39.09		77,108,784
Eco-RPU	168,162,047	16,555	61.15/ 321.55/ 11.50		166,417,192
Eco-MP	6,987,080	4,559	330.39/129.71		11,617,463
Eco-MPG	34,422,080	2,260	156.46		14,826,678
Eco-FE	840,994	201	420.50		776,937
Eco-DCC	86,440,416	21,848	67.59/ 52.10/ 27.61		85,265,182
DaC	21,863,198	2,497	316.59	253.28	21,611,432
DaC-BP	32,906,324	704	472.73	378.18	32,648,597
MeC	27,117,851	3,845	250.01	200.00	26,026,476
MeC-BP	5,020,872	219	384.18	307.35	4,954,862
C-EB	6,231,688	484	251.32	201.06	6,170,994
C-mr	1,092,875	579	277.45		1,086,647
Buffaloes	4,896,719	237	408.19	326.55	4,682,427
SMR – BP	17,286,316	1,203	84.24	67.40	17,068,753
SMR	1,642,294	1,408	42.71		1,635,320
SMR-EB	6,196,058	803	48.19	38.55	6,067,702
SF	45,211,822	7,581	1,836.07	1,224.06	44,768,680
SF-C	2,365,677	2,103	679.99		2,273,730
CV-TCGE	5,319,891	1,467	1,993.43	1,328.95	5,156,513
SV-P	4,407,386	1,050	2,265.52	1,510.35	4,310,622
SV-CCWM	8,499,131	3,070	863.66	575.77	8,264,095
SV-POG	3,718,669	705	1,284.77	856.52	3,608,098
SVg	12,015,075	1,278	16,007.13		11,929,043

Intervention	Annual indicative allocation of financial resources (BGN)*	Valid applications submitted (unit)	Rate, BGN/1**		Authorized payments (BGN)****
			to/ha, no.	above/ha, no.	
SVF-mr	384,964	164	2,375.48		367,487
SPC	31,853,350	14,090	254.74		31,718,667
SV-PPC	869,405	92	1,529.44		827,855
TMSA1	28,857,927	5,768	70.29 (for cattle) 123.00 (for buffalo)		28,791,404
TMSA3	24,145,818	4,634	41.07		19,860,713
TNST	70,897,261	8,404	5,40 / 4,10 / 4,00 / 4,00 /3,00		70,821,367
Total					**1,688,792 758**

Source: SFA-PA

Note:

* According to Art. 101, paragraph 3 of Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 December 2021, the designated indicative financial means for direct payment interventions may be used for other direct payment interventions, without requiring an amendment of SPARD 2023- 2027

** Under the interventions DaC, DaC-BP, MeC, MeC-BP, C-EB and Buffaloes, increased support is provided for the first 150 animals eligible for support under the respective intervention. Under the interventions SMR – BP and SMR-EB, increased support is provided for the first 300 animals eligible for support under the respective intervention. Under the interventions SF, CV-TCGE, SV-P, SV-CCWM and SV-POG, increased support is provided for the first 30 hectares of the eligible area for support under the respective intervention. Under the Eco-RPU intervention, the rates are determined depending on the type of land use, respectively for arable land/permanent crops/permanent grassland. For the Eco-DCC intervention, the rates are determined according to the size of the farm, respectively: up to 10 ha. /from 10 to 30 ha / over 30 ha. Under the TNST intervention, the rates are determined by varieties of purchased tobacco, respectively: Basmi up to 2 tons / Basmi over 2 tons / Kaba Kulak / Burley / Virginia The Small State Farms (SSF) rate replaces all other direct payments to the farmer and is provided in the form of a lump sum in the amount of the BGN equivalent of 1,000 to 1,250 euros.

*** Under the AR-BISS intervention, the value of the annual indicatively allocated financial resources includes the amount generated by imposing reductions in BISS payments (payment ceiling), pursuant to Art. 57, para. 2 of the Agricultural Producers Support Act.

****Data as of 30.06.2025.

Campaign `2025

The acceptance of applications for direct payments for Campaign `2025 ended on June 9, 2025. A total of 62,808 applications for support were accepted for all interventions, and the area applied for amounted to 3,858,429 ha.

Table IV.4. Applications submitted for Campaign 2025

Intervention	Number of applications for assistance submitted	Declared areas/animals (number/ha)*
Basic Income Support for Sustainability	44,530	3,840,933
Additional Redistributive Income Support for Sustainability	43,078	703,910
Payments for small farmers	7,015	9,402
Additional income support for young farmers	2,213	138,316
Special payment for cotton	90	3,020
Organic farming (livestock) eco scheme	532	69,624
Eco scheme for maintenance and improvement of biodiversity and ecological infrastructure	5,933	28,359
Eco scheme for preservation and restoration of soil potential - promoting green manuring and organic fertilization	9,629	2,529,161
Eco scheme to reduce pesticide use	17,750	3,040,705
Eco scheme for ecological maintenance of perennials	5,295	40,418
Eco scheme for extensive maintenance of permanent grasslands	3,308	200,381
Eco scheme for maintenance and improvement of biodiversity in forest ecosystems	202	3,127
Eco scheme for diversification of cultivated crops	21,773	3,009,855
Coupled with production support for dairy cows	2,312	68,526
Coupled with production support of dairy cows included in breeding programs	703	78,234

Intervention	Number of applications for assistance submitted	Declared areas/animals (number/ha)*
Coupled with production support for meat cows	3,879	116,728
Coupled with production support of meat cows included in breeding programs	246	15,215
Coupled with production support of cows of endangered breeds	524	28,848
Coupled with production support of cattle in mountain regions	577	4,117
Coupled with production support for buffaloes	233	12,965
Coupled support for sheep and goats of local breeds included in breeding programmes	1,181	219,453
Coupled with production support of ewes and goats in mountain regions	1,251	34,463
Coupled with production support of ewes and goats of endangered breeds	749	131,353
Coupled support for fruits	7,025	26,764
Coupled support for fruit crops until fruiting	2,226	4,465
Coupled support for vegetables (tomatoes, cucumbers, gherkins and eggplant)	1,474	3,026
Coupled support for vegetables (pepper)	960	2,071
Coupled support for vegetables (carrots, cabbage, watermelons and melons)	3,222	11,001
Coupled support for vegetables (onions and garlic)	656	3,347
Coupled support for vegetables - Greenhouse Production	1,269	938
Coupled support for fruits and vegetables in mountain regions	170	178
Coupled support for protein crops	13,632	124,622
Coupled support for vegetables for seed potato production	104	1,270
Transitional national aid for cattle, decoupled with production	5,445	394,170
Transitional national aid for ewes and/or she-goats, coupled	4,443	487,296
Transitional national aid scheme for tobacco, decoupled with production	8,475	2,537,483 kg

Source: SFA-PA

Note: *Data is not final. Until December 1, 2025, applicants for assistance have the opportunity to withdraw plots, interventions and applications.

1.2. Market support mechanisms

1.2.1. Contractual relations in the milk sector

The main objectives of the scheme are aimed at achieving a real improvement in the ability of milk producers to negotiate with processors, which in turn will lead to a fairer distribution of value added in the supply chain.

Since the introduction of the regulatory regime, changes have been made to the legislation concerning the scheme, with the aim of easing the administrative burden and, accordingly, reducing the administrative capacity for the registration and control of the scheme by the SFA. Since 2020, a service for electronic registration of contracts by the first purchaser has been provided.

In 2024, based on risk analysis, 35 inspections of buyers of raw cow, sheep, goat and buffalo milk were assigned. Based on a thorough risk analysis, inspections were also carried out on 24 buyers for purchasing raw milk without a signed contract. 9 AEAVs were issued, for which the criminal proceedings resulted in the issuance of 3 reasoned resolutions to terminate the proceedings and 1 written warning. On 5 CEAV, offers were made to the offenders to conclude an agreement and pay the imposed property sanctions and fines in a reduced amount. A total of 7,000 leva worth of property sanctions were imposed. By the end of December 2024, property sanctions worth 6,300 leva were voluntarily paid.

More than 1,146 applications were accepted and processed for the first half of 2024 under the scheme for contractual relations in the dairy sector, relating to 6,440 contracts/annexes/terminations between producers and first buyers of raw cow, sheep, goat and buffalo milk. 29 applications for registration of contracts have been submitted electronically in the SFA electronic services system.

In the first half of 2025, 533 applications were accepted and processed, relating to 3,013 contracts/annexes/terminations between producers and first purchasers of raw cow, sheep, goat and buffalo milk.

1.2.2. Operational programs

Operational Programmes Scheme

In 2024, a producer organization implements the last year of its operational program with a total duration of 3 years. During the year, two final payment applications for 2023 under two operational programs were accepted and processed, accounting for investments, expenses and activities carried out in 2023, as well as one interim payment application for 2024.

The total funds paid in 2024 under the scheme are worth BGN 380,086, of which BGN 110,522 from the EAGF and BGN 269,564 from the National Bank.

In 2024, the State Fund "Agriculture" - RA carried out inspections of three fruit and vegetable producer organizations that had completed the implementation of their operational programs. During the inspections, it was established that the organizations comply with their obligations.

Schemes for producer groups in the fruit and vegetables sector;

In 2024 under the scheme, 6 checks were carried out by the SFA-RA for compliance with statutory and contractual obligations under implemented plans for recognition of groups of fruit and vegetable producers after payment. The inspections did not establish non-compliance with obligations by the producer groups.

Interventions from the Strategic Plan for the Development of Agriculture and Rural Areas for the period 2023-2027 in the "Fruit and Vegetables" and "Milk and Dairy Products" sectors

Interventions for the implementation of operational programs are implemented in accordance with Regulation No. 13 of 01.09.2023 on the conditions and procedure for implementing interventions from the SPARD 2023-2027 in the "Milk and Dairy Products" and "Fruits and Vegetables" sectors.

Operational programs in the Milk and Dairy products sector

The SPRD 2023-2027 provides for interventions through operational programs of recognized producer organizations and associations of producer organizations in the "Milk and dairy products" sector.

For the sector, producer groups are also eligible for support and alongside their operational program they must submit a plan for recognition. Groups should be recognized as organizations within four years of the start of their approved operational program and no later than 31 December 2027.

The EU financial assistance for operational programs in the "Milk and Dairy Products" sector is the lesser of 50% of the actual costs incurred under the operational program or 6% of the value of the production offered on the market by the organization. The operational fund shall only pay for expenditure and activities under the operational program. It is funded through financial contributions from the group/organization and/or its members and financial support from the EAGF. Contributions to the operational fund shall be determined by decision of the General Assembly of the group/organization.

Applications for approval of an operational program for interventions are submitted annually in the period 1 - 15 October through the ESS of the State Fund - RA. In 2024, there are no deposited and approved programs in the "Milk and Dairy Products" sector.

Table IV.5. Planned amount of financial aid for implementation of operational programs in the Milk and Dairy products sector under SPARD 2023- 2027, BGN

	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Total for the period 2024-2028
Operational programs in the Milk and Dairy products sector	360,000	360,000	360,000	360,000	360,000	1,800,000

Source: SFA-PA

Operational programs in the Fruit and Vegetables sector

The financial support is aimed at increasing the competitiveness and market orientation of producer organizations and associations of producer organizations in the "Fruits and vegetables" sector, reducing fluctuations in the income of farmers during crises, increasing the consumption of fruits and vegetables and increasing the use of ecological techniques in production.

Organizations of fruit and vegetable producers that are recognized by the Minister of Agriculture and Food can apply for support. They must have an operational fund established and submit operational program(s) for approval. The financing of the operational program is carried out only from the operational fund, which is formed by financial contributions from the organization and/or from its members and financial assistance from EAGF. Contributions to the operational fund shall be determined by decision of the General Assembly of the organization. The operational fund pays for all expenditures and activities under the operational program.

The EU financial aid is the lesser of 50% of the actually incurred expenses by the operational program or 4.1% of the value of the organization's marketed production.

Producer organizations in regions where the degree of organization in the fruit and vegetable sector is significantly below the Union average may, in addition to the EU financial support, receive national financial support, defined as the lower value between 80% of the actually paid contributions to the operational fund or 10% of the value of the producer organization's marketable output.

Applications for approval of an operational program for interventions in the "Fruit and Vegetables" sector are submitted annually in the period 1 August - 1 September through the SEU of the State Food and Agriculture Organization - RA.

In 2024, under the interventions for the implementation of operational programs in the "Fruit and Vegetables" sector, three operational programs are being implemented, each of which has a duration of 3 years, for a total amount of BGN 4,790,543, with the financial assistance from the EAGF and the National Bank totaling BGN 2,958,683.

The financial assistance paid in 2024 for interventions in the "Fruit and Vegetables" sector amounts to BGN 305,405, of which BGN 93,845 from the EAGF and BGN 211,559 from the National Bank.

Table IV.6. Planned amount of financial assistance for the implementation of operational programs in the "Fruit and Vegetables" sector under the SPARD 2023-2027, BGN

	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Total for the period 2024-2028
Operational programs in the Fruit and Vegetables sector	553,500	738,000	738,000	738,000	0	2,767,500

Source: SFA-PA

1.2.3. Producer organizations and groups

As of the end of 2024, the number of recognized organizations and groups of producers of agricultural products was 37, of which: in the "Cereals and oilseeds" sector - 1 OP, in the "Cereals" sector - 2 GPs, in the "Fruits and vegetables" sector - 5 OPs, in the "Fruits" sector - 1 GP and 7 OPs, in "Vegetables" sector - 4 OPs, in the "Potatoes" sector - 1 GP, in the "Medicinal and essential oil crops" sector - 1 GP, in the "Milk and dairy products" sector - 1 OP, in the "Milk" sector - 9 GPs, in the "Meat" sector - 2 GPs, in the "Honey and bee products" sector - 3 OPs.

The largest number of associations was set up in the Fruit and In the vegetable sector - 16 OPs and 1 GP and the Milk and dairy products 1 OPs and 9 GPs. The "Milk and dairy products" sector stands out with the highest degree of association based on the number of farmers represented, with 323 farmers, followed by the "Fruits and vegetables" sector with 122 producers.

1.2.4. Scheme to supply fruits, vegetables, milk and dairy products to kindergartens and schools in Bulgaria (School Fruit Scheme and School Milk Scheme)

The scheme aims to create healthy eating habits for children and students by making regular deliveries of fruits, vegetables, milk and dairy products to institutions in the preschool and school education system. The aid is aimed at children from I to IV group in kindergartens and students from preparatory class to IV class inclusive throughout the country. Deliveries are made on school days only. Financial aid is provided for supply of products accompanying educational measures and monitoring, evaluation and publicity.

2023/2024 academic year

From the 2023/2024 academic year, a new program period for both schemes began. A new National Strategy has been developed, based on which the schemes will be implemented until the 2028/2029 academic year. The terms and conditions for the implementation of the school schemes are regulated by the Ordinance on the terms and conditions for the implementation of schemes for the provision of fruit and vegetables and milk and milk products in educational institutions - Scheme "School fruit" and Scheme "School milk".

Under the School Fruit scheme, deliveries of were made by 85 approved applicants. Fruits and vegetables under the scheme were received by 423,353 children in 3,385 institutions in the preschool and school education system. The total budget for the school year, which also covers costs for accompanying measures and information activities, amounted to BGN 25,245,420, of which BGN 4,273,924 - from the EU and BGN 20,971,496 from NB. Funds amounting to 16,180,767 leva have been disbursed, including 4,223,443 leva from the EU and 11,957,324 leva from the National Bank.

Under the "School Milk" scheme, supplies were received from 91 approved applicants. Milk and milk products under the scheme were received by 425,424 children in 3,392 institutions in the preschool and school education system. The total annual budget under the scheme amounts to BGN 24,624,913, of which BGN 3,520,616 from the EU and BGN 21,104,297 from the NB. Funds were disbursed to the amount of BGN 23,701,681.

2024/2025 academic year

From the 2024/2025 school year, the number of deliveries of organically produced products has been increased to 9 (by the 2023/2024 school year, these deliveries are between 4 and 6), six of which should include products produced by Bulgarian farmers. The number of deliveries of fruits and vegetables produced by Bulgarian farmers has also increased - from 25 to 26 (from a total of 50 for the entire school year). At the same time, the range of fruits and vegetables allowed for distribution in educational institutions has been expanded to include raspberries and blueberries.

Under the "School fruit" scheme, deliveries were made by 95 approved applicants. Fruits and vegetables were provided to 445,860 children in 3,502 childcare/educational institutions in the preschool and school education system. The total budget under the scheme for the school year, which also covers costs for accompanying measures and information activities, amounted to BGN 26,366,499, of which BGN 4,273,585 - from the EU and BGN 22,092,914 from NB. Funds in the amount of 16,251,642 leva have been paid, including: 4,110,826 leva from the EU and 12,140,816 leva from the National Bank.

Under the School Milk Scheme, deliveries were made by 95 approved applicants. Products were received by 442,030 children in 3,495 childcare/educational institutions in the preschool and school education system. The total annual budget under the scheme amounts to BGN 25,724,172, of which BGN 3,520,616 from the EU and BGN 22,203,556 from the NB. Funds amounting to 23,726,931 leva have been disbursed, including 2,372,693 leva from the EU and 21,354,238 leva from the National Bank.

1.2.5. Beekeeping sector

After the completion of the implementation of the fifth three-year National Beekeeping Program (2020-2022), the sector is supported through the implementation of interventions under Article 55 of Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the CAP Strategic Plans, set out in the approved SPRZSD 2023-2027.

In February 2024, the SEU of the State Fund for Agricultural and Rural Development (SFA-RA) accepted applications for support for sectoral interventions for the financial year 2024, with a budget of 6,286,801 leva. 1,729 applications were accepted with a total amount of requested financial assistance of BGN

8,047,653. 1,567 contracts have been concluded, with a financial assistance amount of 6,466,072 leva. The support paid during the financial year amounted to 5,626,031 leva.

In the period from December 9 to 23, 2024, the ESS of the SAF-RA accepted applications for support for interventions in the Beekeeping sector for the financial year 2025, with a budget of BGN 10,077,843. 1,419 applications were accepted, with a total amount of financial assistance requested of BGN 7,609,723.

Table IV.7. Budget and paid financial assistance for interventions in the Beekeeping sector for 2024, BGN

Interventions	Budget under the 2024 scheme (BGN)	Applications for assistance accepted (number)	Signed contracts (number)	Financial assistance, according to signed contracts (BGN)	Paid applications at the end of the reporting period (number)	Financial assistance paid at the end of the reporting period (BGN)
Interventions in the beekeeping sector 2023-2027	6,286,801	1,729	1,567	6,466,072	1,512	5 626 031

Source: SFA-PA

In order to more effectively utilize the financial resource, a second intake of interventions in the Beekeeping sector for 2025 was carried out between May 7 and 22, 2025.

By August 15, 2025, beneficiaries with a signed contract from both intakes should submit payment applications, which will be paid by the State Fund for Public Health-RA by October 15, 2025.

1.2.6. Wine sector

The implementation of the interventions in the wine sector, included in the SPARD 2023-2027, started in October 2023. Ordinance No. 14 of 11.09.2023 regulates the conditions and procedure for providing financial assistance for the following interventions:

- Restructuring and conversion of vineyards
- Investments in the wine sector
- Green Harvesting
- Crop insurance
- Information in Member States
- Promotion in third countries
- Investments in environmental facilities

Support for interventions is financed by the EAGF, with national support also provided for interventions "Popularization in third countries" and "Information in Member States".

During the admissions for interventions in the sector held for the financial year 2024, a total of 233 applications were submitted with a requested subsidy of BGN 49,488,646. 200 administrative contracts have been concluded with a value of approved financial assistance of BGN 35,206,792.

Table IV.8. Budget for interventions in the wine sector for the 2024 financial year, BGN

	Total	Including:	
		From EAGF	From the National Bank
Intervention "Restructuring and conversion of vineyards"	24,165,305	24,165,305	-
Intervention "Investments in the wine sector"	19,338,282	19,338,282	-
Green Harvesting Intervention	500,000	500,000	-
Crop Insurance Intervention	300,000	300,000	-
Intervention "Information in Member States"	1,564,640	977,900	586,740
Intervention "Popularization in third countries"	1,564,640	977,900	586,740
Intervention "Investments in environmental facilities"	4,045,745	4,045,745	-
TOTAL:	**51,478,612**	**50,305,132**	**1,173 480**

Source: SFA-PA

Intervention "Restructuring and conversion of vineyards"

The intervention is an important part of the SPARD 2023-2027 and is of fundamental importance for the wine sector. It is also present in the previous three national programs, implemented for the periods 2009-2013, 2014-2018 and 2019-2023. This is the most successfully implemented measure, in which producers show a high interest in participating. Its support contributes to the competitiveness and market orientation of farms, the protection of natural resources and the environment, the renewal of production potential in viticulture, and the maintenance and construction of its modern and competitive structure.

The financial resources for the intervention are provided entirely by the EAGF, with projects being financed with up to 75% of the incurred and approved costs. The main activities within its scope are:

- Conversion of the varietal composition of plantations;
- Change of location of vineyards;
- Improving vineyard management techniques.

In the financial year 2024, two receptions were opened under the intervention "Restructuring and Conversion of Vineyards" - in the period October - November 2023 and in July 2024. A total of 90 applications for support were received and 74 contracts were concluded for the provision of financial assistance in the amount of BGN 21,376,009. The funds paid in the calendar year 2024 amounted to 14,091,983 leva.

Table IV.9. Data on the implementation of the intervention "Restructuring and conversion of vineyards" for the financial year 2024.

Admission	Number of applications submitted for financial assistance	Financial assistance requested (BGN)	Number of contracts concluded	Approved financial aid (BGN)
First admission	74	24,335,142	63	17,681,808
Second admission	16	6,016,063	11	3,694,201
TOTAL	**90**	**30,351,205**	**74**	**21,376,009**

Source: SFA-PA

Intervention "Investments in the wine sector"

The aim of the intervention "Investments in the wine sector" is to improve the overall performance of wine enterprises, increase their competitiveness and adapt them to market requirements. To achieve this goal, it is planned to implement activities aimed at investments to improve tangible and intangible assets - processing facilities and/or infrastructure of enterprises in the wine sector, as well as structures and means of marketing. The investments made should also contribute to increasing the sustainability of winemaking processes.

The intervention is fully financed by the EAGF, with support amounting to up to 50% of the incurred and approved costs.

Table IV.10. Data on the implementation of the intervention "Investments in the wine sector" for the financial year 2024

Reception	Number of applications submitted for financial assistance	Financial assistance requested (BGN)	Number of contracts concluded	Approved financial aid (BGN)
First admission	59	28,010,515	50	20,179,866
Second admission	20	8,592,987	18	6,967,451
TOTAL:	**79**	**36,603,503**	**68**	**27,147,317**

Source: SFA-PA

In the financial year 2024, under the intervention "Investments in the Vine and Wine Sector", two receptions were opened - in the period January - February 2024 and in June 2024. A total of 79 applications

were received and 68 contracts were concluded with the amount of the encouraged subsidy of BGN 27,147,317. During the calendar year 2024, payments worth 15,809,161 leva were made.

Intervention "Investments in environmental facilities"

The "Investments in Environmental Facilities" intervention is being implemented for the first time in Bulgaria during the 2023-2027 programming period. The support is aimed at reducing the environmental footprint of the activities of wine production enterprises and increasing their competitiveness through the production of energy from renewable sources and the construction of treatment and composting plants.

In the financial year 2024, two admissions were opened under the intervention - in the period January - February 2024 and in June 2024. A total of 15 applications were received and 12 contracts were concluded for the provision of financial assistance in the amount of 3,960,076 leva. Within the calendar year 2024, 662,567 leva were paid.

Table IV.11. Data on the implementation of the intervention "Investments in environmental facilities" for the financial year 2024

Admission	Number of applications submitted for financial assistance	Financial assistance requested (BGN)	Number of contracts concluded	Approved financial aid (BGN)
First admission	12	4,150,058	10	2,710,716
Second admission	3	2,233,228	2	1,249,360
TOTAL:	**15**	**6,383,286**	**12**	**3,960,076**

Source: SFA-PA

Harvest Insurance Intervention

The intervention supports the insurance of the harvest of vineyards with wine grape varieties. Its scope includes risks such as frost, storm, hail, icing, heavy rain, severe drought and natural disasters, as well as other insurance risks that can lead to crop destruction. Financial assistance amounts to up to 80% of the cost of insurance premiums.

In the period May 15 - June 15, 2024, an admission was held under the intervention, with 49 applications for assistance received. 46 administrative contracts have been concluded with a total subsidy amount of BGN 405,197, which have been paid in full in the calendar year 2024.

Table IV.12. Data on the implementation of the "Harvest Insurance" intervention for the financial year 2024

Intervention	Number of applications submitted for financial assistance	Financial assistance requested (BGN)	Number of contracts concluded	Approved financial aid (BGN)
Crop insurance	49	485,795	46	405,197

Source: SFA-PA

Green Harvesting Intervention

The intervention is crisis-related and its implementation is justified by a market imbalance that has arisen in the sector - an expected overproduction of wine grapes in combination with high wine inventories in enterprises. The complete manual removal of the grapes while they are not yet ripe is encouraged, thus reducing the yield from the relevant declared area to zero. The intervention can be applied to all wine grape varieties according to the List of classified wine grape varieties by wine-growing regions and wine-growing zones in the EU of the Republic of Bulgaria.

In the financial year 2024, no admission was opened under this intervention due to the lack of a market situation.

By ***"Popularization in third countries" interventions*** and ***"Information in the Member States"*** No applications for financial assistance have been received for the fiscal year 2024. In the calendar year 2024, 116,209 BGN were paid under the intervention "Popularization in third countries", and 43,821 BGN under the intervention "Information in the Member States".

For the financial year 2025, a call for applications for both promotional interventions was held between 1 and 15 December 2024. 1 application for financial assistance was submitted under the intervention "Information in the Member States", which as of June 2025 is in the process of administrative processing.

In the financial year 2025, applications are processed and contracts are concluded for intakes from 2024 and 2025. Requests for advance and final payment for all interventions in the wine sector are also processed.

Table IV.13. Data on the implementation of interventions for the wine sector in the financial year 2025

Intervention	Number of applications accepted	Total financial aid requested (BGN)	Number of contracts concluded	Total approved financial aid (BGN)
Restructuring and conversion of vineyards	77	28,873,913	60	22,583,176
Investments in the wine sector	83	22,041,169	26	3,694,463
Investments in environmental facilities	17	4,889,676	1	252,940
Crop insurance	47	431,899	-	-
Total	**224**	**56,236,657**	**87**	**26,530,579**

Source: SFA-PA

1.2.7. Public Intervention and Private Storage

In the event of the regulatory market conditions, public intervention for regular and durum wheat, barley, corn and paddy rice, beef and veal, butter and skim powdered milk, meat, as well as private storage of products, may be opened by means of implementing acts of the European Commission.

In 2024, there were no conditions for opening a public intervention and private storage of products.

1.2.8. Sugar sector

On the basis of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2017/1185 of 20.04.2017 laying down rules for the application of Regulations (EU) No 1307/2013 and (EU) No 1308/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to notifications to the Commission regarding information and documents and amending and repealing several Commission Regulations and Art. 10a of the Law on the Implementation of the Common Organization of the Markets of Agricultural Products of the European Union, sugar refineries submit to the Ministry of Agriculture notifications about prices and stocks of sugar, and isoglucose producers - notifications about the production of isoglucose.

In 2024, one enterprise for the production of isoglucose and one sugar refinery operate on the territory of Bulgaria.

1.2.9. Promotional programs

Promotional programs cover activities aimed at providing information about the presented product and facilitating its market offering. The programs may include organization of trainings, conferences with the participation of journalists and doctors, promotions in supermarkets and shops, tastings, advertising, organization of competitions, publications in the specialized press and the Internet, participation in exhibitions, fairs, national and international exhibitions.

The implementation of promotional programs contributes to increasing the market share and the demand of the products in the target countries, improves the image of products compared to other similar products, and at the same time increases the consumption of promoted products.

The rules for implementing promotional programs are established by Regulation (EU) No. 1144/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22.10.2014. According to European legislation, the selection of

programs for 2024, for which financial support is provided, is carried out by the European Research Executive Agency - EREA.

For Campaign `2024 Bulgaria has one approved regular promotional program, for which administrative checks are carried out.

1.2.10. Quality Policy

Following the registration of the PDO "Balgarsko Kiselo Mlyako (Bulgarian Yogurt)" and the PDO "Balgarsko Byalo Salamureno Sirene (Bulgarian White Brine Cheese)" in the European Register of PDOs and PGIs in 2023, actions were taken in 2024 to inform the national associations of dairy processors about the requirements for the production and control of products with the two protected names. As a result of the procedures carried out, 34 dairy processing companies have been entered in the register of producers of the PDO "Bulgarian Yogurt", and 28 companies in the register of producers of the PDO "Bulgarian White Brine Cheese". By mid-2025, another 7 dairy companies are in the process of being entered into the two registers at different stages, and will have the opportunity to benefit from the advantages of implementing the European quality schemes for agricultural products and foods.

In 2024 an application for registration of PDO "Strandzhanski bilkov chai" (Strandzha Herbal Tea) was published in the Official Journal of the EU to grant the right of reasoned objection by member states and third parties within three months from the date of publication (13/02/2024). Successful consultations and negotiations were held regarding the objection of the Ministry of Rural Development and Food of Greece to the Bulgarian application submitted to the EC for registration of this product. On June 3, 2025, the EC entered Strandzha Herbal Tea in the Register of Geographical Indications of the European Union with the publication in the Official Journal of the European Union of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2025/1084 of 2 June 2025 entering a name in the Register of Geographical Indications of the Union - "Strandzhanski bilkov chay" (PDO).

In connection with the publication in the Official Journal of the EU of Regulation (EU) 2024/1143 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 April 2024 on geographical indications for wines, spirit drinks and agricultural products, as well as on traditional specialities guaranteed and optional quality terms for agricultural products, amending Regulations (EU) No 1308/2013, (EU) 2019/787 and (EU) 2019/1753 and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012, activities have been launched to update the national legislation concerning quality schemes.

In May 2024, a joint Mini-Conference of the European Commission, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, the Ministry of Economy and Industry and the Executive Agency for Vine and Wine was held at the Ministry of Agriculture and Food on the topic: "News on European quality schemes and aspects of preparation of applications for registration of geographical indications". The agricultural industry conference explained the reform carried out by Regulation (EU) 2024/1143 regarding quality schemes.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food actively assists groups of producers who apply for registration of their products in the European registers, and after submitting the applications, assists them in preparing and completing the necessary documentation within the framework of the national and European procedure.

The producers of the PDO "Strandzhanski manov med"/"Manov med ot Strandzha" have been granted "de minimis" state aid to cover the costs of product certification.

1.2.11. Temporary Emergency Measures Scheme

Emergency measure in certain sectors

In the summer of 2024, the production of spring crops was seriously affected by adverse weather events - unusually high temperatures and droughts, accompanied by the development of fires.

By Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2024/2675 providing emergency financial support to the agricultural sectors affected by adverse weather events in Bulgaria, Germany, Estonia, Italy and Romania, in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council, Bulgaria has been granted financial resources from the EAGF in the amount of EUR 10,900,000 (BGN 21,318,220). Additional national support of up to 200% of European funds is allowed, which represents EUR 21,800,000 (BGN 42,636,440).

In this regard, an Ordinance has been prepared on the terms and conditions for providing emergency financial assistance to farmers growing corn for grain. It is planned that the aid will be provided for the areas with grain maize to farmers who are eligible for support under the "Basic Income Support for Sustainability" intervention for the 2024 campaign, as the most serious income losses have been identified for them.

8,869 beneficiaries have been identified as eligible for the extraordinary financial assistance, and the areas eligible for assistance amount to 511,374 ha. Funds amounting to BGN 21,314,082 have been paid from the EAGF.

Trade mechanisms

1.2.12. Export licensing

Scheme - Export licenses for dairy products to the USA and Canada for the calendar year 2024

According to the Agreement between the European Community and Canada, signed in 1995, in order for the traders to benefit from the reduction of customs duties on imports of cheese and yellow cheese in the USA and Canada, an export license issued within the quota is mandatory. USA and Canada's import quota system is a mechanism to protect domestic production and is a combination of two tools - quotas and import duties. For Bulgaria, the agreement entered into force after joining the EU on 01.01.2007. The export license for САЩ Canada gives the right to a reduced duty upon import of dairy products under code 0406, produced in a member state of the European Union.

In 2024, 63 licenses were issued for the export of milk and dairy products to the USA and Canada within a quota, including 27 licenses for the export of 87 tons of yellow cheese, 29 licenses for the export of 293 tons of cow's cheese and 7 licenses for the export of 41 tons of sheep's cheese.

For the period 01.01.-20.06.2025, a total of 37 licenses for the export of dairy products to the USA and Canada were issued, and the annual number is expected to remain close to the levels of previous years - around 60 licenses.

1.2.13. Import licensing of agricultural products from third countries

In accordance with the European legislation, the following products are subject to compulsory licensing when imported from third countries: rice; hemp seeds for sowing; hemp seeds not intended for sowing; unprocessed or melted hemp and ethyl alcohol of agricultural origin.

The application of the licensing regime for the import of agricultural products from third countries within the framework of tariff quotas and preferential regimes covers the following groups of agricultural products: cereals, rice, sugar, olive oil and table olives, fresh and processed fruits and vegetables (garlic and canned mushrooms), beef and veal, pork, milk and dairy, eggs and egg albumin, and poultry meat.

In 2024, 314 applications were submitted for the issuance of licenses for the import of agricultural products from third countries and extracts. 287 import licenses were issued (including 177 under tariff quotas and 110 - under general conditions) and 25 extracts.

The guarantees established in favor of the MAF for fulfillment of the import obligation under the licenses issued in 2024 amounted to BGN 91,892 512.

In 2024, 4 new companies of importers of agricultural products were entered in the MAF register. As of 31.12.2024, the number of registered importers of agricultural products was 529.

2. Support under the Second Pillar of CAP

Rural Development Program 2014 - 2020

The program for the development of rural areas of Bulgaria for the program period 2014 - 2020 was approved by Commission Implementation Decision C (2015) 3480 of 26.05.2015.

The total budget of the RDP 2014-2020 is BGN 7,416,153,009 of public funds (EUR 3,791,876,986), according to the 17th amendment in force as of 31.12.2024, including a contribution from the EAFRD of BGN 6,119,785,771 (EUR 3,129,044,775) and national co-financing of BGN 1,296,367,238 (EUR 662,832,211).

The contracted funds (excluding future and transitional obligations under measures with a multi-year commitment) amount to 6,969,765,743 BGN (3,563,639,300 EUR) of public funds or 94% of the entire RDP 2014-2020 budget.

The subsidies paid as of December 31, 2024 amount to 2,986,797,433 euros (5,841,578,419 leva) of public funds, which represents 79% of the entire available budget of the Program. For the calendar year 2024, payments amounting to 651,615,889 BGN (333,171,024 EUR) of public funds were made.

The implementation of the RDP 2014-2020 ends in 2025. An organization has been established for the timely finalization of all contractual obligations under the measures and sub-measures of the Program, with the aim of proper processing and payment by the SFA structures by the end of the calendar year.

Measure 1 "Knowledge transfer and information actions"

Sub-measure 1.1. "Vocational training and skills acquisition"

Support under Sub-measure 1.1. “Vocational training and skills acquisition" is aimed at increasing the knowledge and skills of farmers and foresters and employees on their farms by achieving an appropriate level of technical and economic training and increasing the capacity for access to knowledge and information in the field of agriculture and forestry.

As of 31.12.2024, there are 17 active contracts under the sub-measure, and for 3 of them, the implementation of the activities under the signed contracts has not started. The total number of people trained under the projects that received payment (8 projects) is 1,946. The deadline for the implementation of the signed grant contracts is August 2025.

For the period from the beginning of the implementation of the sub-measure (2019) to 2024, the funds disbursed amounted to 1,011,480 BGN. In 2024, payments were made in the amount of BGN 844,952.09.

Sub-measure 1.2. "Demonstration and awareness activities"

The sub-measure supports the organization and implementation of demonstration activities in the field of agriculture and forestry, with the aim of increasing the knowledge and improving the skills of farmers and foresters and those employed on their farms by achieving an appropriate level of technical and economic training and increasing the capacity for access to knowledge and information in the field of agriculture and forestry.

As of 31.12.2024, 13 contracts with grants amounting to BGN 5,046,042 of public funds have been concluded under the sub-measure. Beneficiaries carry out demonstration activities in the fields of animal husbandry, viticulture, tobacco production, cereal and legume crops, cultivation of medicinal and aromatic plants, ecological fruit production, forestry, soil science, improvement of biodiversity and adaptation to climate change for environmentally friendly agriculture.

The supported activities are implemented in the cities of Sofia, Pleven, Dobrich, Ruse, Varna, Stara Zagora, Plovdiv, Smolyan, Kyustendil, etc. They will involve over 8,000 participants, of which 1,610 are employed in the forestry sector, and the rest - in agriculture.

By the end of 2024, the demonstration activities planned under the projects are being carried out, with some of the beneficiaries - contracting authorities under the Public Procurement Act still in the process of coordinating documentation.

The total public funds paid under the sub-measure as of 31.12.2024 amount to BGN 121,908 of public funds under two of the 13 concluded contracts. For the first five months of 2025, payments worth 190,890 leva were made.

Measure 2 "Consulting Services, Farm Management and Farm Replacement Services"

Sub-measure 2.1 "Assistance for provision of consultancy services"

Sub-measure 2.1. is applied with two sub-measures - Sub-measure 2.1.1 "Consultancy Services for Farmers and Forester Holders" and Sub-measure 2.1.2 "Consultancy Services for Small Farmers".

Sub-measure 2.1.1. “Consulting services for farmers and foresters”

Sub-measure 2.1.1. “Consultancy services for farmers and forester holders " aims to provide advisory services to farmers, young farmers and foresters for improvement of the economic and environmental performance, as well as climate resilience and climate change resilience on their farms.

During the first call of the sub-measure held in 2015 the National Agricultural Advisory Service was designated as the only beneficiary to provide consulting services to farmers, applicants under sub-measure 6.1 "Start-up Aid for Young Farmers" of the RDP 2014- 2020.

Within the framework of the reception held in 2022, with a budget of 5,867,400 leva, three project proposals were submitted and approved with a subsidy value of 1,955,800 leva.

The total public funds paid under the sub-measure for the period from the beginning of its implementation until the end of 2024 amount to BGN 3,673,323. In 2024, payments amount to 435,862 leva.

Sub-measure 2.1.2. "Consulting services for small farms"

The submeasure is aimed at providing quick and easy access of small farms to quality consultancy services and meeting their needs to improve their skills and management skills, viability, awareness, knowledge of environmental protection, climate change adaptation and risk management improvement. Within its framework, the National Agricultural Advisory Service provides six basic, completely free advisory packages for small farms.

For the period from its launch until 31.12.2024, a total of BGN 24,277,760 was paid under the sub-measure, of which in 2024 - BGN 3,480,506. For the first five months of 2025, payments in the amount of BGN 703,398 were made.

Sub-measure 2.2 “Establishment of Consultancy Services”

The implementation of the sub-measure started in 2021 with a budget of BGN 11,734,800 and the sole beneficiary, the National Agricultural Advisory Service, for the implementation of the activity "Establishment of mobile municipal centers (offices) for advisory services".

In 2024, the approved project is in an advanced implementation process, with some of the main activities being carried out:

- Conducting joint information seminars with a scope of up to 70 participants to present RDP activities - at regional level;
- Providing advice and consultations to small farms;
- Organizing information events for small farms in various settlements;
- Visits to small farms to explain the conditions for applying under the Thematic Sub-programme and other measures financed through the EAFRD, and to provide other advice and consultations directly related to the activities of the farms.

For the period of application of the sub-measure until the end of 2024, the funds disbursed amount to BGN 5,050,007. In 2024, payments amount to 2,297,998 leva.

Measure 4 "Investments in tangible assets"

Sub-measure 4.1. "Investments in agricultural holdings"

Support under the sub-measure is aimed at modernizing agricultural holdings, including in sensitive sectors with difficult access to the market, renewing physical capital and intangible assets related to the organization and management of holdings, introducing new and energy-saving technologies, and improving pre-market preparation and storage of production.

For the period 2015-2024, five acceptances of applications for financial assistance were held under the sub-measure. 3,669 contracts have been concluded, with a total value of the approved subsidy of BGN 1,494,898,899. During the calendar year 2024, 276 contracts were concluded with a subsidy of BGN 64,909,587.

As a result of the implementation of the approved projects under the sub-measure, the creation of 6,303 new jobs has been declared, which contributes to the sustainable development of rural areas and an increase in employment in the agricultural sector.

As of 31.12.2024, for the entire period of implementation of the RDP 2014-2020, under sub-measure 4.1 "Investments in agricultural holdings" 926,835,571 BGN of public funds have been paid. For the calendar year 2024, the financial assistance provided amounts to BGN 178,355,876, and for the first five months of 2025 - BGN 52,974,534.

4.1.2. "Investments in agricultural holdings under a Thematic sub-program for development of small farms"

The support aims to improve the economic sustainability and results of small farms through restructuring and development of their available material capacities, encouraging the introduction of new processes and technologies to improve the quality of the produced products, and protecting the components of the environment. By the end of 2024, when the implementation of the Sub-Programme ends, 96% of the contracted projects have been implemented.

Two admissions were held, during which 502 project proposals were submitted. By the end of 2024, 247 administrative contracts worth 6,495,975 leva had been concluded.

For the period from the beginning of the implementation of the RDP 2014-2020 to 31.12.2024, BGN 5,054,504 were paid under the sub-measure, including BGN 656,724 in 2024. For the first five months of 2025, 6,728 leva were paid.

Sub-measure 4.2. "Investments In Processing/Marketing Of Agricultural Products"

The sub-measure contributes to improving vertical and horizontal cooperation between agricultural producers, processors and traders, increasing their competitiveness and their better integration into the agri-food chain. The investments made in adding value to agricultural products support the creation of sustainable employment, including in rural areas.

For the period from the beginning of the implementation of the sub-measure until the end of 2024, five receptions were held, with a total of 2,011 projects submitted. Of these, 1,035 projects were approved for support and conclusion of administrative contracts with a grant value of BGN 1,125,589,974.

By the end of 2024, the total public funds paid cumulatively for the period of application of the sub-measure amounted to BGN 501,834,397 from the EAFRD and the National Bank. For 2024, the subsidies paid amounted to 127,591,228 leva, and for the first five months of 2025 - 35,290,821 leva.

Sub-measure 4.3. “Support for investments in infrastructure related to the development, modernization or adaptation of agriculture and forestry"

Support under the sub-measure is aimed at the reconstruction/rehabilitation and modernization of off-farm hydro-ameliorative infrastructure used only for agricultural needs, with the aim of reducing water losses and adapting agriculture to the effects of climate change. The support will create more efficient use of water resources through the introduction of new technologies, leading to a real reduction in losses and water consumption in agriculture, increasing competitive advantages and reducing the pressure on water bodies.

Under sub-measure 4.3, three receptions were held and 27 contracts were signed with a total amount of the agreed subsidy of BGN 115,978,940.

For the period of its implementation until 31.12.2024, 68,989,610 BGN were paid under the sub-measure, including 20,256,132 BGN in 2024. For the first five months of 2025, payments worth 5,682,179 BGN were made.

Measure 5 "Restoration of agricultural production potential and introduction of appropriate preventive measures"

The measure is applied with two sub-measures - submeasure 5.1 "Support for investments in preventive measures aimed at limiting the consequences of probable natural disasters, adverse climatic phenomena and

catastrophic events" and sub-measure 5.2 "Investments to restore the potential of agricultural land and agricultural production potential disrupted by natural disasters, adverse climatic events and catastrophic events".

Sub-measure 5.1. "Support for investments in preventive measures"

Support under the sub-measure is aimed at the implementation of the following types of activities:

- Prevention and limitation of the possibilities for the spread of epizootics and mass infectious diseases among farm animals; prevention of dangerous meteorological phenomena - hail;
- Increasing the operational capacity of public entities to prevent epizootics, as well as to fight them, including by reducing the response time of the competent authorities;
- Activities in livestock facilities specializing in raising pigs, sheep, goats and poultry;
- Increasing the operational capacity of public entities to ensure reliable and effective protection from hail and other adverse climatic phenomena, covering agricultural areas throughout the country. Targeted support provides for the upgrade of the required weather radar network through the commissioning of new networks and their associated equipment and service vehicles.

For the period of implementation of the RDP 2014-2020, 3 selection calls have been opened under the sub-measure, for which 70 project proposals have been submitted. Of these, 57 projects were approved for financing and signing of contracts with a grant value of BGN 27,978,621. The total funds paid out by 31.12.2024 are 16,848,351 BGN.

In 2024, 7,416,486 leva were paid, and in the period January - May 2025 - 1,074,856 leva.

Sub-measure 5.2 "Investments to restore the potential of agricultural land and agricultural production potential affected by natural disasters, adverse climatic events and catastrophic events"

The support is aimed at restoring production potential disrupted by acute infectious diseases in pigs, small ruminants (sheep and goats) and poultry.

Sub-measure 5.2 was launched in 2020. One reception was held, within which two contracts were concluded with a total subsidy amount of BGN 1,202,748. The agreed funds have been paid in full to the beneficiaries.

Measure 6 "Development of farms and enterprises"

The measure is implemented with four sub-measures - sub-measure 6.1 "Start-up aid for young farmers", sub-measure 6.3 - "Start-up aid for the development of small farms", sub-measure 6.4.1 "Investments in support of non-agricultural activities" and sub-measure 6.4.2 "Investments in support of non-agricultural activities under the Thematic Sub-programme for the Development of Small Farms".

Sub-measure 6.1. "Start-up aid for young farmers"

Sub-measure 6.1 is aimed at increasing the number and share of young farmers, which will contribute to sustainable development and facilitate structural changes in agriculture. The process of creating viable and sustainable agricultural farms or the takeover of existing farms by young people is supported.

For the period from the beginning of its implementation until the end of 2024, four receptions were held under the sub-measure, with 2,969 contracts concluded worth 145,169,255 leva. The total funds paid cumulatively until 31.12.2024 amount to BGN 155,830,397 under the EAFRD and the National Bank.

In 2024, payments were made in the amount of BGN 13,059,249, and for the first five months of 2025 - in the amount of BGN 1,858,019.

Sub-measure 6.3. "Start-up aid for the development of small farms"

The sub-measure is aimed at ensuring sustainable development and growth of small farms by activating their investment activities.

From the beginning of the implementation of the RDP 2014-2020 until 31.12.2024, 4,992 contracts with an approved subsidy of a total value of BGN 146,450,304 have been concluded under sub-measure 6.3. By the end of 2024, just over 95% of all approved projects have been completed.

Under the sub-measure, 3,581 farmers were also supported in the form of ongoing payments from the 2007-2013 programming period, with these payments being added and reported together with the currently implemented contracts.

The total public funds paid cumulatively for the period of implementation of sub-measure 6.3 are worth 153,186,777 BGN. In 2024, payments were made in the amount of BGN 8,137,725, and for the period January - May 2025, they amounted to BGN 184,396.

Sub-measure 6.4.1. "Investments in support of non-agricultural activities"

The sub-measure is aimed at supporting investments in non-agricultural activities that are essential for increasing the competitiveness of rural areas. Encouraging this type of investment supports employment creation and facilitates the diversification of farmers into non-agricultural activities. The support contributes to the development of technologies in the field of the "green economy", including renewable energy for own consumption.

Within the three acceptances under sub-measure 6.4.1., 770 project proposals were received. Of these, 313 projects were approved for financing and signing of contracts for the provision of grants, with the amount of the approved subsidy amounting to 83,272,794 leva.

For the period of implementation of the RDP 2014-2020 until the end of 2024, payments in the amount of BGN 40,034,039 were made under the sub-measure. In 2024, 9,377,141 leva were paid, and for the first five months of 2025 - 3,043,415 leva.

Measure 7 “Basic services and renewal of villages in rural areas”

Sub-measure 7.2. "Investments in the creation, improvement or expansion of all types of small-scale infrastructure"

The provision of focused support under Sub-Measure 7.2 aims to promote economic development, social inclusion and poverty reduction in rural areas.

Within the framework of the 13 acceptances of applications for support under the sub-measure conducted in the period 2016-2024, 1,773 projects were submitted. As of the end of 2024, there are 922 active contracts, with an approved subsidy of BGN 1,446,997,725.

The investments under the concluded contracts cover 2,230 settlements with a total population of 6,557,594 people. The physical implementation of the infrastructure projects includes the construction and improvement of 1,253 km of street infrastructure (streets, sidewalks and related facilities), 987 km of road infrastructure and 1,393 km of water supply network.

For the period from the beginning of its implementation until 31.12.2024, a total of BGN 1,205,474,349 was paid under the sub-measure, and in 2024 the payments amounted to BGN 138,154,152. In the period 01.01.-31.05.2025, funds worth 39,184,910 leva were paid.

Sub-measure 7.6. "Studies and investments related to the maintenance, restoration and improvement of the cultural and natural heritage of the villages"

The sub-measure aims to improve the quality of life and preserve cultural identity and traditions in rural areas. During the period of its implementation, two receptions were held (in 2016 and 2020), during which 481 project proposals were submitted. Of these, 203 projects were approved for financing and signing of contracts with a value of grant aid of BGN 113,687,506.

The supported investments cover 197 settlements with a total population of 2,640,446, which highlights the significant social coverage of the projects.

By the end of 2024, payments in the amount of 75,691,122 BGN have been made cumulatively, including in 2024 - 14,006,886 BGN. For the first five months of 2025, 3,242,221 leva were paid.

Measure 8 "Investments in the development of forest regions and improvement of the forest viability"

The measure provides for 5 sub-measures, of which 4 are implemented - sub-measure 8.1. "Afforestation and maintenance", sub-measure 8.3. "Prevention of damage to forests from forest fires, natural disasters and catastrophic events", sub-measure 8.4. "Restoration of damage to forests from forest fires, natural disasters and catastrophic events" and sub-measure 8.6. "Investments in silviculture technologies and in the processing, mobilization and trade of forest products."

Sub-measure 8.1. "Afforestation and maintenance"

The support provided under sub-measure 8.1 "Afforestation and maintenance" aims to stimulate the implementation of projects that contribute to environmental protection and adaptation to climate challenges, with an emphasis on increasing forest areas in plain areas, limiting erosion, preserving soil quality, restoring the water balance and promoting sustainable agricultural practices.

One reception was held under the sub-measure in 2020, with 22 project proposals received. Of these, 2 projects worth 168,232 leva were approved for financing, for which payments have not been made.

Sub-measure 8.3. "Preventing damage to forests from forest fires, natural disasters and catastrophic events"

The purpose of the sub-measure is to reduce the threat of forest fires and limit the danger of pests, diseases, natural disasters and catastrophic events in the forest territories by introducing new preventive activities and improving those already implemented. All owners of forest areas are eligible for support.

By the end of 2024, 23 contracts for the provision of grant aid in the amount of BGN 35,220,956 were concluded under the sub-measure. The projects are distributed in different regions of the country, with a concentration of interventions in areas with proven high fire risk, including parts of the South Central, Southeastern and Southwestern regions.

For the period of its implementation until December 31, 2024, a total of BGN 27,838,131 was paid under sub-measure 8.3, of which in 2024 - BGN 4,704,220.

Sub-measure 8.4. “Recovery from damage to forests from forest fires, natural disasters and catastrophic events“

The support under the sub-measure is aimed at restoring forests affected by forest fires, natural disasters, catastrophic events, diseases and pests, as well as protecting the environment and adapting to climate change.

Within the framework of the acceptance of project proposals carried out in 2018, 14 projects were submitted. Of these, as of December 31, 2024, 12 administrative contracts have been concluded with an approved subsidy value of BGN 4,214,442.

The projects cover activities for the restoration of damaged forest areas, erosion prevention and the use of local tree species. The size of the areas for restoration varies significantly - from 12 ha in the smallest projects to over 3,550 ha in the largest interventions. The geographical distribution of the projects covers mainly the Southwestern and Southeastern regions of the country, with emphasis on sensitive territories with a higher tendency to erosion processes and risk of forest fires.

The funds disbursed for the period of application of the sub-measure until the end of 2024 amount to 2,241,081 BGN.

Sub-measure 8.6. “Investments in silviculture technologies and in the processing, mobilization and trade of forest products"

The aim of the support is to increase competitiveness and create new jobs by promoting the processing and marketing of forest products, as well as improving the condition of forests, their protection and sustainable management.

Under the sub-measure, one intake was held in 2018, with 191 projects received, of which 72 financial assistance contracts worth BGN 28,008,583 were concluded by the end of 2024.

For the period of implementation of sub-measure 8.6 until the end of 2024, a total of BGN 11,970,300 has been paid. Payments in the calendar year 2024 amount to 4,622,011 leva.

Measure 9 "Creating producer groups and organizations"

The support under measure 9 "Establishment of producer groups and organizations" is aimed at the establishment of producer groups and organizations in the agricultural sector. It contributes to improving the competitiveness of primary producers by better integrating them into the agricultural and food chain through quality schemes that add value to agricultural products, promotion of local markets and short supply chains, producer groups and organisations and interbranch organisations.

For the period from its implementation until 31.12.2024, 30 contracts were concluded under the measure with a total amount of the approved subsidy of BGN 15,994,966. BGN 9,220,269 of public funds have been paid, including BGN 450,098 in 2024.

Measure 10 "Agroecology and climate"

For Campaign `2024, applications for payment for commitments implemented in the transition period (ending at the end of 2024) have been accepted in the following areas:

- Restoration and maintenance of permanently grassed areas of high natural value, with 451 applications received;
- Conservation of endangered local breeds important for agriculture, with 1,362 applications received;
- Conservation of endangered local varieties important for agriculture, with 542 received.

The total funds paid under measure 10 as of 31.12.2024 for campaigns 2015-2024 amount to 526,104,687 BGN of public funds. In 2024, payments in the amount of BGN 30,399,755 were made.

Measure 11 "Organic Farming"

The measure includes two sub-measures - Sub-measure 11.1 "Payments for transition to organic farming" and Sub-measure 11.2 "Payments for maintenance of organic farming".

Support is provided in three areas:

- Organic crop production, with 416 applications for support received for Campaign `2024;
- Organic beekeeping, with 290 applications received for Campaign `2024;
- Organic livestock farming, with 8 applications for support received for Campaign `2024.

As of 31.12.2024, funds for campaigns 2015-2023 totaling BGN 407,245,483 of public funds have been disbursed under measure 11 (the funds include payments under transitional commitments from the previous programming period). Payments in 2024 amount to 12,294,107 leva.

Measure 12 "Natura 2000 Payments and the Water Framework Directive"

The measure does not apply in the calendar year 2024. Applications have been announced for a similar intervention "Payments for agricultural land in Natura 2000 areas", included in the SPRD 2023-2027.

Measure 13 "Payments for areas facing natural or other specific constraints"

The measure does not apply in 2024, as admissions have been announced under a similar intervention "Payments for areas facing natural or other specific constraints" from the SPARD 2023-2027.

Measure 14 "Animal Welfare"

The measure does not apply in the calendar year 2024. Admissions were held under a similar intervention included in the 2023-2027 SPARD.

Measure 16 "Cooperation"

Sub-measure 16.1. Support For The Formation And Functioning Of Operational Units Within The EIP

The support under sub-measure 16.1. "Support for establishment and functioning of operational groups within the EIP" is aimed at the functioning of task forces set up to implement a specific innovative project to achieve the objectives of the European Innovation Partnership on Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability.

Two admissions were implemented under the sub-measure - in 2019 and 2020 with a total budget of BGN 59,710,500. As of December 31, 2024, 24 contracts are in the process of implementation.

The total funds paid for the period of implementation of the RDP 2014-2020 until the end of 2024 amount to 7,431,731 BGN, including in 2024 - 2,168,551 BGN. For the first five months of 2025, payments worth 656,942 leva were made.

Sub-measure 16.4. "Support for horizontal and vertical cooperation between supply chain actors"

The support under the submeasure is provided for creation and development of short supply chains and of local markets. It covers only chains, which include no more than one intermediary between the farmer and the consumer. Local markets are markets within a radius of 75 km from the farm of origin of the product, within which both the processing of the product and its sale to the final consumer must take place.

As of 31.12.2024, 4 administrative contracts are being implemented under the sub-measure, under which payments in the amount of BGN 20,565 were made in 2024.

Measure 19 "Community-led local development "

Support under measure 19 "Community-led local development" is aimed at stimulating local development in rural areas through funding from the RDP, OPIC, OPHRD, OPE, OPNOIR under one or several priorities of the relevant program or programs, in accordance with the rules for the use of the relevant funds. Community-led local development is carried out through integrated and multi-sectoral local development strategies, based on the characteristics of the specific territory and developed on the basis of local needs and potential.

In the 2014-2020 programming period, the LEADER/CLLD approach includes 64 local initiative groups, covering 117 municipalities with a territory of 53,828 sq. km and a population of 1,646,496 people.

Support for Community-Led Local Development is provided through the implementation of four sub-measures - sub-measure 19.1 "Assistance for preparatory activities"; sub-measure 19.2 "Implementation of operations within Community-Led Local Development strategies"; sub-measure 19.3 "Preparation and implementation of LAG cooperation activities" and sub-measure 19.4 "Running costs and promotion of the Community-Led Local Development strategy".

Sub-measure 19.1 "Aid for preparatory activities"

By the end of 2024, sub-measure 19.1 "Assistance for preparatory actions" has been fully completed with a clearly expressed preparatory role within the RDP 2014-2020. The measure was launched in 2015 with two intakes, under which 100 financial assistance contracts worth around BGN 5,085,000 were concluded. 180 municipalities with a population of over 2.3 million people and a territory of 74.4 thousand square kilometers are covered - about 78% of the rural areas in the country. As a result of the implementation, over 1,200 public events have been organized, contributing to the mobilization of local partnerships and capacity building.

All projects under the sub-measure have been implemented. The total value of the paid grant for the preparatory activities reaches 9,708,028 leva. In 2024, payments were made in the amount of BGN 1,516,999.

Sub-measure 19.2. “Implementation of operations within Community-Led Local Development strategies”

As of the end of 2024, sub-measure 19.2 "Implementation of operations within Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) strategies" is at an advanced stage of implementation. Its aim is to extend support to rural areas by financing projects selected and managed by local partnerships within the framework of CLLD. The 64 LAGs approved under the sub-measure cover 117 municipalities, a territory of 53.8 thousand sq. km and a population of 1.65 million people. 25 of the implemented strategies are single-fund, and 39 of them are multi-fund.

As of 31.12.2024, 2,271 contracts have been concluded under the sub-measure with a total value of the grant of BGN 221,666,099. The contracts concluded in 2024 are 362, with a total amount of the approved subsidy of BGN 34,540,658.

A total of 133,392,288 BGN were paid for the period of implementation of the RDP 2014-2020 until the end of 2024. Payments in 2024 amount to 52,297,641 leva, and for the first five months of 2025 - to 11,175,643 leva.

Sub-measure 19.3. "Preparation and implementation of LAG cooperation activities"

Sub-measure 19.3 "Preparation and implementation of LAG cooperation activities" is one of the specific measures aimed at building capacity for partnership and transnational cooperation in rural areas within the framework of the RDP 2014-2020 and its implementation ends at the end of 2024. It aims to support LAGs in implementing joint internal and transnational projects that strengthen strategic interaction between regions and countries.

For the entire period of its implementation until 31.12.2024, 6,180,970 BGN were paid under the sub-measure, of which in 2024 - 2,019,255 BGN. For the period January - May 2025, payments in the amount of BGN 137,500 were made.

Sub-measure 19.4. "Current expenditures and promotion of a community-led local development strategy"

The sub-measure aims to contribute to the development of LAGs as strong and efficiently operating partnerships and operational structures, by providing them with the necessary financial resources for the effective implementation of local development strategies and their promotion.

From the beginning of the implementation of sub-measure 19.4 until the end of 2024, 63,599,025 BGN have been paid. In 2024, payments were made in the amount of BGN 6,907,149, and in the first five months of 2025 - in the amount of BGN 4,962,601.

Measure 21 "Extraordinary temporary support for farmers and SMEs particularly affected by the COVID-19 crisis""

By the end of 2024, the measure is fully completed financially and administratively. Introduced in July 2020 with the eighth amendment to the RDP 2014-2020, it includes three sub-measures - for farmers, for SMEs and recognized producer groups and organizations. The goal is to provide one-time support to address the economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the period of its implementation, a total of 82,369,848 leva were paid to over 30,000 beneficiaries under the measure.

Measure 22 -"Extraordinary temporary support for farmers and SMEs particularly affected by the crisis caused by the Russian invasion in Ukraine"

The measure represents one of the shortest-term, but at the same time intensively implemented and reported interventions within the framework of the RDP 2014-2020. It is implemented through two sub-measures - sub-measure 22.1 "Extraordinary temporary support for farmers particularly affected by the consequences of the Russian invasion of Ukraine" and sub-measure 22.2 "Extraordinary temporary support for SMEs affected by the consequences of the Russian invasion of Ukraine".

Sub-measure 22.1 is implemented in 2022 and 2023. It supported over 31 thousand farmers, with a total amount of BGN 58,361,898 in public funds paid out.

The admission under sub-measure 22.2, aimed at supporting SMEs, groups and producer organizations, was carried out in March 2023. 49 beneficiaries were supported with a total amount of the subsidy paid of BGN 3,909,723.

Strategic Plan for the Development of Agriculture and Rural Areas for the Period 2023-2027

The Strategic Plan for the Development of Agriculture and Rural Areas for the period 2023-2027 has been prepared on the basis of the requirements and rules set out in Title III of Regulation No. 2021/2115 of the

European Parliament and of the Council of 2 December 2021. It has a national territorial scope and operates throughout the country in accordance with the multiannual financial framework for the period 2023-2027 of the European Union's Common Agricultural Policy.

The strategic plan is based on ten main objectives, defined as "specific objectives". The achievement of each of them is associated with satisfying certain predefined needs. Meeting needs is achieved through interventions that create the framework for implementing specific investment proposals at the local level.

The specific objectives of the SPARD 2023-2027 are:

- **Specific objective No. 1:** Supporting sufficiently reliable agricultural incomes and sustainability across the EU to improve food security

Within this objective, the Strategic Plan addresses needs through targeted interventions contributing to reducing differences in income from agricultural activity compared to the economy as a whole, including reducing income variability across different types of farms and achieving territorial balance in terms of farms falling in areas with natural constraints.

- **Specific objective No. 2**: Strengthening market orientation and increasing competitiveness, including placing greater emphasis on research, technology and digitalisation

To contribute to the goal, the SPRD 2023-2027 includes interventions to support specific sectors to increase the productivity and competitiveness of agricultural holdings and improve their resource efficiency.

- **Specific objective No. 3**: Improving the position of farmers in the value chain

Support is envisaged for using the existing potential for the development of organizations and/or groups of producers and structures for offering production to the market with the aim of directly increasing the competitiveness of producers and their organizations. Interventions in the "Fruit and Vegetables" and "Milk and Dairy Products" sectors are aimed at improving the position of farmers in the food chain.

- **Specific objective No. 4:** Contribution to climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as sustainable energy

The specific objective is addressed by implementing interventions contributing to improving the position of farmers in the food chain, with actions to mitigate climate change and the resilience of agriculture to climate change, including activities leading to the capture of organic carbon in the soil and sustainable energy production from renewable energy sources. Interventions are planned for the provision of advisory services and increasing advisory capacity, as well as for vocational training and skills acquisition, within which advisory packages and training on specific issues relevant to the identified needs will be provided for farmers and foresters.

- **Specific objective No. 5:** Promoting sustainable development and effective management of natural resources such as water, soil and air

Through interventions within the framework of direct payments, the objective is targeted with the implementation of various eco-schemes (for diversification of cultivated crops, extensive maintenance of permanent grassland areas, improvement of soil quality through continued efforts to limit water and wind erosion processes, maintenance and improvement of biodiversity, preservation and restoration of soil potential, etc.).

- **Specific objective No. 6**: Contribution to protecting biodiversity, improving ecosystem services and preserving habitats and landscapes

The specific objective is addressed with interventions supporting sustainable management, conservation and improvement of the conservation status of bird species associated with arable land and grasslands, habitat maintenance, conservation and restoration of landscape elements, pastoralism, preservation and improvement of genetic diversity in animal husbandry and plant breeding, etc. The territorial scope and activities correspond to and reflect both restrictions in specific areas of the Natura 2000 network and action plans of the Ministry of Environment and Water for species conservation, as well as the entire territory of the country for other types of interventions.

- **Specific objective No. 7**: Attracting young farmers and facilitating the development of economic activity in rural areas

Financial support through seed capital will help young farmers to technologically upgrade and modernize their farms. The interventions seek to encourage the transfer of agricultural activity between generations with the aim of preserving farming for sustainable agricultural employment and developing one's own agricultural business. Support is also provided for consulting young farmers by the National Agricultural Science and Technology Agency and other training organizations on various issues related to agricultural production. The aim is to create opportunities, through various forms and methods, for conducting training and demonstrations related to the economic indicators of agriculture, competitiveness, marketing and sales of agricultural products. The unification of young farmers in organizations and groups of producers, the implementation of investments for the development of economic activities and for diversification into other non-agricultural activities are supported.

- **Specific objective No. 8:** Promoting employment, growth, social inclusion and local development in rural areas, including the bioeconomy and sustainable forestry

Targeting interventions to identified needs aims to create jobs in rural areas, increase gross domestic product per capita and promote inclusion in these areas. Support is provided for investments in the development of economic activities related to trade, services, and manufacturing. Activities are financed to improve public infrastructure and technical and communication systems, and to preserve the spiritual and cultural life of the population in rural areas.

- **Specific objective No. 9**: Improving the response of EU agriculture to public demands on food and health, including for safe, nutritious and sustainable food, as well as animal welfare

Support is provided for organic production, very small farms, producer organizations or producer groups, promoting the consumption of organic products, improving food quality, improving animal husbandry, implementing investments for preventive actions and restoring agricultural potential, reducing the use of antimicrobials, fertilizers and plant protection products, etc.

- **Specific objective No. 10** (horizontal): Modernizing the sector by stimulating and sharing knowledge, innovation and digitalization in agriculture and rural areas and encouraging their greater use

Within the horizontal objective, the SPARD 2023-2027 addresses the identified needs through interventions aimed at increasing the qualification and knowledge of farmers and foresters and employees on their farms, creating a more effective system for sharing knowledge and innovation and digitalization in agriculture by involving advisory organizations and increasing their capacity, stimulating various forms of cooperation contributing to achieving the objectives of the European Innovation Partnership, as well as forms of cooperation to shorten the supply chain of agricultural products and food through the EAFRD.

Interventions from the SPARD 2023-2027 related to undertaking multi-annual commitments in the field of environment and climate

Intervention II.A.1 "Organic Plant Production"

The commitments under the intervention, with a duration of five years, are divided into two operations - "Payments for the transition to organic crop production" and "Payments for the maintenance of organic crop production".

For Campaign `2024, 872 applications were submitted under the operation "Payment for transition to organic crop production" and 1,420 applications under the operation "Payment for maintenance of organic crop production".

As of June 26, 2025, funds in the amount of BGN 45,065,035 have been disbursed under both operations.

Intervention II.A.9 "Organic beekeeping"

Within the framework of the "Organic Beekeeping" intervention, two operations have been identified - "Payments for switching to organic beekeeping" with a duration of 1 year and "Payments for maintaining organic beekeeping", covering commitments with a duration of 5 years.

During Campaign `2024, 172 applications were submitted under the operation "Payment for transition to organic beekeeping" and 762 applications under the operation "Payment for maintenance of organic beekeeping".

The funds paid as of June 26, 2025 under the two operations amount to BGN 10,029,183.

Intervention II.A.10. "Supporting the cultivation of climate-resistant varieties through integrated production practices"

During the `2024 Campaign, no applications were submitted for the intervention, within which commitments can be made for a duration of 5 years.

Intervention II.A.12 "Promoting natural pollination".

The intervention is divided into two operations - Operation 1: "Ensuring pollination in mountainous areas and protected areas of the Natura 2000 network (stationary apiaries)" and Operation 2: "Commitments for the provision of pollination services through relocation and temporary placement of bee colonies (mobile beekeeping)", for which 5-year commitments can be made. Compensatory support is provided as a single amount per holding for participation in one of the two operations.

For Campaign `2024, 316 applications for support have been submitted, and the authorized funds as of June 26, 2025 amount to 847,020 BGN.

Intervention II.A.4 "Promoting the use of crops and varieties resistant to climate conditions"

With the first amendment to the SPARD 2023-2027 (approved by the EC in 2024), two operations have been identified under the intervention, which are implemented from Campaign `2024 - "Cultivation of resistant varieties with plant protection products authorized for use in organic production" and "Promotion of cultivation of resistant varieties".

Under the operation "Cultivation of resistant varieties with plant protection products authorized for use in organic production", 134 applications for support were submitted, and under the operation "Promoting the cultivation of resistant varieties" - 61 applications. As of June 26, 2025, payments totaling BGN 865,071 have been made.

Intervention II.A.5 "Conservation of endangered local varieties important for agriculture"

The intervention aims to direct support towards the maintenance and development of endangered local varieties of field crops, perennials, vegetables, essential and medicinal crops. The areas on which eligible crops are grown, supported under a similar activity under measure 10 "Agroecology and Climate" of the RDP 2014-2020, are not supported under this intervention until the end of 2024.

During the `2024 Campaign, 217 applications for assistance were submitted. As of June 26, 2025, payments worth BGN 852,961 have been authorized.

Intervention II.A.6 "Preservation of local breeds (autochthonous) important for agriculture"

The intervention supports farmers who raise animals of endangered local breeds, with commitments lasting 3 consecutive years.

For Campaign `2024, 530 applications were submitted, and the funds disbursed as of June 26, 2025 amounted to 6,954,096 leva.

Intervention II.A.7 "Traditional practices for seasonal grazing (pastoralism)".

Support for the intervention is linked to three-year commitments.

During the `2024 Campaign, 358 applications for assistance were submitted. As of June 26, 2025, payments in the amount of BGN 3,408,326 have been made.

Intervention II.AE.3 "Restoration and maintenance of degraded pasture areas"

Under the intervention, which can be committed for a duration of 5 years, 6 applications have been submitted for Campaign `2024. As of June 26, 2025, payments worth BGN 118,488 have been authorized.

Intervention II.A.8. "Maintaining the habitats of the Red-breasted Goose (Branta ruficollis), the Imperial Eagle and the Egyptian Vulture in ornithologically important sites in arable land"

The intervention is divided into two operations - "Sowing and growing autumn cereals in the habitats of the red-breasted goose on 50% of the area declared under the activity and with a minimum of 30% corn" and "Conversion of arable agricultural lands into permanent grassland areas, into nesting areas of the Crested (Imperial) Eagle and the Egyptian Vulture". The commitments are for a duration of 5 years.

During Campaign `2024, no applications for assistance were submitted under the intervention.

Intervention II.A.2 "Animal Welfare and Antimicrobial Resistance"

The intervention commitments last one year and are divided into three activities - "Ensuring a favorable living environment/free floor space for animals", "Ensuring free-range outdoor living" and "Reducing the use of antimicrobials".

For Campaign `2023, applications were accepted only for the first two activities. For Campaign `2024, the intervention is applied in full scope. Under the activity "Ensuring a favorable living environment/free floor space for animals", 1,116 applications for support were submitted, under the activity "Ensuring free-range outdoor living" - 695 applications and under the activity "Reducing the use of antimicrobials" - 421 applications. As of 26.06.2025, no intervention payments have been authorized.

Intervention II.B.1. "Payments for areas facing natural or other specific constraints"

The intervention is implemented in three directions - "Payments for mountain areas" (NR 1), "Payments for areas other than mountain areas with significant natural constraints" (NR 2) and "Payments for areas with specific constraints" (NR 3).

During the `2024 Campaign, 17,745 applications were submitted under the NR 1 direction, 5,363 applications under the NR 2 direction and 715 applications under the NR 3 direction. The total funds paid under the intervention as of June 26, 2025 amounted to BGN 101,962,498.

Intervention II.B.1. "Payments for agricultural land in Natura 2000 areas"

The intervention includes all agricultural lands (arable lands, permanent crops and permanent grasslands) falling within the scope of Natura 2000 protected areas, for which orders have been issued for their declaration, with specific prohibitions on agricultural activities.

The intervention support is provided in the form of an annual payment per hectare of agricultural area to compensate for the imposed prohibitions on carrying out specific agricultural activities included in the relevant declaration order for each Natura 2000 site or in an approved management plan for the Natura 2000 protected area.

During Campaign `2024, 12,262 applications for assistance were received. As of 26.06.2025, no intervention payments have been authorized.

Interventions from the SPARD 2023-2027 for advisory services, increasing advisory capacity, cooperation and professional training

Intervention II.G.1. "Support for Operational Groups under the European Innovation Partnership"

This intervention aims to implement cutting-edge achievements of science and technology in agricultural practice. Regarding the level of activity in the field of innovation in agriculture, differences are observed according to the economic type of farms, with the need to introduce innovations in production activities being most recognized among small and medium-sized farms and younger farmers. The factors that most strongly motivate farmers to introduce an innovative solution into their practice are obtaining higher yields, realizing greater profits, and the expected time savings.

The intervention is aimed at Operational Groups established under the Obligations and Contracts Act, or associations under a partnership agreement, where an eligible beneficiary of the intervention is the lead partner. Operational groups are formed to achieve the objectives of the EIP and may include at least one farmer as a participant, and in the case of projects in the field of forestry - at least one forester.

Operational groups may include registered farmers, including recognized groups or organizations of producers, owners/users of forest areas, branch organizations for the production and processing of agricultural

products and cooperatives, scientific institutes or experimental stations that carry out scientific research and scientific services in the field of agriculture or forestry, higher education institutions accredited in the professional fields of "Plant Production", "Plant Protection", "Animal Husbandry", "Veterinary Medicine", "Forestry", "Food Technologies" and "Biotechnologies".

In general, activities for the implementation of the innovative project in two steps are supported: first step - formation of a OG, with a maximum amount of support of 29,337 leva, and second step - functioning of the OG, with a maximum amount of funds provided of 782,320 leva. In the case of projects whose final product falls outside the scope of Annex I of the TFEU, the aid is limited to BGN 684,530.

In 2025, the first step is in the process of implementation - within the framework of the admission process, 118 applications for support were received, which are in the evaluation procedure. The largest number of farmers attracted as partners is over 230, consultants are over 100, representatives of science are over 30, and almost the same number of universities and vocational high schools.

The main topics covered in the planned innovative projects are related to the areas of digitalization, soils, climate change, animal husbandry, and implementation of new business models.

The second step of the approval of the operational groups is to be launched as an intake in September 2025, with a budget of 58,674,000 leva.

Intervention II.G.2 - Cooperation for short supply chains

Shortening the supply chain of agricultural products makes it possible, on the one hand, to guarantee product quality, and on the other hand, to increase added value for producers. The use of short supply chains contributes to local development and the preservation of local identity.

The intervention is aimed at an association of farmers, including groups and organizations of producers, district, regional and national representative branch organizations for the production and processing of agricultural products in the "Plant Production" and "Animal Production" sectors and associations including at least 5 registered farmers.

Investments are supported for the creation and operation of short supply chains, through which agricultural products are offered to end consumers directly from their producers.

The funds provided in the form of eligible costs for one project implemented by a beneficiary for the period of application of the SPARD 2023-2027 amount to 586,740 BGN, including for:

- Running costs for the operation of the short supply chain association, as part of the eligible project costs, which cannot exceed BGN 58,674 per year;
- Costs for promoting the project of the short supply chain association, as part of the eligible project costs, which cannot exceed 39,116 BGN for the implementation period.

According to the annual indicative schedule for admissions under the SPARD 2023-2027 for 2025, the first admission under the intervention is planned to be opened in September 2025.

Intervention II.I.1. - Consulting services and increasing consulting capacity

In order to increase the competitiveness and viability of small farms, there is a clear need to improve the knowledge and skills of the managers of these farms in the field of management and agricultural production, including through assistance in the form of advice from specialists with appropriate expertise.

The intervention is aimed at all individuals and legal entities that have expertise in providing advisory services falling within the scope of the included advisory packages. Activities are supported to provide advice to farmers and foresters with the aim of improving the economic and environmental performance, as well as the climate compatibility and climate change resilience of their farms.

An opportunity is also provided to support activities related to expanding the capacity for providing advisory services to small, very small agricultural holdings and young farmers, through the activities of advisors who are part of municipal mobile advisory centers (offices) of the National Agricultural Service.

The funds are provided in the form of a standard table of unit costs (standard simplified costs) or so-called advisory packages.

The costs of providing the advisory packages may include consultants' fees, travel expenses, materials, costs associated with the location where the consultation is provided, and other costs directly related to the provision of the advisory package.

The amount of the grant for activities related to the provision of advisory services in the form of advisory packages is up to 100% of the amount of the estimated costs.

In 2025, it is planned to accept project proposals for the intervention.

Intervention II.I.2. - Professional training and knowledge acquisition

This intervention aims to stimulate organizations using various knowledge transfer methods to offer forms and methods of training and skill development that are as close as possible to the needs of those employed in the agricultural sector.

The intervention is aimed at institutions in the system of vocational education and training, district, regional and national representative branch organizations for the production and processing of agricultural products, for activities in the sector for which there is national representation, provided that the project is implemented in partnership with any of the other eligible beneficiaries, higher education institutions and scientific organizations, etc.

The support covers vocational training and skills acquisition activities, which include conducting:

- courses for acquiring qualifications in a profession or part of a profession;
- courses for improving qualifications;
- specialized courses for acquiring the ability to work with agricultural and forestry equipment;
- information seminars to increase knowledge on specific topics aimed at achieving the specific goals and needs identified in the Strategic Plan;
- demonstration activities.

The funds are provided in the form of a flat rate per unit of product (standard table of simplified costs), covering up to 100% of the amount of supported costs. The maximum amount of funding for one beneficiary is no more than BGN 1,000,000 for the entire period of implementation of the SPRPSD 2023-2027.

Interventions from the SPARD 2023-2027 to support investments

Intervention II.D.1 - Investments in agricultural holdings

The support is aimed at farmers and groups of producer organizations, and the supported activities under the intervention may include tangible and intangible investments in newly established and existing agricultural holdings.

The financial assistance is up to 50% of the total cost of eligible costs. Depending on its size, it may be increased by up to 25% for project proposals submitted by applicant producer groups/organizations, and by up to 10% for project proposals implemented in sensitive sectors identified in the analysis of the Strategic Plan.

According to the annual indicative schedule for admissions under the SPARD 2023-2027 for 2025, the first admission under the intervention is planned to be opened in September 2025, with a budget of 283,591,000 leva.

II.D.1.1 - Investments in agricultural holdings aimed at protecting environmental components

Support under this intervention aims to contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation, promote sustainable energy, promote sustainable development and the efficient management of natural resources such as water, soil and air, including by reducing dependence on chemicals. The conversion and maintenance of areas in organic agriculture and organic animal husbandry is encouraged, in order to meet the growing demand of society for clean and tasty products, as well as for the implementation of environmentally friendly agricultural practices.

The financial assistance is up to 50% of the total amount of eligible costs. Depending on its size, it may be increased by up to 25% for project proposals submitted by applicant producer groups/organizations, and by up to 10% for project proposals implemented in sensitive sectors identified in the analysis of the Strategic Plan.

According to the annual indicative schedule for admissions under the SPARD 2023-2027 for 2025, the first admission under the intervention will be opened in September 2025, with a budget of 127,127,000 leva.

II.D.2 - Investments in processing of agricultural products

The intervention is aimed at improving the position of farmers in the value chain, diversifying economic activity, stimulating new production in the field of bioeconomy, as well as ensuring the necessary quantity and quality of local raw materials for fuller use of the capacity of agricultural producers. Support is provided to processors of agricultural products, farmers and producer groups and organizations.

Within the scope of the intervention, support will be provided within the following production sectors: milk and milk products, including poultry eggs; meat and meat products; fruit and vegetables, including mushrooms; honey; grain, milling and starch products; vegetable and animal oils and fats; technical and medicinal crops, including rose oil and herbs; prepared feed for farm animals; grape must, wine and vinegar.

The financial assistance is up to 50% of the total amount of expenses eligible for financial assistance. For processors of agricultural products that are micro, small, medium or large enterprises under the SME Act, support may be increased by up to 10% for project proposals that are implemented in sensitive sectors identified in the analysis to the SPARD. For farmers and producer groups/organizations, depending on the amount of financial assistance, it may be increased by up to 25% for project proposals submitted by applicant producer groups/organizations, and by up to 10% for project proposals implemented in sensitive sectors identified in the analysis for the SPARD 2023-2027.

According to the annual indicative schedule for admissions under the SPARD 2023-2027 for 2025, the first admission under the intervention is planned to be opened in November 2025 with a budget of 342,265,000 leva.

II.D.2.1 - Investments for processing of agricultural products aimed at protecting environmental components

The intervention is complementary to intervention II.D.2 "Investments for processing of agricultural products" and aims to achieve social well-being, while reducing environmental risks and ecological threats. Processing companies will commit to sustainable development, which ensures long-term profitability, including encouraging the development of various productions based on alternative production processes that can reduce the environmental footprint of the activity. The intervention will also provide an opportunity to support activities aimed at better utilization of agricultural production residues in order to promote the bioeconomy and the circular economy.

The financial assistance is up to 50% of the total amount of expenses eligible for financial assistance. For processors of agricultural products that are micro, small, medium or large enterprises under the SME Act, financial support may be increased by up to 10% for project proposals that are implemented in sensitive sectors identified in the analysis to the SPARD. For farmers and producer groups/organizations, depending on the amount of financial assistance, it may be increased by up to 25% for project proposals submitted by applicant producer groups/organizations, and by up to 10% for project proposals implemented in sensitive sectors identified in the analysis for the SPARD.

According to the annual indicative schedule for admissions under the SPARD 2023-2027, the first admission under the intervention is planned for November 2025 with a budget of 107,569,000 leva.

II.D.3 - Investments for non-agricultural activities in rural areas

The implementation of the intervention is aimed at facilitating the development of economic activity in rural areas, stimulating innovative or technologically intensive production, diversification of economic activity, as well as improving health and social services, sites for the development of traditions and cultural and historical sites in rural areas. The planned diversification of the economy in rural areas will be achieved through the development of economic activities related to production, trade, services, the processing industry and others. In addition, in rural areas there is an opportunity to develop businesses that complement or support agricultural production.

The intervention is aimed at farmers, micro-enterprises and artisans in rural areas. Support is provided for the development of activities in the field of health and social services, which are key to overcoming numerous health problems and challenges in rural areas, health and social inequalities and the optimization of outpatient care.

The financial assistance for the intervention is up to 50% of the total amount of expenses eligible for financial assistance.

In the period January - May 2025, admissions were held in three areas of the intervention ("Crafts", "Production", "Services"), with a total budget of 193,148,794 leva. Under the "Crafts" direction, with a budget of 5,867,400 leva, 7 project proposals were submitted with the amount of the requested subsidy of 1,124,746 leva. In the "Production" direction, with a budget of 91,447,194 leva, 273 projects were submitted with a value of the requested subsidy of 83,020,705 leva. Under the "Services" direction, whose budget amounts to BGN 95,834,200, 782 applications for support have been submitted, with a requested subsidy of BGN 182,021,986.

II.D.5 - Investments in irrigation infrastructure

The aim of the intervention is to promote sustainable development and efficient management of natural resources, such as water, soil and air, including by reducing dependence on chemical substances.

Activities related to tangible and intangible investments for the reconstruction and modernization of existing irrigation infrastructure used only for agricultural purposes and located outside agricultural holdings are supported. Subsidies are provided for activities including repair/reconstruction/rehabilitation of irrigation installations and irrigation infrastructure, purchase and installation of new machinery, facilities and equipment for irrigation, measurement and monitoring, including those directly related to improving energy efficiency and environmental protection. The financial assistance under the intervention is up to 100% of the total eligible costs for investments in infrastructure outside agricultural holdings.

The total budget of the intervention is 195,580,000 BGN. In the period February - April 2025, an admission was held, during which 38 projects were submitted with a subsidy value of 248,339,307 leva.

II.E.1- Start-up aid for the establishment of young farmers in agriculture

The intervention, with a budget of BGN 176,022,000, provides support to help attract and retain young farmers and other new farmers and facilitate the sustainable development of business activity in rural areas. The entry of new young people into agriculture is stimulated, as well as the upgrading of the farms of young farmers who have already entered the sector.

The aid is aimed at farmers aged 18 to 40, owners of an agricultural holding, possessing the relevant professional skills and knowledge to carry out agricultural and agriculture-related activities. The support is provided in the form of a lump sum for the period of implementation of a business plan, with the support amounting to 78,232 BGN per agricultural holding and is granted and paid in two stages. The first stage is after approval of the project proposal, and the second - after establishing the correct implementation of the business plan.

Within the framework of the admission process held in the period November 2024 - January 2025, 1,094 projects were received with a value of the requested subsidy of 85,585,808 leva.

II.E.2 - Support for very small agricultural holdings

The intervention aims to cover a large number of small and semi-market farms that have potential for development in terms of motivation and available family labor. Expanding their production through appropriate public support will lead to a strengthening of the group of medium-sized farms that are more viable. This will have a positive impact on the overall state of the industry.

Small farms are in a difficult situation, with a shortage of capital resources, and in order to expand production and modernize their production facilities, they must increase productivity and reduce their dependence on labor. Technical and technological innovations are an important determining factor for higher production results. With appropriate interventions, the use of manual labor will be reduced and these farms will be able to follow good agricultural practices, which will ensure higher yields in fruit and vegetable cultivation and productivity in cattle and sheep farms with lower labor costs.

The support is provided in the form of a lump sum for the period of implementation of a business plan, with the support amounting to 39,116 BGN per agricultural holding and is granted and paid in two stages. The first stage is after approval of the project proposal, and the second - after establishing the correct implementation of the business plan.

The intervention has a budget of 58,674,000 leva. In the period November 2024 - February 2025, an admission was held, with 1,432 project proposals received with a requested subsidy in the amount of BGN 56,014,112.

II.E.3 - Start-up aid for the establishment of new farmers in agriculture

The support aims to attract new entrepreneurs in agriculture, other than young farmers. By providing an additional opportunity to start an agricultural business, economic development in rural areas is supported, local competitiveness is promoted and prerequisites are created for improving the level of human capital development, including the creation of new jobs. Facilitated access to modernization of new agricultural holdings is provided at the start-up stage of their agricultural business, through the introduction of specialized machinery and equipment.

The scope of the intervention includes farmers aged 41 to 65, owners of agricultural holdings, who have the relevant professional skills and knowledge to carry out agricultural and agriculture-related activities. An opportunity is provided if, at the time of application, farmers do not possess professional skills and knowledge to acquire such within a set period.

The financial assistance is provided in the form of a lump sum for the period of implementation of the business plan, in the amount of BGN 58,674 per agricultural holding, and is granted and paid in two stages. The first stage is after approval of the project proposal, and the second - after establishing the correct implementation of the business plan.

The intervention has a budget of 39,116,000 leva. Within the framework of a reception held in the period November 2024 - February 2025, 652 project proposals were received, with a value of the requested subsidy in the amount of 38,255,448 leva.

II.G.3 - Support for producer organisations or producer groups

The intervention, with a budget of 24,447,500 leva, is aimed at stimulating cooperation between agricultural holdings. The unification of farmers into organizations and groups of producers is a mechanism aimed at concentrating agricultural production, planning and adapting production in accordance with market demand in terms of quality and quantity, reducing production costs, increasing the contractual power of agricultural producers in their relationships with wholesalers and retailers, and achieving better market realization. An opportunity is created to increase the motivation of agricultural producers to unite in groups and organizations by defining various priorities and support mechanisms. This is of particular importance for groups and organizations and contributes to increasing their competitiveness and sustainability.

Support is provided to groups or organizations of agricultural producers recognized by the Minister of Agriculture and Food under specific national legislation. The amount of financial assistance for producer groups and organizations is in the form of an annual payment in accordance with the submitted business plan and is determined as a percentage of the value of the annual marketed production by the producer group or organization.

In the period December 2024 - March 2025, the intervention is open for applications, with 37 project proposals received with a total subsidy value of BGN 31,829,102.

Interventions from the SPRD 2023-2027 for investments in basic services and small-scale infrastructure in rural areas and preservation of the spiritual and cultural life of the population in rural areas

Intervention II.D.6 - Investments in basic services and small-scale infrastructure in rural areas

The intervention aims to promote social inclusion, improve transport connectivity between settlements, energy efficiency of public buildings, as well as the water supply and street network, in order to improve the quality of life in them. Its budget amounts to 977,923,783 leva.

The maximum amount of the grant is determined for each applicant municipality, according to the "Methodology for determining guaranteed budgets for municipalities within the scope of the definition of rural areas" approved by the Monitoring Committee of the SPRD 2023-2027.

In the period December 2024 - March 2025, the first admission of applications for assistance was held. 585 project proposals were submitted, with a value of the requested subsidy of 735,808,159 leva.

A second call for project proposals, with a residual budget from the first call, was announced in the period May 2025 - July 2025. 116 projects were submitted, with a total amount of the requested subsidy of BGN 119,299,893.

Intervention II.D.7 - Preservation of the spiritual and cultural life of the population in rural areas

The intervention aims to preserve the spiritual and cultural life of the population through the recovery, restoration, repair and/or reconstruction of buildings with religious significance, which will largely contribute to the preservation of cultural identity and traditions in rural areas and improving the quality of life of the people living in them.

According to the annual indicative schedule for admissions under the SPARD 2023-2027, in 2025, admissions under the intervention with a budget of 141,795,500 BGN are planned.

Interventions from the SPRD 2023-2027 for the Community-Led Local Development approach

Intervention II.G.5 - Implementation of operations, including cooperation activities and their preparation, selected within the framework of the local development strategy

On December 30, 2024, Decree of the Council of Ministers No. 494 was adopted to determine rules for implementing the "Community-Led Local Development" approach for the period 2023-2027.

The objectives of the intervention are: creating a dynamic living environment; improving the quality of life through the development of horizontal and cross-sectoral partnerships and interaction for initiatives of common interest, as well as practices and models for good governance and participation of stakeholders in the development of the territory; supporting territorial identity, marketing and brands based on the specific territorial potential and products of local character; increasing the competitiveness of local economies and opportunities for creating local businesses, including through diversification and support for alternative activities; supporting the introduction of innovations and promoting the transition to a circular economy; promoting sustainable and quality employment and social inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized groups; preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency, including activities for prevention and risk management and for using the potential of cultural heritage; inclusive education and educational integration.

In the period February - June 2025, a call for project proposals with a budget of 556,743,199 leva was opened. To finance CLLD strategies, additional funding from the European Social Fund plus and the European Regional Development Fund is also provided, bringing the total budget for the approach to nearly 740,000,000 BGN.

Eligible applicants are LAGs that are non-profit legal entities and carry out public benefit activities. They must be registered as associations under the Non-Profit Legal Entities Act and at the same time be public-private partnerships, with representatives of a wide range of stakeholders from the territory of their operation.

The maximum amount of the total public contribution under the SPARD 2023-2027 within the framework of a CLLD strategy is in accordance with the population size in the relevant territory and is aimed at implementing cooperation activities, management, monitoring, evaluation and promotion of the strategy. For LAGs covering a territory with a population of 10,000 to 15,000 inhabitants, inclusive, the amount of support is envisaged to be up to BGN 4,498,340 (EUR 2,300,000), and for LAGs covering a territory with a population of over 15,001 inhabitants, inclusive - up to BGN 5,867,400 (EUR 3,000,000).

3. National Recovery and Resilience Plan

Based on Decree of the Council of Ministers No. 157 of 2022 on determining the bodies and structures responsible for the implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Plan of the Republic of Bulgaria and their main functions, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food has been designated as the Monitoring and Reporting

Structure in relation to the implementation of investment K6.I1 "Fund for Promoting the Technological and Ecological Transition of Agriculture" of Component 6 "Sustainable Agriculture" of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan.

In the period September - December 2023, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development conducted procedures through the selection of proposals for the implementation of investments in two areas - procedure BG-RRP-6.004 "Investments in technological and environmental modernization" and procedure BG-RRP-6.006 "Centers for preparation for marketing and storage of fruits and vegetables". Significant interest has been registered from potential final recipients of financial assistance, significantly exceeding the planned budget.

Support under the "Investments in Technological and Environmental Modernization" direction is aimed at acquiring tangible and intangible assets related to activities contributing to environmental protection, adaptation of farms to climate change and improved use of resources. Investments in agricultural holdings are stimulated to introduce digital solutions that improve the process of growing crops and animals, as well as automated and robotic systems for managing the individual phases of the production process.

Within the framework of the announced procedure "Investments in Technological and Environmental Modernization", with a budget of 381,657,840 BGN, 4,358 project proposals were submitted with a requested grant in the amount of 912,193,337 BGN. 1,520 financial assistance contracts have been concluded with a grant amount of BGN 315,562,820. By the end of 2024, 6 of the contracts had been terminated. As of 31.12.2024, payments under 204 contracts for a total amount of 40,773,791 public funds were made under the procedure. For the first five months of 2025, funds in the amount of 102,364,689 leva were paid. The aim of the support under the direction of "Investments in centers for preparation for marketing and storage of fruit and vegetables" is to stimulate the creation of short supply chains, the modernization and automation of the processes of collection, preparation for the market and storage of fresh fruit and vegetables. Recipients of the grant may be farmers, producer organizations, cooperatives, associations of farmers.

Under the procedure "Investments in centers for preparation for marketing and storage of fruits and vegetables", with a budget of BGN 18,000,000, 41 project proposals were submitted with a requested subsidy of BGN 26,270,388. 23 support contracts have been concluded with a grant amount of BGN 13,603,245. By the end of 2024, public funds in the amount of BGN 262,556 had been disbursed under the procedure.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food is the final recipient of funds under investment K6.I2 "Digitization of the processes from farm to fork" from the NRRP, with a budget of BGN 23,874,419 (BGN 19,949,345 from the RRM and BGN 3,925,074 from the national non-refundable VAT budget). The investment project envisages the construction of an Electronic Information System in agriculture for the exchange of data between the public administration and economic entities in the sector, which will ensure integration and compatibility of data from various information systems, registers and databases, in and outside the Agriculture sector.

The purpose of the EISA is digitization and unification of information resources in agriculture, creation of conditions for monitoring the progress of the implementation of the objectives of the green deal in the field of agriculture, optimization of the business environment and reduction of the administrative burden.

As elements of the EISA, a common platform for uniting the system modules and integrating data from other information systems, four modules and a communication network of field and water sensors will be developed.

The module on the use of plant protection products and fertilizers aims to reduce the use of these products by digitizing the plant protection diaries kept by farmers. Traders, importers, distributors, consultants and professional users of plant protection products will enter information into the module.

The information-analytical module for the control of the use of antimicrobial veterinary medicinal products will collect and summarize information from all entities related to the production, trade and application of these preparations. The aim is to ensure complete traceability of antimicrobials and improve official control by introducing an electronic prescription and reference thresholds for their use.

The Farm-to-Fork tracking module will centrally collect and store data on a product from producers, importers, distributors, wholesalers and retailers, track its movement through the logistics chain and provide reliable information to all involved in the process, on control authorities and consumers.

The online learning module is a tool for improving the knowledge and awareness of farmers regarding the implementation of innovations, the adaptation of farms to climate change, more efficient use of resources, etc.

The communication network of field and water sensors will provide farms with data on soil moisture, air and soil temperature, and rainfall. Thus, farmers will be able to make adequate decisions on the implementation of the most appropriate agrotechnical measures.

In 2024 through a procedure under the Public Procurement Act, a contractor was selected who was entrusted with the development of the EISA. The planned activities are in the process of implementation according to a work plan prepared by the contractor. The deadline for building the system is 31.12.2025.

In the context of the challenges before the agriculture, related to the transition to more environmentally friendly practices, without affecting the country's food security, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food has made commitments to implement a reform included in the NRRP - Update of the strategic framework in the agrarian sector, The essence of the reform consists in the preparation of a National Action Program to contribute to the implementation of the objectives of the "Farm to Fork" Strategy. The purpose of the Program is to update and upgrade the strategic framework for the management of the agricultural sector, regulated in the National Development Program Bulgaria 2030, by outlining tools, measures and activities related to the implementation of specific goals and commitments contributing to the protection of the climate, the environment , biodiversity and natural resources for the period up to 2030.

The program was approved by Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 857/13.12.2024 and is in the process of implementation.

4. Additional state support

The support of the agricultural sector in Bulgaria under the two pillars of the CAP is supplemented by financial support with national funds under state aid schemes, short-term and investment loans granted by the Agriculture State Fund.

4.1. State aid in agriculture

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food determines and implements the policy for national support in agriculture in accordance with the legislation of the European Union on state aid and in connection with the regulations under the Law on State Aid.

State aid as a tool to support the country's agricultural sector is planned, developed and directed to the priority needs of Bulgarian agriculture, in compliance with European and national legislative norms - contracts, regulations, decisions, frameworks and others.

The applied measures are related to stimulating the investments in order to increase the efficiency of farms and the production of higher-quality products, insuring and compensating for damage from natural disasters and adverse climatic events; assistance in the prevention of plant and animal diseases; conservation of genetic resources in crop and livestock production; promoting animal welfare; stimulating the participation in exhibitions for popularization of the Bulgarian agricultural production and for exchange of experience.

The state aid initiative usually comes from the branch concerned (Crop, Livestock, Agricultural Processing), which is involved in the development of the measure.

The total value of state aid support in the Agriculture sector in 2024 is BGN 976,635,268, of which:

- BGN 845,898,265 under state aid and de minimis aid schemes administered by the SFA;
- BGN 130,737.003 under 2 tax relief schemes (assignment of corporate tax for the tax year 2024 and reduced excise rate on gas oil).

During the year, state aid was provided in the following areas:

1) **Risk and crisis management, aimed at counteracting and compensating for damage in the event of natural disasters or adverse weather conditions, as well as in case of animal and plant diseases:**

- Aid to compensate for damage to crops caused by adverse climatic events that can be equated to natural disasters

The support under the state aid scheme is direct aid amounting to up to 80% of the average production costs of growing a crop during the relevant marketing year.

- Aid to compensate for material damage to dead livestock and destroyed beehives;

The support is paid in the form of direct aid up to 100% of the average market prices of farm animals by species and category;

- State Aid to prevent plant and animal diseases:
    - Aid to compensate the costs of farmers related to the implementation of measures under the National Pest Control Program in perennials during the winter;
    - Aid to compensate the costs of agricultural producers related to the implementation of measures under the "National program of measures for control of soil pests on potatoes from the Wireworms (Elateridae) Family;
    - Aid to compensate farmers for the implementation of measures under the National Program of Measures for Control of Tomato Leaf Miner - Tuta absoluta Meyrick (Lepidoptera);
    - Aid to compensate farmers for costs related to the implementation of measures under the "National Program of Measures for the Prevention of the Spread and Control of Grapevine Pests (genus Vitis);
    - Aid to compensate farmers for costs related to implementation of measures under the State Prophylactic Program and the Programs for the Surveillance and Eradication of Animal Diseases
    - Aid for co-financing of insurance premiums for insurance of agricultural production;
    - Aid to compensate for the costs of disposing and destroying of dead animals.

2) **Aid aimed at ensuring the use of quality seed in crop production, maintaining a high level of breeding activity in livestock breeding and optimizing the process of producing quality agricultural products:**

- Aid for the participation of farmers in a quality scheme for production of quality seeds and propagating material;
- Aid for keeping a herd book and determining the productivity traits of animals;
- Aid for certification of holdings in the fruit and vegetables sector under the GLOBALG.A.P standard.

3) **Aid aimed at improving the quality of food and raw materials of animal origin by paying particular attention to animal welfare:**

- Aid to implement voluntary commitments for the welfare of pigs;
- Aid to implement voluntary commitments for the welfare of poultry.

4) **Aid for participation in exhibitions**–

Support of this kind contributes to the popularization of Bulgarian agricultural products on the market, as well as to the promotion of profitable plant varieties, animal breeds, innovative and effective technologies and practices among Bulgarian farmers. It is applied in the "Crop production", "Livestock breeding" and "Processing of agricultural products" sectors.

5) **Temporary framework of state aid measures in crises and transitions to support the economy following Russia's aggression against Ukraine:**

- Liquidity support to farmers to overcome the negative economic impact of the Russian aggression against Ukraine;

- “Aid to support costs of irrigation water for growing agricultural crops"

6) Minimum de minimis aid

De minimis aid is granted in compliance with the provisions of Regulation (EU) No. 1408/2013 and Regulation (EU) 2023/2013. The de minimis rule applies to aid which, due to its small size, does not endanger competition and can be provided by member states without the need for approval from the European Commission.

In 2024, support in the amount of BGN 14,226,957 was provided under developed de minimis schemes.

7) State aid in the form of tax relief (administered under another procedure)

- Aid for investment sin agricultural holdings by transfer of the corporate tax.

The aid is administered by the National Revenue Agency. According to NRA data, the transferred tax for tax year 2024 amounts to 30,741,373 leva from 1,456 individuals;

- Aid in the form of a rebate on the value of excise duty on gas oil used in primary agricultural production.

In 2024, BGN 99,999,023 were paid to 14,640 farmers under the aid line.

Table IV.14. State aid in agriculture in 2024

№	State aid	Utilized financial resource - BGN	Number of beneficiaries
	Total state aid administered by the Agriculture State Fund		
1	Aid to compensate farmers for costs related to implementation of measures under the State Prophylactic Program and the Programs for the Surveillance and Eradication of Animal Diseases	22,488,452	27,805
2	Aid for creation and maintenance of a herd book and for determination of the productivity and genetic traits of animals	9,837,742	5,253
3	Aid to compensate for material damage to dead livestock and destroyed beehives and bee colonies	239,010	11
4	Aid to implement voluntary commitments for the welfare of pigs	41,915,068	62
5	Aid to implement voluntary commitments for the welfare of poultry	39,244,685	252
6	Aid to compensate for the costs of disposing and destroying of dead animals - under the aid the suppliers of services are 2 incinerators	26,000,000	2
7	Aid to compensate for damage to agricultural crops caused by adverse climatic events which can be assimilated to natural disasters from August to October 2023.	2,629,527	206
8	Aid to compensate for damage to crops caused by adverse climatic events that can be equated to natural disasters from 2022	261,421	9
9	Aid to compensate for damage to crops caused by adverse climatic events that can be equated to natural disasters from 31.07.2024	5,494,018	384
10	Aid for compensating the costs of farmers related to implementation of measures under the National Program for Pest Control in Perennials during the winter period	8,706,794	3,429
11	Aid to compensate farmers for the implementation of measures under the National Program of Measures for Control of Tomato Leaf Miner	379,968	205
12	Aid to compensate the costs of agricultural producers related to the implementation of measures under the "National program of measures for control of soil pests on potatoes from the Wireworms Wireworms	1,312,657	274
13	Aid for co - financing of insurance premiums for insurance of agricultural production	3,033,449	678
14	Aid for participation of farmers in a quality scheme for the production of seeds and planting material - under the aid, the service provider is EAVTASC	1,199,988	1
15	Aid to compensate farmers for costs related to the implementation of measures under the "National Program of Measures for the Prevention of the Spread and Control of Grapevine Pests (genus Vitis)	1,024,737	256
16	Aid for certification of holdings in the fruit and vegetables sector under the GLOBALG.A.P standard	77,378	56
17	Assistance for participation in exhibitions - the service providers are industry organizations	3,724,000	39

№	State aid	Utilized financial resource - BGN	Number of beneficiaries
18	Liquidity support for farmers to overcome the negative economic impact of Russian aggression against Ukraine (including residual payments under the aid implemented in 2023)	653,101,595	52,044
19	Aid to support costs of water for irrigation in the cultivation of agricultural crops (including residual payments under the aid applied in 2023)	10,752,201	1,162
20	Payments from previous years under investment support schemes	248,620	5
21	De minimis aid (Regulation (EU) 2023/2013 and Regulation (EU) 1408/2013)	14,226,957	2,224
	Tax measures		
22	Aid in the form of a rebate on the value of excise duty on gas oil used in primary agricultural production- costs are reported to the MF	99,995,630	14,640
23	Aid for investment in agricultural holdings by transferring the corporate tax - tax year 2024	30,741,373	1,456
	Total state aid administered by the Agriculture State Fund	845,898,265	62,366
	TOTAL state aid (including through tax measures)	976,635,268	78,462

Source: SF Agriculture, National Revenue Agency, Customs Agency, BFSA.

Data for 2025

As of July 2025, by decisions of the Management Board of the State Fund Agriculture, a resource for state aid in agriculture in the amount of BGN 160 003 589 under state aid schemes and for de minimis aid, applied by the SFA, was approved. The absorbed resource is 113,682,356 leva.

4.2. Short-term credits

In 2024, loans for livestock, poultry and pig farmers received during the period 2008 - 2012 were deferred. The interest rate for deferral of the short-term loans provided is 4.5%.

The credit debt on the principal of the deferred loans amounts to BGN 4,293,962 and BGN 928,479 in interest, for 78 beneficiaries (including 26 livestock breeders, 40 poultry breeders and 12 pig breeders) under 129 concluded contracts.

4.3. Investment credit schemes of the Agriculture State Fund

In 2024, the SFA applied the following credit schemes for the investment intentions of farmers:

- for lending funds from the State Fund "Agriculture" to applicants with approved projects under Ordinance No. 8 of 20.06.2023 on the terms and conditions for implementing interventions from the Strategic Plan for the Development of Agriculture and Rural Areas for the period 2023 - 2027 in the beekeeping sector;
- Lending with funds from the State Fund for Agriculture for the implementation of approved projects for public activities to persons with concluded contracts for the provision of financial assistance under sub-measure 4.3 of measure 4 and sub-measure 16.1. and sub-measure 16.4. of measure 16 of the RDP 2014 - 2020;
- Credit scheme of the State Fund Agriculture for investments in agriculture.

- **Scheme for lending funds from the State Fund "Agriculture" to applicants with approved projects under Ordinance No. 8 of 20.06.2023 on the terms and conditions for implementing interventions from the Strategic Plan for the Development of Agriculture and Rural Areas for the period 2023 - 2027 in the beekeeping sector.**

The scheme is a continuation of a similar scheme implemented since 2012 in connection with the National Beekeeping Program that was in effect in previous periods. The implementation of the lending scheme contributes to a significant increase in the absorption of funds for investment projects in the beekeeping sector. The State Fund for Agriculture reports full and rapid repayment of the loans provided, along with the interest accrued on them. Under the terms of the scheme, a larger number of agricultural producers is given the opportunity to provide the necessary financial resources for implementation of approved projects for purchase of new hives, swarms, queen bees, veterinary medicines, beekeeping equipment and attached equipment for mobile beekeeping, by using credit. The maximum loan amount is up to 95% of the amount of the grant,

calculated on the basis of the actual agreed costs under concluded contracts for the purchase and sale of assets approved in the grant agreement. Their interest rate is 5.91% on an annual basis. The repayment of the credit and the due interests shall be implemented by offsetting the approved financial assistance.

Within the term of the call under the scheme, in 2024 94 credit applications were submitted, all of which were processed and financed. The amount of the provided funds was BGN 581,571.06. After offset with the approved financial assistance, 93 loans were fully repaid, and 1 was renegotiated.

- **Lending with funds from the State Fund for Agriculture for the implementation of approved projects for public activities to persons with concluded contracts for the provision of financial assistance under sub-measure 4.3 of measure 4 and sub-measure 16.1. and sub-measure 16.4. of measure 16 of the RDP 2014 - 2020**

The credit scheme is aimed at supporting the implementation of approved projects for public activities of persons with concluded contracts for the provision of financial assistance under sub-measure 4.3 of measure 4, sub-measure 16.1. and sub-measure 16.4. of measure 16. The implementation of the scheme aims to increase the funds absorbed and have a positive effect on the implementation of the indicators set in the RDP 2014-2020.

It is envisaged that the grant provided under the RDP 2014-2020 will be used to repay the loan and the interest due. For 2024, the interest rate is set at an amount equal to the reference interest rate applicable on the date of conclusion of the loan agreement, increased by one point. During the year, two loan applications were approved and 1 payment request was financed in the amount of BGN 474,304.55.

- **Credit scheme of the Agriculture State Fund for investments in agriculture**

There are three main directions: Crop, Livestock Breeding, and Technical Assistance, in the credit scheme of the Agriculture State Fund for investments in agriculture.

The activities and sites envisaged for financial support are:

- creation, restoration and cultivation of perennial crops and investments in greenhouse production;
- establishing and equipping of livestock farms and purchase of purebred, hybrid and market animals;
- purchase of machinery, equipment and inventory used in agriculture.

The credits under the scheme have a repayment term from 12 to 114 months, depending on the type of investment, which also includes grace periods in terms of repayment of the principal. The investment projects are financed at an annual interest rate equal to the reference interest rate applicable on the date of concluding the credit agreement, but not lower than the one determined by the Management Board of Agriculture SF for 2024 - 5.91% for direct crediting and up to 7% for refinancing through commercial banks. For credits financed directly by State Fund Agriculture, the processing and management fee is 0.5%.

Expected data for 2025

For 2025 agricultural producers are expected to be granted investment credits under the Schemes for:

- Credit scheme for investments in agriculture;
- Scheme for lending funds from the State Fund "Agriculture" to applicants with approved projects under Ordinance No. 8 of 20.06.2023 on the terms and conditions for implementing interventions from the Strategic Plan for the Development of Agriculture and Rural Areas for the period 2023 - 2027 in the beekeeping sector.
- Scheme for crediting with funds of the State Fund "Agriculture" for the implementation of approved projects for public activities of persons with concluded contracts for the provision of financial assistance under sub-measure 4.3 of measure 4 and sub-measure 16.1. and sub-measure 16.4. from measure 16 of the Rural Development Program for the period 2014- 2020.

In 2025, the State Fund for Agriculture budget has earmarked 90 million leva for investment loans, subject to maintaining a net balance of up to minus 40 million leva. By decision of the SFA Management Board, new loans financed directly by the Fund bear interest at an annual interest rate equal to the reference interest rate applicable on the date of conclusion of the loan agreement, increased by one percentage point.

As of June 2025, under the scheme for lending with funds from the State Fund "Agriculture" for the implementation of approved projects for public activities to persons with concluded contracts for the provision of financial assistance under sub-measure 4.3 of measure 4 and sub-measure 16.1. and sub-measure 16.4. of measure 16 of the Rural Development Program for the period 2014-2020, 1 application for payment of a tranche of commitments from 2024 in the amount of BGN 482,724.11 has been received and paid.

As of June 20, 2025, 82 loan applications have been received under the scheme for lending funds from the State Fund "Agriculture" to candidates with approved projects under Regulation No. 8 of June 20, 2023 on the terms and conditions for implementing the interventions from the SPARD 2023 - 2027 in the beekeeping sector. Of these, 65 were financed for a total value of 442,401.93 leva.

V. AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION ACTIVITIES

1. Control of agricultural and forestry machinery

1.1. Registration of agricultural and forestry machinery

The registration of agricultural and forestry machinery allows to monitor the technical condition of each machine, to control their safety at work and transport, to maintain a database of all machines in the country, to track the dynamics of renewal of machinery and tractor fleet.

In 2024, a total of 30,616 pieces of agricultural and forestry machinery were registered in the country, of which 10,606 were brand new.

Table V.1. Registered agricultural and forestry machinery in 2024

Machine type	Total	including new machines
Caterpillar tractors	96	9
Wheeled tractors	7,580	1,367
Self-propelled chassis	6,539	2,184
Other self-propelled equipment	114	1
Tractor trailers	2,372	692
Forestry equipment	1,665	592
Combine harvesters	712	99
Self-propelled feed harvesters	36	0
Other self-propelled machines	108	32
Sowing and planting machines	1,311	646
Fertilizer and plant protection machines	3,670	1,440
Fodder harvesters and feed processors	3,108	1,718
Soil cultivators	3,172	1,724
Dryers and others	3	0
Grain and seed cleaners	18	14
Irrigating machines	112	88
Total:	**30,616**	**10,606**

Source: MAF

1.2. Technical inspection of the equipment

The effective control of the technical condition and safety of equipment ensures protection of life and health of workers with agricultural and forestry equipment and reduction of accidents at work and victims of road accidents associated with equipment malfunctions.

In 2024, the regional directorates of agriculture conducted 148,641 technical inspections of agricultural and forestry machinery.

1.3. Qualification to work with machinery and issuance of certificates

After on-site 70 inspections of the facilities and the training documentation, 68 certificates for registration of educational forms were issued in 2024 for training of the candidates for acquiring qualification to work with

agricultural and forestry equipment. 3 on-site inspections of the material base were also carried out in connection with a change in circumstances. 8 corrections were made to permits and certificates for registration of educational forms due to change of the circumstances.

During the year, 15 ongoing inspections were carried out on the basis of Art. 44, para. 1 and para. 2 of Regulation No. 1/15.02.2019 on the conditions and procedure for training candidates for acquiring a license to work with agricultural and forestry equipment and the conditions and procedure for issuing a certificate for registration of educational forms for their training in connection with the requirements of Art. 13 and 14 of the same regulation.

As of 01.02.2024 there are 181 valid certificates by category, issued to 91 educational forms for training.

Table V.2. Issued permits and qualification certificates by categories in 2024

Category	Number of qualification certificates issued
tracked and wheeled tractors and machinery attached thereto	5,081
specialized and special agricultural machinery	2,233
specialized and special self-propelled reclamation equipment (earthmoving machines).	666
specialized and special self-propelled forestry equipment (hydraulic cranes and jaw loaders).	318
chainsaws and brushcutters	1,801
log bandsaw	14
cableways	2
Total	**10,115**

Source: MAF

1.4. Testing and certification of used agricultural and forestry machinery

In 2024, 2,770 tests of used agricultural and forestry machinery and earthmoving machinery were performed at the testing and certification centers in Ruse and Plovdiv.

767 inspections of equipment for applying plant protection products were also carried out.

2. Hydromelioration

2.1. Sites for protection against the harmful effects of water

The annual report of the expenses incurred by "Irrigation Systems" EAD in 2024 for the activity under the contract for the sites for protection from the harmful effects of water (SPHWI) has a total value of 29,559,388 BGN including VAT, and the advance funds provided under the contract by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry are 29,300,000 BGN including VAT.

In 2024, compromised sections of rivers and ravines, drainage channels were restored, which improved their conductivity and their function for flood protection of agricultural lands, settlements and technical infrastructure.

The operational condition of drainage systems and drainage fields has been maintained, which has resulted in an improvement in the water-air balance of the soil in arable agricultural lands, contributing to an increase in agricultural yields.

The condition of the Danube dikes has been improved, with areas of shrubby and woody vegetation being cleared. Repairs were made to drainage pumping stations.

The activities carried out by Irrigation Systems EAD (financed with funds from the state budget of Bulgaria) have improved the general operating condition of water management systems and facilities.

Based on Contract No. RD-50-7/18.03.2024, in 2025, "Irrigation Systems" EAD performs a public service for protection from the harmful effects of water, including maintenance and operation activities of 3,141 km of river corrections, 241 km of Danube dikes, 255 km of protective dikes, 70 drainage pumping stations (DPS), 7 retention dams and drainage systems and fields draining 1.466 million decares of areas.

During the first five months of 2025, the expenses incurred by "Irrigation Systems" EAD for carrying out the activities under the SPHWI contract amounted to BGN 11,432,319 including VAT.

In the period until 31.05.2025, repair and restoration works were carried out on over 15 sites (compromised sections of river corrections, Danube dikes, drainage channels, repairs of OPS, retention dam, etc.). Working designs have been prepared for two sites - sections of the Mesta River correction.

The programs for 2025 envisage further restoration of compromised sections of dikes, river corrections and other SPHWI, as well as the first stage assignment and preparation of detailed/technical investment designs for compromised sites, with a view to their subsequent restoration. The costs of the activities in 2025 under Contract No. RD-50-7/18.03.2024 are expected to reach 29 million leva. The implementation of the SPHWI activities is seriously hampered due to the lack of construction equipment, mechanization and means of transport. The technical means available to the company are amortized and are not highly efficient, especially in critical and emergency situations.

In fulfillment of Decision of Council of Ministers No 201 from 14.07.2011 the Ministry of Agriculture and Food has assigned to Irrigation Systems EAD as contractor for the implementation of construction named "Engineering - research, design and implementation of construction and installation works related to the prevention of flooding of the surrounding agricultural lands and the adjacent facilities and embankments of LOT 4 of the Trakia Motorway "Yambol - Karnobat." 10 sub-sites of the construction have been completed and handed over as of mid-2025, and this leaves 2 sub-sites along Azmak Dere for implementation.

In order to realize the construction of the two sub-sites along Azmak Dere, the main goal at this stage is to start carrying out the complete archaeological surveys, as well as the corresponding expropriations and settlement of the ownership in public state property of the MAF of the private properties affected by the detailed development plan, municipal properties and forest fund properties, and these procedures require significant technological time.

2.2. Irrigation

There are a total 181 dams owned and managed by Irrigation Systems EAD. Of these, currently 19 complex and significant dams (public state property) have been provided for use, including management, maintenance, operation, protection and monitoring, and 15 are retention dams. In 2024 the company carried out partial and current repair works on the irrigation infrastructure, mainly in connection with the preparation of the irrigation season and emergency situations.

In 2024, Irrigation Systems EAD irrigated a total of 342,614 decares, supplying water masses to the amount of 311,613 thousand m³, incl. 115,219 decares of rice with 273,817 thousand m³ of water masses. The total irrigated areas were about 11% more than the previous year.

In recent years, there has been a trend of increasing the size of the irrigated areas, with the main influence being the atmospheric conditions in the respective year - precipitation and temperatures during the irrigation season.

Table V.3. Watered areas and supplied water masses by Irrigation Systems EAD in 2024 by types of crops

	TOTAL		Corn		Tobacco		Vegetables		Perennials		Rice		Other crops	
	Irrigated areas	Supplied water masses	Irrigated areas	Supplied water masses	Irrigated areas	Supplied water masses	Irrigated areas	Supplied water masses	Irrigated areas	Supplied water masses	Irrigated areas	Supplied water masses	Irrigated areas	Supplied water masses
	decares	thousand m3	decares	thousand m3	decares	thousand m3	decares	thousand m3	decares	thousand m3	decares	thousand m3	decares	thousand m3
Burgas	5,818	320	268	19	0	0	32	2	1,507	63	0		4,011	236
Vidin	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0
Gorna Tundzha	27,227	40,449	8,251	1,930	975	263	947	209	743	134	15,765	37,837	546	76
Lower Danube	9,126	1,928	1,553	284	0	0	703	229	208	33	0		6,662	1,382
Maritsa	99,943	139,650	35,079	5,494	492	84	1,110	137	3,619	194	56,653	133,257	3,000	484
Mizia	1,665	221	747	98	640	54	262	66	13	2	0		3	0

	TOTAL		Corn		Tobacco		Vegetables		Perennials		Rice		Other crops	
	Irrigated areas	Supplied water masses	Irrigated areas	Supplied water masses	Irrigated areas	Supplied water masses	Irrigated areas	Supplied water masses	Irrigated areas	Supplied water masses	Irrigated areas	Supplied water masses	Irrigated areas	Supplied water masses
	decares	thousand m3	decares	thousand m3	decares	thousand m3	decares	thousand m3	decares	thousand m3	decares	thousand m3	decares	thousand m3
Sofia	6,592	994	50	4	0	0	6,457	966	0	0	0		85	24
Middle Danube	26,601	3,533	13,633	1,207	333	87	6,499	1,563	920	22	0		5,216	654
Middle Tundzha	56,945	8,300	41,501	6,857	238	71	1,762	217	4,843	531	0		8,601	624
Struma-Mesta	12,343	2,562	5,154	1,054	178	22	3,895	873	1,382	129	0		1,734	484
Topolnitsa	71,689	108,725	18,918	4,556	1,022	237	3,889	525	3,693	365	42,801	102,723	1,366	319
Haskovo	5,330	1,114	2,368	357	283	35	1,725	618	574	53	0		380	51
Black Sea	2,332	383	166	34	0	0	1,540	289	458	59	0		168	1
Shumen	17,003	3,434	13,982	2,686	0	0	890	221	119	12	0		2,012	515
TOTAL	**342,614**	**311,613**	**141,670**	**24,580**	**4,161**	**853**	**29,701**	**5,915**	**18,079**	**1,597**	**115,219**	**273,817**	**33,784**	**4,850**

Source: Irrigation Systems EAD

In 2024 of the previous year prices at which Irrigation Systems EAD performs the service "supply of water for irrigation" keep the levels of the previous year and are differentiated by regions and depending on the method of supply.

Table V.4. Summary for Irrigation by Irrigation Systems EAD for the 2022 - 2024 period

	2022			2023			2024		
	I st watering	Irrigated decares	Water masses	I st watering	Irrigated decares	Water masses	I st watering	Irrigated decares	Water masses
	decares	decares	thousand m3	decares	decares	thousand m3	decares	decares	thousand m3
Burgas	4,823	5,864	238	5,065	6,905	304	5818	7747	320
Vidin	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gorna Tundzha	19,280	32,481	31,144	21,775	39,328	33,569	27,227	47,721	40,449
Lower Danube	9,304	42,781	1,934	9,494	45,271	2,055	9,126	45,392	1,928
Maritsa	87,954	269,376	132,586	99,513	314,441	155,766	99,943	302,359	139,650
Mizia	2,010	5,475	121	1,473	3,863	157	1,665	3,914	221
Sofia	4,898	9,012	552	5,722	15,056	929	6,592	15,671	994
Middle Danube	15,366	62,326	1,948	16,386	73,943	2,252	26,601	116,830	3,533
Middle Tundzha	37,838	66,328	4,629	46,192	80,133	5,386	56,945	112,577	8,300
Struma-Mesta	9,024	22,157	1,469	9,661	22,509	1,543	12,343	36,777	2,562
Topolnitsa	62,958	88,363	88,283	67,269	95,684	88,672	71,689	101,007	108,725
Haskovo	4,303	15,602	995	3,784	14,160	929	5,330	16,692	1,114
Black Sea	4,527	10,279	420	6,679	14,865	595	2,332	5,879	383
Shumen	12,515	42,590	2,318	15,363	46,630	2,580	17,003	67,292	3434
TOTAL	**274,800**	**672,632**	**266,637**	**308,375**	**772,787**	**294,737**	**342,614**	**879,858**	**311,613**

Source: Irrigation Systems EAD

2.3. Support for investments in hydromelioration infrastructure

The implementation of the state policy aimed at the development and maintenance of sustainable, competitive agriculture is inextricably linked to the adequate management and use of the built hydromelioration infrastructure for the supply of water for irrigation, as well as ensuring efficient prevention through reconstruction/rehabilitation and modernization of the hydromelioration infrastructure used for agricultural purposes and adaptation of agriculture to the effects of climate change.

In order to permanently provide better quality service and reduce water losses, it is necessary to provide significantly more funds. In this regard Irrigation Systems EAD has applied under submeasure 4.3 "Support for investments in infrastructure related to the development, modernization or adaptation of agriculture and forestry" of measure 4 "Investments in tangible assets" from the Rural Development Program for the period 2014-2020.

According to the terms for application under submeasure 4.3 24 Project proposals from "Irrigation Systems" EAD for restoration of existing hydro-ameliorative irrigation facilities were approved. In 2023, contracts were signed for the implementation of all sites approved under the measure. Construction and installation activities on all 24 sites have been completed.

"Irrigation Systems" EAD will also have the opportunity to apply under intervention II.D.5 "Investments in irrigation infrastructure" of the Strategic Plan for the Development of Agriculture and Rural Areas of Bulgaria for the period 2023 - 2027. Support within the framework of the intervention will be directed to irrigation infrastructure, through which economic sustainability is achieved by increasing the ratio between the benefits for the agricultural sector, as well as environmental sustainability through the efficient use of water resources. Support will be directed to operators who manage hydromelioration infrastructure and provide the service "Delivery of water for irrigation" in accordance with the applicable national legislation. A financial resource in the amount of EUR 100 mln public funds is foreseen.

Irrigation Systems EAD has prepared a total of 41 investment proposals for support, which were selected to include sections of the most intensively used irrigation facilities with a primary need for rehabilitation, located throughout the country.

3. Plant protection and phytosanitary control

3.1. Monitoring the development of economically important pests and plant protection

Plant protection inspectors at the RFSD carry out systematic observations of agricultural crops for the emergence, development and spread of economically important diseases and pests that are directly dependent on agro-meteorological conditions during the growing season. It is the obligation of the farmers to inspect the fields for disease and pest infestation in a timely manner and to apply chemical control only when the thresholds of economic harmfulness of pests in different crops are reached.

3.2. Plant protection

- **Plant protection in cereals**

In 2024, the general phytosanitary condition of cereals was good.

Weed control

During 2024, herbicides were applied to a total of 1,329.950 thousand ha with autumn crops (compared to 1,328.580 thousand ha in the previous year), including 1,161.268 thousand ha with wheat and 168.682 thousand ha with barley. Treatment against broadleaf weeds was carried out on 566.996 thousand ha.

In soil herbicides were applied to 254.956 thousand ha on areas sown with corn, and total of 285.804 thousand ha were treated with vegetation herbicides against types of wheat and broadleaf weeds.

Pests and Diseases Control

Corn bug (Eurygaster integriceps Put.)

The total areas affected by the adult of the corn bug during the year are 184.242 thousand ha and treatment was carried out on 110.452 thousand ha.

Treatment against the larvae of the pest was carried out on 144.204 thousand ha, while 191.770 thousand ha were affected.

Cereal Leaf Beetle (Oulema melanopa (L.))

In 2024, 167.760 thousand ha were treated against the larvae of the cereal leaf beetle, while 191.090 thousand ha were affected.

Western corn rootworm

During 2024, pheromone and pherocone traps are provided to determine the flight and density of the pest. According to operational data from the Bulgarian Food Safety Agency, the total area attacked by it is 1,600

thousand ha with corn (compared to 3,490 thousand ha in 2023), and treatment was carried out on 0,900 thousand ha. A large number of plant protection products authorized for marketing and use are available for pest control.

Powdery mildew

The areas of wheat affected by powdery mildew are 447,029 thousand ha, treatment was carried out on 599,924 thousand ha. Multiple early chemical treatments were carried out, as in most of the treated areas the fungicides used were combined with the application of vegetation herbicides.

Septoria

Disease attack was reported on 239,290 thousand ha, and treatment was carried out on 339,620 thousand ha.

- **Plant protection in industrial crops**

Weed control

In 2024, soil herbicides were applied to 399,447 thousand ha of sunflower, and 467,924 thousand ha were vegetatively treated.

In the autumn, chemical weed control was carried out on rapeseed, mainly with soil herbicides, which were applied to 27,395 thousand hectares. Vegetation herbicides were applied to 43,457 thousand ha.

Soil herbicides were applied to 1,019 thousand ha of tobacco, and 0,100 thousand ha were treated with vegetation herbicides.

Chemical control of weeds in potatoes was carried out by applying soil and vegetation herbicides. Soil herbicides were applied to 4,073 thousand ha, and vegetation herbicides were applied to 1,833 thousand ha.

Control of diseases and pests

Black spots (Phoma) and Stem canker (Phomopsis) in sunflower

During the year, 45,215 thousand ha were treated against phoma. Treatment of 45,050 thousand ha against Phomopsis was carried out. The treatments were mainly preventive.

Mildew on Sunflower

During 2024, manifestations of systemic and local forms of late blight on sunflower were observed. The total area affected by the disease during the year is 3,247 thousand ha, compared to 5,626 thousand ha in 2023.

The cause for the mildew is Plazmopara helianti (halstedii). The control measures for the pathogen are: high level of agrotechnics - mandatory decontamination of seeds before sowing, deep plowing after harvesting, sowing of resistant varieties and hybrids, mandatory destruction of self-sowing plants and, in case of an established infection, observance of 7- 8 annual crop rotation with cereal crops. There are plant protection products authorized for placing on the market and for use to decontaminate the seeds.

Rape beetle (Meligethes aeneus)

In the months of April and May of 2024, treatments against the Rape beetle were carried out on 53.441 thousand ha Rapeseed.

Rape stem weevil (Ceutorhynchus napi)

In 2024, 19,760 thousand hectares of rapeseed were treated against the enemy.

- **Plant protection in vegetable crops**

Pest Control

Tomato pinworm (Tuta Absoluta)

In most greenhouses in the country, the vermin was not allowed to multiply in 2024. From 1 to 10 insecticide treatments were carried out per 0.126 ha.

Under field conditions, 1 to 6 treatments against the tomato leafminer were carried out on an area of 1,324 thousand ha.

During the year, the implementation of state aid under the "National Program of Measures for Control of Tomato Leafminer" continues. Beneficiaries of the aid are farmers growing tomatoes, peppers, eggplants and potatoes in greenhouses, on areas of over 1 decare. 204 farmers applied under the program in 2024.

- **Plant protection in orchard crops**

Pests and Diseases Control

Leaf-eating caterpillars

Predominant species in orchards are: Lymantria dispar L.; Euproctis chrisorrhoea L.; Geometridae; Hyphantria cunea Drury. In 2024, the pests were in low population density and degree of attack. The harmful activity and the spread of leaf-eating caterpillars were limited by treatments against other economically important pests on fruit crops. Treatment against the main leaf-eating species was carried out on 8,333 thousand ha of fruit plantations, including 0,787 thousand ha of pome and 7,546 thousand ha of stone fruit species, combined with the control of other pests.

Tortrix moths (Tortricidae) and Temetocera ocellana F. and Hedya nubiferana Haw

Pest control was carried out on 1,586 thousand ha of pome fruit species.

Aphididae

Aphid infestation has been found everywhere and in all fruit crops. 3,864 thousand ha of pome and 14,630 thousand ha of stone fruit species were treated, from 1 to 6 times.

Quadraspidiotus perniciosus

A total of 1,575 thousand hectares of fruit plantations were treated against California scale.

Parthenolecanium corni Bouche

Within 2024, 1,907 thousand ha of plums were treated out of a total of 10,069 thousand ha of plum plantations, mainly with combined treatments against plum fruitworm.

Cherry fruit fly (Rhagoletis cerasi L.)

The treated areas are 10,628 thousand hectares.

Black plum sawfly (Hoplocampa minuta Christ.)

5,885 thousand ha were treated against the enemy from 1 to 2 times.

Fruit worms

In 2024, 4,051 thousand ha of apple orchards were treated against apple fruit worm, 8,754 thousand ha of plum orchards against plum fruit worm, and 5,787 thousand ha against eastern fruit worm on peaches and apricots.

Peach-twig borer (Anarsia lineatella Zell.)

2,914 thousand ha were treated with peaches and apricots.

Roundworm moth (Leucotera (Cemiostoma) scitella Zell.) on apple trees

0.423 thousand hectares were treated against the roundworm moth.

Apple scab and pear scab

Within 2024, 3,934 thousand hectares were treated against apple and pear scab.

Powdery mildew on apple trees

During the year, 3,754 thousand hectares of apple and pear orchards were treated against powdery mildew.

Early brown rot

From 1 to 4 treatments against early brown rot were carried out on 20,769 thousand ha of managed stone fruit plantations (including plums, cherries, sour cherries, peaches, apricots).

Late brown rot

In 2024, 1 to 4 treatments against late brown rot were carried out on 2,204 thousand ha of managed stone fruit plantations (including plums, cherries, sour cherries, peaches, apricots).

Peach powdery mildew

During the vegetation, 1 to 6 sprays were carried out. 2,317 thousand hectares of peach plantations were treated.

Peach Leaf Curl

From 1 to 3 treatments were carried out on 3,946 thousand ha of peaches.

Cherry leaf spot (Blumeriella jaapii) on cherries and sour cherries

1 to 5 treatments were performed on an area of 6,609 thousand ha of cherries and sour cherries.

Black goldfish

In recent years, the trend in the development of the vermin black goldfish (Capnodis tenebrionis) has been a gradual expansion of its distribution area and an increase in the number of attacked and destroyed plants.

The enemy is spread both on the territory of Bulgaria and in other EU member states, such as Greece, Italy and Spain.

It mainly attacks stone and pome fruit species (apricot, plum, peach, cherry, sour cherry and gooseberry), but also causes damage to other species of the family. Rosaceae, including pear, quince, rosehip, hawthorn and a number of forest and ornamental species.

Global warming has a direct impact on the black goldfinch, leading to increased survival of overwintering larvae and adults, a shortened larval development period, earlier emergence of adults, increased dispersal ability of adults, higher fecundity, and larger population size.

Currently, the control of black goldfish is a challenge for farmers due to the lack of sustainable rootstocks, lack of effective monitoring tools, as well as problems in the applied agrotechnics (maintaining the soil surface permanently grassed and lack of gravity irrigation, presence of old diseased trees around the massifs with perennial crops, abandoned gardens, gardens where the level of agrotechnics is low or completely absent).

- **Plant protection in vineyards**

Weed control

Within 2024, soil herbicides were applied to 1,000 thousand ha and vegetation herbicides to 12,950 thousand ha of the managed areas occupied by vineyards.

- **Pests and Diseases Control**

European Grapevine Moth (Lobesia botrana Schiff.)

In 2024, out of a total of 54,414 thousand ha of vineyards, 15,871 thousand ha were treated, from 1 to 6 times.

Schizotetranychus viticola Reck.

During the year, treatment was carried out on 5,878 thousand ha vineyards, from 1 to 6 times.

Grapevine Downy Mildew (Plasmopara viticola)

From 1 to 18 treatments were carried out against powdery mildew on a total area of 36,552 thousand hectares.

Powdery mildew (Oidium)

From 1 to 18 treatments were carried out on 37,813 thousand hectares of vineyards.

Gray mould rot (botrytis)

The areas treated against gray rot are 23,742 thousand ha, from 1 to 9 treatments were carried out.

- **Plant Protection against Omnivorous Pests**

Common Vole (Microtus arvalis)

In the spring of 2024, the total area of autumn forests attacked by the common vole was 42,247 thousand hectares. Chemical control was carried out on 34,255 thousand hectares.

Crickets

In 2024, 2,502 thousand ha of sunflower and 0,100 thousand ha of corn were attacked by crickets. At present, there are no registered plant protection products for fighting the pest.

Wireworms

The areas attacked by wireworms in sunflower are 19,910 thousand ha, and in corn - 3,450 thousand ha.

In 2024, state aid was granted to compensate the costs of agricultural producers related to the implementation of measures under the „National Program of Measures for Control of Soil Pests on Potatoes from the Wireworm family. The aid consisted of compensation of the costs for purchase of plant protection products, for the control of soil pests on potatoes from the Wireworm family.

During the year, farmers submitted 270 declarations for 2,654 thousand hectares of potatoes attacked.

Maize Leaf Weevil (Tanymecus dilaticollis Gyll.)

The pest is spread throughout the country, but it is found in the highest density in the Danube Plain, Ludogorie and Dobrudza. It causes the most serious damage in corn and sunflower. The use of decontaminated seed has proven to be the most effective method of combating soil pests that cause damage in the early stages of crop development.

In 2024, chemical control against gray corn borer was carried out on 20,250 thousand ha of corn (which is 3.92% of the total sown area) and 20,900 thousand ha of sunflower (2.27% of the areas occupied by sunflower). Currently there are no suitable seed decontamination products authorized to deal with the pests.

Loxostege sticticalis

As a result of the mass multiplication of the meadow butterfly in 2022 and the declared calamity in 2023, the vermin remained under increased, systematic surveillance in 2024. The goal is to prevent mass multiplication and to implement control measures in a timely manner.

In 2024, a meadow moth attack on corn was reported on 0.200 thousand ha. There are no affected areas in sunflower.

Moroccan locust (Dociostaurus maroccanus)

Annually, the pest is more closely monitored and, if necessary, it is possible to declare a calamity and take action for its physical destruction and damage limitation.

In 2024, a Moroccan locust disaster was declared in the territory of Kardzhali and Blagoevgrad regions, as a result of a mass multiplication of the vermin established by plant protection inspectors. An organization was created in a short period of time and immediate actions were taken to urgently implement plant protection measures in the areas affected by the enemy. The total cultivated areas amount to 32,331 decares, respectively 19,851 decares for Kardzhali district (the municipalities of Chernoochene, Kardzhali, Djebel, Kirkovo and Momchilgrad) and 12,480 decares for Blagoevgrad district (the municipalities of Sandanski and Petrich).

The treatment of the areas affected by the enemy was carried out with aviation equipment, in compliance with current legislation. Observations made after the treatments showed that the Moroccan locust responded to the applied active substance.

During surveys of areas heavily attacked in previous years, in the territory of Haskovo district (the municipalities of Madzharovo and Ivaylovgrad), no outbreaks of the enemy were found in meadows and pastures.

An attack of a mixed population of Moroccan and Italian locusts has been detected in a forest area of about 10 decares in the territory of Targovishte.

As a result of the rapid, timely and adequate actions taken by the plant protection inspectors, the locusts were prevented from migrating to areas occupied by agricultural crops.

Surveys conducted to establish the wintering stock indicate that in 2025 there is a possibility of mass multiplication of the enemy again in certain places and it remains under increased surveillance.

3.3. Phytosanitary Control

The objectives and priorities of phytosanitary control are:

- Protection of Bulgaria and the European Union from the penetration and spread of new plant pests;
- Protection of the plant resources of Bulgaria and the EU, through a preliminary study of new risks and ways of transmission, early detection upon importation or on the territory of the country and successful eradication of outbreaks of pests;
- Preservation of Bulgaria's biological diversity and environment.

Activities to achieve these goals are:

- Production control of plants and plant products on the territory of Bulgaria with a view to timely detection and prevention of the spread of quarantine pests on plants and plant products;
- Effective control on import of plants and plant products from third countries on the territory of the country and the EU, as an external border of the Union;
- Ensuring the export of plants and plant products according to the phytosanitary requirements of the importing country;
- Legislation harmonized with the EU plant health regime;
- Carrying out phytosanitary monitoring programs for quarantine pests, in accordance with EU legislation;
- Laboratory-diagnostic network.

3.3.1. Production control of the territory of Bulgaria and movement of plants, plant products and other objects within the EU

Phytosanitary control in the production and movement of plants, plant products and other sites and monitoring in the country for quarantine pests and regulated non-quarantine pests (RNQ) in 2024 was carried out in compliance with the requirements of the Plant Protection Act (PPA), in accordance with EU legislation in the field.

The persons under Art. 22, para. 1 of the Plant Protection Act - importers, producers, processors, warehouses, forwarding centers, markets and persons handling plants, plant products and other sites subject to phytosanitary control, are registered in the official register of the professional phytorsantitary control operators.

Registered professional operators in 2024 were 4,043. Of these, 178 were professional operators registered for thermal treatment of wood packaging material (WPM) and 694 - importers of plants, plant products and other objects.

In 2024, 4,866 inspections were carried out in the production of plants and plant products, compared to 5,669 in the previous year.

The main priority in this area is to ensure the production of healthy plants and plant products, their movement within the EU through the system of plant passports and trouble-free exports to third countries, complying with phytosanitary requirements for imports from the importing country.

The phytosanitary inspectors of the Bulgarian Food Safety Authority in 2024 carried out phytosanitary control under the following national monitoring programs:

- Monitoring for quarantine pests on potatoes;

- Monitoring for quarantine pests on fruit species, including strawberries and raspberries.
- Monitoring for fruit maggots.
- Monitoring for quarantine pests on vineyards;
- Monitoring for quarantine pests by vegetable species in greenhouses and open areas;
- Monitoring for quarantine pests in greenhouses, nurseries and garden centers for flowers and ornamental plants.
- Monitoring for Xylella fastidiosa;
- Monitoring for quarantine pests by forest species;
- Monitoring to establish the presence or absence of the pest Meloidogyne graminicola on the territory of Bulgaria;
- Calendar plan for monitoring plants and plant products for quarantine pests.

During the observations carried out under the monitoring programs on the territory of the country during the year, 5,657 inspections were documented (compared to 6,395 for 2023); 1,675 samples were analyzed in the regional diagnostic laboratories for plant health (RDLPH) (compared to 1,510 for 2023) and 3,355 samples in the Central Laboratory for Plant Quarantine (CLPQ) (compared to 3,291 for 2023). 3,072 plant passports (compared to 2,854 for 2023) were issued for locally produced goods for movement within the country and the EU, and 157 health certificates.

Phytosanitary control in the BFSA is related to the activities of the Central Plant Quarantine Laboratory (CPQL), which is accredited for methods of laboratory analysis, testing and diagnostics of pests and has been designated as the National Reference Laboratory for plant pests - insects and mites, nematodes, bacteria, fungi and oomycetes and for viruses, viroids and phytoplasmas.

In 2024, 4,701 samples were received in the Central Laboratory and 11,415 analyses of plants, plant materials and imported soils, incl. from EU traffic, from field control, from monitoring programs and from the private sector, were performed.

The timely detection of pests enables the phytosanitary inspectors to take timely and appropriate action to locate outbreaks and eradicate them where possible.

The specialized potato laboratory in Samokov, potato varieties are being tested for resistance to potato cyst nematodes.

3.3.2. Phytosanitary control at export

In 2024, 9,977 inspections were carried out (12,479 in 2023), on 30,906 shipments of plants and plant products intended for export, for compliance with the phytosanitary requirements of the importer country (30,592 in 2023).

In 2024, 15,646 phytosanitary certificates for export were issued, compared to 15,950 in 2023.

The main goods subject to phytosanitary control for export are: sunflower seeds (peeled, colored, black), wheat and corn, coriander seeds, seed material, planting material, timber, dried herbs and spices. Timber exports are mainly to Turkey, North Macedonia, Serbia, Albania and Israel. The most significant is the export of sunflower (white and black) to the United Kingdom, the United States, Turkey, North Macedonia, Serbia and Australia, and of wheat to Algeria, Turkey, Tunisia, the United States, Morocco and Thailand. Coriander exports are most significant for Indonesia, Malaysia, Israel, the United Kingdom, South Africa, Canada, and Pakistan. The largest exports are of seed material (wheat, corn, sunflower, tomato, pepper and cucumber seeds) to Turkey, North Macedonia, Serbia, Albania and the United Kingdom, and that of seedlings (lavender, rosehip, blueberries, strawberries, grapevine rootstocks and grapevine grafts) to Turkey, North Macedonia, Serbia, Georgia and the United Kingdom. The export of dried herbs is most sensitive to the USA, Serbia, South Korea, Israel and North Macedonia, and of spices - to the USA, Serbia, North Macedonia, Israel.

3.3.3. Phytosanitary control at import

Within 2024, 694 operators were registered in the official phytosanitary control register of importers of plants and plant products, 126 more than in the previous year. 9 plant passports were issued, compared to 18 in 2023.

3.4. Control of plant protection products and fertilizers

The main purpose of the control over the marketing of plant protection products (PPPs) and fertilizers is to ensure the marketing, storage, repackaging and production of permitted, usable, efficient, maximally safe for human and animal health, sparing environmental PPPs and fertilizers that meet the legal requirements for packaging and labeling. The scope of control covers companies for trade, repackaging and production of PPP and fertilizers, as well as unregulated trade sites and border crossings.

The control over the use of PPP and fertilizers is directed at ensuring the correct and sustainable use of plant protection products in compliance with the requirements of the Plant Protection Act to produce safe plant production. The scope of control involves farmers who apply plant protection products and fertilizers production of plant products intended for food, feed or other purposes outside the agri-food network.

In 2024, 67 plant protection products were authorized, the authorization of 1 product was renewed, 41 were suspended or revoked, 3 products were refused for parallel trade and the authorization of 2 products for limited and controlled use was refused, and the authorization of 96 products was amended.

3.4.1. Results of the control activity on the marketing of PPPs

There are 1,277 registered sites across the country related to the supply of plant protection products on the market, including 834 for trade in agricultural pharmacies, 429 trade warehouses, 12 repackaging sites and 2 companies for the production of PPPs.

In 2024, 1,834 inspections were carried out, 980 of which were in agricultural pharmacies, 667 in warehouses, 28 in repackaging sites, 28 in PPP production sites and 131 in unregulated sites (municipal markets, shops, etc.). Non-compliances were found in 280 inspections, during which 434 prescriptions were issued with a specified deadline for implementation. 47 citations for established administrative violations were drawn up.

Table V.5. Control over the PPP market in the 2022 - 2024 period

Activities	2022	2023	2024
Number of registered sites	1,321	1,298	1,277
Number of site inspections	1,582	1,606	1,834
Number of inspections with non-conformities	149	177	280
Number of prescriptions for identified non-conformities	173	256	434
Number of PPP samples taken for analysis	88	73	80
Number of acts for established administrative violations	25	19	47

Source: BFSA

During the year, a total of 244 certificates were issued, including 59 certificates for PPP trade in warehouses, 43 for trade in agricultural pharmacies, 1 for repackaging of PPP and 141 certificates for change of circumstances.

80 compliance control samples were taken in 2024. No discrepancies were found in the analyzed samples.

55 certificates for extension of the validity period of the PPP were prepared and issued under received applications.

A total of 525.533 kg and 5,481.798 liters of PPP were seized from the trading, production and repackaging sites and left for safekeeping.

3.4.2. Results of the control activity on the use of PPP

The total number of inspections of the use of PPP in 2024 was 5,950, including 3,768 documentary checks in RFSD, 2,045 documentary checks during on-site farm inspections, 23 during aerial spraying, 19 during fumigation, 52 during treatment of seeds for sowing and 43 during treatment with ground equipment.

During the year, 759 prescriptions and 67 acts for established administrative violations were drawn up.

100 inspections were carried out across the country based on signals or complaints regarding the use of PPPs and 16 acts were drawn up for established administrative violations.

Table V.6. Control over the use of PPPs in the 2022 - 2024 period

Activities	2022	2023	2024
Number of inspections of the use of PPPs carried out	5,624	5,966	5,950
Number of scheduled inspections with non-conformities	770	687	468
Number of prescriptions	1,299	1,102	759
Acts for established administrative violations	21	38	67
Number of inspections on signals or complaints regarding the use of PPPs	156	125	100
Citations for discovered administrative violations for signals and complaints	22	16	16
Plant samples taken for analysis:			
Pesticide residues	29	68	78
Leaf samples	13	52	46
Nitrate pollutants and heavy metals	24	36	33
On signals and complaints	27	14	28
Acts of established administrative violation in case of plant samples taken	16	19	14
Number of individuals providing plant protection services	65	56	54
Number of permits issued for aerial spraying	59	54	34

Source: BFSA

Issued permits for application of PPPs by aerial application

In 2024, the permits issued for the application of PPPs by aerial spraying, pursuant to Article 109 of the Plant Protection Act, were 34, with 8,141.6 ha of areas treated.

The individuals providing specialized plant protection services were 54, out of which 22 performed fumigation, 23 performed treatment of seeds and 9 provided consultancy service. 60 inspections of persons providing specialized plant protection services were carried out, in which 3 non-conformities were found.

Samples for pesticide residues under the National Program for Control of Pesticide Residues in and on Foods of Plant and Animal Origin and leaf samples for identification of PPP

Of the planned 80 samples for pesticide residues in 2024, 78 samples were taken. 4 discrepancies were found. 2 administrative violation acts have been drawn up for the use of unauthorized PPPs (for lettuce and cherries).

In 2024, out of the planned 85 plant samples (50 for identification of used PPPs and 35 in cases of reports related to protection of bees for poisoning, signals for unregulated use of PPPs), 46 samples were taken and analyzed. 2 plant samples of sunflower and lavender were also taken in response to reports related to the protection of bees from poisoning, which were not sent for laboratory analysis, as no pesticides were detected in the bee samples. 7 administrative violation acts were drawn up, of which 2 were for the use of unauthorized PPPs, and 1 each for the use of PPPs outside the scope of authorized use and for failure to comply with good plant protection practice, 2 for lack of disclosure in the Electronic Platform for Disclosure of Plant Protection Activities (EPDPPA) and 1 for lack of notification to the owners of bee colonies for treatment with PPPs.

Samples of plants and plant products under the National Program for Control of Contaminants in Food (nitrates and heavy metals - lead and cadmium and microbiological contaminants)

In 2024, out of the planned 34 samples, 33 were taken and analyzed (6 for nitrate content, 24 for heavy metals and 3 for microbiological contaminants) in the primary production of agricultural crops, with 1 non-compliance found for the presence of nitrates in spinach.

Samples taken from plants and plant products outside the National Plan for Control on the Use of PPPs for 2024

Based on signals, complaints and orders, laboratory analysis of 28 samples was carried out and 5 acts for established administrative violations were drawn up, of which 2 for the use of unauthorized PPPs, 1 for the use of PPPs outside the scope of authorized use or in a dose exceeding the maximum authorized dose per unit area and 2 for failure to notify the owners of bee colonies of the performance of PPP treatment.

Opinions issued to farmers that applied for support in 2024

During the year, 1,948 inspections of farmers were carried out, during which 1,253 opinions on support measures were issued.

Results of the control activity of farmers for the presence of microbiological pollutants

During the year, a total of 123 inspections of farmers were carried out for the presence of microbiological contaminants in the primary production of agricultural crops and 10 prescriptions were issued.

Inspections of agricultural holdings for compliance with the rules of Good Agricultural Practices were carried out

In 2024, 245 inspections were carried out and 5 prescriptions were made. The main shortcomings that farmers make in complying with the rules of good agricultural practice are the lack of built facilities for storing solid or liquid manure and insufficient capacity of the manure site.

A total of 13 inspections of agricultural holdings were carried out following reports and complaints about compliance with good agricultural practice, and 2 non-conformities were found.

3.4.3. Analysis of the results of the control of the market and use of PPPs in 2024

Progress has been made in meeting the objectives set out in the Annual National Plans for Market Control and the Control of the Use of Plant Protection Products and Fertilizers and the controls carried out have been effective.

The serious violations found in 2024 in the control activities over the supply of PPPs on the market are trade and storage of unauthorized and expired PPPs, sale of PPPs from the professional category of use to a person without a certificate and trade in PPPs in unregulated facilities without a trade certificate, and the most common discrepancies are incomplete data in the logbook for delivered and sold PPPs, PPPs not sorted according to their intended purpose, lack of a contract for the transfer of unfit PPPs and a separate place for storing those with an expired expiration date.

Within 2024, the most common discrepancies in the control activities on the use of PPPs by farmers are the lack of a contract with a company for the collection of empty packaging, lack of notification of plant protection measures carried out in EPDPPA, incomplete data in the Diary of plant protection measures carried out and fertilization or lack of such, as well as the lack of primary accounting documents and the farmer not having a certificate. Some more serious violations were also found, such as storage for the purpose of using unauthorized or unsuitable plant protection products and the use of plant protection products outside the scope of authorized use.

Depending on the severity of the established non-conformity, prescriptions are given with a deadline for their implementation or acts are drawn up to establish an administrative violation.

A large number of PPP traders and farmers comply with the prescriptions, cooperate with the competent authorities and keep the required documentation and records.

With the construction and use of EPDPPA, a significant reduction of signals related to the protection of bees from poisoning has been observed over the years.

The trend of reducing the areas treated by aerial spraying and issuing permits for aerial spraying continues.

In order to counteract the illegal import, trade and use of unauthorized and illegal PPPs, in 2024 the Bulgarian Food Safety Agency participated in the SILVER AXE VII international operation against the distribution of illegal pesticides.

A total of 1,617 targeted inspections for illegal plant protection products were carried out within the control activity, of which 696 on trading sites and 921 on farmer use of plant protection products, issuing 31 acts for established administrative violation. During the inspections, a total of 7,362.65 liters and 2,429.31 kg of unauthorized pesticides were found in the interior of the country.

Unregulated sites are risk sites where conditions are created for unregulated trade in PPPs, as well as trade and distribution of unauthorized or counterfeit PPPs, making it necessary to focus on this control in the coming years.

To counter illegal internet trade, in 2024, numerous inspections were carried out on online sites selling illegal PPPs or labeled in a language other than Bulgarian. In the case of violations found, the administrators of the sites were notified to remove the advertisements for unregulated trade in PPPs. For the violations identified, official letters have been sent to the competent authorities to take measures against the violators.

Since October 2024, joint inspections have been carried out with the Ministry of Interior authorities throughout the country against the illegal trade and distribution of illegal PPPs.

During the year, an audit was conducted by the European Commission of the Republic of Bulgaria to assess the authorization and control of the placing on the market and use of plant protection products.

4. Fertilizers

4.1. Registration of fertilizers

In 2024, a total of 106 fertilizers, soil improvers, biologically active substances and nutrient substrates were entered in the register under Art. 6, Para. 1, Item 14 of the Plant Protection Act, which are placed on the market without a CE marking.

4.2. Control of fertilizers upon their placing on the market

A total of 630 inspections were carried out on the territory of the country in 2024 in connection with the control of fertilizers carried out by the BFSA, with 565 inspections planned. 20 prescriptions were issued and a deadline for implementation was specified. No acts have been drawn up for an established administrative violation.

In pursuance of the National Plan for Control of Fertilizers, Soil Enhancers, Biologically Active Substances and Nutrient Substrates, 46 samples of fertilizers registered under the national legislation were taken and tested in 2024. 46 opinions have been prepared to establish compliance with the indicators declared by the manufacturer, in accordance with the Plant Protection Act.

Table V.7. Control over fertilizers in the period 2022 - 2024

Activities	2022	2023	2024
Number of registered fertilizers	110	111	106
Number of site inspections	876	799	630
Samples of fertilizers taken for analysis	73	37	46
Acts of violations	3	1	0

Source: BFSA

Use of sludge in agriculture

In 2024, 113 permits were issued for utilization of sewage sludge for use in agriculture, on fields with a total area of 13,614.896 decares in the lands.of the village of Kubratovo, district Benkovski, town Bankya, Klisura village, Malo Buchino village, Ivanyane village, Trebich village and Mramor village.

The total amount of utilized sludge, expressed as dry matter, is 32,853.62 tons (45% more compared to the previous year) for sunflower, corn and wheat crops. The producer of the sludge is "Sofiiska voda" AD, and the utilized sludge is from the drying fields of the Settlement wastewater treatment plants in the village of Kubratovo and district Benkovski.

The maximum amount of sludge meeting the requirements, according to Annex No. 2 of the Regulation on the procedure and manner for the utilization of sludge from wastewater treatment through their use in

agriculture, which can be used in the soil per unit area per year, so as not to exceed the maximum permissible concentration of heavy metals in the soil, according to Annex No. 1, based on the permits issued by the Bulgarian Food Safety Authority for 2024, is 0.76 tons/hectare, expressed as dry matter.

5. Variety testing, approbation, and seed control

The state policy in the field of variety testing, variety maintenance, production, trade, import and export of sowing and planting material is implemented through the Executive Agency for Variety Testing, Approbation and Seed Control at the MAF.

EAPVTASC controls the production, harvesting, distribution, trade and storage of sowing and planting material; its certification in compliance with the accepted methods, schemes and technological characteristics for quality; manages the procedure for testing, recognition and zoning of cultivated plant varieties; annually issues the Official Variety List of the Republic of Bulgaria for the varieties of field, vegetable, fruit crops and vines; enters the newly registered varieties in the European catalogs of the EU and is responsible for the full harmonization of the national legislation in the field of seeds and propagating material with that of the EU.

The Agency is the national body for implementation of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) seed schemes.

In 2024, by-laws on seeds and propagating material, transposing directives amending and supplementing basic EU directives, were updated. The existing regulations were amended and supplemented, specialized internal regulations, such as test methods for distinctness, homogeneity and stability (RCS) according to the technical protocols of the European Plant Variety Office (CPVO) and the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV), test methods for biological and economic qualities (BIA), were developed.

In order to meet the expectations of customers for provision of administrative services, in compliance with the highest professional standards, EAPVTASC is accredited and has effective quality systems according to ISO 9001:2015, as per the standard of the International Association of Seed Laboratories (ISTA). The Agency is authorized by the EU for the plant varieties (EAEC/CPVO) to make expert assessments on its behalf in terms of distinctness, uniformity and stability of new varieties, to provide legal protection in the EU.

Administration of state aid

Pursuant to a contract for granting of state aid to promote the production and use of quality seeds and propagating material, in 2024 EAPVTASC provided services to farmers related to:

- field inspection of seed crops and common nursery plantations; labelling;
- sampling of seed batches, intended for certification;
- laboratory analysis of seed samples by groups of crops;
- post-control of seed batches;
- qualification of certified and CAC fruit and certified and standard vine planting material.

The quality scheme introduces additional and some higher requirements to the production process and the final product and guarantees higher quality of the produced seeds and propagating material from the following groups of crops: cereals, feed, oilseeds, potatoes, tobacco, cotton, certified and CAC fruit seedlings, certified and standard vine seedlings and certified and standard vegetable seeds.

The total value of the services provided by EAPVTASC under this scheme in 2024 amounted to BGN 1,199,987.

State aid is a prerequisite for achieving significant added value in the use of certified seeds. The beneficiaries are 446, but the positive effect of producing more and better quality products per unit area and improving the agri-environment of agricultural production are beneficial for the whole society.

Publication of an official variety list of the Republic of Bulgaria

In 2024, EAPVTASC regularly exchanged information with the European Commission, Member States and other international institutions regarding the names, entries and de-registration of plant varieties in and from the official variety list, as well as the trade in seeds and propagating material.

The official variety list of the Republic of Bulgaria is part of the European catalogs of varieties of field and vegetable crops, which allows varieties of Bulgarian selection to be present on the EU free market. The official variety list is published on the Agency's website and it is updated promptly after the entry of new plant varieties. Under the Law on Protection of New Varieties of Plants and Breeds of Animals, the Agency carries out substantive examination of the distinctness, uniformity and stability of new plant varieties, on the basis of which the Patent Office issues a certificate of protection.

In 2024, 1,088 varieties (compared to 978 in 2023) of the following types of agricultural plants were entered into the official variety list: field species - 576, vegetable species - 375, orchard species - 4, vine - 92, tobacco - 16, medicinal and aromatic species - 12, and species outside the scope of Directives 2002/53/EC and 2002/55/EU - 13 species.

Of these, 260 species are protected in the country with a certificate of legal protection issued by the Patent Office, as follows: field species - 177, vegetable species - 47, orchard species - 1, vine - 19, tobacco - 7, medicinal and aromatic species - 3, and species outside the scope of Directives 2002/53/EC and 2002/55/EU - 6 species.

Carrying out variety testing for distinctness, uniformity and stability, soil control, biological and economic qualities and preliminary testing of new plant varieties

In 2024, a total of 1,129 species, hybrids and lines were planted and tested (733 for 2023), with 511 of them under signed contracts for species testing (409 for 2023) and 618 - similar species, and a comparative collection to prove the distinctiveness of the requested new species (324 for 2023). The comparative variety collection (seeds, material from vegetatively propagating plant species and official variety descriptions), maintained by EAPVTASC includes 7,650 varieties (compared to 9,988 in 2023) of 82 crop species. For the purposes of the comparative collection for DUS, seeds of 1,142 varieties from 16 species of crops were requested. Seeds of 306 varieties were obtained.

In order to obtain legal protection on the territory of the country, 7 papers were prepared and sent to the Patent Office (compared to 55 for 2023), final reports and official variety descriptions.

The European Plant Variety Office (EPVO) has applied for testing 39 varieties with the aim of obtaining legal protection on the territory of the EU - 37 sunflower varieties (with 15 varieties for 2023), 1 tobacco variety and 1 rice variety.

Of the total number of sown/planted varieties, 736 are field varieties, 319 vegetable varieties, 50 oilseed and fiber varieties, and 24 fruit and vine varieties. Compared to the previous year, an increase in the number of all types of crops was observed.

By types of agricultural crops, the variety test for DUS is distributed as follows:

- 14 types of field crops (compared to 18 in 2023);
- 19 vegetable crops (compared to 18 in 2023);
- 3 types of oil and fiber crops (3 for 2023);
- 4 fruit species and vine (up from 1 in 2023).

Out of the total number of sown/planted varieties, 626 are field, 202 vegetable, 5 essential oils and medicinal, 17 fruit and vine. Compared to the previous year, an increase in the number of field and fruit species and vines was observed, while a decrease was observed in vegetable species.

Final reports with official variety descriptions have been prepared, which have been presented and accepted by 3 expert committees. At the meetings of the expert committees for RHS, 168 varieties were discussed and recognized, with 132 varieties for 2023.

In 2024, 806 soil control samples (compared to 813 in 2023) from 26 types of agricultural crops are planned.

The total number of varieties tested for biological and economic qualities (BEQ) and preliminary testing, according to concluded contracts (excluding the participation of standard varieties in the trials) is 1,083, 18 less than in 2023.

Under contracts for variety testing for the Bulgarian Agricultural Association for the purpose of inclusion in list "A" of the Official Variety List of the country, 188 varieties have been tested, and 895 varieties have been tested for preliminary testing (in 2020 and 881 for 2023, respectively).

Of the 1,037 varieties tested for BEQ and preliminary testing, 95.8% are foreign selection (compared to 94.7% for 2023).

8 meetings were held to discuss the results of the BEQ for the purpose of entering plant varieties in List "A" of the Official Variety List. Reports have been prepared for the Bulgarian Agricultural Institute for 72 varieties of Bulgarian and foreign selection, 67 of which have been recognized.

93 permits were issued during the year, 21 of which were updated, according to art. 39a of the Law on Seed and Propagating Material and in compliance with Commission Decision 2004/842/EC, which supports the business in terms of production and trade in seeds in the agricultural sector.

Keeping a public national electronic register of the persons who trade in sowing and/or planting material, under art. 28, para. 4 of the LSS

To regulate the trade in seed and/or planting material, IASAS maintains a public national electronic register of persons who trade in seed and/or planting material.

In 2024, a total of 316 trade certificates were issued (212 less than in 2023), with 250 for initial registration, 66 reissued and 13 deleted from the register.

Certification of sowing and propagating material

The certification of seed and propagating material was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the procedures of the quality management system and the "Quality scheme for production of quality seeds and propagating material".

In 2024, applications for certification were received for 35,056 ha of seed crops from various crop groups (compared to 32,826 ha for 2023).

The total area of inspected field and vegetable crops by IACS inspectors amounts to 34,504 ha (1,762.1 ha less than in 2023). Of the inspected agricultural plant species, the largest share is occupied by the group of cereal species - 32,582 ha (94.4%), followed by fodder - 956 ha (2.7%), potatoes - 693 ha (2%), oil and fiber crops - 229 ha (0.6%), vegetable species - 35.6 ha (0.1%), tobacco - 2.3 ha and beet - 0.9 ha.

After conducting field inspections, 34,337 ha of seed production crops were approved (compared to 32,527 ha for 2023), 70.1 ha were downgraded to a lower category than the one applied for certification, and 97.1 ha were rejected due to lower indicators than those required under the regulations under Art. 29, para. 6 of the LPPM.

For the purposes of certification, 6,252 samples were taken from homogeneously prepared seed batches. 437 samples were taken from individuals (samplers) who received permission under the terms and conditions of Regulation No. 8 of October 31, 2016.

In 2024, a total of 134 ha were inspected, of which: 71.8 ha of grapevine nurseries, 36.3 ha of mother vines and 17.6 ha of vine rootstocks.

A total of 4,065,000 pieces of grapevine planting material have been certified, of which 397,000 improved vines, 3,254,000 cuttings for rootstocks and 414,000 cuttings for grafts.

A field inspection was carried out on 0.5 ha of a mother plantation for the production of grafts, 1.06 ha of a mother plantation for the production of rootstocks, 0.27 ha of vegetative mother plantation from fruit rootstocks, category "certified", and 1.8 ha of a nursery plantation, category "certified". 1.49 ha of plantations of improved fruit trees, category "certified", were also inspected.

3,900 kg of walnut seeds were graded. 2 documents have also been issued for seeds of fruit species to determine viability.

550 improved fruit trees, 371,910 rootstocks of fruit species and 237,594 fruit planting material imported from third countries were certified.

Field inspections were carried out on 8 ha of oil-bearing rose nurseries and 0.2 ha of rootstock, including 2.7 ha of the "pre-basic" category and 5.2 ha of the "certified" category. 71,220 pieces of oil rose propagating material have been certified.

Field inspections were also carried out on 0.2 ha of lavender mother plantations, category "pre-base" and rooting site - 0.02 decares. The qualified number of planting material from the "pre-basic" lavender category is 37,300.

Control activities under GMOA and LSS, including import of seeds and propagating material from and to third countries

In 2024, more than 714 document and on-the-spot checks were carried out. The GMO inspections did not detect the presence of GMOs in conventional seed batches.

Effective control was exercised during harvesting and marketing of seeds and propagating material. The results of the analyses of 28 samples taken show that the seeds meet the minimum germination requirements. No GMOs were detected in the 10 samples of hybrid corn seed batches analyzed in an accredited GMO monitoring laboratory.

15 acts have been drawn up to establish administrative violations under the Law on Seed and Propagating Material. For the results from the inspections, inspection checklists and statements of findings with precepts were issued, in cases of established irregularities.

59 samples of hemp plants were taken to quantitatively determine the tetrahydrocannabinol content in hemp varieties upon requests from producers and during variety testing.

10 batches of raw hops were sampled and certified.

Expected data for 2025

In the first half of 2025, drafts were prepared to amend and supplement regulatory acts related to the production and trade of planting material; the marketing of seeds; the conditions and procedure for variety testing, recognition, registration and deregistration of plant varieties from the Official Variety List of the Republic of Bulgaria.

In 2025, EAPVTASC continued to provide services related to the application of state aid for participation of farmers in a quality scheme for production of seeds and propagating material. The planned maximum aid budget for the year is BGN 1.2 million.

In 2025, a total of 35,365 ha were requested for field inspection.

Of the declared seed crops, the largest share is occupied by the group of cereal species - 34,097 ha (96.4%), followed by fodder crops - 615 ha (1.7%), potatoes - 365 ha (1%) and oil and fiber crops - 180 ha (0.5%). Seed production crops of vegetable crops - 19.6 ha and tobacco - 0.8 ha have also been declared.

6 ha of vine plantations, 2.6 ha of fruit plantations and 7.2 ha of medicinal and aromatic plants have been applied for certification/approval.

The Agency continues to control the harvesting and marketing of seeds and propagating material. Seeds that do not meet the minimum germination requirements are suspended from marketing.

6. Food chain safety

EU food safety policy aims to ensure a high level of protection of human health and consumer interests in food, including traditional products, as well as the effective functioning of the internal market.

The Ministry of Agriculture manages, coordinates and controls the implementation of state policy in the field of food safety and animal health through its specialized administration.

The Agri-Food Chain Policies Directorate assists the Minister of Agriculture and Food in developing, coordinating and implementing state policy in the field of food and feed quality and safety, animal health, plant health and plant reproductive material.

The Bulgarian Food Safety Agency (BFSA) conducts official control of the entire food chain based on the farm-to-table approach, following the best European practices in the application of high standards in the

control of food safety and quality, food additives and beverages, veterinary activity, animal health and welfare, plant protection and fertilizers, phytosanitary control, feed control, border control, etc. A high level of consumer confidence in the quality and safety of food is ensured by uniform controls throughout the food chain.

6.1. Animal health and welfare.

Animal health

The priority tasks of the BFSA in this area are:

- protection of animal health in the country;
- protection of the health of farm animals against dangerous viral infections associated with major economic losses;
- ensuring the production of raw cow milk compliant with the requirements in accordance with European legislation;
- free movement of animals, products and raw materials obtained from them between Member States and exports to third countries;
- protection of the population from the occurrence of zoonoses (diseases transmitted from animals to humans).

To achieve these priorities in 2024, a scheme to support farmers in implementing the measures specified in the National Program for Prevention, Surveillance, Control and Eradication of Animal Diseases and Zoonoses in the Republic of Bulgaria for the period 2022 - 2024 continues to be implemented. In 2024, the mandatory measures set for the implementation of the Program were implemented.

The activities of the BFSA are aimed at reducing the risk of the occurrence and spread of acute and exotic infectious animal diseases, given the geographical location of our country. To this end, the following national disease surveillance programs, cofinanced by the EU, are being implemented, namely:

- Program for surveillance of avian influenza in poultry and wild birds;
- Program for control and eradication of rabies;
- Program for supervision of bluetongue in ruminants;
- Program for supervision and eradication of classical swine fever;
- Program for control of salmonellosis in laying hens, broilers, breeding flocks and turkeys;
- Program for supervision of Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (TSE);
- Program for precautionary measures against some cross-border animal diseases, which includes contagious nodular dermatitis in large ruminants, foot-and-mouth disease in large ruminants, small ruminant plague and smallpox in sheep and goats.

The following major diseases were detected in the country in 2024, included in the list of priority diseases described in Regulation 2016/429 on animal health of the European Commission: highly pathogenic avian influenza (14 outbreaks, including: 7 in Plovdiv district, 1 in Pazardzhik district, 1 in Veliko Tarnovo district, 4 in Haskovo district and 1 in Dobrich district). In accordance with the requirements of Directive 2020/687 and 2016/429 of the EU and the Plan of Emergency Measures for Control of Avian Influenza, the BFSA took immediate measures to eradicate all infected and contact poultry in the outbreaks.

In 2024, two outbreaks of equine infectious anemia were registered in the districts of Vidin and Blagoevgrad.

3 samples were found to have a positive result for the presence of an immune response against West Nile fever (2 samples in Burgas district and 1 - in Sofia city district).

One case of Usutu disease has been identified in a sea plover in the Burgas region.

During the year, 12 outbreaks of small ruminant pox were detected in the districts of Yambol, Stara Zagora, Haskovo, Sliven and Kardzhali.

In November 2024, an outbreak of plague in small ruminants was detected in the town of Velingrad, Pazardzhik district.

52 outbreaks of brucellosis in large ruminants have been declared in the districts of Blagoevgrad, Yambol, Smolyan, Kardzhali and one outbreak of brucellosis in small ruminants in the district of Blagoevgrad.

15 outbreaks of Q fever have been declared in the districts of Haskovo, Gabrovo, Kyustendil, Stara Zagora and Smolyan.

In 2024, there were two tuberculosis outbreaks - in the town of Topolovgrad, Haskovo district and in the village of Zlatovrah, Plovdiv district.

One case of anthrax has been confirmed in two sheep in Razgrad district.

No positive cases of scrapie and spongiform encephalopathy in ruminants were detected during the year.

Regarding African swine fever, 1 outbreak was found in domestic pigs with 11 animals affected and in wild pigs - 1,311 positive animals found. During the year, 12,639 negative samples were taken from wild boars.

In connection with the complicated epizootic situation with regard to African swine fever in Europe and the outbreaks identified in 2024 in Bulgaria, the following measures were taken in accordance with EU Regulation 2016/429 and the EU Strategy for ASF Control - SANTE/7113/2015 - Rev. 10:

- Supervision program;
- Control of the movement of people, animals, products, including personal luggage from countries where there is ASF;
- Confiscation of meat products, testing and disposal;
- Disinfection of vehicles coming from ASF countries;
- Disposal of waste from vehicles from countries with ASF;
- Biosecurity inspections in pig farms;
- Development of individual contingency plans for pig farms;
- Regular meetings with the sector, EFA, hunting organizations;
- Biosecurity training for the sector and for hunters;
- Reduction of backyard farms around industrial farms;
- Prohibition of fresh grass feeding and special measures with regard to feed;
- Development of a mobile application for trichinella and ASF samples;
- Prohibition on the movement of wild boar from other EU Member States and for imports from third countries;
- Training of hunters on ASF issues, sampling, biosecurity, including material development;
- Construction of special pits for carcasses and animal by-products for each hunting holding;
- Fence along the border with Romania;
- Obligation to report any wild boar found dead or showing atypical behavior to the RFSD;
- Special regime, restrictions on hunting in restricted areas;
- Information campaigns;
- Coordination between institutions in order to reduce the risks of spread in transport and tourism;

- Additional national requirements such as pre-movement notification and permission received from the receiving RDFS (valid for sites from both Part I and Part II of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/605); Biosecurity, contingency plans, incl. during transportation (valid for sites from both Part I and Part II); laboratory tests to identify the pathogen of ASF and when moving from sites of Part I to regions in southern Bulgaria (examination of the carcasses within 24 hours before the transport - by a registered veterinary doctor).

Given the identified outbreaks of bluetongue in 2014 and contagious nodular dermatitis in 2016, in order to protect animals susceptible to these diseases and to protect livestock in the country, vaccination against bluetongue, serotype 4 and against infectious nodular dermatitis continued in 2024.

After five consecutive years, the implementation of the coronavirus control program in mink was suspended in 2024.

In 2024, a double oral vaccination against rabies in foxes is carried out using oral baits.

Animal Welfare

Control over compliance with animal welfare requirements is carried out through official inspections by the regional food safety directorates (DFS) at all stages of animal husbandry, including during their transportation. The official control checks are: planned, periodic, on signal, investigative, follow-up and on the basis of risk analysis, which is based on the detected non-conformities in the rearing of the different types of animals, as well as during their transportation.

Animal welfare - livestock sites

All livestock sites registered under art. 137 of the Veterinary Activities Act (both industrial and private farms, vivariums, collection centers, control points, shelters, etc.) are covered by the inspections carried out by means of an on-site visit to the livestock site.

Table V.8. Percentage of compliance with animal welfare requirements per sectors in the period 2023-2024

Category	Laying hens		Pigs		Calves		Large ruminants		Sheep		Goats		Ducks	
	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024
Inspected production sites - number	231	293	333	335	339	457	2,311	1,807	1,629	1,316	322	250	172	152
Production sites without discrepancy - number	226	284	319	328	307	412	2,060	1,564	1,475	12 02	286	224	165	152
% of compliance	97,8%	96,9%	95,8%	97,9%	90,6%	90,2%	89,1%	86,6%	90,5%	91,3%	88,8%	89,6%	95,9%	100%

Source: BFSA

Based on the identified non-compliances for not following the requirements for humane treatment of animals kept in the production sites for 2024, it is established that the percentage of compliance in some sectors - pigs, sheep and goats - has increased significantly compared to 2023. No non-compliances related to humane treatment requirements were found in the production sites where ducks are kept, which is contributed to by the increased control by the RFSD. Corrective measures have been taken to eliminate discrepancies and improve the situation.

During the year, the trend of improvement in animal husbandry conditions continues in terms of providing food and water suitable for the species, freedom of movement, inspections, injuries, automatic and mechanical equipment and staff competence. The data show that the qualifications of the staff taking care of the animals are still not at an optimal level. In this regard, the BFSA has taken measures for additional training.

Animal welfare during transportation

In accordance with the requirements of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1/2005 of 22.12.2004 on the protection of animals during transport, the issuance of permits for the transport of live animals continues in 2024. During the year, 126 permits (licenses) were issued for short transportations and 65 for long transportations. Compared to 2023, there is a decrease in the number of permits issued for short trips and an increase in those for long trips (permits for the transport of large ruminants predominate).

The BFSA keeps an up-to-date register of permits issued for the transport of live animals in accordance with art. 166 of the VAA, and up-to-date information on approved vehicles is entered in the integrated information system VetIS.

In 2024, there were 16 notifications of infringement of the requirements of Regulation (EC) No 1/2005/EC, some of which were sent to the contact points of other Member States. The main types of detected violations are: exceeded travel time, lack of guarantees under Art. 21, 1 (e) of Regulation (EC) No. 1/2005/EC; scarce and/or insufficient bedding; unapproved object of final destination.

During the year, there was a decrease in the number of non-compliances found in implementing the requirements of the regulation for the transportation of farm animals. Based on the data obtained from the inspections carried out at the Kapitan Andreevo border checkpoint, there is an increase in the percentage of compliance with the requirements of Regulation (EC) № 1/2005 for the transport of live animals to Middle Eastern countries. On the other hand, violations found and notifications received in the transport of pets (dogs and cats) have increased significantly in recent years.

A total of 18,832 inspections were carried out in 2024. The percentage of detected discrepancies is 0.3%, an increase compared to previous years.

The total number of cases of non-compliance with animal welfare requirements during transport for 2024 is 50, and the sanctions imposed in this regard are 62.

In 2024, roadside inspections during transport, together with the bodies of the Ministry of Interior, will continue in order to fully strengthen controls and end the practice of transporting live animals in unlicensed vehicles. The discrepancies found with licensed transporters are becoming fewer and less significant.

There is a positive trend of improving the effectiveness of the control carried out, which is also contributed to by the training conducted by the Central Office of the Bulgarian Food Safety Agency and under the BTSF program for experts who approve means of transport.

Animal welfare for animals used in testing and stray animals

In 2024, the Bulgarian Food Safety Authority issued a total of 45 permits for the use of animals in experiments on the basis of Art. 155, para. 7 of the Animal Health Act, compared to 37 in the previous year. The increase in issued permits is due to the launch of projects by Universities and scientific institutions, which are the main applicants for the service. On the other hand, the Committee on Animal Ethics will continue to work towards reducing the number of laboratory animals used for student training, in accordance with European requirements for the protection and humane treatment of laboratory animals. In this regard, the recommendations to Universities for the filming of many of the exercises of students studying in medical specialties in accordance with the requirements of Directive 2010/63/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of September 22, 2010 regarding the protection of animals used are also increasing for scientific purposes and EC recommendations.

The BFSA has prepared an annual report for 2024 on the implementation of the municipal programs for control of stray dog population. A report was approved on the implementation of the National Program for Control of Stray Dog Population on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria for 2024.

In 2024, in accordance with the provisions of Regulation No. 4 of 1.02.2021, the Bulgarian Food and Drug Administration (BFSA) prepared a summary report on the census of stray dogs on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria for 2024.

During the year, participation was taken in the Sixth Regional Meeting of the Balkan Countries on Dog Population Management at WOAH - World Organization for Animal Health.

The BFSA's website keeps an up-to-date public register of shelters.

6.2. Animal identification and veterinary activities

The activities performed by the BFSA in this area are the following:

- Identification and registration of farm animals (large and small ruminants, pigs, equidae), bee colonies, pets;
- Registration of breeding sites in accordance with the current European and national legislation;
- Ensuring timely entry of correct data in the IIS registers of the BFSA Integrated Information System (VetIS) in connection with the implementation of the National Program for Prevention, Surveillance, Control and Eradication of Animal Diseases, including Zoonoses in Bulgaria;
- Timely entry of data into the Integrated Information System "Registers" of the Bulgarian Food Safety Authority;
- Introduction of a module through which farmers notify the registered veterinarian (RV) serving the animals at the facility of events with them - the "Notifications" module;
- Providing up-to-date information maintained in the IIS registers and entering the information in the additionally developed module to the Integrated Administration and Control System (IACS), maintained by the Agriculture State Fund;

In this regard, in 2024, the work on developing the existing and adding new functionalities in VetIS continued for the purposes of official control, as well as in connection with improving the user experience.

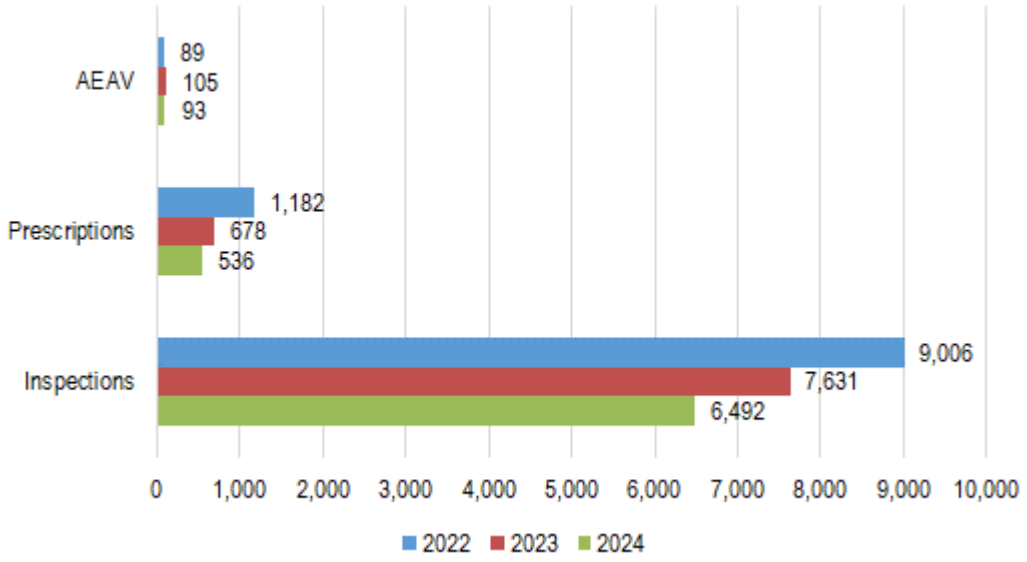
During the year, meetings were held in connection with amendments to the Veterinary Medical Activity Act, concerning electronic notification (by the owner to the Veterinary Medical Activity Office) of events involving animals. The requirements come into force from 01.07.2025.

In 2024, the RFSD carried out a total of 21,888 inspections regarding the registration of livestock facilities, animal identification, the activities of registered veterinarians (RV) in implementing the national preventive program and of veterinary medical institutions, including those based on complaints and reports submitted. During the control, a total of 1,647 prescriptions were issued and 1,697 AEAV were served. A total of 1,035 penal decrees were also issued, 987 of which entered into force.

Regarding the registration of livestock facilities, BFSA employees have carried out a total of 6,492 inspections, with the largest number on the territory of the Blagoevgrad RFSD - 748, and the smallest in the Vidin RFSD - 60. As a result of the inspections, 536 prescriptions were issued and 93 acts establishing an administrative violation were handed out. Subsequently, a total of 58 penal decrees were issued, of which 54 entered into force.

In 2024, the trend of a gradual decrease in inspections in this area continues, which is mainly explained by the fact that after 2020, the legislation was changed in order to significantly ease the registration of livestock farms of the "personal farms" type, registration in previous periods of livestock farms that did not have a valid certificate reflected in the VetIS system, as well as directing official control in the field of animal identification for 2024. There are also fewer prescriptions and AEAVs compared to the previous year.

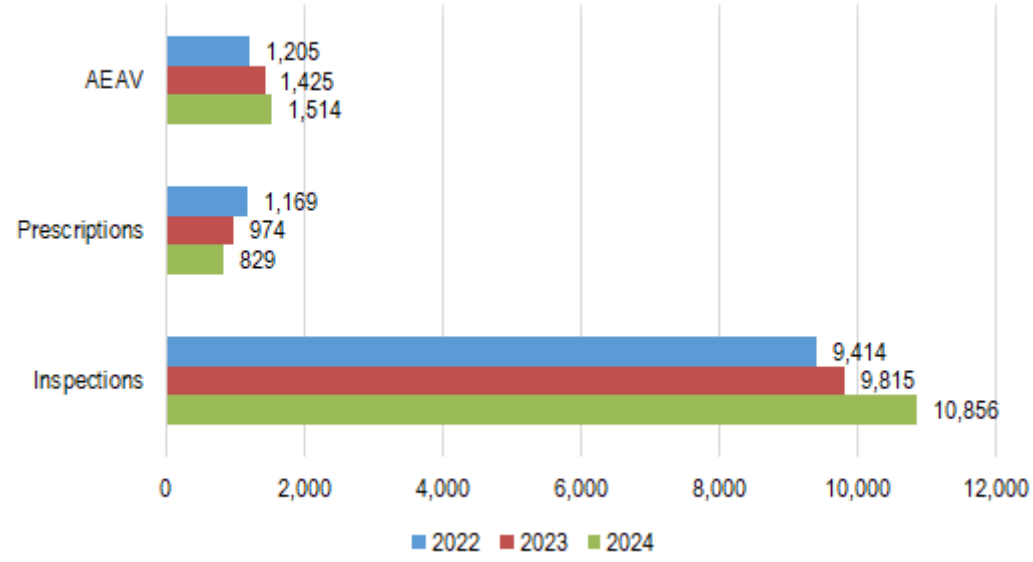
Figure V.1. Control on the registration of animal breeding sites in the 2022– 2024 period



Source: BFSA

When exercising control over the identification of animals in 2024, a total of 10,586 inspections were carried out, with the largest number on the territory of the Yambol RFSD - 1,625, and the smallest at the Kyustendil RFSD - 67. During the control by the RFSD in this area, a total of 829 prescriptions were issued during the year and 1,514 AEAVs were awarded. 917 penal decrees were issued, 879 of which entered into force. The number of inspections and issued AEAVs is increasing compared to the previous year, while the number of prescriptions is decreasing.

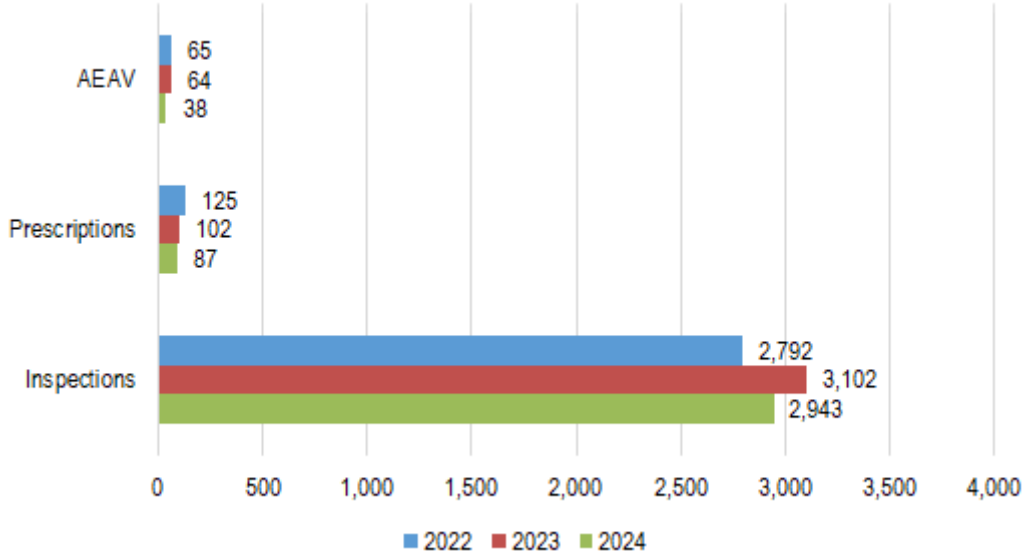
Figure V.2. Animal identification control in the 2022– 2024 period



Source: BFSA

During the control in the field of RV activities in 2024, 2,943 inspections were carried out, with the highest intensity at the Razgrad RFSD - 203. A total of 87 prescriptions were issued and 37 AEAV were served. In addition, 23 penal decrees have been issued, of which 22 have entered into force. Compared to the previous year, there has been a decrease in both the inspections carried out and the prescriptions and AUAN issued.

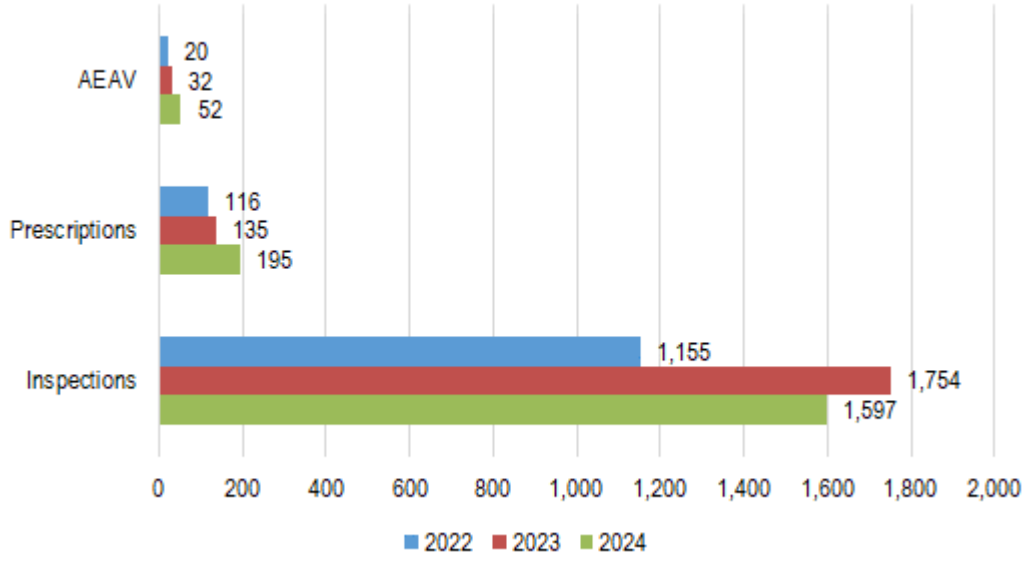
Figure V.3. Control on the activities of registered veterinarians, including the implementation of the National Prophylactic Program in the 2022 - 2024 period



Source: BFSA

In 2024, the RFSD staff carried out a total of 1,597 inspections of veterinary medical facilities. During their control, 195 precepts were issued and 52 AEAV were delivered. 37 penal decrees were issued, 32 of which entered into force. Although the number of inspections carried out is lower than in 2023, there is an increase in the number of prescriptions issued and the number of AEAVs given.

Figure V.4. Control of veterinary medical facilities in 2022 and 2024



Source: BFSA

In 2025, the control related to the identification and registration of animals and veterinary activities continued to pursue the main operational objectives set:

- Ensuring the timely identification and registration of animals, as well as registration of livestock farms in accordance with the VAA, which contribute greatly to ensuring the protection of human and animal health and protection against fraud;
- Ensuring timely entry of correct data into the Integrated Information System "Registers" of the Bulgarian Food Safety Authority;

- Ensuring timely entry of correct data in the IIS registers of the BFSA - VetIS on the identification and registration of animals, as well as data related to the implementation of the National Program for Prevention, Surveillance, Control and Eradication of Animal Diseases, including Zoonoses in Bulgaria;
- Reporting on the activities performed by the registered veterinarians under the National Program for Prevention, Surveillance, Control and Eradication of Animal Diseases and Zoonoses;
- Livestock service activities;
- Development of the Integrated Information System of BFSA - VetIS.

The fulfillment of these goals will be achieved by carrying out checks for compliance with the requirements of the legislation in the area; work and processing of documentation related to programs to support agricultural producers; inspections in connection with the preparation of reports of agricultural producers; preparation of projects for the amendment of normative acts and improvement of individual controls in the IIS of the BFSA - VetIS.

6.3. Food control

The BFSA methodically manages and coordinates the activities of the RFSD to control the safety and quality of raw materials, food, including those with protected geographical names, organic products, as well as materials and articles intended for contact with food, food additives, enzymes and flavorings; animal welfare during slaughter.

By maintaining a web-based system for national registers and lists of BFSA-controlled sites, the access of users, business operators and institutions to up-to-date information about the registered sites on the territory of the country is facilitated. The total number of registered sites and vehicles within the scope of RFSD control for 2024 is 217,904.

In 2024, the implementation of the Integrated Information System "REGISTERS" of the Bulgarian Food Safety Authority (IISR) began.**)**, serving the registration of food production, processing and/or distribution facilities. The official control of food in Bulgaria is carried out adequately, in full compliance with the requirements of the European and national legislation. Based on risk analysis, effective official control over food safety is carried out in food production, processing and distribution facilities. Additional thematic inspections (winter and summer tourist season, official and religious holidays, etc.) and inspections on signals are carried out.

Table V.9. Official control carried out on food safety in the 2022 -2024 period

	2022	2023	2024
1. In food production and wholesale establishments – planned inspections (number)	21,855	20,629	33,628
2. In Retail and catering establishments (number)	118,736	96,576	104,376
3. Unscheduled inspections (number)	8,165	23,872	25,884
4. Total number of inspections carried out	148,756	141,077	163,888
5. Measures taken by the official control			
5. 1. Issued AEAVs (number)	797	1,396	1,942
2. 2. Issued precepts (number)	5,610	6,888	8,112
2. 3. Prohibited and discarded food (kg)	654,000 kg of food	271,000 kg of food and 9,695,525 eggs in relation to the disease Avian Influenza	381,000 kg of food; 32,000 l drinks; 202,053 eggs. In connection with the disease Avian Influenza 105,000 kg of poultry meat and 2,421,283 pcs. eggs
2. 4. Closed sites/sites with temporarily suspended activity (number)	48	118	204

Source: BFSA

Note: The cited number of inspections does not include daily controls in slaughterhouses.

A total of 163,888 inspections were carried out during the official control of food safety in 2024. The established non-conformities can be grouped in the following most common directions:

- Structural non-conformities concerning the buildings and equipment at the sites;
- Operational non-conformities regarding the implementation of activities related to product safety;
- Non-conformities related to the self-control systems of business operators;
- Inconsistencies in labeling and presentation of consumer information;
- Gaps in food traceability;
- Foods that do not meet statutory safety requirements.

The analysis of the average values of effectiveness of the official control performed in 2024 shows that: On average, every 20th inspection ends with the issuance of a prescription (maintaining the level of the previous year); and on average, every 84th inspection ends with the drawing up of an act establishing an administrative violation (every 101st for 2023). There is an increase in the number of prescriptions issued and the number of AEAVs drawn up.

The results of official inspections show that a risk-based approach to planning and implementation of official inspections is appropriate and effective in detecting non-conformities and ensuring food safety. In general, the requirements of food legislation are complied with. For the identified non-conformities, business operators have taken adequate corrective measures in order to produce and trade safe food.

In 2024, the BFSA Head Office received 21 notifications of suspected food poisoning throughout the country. In the joint inspections and an epidemiological study with representatives of the Regional Health Inspectorates, food traceability and sampling for food and personnel analysis, it was proven in two of the cases that the source of the disease was the food consumed.

Despite the difficulties associated with increasing the commitment of inspectors, the main priority in conducting official food controls of the RFSD to achieve a high level of consumer health protection has been met.

Foods with protected designations of origin

With the entry in 2023 in the European Register of Protected Designations of Origin and Protected Geographical Indications of "Българско кисело мляко/Bulgarsko kiselo mlyako" (PDO) and "Българско бяло саламурено сирене/Bulgarsko byalo salamureno sirene" (PDO), the share of dairy companies willing to produce products with a protected designation has significantly increased. A large part of the dairy enterprises in the country have gone through a registration procedure for the PDO "Българско кисело мляко" and the PDO "Българско бяло саламурено сирене", which continues in 2025. This helps to increase the supply of dairy products on the market that use only Bulgarian raw materials.

Monitoring of dairy products offered on the market

In order to guarantee the right of consumers to receive complete and accurate information about the foods they purchase and consume, and in accordance with Regulation (EU) No. 1308/2013 establishing a common organization of the markets in agricultural products and the Regulation on specific requirements for dairy products, the Bulgarian Food Safety Authority (BFSA) carries out control of dairy products offered on the market for unregulated addition of non-dairy fats and for compliance with physicochemical indicators, according to the manufacturer's technological documentation. Monitoring is carried out by sampling dairy products from the retail network with the participation of the industry organizations of dairy processors, the association "For Affordable and Quality Food", the Consumer Protection Commission and Active Consumers. The samples are tested for compliance with physicochemical parameters and for the presence of non-dairy fats. The determination of the commercial site is carried out on a rotational basis by the participating organizations, with each member of the committee indicating two types of dairy products from different producers.

In case of established non-conformities, the RFSDs, on whose territory the enterprises that produced the dairy products with established non-conforming results in laboratory testing are located, are notified, to take measures within their competence.

The BFSA works with priority on reports and complaints submitted by citizens and business operators, on which checks are carried out, and responses are sent to the complainants with information about the official control carried out and the measures taken in each specific case.

Laboratory control

BFSA coordinates the development and implementation of the following official laboratory control programs:

- **National Program for Control of Quality Characteristics of Foods (NPCQCF), 2024;**

The program aims to conduct effective and systematic official control, with a view to monitoring the quality characteristics of food, for which there are requirements laid down in normative acts, standards and technological documentation (TD) and all required analyzes should be completed. Its implementation is important in order to protect the consumer from misleading or deceptive labeling information. It is planned that the part of the analyses for which the Bulgarian Food Safety Authority does not have its own accredited laboratories and research methods will be carried out in laboratories external to the Bulgarian Food Safety Authority.

In 2024, a total of 1,062 samples are planned under the program, compared to 1,151 in 2023. 1,072 samples were completed (101% implementation) and 122 non-conformities were identified.

Table V.10. Number of planned, executed and non-conforming samples during the implementation of NPCQCF 2024.

		Scheduled samples	Completed samples		Non-conforming samples	
		number	number	%	number	%
1	Foods produced according to national, established, and industry standards	278	278	101	50	18
2	Table salt	0	-	-	-	-
3	Bee honey	142	146	103	13	9
4	Foods for energy value	112	112	100	1	1
5	Foods with nutritional claims	56	57	102	3	5
6	Dairy products for non-dairy fats	128	136	106	1	1
	and physicochemical parameters according to TD*				18	13
7	Dairy products for PC indicators according to TD	226	226	100	32	14
8	Frozen poultry carcasses and poultry cuts for total water content	115	112	97	3	34
9	Olive oils	5	5	100	1	20
	Total	**1,062**	**1,072**	**101**	**122**	**11**

Source: BFSA *One sample has the presence of non-dairy fats, and 18 samples are non-compliant according to physicochemical indicators

For each non-conformity, information has been sent to take appropriate action. The failure to perform some of the planned tests is due to the temporary suspension of operations at some of the sites.

- **National Program for Control of Pesticide Residues in and on Food (NPCPR), 2024**

In implementation of the NPCPR, in 2024, the testing of a total of 425 food samples is planned, including 12 samples from organic production. Of these, 195 samples are in accordance with Regulation (EU) No. 2023/731, and the remaining 230 are in addition to the Regulation. A total of 362 samples were performed (333 of plant origin and 29 of animal origin). This represents 85% implementation of the program, compared to 66% in 2023.

Reasons for partial non-implementation of the plan - no available matrices were found in the commercial network, lack of sown areas with the relevant fruits and vegetables and lack of financial resources to send the

samples, for which the laboratories at the BFSA (CLCTC and CLVSEE) do not have the capacity, to external laboratories (55 samples). During the execution of the program, 19 non-conforming results were found. There is an increase in the number of identified non-conformities (5.2% of the total number of samples tested in 2024, compared to 3.9% in 2023).

- **National Program for control of food and food contact and additives, chemical and microbiological contaminants and control of food treated with ionizing radiation 2024;**

The Program introduces the requirements of a number of regulations specific to individual pollutants. For 2024 laboratory tests under the program are planned as follows: 704 samples for the content of chemical contaminants; 96 samples for the content of food additives; 24 samples of materials and objects intended for contact with food; 3 samples of food treated with ionizing radiation; 670 samples for the content of microbiological contaminants in food of plant origin; 56 samples for nitrites; 4,552 samples for microbiological contaminants in food of animal origin, ready-to-eat foods, ice from ice producers and water for drinking and domestic purposes.

The implementation of this program in 2024 was as follows:

- The following number of samples were tested for microbiological contaminants: from production enterprises - 19,831 samples; from the commercial network - 3,048 samples; from sites under Ordinance No. 26 of 2010 - 369 samples, unplanned samples - 451. The tests for microbiological contaminants yielded 488 inconsistent results (salmonella, Escherichia coli, listeria, enterobacteria). 56 samples were tested for histamine, with 1 discrepancy found. 1,727,154 samples from pigs and 146 samples from horses were tested for trichinella. Discrepancies found for trichinella mainly in feral pigs;
- A total of 287 samples were tested for chemical contaminants in foods of plant origin, of which 38 samples for nitrates with 1 non-compliance established, for mycotoxins - 118 samples with 4 non-compliances, heavy metals - 130 samples with 2 non-compliances established;
- A total of 155 samples were tested for chemical contaminants in foods of animal origin - for the content of halogenated persistent organic pollutants (polychlorinated biphenyls - PCBs, metals - (lead, cadmium, mercury), mycotoxins (aflatoxin M1) and radionuclides. 2 non-conformities were found (mercury in lamb liver, aflatoxin M1 in raw goat milk).

In 2024, the number of planned tests for chemical and microbiological contaminants was reduced compared to 2023. The percentage of implementation of the test plan for chemical contaminants reached 63%, compared to 56% in 2023. The number of tests for Trichinella performed is increasing. Compared to 2023, an increase in the share of identified non-conformities from the total number of samples taken was found (from 1.15% in 2023 to 2.06% in 2024).

The implementation of the Program during the year was hampered by delays in its approval and non-implementation of part of the samples, due to a lack of financial means to pay for external laboratories.

- **Program for monitoring and reporting of antimicrobial resistance of zoonotic and commensal bacteria in the Republic of Bulgaria (AMR) 2024**

Antimicrobial resistance monitoring is carried out by sampling different populations of animals raised for food production, as well as fresh meat obtained from them. In 2023, the Program plans to take samples of slaughtered birds from poultry meat production enterprises (456 samples) and samples of poultry meat originating in Bulgaria, other EU Member States and third countries from commercial establishments (150 samples of broiler meat and 150 samples of turkey meat). Sampling of cecal contents is random only from slaughtered local poultry, with planning proportional to the annual capacity of the respective slaughterhouse.

The implementation of the 2024 Program is at 98%. For the year, 456 samples of cecal contents of slaughtered poultry were planned and 442 were completed (14 samples were not completed due to lack of production). Regarding the samples of chilled poultry meat from the commercial network of broilers and turkeys, 150 samples of each of the respective bird species were planned and carried out.

- **National Program for Control of Genetically Modified Foods (NPCGMF), 2024**

In the control of genetically modified foods in 2024 89 samples are scheduled for laboratory testing of raw materials - soy, rapeseed and/or corn, which are used in food production; from ready-to-eat foods - meat products, soy foods, waffles, corn chips/snacks, popcorn, corn bread, chocolate and chocolate products; foods for infants and young children based on soy and/or corn, formula milk intended for infants and from rice and rice products. This includes 7 samples of organically produced foods.

A total of 85 samples were tested during the year. The analyses performed revealed the presence of GMOs above the permissible limit of 0.9% in the product - roasted soybeans. The competent authorities have taken the necessary actions. 4 samples from the planned plan were not completed due to the lack of the corresponding products on the market.

Regarding taking urgent measures in relation to unauthorized genetically modified rice in rice products originating in China and in accordance with the requirements of EU legislation, a total of 5 consignments of rice entered in 2024 are subject to 100% documentary control, identity verification and physical control with laboratory analysis included for the presence of an unauthorized GMO. During the laboratory testing of the samples, no inconsistencies were found.

- **National Monitoring Programme for the official control of the use of pharmacologically active substances authorised as veterinary medicinal products or as feed additives, and of prohibited or unauthorised pharmacologically active substances and their residues in live animals and products of animal origin (NMPRC) 2024.**

The NMPRC has been approved by the European Commission. According to the requirements of the legislation, three plans have been developed and are being implemented by the NMPRC:

- A risk-based national production control plan implemented to verify the compliance of food-producing animals and animal products with the requirements of the legislation - it is planned to take and examine 1,585 samples, of which 1 362 samples are completed;
- National plan for randomized monitoring of production, through the implementation of which, monitoring is provided for a wide range of pharmacologically active substances authorized as veterinary medicinal products or as feed additives, as well as prohibited or unauthorized pharmacologically active substances and their residues, based on random sampling - it is planned to take and examine 120 samples, of which 107 samples were completed;
- A risk-based national control plan for food-producing animals and products of animal origin entering the Union and intended to be placed on the Union market through their border control posts (BCPs). The control carried out within the framework of this plan is part of the official control of the BCPs - it is planned to take and examine 195 samples, of which 144 samples were completed.

In 2024, 85% implementation of the targets set for the three plans was observed. Compared to 2023, there is a decrease in both planned and taken samples. A slight decrease in the percentage of uncompleted analyses was reported to 15%, compared to 16% in 2023. 2 non-compliant results were identified, compared to one non-compliance in the previous year.

A total of 83 samples were determined for external laboratories for the three plans, of which 8 samples were completed. The performance constitutes 9.6% of the samples performed for external laboratories under the National Program for 2024. Two non-conformities were identified (chloramphenicol in pig blood serum and streptomycin in honey).

The failure to implement the 2024 plan is due to the lack of production of raw materials from the relevant animal species, due to the temporary suspension of production facilities, as well as a technical problem in the laboratory (CLVCEE).

- **National program for the prevention, supervision, control and eradication of animal diseases, including zoonoses in the Republic of Bulgaria 2024**

The main responsibility of the BFSA in relation to the program is to coordinate laboratory-diagnostic research, analysis and expertise related to animal health.

In implementation of the program, the following diagnostic tests were performed in 2024:

Table V.11. The diagnostic tests performed under the program in 2024

Disease	Number of laboratories	Number of tests
Brucellosis in large ruminants	9	197,127
Brucellosis in small ruminants	9	1 061 673
Brucellosis in pigs	9	9,558.
Brucellosis in rams	9	23,892
Leptospirosis - large ruminants and pigs	7	27,345
TSEs in large ruminants	3	25,627
Scrapie small ruminants	3	5,543
Colic fever	1	596 - dairy
Colic fever	1	173 - blood
Infectious rhinotracheitis	1	86
Mucosal disease-viral diarrhea	1	71
Tuberculosis	1	28.
Salmonella – primary infection	1	136
Brucellosis - NRL	1	69,476
Rabies	1	2,018
Anthrax	1	16
Diseases in bees	1	355
Fish/shellfish diseases	1	430
African swine fever	3	8,158
Classical swine fever	3	6,515
Plague in small ruminants	1	8,754
Foot and mouth disease in ruminants	1	4,731
Bluetongue	1	6,143
Infectious nodular dermatitis	1	5,834
Equine infectious anemia	1	885
Small ruminant measles	1	9,887
West Nile fever	1	1,243

Source: BFSA

Audit of official controls in 2024

In 2024, the following audits were carried out by the General Directorate "Health and Food Safety" of the EC (DG SANTE) and third countries in the field of official food control in Bulgaria:

- Mission to Bulgaria on the topic of bivalve molluscs under the implemented EU SPS agreement;
- Audit "Food of non-animal origin - Plant protection products - Authorization, sale and use", No. 2024-7973;
- Audit of the BFSA by the European Medicines Agency, on behalf of the European Commission, of activities related to the control of production, import and Good Manufacturing Practice in the production

of veterinary medicinal products and active substances;

- Audit "Food of animal origin - Slaughter of mammals and/or birds" No. 2024-8030;
- EUVET mission on avian influenza in Bulgaria;
- Audit "Plant Health Monitoring Programs" No. 2024-7964;
- Audit and fact-finding - avian influenza - ONE HEALTH;
- EUVET mission in relation to PPR.

In 2025, the following audits were carried out or are to be carried by the General Directorate "Health and Food Safety" of the EC (DG SANTE) and third countries in the field of official food control:

- Documentary control of histamine in fish products in all Member States - No. 2025-0229 - Questionnaire completed and sent electronically;
- Audit "Food of animal origin - Chemical safety - Residues" No. 2025-0041;
- Audit "Introduction of animals and goods into the EU - Official controls on imports" No. 2025-0062;
- Audit "One Health - AMR monitoring (zoonotic and commensal bacteria)" No. 2025-0049;
- Audit "One Health" - Antimicrobial Veterinary Medicinal Products" No. 2025-0052.

6.3.1. Alert and Cooperation Network (ACN) (ACN=RASFF+AAC+ FFN+PHN+AHW+PAN))

In view of the multiple challenges in the field of food and feed safety and the crucial role that vigilance and cooperation play in addressing them, in 2024 the scope of the Alert and Cooperation Network (ACN) was extended to cover animal risks and animal welfare. In line with the Commission's broader strategy to protect public health and improve food safety, a pilot project called TraceMap has also been presented, which aims to implement artificial intelligence embedded in the Information Management System for Official Controls.

The Alert and Cooperation Network is a tool for the exchange of information regarding identified hazards and non-compliances throughout the agri-food chain between EU Member States via an online platform - iRASFF, which covers:

Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF)

The Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) was established on the basis of the provisions of art. 50 of Regulation (EC) No. 178/2002 and covers any direct or indirect risk to human health arising from food, materials intended for contact with food and feed. At a later stage, with art. 29 of Regulation (EC) No 183/2005, the scope of the Network was extended and covers serious risks to animal health and the environment caused by feed.

The exchange of information between competent state control authorities on measures taken in response to serious risks occurring in food or feed; food fraud; materials and articles intended to come into contact with food, risks related to plant health, animal health and animal welfare. is carried out in a clear and structured manner using the web-based application iRASFF. This exchange of information enables rapid reactions, timely action and a coordinated approach by Member States to public health threats. Its effectiveness is ensured by a simplified structure consisting of identified contact points of the European Commission, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and the Member States, exchanging data in a clear and structured way.

A main focus in the upgrade of iRASFF in 2024 is the finalization of the expansion process, including the implementation of the animal health modules, as well as the implementation of new software to contribute to improving the functionality and efficiency of the IRIS platform - a corporate crisis management platform that will also encompass iRASFF. Another innovation is the increasingly active use of artificial intelligence to help analyze incoming information.

For the effective operation of the RASFF system in Bulgaria, good communication is maintained between the National Contact Point, located in the specialized administration of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, the contact point at the Ministry of Health and the contact point at the Bulgarian Food Safety Agency.

For 2024, the total number of incoming notifications in the iRASFF platform, distributed by the European Commission Contact Point to the Member States Contact Points, is 9,640, which is 713 units or 8.2% more compared to 2023.

The trend of increasing the number of notifications registered in the Alert and Cooperation Network in previous years continues in 2024, at the expense of a slight decrease in notifications registered in the Agri-Food Chain Fraud Network, due to the activity of the two new animal modules.

In 2024, the fruit and vegetable sector represented 16% of the total number of notifications (1,479) in the ACN, making them the most frequently reported category of all products. Most of the cases (about 66%) involve possible health risks, including hazards such as pesticide residues, mycotoxins, pathogenic microorganisms, metals, environmental pollutants, and other contaminants. Pesticide residues continue to be the most frequently reported problem, with oranges, vine leaves, mangoes and peppers consistently appearing in multiple notifications. Chlorpyrifos, acetamiprid, and dimethoate emerged as the most prevalent pesticide residues affecting various fresh produce. Cases of grapevine leaf contamination are frequently reported with more than 10 residues of different pesticides (32 notifications). Notifications of mycotoxins follow, with the most frequently reported being aflatoxins in figs and ochratoxin A in raisins.

By the indicator "notifying country", in 2024, Germany ranked first with the largest volume of notifications created, followed by the Netherlands and Italy. Bulgaria ranks ninth among the Member States with the highest volume of cases processed. In terms of the type of notifications, in 2024 the largest number were classified as "consignments rejected at border" (1,665), followed by information cases (1,288) and attention cases (1,279).

The overall statistics show 5,250 notifications within the RASFF Network, with 5% of cases covering irregularities in the feed sector and 3% being non-conformities identified in plastic kitchen utensils and containers.

Regarding notifications distributed to the Agri-Food Fraud Network (FFN), in 2024 there was a decrease of 1/3 in registered cases due to the implementation of two new animal modules. The total number of cases generated is 546, 27% less than the previous year. In addition, 1,335 notifications in the AAC and 1,959 notifications in the scope of RASFF were identified as possibly resulting from intentional behaviour. More than half of the cases are related to unregulated pet trade or the so-called "gray sector". These are followed by notifications of identified irregularities related to documentary inaccuracies, lack of or falsified/incomplete documentation, incorrect labelling, etc. The countries with the highest number of cases in which Member States were affected are Germany, the Netherlands, Romania and Slovakia. Bulgaria has 100% responded to and provided data on 115 requests received.

Depending on the classification, notifications are distributed as follows:

- "Notifications of shipments rejected at the border" - 1,665 pieces;
- "Warning notifications" - 1,288 pieces;
- "Notifications for attention" - 1,279 pieces;
- "Tracking notifications" - 1,077 pieces;
- "News notifications" - 11 issues.

The total number of notifications in the iRASFF system, for which Bulgaria has taken action as a notified and notifying state for 2024 is 467. The dissemination of notifications is as follows:

- Incoming:

- Food sector - 156 notifications (61 for non-compliance; 5 information for attention notifications ; 48 information for follow-up notification; 41 alert notifications; 1 border rejection notifications);
- Feed sector - 9 notifications;
- Animal Health sector - 57 notifications in PAN directed at Bulgaria, of which 32 for taking follow-up measures and 5 notifications received under AWN, of which 1 for follow-up control.

- Outgoing:

- Food sector - 11 notifications (7 for non-compliance; 4 for information to draw attention) and one inquiry);
- "Feeds" sector - 3 notifications;
- "Border Control" sector - 226 notifications (127 for shipments rejected at the border and 99 for non-compliance.

There has been a significant decline in the number of notifications in the Border Control sector, in contrast to the general upward trend in this category. There has been a slight increase in the number of cases where Bulgaria is the recipient or originator of notifications, which requires time and resources to take measures, conduct an investigation and report on the results by the Single Point of Contact and the contact points in the competent departments.

Administrative Assistance and Cooperation (AAC) System

The European Commission's Administrative Assistance and Cooperation System was established to ensure the verification of compliance with feed and food law and animal health and welfare rules.

The AAC system serves for exchange of information between the competent authorities of the member states and the Commission when performing official controls and/or taking effective follow-up actions, in accordance with Title IV of Regulation (EU) No. 2017/625. The administrative assistance can include the provision of information and documents, performing investigations and on site inspections, and it is an important tool for maximizing the efficiency of the available resources in Member States.

In 2024, the total number of notifications in the AAC system for the EU is 3,212, compared to 3,166 registered in 2023. The most commonly reported cases are related to suspicions of abuse, lack of mandatory documents, improper storage, environmental pollution, investigations to identify fraudulent practices, etc. As with ACN, the largest volume of cases affects the fruit and vegetable sector, followed by that of dietary foods and supplements, food of animal origin, etc.

According to the indicator"recorded delay in preparing a response" in the implementation of the RASFF procedures and mechanisms, Bulgaria does not feature on any reminder list of open conversations (red bell list).

Agri-Food Fraud Network (FFN)

The FFN provides Member States with the opportunity to exchange information and cooperate on a voluntary basis on issues related to infringements of European legislation in the field of the agri-food chain, in accordance with the rules laid down in Regulation (EU) No. 2017/625, in order to counteract food fraud.

The increase in food fraud at EU level requires adequate and timely measures to optimize the control system and strengthen its ability to assess at an early stage the potential vulnerability to fraud in different parts of the food supply chain and the ability of the national authorities to detect and prevent potential fraud.

Since 2024, a new terminology and categorization of suspected fraud in the food industry has been introduced at the EU level. They are based on the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) and the Codex Committee for Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS). Food fraud indicators are categorized into three main types: product manipulation, record manipulation, and other discrepancies, which are further described in subcategories.

The number of notifications related to suspected abuses of honey in ACN remains significant (52) in a sector that remains highly controlled (4,813 controls carried out in Member States in 2022 on 10,392 EU operators). The problem of honey manipulation by dilution with external sugars remains the main cause of fraud-related notifications, as shown in the EU coordinated actions carried out in 2021-2022. Excessive content of hydroxymethylfurfural (HMF), an indicator of honey quality (age, incorrect storage conditions or overheating), is also a serious problem. There have been few notifications of non-compliant labeling, particularly regarding the composition and health claims associated with manuka honey. Cases of natural toxins such as pyrrolizidine alkaloids and grayanotoxins, as well as the presence of medicinal substances (e.g. sildenafil and tadalafil) associated with potential health risks, have also been reported.

In 2024, a new coordinated plan for investigating abuses under the name GoldFish was launched. This control plan aims to monitor and assess irregularities in the trade in fish and fishery products in the Union and thereby minimise them. The Bulgarian competent authority has provided consent to participate in the coordinated actions on a solidarity basis, thereby joining other Member States in combating the unregulated offering, labeling and presentation of foods that do not comply with the requirements of Union legislation. The plan focuses on unprocessed, frozen, filleted and other types of labeled fish and fish products. The selection of fish species was carried out based on studies conducted by EUROSTAT, as well as on data collected from the IRASFF platform and is reduced to: Pangasius (Pangasisianodon hypophthalmus); Atlantic cod (Gadus morhua) and white tiger scarid (Litopenaeus vannamei).

It is also planned to carry out laboratory analyses on the following indicators: Incorrectly declared net weight of products; undeclared or incorrectly declared water content; undeclared or incorrectly declared use of additives. Actual work on the plan is expected to start in the fourth quarter of 2025.

Cases related to the illegal trade in dogs and cats have occupied a large part of the Network's activity over the last 3 years. Since 2024, they have already been registered in the specialized modules - the Pet Network and the Animal Welfare Network. In 2024, there was a slight decrease in the number of registered cases compared to the previous year, with 259 notifications created between October 2024 and April 2025. Among the ten most popular third countries of origin of animals, Serbia, Ukraine and Turkey are at the top, as notifying countries - those where the most abuses in the pet trade have been identified are Slovenia, Germany, the Netherlands, Italy and others. The registered irregularities are mostly related to documentary discrepancies, missing documents in TRACES, missing vaccinations, microchips, etc.

In 2024, a total of 115 notifications were sent to Bulgaria through the Anti-Food Fraud Network, of which 53 - for information and 62 - for response.

In the FFN there are no notifications on which Bulgaria has not taken action and has not provided an answer.

Plant Health Network/Module (PHN)

The PHN Network reports risks related to plant health and plant protection products falling within the scope of Regulation (EU) No 2016/2031 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 October 2016 on protective measures against pests of plants for cases identified within the Community territory /internal interceptions/. The total number of notifications registered in the PHN for 2024 is 397.

Pet Network (PAN)

In October 2024, the Commission launched the Pet Network (PAN), a dedicated administrative assistance and cooperation network aimed at tackling irregularities related to pets, including suspected fraud and illegal trade. The PAN improves cooperation, communication and coordination between EU Member State authorities, strengthening efforts to address these problems.

Animal Welfare Network (AWN)

The Animal Welfare Network (AWN) was established to improve cooperation and information sharing between Member States on animal welfare issues. The network focuses on ensuring humane treatment throughout the entire life cycle of animals, from breeding and transportation to slaughter. It was designed with productive animals in mind, which is why it was decided to store notifications about the welfare of cats and dogs in its own, specialized network. AWN allows Member States to request support and exchange knowledge on best practices, with the aim of harmonizing animal welfare standards across the EU. It operates under existing regulations covering the protection of animals during transport and slaughter, as well as directives setting minimum standards for farm animals.

6.3.2. Control of veterinary medicinal products, feed and animal by-products, border control

6.3.2.1. Control of veterinary medicinal products

The quality, efficacy and safety of VMPs are monitored through the reports on any adverse reactions to the usage of VMPs obtained through the system of pharmacovigilance and any deviations in the qualities of VMPs, as well as through continuous surveillance of the market. The received signals for adverse reactions that occurred on the territory of Bulgaria are published in the EU pharmacovigilance database - EudraVigilance. The

maintenance of a pharmacovigilance system by the holders of authorization for trading in VMPs is controlled via periodic inspections by the BFSA.

The register of VMPs authorized for use is updated periodically in order to support the control of the VMP market, as well as to provide veterinary professionals and external users with the information provided for in the law. The public registers of the issued permits for wholesale trade in VMPs, retail trade in VMPs, production of VMPs and licenses issued for activities with narcotic substances for veterinary purposes are updated periodically in order to provide the information previewed in the law for public use.

In connection with the surveillance of antimicrobial resistance, the BFSA annually collects and summarizes data from the holders of permits for the use of VMPs on the sold quantities of VMPs with antimicrobial activity. Information on the types and quantities of antimicrobial products used in certain animal species is obtained from registered veterinarians, based on the documentation kept in veterinary medical facilities and the prescriptions issued for such products.

In 2024, an electronic platform will operate at the BFSA, through which registered veterinarians and wholesalers with VMP can enter data on antimicrobial medicinal products used/prescribed and sold.

The summary data is provided to the European Medicines Agency. (EMA) for analysis and preparation of an annual report, in accordance with the requirements of Art. 57, para. 2 of Regulation (EU) 2019/6, as well as to the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH), in accordance with the approved formats.

In 2024, the BFSA participates in the implementation of the EU Program for sampling and testing of VMP samples under a centralized procedure and organizes the collection of a sample of immunological VMP and its sending her to the European Directorate for the Quality of Medicines (EDQM), France.

The official VMP control is carried out by BFSA employees at central and regional level.

The BFSA controls the use, production, trade, storage and advertising of VMPs. The control over the trade in VMPs, as well as the use of VMPs in livestock holdings and veterinary establishments, is carried out in accordance with the BFSA Inspection Program for State Control of Veterinary Medicinal Products, which determines the frequency and procedure for conducting inspections based on risk assessment. If necessary, RFSD inspectors also inspect beekeeping shops, feed trading sites and agricultural pharmacies, as risky commercial sites for unregulated trade/supply of VMP.

By order of the executive director of the BFSA February 2024, a Quality Control Program for the commercially available veterinary medicinal products was approved and implemented, and based on it, a plan was prepared and implemented for annual sampling and analysis of VMPs from the commercial network.

The program applies to VMPs authorized for marketing under the national procedure, the mutual recognition procedure, the decentralized procedure and the review procedure. The quality control of VMPs is carried out under a centralized procedure (sampling and laboratory analysis) under a program of the European Medicines Agency.

With regard to the control activity over the trade and use of VMPs in 2024, the following has been done: one permit for wholesale trade in VMP was issued; Amendments to permits for wholesale trade in VMP issued - 3; Terminated licenses/permits for wholesale trade in VMP - 9; Permits for retail trade in VMP issued - 8; Entry in the list of VMP retailers in Bulgaria who have been granted a permit for distance selling of VMP - 11; Amendments to permits for retail trade in VMP issued/officially issued licenses in permits for retail trade in VMP terminated - 14; VMP retail trade licenses/permits for retail trade in VMP terminated/revoked permits for retail trade in VMP - 12; Approved amendments/issued supplements/renewal of licenses for wholesale trade in narcotic substances for veterinary medical purposes - 3; Registered manufacturers, importers and distributors of active substances used as starting materials for veterinary medicinal products - 1 number.

In 2024, the inspections carried out by the RFSD in relation to the official control over the trade, storage and use of VMP totalled 3,259 (540 fewer than the previous year), of which: 120 of wholesale trade sites; 260 of retail outlets (pharmacies); 1,267 veterinary medical establishments; 1,474 livestock sites and 238 pet stores, beekeeping shops, etc. A total of 253 precepts were issued and 68 citations for establishing administrative violations were drawn up as a result.

In implementation of the approved Good Manufacturing Practice Inspection Plan for 2024, a total of 11 inspections were carried out. A remote assessment of the documentation and conditions for production, control and storage of VMP was carried out at one of the VMP production sites in a third country. For all GMP inspections carried out, standard protocols were prepared and, after a positive conclusion on the compliance of the manufacturing site with the GMP requirements, 11 GMP certificates were issued, which were promptly entered into the EU database EudraGMDP. Due to cessation of activity, one permit for the production of VMP has been terminated.

Non-compliances with GMP requirements found during inspections of manufacturers/importers of PPE are classified as "other" non-compliances (do not pose a direct risk to the quality of the manufactured PPE and would not lead to the production/import and placing on the market of PPE posing a risk to human and animal health). No "significant" and "critical" non-conformities were found. The manufacturers/importers of PPE have presented acceptable schedules for eliminating the non-conformities found during the inspections. Their implementation is verified during subsequent inspections at the sites for the production/import of VMP.

In connection with the implementation of the Quality Control Program for VMPs offered in the retail network for 2024, 16 samples have been planned and taken for testing quality indicators and the data on the packaging label and in the product leaflet.

Inspections at sites subject to RFSD control include, in addition to the minimum requirements set out in the BFSA Inspection Program for 2024, additional inspections carried out in connection with submitted signals and complaints, based on the risk assessment for each individual site and inspections carried out on orders of the Executive/Deputy Executive Director of the BFSA. Overall, in 2024, RFSDs exceeded the number of inspections planned for the year by type of facility, but some still fail to meet annual plans.

The inspections in which non-compliances were found and for which prescriptions were given are about 8% of the total number, which is 2% more compared to 2023. Acts establishing an administrative violation were drawn up in about 2% of the inspections (in 1.3% of the inspections in 2023).

6.3.2.2. Border control

Official control is carried out at border control points (BCPs) located on the territory of Bulgaria, which are approved in accordance with the requirements of Art. 59 of Regulation (EU) 2017/625, as well as Regulation (EU) 2019/1014, as follows: Kapitan Andreevo BCP; Varna Port BCP; Burgas Port BCP; Gyueshevo BCP; Zlatarevo BCP; Kalotina BCP; Sofia Airport BCP; Bregovo BCP.

The BFSA, via the BCP departments, carries out official control upon entry into EU territory of animals and goods falling within the scope of art. 47 (1) of Regulation (EU) 2017/625. This includes carrying out official controls upon the entry of consignments of animals and goods from third countries containing: live animals; animal products, germ products, animal by-products, hay and straw and foods containing both plant products and processed animal products; plants, plant products and other objects; food and feed of non-animal origin to which measures under enhanced official control of the BCPs are applied and those to which emergency measures are applied; materials and objects in contact with food.

In addition to the eight approved border inspection posts, BFSA carried out official control of the following points of entry into the EU: Malko Tarnovo, Lesovo, Logodazh, Strezimirovtsi, Varna Airport, Burgas Airport for: goods that are part of passengers' personal luggage and are intended for personal use or consumption in compliance with the requirements of Regulation (EU) 2019/2122; checks for compliance with veterinary and sanitary requirements regarding the non-commercial movement of pets under Regulation 2013/576.

The official control of the border control points at the introduction of consignments of animals and goods from third countries on EU territory is carried out by official veterinarians, official phytosanitary inspectors and other official inspectors and includes the performance of documentary, identification and physical inspections, including taking samples for laboratory analysis in compliance with the requirements of the directly applicable European law and national legislation.

In 2024, the BCPs, through the official inspectors of the BFSA, carried out official control of consignments of animals and goods falling within the scope of art. 47 (1) of Regulation (EU) 2017/625 as

follows: live animals - 743 shipments; products of animal origin - 12,299 shipments; food and feed of non-animal origin - 98,847 shipments; plants, plant products and others - 74,247 shipments.

During the year, a total of 226 notifications were created, of which 127 were for shipments rejected at the border and 96 notifications for non-conforming shipments (non-compliance), which were notified in the RASFF system.

6.3.2.3. Control of feed and animal by-products

Feed control

In 2024, the Multiannual National Control Plan of the Republic of Bulgaria for Food, Feed, Animal Health, Animal Welfare and Plant Protection (January 2024 - December 2026) (MANCP) was implemented to achieve the strategic goal "Effective functioning of the feed control system".

In order to achieve a high level of protection of human and animal health, environmental protection and protection of consumers from delusions, regular, risk-based control of each stage of production of forage, processing, storage, transportation, distribution, including feed feeding, was carried out during the year.

Feed control in 2024 follows the following priorities:

- Achieving a high level of protection of human health, animal health and the environment via effective controls at all stages of production, processing, storage, import, transport, distribution, including animal feeding, by implementing and enforcing European law and national feed legislation;
- Protecting consumers from fraud, deception and illegal feed practices;
- Performing a regular and risk-oriented control of processes at feed business operators - at each stage of feed production, processing, storage and distribution, including animal nutrition;
- Control of feed, regarding the content of unwanted and prohibited substances, as well as control of their compliance with the information provided to customers;
- Effective control of genetically modified feed, control of the placing on the market, tracing and labeling of feed containing or produced from GMOs. The purpose of these controls is to ensure informed consumer choice;
- Control of the production, marketing, transport and use of medicated feed in order to minimize the risk of placing on the market of raw materials and/or food of animal origin for human consumption, containing concentrations of pharmacologically active medicinal substances above the maximum admissible levels, set in the applicable legislation;
- Control of the compliance with the feed prohibition related to transmissible spongiform encephalopathies in order to avoid risks to human and animal health;
- Control of the intra-species feed ban in relation to the feeding of terrestrial animals of a species with processed animal protein derived from animals of the same species.

Registration and approval of facilities in the feed sector

In accordance with the requirements of the Feed Act and in conjunction with Regulation (EC) No. 183/2005 on feed hygiene, the activities performed in the Feed sector are carried out at sites and by operators approved or registered by the Bulgarian Food Safety Agency.

As of Tuesday, December 31, 2024, the total number of registered and approved sites/operators on the territory of the country is 20,771, which are distributed by activities as follows:

Table V.12. Number of registered and approved facilities/operators in the Feed Sector in accordance with the requirements of Art. 9 and Art. 10 of Regulation (EC) No. 183/2005 as of 31.12.2024

Declared activity	Number of sites
I. Registered sites under Art. 9 of Regulation (EC) No. 183/2005, exercising activities according to Art. 5 (2) of the Regulation	**12,268**
1. Manufacturers of supplements	5
2. Manufacturers of premixtures of supplements	2
3. Manufacturers of compound feed	289
4. Operators performing activities of cutting, packaging, repackaging and sale of compound feed and feeding materials	57
5. Packaging, labeling, storage and marketing of feeds	17
6. Grinding, packaging, labeling, storage and marketing of feeds	5
7. Manufacturers of feed materials	364
8. Feed traders	10,270*
9. Feed transport operators	1,135
10. Warehouse leasing operators	124
II. Registered operators at the level of primary production of agricultural crops intended for feed, exercising activities under Art. 5 (1) of Regulation (EC) No. 183/2005	**8,355**
1. Registered sites of farmers producing primary forages at the location of the property	6,315
2. Registered sites of farmers producing silage using silage additives, as feed is intended only for the needs of their own farm	370
3. Registered sites of farmers mixing feed exclusively for their own farm, without the use of additives and premixtures, using supplementary feed	1,567
4. Registered sites of farmers, mixing feed and producing silage, intended only for the needs of their own farm	103
III. Approved sites under Art. 10, exercising activities under Art. 5 (2) of Regulation (EC) No. 183/2005	**139****
1. Manufacturers of feed additives	7
2. Manufacturers of premixtures, based on feed additives	5
3. Manufacturers of compound feed	45
4. Traders in feed additives and premixes	76
5. Feed detoxication operators	1
8. Operators, engaged in the processing of raw vegetable oil, except for sites registered under the Food Act, and/or production of fatty acids through the processing of vegetable oils and animal fats, production of biodiesel and blending of fats and/or engaged in the blending of fats and/or the manufacturing of products, obtained in the production of biodiesel	5
IV. Approved sites under Art. 55 of the Feed Act	9
1. Manufacturers of medicated feed	9
Total registered and approved sites/operators in which activities under Art. 9 and Art. 10 of Regulation (EC) 183/2005 are performed	**20,771**

Source: BFSA and MAF;

* According to the Amendments to the Feed Act, published in the State Gazette, no. 21 of 12.03.2024, the scope of the Feed Act also includes pet food retailers

** Including 9 approved sites for production and/or trade with medicinal feed and/or intermediate products under Art. 55 / c (1) of the Feed Act were approved.

The BFSA maintains and updates 7 national registers of the registered and of the approved sites/operators in the feed sector for the activities specified in Art. 9 and Art. 10 of Regulation (EC) No. 183/2005. They are public and available to consumers on the BFSA website, as well as on the website of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety.

According to signed bilateral agreements between the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Republic of Bulgaria, in 2024 BFSA also maintains 6 lists of representatives or producers of certain feed products approved for export to the PRC (maize, alfalfa, plant-based compound feed, feed additives, sunflower meal and dry grain stillage with extracts).

The operators in the Feed sector are registered and/or approved for all sites under their control, for each activity performed by them. The registration and approval of sites in the Feed sector is a dynamic process.

Table V.13. Number of registered and approved sites in the Feed Sector in 2023 - 2024

Item No.	Type of operator	Number of sites as of 31.12.2023	Number of sites as of 31.12.2024	Change in %
1.	**Registered operators according to art. 15 (1) of the Feed Act**	**4,357**	**12,268**	**181,6%**
1.1.	Manufacturers of compound feed	276	289	4,7%
1.2.	Operators performing activities of cutting, packaging, repackaging, labeling and marketing of compound feed and feed materials	54	57	5,6%
1. 3.	Packaging, labeling, storage and marketing of feeds	17	17	0,0%
1. 4.	Grinding, packaging, labeling, storage and marketing of feeds	5	5	0,0%
1. 5.	Manufacturers of supplements	5	5	0,0%
1. 6.	Manufacturers of premixtures of supplements	2	2	0,0%
1. 7.	Manufacturers of feed materials	345	364	5,5%
1. 8.	Feed traders	2,530	10,270	305,9%
1. 9.	Feed transport operators	1,017	1,135	11,6%
1. 10.	Warehouse leasing operators	106	124	17,0%
2.	**Approved operators according to art. 15 (3) and (4) of the Feed Act**	**143***	**139**	**-2,8%**
2. 1.	Manufacturers of compound feed	46	45	-2,2%
2. 2.	Manufacturers of feed additives	7	7	0,0%
2. 3.	Manufacturers of premixtures of supplements	5	5	0,0%
2. 4.	Traders in feed additives and premixes	78	76	-2,6%
2. 5.	Operators performing: - processing of raw vegetable oil, except for sites registered under the Food Act, and/or - production of fatty acids through the processing of vegetable oils and animal fats, production of biodiesel and blending of fats and/or - engaged in the blending of fats and/or - producing biodiesel	6	5	-16,7%
2. 6.	Feed detoxication operators	1	1	0,0%
3.	**Approved producers of medicated feed according to art. 55C (1) of the Feed Act**	10	9	-10,0%
4.	**Registered farmers exercising activities under Art. 5 (1) of Regulation (EC) No. 183/2005**	6,979	8,355	19,7%
4. 1.	Registered farmers producing primary feed	5,049	6,315	25,1%
4. 2.	Registered farmers producing silage using silage additives, as feed is intended only for their own farm	341	370	8,5%
4. 3.	Registered farmers mixing feed exclusively for their own farm without the use of additives and premixtures, using complementary feed	1,429	1,567	9,7%
4. 4.	Registered farmers mixing feed and producing silage, intended only for the needs of their own farm	160	103	-35,6%
	Total	**11,489**	**20,771**	**80,8%**

Source: BFSA and MAF

As of December 31, 2024, 1,131 new sites were registered, operating in accordance with feed legislation. This represents an increase of 667 units or nearly two and a half times compared to a year earlier. The deleted registrations, at the request of the operator on the basis of Art. 16, para. 10, items 1 and 2 or Art. 17d, para. 2, items 1 and 2 of the Feed Act, are 391, with 146 more on an annual basis. The most common

reason for registration revokes on this basis is the temporary suspension of the operator's activity for a period longer than one year.

By the end of 2024, 2 new sites were approved, in which activities are carried out in accordance with the feed legislation, compared to 1 at the end of 2023. 4 site approvals were deleted, at the request of the operator pursuant to Art. 19, para. 18, item 1 of the Feed Act - the same as in the previous year.

As of December 31, 2024, the facilities carrying out the activity "production of medicated feed" falling within the scope of Article 10 of Regulation (EC) No. 183/2005 are 10 in total, 1 less than a year earlier.

Production of compound feed

In 2024, a total of 1,365,265,890 tons of compound feed were produced in the country - 2.1% more than the previous year. The quantity is distributed as follows: for the market - 975,374.045 tons (71.4% of total production) and for the needs of our own livestock farms - 389,891.845 tons (28.6%), at 72.6% and 27.4% respectively in 2023. The produced compound feed for the market was sold both on the territory of the European Union and through export to third countries.

Table V.14. Production of compound feed in 2024 by animal species, tons

Type of animals	For the market	For own farms	Total
Ruminants	118,794.909	71,848.904	190,643.813
Pigs	279,628.922	197,356.492	476,985.414
Poultry	503,640.435	117,125.599	620,766.034
Other animals	73,309.779	3,560.850	76,870.629
Total	975,374.045	389,891.845	1,365,265.890

Source: BFSA

Production of medicated feed

As in previous years, in 2024 the country produced medicated feed only for pigs. The produced quantity is 26,179.56 tons, 1,418.11 tons or 5.7% above the 2023 level. Of the total production of medicated feed during the year, 76.6% is for the needs of the own livestock farms, and 23.3% - for sale on the market (compared to 75.7% and 24.3% in 2023, respectively).

Table V.15. Production of medicated feed in 2024 by districts, tons

Province	For the market	For own farms	Total
Varna	8.00	7614.00	7,622.00
Veliko Tarnovo	-	1329.70	1,329.70
Razgrad	-	615.00	615.00
Ruse	384.00	8,112.86	8,496.86
Shumen	5,739.00	2,377.00	8,116.00
Yambol	-	-	-
Total	6,131.00	20,048.56	26,179.56

Source: BFSA

Official feed control

The feed control covers both sites in the feed sector and livestock sites, including establishments that produce feed or only feed animals that are kept for food production and their products are intended for human consumption.

In 2024, the feed control followed the defined main specific operational objectives, related to the strategic objectives set in the SMNCP of the Republic of Bulgaria for 2024 - 2026, namely: to ensure that the feed meets the safety requirements and the requirements of Regulation (EC) No. 767/2009 in regards to the information to be provided on the label or the document accompanying the batch, including the information to be provided when trading by means of distance communication.

In accordance with Art. 17 of Regulation (EC) No. 178/2002 and recital (6) of Regulation (EC) No. 183/2005, feed business operators are responsible for the safety of their feed, the protection of animal health and the prevention of risks. for the environment.

The official feed control is scheduled and ongoing. The scheduled control is based on country-wide risk assessment criteria. In 2024, a "Framework Plan for Feed Control for 2024" was implemented, covering three control systems: "Animal feed and nutrition", "Transmissible spongiform encephalopathies and animal by-products" and "Veterinary medicinal products and residues of veterinary medicinal products". The inspections carried out in 2024 and the samples taken from feed for analysis were evenly distributed over the period and cover all groups of operators. Ongoing controls include follow-up checks, checks in case of suspicions and investigations (alerts, complaints, RASFF/AAC system notifications, etc.), checks on applications for feed exports to third countries, TRACES NT checks and others.

Results of control activities under the Animal Feed and Nutrition Control System

The overall progress in achieving the strategic and specific objectives of the Animal Feed and Nutrition Control System in 2024 is assessed as positive. The number of inspections set out in the Framework Control Plan 2024 has been completed at 80.2%. The number of planned inspections carried out during the year was 3,122 (compared to 3,420 in 2023). The partial non-implementation of the Feed Control Framework Plan for 2024 is due to the deletion/temporary suspension of registration/approval of establishments/operators in the sector that were planned for control during the period, as well as the insufficient human resources in some RFSDs. According to the Amendments to the Feed Act, published in the State Gazette, no. 21 of 12.03.2024, the scope of the Feed Act also includes pet food retailers, which at the time of the entry into force of the law numbered 7,495 establishments.

In 2024, a total of 3,683 inspections and audits were carried out at all stages of feed production, processing, distribution and feeding. During the inspections, non-compliances with the requirements of the legislation applicable in the sector were found, in connection with which 665 prescriptions were issued with specific deadlines for their elimination - 348 or 34.4% less than the previous year.

No serious non-conformities were observed with regard to feed tested which would result in animal or public health hazards. The type of non-conformities found did not pose a potential risk to animals.

The most common reasons for the non-conformities are: the unawareness of the operators' liability accordance with Regulation (EC) No.178/2002; insufficient knowledge of the legislation requirements; insufficient financial resources on the part of feed business operators.

According to the type of the site where the non-conformities were found, the largest number of precepts were given during inspections in livestock farms - 301, which is 38.6% less than in 2023. The identified discrepancies were mainly related to compliance with the requirements for hygiene, self-control of operators and traceability of feed.

In 2024, during the inspections of the sites in the feed sector, samples were taken for analysis on indicators declared by the manufacturer for compliance, as well as for compliance with the permissible safety values defined in the legislation.

The total number of analyses of samples taken for official control in 2024 was 4,108 (including 254 analyses for moisture content), of which:

- 368 items for nutritional composition (no inconsistent results were obtained from the analyses performed, 2 inconsistent analyses were identified for 2023);
- 226 samples for feed additives, with a fixed maximum content, including permitted coccidiostats (non-compliances were found in 9 analyses, 3 less than in 2023);
- 1,180 samples for undesirable substances (for presence of heavy metals, mycotoxins, active residues of pesticide, dioxins, ambrosia(6 non-compliant results were obtained of the analyses, with 3 in 2023);

- 28 counts for prohibited use of medicinal substances as feed additives and for the inevitable transfer of coccidiostats into non-target feed (2 inconsistent results were obtained from the analyses performed, which is maintaining the level of the indicator for 2023);
- 139 items for microbiological contamination - presence of salmonella (no non-conformities were found in the analyzed samples, with 2 items in 2023);
- 18 samples of feed for the presence of GMOs, (presence of unauthorized genetically modified feed was not detected).

In 2024, a total of 1,902 analyses were performed for the following indicators during export/import/at the operator's request/unscheduled sampling of feed: nutritional composition, 6-phytase, heavy metals, pesticides, mycotoxins, dioxins, salmonella, GMOs, radioactivity (cesium 134 and cesium 137), cyanides, ethylene dibromide, phosphides, for which no non-compliances with the applicable requirements have been established.

The cases in which non-compliance of feed with the requirements of the applicable legislation was established during laboratory control in 2024 were 18, 3 fewer than the previous year.

Control of feed under the control system "Transmissible spongiform encephalopathies and animal by-products"

The observance by the operators from the feed sector of the feed prohibitions, defined in art. 7 and Annex IV to Regulation (EC) No. 999/2001 and in Art. 11 of Regulation (EC) 1069/2009, is controlled.

During the performed documentary and physical inspections in 2024, no infringement of the requirements of Art. 11 of Regulation (EC) No. 1069/2009 on the intra-species feed ban were found.

During 2 laboratory tests carried out during the year, non-compliances with the requirements of Article 7 and Annex IV of Regulation (EC) No. 999/2001 were identified, for which all necessary administrative penalty measures and actions were taken.

The number of feed samples taken in 2024 for the presence of ingredients of animal origin was 252, including 239 samples in implementation of the framework plan for feed control, 3 samples at the discretion of the inspector and 10 samples of feed intended for export.

Proteins of animal origin are at risk for contamination with microorganisms (*Salmonella spp.* and other bacteria from the *Enterobacteriaceae*), which is why feed samples are taken for the presence of microbiological contamination. In 2024, 153 feed samples were analyzed for presence of Salmonella spp., incl. 28 samples in implementation of the Feed Control Framework Plan under the TSE and by-products control system, 124 samples of feed intended for export and 1 samples taken at the discretion of the inspector.

In 2024, 154 samples of feed were analyzed for the presence of enterobacteria, including 27 samples in implementation of the Framework Plan for Feed Control under the TSE and SJP Control System, 125 samples of feed intended for export and 1 sample taken from a compound feed - a mixture of grains for poultry (does not contain SJP), in a study carried out in connection with the established content of *Enterobacteriaceae.* During the laboratory control carried out during the year, no positive results were found for the presence of salmonella and enterobacteria in feed containing animal proteins.

Feed control under the "Veterinary medicinal products and residues of veterinary medicinal products" control system

As of 31.12.2024, 9 sites for production with medicinal feed and/or intermediate products under Art. 55 c (1) of the Feed Act were approved.

In 2024, a total of 18 inspections of approved operators engaged in the production of medicated feed (6 less than in 2023), of which 10 scheduled inspections, 2 follow-up inspections and 3 investigative inspections, were carried out. During the inspections, 6 prescriptions were given to 4 operators, which represent 44.4% of the 9 inspected sites (with 5 prescriptions given to 3 operators in 2023).

Audits of Feed Business Operators

According to the requirements of Art. 6 and Art. 7 of Regulation (EC) No. 183/2005 and in connection with Art. 26 (2) of the Feed Act, feed business operators carrying out activities other than those at the primary feed production level are obliged to have developed and implemented procedures based on the principles of HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point).

In 2024, 213 audits of feed business operators and 14 follow-up audits to check the implementation of the audit recommendations were carried out (with 263 audits and 30 follow-ups in 2023).

It can be concluded that the operators have developed, introduced and implement the relevant procedures, thus fulfilling the requirements of Art. 6 and Art. 7 of Regulation (EC) No. 183/2005. For some operators, it was found that procedures based on HACCP principles were not relevant at the time of the audit. For all identified non-conformities, recommendations were given and the operators have taken corrective action. Their implementation has been inspected and they were closed.

In 2024, 24 acts of established administrative violation were drawn up - 6 fewer than in 2023. The most common violations by operators in the Feed sector are non-compliance with the norms of Art. 6, para. 1, Art. 7, para. 1, Art. 15, para. 1 and Art. 24 of the Feed Act. The analysis shows that the imposed penalties have an effect on the observance of the requirements of the feed legislation by the operators in the sector.

Control of animal by-products

The correct handling of animal by-products (ABP) and their derived products in accordance with the requirements of European and national legislation guarantees the protection of human and animal health and the protection of the environment. As a result of animal husbandry activities, animal by-products are released, which are subsequently sent for destruction or processed/reprocessed for the purpose of using them for food (forage production), as organic fertilizers for crop production or for technical purposes.

The BFSA methodically directs, coordinates and supervises the implementation by the regional food safety directorates (RFSD) of the control in the field of animal by-products.

In 2024, the strategic objectives set out in the Multi-Annual National Control Plan of the Republic of Bulgaria (2024 - 2026) (MANCP) were implemented. During the year, regular, risk-based control was carried out at each of the stages of production, processing, storage, transportation, use, marketing and distribution.

ABP and derivatives control in 2024 follows the following priorities:

- Achieving a high level of protection of human health, animal health and the environment via effective controls at all stages of production, processing, storage, import, transport, distribution, including animal feeding, by implementing and enforcing European law and national legislation regarding ABP and derivatives;
- Ensuring effective implementation of European and national legislation on the agri-food chain and in particular Regulation (EC) No. 2017/625 and applicable special legislation;
- Ensuring an effective system of official control and monitoring of the implementation of safety rules.

According to the requirements of the Law on Veterinary Medicine and in connection with Regulation (EC) No. 1069/2009 on animal by-products, activities with ABP and derived products are carried out by operators and in facilities and enterprises that are registered by the BFSA.

As of December 31, 2024, the total number of registered sites/operators on the territory of the country is 709 (26.6% more compared to 2023), which are distributed by activities as follows:

Table V.16. Number of active operators, sites and enterprises handling ABP and derived products as of 31.12.2024

Section	Active operators, sites and enterprises handling ABP and derived products	2023	2024	Change 2024/ 2023
I	Facilities or enterprises handling ABP for the purpose of intermediate activities after their collection and enterprises storing ABP	227	269	18,5%
II	Facilities or enterprises for the storage of derived products obtained from ABP	81	100	23,5%

Section	Active operators, sites and enterprises handling ABP and derived products	2023	2024	Change 2024/ 2023
III	Incinerators, co-incineration plants and combustion plants	23	29	26,1%
IV	Processing enterprises	13	16	23,1%
V	Oleo-chemical enterprises	3	4	33,3%
VI	Enterprises for conversion of ABP into biogas	22	21	-4,6%
VII	Enterprises for the conversion of ABP into compost	4	8	100,0%
VIII	Enterprises for the production of pet food	49	69	40,8%
IX	Facilities and enterprises handling ABP or derived products for purposes outside the food chain	61	83	36,1%
X	Registered operators of ABP and derivative products for specific purposes	14	28	100,0%
XI	Collection centers	0	0	-
XII	Enterprises and sites producing organic fertilizers or soil improvers	14	18	28,6%
XIII	Other registered operators	49	64	30,6%
	Total:	**560**	**709**	**26,6%**

Source: BFSA

Official control of operators, sites and enterprises handling ABP and derived products

During the official control in 2024 the RFSDs have carried out a total of 889 inspections of operators, sites and enterprises handling ABP and derived products including: 231 checks during planned control; 639 checks during unscheduled control and 19 audits.

Compared to 2023, the number of inspections carried out decreased by 606 or 40.5%, which is mainly due to the lower number of unscheduled inspections in connection with alerts, complaints, registration/approval, trade, transport of ABP and export. The number of audits performed decreased by 21 or by over 50%, as audits are planned and carried out with a minimum frequency of once every 3 years.

The frequency of official planned control based on individual risk assessment varies from one to four times a year. In 2024 of 530 registered operators, sites and enterprises handling ABP and derived products under Art. 24 of Regulation (EC) No. 1069/2009, a total of 617 inspections were carried out, and the registered 179 sites, enterprises and operators under Art. 23 of Regulation (EC) No. 1069/2009 - a total of 272 inspections.

In 2024 1,671 checks were carried out under horizontal rules regarding labeling and traceability of ABP and derived products, 2.6 more compared to the transition year. A total 24 inconsistencies were found in terms of traceability and safety of ABP and derived products, for which 11 prescriptions were given and 3 acts were issued for an established administrative violation. In terms of labeling, no non-conformities with the legislation were found.

As a result of the official control carried out in 2024 of operators, sites and enterprises handling ASF and derived products, a total of 14 non-conformities were identified in 8 operators, for which 11 prescriptions with specific deadlines for their elimination were given and 3 AUANs were issued. The non-conformities are in relation to traceability, general hygiene, records and procedures and storage.

Compared to the previous year, there is a decrease in the number of identified non-conformities by 7, as well as in the number of operators for whom non-conformities were identified and in the prescriptions given, but the number of issued AUANs is increasing. The identified non-conformities are taken into account in the individual risk assessment when planning official controls for the following year.

Official control of ABP in animal breeding facilities

In 2024 the official control carried out is assessed as satisfactory with a total of 6,747 inspections for ABP in animal breeding sites, of which 3,195 are planned and 3,552 are unplanned. The total number of inspections increases by 2.6% compared to 2023 (when 6,576 inspections were carried out).

As a result of the inspections, a total of 283 non-conformities were found, for which 140 prescriptions, 34 AEAVs, 4 foreclosure acts and 9 orders were issued. The number of identified non-conformities decreased by 22% compared to the previous year, and the number of sites in which they were identified decreased by 28%.

The prescriptions given, the AEAV issued, and the foreclosure acts are also fewer on an annual basis (by 116, 14, and 6, respectively), unlike the orders, which are increasing by 9.

The most frequently identified reasons for allowing non-conformities with the requirements of the legislation in relation to ABP and derived products at each stage of the production chain are unrealized responsibility on the part of the operators, their insufficient knowledge of the requirements of the European and national sectoral legislation and insufficient financial resources from operator side.

6.4. Analysis of the food chain risks

In 2024, the Centre for Risk Assessment in the Food Chain (CRAFC) continues to fulfill one of its main objectives - preparing scientific opinions and publishing scientific reviews/analyses and information in the field of health, reproduction and animal welfare, biological and chemical hazards in the food chain, zoonoses, genetically modified organisms, food contact materials, plant health, pesticide residues in food, food additives, food supplements, novel foods, dietetic products, nutrition and allergens. The scientific opinions prepared are most often at the request of the Ministry of Agriculture, the Bulgarian Food and Agriculture Organization, industry organizations in agriculture and other organizations. In addition to assessments of the risk of the spread and entry of particularly dangerous animal and plant diseases, most of the opinions include planned assessments of the risk to the health of consumers and rapid assessments of specific cases of identified residues of chemical contaminants in food, including pesticides, in which recommendations are given for taking measures to manage food safety risks.

The Center for Food Safety and Health regularly monitors and analyzes notifications in the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) regarding the most frequently notified biological hazards in food, chemical contaminants in food, including pesticides and heavy metals, mycotoxins, genetically modified foods, and provides recommendations to control authorities to minimize the risk to consumers in Bulgaria. All publications are available on the FCRAC website.

Highlights in the activities of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention during the year remain:

- Continuous monitoring and evaluation of the course of the disease highly pathogenic Influenza A in birds, which for another year is spreading in Bulgaria and leads to great losses for the poultry industry. Risk assessments are regularly carried out before any repopulation of poultry farms following an outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza A. The main priority is to evaluate different strategies for vaccination of birds in Bulgaria, taking into account the available data for the territory of the country and recommendations on the need to prepare a strategy based on risk assessment - types of available vaccines, antigenic proximity of vaccines to Bulgarian strains of the virus, determination of high-risk areas in the country and vulnerable populations in the poultry sector, determination of species and categories of birds subject to vaccination, variants of vaccination strategies, appropriate surveillance schemes, the main consideration being the preservation of commercial markets for export of products from vaccinated animals and positive results from the vaccination of ducks in France and clinical studies in hens in the Netherlands; Given the evolution of influenza viruses around the world and the impact on other animal species, the risk of spread of influenza A virus in cows in Bulgaria and the risk of introduction of influenza D disease in Bulgaria have been assessed.
- Monitoring the development of the epidemic situation in the world and Bulgaria regarding a number of other infectious animal diseases and zoonoses, such as:
    - African swine fever (ASF), with respect to which the epidemic situation in Bulgaria stabilized in 2023 and remained so throughout 2024, without outbreaks in domestic pigs. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention reviewed and provided the industry organizations in the Pig Breeding sector with the latest scientific information on the survival of the ASF virus in feed, bedding and mechanical vectors and their potential role in the transmission of the virus in order to prevent the disease from entering farms and Strategies for biosecurity and control of the presence of swine viruses in feed ingredients and complete feeds; prepared an Interim Rapid

Assessment of the risk of the spread of African swine fever in Bulgaria for the first half of 2024 and participated in the preparation and approval of a Plan for the control and prevention of the spread of African swine fever in the Republic of Bulgaria for the period 2024 - 2026;

- Infectious anemia in horses in Bulgaria;
- Assessment of the risk of the spread of Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease in Bulgaria as an emerging threat to countries in Europe, which should be monitored with increasing attention;
- The spread of the Asian tiger mosquito (Aedes albopictus) and its role in the spread of vector-borne viral diseases, which due to climate change are increasingly covering northern areas;
- Risk of spread of SARS COV-2 from humans to animals and its re-introduction into the human population;
- The spread of the Dengue virus (bone fever).

An important process that will have an impact on the development of animal husbandry in the coming years is the revision of the current EU animal welfare legislation by the EC, within the framework of the "Farm to Fork" strategy, as well as the new scientific opinions of European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) on the welfare of farmed farm animals, which will provide the scientific basis to support a legislative proposal from the EC.

The EFSA scientific opinions published in 2022 and 2023 on animal welfare concern the rearing of pigs; laying hens on farms, broilers and broiler breeder flocks; calves; dairy cattle, ducks, geese and quails; animals during transport and are published on the website of the Central Veterinary and Animal Health Authority. In connection with this review of the legislation, the Center for Animal Health and Welfare informed interested Bulgarian farming organizations and conducted a survey on the attitudes and readiness of Bulgarian livestock farming to implement the upcoming changes. The analysis of the data from the survey conducted is published on the website of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. The study aims to establish how Bulgarian farmers assess the impact of the cage ban on Bulgarian livestock farming and would be extremely useful in the negotiation process on new EU legislation, providing clarity and an opportunity for Bulgaria to set its justified requirements and protect its economic interests.

Another significant innovation that the EC has been working on since 2023 and which has the potential to completely change agriculture is the direction of applying new genomic techniques in plant breeding. On July 5, 2023 the European Commission has adopted a legislative proposal for a Regulation on plants obtained by certain new genomic techniques (NGT) and food and feed produced from them, and amending Regulation (EU) 2017/625, whereby plants obtained with Category 1 NGT are removed from GMO legislation and their placing on the market for food, seed and feed is liberalized.

The draft Regulation aroused increased interest among the professional community in Bulgaria, agricultural organizations and academic circles in the country with completely opposing opinions, which is why the Center for Food Safety and Agriculture prepared an extensive scientific review "New genomic techniques - are they safe and can we 100% claim that they are highly effective and beneficial for the agri-food chain" by examining the identified dangers of the extreme deregulation of these innovations for human, animal and environmental health, and the sustainability and independence of farmers, and made proposals for a reasonable approach to their placing on the market with mandatory prior risk assessment, traceability and labeling. Due to the increasing penetration of genetic engineering techniques in animal husbandry and agriculture, the issues of genetically modified animals and the work of the EFSA are examined in detail, why new genomic techniques will not solve the problems associated with intensive animal husbandry, gene editing of pigs, xenotransplantation of organs and the risk of transmission of xenozoonoses - due to the great rise of the introduction of these techniques in food production and the recently approved patent for gene-edited pigs and their potential release on the US meat market.

In implementation of the measures set out in the National Plan for Combating Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR), assigned to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, trends in the development of antimicrobial resistance in aquaculture and the risk of AMR development in the event of reduced homogeneity and stability of antimicrobials in medicated feed and drinking water in pig farming have been monitored.

Regarding the safe use of food additives and flavorings, the Center for Food Safety and Hygiene, together with the Ministry of Agriculture, the National Center for Public Health and Analysis and the Bulgarian Food Safety Agency, prepared a statement with recommendations for the food groups that should be included in the Bulgarian Food Safety Agency's monitoring program for food colors and flavorings. Their inclusion in the monitoring program is necessary because food additives and flavorings are currently not tested in Bulgaria and it is not possible to analyze the exposure of children and the general population. The introduction of monitoring is based on a recommendation from an official control audit DG(SANTE) 2019-6660.

The following issues important for consumer safety were also considered:

- Fourteen opinions concerning the assessment of the risk to the consumer due to active substances and pesticides (permitted and unauthorized) found in foods in quantities above the maximum permissible levels;
- Risk assessment for the Bulgarian population from dietary exposure to dyes Ponceau 4R and Sunset Yellow;
- Risk assessment for the Bulgarian population from dietary exposure to methylmercury;
- Updated risk assessment of inorganic arsenic in food;
- Food chain risk assessment regarding the hazards to human health from long-term consumption of imitation products containing milk;
- Determination of the safe quantity for consumption of unprocessed whole, crushed, ground, split, chopped apricot kernels placed on the market for the end consumer;
- Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in food - the “eternal chemicals”;
- Sustainable food consumption: framework for future research - Opportunities for transformation of the food and flavor sector in Bulgaria.

The priority tasks of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention in 2024 include preparing an analysis of the phytosanitary risk of the entry and spread of the plant pest - the enemy Guatemalan potato moth (Tecia solanivora) on potatoes for Bulgaria, as well as providing scientific information and recommendations for dealing with the invasion of the Moroccan locust (Dociostaurus maroccanus) in the Kardzhali region and taking measures against the plant pest Black goldfish (Capnodis tenebrionis L.), which causes damage in Bulgaria.

The Center for Plant Protection and Disease Control continued its main work on providing the latest scientific information on categorizations (3 issues) of crop pests for the territory of the European Union, pests and/or invasive alien species included in the warning list of the European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization and/or in the list of priority pests for the European Union (7 issues), 7 risk assessments of the import of various whole plants or unrooted cuttings into the territory of Bulgaria and pests that may spread throughout the territory of the country and 2 updates of data on host plants of Xylella spp.

The "List of biological agents that can be applied in the Republic of Bulgaria" has been updated.

During the year, three opinions were prepared on requests for authorization for limited and controlled use (RCU) of plant protection products (PPP);

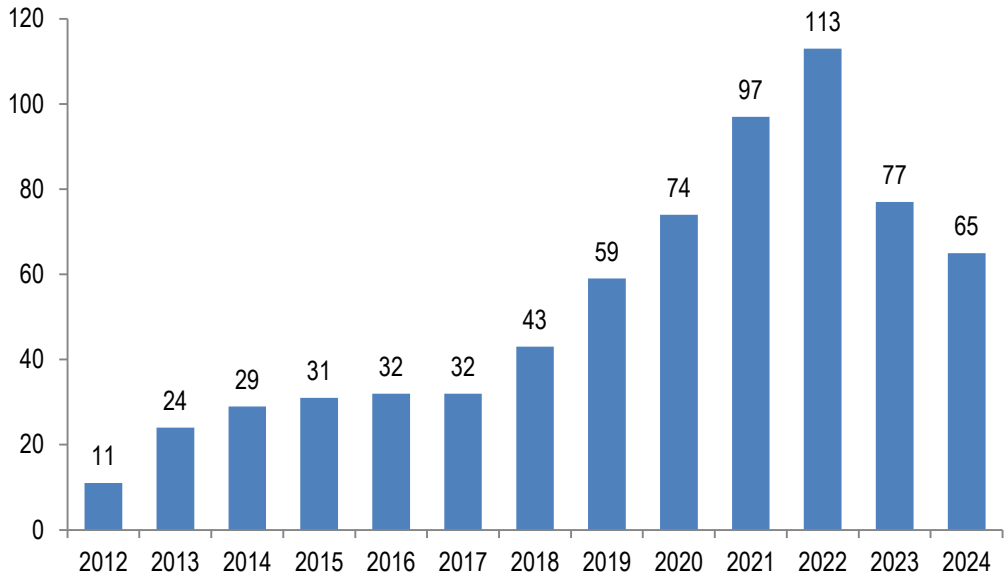
Criteria for the efficacy of fertilizing products without CE marking have also been established.

Due to the reported high food waste and loss in the EU, the work of the Center for Food Safety and Environment in this area is focused on considering the need to rethink the rules for the use of food residues as animal feed, examining the issues and possibilities for finding alternative sources of protein to replace soy in pig feed and the effect on meat quality. In the field of feed safety, issues of animal health risks related to the presence of polychlorinated naphthalenes (PCN) in feed and the provision of information for the establishment of an integrated mycotoxin management system along the feed supply chain were addressed.

In 2024, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention prepared a total of: 51 opinions and scientific risk assessments; 97 scientific information; 5 scientific reviews and analyses; 9 scientific analyses of data from

the RASFF system; 3 annual reports with data for Bulgaria for 2023 to EFSA on zoonoses, residues of chemical contaminants and pesticides in food.

Figure V.5. Number of scientific opinions prepared by the FCRAC for the 2012 - 2024 period



Source: FCRAC

After the observed trend of increasing the number of scientific assessments and analyses carried out by the Center for the Control and Prevention of Forestry and Fisheries in the period 2012 - 2022, a decrease is reported in 2023 and 2024. In 2024, 65 scientific opinions were prepared (including 51 scientific risk assessments and 5 scientific reviews and analyses), compared to 77 in 2023 and 113 in 2022. However, the number of assessments and scientific reviews produced in 2024 remains high, while the quality of the opinions continues to improve.

In 2024 the FCRAC continued to fulfill its other main objective in relation to the assessment of active substances included in plant protection products and the assessment of plant protection products (PPPs). FCRAC is the only competent authority in Bulgaria to carry out this type of assessment. The evaluation is commissioned by the European Commission and coordinated with the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). Bulgaria has been assigned 2 active substances for evaluation, on which experts from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention are working.

With regard to the obligations under Article 12 of Regulation (EC) No 396/2005 on the assessment of maximum residue limits (MRLs), in 2024 the Center for Disease Control and Prevention provided information to EFSA on approved good agricultural practices in Bulgaria when reviewing existing pesticide MRLs under Article 12 of Regulation (EC) No 396/2005 for one active substance contained in five authorised plant protection products in Bulgaria.

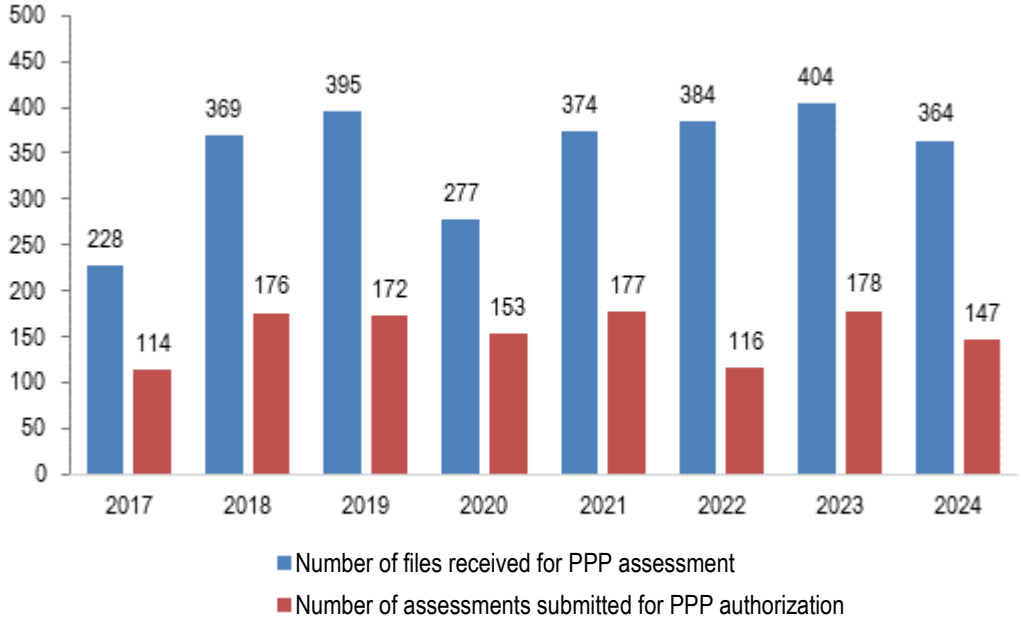
A review of 13 published Regulations amending MRLs for compliance with uses permitted in Bulgaria for PPPs was carried out, and for some of the uses the need to take national risk mitigation measures was confirmed.

The Center for Food Chain Risk Assessment is the only competent authority in Bulgaria for carrying out an assessment for the authorization of plant protection products. Assessments are carried out in terms of safety for humans and the environment, consumer safety and efficacy, and physicochemical characteristics of the product. The activity of evaluating plant protection products at the Center for Plant Protection and Hygiene is part of the PPP authorization process jointly with the Bulgarian Food Safety Agency. The evaluation of plant protection products helps agricultural producers in the fight against diseases and pests and in order to guarantee the quality of the produced products, as well as the protection of human health and the environment.

The total number of files received in 2024 is 364 (40 fewer than in 2023), which includes new files and provision of additional information on PPP assessment files already available in the Center for Disease Control

and Prevention. Evaluation reports for 147 plant protection products were evaluated and submitted to the Bulgarian Food Safety Authority, compared to 178 in the previous year.

Figure V.6. Files received and assessments submitted to the Public Health Agency during the period 2017 - 2024



Source: FCRAC

In 2025, the activities of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (FCRAC) continue to update risk assessments in the following areas:

- Influenza A in birds and the development of the possibilities for building a strategy for vaccination of birds in Bulgaria, subject to the preservation of commercial markets and waiting for the results of the conducted vaccine trials in chickens in the Netherlands and in ducks in France;
- African swine fever in Bulgaria, Europe and the world;
- Current animal diseases or with an increased risk of entering the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria - vector-borne diseases caused by Toga viruses and Bunya viruses - analysis of data for Europe, possible reservoirs in wildlife;
- The spread of parasitic diseases in animals and humans;
- Other economically significant, exotic, emerging, transboundary and vector-borne animal diseases and zoonoses;
- The development of European legislation on humane treatment of animals and the expected EC proposal for a new regulation, as well as its impact on Bulgarian animal husbandry;
- The development of European legislation regarding new genomic techniques in plant breeding, food and feed;
- Residues of PPPs, VMPs and environmental contaminants in food - hydrocarbons of mineral oils and risks to human health and assessment of dietary exposure to aflatoxins of the population in Bulgaria;
- Allergens, dietetic foods, novel foods and foods with health claims, food additives, novel foods, safety assessment of traditional foods - use and safety of magnesium food additives; Proteins in food systems - sources, functional properties and options for a healthy diet; History and application of cannabidiol (a component of Cannabis sativa);

- Biological hazards in the consumption of foods of plant origin;
- Use of agrophotovoltaics in agriculture;
- Plant health, phytosanitary risk of plant pests for Bulgaria - the enemy Anoplophora glabripennis on forest and ornamental species in Bulgaria; the enemy Bactrocera dorsalis on fruit species in Bulgaria;
- Feed additives, products and substances in feed - risks from alternative sources (insects) of feed raw materials for animal and human health; risk of pesticide residues in feed;
- Fulfillment of the goals set out in the national plan to fight against antimicrobial resistance, attributed to the FCRAC - tracking trends for the development of alternatives to antibiotics in veterinary and human medicine, use of feed additives to replace antibiotic therapy in farm animals and birds;
- At its own discretion, self-referral and preparation of scientific opinions, analyses and information on current problematic and emerging risks.

The Center's experts continue to carry out the activities of approval, renewal and review of the approval of active substances, antidotes and synergists and to carry out evaluations with assessment reports for PPPs in accordance with FCRACA and in accordance with the requirements of Regulation (EU) No. 1107/2009 for:

- plant protection products in their authorization for placing on the market and use, renewal, amendment and withdrawal of authorization for placing on the market and use, extension of the scope of authorization for placing on the market and use of a plant protection product for a minimum use and mutual recognition of product authorizations;
- plant protection products identity in their authorization for parallel trade;
- plant protection products that contain substances which are candidates for substitution.

6.5. Legislative changes and strategic documents in the field of food chain safety

In 2024, the updating of the regulatory framework in the field of food safety, animal health and plant health continues. During the year, work was done on projects of the following important normative acts and strategic documents, some of which have already been finalized or are expected to be finalized in 2025, as well as the following activities were carried out:

- Draft Law amending and supplementing the Foods Act;
- DCM for amending and supplementing the Ordinance on the requirements for the use of extraction solvents in the production of food and food ingredients;
- Ordinance No. 2 from 27.03.2024 on the conditions and procedure for food sampling and lab testing of foods;
- Amending and supplementing Ordinance No. 2 from 20.01.2021 on the specific requirements for the safety and quality of food offered in children's institutions, school canteens and retail establishments on the territory of schools and children's institutions, as well as of food offered at organized events for children and students;
- Approved Action Plan for the implementation of Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/627 in relation to live bivalve molluscs, live echinoderms, live tunicates and live marine gastropods that filter feed the water;
- Designated shellfish farming areas in coastal marine waters, respectively aquaculture areas (defined by the River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) in the Black Sea Water Basin Management Region (2016-2021), respectively the Marine Spatial Plan of the Republic of Bulgaria 2021-2035), as well as areas for production and relaying of live bivalve molluscs, live echinoderms, live tunicates and live filter-feeding marine gastropods, within the meaning of Article 52(1) of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/627, their location and boundaries.

- Regulation on the conditions and procedure for conducting a scientific risk assessment along the food chain;
- Draft of a new Law on veterinary medical activity, developed due to the need to update the current national legislation in the field of veterinary medical activity and to adopt national measures to implement EU legislation on the agro-food chain within the scope of the Veterinary Medicine;
- Draft of a new Law on the Professional Organization of Veterinarians in Bulgaria; The aim is compliance with the requirements of the new Veterinary Act;
- Amending and supplementing Ordinance No. 8 of 05.11.2020 on the conditions and procedure for carrying out disinfection, disinsection, deratization and devastation in limiting and eradication animal diseases;.
- Amending and supplementing Ordinance No. 6 of 20 March 2007 on the terms and conditions for grazing pigs of the Eastern Balkan breed and its crossbreeds;
- Draft Ordinance amending and supplementing Ordinance No. 10 of 2015 on the conditions for registration and the procedure for identification of bee colonies;
- An analysis was prepared on the need to develop a Vaccination Strategy against Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza;
- Work on a draft National Action Program against Antimicrobial Resistance 2024 - 2027 (the leading structure is the Ministry of Health);
- Regulation No. 5 of 2.12.2024 on the requirements for veterinary pharmacies and the conditions and requirements for distance trading in veterinary medicinal products.
- Amendment to Regulation No. 69 of 16.05.2006 on the requirements for Good Manufacturing Practice in the production of veterinary medicinal products and active substances;
- Prepared a draft protocol for preparation and requirements for the readiness of a poultry farm for participation in a pilot project with preventive vaccination;
- Weekly reports prepared on the epizootic situation regarding certain dangerous animal diseases in Bulgaria, neighboring countries and EU members;
- Council of Ministers decision to approve the Plan for control and prevention of the spread of the African swine fever disease in the Republic of Bulgaria for the period 2024 - 2026;
- Council of Ministers decision to approve the Plan for control and prevention of the spread of the African swine fever disease in the Republic of Bulgaria for the period 2024 - 2026;
- Sampling guidance for highly pathogenic avian influenza from wild birds and mammals;
- Organizing a round table to discuss the preparation of a National Strategy for the Conservation of the Eastern Balkan Pig Breed on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria.
- Draft Ordinance for amendment of Ordinance No 12 of 2023 on the terms and conditions for the use of plant protection products;
- Draft Ordinance amending Ordinance No. 21 of 2016 on the terms and conditions for the registration, labeling and control of fertilizers, soil improvers, biologically active substances and food substrates;
- Amendment to the Plant Protection Act, regarding additional provisions.
- Updating the National Action Plan for the Sustainable Use of Pesticides of the Republic of Bulgaria
- Three meetings of the National Food Council were held with the participation of industry organizations in the field of food.

- A procedure has been initiated within the Technical Committee of the Bulgarian Institute for Standardization to amend BDS 12:2010 "Българско кисело мляко" and national standard BDS 15:2010 "Българско бяло саламурено сирене". Amendments to both standards have been published;
- An Annual Report on the State of the Food Sector in Bulgaria for the period 2021-2022 has been prepared and adopted.
- Studying the possibilities and discussing proposals for establishing a procedure for the use of plant protection products through unmanned aerial systems;
- The project "Digitalization of Farm-to-Fork Processes" has been finalized, which includes a module on plant health.

Priority activities in 2025

In 2025, the process of preparing draft regulations in the field of food safety, animal health and plant health continues.

A draft decision of the Council of Ministers has been prepared for the adoption of a Regulation on the requirements for fruit jams, jellies, marmalades, jelly-marmalades and sweetened chestnut puree, published in issue 35 of the State Gazette of 2025.

A draft Act amending and supplementing the Food Act has been prepared, and the additional provisions also provide for amendments to the Plant Protection Act.

A draft Regulation has been prepared on the requirements for direct supplies from the producer of small quantities of primary products and food of animal origin.

A follow-up impact assessment of the Agri-Food Chain Management Act is due to be prepared during the year.

The preparation of a report on the state of the Food sector for the period 2023-2024 is also a priority.

A proposal has been prepared by the Ministry of Agriculture to amend BDS 12:2024 Yogurt under BDS and a public consultation has been launched.

The activities that have priority are related to the preparation of a draft of a new Veterinary Medical Activity Act, fully compliant with the framework and provisions of Regulation (EU) 2016/429 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2016 on transmissible animal diseases and amending and repealing certain acts in the area of animal health and delegated acts thereto (applicable from 21 April 2021) and Regulation (EU) 2019/6 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2018 on veterinary medicinal products and repealing Directive 2001/82/EC.

A new Law on the professional organization of veterinarians in Bulgaria is being developed, due to the need to fully implement the provisions of Regulation (EU) 2017/625 of the European Parliament and of the Council of March 15, 2017 on official controls and other official activities carried out to ensure the application of food and feed legislation, animal health and welfare rules, plant health and plant protection products and the harmonization of control requirements and the terms and conditions for the implementation of veterinary medical practice with the draft of a new law on veterinary medical activity.

It is necessary for the Council of Ministers to adopt the draft National Action Program for Combating Antimicrobial Resistance 2025 - 2028, prepared under the “One Health” approach (with Ministry of Health as the leading institution) and to work on the implementation of the set measures in order to achieve the objectives of the Green Deal to reduce the use of antimicrobials and meet the requirements of the new legislation on veterinary medicinal products related to ensuring the collection of information on the quantities of antimicrobials used and raising awareness among farmers regarding good practices to reduce the use of antimicrobials.

Work is underway to prepare an Ordinance amending and supplementing Ordinance No. 21 of 2016 on the terms and conditions for the registration, labeling and control of fertilizers, soil improvers, biologically active substances and nutrient substrates.

7. Livestock Selection and Reproduction

7.1. Livestock Selection and Reproduction

The Executive Agency for Selection and Reproduction in Animal Breeding (EASRAB) assists the Minister of Agriculture and Food in pursuing the state policy in the field of breeding and management and conservation of genetic resources. The Agency monitors the state of national genetic resources and coordinates the activities related to their management.

The EASRAB participates in the management of national genetic resources in animal husbandry through management, organization and participation in the activities of the National Council for Management and Conservation of Genetic Resources. In 2024, 14 meetings of the Council by Sections for the individual directions in animal husbandry were held, where the problems of the respective branch were discussed and proposals for improving the breeding activity were made.

The EASRAB coordinates the creation of new breeds and hybrids of animals by administering the activities of the State Commission on Animal Breeds (SCAB) and performs the necessary expert assessment on the merits at all levels.

The Agency makes annual monitoring of the breeds in connection with the maintenance and periodic updating of the Register of Breeding herds of the National Gene Fund under Article 18 (6) of the Animal Breeding Act.

In 2024, the risk status and change trend was determined of the following: 32,951 cattle (of three autochthonous and three commercial breeds); 14,115 buffaloes (of one commercial breed); 138,022 sheep (of 20 autochthonous and 3 commercial breeds); 9,974 goats (from 3 autochthonous breeds); 731 pigs (one autochthonous and one commercial breed) and 10,744 horses (one autochthonous and four commercial breeds).

During the year, the breeding organizations in the country and the EASRAB control 28 autochthonous and 12 commercial breeds, which are the subject of support under the Program for the Development of Rural Areas, measure 10 "Agroecology and climate in the direction "Protection of endangered local breeds".

Due to the African Swine Fever disease, 1,056 pigs of the autochthonous East Balkan pig breed were destroyed in the period 2019-2022, as a result of which its status has now been changed to an endangered breed. The Pleven Horse and Bulgarian Red Cattle breeds can also be identified as endangered breeds. Of the autochthonous breeds, the condition of the Local Stara Zagora sheep, Byala Marishka, Local Karnobat sheep and the Sakar sheep is alarming, and of the commercial breeds - Karnobatska and Trakiyska fine-wooled sheep, of the East Bulgarian horse, Danube horse and Danube white pig. In 2024, measures for restoration of two national breeds - the Bulgarian brown cattle and the Bulgarian red cattle - continued to be implemented. A breeding program has been developed for the Bulgarian Brown Cattle, and the breeding activity with the breed is undertaken by three breeding organizations. A breeding plan has been developed for the development of the Bulgarian red cattle and it was implemented in 2024 as well.

The EASRAB maintains an information database on the state of genetic resources, based on the EFABIS model of the European Regional Focal Point. The national system is linked to EFABIS, and the latter to the DAD-IS information system of the World Food Organization (FAO). This integration enables the transfer of data from national to European and global information systems. Within 2024, the information in the database was updated for 612,223 animals and birds.

The Agency manages and maintains a National Genetic Bank with two repositories (Sofia and Sliven), which store cryopreserved semen from different species and breeds of animals.

As of the end of 2024, the National Genetic Bank stored a total of 1,583,029 doses of deep-frozen semen from 347 breeders, as follows: of 289 cattle breeders, 27 buffalo breeders, 19 goats, 9 rams and 3 stallions of 22 breeds of cattle, 4 breeds of buffalo, 10 breeds of sheep, 4 breeds of goats and 3 breeds of horses, which increases the variety of genetic material offered for sale.

As a separate part of the National Genetic Bank, the Agency also maintains a National Genetic Reserve that guarantees the national sovereignty of the country with regard to genetic resources, conservation, restoration and sustainable management of biodiversity, as well as limiting its loss.

As of 31.12.2024 a total of 416,945 doses of deep-frozen seminal fluid from: 470 cattle and 33 buffalo breeders, 60 rams, 17 he-goats and 56 stallions. The doses are from 27 breeds of cattle, 4 breeds of buffalo, 22 breeds of sheep, 8 breeds of goats and 11 breeds of horses.

To ensure higher biosecurity, the frozen semen from the National Genetic Reserve is stored in two cryo-storage facilities - Sofia and Sliven.

The EASRAB manages and maintains the two State Artificial Insemination Stations (SATIS) in Sofia and Sliven, ensuring the breeding activity and the conservation of genetic resources in the country. The stations also receive and store long-lasting breeding material from valuable highly productive breeds from threatened with extinction and endangered local autochthonous breeds of animals.

At the end of 2024, 9 breeders of the following breeds were bred in Sliven SATIS: Bulgarian Red Cattle, Bulgarian Rhodope, Brown, Holstein Black and White, Aberdeen Angus Red, Jersey and Bulgarian Murra.

During the year, 19,025 doses of deep-frozen semen were produced from the available cattle and buffalo breeders in Sliven SATIS.

A horse breeding depot is maintained in the Sofia SATIS, where the EASRAB's own horses are bred and provided under contracts. In 2024, 89 ejaculates were obtained and 5,988 doses of deep-frozen semen were produced from the stallions bred at the station.

In the implementation of the ten-year Conservation Program for "ex situ" management of genetic resources in Bulgaria 2015 - 2024, from the middle of 2018 rams and he-goats are bred at Sofia SATIS. The rams and he-goats received in the SATIS are under contracts for joint activity with the respective breeding organizations. As of December 31, 2024, 1 goat and 1 ram, 3 sheep, 4 goats, 4 she goats, 4 ewes, 5 gilts and 5 goatlings are being raised in the Sofia Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Service.

The Agency has taken preventive measures for the protection and conservation of the East Balkan pig breed in connection with African swine fever. In order to prevent the risk of loss of valuable genetic resources, a response system has been set up in the event of natural disasters, epidemics, industrial accidents or other unforeseen causes, with severe consequences for animal populations. A clinical examination of a pig farm, which is under the selection control of the Association for Breeding and Storage of the East Balkan Pig, was carried out. As a result, at the Artificial Insemination Station (in the town of Sliven) there are 5 breeding groups of 4 sows and one boar each.

EASRAB assists with the activities of breeding organizations in the implementation of their breeding programs, ensuring proper assessment of selection traits and assessment of breeding value through: providing an opportunity for research of the quality indicators of controlled traits in its laboratories; breeding of male animals and production and storage of semen; proving the origin of breeding animals in its laboratory.

To this end, the Agency manages and maintains a laboratory for control of milk productivity and a laboratory for control of wool productivity.

In 2024 in the state laboratory for determining the physico-chemical composition of milk in the town of A total of 14,339 cow's milk samples were analyzed in Sliven. Of these, 13,719 samples were provided by the Smolyan Animal Welfare Department, 236 samples from animals controlled by the Bulgarian Animal Welfare Agency and 384 samples from sheep milk for scientific purposes.

The laboratory for testing rams on own productivity (town of Shumen), servicing the selection in fine-wool sheep breeding, makes it possible to determine the size of some selection traits and the quality of wool in terms of physical and mechanical properties, yield and the amount of pure fiber. Within 2024, 669 wool samples were examined.

EASRAB provides breeding organizations with various options for joint activities, cooperation and partnership in breeding male breeding animals, production and cryopreservation of semen from them. During the year, 6 beef and 3 buffalo breeding stock, 3 male calves, 1 calf, 2 buffaloes, 1 ram and 1 heifer, 3 sheep, 4 goats, 1 heifer and 1 kid, 5 heifers and kids, 32 stallions, mares and growing horses were raised in the bases of the Agency for Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services under contracts for joint reproductive activity.

In 2024, the activity of the National Genetic Laboratory continued, ensuring reliable, scientifically based determination of the animal breed at a modern level, recognized by the international community and allows the

performance of reference DNA analyzes. This provides an opportunity to control both the activities of breeding organizations and the implementation of coupled support schemes in the field of animal husbandry. The performed DNA analyses also reveal new regularities necessary for the development of breeding strategies and programs for the conservation of national genetic resources in animal husbandry. During the year, DNA was isolated from 2,793 samples of cattle and 1,987 of sheep at the National Genetics Laboratory. 1,837 certificates were issued for cattle and 2,899 certificates for sheep.

The realization of seed material of breeders from the national gene pool is carried out by 7 licensed sperm storage centers. An organization has been created in five centers for the operation of 11 mobile lines covering the areas with closed sperm storage centers over the years.

Within 2024, a total of 14,973 doses of semen were sold (66.1% from dairy breeds, 31.9% from meat breeds and only 2% from buffaloes). Of the 9,825 doses of semen from dairy cattle breeds sold, the largest share was taken by those from Simmental - 28.2%, followed by Holstein - 22.6% and Bulgarian Rhodope cattle - 12.2%. Of the meat breeds, the most doses were realized by the Aberdeen Angus breed - 68.3% and Limousin - 27.8%.

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in preserving the genetic diversity of animals used for agricultural purposes. With the approval of the FAO Global Plan of Action for the Conservation of Genetic Resources in Animal Husbandry, the EASRAB has taken concrete steps for the effective management and long-term conservation of genetic diversity in animal husbandry. To this end, a ten-year Conservation Program for ex situ management of genetic resources in Bulgaria has been developed. It stipulates that breeders of commercial and autochthonous breeds of cattle, buffaloes, sheep, goats and horses, from which genetic material is preserved, shall enter the State Stations for artificial insemination. With the implementation of the cryopreservation program, the National Genetic Reserve and the National Genetic Bank will be enriched with potentially useful genes from 11 breeds of cattle, 1 breed of buffalo, 26 breeds of sheep, 4 breeds of goats and 13 breeds of horses.

In implementation of the program, over the last years the EASRAB has undertaken activities for restoration of the Bulgarian Red Cattle breed. By the end of 2024, 12 animals of the Bulgarian Red cattle breed were bred. The main goal of the breeding work is to preserve and increase the available gene pool and to strengthen the biological qualities, ensuring the typicality, productivity and survival of the breed. Due to the narrow genetic diversity and the impossibility of further breeding of the breed in its pure state, a refined cross with bulls from the Angler and Danish Red Cattle breeds was initiated, as they were involved in the breeding process.

In implementation of the programs for saving from extinction and restoring the Danube, Pleven Horse and Bulgarian Heavy Draft Horse breeds, in 2024 the contracts concluded between the Agency for the Restoration and Development of the Pleven Horse and Gidran Breeds and the Association of Horse Breeders in Bulgaria will continue to be valid. The aim is to obtain and store semen from stallions of the three breeds, to make embryo transfer, as well as to naturally cover mares of the Danube and Pleven horse breeds. During the year, 11,801 doses of equine semen were stored in the National Genetic Bank and the National Genetic Reserve.

In order to promote the national genetic resources and the breeding activity, EASRAB organized and conducted exhibitions financed by the State Fund Agriculture under the state aid schemes. In 2024, only one event was held in the city of Sliven: Bulgarian Producer's Day.

In 2024, the EASRAB continued to represent Bulgaria in international bodies and organizations related to the management and conservation of European and global genetic resources in animal husbandry and to participate in working groups, meetings and various projects.

7.2. Control and coordination of breeding activities

In 2024, the EASRAB carried out control by conducting an inspection of the activities of breeding organizations that received support under the state aid scheme "Aid for keeping a herd book and determining the productivity and genetic traits of animals" for animals applying for 2023. In accordance with the requirements of the scheme, the inspections carried out cover animal breeding as follows: 1,669 farms with 124,010 cattle, 250 farms with 13,275 buffaloes, 1,994 farms with 368,603 sheep, 346 farms with 34,015 goats, 35 farms with

44,683 pigs, 7 farms with 936,973 poultry, 314 owners with 8,679 horses, 17,996 bee colonies, 11 owners with 352 dogs and 2 farms with 572 rabbits.

The EASRAB has carried out control over the activities of organizing and holding exhibitions by the Breeding Organizations under State Aid Schemes - "Assistance for participation in exhibitions" in 2024 of the Agriculture State Fund.

During the year, the Agency carried out inspections of seventeen canine exhibitions, five horse exhibitions with animals presented by the "Association of Horse Breeders in Bulgaria", the "Bulgarian Sport Horse" Association and the "East Bulgarian Horse" Association, as well as five livestock exhibitions organized by the "Karakachan Dog", the "Breeding Organization for Dairy Sheep", the "Association for Breeding Dairy Goat Breeds" and the "Association for Breeding the Ile de France Breed in Bulgaria".

The agency controls state-owned stud farms, and during the year two inspections (spring and autumn) of the horse breeding herds were conducted at the Kabiyuk State Enterprise and the Kostinbrod Stud Farm.

Inspections of the organized depots of male breeding animals for 2024 were carried out, with 15 depots of breeding organizations in the field of sheep breeding being inspected. Inspections were also carried out of the prescriptions made by the planned and other inspections of the "Association for Breeding Fine-wool Sheep in Bulgaria", "Breeding Organization for Dairy Sheep", "Association for Breeding the Black-and-White Breed in Bulgaria", as well as an inspection as a result of a self-referral of the "National Association for Breeding Dairy Sheep in Bulgaria".

In 2024, the EASRAB carried out planned inspections of 23 breeding organizations (11 in cattle breeding, 7 in sheep breeding, 2 in buffalo breeding and 1 each in rabbit breeding, horse breeding and cynology).

5 unscheduled inspections were carried out based on written complaints and reports of violations filed by state bodies, individuals and legal entities.

Inspections were also carried out on the "Association for the Preservation and Breeding of Local Long-Haired Goat", "Association for Autochthonous Goat Breeds in Bulgaria", "Breeding Association of Aboriginal Sheep Breeds from Western Bulgaria" and "Bulgarian Sport Horse Association".

Due to the lack of approved breeding organizations in the country for certain breeds, in 2024 EASRAB continued to carry out selection activities by species and breeds, as follows: cattle breeding - with 10 cattle, sheep breeding - with 12,766 sheep and goat breeding - with 474 goats. This activity enables farmers breeding the said breeds, for which no breeding organizations have been established, to apply for coupled support schemes for animals under selection control.

In connection with the implementation of coupled support schemes in the Livestock sector for animals under selection control, inspections were carried out to identify the animals under selection control, as well as to record the approved animals in the VetIS system of the BFSA. In 2024, the EASRAB entered in the VetIS system: 112,156 cattle of 17 breeds; 17,030 buffaloes of one breed; 362,581 sheep of 34 breeds; 38,251 goats of 10 breeds.

The quality of the breeding material produced, entering and distributed on the territory of the country is controlled by the EASRAB, through the maintenance of a national register of male breeding animals and a Register of breeding herds from the national gene pool.

As of 31.12.2024 the Register of male breeding animals included: 2,456 beef bulls, 396 buffalo bulls, 9,772 rams, 1,355 he-goats, 427 stallions, 309 boars, 93 dogs and 66 rabbits.

Information is entered in the Register of Breeding Herds as follows: cattle breeding - 1,805 herds with 149,732 animals, buffalo breeding - 274 herds with 16,746 animals, sheep breeding - 1,994 herds with 368,603 animals, goat breeding - 346 herds with 34,415 animals, pig breeding - 39 herds with 49,492 animals, horse breeding - 761 owners with 13,136 animals and 44 owners of dogs of breeds with economic importance with 312 dogs.

In 2024, 1 importer was registered in the register of importers of organic products, with 7 notifications submitted for intra-community trade and 1 for the import of frozen seed material from third countries. Doses of

deep-frozen semen from 99 cattle breeders of 11 breeds were imported: Holstein, Brown Cattle, Simmental, Jersey, Wagyu, Limousin, Aberdeen Angus, Abondance, INRA 95, Hereford and Normandy.

8. Agricultural Science, Training and Advisory Activities

8.1. Agricultural Scientific Research and Scientific Service Activities Provided by the Agricultural Academy

8.1.1. Main research priorities in the Agricultural Academy

The Agricultural Academy (AA) carries out its activities within the framework of the National Strategy for the Development of Scientific Research (2017-2030) and in accordance with the state agrarian policy and the Common Agricultural Policy of the European Union (2023-2027).

The main strategic goal of the Agricultural Academy is to carry out scientific and applied research and analysis, and create knowledge and innovations that contribute to increasing added value in the agricultural sector, reducing the footprint of the food system on the climate and the environment, and maintaining and improving ecosystem services.

The main activities of the Academy in 2024, according to the priorities set in the National Strategy for the Development of Scientific Research in the Republic of Bulgaria (2017-2030), cover the scientific areas related to the development of innovations, the economy and society, namely:

- Health and quality of life. Prevention, therapy, green, blue and ecological technologies, biotechnologies, ecological foods;
- Environmental protection. Environmental monitoring. Utilization of raw materials and bioresources. Purification and waste-free technologies;
- Socio-economic development and management.

Scientific and applied research of the AA includes the two thematic areas of the Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialization 2021- 2027, as follows:

- Healthy living and biotechnology industry - this includes scientific research related to: methods for clean production, storage, processing and reaching the end user of specific Bulgarian ingredients, means and products; production of specialized food and beverages; personal medicine, diagnostics and individual therapy, medical and medicinal forms and means; biotechnologies with direct application for a healthy lifestyle; introduction of innovative methods in agriculture and fish farming, without the use of chemical preparations for pest control and fertilization; green economy; industrial biotechnology;
- Clean technologies, circular and low-carbon economy - within this thematic area, AA focuses on research on zero-waste technologies and methods for incorporating waste products and materials from production into other production and services;

AA scientists continue to work on the priorities set out in the Green Deal, such as the strategies “Farm-to-Fork” and “Biodiversity”, the Zero Pollution for Air, Water and Soil Plan, the circular economy, the ecosystem restoration, and Digitalization of agriculture in line with the European Digital Decade (2020- 2030).

A key aspect of the AA's work is participation in five projects for the construction and development of modern research infrastructures, funded by the Ministry of Education and Science under the National Roadmap for Scientific Infrastructure (NRMSI) 2020-2027, Infrastructure for Sustainable Development in the Field of Marine Research and Participation in the European Infrastructure EURO-ARGO (MASRI)”, “Research Infrastructure in the Field of Food, Nutrition and Health”, linked to Bulgaria's participation in the pan-European infrastructure FNH-RI (FNH-RI BUL), “Center for Plant Systems Biology and Biotechnology (CPSBBT)” and Center of Competence “Sustainable Utilization of Bioresources and Waste from Medicinal and Aromatic Plants for Innovative Bioactive Products”.

The AA also participates as a lead organization in the National Infrastructure for Research and Innovation in Agriculture and Food - (RINA, Research, Innovation, Agriculture), which is part of the European Research Infrastructure for Analysis and Experimentation on Ecosystems (AnaEE). The participation of teams of scientists from the structural units of the AA in AnaEE provides Bulgarian researchers with access to modern scientific infrastructure for conducting research in the field of agroecology and agro-ecosystem services.

At the end of 2023, the "National Scientific Infrastructure for Research and Innovation in Agriculture and Food" together with two other scientific infrastructures, part of the NPKNI, including "Research Infrastructure in the Field of Food, Nutrition and Health", grew into the Center of Competence "Agrifood Systems and Bioeconomy".

The Academy promotes the career development of young scientists, increasing the level of scientific research activity, international integration and recognition of scientists and their achievements in the international research space. AA is a beneficiary of the NP "Young Scientists and Postdoctoral Fellows" and the NP "Stimulating Publication Activity in Authoritative International Scientific Journals and Open Access to Scientific Information" of the Ministry of Education and Science.

In 2024, a total of 217 research projects were developed and implemented in the structural units of the Academy. Of these, 109 projects are financed by the budget subsidy of the AA; 47 - by the Scientific Research Fund (SRF); 5 - by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and 56 - by national and international organizations and agencies (World Health Organization, Horizon Europe, COST, FAO, IAEA, NEXT Black Sea Basin Programme, Erasmus, etc.). The AA also coordinates projects along the lines of bilateral cooperation with related international organizations on the principle of shared self-financing and performs contractual tasks funded by the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health and other departments.

Within these projects and programs, scientific research in the following directions and thematic areas is leading:

- Preservation and increase of the biodiversity of plant genetic resources - expeditions are carried out to search for, characterize and preserve wild species and old varieties as a valuable genetic resource and an endangered national treasure. Collections of genetic resources of basic agricultural crops, medicinal and other plant species in Bulgaria are created and maintained;
- Genetic and breeding research to create new varieties and hybrids with increased productivity and quality, adapted to the market and climate changes - varieties with good adaptability and plasticity to changes in agro-climatic conditions, with good productivity and quality, resistant to diseases and enemies are created, enabling the development of sustainable and competitive agriculture. Demo fields are being built to present varieties suitable for cultivation in conditions of biotic and abiotic stress and recommendations are being prepared for their zoning in the country;
- Sustainable and efficient management of resources (soil, water, biomass) in the conditions of climate change, impact mitigation and adaptation practices - the influence of land use methods on the quality of groundwater in highly stressed agro-ecosystems, as well as the forms of pollution of water and soil caused by industry and energy; the influence of reduced irrigation on crop yield and quality is studied; concepts and technological solutions are created for the preservation, restoration and sustainable management of soil resources and biodiversity, for assessment, monitoring and mitigation of the impact of climate change;
- Farming systems for conventional and organic production. New solutions in integrated systems for combating enemies in agricultural agrocenoses - technologies and innovations are being developed for conventional and organic agriculture, incl. innovative plant protection practices;
- Genetic and breeding research in animal husbandry. Improving nutrition, animal welfare and limiting harmful environmental effects - projects are being developed for: exploring, maintaining and increasing the diversity of important farm and other animal species; strategies for managing national genetic resources in animal husbandry and improving husbandry, welfare and productivity in various ruminant and non-ruminant species; assessment of feed quality and creation of innovations in animal nutrition; selection and breeding programs for long-term conservation and preservation of the biodiversity of aboriginal breeds, incl. preserving the purity of breeding breeds and assessing their adaptive potential;
- Sustainable development of fisheries and aquaculture - monitoring of the state of fish and non-fish resources in river basins and the Bulgarian Black Sea water area and implementation of technological innovations to support the implementation of EU policies and programs. Complex monitoring studies of reservoirs in the country are being conducted with a view to their suitability for fish farming use and

environmental protection. Systems and methods for reproduction and cultivation of traditional and new species of hydrobionts, evaluation of their health status and well-being, as well as systems for evaluating the quality of their meat are being developed;

- Development of safe, quality and healthy foods, beverages and other food resources, updating existing recipes, maps, technologies and instructions for production, processing and processing of plant and animal products production, incl. biomass in line with new knowledge about climate change, increasing pressure on ecosystems and their response. In the "Health and Quality of Life" direction, new methods for the analysis of tobacco, tobacco products and products containing nicotine are being developed;
- Improving living conditions in rural areas - strategies for vibrant rural areas are being developed. Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of various programs and schemes of the MAF covering rural areas is carried out.

AA and its structural units continue to maintain a gene fund that includes 113,600 plant specimens and 18,867 animals of various breeds, 8 aquatic cultures and 430 strains of microorganisms. The Gene Bank at the Institute of Plant Genetic Resources of the AA maintains a base collection of 43,143 specimens from 33 families, 150 genera and 600 plant species, which is annually supplemented with new taxonomic specimens. The Scientific Center for Sericulture, town of Vratsa maintains the largest gene pool of silkworms in the European Union, including over 70 distinct local and introduced silkworm breeds and over 50 hybrids.

8.1.2. Created scientific products, implemented in production

The creation and improvement of varieties is one of the most important tasks of AA. By the end of 2024, the total number of plant variety and animal breed certificates maintained by the structural units of the Patent Office was 295, which represents over 85% of all certificates issued and maintained by the Patent Office in Bulgaria. Of these, the supported certificates for cultivated plant varieties are 286, distributed by crops as follows: cereals - 159 (cereals - 146; cereals and legumes - 13), technical crops - 61 (industrial - 11, oilseeds - 20, fiber crops - 21 and medicinal - 9), fresh vegetables - 23, fodder crops - 11, perennial crops - 27 (vines - 24, fruit crops - 3), flowers and ornamental crops - 5. There are 9 supported animal breed certificates.

The scientific products that received legal protection according to the regulatory framework in 2024 are 20 certificates for new plant varieties with readiness for active cooperation and conclusion of license agreements. They were created in 7 institutes of the AA and include 10 cereal, one oilseed, two fruit and seven vegetable varieties.

The tendency to create varieties with good adaptability and plasticity to changes in climatic conditions in the country, good productivity and quality, allowing the development of sustainable and competitive agriculture in Bulgaria continues. In 2024, 5 applications for issuing certificates for new plant varieties from the teams of three institutes of the Academy and 4 patents for beverages from the Institute of Cryobiology and Food Technology - Sofia were published in the official bulletin of the Patent Office of the Republic of Bulgaria.

During the year, 318 varieties from AA were proposed for inclusion in the Official Variety List of the country, issued by the Executive Agency for Seed Production, Approbation and Seed Control (EASPASC), including: List A 231 varieties of cereals, technical and fodder crops, and list B - 87 varieties of vegetables, vines, medical and aromatic crops. Over 26 license agreements have been concluded with companies from the country and abroad.

8.1.3. Transfer of knowledge and scientific products

In 2024 the AA continues the activities of popularizing its scientific achievements and advertising the created scientific products, conducts studies on the needs of farmers and carries out marketing activities in order to analyze and improve its scientific and implementation activities.

In order to build a sustainable relationship with agricultural producers, demonstration fields and farms have been created in the scientific and experimental units of the AA, which are included in the programs of thematic days. Through them, farmers and interested parties are presented with new varieties of cultivated plants and breeds of farm animals from our and global selection. The most successful breeding, plant protection, agrochemical and technological solutions and practices suitable for the climatic conditions of the various agricultural production regions in the country are demonstrated, with the greatest interest being aroused by varieties resistant to abiotic (high and low temperatures, drought) and biotic stress (diseases and pests). The

established network of demonstration fields is a relatively new and successful way to Such demonstration fields have been created in Pazardzhik, Yambol, Sadovo, Knezha, Pleven and Ruse.

In 2024, scientists from the AA held 1,264 events, which included organizing open days, scientific-practical conferences, seminars, symposiums, round tables, anniversary celebrations and short-term courses; 346 opinions were prepared for farmers, cooperatives and departments; 142 projects and technologies were developed and presented; 7 permanent and temporary stores and 29 demonstration fields and farms were maintained; participation in 69 exhibitions and fairs in our country and abroad, etc.

In 2024, 10 demonstration days were held under sub-measure 1.2 "Demonstration activities and awareness-raising actions" of measure 1 "Knowledge transfer and awareness-raising actions" from the RDP under projects funded by the Ministry of Agriculture, as well as under the AGRODIGIRISE project of the Maritsa Agricultural Research Center - Plovdiv and AgoHub.bg. Scientists from various structural units of the AA provide consulting services and training (vocational training and skills acquisition), offer good agricultural practices, innovative solutions and technologies in the field of plant and animal husbandry, including demonstration of varieties and crops suitable for cultivation in risky climatic conditions.

3 information and training seminars were held with farmers and stakeholders related to the cultivation of important fruit species and the fight against varroa disease in bees.

In October 2024 in the city of Sofia was held the IVth International Congress on Green Biotechnology, hosted by the Agricultural Academy, on the topic: "Biotechnology for agricultural sustainability in the era of climate change". The event was held under the patronage of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and the Ministry of Education and Science with the support of the Scientific Research Fund. Over 100 Bulgarian and foreign scientists participated in the conference with the following thematic areas:

- Plant genomics and metabolomics;
- Precision plant selection - marker-assisted selection, genome editing techniques, plant phenomics;
- Cultivation of plant cells and tissues;
- Beneficial soil microbiome, phytoremediation, biotechnological tools for managing soil fertility, plant development and health.

To assist farmers and livestock breeders, the AA maintains a Vocational Training Center (VTC), whose main goal is to provide qualified personnel for the agricultural sector and quality professional training. In 2024, 763 people were trained at the Vocational Training Center and the Institute of Agriculture in Stara Zagora in various specialties in the professions "Farmer" and "Agriculturist", "Agroecology" and "Hygiene and safety of feed in animal nutrition", "Quality and safety of feed and good practices in animal nutrition".

A significant part of the public and educational activities of the National Agricultural Museum and the structural units of the Agricultural Academy is aimed at working with children and students. The goal is to expand the awareness of adolescents and arouse their interest in agricultural science. During the year, over 400 children from kindergartens, primary and secondary school students participated in classes and demonstrations on various topics: the cultivation and use of cherry fruits, sericulture as a livelihood and the future development of this traditional industry, techniques for growing vines, etc.

8.1.4. Qualification structure of scientists and training of doctorate students

In 2024, 497 scientists worked at the AA. There is an improvement in the age structure of scientists compared to 2023 and an increase in the number of scientists up to 35 years of age.

During the year, 55 PhD students were trained in the structural units of the Academy. The training of doctoral students takes place in 21 scientific institutes of the Academy under 28 doctoral programs (a total of 53 accreditations), from 8 professional fields in 4 scientific fields, approved by the National Agency for Training and Accreditation. 12 doctoral students successfully defended their dissertations.

In 2024, the AA received approval for a project under the "Education 2021-2027" program of the Ministry of Education and Science to establish a doctoral school in the Central Academic Center of the AA and train 24 project doctoral students in 9 accredited programs in 12 structural units of the SAA.

8.1.5. Scientometric results and specialized scientific periodicals

In 2024, a total of 686 scientific papers were published, of which 321 were articles in journals with an impact factor and impact rank. The indicated publications are referenced and indexed in various platforms of the global scientific information databases Web of Science and/or Scopus. The number of independent citations is 3,281, and of cited publications in refereed and indexed journals - 3,141.

The scientific journals published by AA are: "Animal Sciences", "Agricultural Economics and Management", "Soil Science, Agrochemistry and Ecology", "Plant Sciences" and "Bulgarian Journal of Agricultural Science". In 2024, the archive of the five journals up to 2005 was digitized and uploaded to the software platform for managing the publication process - OJS (Open Journal System). A total of 299 articles were published during the year.

Expected data for 2025

In 2025, research activities will continue on projects financed by the budget subsidy, national scientific programs, international projects, as well as those financed by the National Science Foundation - a total of 224 projects.

In addition to the current activities related to the development and implementation of research projects, transfer of knowledge and innovations, creation and implementation in the production of scientific products, improving the knowledge and qualifications of scientists, in 2025 the structural units of the AA are expected to:

- build and operate a doctoral school under the project "Support for the Development of Project Doctoral Studies at the Agricultural Academy", in accordance with a contract for the provision of grant aid under the Education Program 2021-2027. It will build capacity and increase the quality of training for doctoral students at the Agricultural Academy by stimulating the exchange of knowledge and innovations between science and business. Within 2025, it is expected that 20 project doctoral students will be enrolled in full-time studies in 9 accredited doctoral programs and scientific specialties at 12 institutes of the AA;
- launch the construction of a competence center "Agrifood Systems and Bioeconomy", which will help integrate the principles of the bioeconomy into the modernization of the Bulgarian agrifood sector.

8.2. Advisory activities

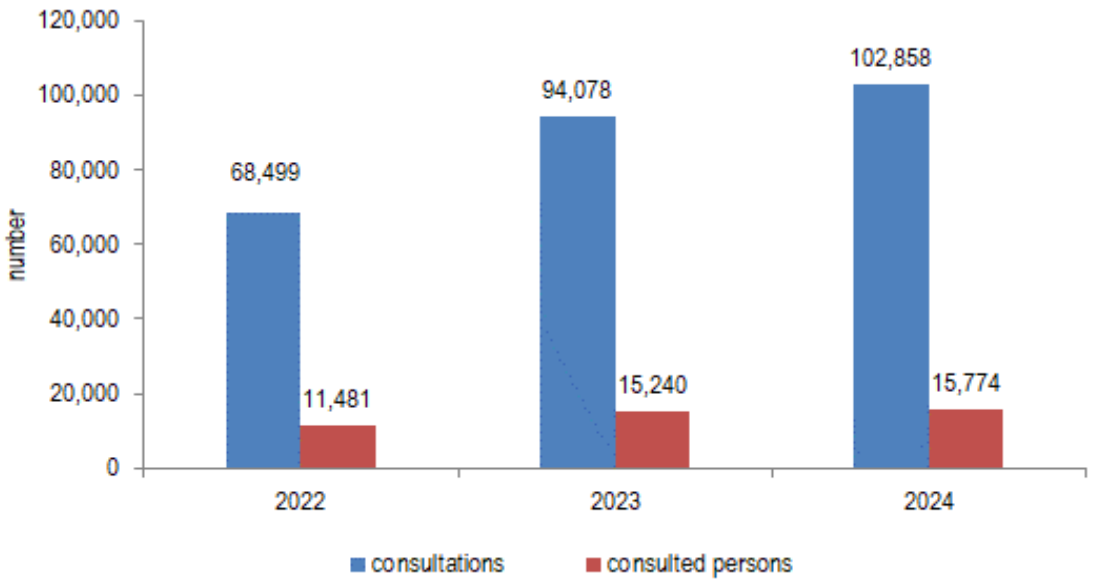
The National Advice in Agriculture Service (NAAS) is a public advisory organization within the structure of the Ministry of Agriculture, whose activity is related to the implementation of state policy in the field of the System of Knowledge and Innovation in Agriculture (AKIS). The office provides advisory services, up-to-date information and technical assistance to farmers for effective and competitive agriculture in the country.

NAAS carries out its activities on the territory of the whole country through the established 27 territorial regional offices (TRO) in each regional city and 28 mobile municipal offices (MMO), with territorial coverage of 96 municipalities in the country. Farmers can receive free consultations in the fields of crop production, animal husbandry, agrarian economics, the Rural Development Program 2014-2022 (RDP) and the Strategic Plan for the Development of Agriculture and Rural Areas of the Republic of Bulgaria (SPARD) for the period 2023-2027.

The Service supports the transfer and application of scientific and practical achievements in the field of agriculture and thus helps to improve the "research - advice in agriculture - agricultural business". In 2024, the trend of events being held both in person and remotely continues, including through the holding of a large number of demonstration events with a practical focus. Remote reception (consultation days) are held in different settlements in the country, which are far from the regional centers, in order to facilitate the access of farmers to consulting services.

In 2024, a total of 15,774 individuals received 102,858 consultations from NAAS experts. Compared to 2023, there was an increase in the number of consulted persons by 3.5% and in consultations by 9.3%.

Figure V.7. Total number of consultations made and persons consulted for the period 2022- 2024

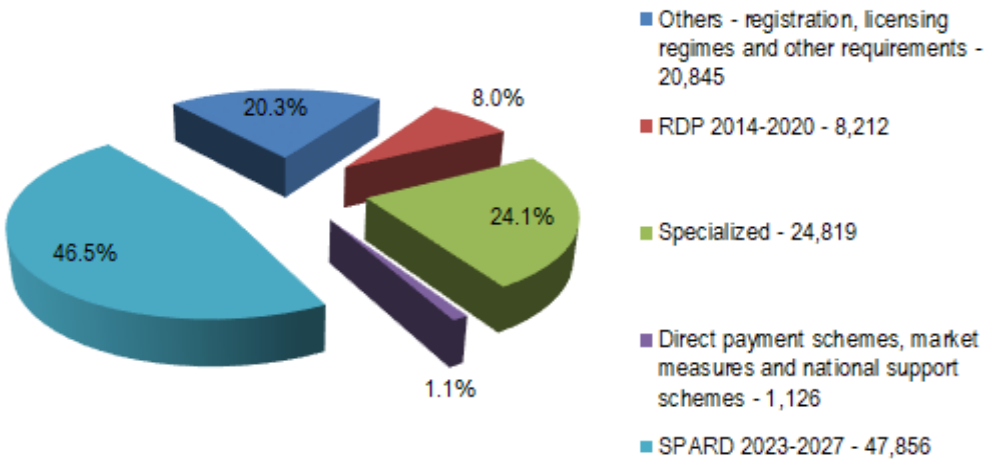


Source: NAAS

In 2023, experts from the Service made 4,986 on-site visits to agricultural holdings, which is 25% more than in 2023. During the on-site visits to their farms, the farmers received specific advice and an assessment of the conditions in which agricultural crops were grown and animals reared.

The leading place in 2024 is occupied by consultations under the SPARD 2023-2027 - 47,856 (47% of all consultations provided), which increased by 17.4% compared to the previous year. The greatest interest among those using the services of the National Agricultural Service was aroused by the interventions to support very small farms and to establish young and new farmers in agriculture, for which admission was announced in the second half of November. Increased interest is noted in intervention II.G.3 "Support to producer organizations or groups of producers", for which the admission was launched in December. Next in interest is intervention II.A.1 "Organic Plant Production", which is probably contributed to by the national campaign organized in 2024 with the participation of the National Agricultural Service for Organic Agriculture. Of the eco-schemes, the most consultations were provided under intervention I.C.4 "Eco-scheme for reducing the use of pesticides".

Figure V.8. Provided consultations by type in 2024



Source: NAAS

In second place are specialized consultations with 24,819 (24% of the total number) in the following areas: agrarian economy - 5,417, plant breeding (including organic plant breeding) - 5,170, animal breeding

(including organic animal breeding) - 3,159, Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC) standards - 3,450, requirements and principles of social conditionality - 3,329, statutory management requirements (SMRs) - 2,786, rules of good agricultural practice and others - 1,508. Compliance with social conditionality is one of the requirements for receiving the full amount of support from interventions in the form of direct payments or annual payments for interventions in the field of rural areas on agro-ecology, climate and organic farming. The large number of consultations in this area can be explained by the entry into a sanctions regime from 2025 for failure to comply with the requirements of social and labor legislation.

The consultations provided by the "Other consultations" group total 20,845. About 29% of them are for providing assistance in working with electronic tools, including EMS and UMIS. Next in this group are the consultations provided regarding the requirements for registration and re-registration of farmers under Ordinance No. 3 of January 29, 1999 on the establishment and maintenance of a register of farmers. Most often, these consultations are in connection with the initial registration, i.e. by individuals who want to turn agricultural production into their main activity.

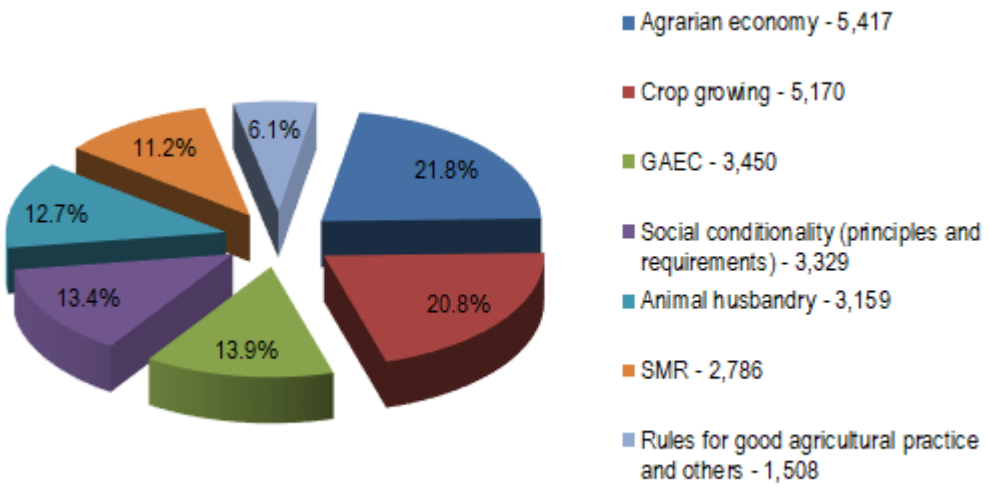
Consultations related to the RDP 2014-2020 are 8,212, 23% less than in 2023. This type of consultation is mainly related to the opportunities for support under sub-measure 6.3 "Start-up aid for the development of small farms", receiving consultancy packages under sub-measure 2.1.2 "Consulting services for small agricultural holdings" under measure 2 "Consulting services, farm management services and farm replacement services" and consultations for the implementation of approved projects under sub-measure 6.1.

In 2024, the experts of the National Agricultural Service provided assistance to 1,826 small agricultural holdings and young farmers in connection with the electronic submission in the UMIS 2020 of notifications for changes to project proposals and payment requests under sub-measure 4.1.2, sub-measure 6.3 and sub-measure 6.1 of the RDP 2014-2020.

Consultations from the "Market Measures and Other Support Schemes" group are 1,126. The greatest interest in this group was shown in the consultations regarding the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP) and other national support schemes, including state aid.

In 2024 NAAS experts also provided consultations related to the adaptation of agriculture and farmers to climate change (13,516 items), as well as the River Basin Management Plans, which are prepared according to the Water Framework Directive and the Water Act. 6,262 people were consulted on measures with a direct or indirect effect on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, 6% more than in 2023.

Figure V.9. Distribution of the provided specialized consultations in 2024 by type



Source: NAAS

8.2.1. Vocational training

The Vocational Training Center (VTC) at the NAAS is licensed by the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training (NAVET). It hosts specialized courses, seminars and trainings for both NAAS experts and farmers. The main goal is to support the professional career and individual development of farmers through high-quality, practically-oriented training in the field of agriculture. The training programs were developed by NAAS experts in accordance with the requirements of ongoing vocational training. The successful completion of some of the trainings is a mandatory condition for the fulfillment of the commitments of the farmers, approved beneficiaries under the RDP 2014-2020 and/or candidates for the interventions under the SPRD 2023-2027. All trainings are free of charge for farmers registered under Regulation No. 3 of January 29, 1999.

In 2024, a total of 16 farmers were trained at the CVT within the framework of an in-person qualification course in part of the "Farmer" profession on the topic: "Environmental protection, biodiversity, mitigation and adaptation to climate change in the agricultural sector."

8.2.2. Improving the "research - advice in agriculture - agricultural business" link

The NAAS closely cooperates with various organizations to support the transfer of scientific knowledge and achievements, including the scientific institutes of the Agricultural Academy, Agrarian University - Plovdiv, Thracian University - Stara Zagora, University of Economics - Varna, University of Ruse "A. Kanchev", University of Forestry - Sofia, University of National and World Economy (UNWE) - Sofia, Shumen University "E. K. Preslavski", Institutes at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, the Regional Directorates of Food Safety at the Bulgarian Food Safety Agency, the Directorates of Labor Inspections at the General Labor Inspectorate, the territorial directorates of the National Revenue Agency, etc.

In 2024, 106 joint information and training events were held (including 95 in-person), in which over 2,960 people participated. These joint activities and events represent specialized training, fully oriented towards the needs of farmers, with the topics of the seminars largely proposed by the farmers themselves. Both specialized topics and the requirements for the implementation of approved projects under the RDP 2014-2020, the activities of the National Agricultural Strategy under sub-measure 2.1.2 "Consulting services for small agricultural holdings" of measure 2 of the RDP and the interventions under the SPARD 2023-2027 are presented.

8.2.3. Information support

In 2024, NAAS experts organized 320 informational events (not including remote receptions), including: 271 seminars and information meetings, 47 demonstrations and 2 events in the form of information stand/workshop. The total number of participants in the information events is 12,315, 4% more than in 2023.

During the year, a total of 3,428 outreach sessions were held, facilitating access to advisory services for 6,187 farmers with farms located far from regional centers. During the outsourced receptions, farmers receive up-to-date information and advice in the field of agriculture, direct payment schemes, opportunities to support small farms and young farmers under the 2023- 2027 SPARD.

219 information materials (information leaflets, brochures, farmer's calendar) on current topics were prepared and distributed to help farmers.

The office also provides useful up-to-date information through its website and social media.

The NAAS disseminates up-to-date information on important deadlines, regulations and other issues through the so-called "Farmers' Circles" operating at the territorial district offices (TDOs) of the Service. The goal is timely sharing and communication with the agricultural community, through more active farmers who are regular clients of the National Agricultural Service.

8.2.4. Agrochemical analyses

The areas of laboratory activity of the Analysis Lab of the NAAS are related to the requirements for improving the activity and increasing the competitiveness of farms. The Lab performs agrochemical analyses of soil samples for acidity, digestible phosphorus and potassium, mineral nitrogen (ammonia and nitrate), total nitrogen in soils, determination of active calcium, determination of humus and determination of the norm for liming acid soils.

In 2024, the laboratory received soil samples from 933 persons, 1,501 samples were made for 7,252 determinations (analyses). Of those, 1,449 soil samples were mainly in connection with the provision of the consulting packages under sub-measure 2.1.2 "Consulting services for small farms" under measure 2 "Consulting services, farm management services and farm replacement services" under RDP 2014- 2020, taken by TRO members during visits on site in the farms.

The soil samples received are primarily related to the cultivation of autumn crops, followed by vegetables and spring crops, as well as soil samples for the creation of perennial crops and for studying the nutritional value of unused lands for future use.

Based on the performed analyses, 1,103 recommendations for fertilization were prepared.

8.2.5. Activities under sub-measure 2.1.2 "Consulting services for small agricultural holdings"

The NAAS is the only advisory organization approved by the EC to provide advisory services to small agricultural holdings under the sub-measure 2.1.2 "Advisory services for small agricultural holdings" launched in 2016 under measure 2 "Advisory services, farm management services and farm replacement services" of the RDP 2014- 2020.

Under sub-measure 2.1.2, the NAAS provides six main advisory packages (AP) entirely free of charge, contributing to the economic development and the strengthening of small farms through modernization and technological renewal, as well as to improving environmental protection and combating climate change.

The provision of AP under sub-measure 2.1.2 includes on-site visits, assessment and analysis of the condition of farm holdings, as well as soil sampling for agrochemical analysis and preparation of recommendations for fertilization where applicable.

The total number of applications submitted for receiving advisory packages under the sub-measure in 2024 is 1,723, based on which 7,624 APs were provided and 1,688 written reports were prepared, including various types of consultations and detailed analysis, assessment and recommendations for the development of agricultural holdings.

8.2.6. Activities under Sub-measure 2.2 "Establishment of Consultancy Services"

In 2024 the implementation of the activities under the concluded contract continues from 2021 between NAAS, MAF and SFA-RA for the provision of a grant under the procedure for the selection of project proposals "Expanding the territorial scope of NAAS by creating mobile municipal centers (offices) for consulting services" under sub-measure 2.2 "Establishment of consulting services" under measure 2 "Consulting services, farm management services and farm replacement services" from the 2014- 2020 RDP.

In the structure of the Mobile Municipal Offices Directorate, by the end of 2024, 58 experts/advisors have been appointed, of which: 51 experts in the 28 mobile municipal offices (MMOs), 6 coordinators at the regional level and 1 coordinator at the central level.

The tasks of the experts/advisors from the MMOs are mainly related to providing consultations, including individual consultations to farmers and other interested parties. The consultations provided are on topics related to the measures of the RDP 2014-2020, the interventions of the SPRD 2023-2027; specialized consultations on crop production, animal husbandry and farm management; consultations related to the requirements for organic production and the possibilities for supporting organic producers; agrarian economics, schemes and measures for direct payments, registration and licensing regimes, legal and regulatory framework in agriculture and other consultations related to the activities of agricultural holdings.

The experts from the MMOs also conduct outreach visits in various settlements, in order to facilitate farmers' access to up-to-date and reliable information. On-site visits are carried out to agricultural holdings, during which advisors provide information and advice for the development of the specific holding and explain the conditions for applying under the Thematic Sub-Programme for Small Farms and other measures financed through the EAFRD.

In addition, the MMO Directorate organizes information events, providing an opportunity for a larger number of farmers and other interested parties to receive information about funding opportunities under various European and national programs. In 2024, under sub-measure 2.2 "Establishment of consulting services" of the

RDP 2014-2020, 9 types of information and specialized materials were printed with a total circulation of 22,400 copies.

8.2.7. Activities of the NAAS under intervention I.I.1. "Consulting services and increasing consulting capacity" from the SPARD 2023-2027

A contract was signed in August 2024 between the NAAS and the Ministry of Agriculture for the provision of advisory packages (AP) to farmers, applicants and/or approved beneficiaries under interventions II.E.1 "Start-up aid for the establishment of young farmers in agriculture", II.E.2 "Support for very small agricultural holdings" and II.E.3 "Start-up aid for the establishment of new farmers in agriculture" from the SPRD 2023–2027.

As a result, at the end of 2024, the NAAS launched the provision of the following SPs under intervention II.I.1. of the SPARD 2023 - 2027:

- AP No. 1: Providing advice targeted at young or new farmers to support them in applying for the interventions for which they are eligible (AP1);
- AP No. 2: Providing advice targeted at small and very small farmers for assistance in applying for the interventions for which they are eligible (AP2).

Advisory services include preparing and completing the business plan for application, calculating the points according to the selection criteria, preparing and completing the application for support, completing the required documents for the application for support and assisting in uploading them together with the farmer to the EMIS of the State Agricultural Fund.

From the start of the admission periods for granting AP 1 and AP 2 until 31.12.2024, 673 applications from farmers to receive these SPs have been submitted to the offices of the NAAS.

8.2.8. Common Agricultural Policy 2023-2027

In 2023, the implementation of the Strategic Plan for the Development of Agriculture and Rural Areas of Bulgaria for the period 2023-2027 (SPARD 2023-2027) began. It reflects the ten main objectives that the EU sets regarding the new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) in the social, environmental and economic spheres, including the goal of wider use of modern technologies, knowledge and innovations. The activities for stimulating knowledge and innovation exchange are supported in the Member States through the Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS), aimed at interaction between people and organizations, promotion of mutual learning, generation, sharing and use of knowledge and information related to agriculture.

The systems should include a wide variety of participants - farmers, advisers, researchers, educational and training institutions, raw material suppliers, retailers, media representatives, ministries, brought together in national or regional AKIS systems to generate and/or exchange knowledge. The connection between these persons is also carried out with the help of the advisory organizations in some of the EU member states, including and in Bulgaria through the NAAS. In support of the development of AKIS, the National Agricultural Service carries out targeted information, consultancy and advisory activities to help farmers, especially small ones, expand and modernize their farms, as well as to assist farmers in the absorption of funds under European and national support programs and schemes. Advisory services, sharing knowledge and skills, are key to enabling food system actors to become sustainable.

In 2024, the NAAS focused additional efforts in supporting the development of AKIS. This includes activities to transform and expand the existing "informal advisory councils" at the district level. (IACs) to the territorial offices of the Service in regional advisory AKIS centers, as well as the activities of the Service's mobile municipal offices as "AKIS sensors" to identify the needs of farmers. In 2024, changes were made to the work of the IACs, taking into account the inherent functions of the NAAS and the initiated implementation of the SPARD 2023-2027, and in particular the preparation for the functioning of the AKIS at the district level.

In order to develop and strengthen AKIS at the national level, the NAAS participates in a number of international projects under EU research and innovation programs.

8.2.9. International activity

NAAS is a member of the European Association of Agricultural and Rural Advisory Service Organizations (European Forum of Agricultural and Rural Advisory Services (EUFRAS) and South Eastern Europe Advisory Service Network (SEASN)).

In 2024, the Service took part in the following projects and programs:

- project "Promoting cross-border knowledge exchange and co-creation in the field of sustainable soil and farm management" (Soil-X-Change) under the Horizon Europe program. The main activities of the project are aimed at studying the results of the work of operational groups funded by EIP-AGRI and the knowledge gathered by the project partners, and subsequently the innovative practices will be disseminated and shared.
- project "EU Advisory Networks for Reducing Pesticide Use and Risks" (AdvisoryNetPEST) under the Horizon Europe program. The main objective of the project is to create and build on a network of advisory services across the EU, increasing knowledge exchange between advisors and across the AKIS, as well as the adoption of innovative solutions by farmers to reduce pesticide use and risks.
- project “Connecting advisers to boost interactive innovation in agriculture and forestry” (i2Connect) started in November 2019 under the Horizon 2020. The main goal of the project is the inclusion of farmers and forest users in interactive innovative processes. The project's website contains useful information on AKIS systems and interactive innovation practices;
- project “European-wide network of pilot farmers implementing and demonstrating climate smart solutions for a carbon neutral Europe” (Climate Farm Demo) under the Horizon Europe program. The project supports the implementation of agricultural practices for climate-smart (precision) farming across the EU to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 35%. This supports the implementation of the EU's 2030 Climate Plan;
- project “Modernization of agriculture through more effective and efficient Agricultural Knowledge and Information Systems (AKIS)” (ModernAKIS) under the Horizon Europe program. The project’s main activities aim to improve the capacity of the participants in the AKIS to operate the system more efficiently and to implement the transition towards sustainable management and use of natural resources in agriculture and forestry;
- project “Connecting and mobilizing the EU agricultural advisory community to support the transition to Climate Smart Farming” (ClimateSmartAdvisors) under the Horizon Europe program. Its implementation started in April 2023. The main objective of the project is to strengthen and reinforce the agricultural advisory community in the EU, resulting in climate-smart (precision) farming practices.
- project "Development of an application for end users for the monitoring and analysis of agricultural crops based on satellite observations and intelligent observations" (AGROMOAPP) under the Seventh tendering procedure of the European Space Agency Cooperating Countries Support Plan. The project is developing an Internet application (Agromo) for monitoring and analysis of three pilot agricultural crops (wheat, sunflower and corn), with a module for advisory services.

9. Hail Suppression

The geographical position and orography of the country predetermine Bulgaria as one of the countries in Europe with high frequency and power of hail processes.

In recent years, there has been an increase in the frequency and severity of hazardous phenomena such as hailstorms, floods, tornadoes and lightning. Predictions based on numerical models in different climate change scenarios confirm this increase in the future. One of the geographical areas where a significant increase in extreme cases is predicted is South Eastern Europe.

Bulgaria is one of the countries in Europe where the trend of increasing the frequency and strength of hail processes persists, despite the observed fluctuations in the degree of hail activity over the years.

The Executive Agency "Hail Safety" (HSEA) defends a territory with an area of almost 22 million decares with missile technology in the regions of Vidin, Montana, Vratsa, Pleven, Pazardzhik, Plovdiv, Stara Zagora, Haskovo and Sliven.

In 2024, anti-hail protection activities continue with an aircraft method for anti-hail impacts (seeding) of potentially hail-hazardous clouds in North-Central and North-Eastern Bulgaria on an area of about 30 million decares. The entire protected area during the year is approximately 52 million acres.

In 2024, through the constructed network of six dual-band meteorological Doppler radars (with a wavelength of 10 and 3 cm) and one single-band (10 cm wavelength) during the active season, real-time radar monitoring of atmospheric processes over Bulgaria is provided, necessary for a detailed analysis of the structure of hail clouds. The radar information serves for an ultra-short-term forecast of strong storms, lightning, downpours, hail and other unfavorable atmospheric phenomena over the territory of the country.

Meteorological radar information is transmitted around the clock to certain structures at the Ministry of Interior, Air Force, State-Owned Enterprise “Air Traffic Management”, the National Institute of Meteorology and Hydrology, State Enterprise “Management and Maintenance of Dams” and Sofia Municipality. The Agency's website provides constant meteorological information based on radar reflectivity. The available radar network can be used to monitor both summer, autumn, winter and spring atmospheric processes and associated precipitation.

Joint teams of HSEA and the Regional Directorates of Agriculture conduct surveys for hail damage in protected areas after each impact. The Agency receives information on the sown areas, the condition and the phase of development of the crops, harvested areas, average yield, etc.

Based on weather forecasts of the HSEA and the phase of development of agricultural crops in the protected territories in 2024 the active season for hail suppression with the rocket method on the territory of the country opened on April 10 and closed on October 1.

The active season for anti-hail protection by aircraft starts on May 1 and ends on October 1, 2024.

According to the methodology for determining the degree of hail activity (DHA) the active hail season in 2024 with a rocket method is defined as a "high degree of hail activity" for Southern and Northern Bulgaria.

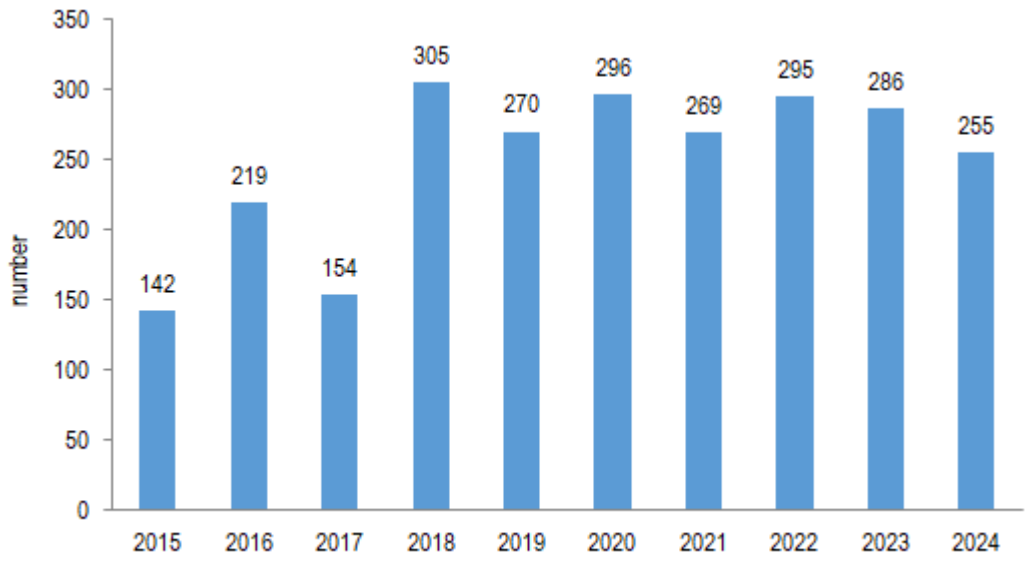
9.1. Active impacts with a rocket method

In 2024 255 impacts on city defense were carried out by rocket means in 63 days. The total number of hail clouds processed was 920, with a total processing time of over 216 hours. The seeding was carried out using 14,349 rockets.

In Northern Bulgaria, 80 impacts were carried out in 35 days, and 333 hail cells were processed with a total processing time of 79 hours and 18 minutes. In Southern Bulgaria, 175 impacts were carried out in 53 days and 587 hail cells were treated with a total treatment time of 136 hours and 59 minutes.

In April, the trend observed in recent years for the development of strong convective cloudiness, atypical for spring, and especially hail-threatening, is maintained. On seven dates - 12, 13, 17, 21, 24, 25 and 27, the impacts were carried out by the Regional Directorates "Fighting Hail" in both Southern and Northern Bulgaria. 18 actions were conducted, treating 79 hail clouds with a total treatment duration of over 19 hours. Of the seven days with impacts, with a massive nature of precipitation from hail and rain, April 25th stands out, when a supercell process developed in Southern Bulgaria.

Figure* V.10. *Actions of the hail suppression system with rockets in the period 2015 - 2024



Source: HSEA

The month of May is characterized by the development of cumulus-rainy clouds and hail processes develop within a total of 14 days. A greater frequency of processes was observed in the last ten days of the month, with 70 impacts being carried out. A total of 249 cells were processed and a total of 3,154 anti-hail missiles were fired. In Northern Bulgaria, 137 hail-hazard cloud cells were processed, with a processing duration of 1,949 minutes, and in Southern Bulgaria - 112 with a processing duration of 1,520 minutes. Massive hailstorms are developing across the country on May 8, 9, 12, 22, 29 and 30. A total of 176 hail cells were processed on these dates.

The month of June is the strongest month in terms of the development of hail processes. The high frequency of formation of hail-hazardous cumulonimbus clouds is characterized by longer duration and extremely intense development. Supercells are forming. The synoptic situation over the country is dynamic. Periods of high atmospheric pressure alternate with those with the passage of cyclones, local cyclonic eddies and the associated frontal systems. A total of 77 impacts were carried out in 17 days during the month, with their number being higher compared to the previous year (for 2023 - 55 impacts in 15 days). 277 hail hazard cells were treated for 4,703 minutes. The city processes that developed on June 5th and 6th, June 12th and 13th are distinguished by the greatest intensity and mass scale. On June 5-6, 47 hail cells with 1,082 missiles were treated with missiles. On June 12 and 13, supercells developed. There is hail in a number of areas such as Veliko Tarnovo, Lovech, Shumen and Stara Zagora. A state of emergency has been declared in individual municipalities.

In July, the processes are mainly associated with the passage of frontal systems through the country and a cyclonic pressure field. The days on which active impacts were carried out were 13. The seeded hail cells are 245 with a total processing time for the entire month of 3,019 minutes. The pressure field during the first half of the month is weakly gradient, cloudiness is observed, but it is not accompanied by precipitation. In many places, maximum temperatures reach over 40°C. In the second half of the month, between July 16 and 25, under the influence of passing baric valleys, powerful cumulus-rain clouds develop and active hail protection measures are carried out every day. For this period alone, 48 active interventions were carried out, with 174 cells being processed. A total of 62 active impacts were carried out during the month, and 245 hail cells with 3,258 missiles were treated.

The month of August, unlike previous years, is characterized by a low frequency of convective processes. A total of 20 city defense interventions were carried out in 9 days. The processing was carried out on 53 hail cells for 444 minutes. The majority of active impact operations, 18 in number, were carried out by the RDBG in Southern Bulgaria. In the treated cells, no well-defined vertical development is observed, with the

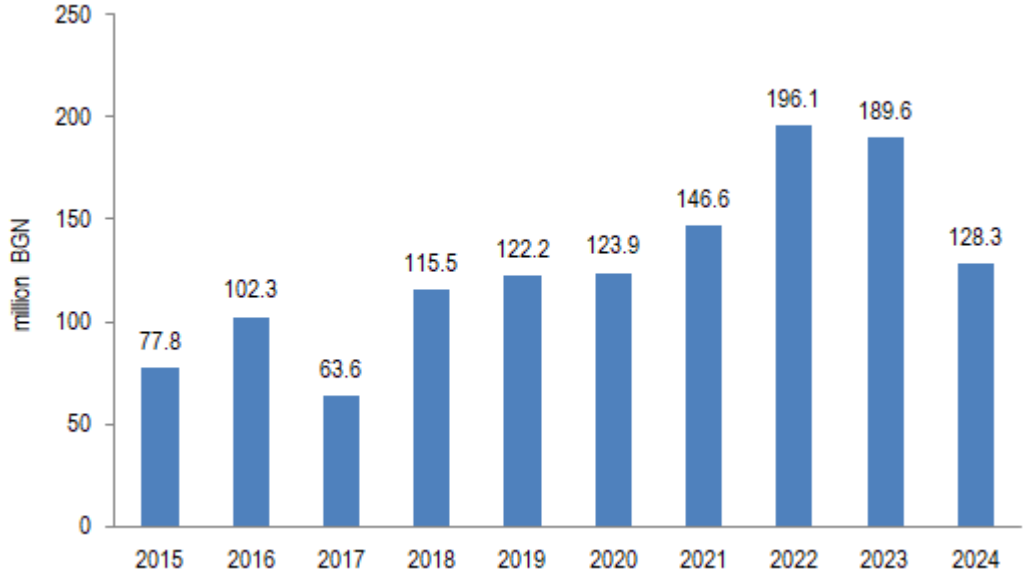
height of the region with a reflectivity of 15 dBZ being between 7.8 and 14.1 km. Precipitation from small hail was recorded on August 3, 15, 16 and 20, with no damage to agricultural production noted.

In September, circulation conditions bear the character of a gradual transition from summer to autumn. 8 impacts were carried out in only three days - September 5, 6 and 11. 17 hail cells were processed for 163 minutes. 153 missiles were used.

Throughout the season of cloud seeding, from the processed 920 hail hazard cells crop affecting hail occurred only from 13 processed cells. Of all 63 days in which impacts were carried out, damage to agricultural crops in the territory protected by the HSEA was registered on only 8 dates - April 25; May 8 and 22; June 1, 2, 5, 12 and 13. Hail damage to cultivated agricultural crops occurred on 10,367.25 ha with an average damage rate of 58.83%. Reduced to 100% damage, the area is 6,098.67 ha.

According to the adopted Methodology for determining the economic efficiency of hail protection, in 2024 the value of the saved production as a result of cloud seeding carried out using the rocket method by HSEA is estimated at BGN 128.3 million.

Figure* V.11. *Value of the production saved from hail using the rocket method during the 2015 - 2024 period, BGN million



Source: HSEA

The main causes of damage in territories protected with the rocket method in 2024 were:

- reduced concentration of artificial competitive ice-forming nuclei and disruption of seeding rates due to restricted firing over settlements (sectors with prohibited firing);
- insufficient seeding and interruption of treatment due to technical problems occurring at the rocket sites or command post during operation (accidents, shortage of rockets, software problems, etc.);
- insufficient amount of reagent due to the location of the seeding area being out of reach of the rocket sites.

9.2. Active impacts with the aircraft method

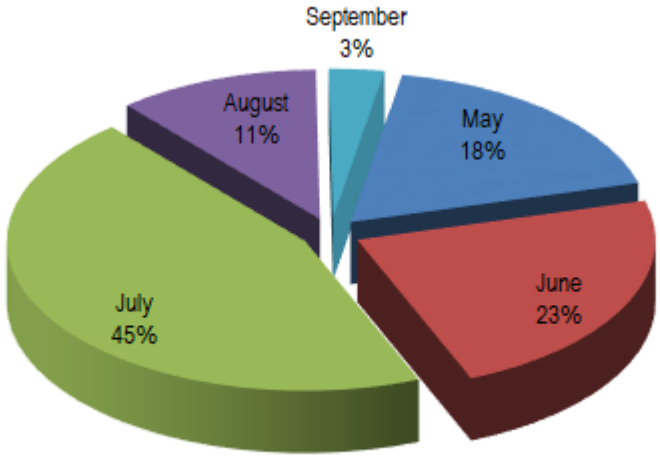
The radar operations center of the contractor under the contract for hail defense with aircraft is located in Sofia. The Unit for Technical and Line Maintenance of Aircrafts (consisting of engineers and technicians) and the Unit of Aircraft Pilots are located at the airport in the village Shtraklevo, Ruse region.

The Operations Center directs hail cloud seeding operations, applying an aircraft seeding methodology using analysis of storm development and structure through TITAN thunderstorm identification, tracking, analysis and ultra-short-term forecasting software. The trajectory is plotted and the altitude and flight speed of each aircraft is plotted based on the telemetry data from the aircraft's telemetry equipment. To assist in the process of

determining the most appropriate location and time for seeding hail clouds, an automated management system is used - ASU-MRL software. Aircraft- and ground-mounted radio communication equipment operating on a single radio frequency is used for voice communication between the radar operations center and the aircraft.

The project uses 3 aircraft equipped with a non-separable rod ignition system with silver iodide (AgI) reagent, located on the left and right half-wings, behind the engines. Two of the aircrafts are equipped with an AgI reagent pyropatron firing systems.

Figure V.12. Percentage distribution of the number of seeded hail cells by months of 2024



Source: HSEA

For the purpose of implementation of the anti-hail protection contract with aircraft in 2024, aircraft flights were permitted in the uncontrolled airspace up to 3,000 m, as well as the controlled airspace of the Republic of Bulgaria.

Of the 152 days of the active season for anti-hail protection by aircraft (May 1 - September 30, 2024), flights with seeds were carried out on 33 days, with a total of 145 hail cells being treated, and only patrol flights were carried out on 20 days.

A total of 1,366 sticks and 5,481 pyropatrons were used during the hail suppression period. The cost depends on the lifetime of the cloud cell in the hail-threatening stage and its power, as determined by its radar characteristics.

Damage to agricultural production in the territory defended by aircraft occurred on 9 dates: May 8, 12 and 22; June 3, 4, 11, 12 and 13; July 21. Based on protocols prepared by the municipal Agriculture services, hail damage during the hail protection period was found on 11,040.94 ha with an average damage rate of 50.60%. The area of completely destroyed areas, brought to 100%, is 5,587 ha.

The main causes of damage are:

- Restricting flights in controlled airspace that disrupts pyrotechnic handling;
- When powerful hail processes develop everywhere, in many places, far apart from each other, or when there is a need for continuous seeding of 1 cell with more than 1 aircraft, it is impossible to carry out the correct treatment of each hail cell due to the limited number of aircraft;
- With the emergence and rapid development of hail cells, due to the time required for the arrival of the aircraft, observing the instructions of the ATS and safety rules, the probability of late initial processing increases.
- Airplanes are certified to carry a certain number of seeding agents, which are used up in a very short time in the case of heavy fire processes. This in turn forces the planes to land for refueling, during which

time the city cells resume their natural development. This leads to interruption of the seeding and the inability to process the newly germinated cells.

- Impossibility of seeding cells entering the protected territory from the HSEA test sites in Northwestern Bulgaria and from South-Central Bulgaria (the buffer zone at Stara Planina), due to instructions to move away from the missile sites by 15 miles.

In 2024, the value of saved production as a result of active interventions by plane method is estimated at 29.4 million leva.

10. Reducing the Regulatory and Administrative Burden on Business

10.1. Applied Regulatory Regimes in the MAF System

In early 2025, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food made an annual review of regulatory regimes applied in the system in 2024. The review was aimed at identifying the opportunities to reduce the regulatory and administrative burden on businesses and citizens, creating better conditions for business development by improving access and improving the quality of public services, and achieving higher efficiency of public spending.

The main mechanism for achieving this goal is the elimination of unnecessary regulatory regimes and optimization of the procedures for their implementation, introduction of electronic administrative services and increasing the volume of publicly available information for business operators and citizens.

The expected results from the reduction of the regulatory burden on business are: increasing the competitiveness of Bulgarian agriculture; providing an opportunity for the business to plan the impact of regulation; stimulating the development of economic activity; ensuring equal conditions for conducting business and creating conditions for fair competition.

Following the review of the regulatory regimes in the MAF system, as of 31 December 2024, 173 regulatory regimes related to the regulation of economic activity in the field of agriculture, fisheries and forests were identified, including:

- licensing - 5;
- registration - 71;
- permits - 87;
- certificates - 3;
- notification - 3;
- coordinating - 4.

Of the total number of regulatory regimes, 43 were administered by MAF - Central Office, and the remaining 130 - by various structures of the ministry system.

10.2. Measures Taken in 2024 to Reduce the Regulatory and Administrative Burden on Businesses

In 2024, a number of actions were taken in the MAF system aimed at easing existing regulatory regimes in order to create an optimal business environment. Amendments and supplements to regulatory acts regulating economic relations in the agriculture, fisheries and forestry sectors have been adopted, which repealed 1 and eased 6 regulatory regimes, namely:

- By amending Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council, the licensing regime “Issuance of export refund certificates for certain agricultural products exported in the form of goods not included in Annex I to the Treaty” is abolished; A draft of the Legislative Decree of the Act on the Implementation of the Common Organization of the Markets in Agricultural Products of the European Union has been prepared, with which the changes will be transposed into national legislation.
- An amendment to the Agricultural Land Protection Act eases the permit regimes “Issuance of a decision for sites and routes of design objects” and “Issue of a decision to change the purpose of agricultural lands for non-agricultural needs”, reducing the scope of objects for which a decision is required. The

changes will not be applied until the ruling of the Constitutional Court on Constitutional Case No. 18/2023, initiated at the request of the President of the Republic of Bulgaria to establish the unconstitutionality of the provisions amending the Law on the Protection of Agricultural Lands.

- With the adoption of the Amendments to the Veterinary Medical Activities Act (published in the State Gazette, issue 23 of 19.03.2024) 4 regulatory regimes are eased, which transition from licensing to registration or permits. The licensing regime "|Issue of a license for the production of veterinary medicinal products (VMP) and/or active substances" is divided into "Issue of a permit for the production of a veterinary medicinal product (VMP)" and "Registration of manufacturers, importers and distributors of active substances used as starting materials in VMP". The licensing regime "Issuance of a license for wholesale trade in VMPs" becomes "Issue of a permit for wholesale trade in VLPs". The licensing regime "Issuance of a license for retail trade in VMPs" becomes "Issue of a permit for retail trade in VLPs". The licensing regime "Issuance of a license for the use of VMPs" is divided into "Issue of a permit for trading in VMPs" and "Issue of a certificate for registration of a homeopathic veterinary medicinal product". The separation of currently operating licensing regimes does not lead to an increase in the administrative burden, as no new regulatory regimes are created. Some of the above regulatory regimes eliminate some of the required documents.

11. Risk and crisis management in agriculture

In implementation of the measures set out in the Risk and Crisis Management Program in the Agriculture sector to limit the negative impact of the identified risks on the sectors of agriculture, forestry and fisheries, in 2024 actions were taken in the following main areas:

- Limiting the impact of the instability of agricultural products on the national market, the European Union market and international markets;
- Stabilization and increase of the incomes of the farmers and creation of conditions for development of efficient agricultural production;
- Limiting the potential hazards and managing the factors for outbreaks of infectious diseases in animals and plants;
- Limiting the potential risks of occurrence of floods and forest fires;
- Overcoming the harmful influence and material damages by the occurred sanitary crises in the animal husbandry and plant growing;
- Limiting the consequences and overcoming the harmful effects and losses for farmers from natural and climatic disasters, field and forest fires;
- Preservation and restoration of the biodiversity of river and sea basins and forests.

11.1. Sanitary risks

Sanitary risk management is aimed at creating a stable foundation for the development of agricultural production, protecting animal and human health, as well as protecting the environment and biodiversity.

In order to guarantee the health of animals and plants as primary production and that the foods offered on the market meet the safety requirements and compliance with the measures related to protecting consumers from the unregulated supply of unfit for consumption, the Bulgarian Food Safety Authority carries out constant planned control, which also uses laboratory analysis.

In implementing the National Plant Pest Monitoring Programs, the National Programs for Official Laboratory Monitoring of Food, Materials and Articles in Contact with Food, and the GMP of the Animal Disease Surveillance and Eradication Programs, in 2024, BGN 122,744 was paid through the Bulgarian Food Safety Agency for accreditation and re-accreditation of the laboratories of the Bulgarian Food Safety Agency.

Specific risks in the Livestock sector

In the structure of the activities carried out in implementation of the National Program for Prevention, Surveillance, Control and Eradication of Animal Diseases and Zoonoses in the Republic of Bulgaria for the period 2022 - 2024, the largest share is the vaccinations carried out - 39%, followed by clinical examinations of animals - 35% and blood samples - 26%.

The financial resources paid under the state aid "Aid for compensating for the costs of removing and destroying dead animals" for 2024 amounted to BGN 26 million, compared to BGN 13.6 million for the previous year.

Specific risks in "Plant Growing" sector

In order to limit the spread of quarantine pests and economically important pests on plants and plant products, in 2024 the ASF administered 5 state aid schemes for the Crop Growing sector, namely:

- Aid to compensate the costs of farmers related to the implementation of measures under the National Pest Control Program in perennials during the winter;
- Aid to compensate farmers for costs related to the implementation of measures to control soil pests on potatoes of the family Wireworms (Elateridae) Family;
- Aid to compensate farmers for costs related to the implementation of measures to control the Tomato leaf miner - Tuta absoluta Meyrick (Lepidoptera);
- Aid for certification of holdings in the fruit and vegetables sector under the GLOBAL G.A.P. standard.;
- Aid to compensate farmers for costs related to the implementation of measures under the "National Program of Measures for the Prevention of the Spread and Control of Grapevine Pests (genus Vitis).

The total amount of funds paid for state aid under the above-mentioned schemes for 2024 is BGN 11,501,533, which is 18.2% more than the previous year. Nearly 76% of the funds were provided under state aid for pest control in perennial crops.

Specific risks in Forest sector

The report on the financial resources spent by State Enterprises in 2024 shows an increase in funds for forest protection activities by 91% compared to the previous year, to 484,550 leva. Sanitary and forced fellings carried out in 2024 are 22% more on an annual basis.

11.2. Natural and climatic risks

In 2024, a total of 80,467,510 BGN were spent on preventing the harmful impact of natural and climatic factors, about 17 million BGN or 27% above the level of the previous year. The largest amount of financial resources is for hail protection - 45,763,588 leva (nearly 57% of the total financial resources for the year), which marks an increase of 39.5% on an annual basis.

Table V.17. Financial resources spent on preventing the harmful impact of natural and climatic factors during the period 2022 - 2024.

Risk	Risk management measures	2022	2023	2024
Hail - Reduction or destruction of agricultural production, damage to infrastructure and settlements	Implementation of hail protection	37,274,815	32,811,118	45,763,588
Floods - Reduction or destruction of agricultural production, infrastructure and settlements	Post-flood prevention - cleaning, maintenance and repair and restoration works on sites to protect against the harmful effects of water - dikes, river corrections, drainage canals and drainage pumping stations	26,462,501	29,300,000	33,375,243

Risk	Risk management measures	2022	2023	2024
Forest fires	Prevention of fires in forest areas - mineralized strips, silvicultural and barrier fences, fire observation towers, etc.	1,712,790	1,397,402	1,328,679
	Total	**65,450,106**	**63,508,520**	**80,467,510**

Source: MAF

Control and supervision activities in the Fisheries sector

Within 2024, the Executive Agency for Fisheries and Aquaculture carried out a total of 20,192 inspections to improve control and supervision activities regarding the exploitation of natural resources - fish and aquaculture (compared to 5,727 in the previous year). This includes 3 inspections for the protection of white sand mussel populations and their sustainable exploitation (inspections during the ban period) and 1,235 joint inspections with the Border Police, Maritime Administration, RIEW, BFSA, IAG, associations and other organizations.

By type of activities, the most inspections were carried out during the unloading of a fishing vessel in a port (3,309) and at establishments selling fish and other aquatic organisms (1,597).

As a result of the inspections, a total of 1,208 violations were identified during the year (compared to 3,170 for 2023).

11.3. Economic risks

The main tools used to manage economic risks in the agricultural sector are: the interventions from the SPARD 2023-2027 for direct payments and the wine sector, financed with European and national funds, as well as some state aid schemes.

Direct payments are aimed at supporting farmers' incomes and stimulating the development of agricultural production.

Within 2024, a total of BGN 12,537,031 was paid for the prevention of economic risks in the form of de minimis state aid in the sectors “Animal Husbandry”, including bees, and “Plant Production”, supporting 2,061 agricultural producers (compared to BGN 46,399,437 and 30,184 agricultural producers supported in the previous year, respectively).

During the year, 4,084,600 leva were paid as state aid for participation in exhibitions and fairs in the sectors “Animal Husbandry”, “Plant Production” and “Food Industry”, 6.5% more on an annual basis.

In 2024, of the budget set for the year for the implementation of interventions in the wine sector under the SPARD 2023-2027 in the amount of BGN 50.3 million, about BGN 22.5 million or 44.7% were paid (about 21.6% less compared to 2023, when the funds were paid under the measures of the National Program for Support to the Wine Sector 2019-2023).

Table V.18. Financial resources disbursed in 2024 to support farmers and operators in the Fisheries sector to overcome the negative consequences of the Russian invasion of Ukraine

Measure	Normative basis	Financial resource (BGN)		
		Total	Including:	
			EU funds	State budget
Aid to support the liquidity of farmers to overcome the negative economic impact of Russian aggression against Ukraine and Aid to support the costs of water for irrigation in the cultivation of agricultural crops - total including:	Temporary framework of state aid measures in crises and transitions to support the economy following Russia's aggression against Ukraine	663,826,734		663,826,734
“Animal Husbandry” Sector		163,657,806		163,657,806
Plant Growing Sector		162,353,760		162,353,760

Measure	Normative basis	Financial resource (BGN)		
		Total	Including:	
			EU funds	State budget
Grain Production Sector		327,070,000		327,070,000
Irrigation water costs		10,745,168		10,745,168
Support to the Fisheries sector in order to mitigate the consequences of the war in Ukraine	Redistribution of funds between MAFP measures	11,107,984	8,325,250	2,782,735
TOTAL		**674,934,718**	**8,325,250**	**666,609,468**

Source: MAF

In order to limit the negative consequences of increasing production costs in the Agriculture sector, the state budget of the Republic of Bulgaria annually approves a certain amount for a discount on the excise duty on gas oil used in primary agricultural production. During the period 2021-2024, this budget amounts to 100 million leva per year.

The measure is implemented through the state aid scheme “Aid in the form of a discount on the value of excise duty on gas oil used in primary agricultural production”. In 2024, nearly 99.2 million leva were paid to 14,640 farmers under the scheme.

To overcome the negative consequences of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, in 2024, farmers and operators in the Fisheries sector were supported with a total of BGN 674.9 million.

11.4. Measures to manage crises in agriculture

In 2024, the following local sanitary crises and crisis situations caused by natural disasters in the Livestock and Crop Growing sectors were declared in the country:

- Local sanitary crises have been declared for the “Animal Husbandry” sector in several areas of the country, related to the diseases avian influenza, African swine fever, small ruminant measles, anthrax, small ruminant plague, equine infectious anemia, West Nile fever, kennel cough, and rabies. Among the crises in the “Livestock” sector are also described the crisis situations caused by natural disasters - unfavorable meteorological events;

- In the "Plant Growing" sector, crisis situations have been declared throughout the country, caused by adverse weather conditions and natural disasters - frost, sleet, storm, torrential, heavy, continuous rain with hurricane-force winds, flooding, waterlogging of agricultural areas, hail and drought.

In order to overcome the crisis situations that have arisen (sanitary crises and natural and climatic disasters) and cover the damage caused to farmers, financial resources totaling 18,456,781 BGN were paid out in 2024.

Table V.19. Disbursed financial resources in 2024 related to crises in the "Plant Production" and "Animal Production" sectors

Name of the crisis event	Financing (BGN)	
	EU funds	State budget
Sanitary crises		
Highly pathogenic avian influenza	7,600,747	138,167
African swine fever	0	79,950
Small ruminant measles	0	445,822
Anthrax	0	0

Name of the crisis event	Financing (BGN)	
	EU funds	State budget
Plague on the ruminants	0	11,119
Equine infectious anemia	0	0
West Nile fever	0	0
Colic fever	0	0
Medi-visna	0	0
Natural and climatic crises		
Animal husbandry		
State aid to compensate for damage caused by adverse weather conditions in 2023 suffered by farmers raising livestock and bee colonies		239,010
De minimis aid to compensate for damage from fires that occurred in 2024.		1,368,534
De minimis individual aid to compensate for damage from fires that occurred in 2024.		267,391
Plant breeding		
State aid to compensate for damage to agricultural crops in 2023 caused by adverse climatic conditions that can be assimilated to natural disasters		2,276,957
State aid to compensate for damage to agricultural crops in 2023 caused by adverse climatic conditions that can be assimilated to natural disasters		352,569
State aid to compensate for damage to agricultural crops in 2022 caused by adverse climatic conditions that can be assimilated to natural disasters		182,500
State aid to compensate for damage to agricultural crops in 2024 caused by adverse climatic conditions that can be assimilated to natural disasters		5,494,017
Total: 18,456,781 leva	**7,600,747**	**10,856,034**

Source: MAF

VI. FORESTRY

1. Characteristics of Forest Areas

As of 31.12.2024, the total area of forests and forest territories in Bulgaria amounted to 4,283,668 ha, of which 3,939,110 ha are forested areas (including squatter forests).

The area of forest territories is 3,952,622 ha, of which 2,891,211 ha (73.2%) are state-owned forest territories managed by state-owned enterprises under Art. 163 of the Forest Act, 172,484 ha (4.4%) state forests managed by the Ministry of Environment and Water (including reserves and maintained reserves - 33,508 ha; Rila National Park - 53,480 ha; Pirin National Park - 40,332 ha and Central Balkan National Park - 45,164 ha), 11,271 ha (0.3%) state forest territories provided for management by Educational and Experimental Forestry Farms, 441,018 ha (11.2%) forest territories - owned by municipalities, 377,580 ha (9.6%) forest territories - owned by individuals and 59,058 ha (1.5%) forest territories - owned by legal entities (including 16,117 ha forest territories - owned by religious communities).

The area of agricultural territories possessing the characteristics of a forest within the meaning of Art. 2 of the Forest Act (forests on agricultural territories) was 331,046 ha, including: 26,958 ha (8.1%) forests on agricultural territories - state property, 189,213 ha (57.2%) forests on agricultural territories - municipal property, 82,008 ha (24.8%) forests on agricultural territories - property of individuals, 11,751 ha (3.6%) forests on

agricultural territories - property of legal entities (including 2,188 ha forests on agricultural territories - property of religious communities) and 20,652 ha (6.2%) forests temporarily managed by the municipality. The remaining 464 ha are agricultural territories with unclear ownership.

The total forest area is 3,531 ha more compared to 2023. The forested area has increased by 2,970 ha, mainly due to newly inventoried territories that have the characteristics of a forest within the meaning of the Forestry Act.

The area of forest territories is 973 ha less compared to 2023.

The area of forests on agricultural lands increased by 4,504 ha.

An increase in the area of state forest territories by 1,313 ha was reported, which is mainly due to the inventory of newly forested territories, purchases by state enterprises of forests owned by individuals, as well as administrative proceedings to change the intended use from agricultural to forest territory. The area of the Educational and Experimental Farms is 2 ha more than the previous year.

The area of municipal forest territories decreased by 253 ha due to completed administrative proceedings for change of purpose under the Forestry Act. In addition, when conducting new inventories, part of the forests, reflected in previous inventories as forest territories, are refined and attributed to agricultural territories due to unfinished administrative proceedings and lack of grounds for their inclusion in forest territories.

The area of state forests managed by the Ministry of Environment and Water is 122 ha more than in 2023, with the increase due to adjusted areas of the “Elenova Gora” reserve and the maintained “Chamdzha” reserve.

The non-timber productive area increased by 1,698 ha, to 307,579 ha. The unforested forest area is shrinking by 1,137 ha - from 38,116 ha to 36,979 ha, as a result of new afforestation and self-forestation.

Despite the emergence of self-forested areas, the forested area of coniferous forests is 7,006 ha less than the previous year. This was due to the fellings made in connection with biotic attacks of bark beetles and mass drying of pine crops outside the area, which were subsequently reforested with native deciduous species, to the continuing increase in mixed coniferous-deciduous plantations obtained after the creation and subsequent management of coniferous stands, as well as the policy pursued in recent years for the transformation of coniferous plantations and stands created outside their natural range. This trend will continue in the future.

Deciduous high-stemmed forests were 4,119 ha more compared to the previous year, due to the conversion of shoot stands to high stem ones, afforestation of post-fire areas, windfalls, self-afforestation of unforested forest areas, reassessment of coniferous stands and low-productivity plantations and transformation of coniferous forests into deciduous.

Coppice forests for conversion increase by 9,237 ha after newly inventoried plantations and re-evaluated coniferous crops mixed with broadleaf coppice species and low-stemmed plantings.

Low-stemmed forests decreased by 3,376 ha, due to the reassessment of some of the acacia and hornbeam plantations, in which other coppice and/or high-stem tree species predominated.

The general use of regeneration loggings and thinnings for the forest territories, carried out in 2024, amounted to 5,626,921 cubic meters of standing mass, which is equal to 70.3% of the foreseen under the forestry plan (forest development project) 8,000,527 cubic meters of standing wood.

Of these, 3,019,823 cubic meters were from regenerative felling. The implementation of the regenerative felling compared to the planned ones according to the forestry plan (4,711,385 cubic meters) was 64.1%.

2,607,098 cubic meters were harvested from maintenance fellings, which represents 79.3% of the planned forestry plan (3,289,142 cubic meters).

The annual use in the forest territories - state property amounted to 4,454,698 cubic meters of standing mass or 71% of the 6,273,015 cubic meters of standing mass envisaged in the forestry plan (forest management project).

The annual use of forests provided to educational experimental forest farms amounted to 36,682 cubic

meters of standing mass (94.9% of the planned amount); from municipal forest territories - to 447,983 cubic meters of standing mass (43.8% of the planned amount); and from forests owned by individuals and legal entities - to 684,082 cubic meters of standing mass (103% of the planned amount).

The annual use of forests on agricultural territories is in the amount of 31,317 cubic meters of standing mass.

2. Changes of Forest Areas

In 2024, the following changes took place in the forest territories of the country:

- 3 administrative acts for change of the purpose of land properties in forest territories pursuant to art. 14 of the Forest Act (repealed), with a total area 15.63 ha, with a price for the change of BGN 3,962,505.00, were issued. Funds for compensatory afforestation in the amount of BGN 195,633.15 were allocated. Two administrative orders were issued to terminate administrative proceedings for a change of intended usage. An administrative act for a change of purpose has expired rights on the basis of Part 19, Paragraph 7 of the Land Use Act (repealed), because the due price for a change of purpose has not been paid within the three-month period from the delivery of the administrative act;
- 33 administrative orders were issued for preliminary approval of a change in the intended usage of land properties in forest territories, with a total area of 138.6 ha, pursuant to Art. 75 (3) of the Forest Act; 1 administrative act has been issued, terminating administrative proceedings on change of purpose;
- 38 administrative orders for the change of the intended usage of land properties in forest territories pursuant to art. 77 of the Forest Act, with a total area of 28.45 ha, with a price for the change of BGN 1,134,734.38, were issued. Funds for compensatory afforestation in the amount of BGN 65,093.83 were allocated. According to one of the issued decisions, the rights of the company in whose favor the purpose was changed were extinguished by law, due to the expiration of the statutory deadline for payment of the due funds and lack of data on paid due amounts. In this regard, the administrative acts that have entered into force for the change of purpose have a total area of 27.95 ha, with a price for the change of purpose in the amount of 1,064,155.38 leva and certain funds for compensatory afforestation in the amount of 65,093.83 leva;
- The purpose of 15.86 ha of forest territories was changed free of charge, pursuant to Art. 73, Para. 5 of the Forestry Act, for the construction of 1 national site and 12 municipal sites of primary importance, and 13 administrative acts were issued, establishing already arising rights and obligations. The allocated funds for compensatory afforestation for 2 of the cited areas were BGN 39,010.83;
- 4 administrative orders were issued for acquisition of the right of ownership over 0.12 ha of forest territories - private state property, representing built-up and normatively determined adjacent area of buildings, structures, networks and facilities, by the order of § 123, para. 3 of the TFP to the Act amending and supplementing the Forest Act, with a total sale price of the land properties of BGN 11,693.00 and overheads in the amount of BGN 233.86. 2 administrative acts have been issued refusing to purchase the legally defined adjacent area;
- 149 administrative orders for the change of the intended usage of land properties (with total area of 6,444.37 ha) from agricultural to forest territory pursuant to art. 81 of the Forest Act were issued. The change of purpose was carried out free of charge;
- 4 administrative acts have been issued to record as forest territory land properties with a total area of 3.43 ha, whose purpose has been changed in accordance with the Land Use Act, but the rights to purchase them have been extinguished by virtue of the law.

3. Management of Forest Areas

The management, use and protection of forests is aimed at the formation and maintenance of living and multifunctional forest ecosystems, creating conditions for their natural regeneration and improving their sustainability.

3.1. Afforestation and Protection against Erosion and Torrential Rains

In 2024, EFA's activities in this area were focused mainly on the following areas:

- Implementation of the goals and indicators set in the EFA program and budget;
- Fulfillment of Bulgaria's obligations arising from the membership in the European Union in the field of forest reproductive materials (FRM);
- Approval and registration of basic sources for FRM, registration of FRM suppliers, testing and qualification of seeds and improving the condition of the forest seed production base;
- Maintaining a database of the performed inventories of the created forest crops; of fires, unrenewed fellings and forests destroyed by other natural impacts; of large-scale fortifications; the compensatory afforestation activities and register of forest nurseries in the country;
- Performing control activities;
- Coordination of projects for biological reclamation in forest areas, preparation of answers and opinions;
- Preparation of drafts of normative documents.

Table VI.1. Implemented activities for creation of forests in 2024

No.	Types of activities	Measure	Implementation for 2024
1.	Collected and harvested seeds by TD SF/SH	kg	40,634
2.	Produced saplings in state forest nurseries	thousand	8,623.65
3.	Afforested areas, including	ha	923.85
	- State-owned enterprises	ha	905.2
	- municipalities	ha	14.35
	- private	ha	4.3
4.	Developing stands in state forest territories	ha	703.7
5.	Growing stands in state forest territories	ha	9,823.9
6.	Average percentage of survival of planted trees		
	a) state-owned property		
	- annual	%	55.12
	- biennials	%	58.33
	- triennials	%	63.16
	b) municipal-owned property		
	- annual	%	60.88
	- biennials	%	72.72
	- triennials	%	68.75
	c) private property		
	- annual	%	63.09
	- biennials	%	51.07
	- triennials	%	54.12

Source: EFA

The following activities were performed in 2024:

- Reports with a database regarding the conducted inventories of the created forest stands; of existing post-fire areas, unrestored clearings and forests destroyed by other natural impacts; the available large-scale strengthenings were prepared and recommendations to eliminate the omissions and errors were given;
- The price of the compensatory afforestation was determined and orders were issued by the Minister of Agriculture and Food and the Executive Director of the EFA;
- 7 projects for reclamation of disturbed terrains in forest territories were approved;

- The public register of forest nurseries in the country has been updated, and as of 31.12.2024, there are 167 registered forest nurseries on the territory of the country, of which 148 are state-owned;
- The National list of approved and registered sources for production of FRM was updated;
- 7 information documents have been prepared for the movement of forest reproductive materials for the purpose of trade from the Republic of Bulgaria to the Republic of Austria and the Kingdom of Spain;
- 28 new baseline sources from the FRM production category have been approved and registered on an area of 160.4 ha, meeting the minimum requirements of Directive 1999/105/EC, and 18 baseline sources on an area of 160.4 ha have been cancelled;
- Specialists of the State Environmental Protection Agency carried out 516 control checks of the condition and activities carried out in the registered basic sources for FRM on an area of 5,447 ha;
- A total of 180 certificates have been issued by experts in the RDG and GSS to identify the origin of FRM;
- In the seed control laboratories of the FSC stations in Sofia and Plovdiv 202 seed control certificates were issued for batches of seeds of deciduous and coniferous species;
- The seed storage facility for long-term storage at the Plovdiv State Agricultural Research Center stores 1,036.1 kg of seeds from 227 batches of conifers and 9 batches of broadleaf species;
- Sofia FSCS kept 220.62 kg of seeds of different origins from 44 tree and shrub species as a seed collection for its bank. 18.5 kg of 7 tree species were stored in Plovdiv FSCS.

To protect forest areas from erosion and torrential rains, 511.5 ha of anti-erosion afforestation were carried out.

BGN 19.2 million was spent on afforestation measures and protection from erosion and heavy rains in state forest territories.

A total of 21 million leva has been allocated for the implementation of afforestation and protection against erosion and torrential rains in state forest areas in 2025.

3.2. Logging in Forests

In 2024, thinnings were carried out on an area of 38,351.3 ha in state forests, which represents 51.6% of the FEP/FMP projections, to regulate the tree composition and to improve the growing conditions. Of the clearance fellings carried out, 48.9% were in coniferous forests, 33% in broadleaf tall-stemmed forests and 18.1% in coppice forests for conversion into seed forests. The execution of thinnings without material extraction on an area of 1,399 ha was 44.7% of the FEP/FMP projections. By type of clear-cutting, the implementation of FEP/FMP is 43.2% for clearings, 33.1% for clearings, 41.8% for thinnings and 60.2% for samplings.

During the year, selective fellings were carried out on an area of 809.6 ha, thus fulfilling 70% of the FEP/FMP projections.

Two control inspections of the marking and selection fellings in seed production plantations on a total area of 1,520 ha were carried out by FSCS experts;

Within 2024, clear-cutting was carried out in non-state forests on an area of 5,512.5 ha, of which: 3,459.6 ha in municipal forests, 1,675.9 ha in forests owned by individuals, 290.2 ha in forests owned by legal entities and 86.8 ha in forests owned by religious organizations.

In state forests, pruning of standing trees was carried out to improve the quality of the wood produced and support the process of natural self-pruning of tree stands on 1,178.2 ha, 681.8 ha less than the estimate for the activity for 2024. Natural regeneration was supported on an area of 6,383.2 ha (55.5% of the FEP estimates), 8,063.4 ha less than the implementation in the previous year. A logging fund of 5,019,465 cubic meters of standing timber has been marked, or 81,030 cubic meters less than in 2023.

For the implementation of activities related to the management of forest territories - state property, in 2024, the State Enterprises spent a total of 5.5 million leva.

The total amount of funds planned for the implementation of management activities in 2025 is 9.3 million leva.

4. Use of Wood and Non-wood Forest Products

4.1. Use of Wood

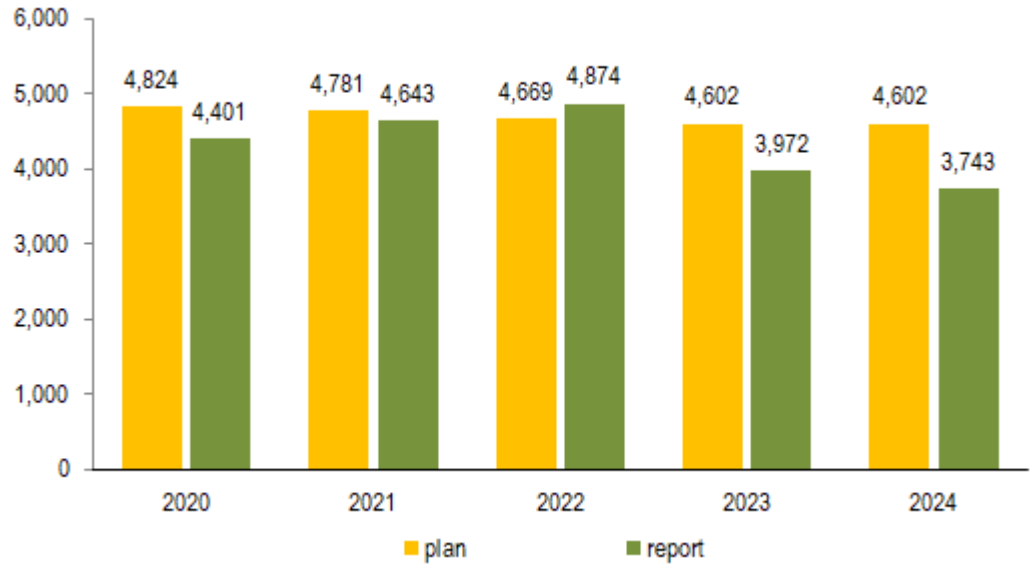
According to EFA data, in 2024, wood production from all forest areas amounted to 4,736,011 cubic meters.

In 2024, the state enterprises under Art. 163 of the Forest Act have sold a total of 3,743,461 cubic meters of wood from forest areas - state property or 81% of the planned amount. The sold wood was 229 thousand cubic meters less than in 2023.

The sold wood, affected by abiotic and biotic factors, amounted to 157 thousand cubic meters, or 4% of all sales.

Total revenue from wood sales in 2024 amounted to BGN 337.3 million, 19.4% less year-on-year. The total costs of using wood are worth 107.1 million leva, 16.5% below those reported in 2023, and they also include deductions from the selling price of wood to the Forest Investment Fund in the amount of 14.4 million leva.

Figure VI.1. Planned and reported wood sold from the forest territories - state property for the period 2020 - 2024, thousand cubic meters



Source: MAF

In 2024, 53% of the total quantities of wood were sold through the sale of harvested wood from storage. The remaining 47% was realized through the sale of standing timber to individuals for personal use and to legal entities after holding auctions. To meet the needs of individuals, a total of 529 thousand cubic meters of wood, mainly firewood, were sold at the price list, which is 180 thousand cubic meters or 25% less than in 2023.

The volume of wood provided in 2024 under long-term contracts concluded by state-owned enterprises is 299.6 thousand cubic meters of standing wood and 220.4 thousand cubic meters of harvested wood, and the total quantity represents 14% of the wood sold, with this share increasing by 3 percentage points compared to the previous year.

After electronic tendering, sales for a total of 1,327 thousand cubic meters of wood from state forests were realized during the year, with 495 thousand cubic meters less than in 2023.

The weighted average reported sales prices of wood from state-owned forest territories, from stock and at the root, are respectively 111.73 BGN/cubic m and 67.43 BGN/cubic m, decreasing respectively by 12%

(15.46 BGN/cubic m) and by 6.5% (4.68 BGN/cubic m). Average costs for timber harvesting remain approximately the same as the previous year.

According to the financial plans of the state-owned enterprise for 2025, the total use of wood is expected to be 4,382,765 cubic meters.

Table VI.2. Use of wood from forest areas provided for management by the State Enterprise and sales revenues in 2024

Method of use and sale	2023		2024			
			Quantity		Value	
	Quantity (cubic meters)	Value (thousands of leva)	cubic meters	Change versus 2023 (%)	BGN thousand	Change versus 2023 (%)
I. Income from the sale of wood (1+2+3+4):	**3,972,318**	**418,395**	**3,743,461**	**-6%**	**337,346**	**-19%**
1. Sale of standing wood	1,504,318	108,475	1,741,143	16%	117,401	8%
1.1. including, according to a price list to individuals for personal use	187,606	4,747	141,576	-25%	2,920	-38%
2. Sale of harvested wood	2,390,538	304,053	1,930,553	-19%	215,695	-29%
2.1. including. according to a price list to individuals for personal use	520,804	57,347	387,548	-26%	37,239	-35%
3. Use of wood under Art. 116b of the FA	7,318	x	4,646	-37%	x	x
4. Use of wood under Art. 193 of the FA	70,143	3,059	67,117	-4%	2,963	-3%
II. Total costs, quantity (I.1.+ II.1.), value II.(1+2+3):	**x**	**128,310**	**x**	**x**	**107,150**	**-16%**
1. Costs for wood harvesting - total:	2,510,469	98,569	1,992,162	-21%	78,962	-20%
2. Costs for construction of roads and current repairs of forest roads	263	1273	340	29%	1,322	4%
3. Deductions for the Forest Investment Fund	x	17,442	x	x	14,417	-17%

Source: MAF

4.2. Auxiliary Activities and Use of Non-Wood Forest Products

For 2024, state-owned enterprises report a total of BGN 20.3 million in revenues from side activities and non-timber forest products (no significant change compared to 2023) and corresponding expenses of BGN 16.2 million.

5. Protection of Forest Territories

5.1. Protection of Forest Territories from Diseases, Pests and Other Damages

In 2024 forest protection measures are planned for 42% of the surveyed damaged forest areas by the end of November 2023. The overall implementation of the forecast is within 89%. It is also planned to carry out aerial spraying on a total area of 1,787.1 ha, of which 1,070 ha against pine processionary moth and 717.1 ha against rusty pine leafhopper.

The ground chemical control carried out in forest nurseries and poplar crops in 2024 is 64% more than the estimated area. The overfulfillment is due to health problems that have arisen in forest nurseries and crops in various regions of the country, caused by drought, insect pests and diseases of poplars, willows and alders, weeds and parasitic vegetation. During the year, ground-based chemical control was also carried out against false caterpillars of the rusty pine leaf wasp, the number of which increased significantly in 2023 in the area of activity of the Varna Forestry Service (Sliven Regional Forestry Service, Nova Zagora Regional Forestry Service).

The implementation of the planned mechanical fight in 2024 is almost twice as much as planned. The distribution of the reported areas shows that 44% of the mechanical control was carried out against insects in coniferous crops, 39% against biotic damage in poplar, willow, alder and other broadleaf forests and plantations, 13% against damage from game, rodents and domestic animals and 4% in forest nurseries.

Sanitary and forced fellings were carried out on an area of 20,193 ha. Of these, 82% are in coniferous forests and 18% in deciduous forests. The largest share was in sanitary and forced fellings in forests damaged by abiotic factors (48%), followed by phytopathogenic fungi (45%). The share of reported sanitary fellings in forests damaged by stem insects and fires remains at the level of 2023, 4% and 3%, respectively.

The costs for performing the activities for protection against diseases, pests and other damages in the forest territories, managed by the state enterprises under art. 163 of the Forest Act, amounted to BGN 356 thousand.

A total of 666 thousand leva are planned for the implementation of activities to protect against diseases, pests and other damage in the State Forest Reserve in 2025.

Table VI.3. Conducted forest protection measures in 2024

Measure	Forecast 2024 (ha)	Report 2024 (ha)	Implementation (%)
Air combat	4,254	1,848.3	43%
Biological warfare	0	0	-
Ground chemical treatment, including:	415	680.9	164%
in forest nurseries	28.4	121.6	428%
in cultures	386.6	559.3	145%
Mechanical treatment	263.1	505.2	192%
Integrated treatment	6	0	-
Sanitary felling	16,872.7	20,193	120%
Total:	**21,810.8**	**23,227.4**	**106%**

Source: EFA

5.2. Forest Fire Protection

In 2024, a total of 595 fires occurred in the country's forest areas, affecting 17,116.4 ha. Of these, 1,462.4 ha were burned by peak fires.

The number of forest fires registered in 2024 is 150 more than in 2023, with the burned forest areas being 10,744.6 ha more.

The most fires occurred as a result of negligence in handling fire - 66% of the total number. For 25% of fires, the cause of their occurrence was not found, 3% were caused intentionally, 6% were caused by natural phenomena (lightning). A large part of the fires originated outside forest areas and then spread into them.

The largest forest fire was registered in the Elhovo State Forest Reserve area, affecting 4,181.4 ha. Other large fires occurred in Svilengrad, Hisar and Madzharovo.

During the year, the State Enterprises spent funds in the amount of BGN 1.329 million for the implementation of the activities for protection of the forest territories from fires. The main part of the reported costs were for the implementation of preventive activities, including the construction and maintenance of 2,029,049 meters of mineralized strips, 967,221 meters of forest barriers and 987,220 meters of barrier walls.

6. Protected Areas

According to the Protected Areas Act (PAA), there are 6 categories of protected areas in the country, and for 3 of them (nature park, natural landmark and protected area) management is shared between MAFF - EFA, MoEW and municipalities, and for the remaining 3 (reserve, maintained reserve and national park) - the administration and management is conducted by MoEW and its respective regional subdivisions, including the national parks directorates (Central Balkan NPD, Rila NPD and Pirin NPD) and regional environmental and water inspections.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food, the Forestry Executive Agency, as well as natural and legal persons and municipalities - owners of forests, lands and water areas in the protected territories of the categories: “nature park”, “natural landmark”, and “protected area” carry out their management, preservation, and protection, as per the provisions of the Environmental Protection Act and other special laws.

11 directorates have been established for the management of the nature parks - specialized territorial units at EFA: Belasitsa Nature Park, Bulgarka Nature Park, Vitosha Nature Park, Vrachanski Nature National Park, Golden Sands Nature Park, Persina Nature Park, Sinite Kamani Nature Park, Strandzha Nature Park, Rusenski Lom Nature Park Rila Monastery and Shumen Plateau Nature Park.

The MoEW and its regional bodies conduct and carry out control in the protected areas in relation to the activities of the owners or users of forests, lands and water areas and in compliance with the regimes established under the order of the Environmental Protection Act, the declaration order and the management plan of the respective protected area.

The control on the compliance with the regimes in the protected areas is also carried out by the directors of the regional forest administrations, state forestry farms, state hunting farms, and directorates of nature parks, as well as the mayors of municipalities.

The activities for the management of forest territories in protected areas and natural landmarks were carried out by the state forestry and hunting farms, depending on their territorial scope.

In 2024, the work of the nature park directorates continued to improve the conditions for tourism in the park territories. Repair and restoration works were carried out on the existing tourist infrastructure - bridges, interpretive trails, shelters, gazebos, recreation areas, fountains, etc. Information boards, marking of hiking traisl, etc. were renewed and restored.

All directorates of the natural parks have continued to actively work with volunteers, with whose help a number of activities have been implemented to restore and maintain the tourist infrastructure, clean up the park territories, renew the tourist markings, afforestation activities, etc.

On the territory of the Rusenski Lom Nature Reserve, together with volunteers, an old tourist trail from the 1980s has been restored - the most direct route from Ivanovo station to the parking lot under the rock church of the Holy Virgin and the beginning of the Gramovets eco-trail. The steps and railings to the tourist shelter in the Gramovets area, which was restored in 2023, have been repaired and restored. Throughout 2024, STPD Akademik - Ruse, supported by sponsors, volunteers and the Rusenski Lom Nature Reserve, continued to place directional and information signs within the boundaries of the Nature Park. Routes are marked year-round and 70 signposts have been placed.

On the territory of the Strandzha Nature Reserve, 5 signs have been repaired, 6 new information signs have been placed along the routes, and 4 century-old trees have been planted. The viewing point next to the chapel "St. Iliya" - village of Vizitsa, on "Gradishte" peak, all railings and viewing points along the routes of the "Mladezhka" river and "In the Kingdom of Zelenikata" and the "Indipasha" area have also been repaired.

On the territory of the Shumen Plateau Nature Reserve, young people from the Podobri Foundation, together with experts from the park, have renewed tourist markings along the Floristic Trail. Signs have been placed at the shelters and directions to the routes to the picnic areas have been provided. Scouts from both clubs have repaired the benches in front of Rusalka Cave, planted spring flowers in the Kyoshkovete Forest Park, and carried out numerous clean-up actions in various areas of the park. With the help of interns from Sofia University "Tr. Simeonov" paths to the Biserna cave were improved.

On the territory of the Vrachanski Balkan Nature Reserve, in 2024, 10 interpretive routes were repaired, markings along 10 tourist routes were renewed, 1 information point and 6 recreation areas were repaired, 4 information boards were replaced and another 5 were repaired.

Activities related to cleaning and renovation of the tourist infrastructure were carried out on the territory of the Vitosha National Park during the year. Over 250 elements of the park infrastructure have been refreshed - tables, benches, gazebos, bridges, grills, wooden fences, the stage at the Children's Ecostation "White Birches", the facade of the adaptation aviary, the metal railings at the Boyana Waterfall and at the stone river in the Zlatni Mostove area. More than 4,000 linear meters of ditches/water drains along the tourist trails have been cleaned.

A 400-meter-long alley has been restored. 11 wooden bridges/slats have been built, including a section of the wooden grating on the Priizvorni torpishte alley. 9 information boards, 15 tables and “Vitosha type” benches have been built. 3 tourist shelters have been cleaned and repaired in the areas of Raztovarishteto, Pleshti Dol and Mecha Polyana. Two fountains in the areas of Mecha Polyana and Maslovitsa have been repaired. 15 camp fires have been cleaned and stabilized, and over 25 unregulated ones have been eliminated. Over 100 metal directional signs have been made and installed in different parts of the Park - Cherni Vrah, Plateoto area, Goli Vrah, at the hut. "Aleko", on the route to Boyana Waterfall, etc. 7 forest first aid kits have been stocked with first aid materials.

In 2024, the Persina Nature Reserve was awarded first prize in the Living Danube'24 initiative, with the project proposal "The wetlands restoration brings Danube habitats back to life and forms the Danube nature'treasures".

In the visitor center of the Persina Nature Reserve, in 2024, the construction of a new module, a 3D model of a flooded forest habitat 91E0* Alluvial forests in real size, continued. The module will be built under the "Danube Wild Islands, Corridor of Habitats" project.

For over 15 years, the Directorate of Persina Nature Park has been organizing a summer educational internship entitled "Eco-Vacation" as part of the park's educational programs.

The employees of the Blue Stones Nature Park have been carrying out repair work on elements of the infrastructure on the territory of the nature park throughout the year. Directional and warning signs have been placed at some of the places most visited by tourists.

The Information Center of the Rila Monastery Nature Park hosted the students majoring in Ecology at the University of Technology, who annually conduct their regular practices on the territory of the nature park.

Traditionally, in the Iglikina Polyana area of the Vitosha National Park, "Shared Games" have been organized and held for children with special needs, jointly with the "Sofia - European Capital of Sport" Foundation and the "Vasil Levski" National Sports Association.

The Vrachanski Balkan Nature Reserve, within the framework of the long-term project "Restoring the Mountain Partridge Population", relocated 134 birds in 2024 (autumn), conducting a spring survey of the population status (transect method), an autumn survey (telemetry) and a winter survey (camera traps and feeders). The parks have a main flock of 84 birds in 2025. The park has also continued its activities in feeding the Egyptian vulture and reintroducing the griffon vulture. In 2024, over 80 griffon vultures were observed in the area monthly. A total of 18 pairs have been formed, which have successfully hatched and raised 16 griffon vulture chicks.

Monitoring was carried out on a project for the reintroduction of the European grebe. More than 68 active holes have been identified and their coordinates have been taken. Over 16 animals were observed during the period. The colony is developing successfully, with a sustained trend of displacement observed. her in the northeast direction.

On the territory of the Golden Sands Nature Reserve, rehabilitation of the tourist infrastructure was carried out, including repair of a 47 m electrical power cable in the Aladzha Monastery IPC, repair of bridges and railings to the Jordan Minkov and St. Sedmochislenitsi” and “1300 years of Bulgaria”, repair of 10 benches in front of the stage next to the administrative building, 1 board along the “Song of the Forest” route, a wooden floor was repaired on the “Forest Corner” viewing platform and repair of 36 panels of a decorative wooden fence marking the park boundary.

In the reproduction base for rare and endangered plant species of the Bulgarka NPD in Potok village and in the gene bank for orchard species, activities were carried out throughout the year on maintaining the material base, collecting seeds, preparing the grounds, planting activities, care during vegetation, pruning and pest control for fruit species.

NPD "Bulgarka" is presented in an international training program in the city of Hyderabad, India. The park's management took part in conducting ecological activities during the traditional "Bulgarian Seed" festival in the town of Sevlievo. For another year, experts from theNPD Bulgarka and forest educators from the North Central State Enterprise - Gabrovo have joined the "Fun Outside" fest initiative in Tryavna.

In 2024, the Strandzha Nature Reserve implemented activities to support the natural renewal of local species, reintroduction of flora and fauna species (trout, relict plant species from the Specialized Nursery), and took measures to limit the spread of invasive species - through mechanical removal. The Park Directorate also conducted a regular survey of the most sensitive and damaged coastal dune habitats and riparian wetlands.

Regular bird monitoring was carried out in NPD Rusenski Lom, which included checking known occupied nests of birds of prey, locating new territories occupied by birds of prey and scavengers and searching for new nests (Lesser spotted eagle, Egyptian vulture, Long-legged buzzard, Booted eagle), the occupancy of artificial nests was checked for Lesser spotted eagle; all known nests of Black storks were checked and inspections of new ones were conducted. The Park Directorate is also responsible for maintaining the optimal water level in the Kalimok-Brushlen Protected Area. On the platform built in 2021 to attract nesting pelicans on the territory of the protected area, a record was registered in 2024 - 92 pairs raised 110 little pelicans.

As part of a project funded by the Municipal Fund "Culture" of the Municipality of Shumen, the Shumen Plateau Regional Nature Park presented a book “The Underground Wonders of the Shumen Plateau” about the caves on the Shumen Plateau. For another year, the "Summer Forestry School" initiative has been implemented with the Regional Library in Shumen. The Shumen Plateau Nature Reserve has organized the Green Suns festival on the occasion of Midsummer Day.

The increased interest in the "Biserna" cave on the territory of the "Shumen Plateau" Nature Reserve continues, and in 2024 it was visited by over 4 thousand tourists.

In April 2024, the Rusenski Lom Nature Park traditionally celebrates Beaver Day, and as part of the Forest Week initiatives, a drawing competition for students on the topic "Conservation of the rich diversity of plant and animal species in the landscape of the Rusenski Lom Nature Park" has been announced.

During the year, the Golden Sands Nature Reserve has held ecological games and guided tours along children's educational routes "The Song of the Forest" and "The Jay's Home", where children have been introduced to the characteristics of some of the birds commonly found in the park, and have learned more about their lifestyle and their conservation. Ecological games were held, as well as talks about herbs at the educational "Herb Garden and Rock Garden". New games have been developed under the "Traveling with a Suitcase" project, aimed at children up to 6 years old.

Nature Reserve Sinite Kamani has created the Barbatos Children's Club and has organized camps for the children from the club. On them, the students tagged turtles rescued from the Wildlife Rescue Center in Stara Zagora, downloaded their biometric data and released them on the territory of the park. They observed vultures with binoculars and an optical tube and attended the ringing and marking of griffon vultures.

NPD "Belasitsa" is a partner in the "Grow a Chestnut" campaign, as well as in the organization and holding of a three-day event "Let's Get Green" in Podgorie.

In 2024, in addition to regular activities to maintain the diversity of ecosystems and protect biodiversity in the park, the Sinite Kamani Reserve continued activities to provide first aid to wild birds, turtles, hedgehogs, etc., after which it dispatched them to the "Wild Animal Rescue Center" - Stara Zagora.

All directorates of natural parks have continued to fulfill obligations related to the monitoring of conservation-significant plant and animal species included in the National Biodiversity Monitoring System.

Vrachanski Balkan Nature Reserve is a leading partner in the project "Eco Destination Iskar Gorge", under the program "Tourism Development in Northwestern Bulgaria and Along the Danube River", funded by the America for Bulgaria Foundation.

The Sinite Kamani Nature Reserve is a partner in the international project "Life for the Bearded Vulture" (project No. 101113869 LIFE22-NAT-BG-Bearded Vulture LIFE), launched in 2023.

NPD "Persina" has implemented and reported 3 projects.

In 2024, the EFA prepared and submitted to the Ministry of Environment and Water opinions on the basis of Art. 36, para. 2 of the Protected Areas Act (PAA) on procedures for declaring 10 protected areas and 5 natural landmarks to the Ministry of Environment and Water:

- Protected area "The Spring of the White-footed Girl", falling within the territory of the village of Rogozinovo, Harmanli municipality, Haskovo district;
- "Golyama Syutka" protected area, falling within the territory of the town of Rakitovo, Rakitovo Municipality, Pazardzhik District;
- "Grancharitsa" protected area, falling within the lands of the villages of Grashevo and Krastava, Velingrad municipality, Pazardzhik district;
- Protected area "Ognyanovo - Sinitevski rid", falling within the lands of the villages of Sinitovo and Ognyanovo, Pazardzhik municipality, Pazardzhik district;
- "Rainovska koriya" protected area, falling within the territory of the village of Raynovo, Dimitrovgrad municipality, Haskovo district;
- Silistar Protected Area, falling within the lands of the villages of Rezovo and Sinemorets, Tsarevo Municipality, Burgas Region;
- Natural landmark "Provrtenika", falling within the territory of the town of Lukovit, Lukovit Municipality, Lovech District;
- Natural landmark "Yew site in Elenska Glava", falling within the territory of the village of Borov Dol, Tvarditsa municipality, Sliven district and recategorization into a protected area;
- Natural landmark "Sand Dunes - 5 pieces" and natural landmark "Sand Dunes - Babata area - Sunny Beach" and increasing the area of the newly designated protected area;
- Protected area "Locality of Rhodope Silivryak", in the land of the village of Gornoslav, Asenovgrad municipality, Plovdiv region;
- Natural landmark "Dushan River Waterfall", in the land of the villages of Dzhanka and Krasino, Krumovgrad municipality, Kardzhali region;
- "Dupkata" protected area, in the territory of the town of Ivaylovgrad, Ivaylovgrad Municipality, Haskovo District;
- Natural landmark "Snowdrop Site" and declaration of a protected area "Elvezievo Snowdrop Site", in the land of the town of Ivaylovgrad, Ivaylovgrad Municipality, Haskovo District;
- Lavdan Protected Area, in the land of the village of Evrenozovo, Malko Tarnovo Municipality;
- Protected area "Field of Urumovo tulip in the "Lalikoto" area, land of the village of Terziysko, Sungurlare municipality, Burgas region.

7. Forest certification

As of the end of February 2025, the total area of certified forest areas under the FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) system in the country is 2,405,444 ha. The area of state forest territories certified under the FSC system, managed by state enterprises under Article 163 of the Forestry Act, is 2,385,896.1 ha, equivalent to 90% of the total forested territory managed by them in the country, with 28 certified units. The area of municipal forest areas certified under the FSC system, managed by municipalities, is 19,548 ha or 5% of the total forested area managed by them in the country, with 2 certified units.

The area of state forest territories certified under the PEFC system (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification) managed by state enterprises under Article 163 of the Forestry Act is 245,025 ha, equivalent to 9% of the total forested territory managed by them in the country, and the certified unit is one - the Northwestern State Forest Enterprise, with 18 territorial divisions within the scope of the certificate.

According to the PEFC electronic information portal, as of February 28, 2025, 78 certified units hold a PEFC - Chain of custody wood traceability certificate.

8. Inventory and planning in forest areas

In 2024, the following major activities were carried out in this direction:

- Meetings of the commissions for inventory and planning in forest territories under Art. 34, para. 1 of Regulation No. 18/07.10.2015 on carrying out an inventory of forest territories regardless of their ownership, developing a forest management map, a hunting management plan and a plan for the activities to protect forest territories from fires, in the area of activity of the relevant territorial division, as well as developing a forest management plan for the state forest territories falling within the same area of activity in 2024/2025 for territorial divisions of state forest farms "Pleven", "Breznik", "Zlatograd", "Belovo", "Etropole", "Svoge", "Gorna Oryahovitsa", "Svilengrad", "Gabrovo", "General Toshevo", "Suvorovo", "Ticha", "Dobrich", "Kipilovo" and "Rila Monastery" for the territory owned by "Rila Holy Monastery" and for territorial division of state hunting farm "Karakuz" and Petrohan Experimental Forestry Farm;
- Expert councils were held to accept assignments in connection with the upcoming inventory of forest territories regardless of their ownership in 2025/26, development of a forest management map, a hunting management plan and a plan for activities to protect forest territories from fires in the area of activity of the relevant territorial division, as well as development of a forest management plan for the state forest territories falling within the same area of activity for territorial divisions SGS "Stara Zagora", "Montana" (for the merged TA "SFR Lom"), "Belogradchik" (together with TA "SFR Midzhur"), "Oryahovo", "Gotse Delchev", "Tsarevo", "Acad. Nikolay Haitov" (without TU SFR Chepelare", "Klisura" (without TU SFR Rozino), "Nikopol", "Selishte", "Svishtov", "Madzharovo" and for TU SHR "Kormisosh", "Chepino" (for the "Chehlovo" TU SFR), "Balchik", "Zhenda" (for the "Kardzhali" TU SFR), "Sherba" (for the TU SFR "Staro Oryahovo");
- Tasks have been approved for carrying out an inventory of forest territories regardless of their ownership, developing a forest management map, a hunting management plan and a plan for activities to protect forest territories from fires in the area of activity of the relevant territorial division, as well as developing a forest management plan for the state forest territories falling within the same area of activity during the period 2025/26 for territorial divisions of state forest farms "Stara Zagora", "Montana" (for the merged TU SFR "Lom"), "Belogradchik" (together with TU SFR "Midzhur"), "Oryahovo", "Gotse Delchev", "Tsarevo", "Acad. Nikolay Khaitov" (without TU SFR "Chepelare"), "Klisura" (without TU SFR "Rozino"), "Nikopol", "Selishte", "Svishtov", "Madzharovo" and for territorial divisions DGS "Kormisosh", "Chepino" (for TU SFR "Chehlevo"), "Balchik", "Zhenda" (for TU SFR "Kardzhali"), "Sherba" (for TU SFR "Staro Oryahovo") and educational and experimental forestry "Petrohan";
- Expert advice was held to adopt the economic classes and the amount of annual use based on the inventory of forest territories carried out regardless of their ownership and the prepared forest management plans for 2023/24 for the territorial divisions of the SFR Yakoruda, Belitsa, Karlovo, Ardino, Haskovo, Karnobat (only for the part of the merged TU SFR Sungurlare), Burgas, Vratsa, Lesidren, Lovech, Botevgrad, Samokov, FM Borovets to the TU SFR Samokov, Elena, Tutrakan, Provadia, Targovishte, Pazardzhik, Karnobat (without the merged TU SFR Sungurlare) and for the territorial divisions of the SHR Iskar and Rositsa (without the TU SFR Sevlievo), and the hunting region Trunkovo to TU SHR "Mazalat";
- Meetings of the committees under Article 37, para. 3 of Regulation No. 18/07.10.2015 on inventory and planning in forest territories for acceptance of the completed inventory of forest territories regardless of their ownership, development of a forest management map, a hunting management plan and a plan for the activities to protect forest territories from fires, in the area of activity of the relevant territorial division, as well as development of a forest management plan for the state forest territories falling within the same area of activity in 2023/24 for territorial divisions of the State Forestry Administration Yakoruda, Belitsa, Karlovo, Ardino, Haskovo, Karnobat (only for the part of the merged TU of the State Forestry Administration Sungurlare), Burgas, Vratsa, Lesidren, Lovech, Botevgrad, Samokov, FM Borovets to the TU of the State Forestry Administration Samokov, Elena, Tutrakan, Provadia, "Targovishte", "Pazardzhik", Karnobat (without the merged TU SFR "Sungurlare") and for territorial divisions SHR "Iskar" and "Rositsa" (without TU SFR "Sevlievo"), and hunting region "Trunkovo" to TU SFR "Mazalat";
- Expert councils were held to adopt the minutes of meetings of the committees under Art. 37, para. 3 of Regulation No. 18/07.10.2015 on inventory and planning in forest territories for acceptance of the

completed inventory of forest territories regardless of their ownership, development of a forest management map, a hunting management plan and a plan for activities to protect forest territories from fires, in the area of activity of the relevant territorial division, as well as development of a forest management plan for the state forest territories falling within the same area of activity in 2022/23 for territorial divisions of state forest farms "Byala", "Seslav", "Ivaylovgrad", "Nevestino", "Razlog", "Omurtag" and for territorial divisions of state forest farms "Topolovgrad", "Vitinya" and "Zhenda" (excluding the part of the former TU SFR"), 2023/24 - for territorial division SFR "Provadia", 2021/22. - for territorial divisions of the State Hunting Enterprise "Preslav", "Klisura" (for the former TU SFR "Rozino") and "Shumen", and for territorial division of the State Hunting Enterprise "Danube - Ruse";

- A report has been approved by the Minister of Agriculture and Food for the sites where an inventory of forest areas will be carried out regardless of their ownership, the development of a forest management map, a hunting management plan and a plan for activities to protect forest areas from fires in the area of activity of the relevant territorial division, as well as the development of a forest management plan for the state forest areas falling within the same area of activity in 2026/27 for territorial divisions of state forest farms "Momchilgrad", "Kirkovo", "Mezdra", "Belogradchik" (for the part of the former TU SFR "Chuprene"), "Mesta", "Novo Panicharevo", "Shiroka Laka", "Troyan", "Borima", "Teteven" (for the part of the former TU SFR "Ribaritsa"), "Peshtera", "Dupnitsa", "Samokov" (for the former TU SFR "Borovets" - inventory of all forest territories other than state ones), "Varna" and for territorial divisions of the SHR "Gramatikovo", "Rusalka - Apriltsi", "Rositsa" (for the part of the former TU SFR "Sevlievo", as well as an inventory of the territorial division of the SFR "Krichim";
- An expert council was held to adopt a task to amend the forestry plan for the territorial division of the Slivnitsa State Forestry Administration;
- Expert consultations were held on amendments to forest management plans for territorial divisions of state forest holdings - "Parvomai", "Trigrad", "Shiroka Laka", "Peshtera" and territorial division of the State Forest Management Unit "Kormisosh";
- An expert council was held to amend the hunting management plan for the territorial division of the Mezdra State Forest Reserve;
- 8 working group meetings were held in connection with the development and adoption of a Methodology for conducting a National Inventory of Forest Territories;
- The functionality of a software product for testing digital models was tested;
- Participated in the development of the EFA project under the Recovery and Resilience Plan;
- A digital orthophoto map was provided to the companies performing the inventory of forest territories and producing forest management plans, forest management maps, hunting management plans and plans of activities for protection of forest areas from fires for the period 2024/25;
- A digital model of the map of the restored property and the cadastral map for the territorial scope of activity of the state forestry and hunting units, subject to inventory and forestry planning in 2024/25, was provided;;
- 1 order was issued under Art. 83, para. 7 of the Forestry Act, with 0.95 ha included in the forest territories and 8 orders under § 17 of the TFP to the FA of the ZOZZ with 152.8 ha included in the state forest territories;
- 8 inspections of training forms were carried out under the Regulation on the conditions and procedure for acquiring a license to work with agricultural and forestry equipment, and certificates of the training forms were issued.

9. Hunting Units

In 2024, the following important activities, related to the management and use of game in the country, were carried out with the participation of EFA:

- Participation was taken in the development of projects for amending regulatory acts in the field - PPZLOD; Tariff of fees collected under ZLOD; Ordinance No. 6 of 2007 on the conditions and procedure for pasture breeding of pigs of the Eastern Balkan breed and its crosses;
- Participated in a major audit of the European Commission regarding measures to combat African wild boar disease;
- Information was provided in relation to a fact-finding audit in Bulgaria by Directorate F, DG Health and Food Safety, EC, with the aim of identifying good practices and gaps in One Health policy actions to reduce potential risks to animals, the environment and humans from avian influenza;
- Participation in the work of interdepartmental working groups regarding: the conservation of the brown bear species; prevention of poaching and the use of lead bullets in wetlands; the future management and use of the Balkan chamois;
- A meeting was held with the Executive Environment Agency about the upcoming monitoring and sampling to determine the number of bears in Bulgaria;
- Meetings of the Hunting Council of the EFA were held;
- Participation in National Meetings organized by NHF - HFU in the city of Plovdiv and the city of Pleven;
- Participation in international hunting exhibitions in the city of Dortmund - Germany, city of Salzburg - Austria and the city of Varaždin - Croatia;
- An exhibition "Nature, Hunting, Fishing" has been organized in 2024, in the city of Plovdiv;
- Participation was taken in a conference of the Dinaric Balkan - Pindus Platform for the Management of Large Carnivores, held in the city of Sofia;
- Correspondence was conducted regarding the continuation of monitoring activities under the "Methodology for monitoring turtledoves and quail and its implementation" her on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria";
- Joint trainings were conducted with the RFD and the BFSA among hunters on limiting the spread of African swine fever, avian influenza, as well as compliance with biosecurity measures in order to limit their spread;
- Inspections were carried out related to the implementation of contracts granting the management and use of game to hunting associations, contracts in the game breeding areas allocated to the State Hunting Association and contracts for joint hunting activities in state hunting farms;
- Inspections have been carried out on farms producing game for resettlement;
- Inspections of the exams for acquiring the right to hunt in hunting associations have been carried out;
- Permits for scientific research activities, permits for the use of capercaillie, brown bear derogation permits, permits for capture and relocation, and refusal to issue a shooting permit have been issued.
- Hunting bases in SHU, SFU and game breeding grounds were categorized;

The total revenues from hunting activity in the forest territories - state property, reported in 2024, amounted to BGN 11.6 million, which is 1.4 mln BGN more compared to 2023. The revenues from organized hunting and other types of tourism amounted to BGN 5.9 million, about BGN 694 thousand above the level of the previous year. Revenues from contracts concluded under HGPA in the form of annual installments for game management in game breeding areas and annual rental prices of hunting tourism facilities of SHU amounted to BGN 4.47 million, an increase of BGN 650 thousand compared to 2023. BGN 18.3 million were spent for implementation of the planned hunting and fishing activities during the year.

In 2025, SEs plan revenues from hunting and fishing activities and other types of tourism in the amount of BGN 11,749 thousand and expenses in the amount of BGN 17,991 thousand.

10. Protection of Forest Territories and Control

In 2024, the employees of RDF and SE under Art. 163 of the Forest Act performed a total of 646,682 inspections, including of: 133,479 sites for timber extraction, 27,475 sites under Art. 206 of the Forestry Act, 174,733 vehicles, 143,172 hunters, 15,625 fishermen, 144,335 other persons, 3,050 inspections for truffle extraction, 3,207 inspections on the implementation of forest protection activities and 1,606 other inspections.

Inspections of incoming wood were carried out at the facilities under Article 206 of the Forestry Act, which process over 20,000 cubic meters of wood per year, as well as inspections of transportation tickets issued outside forest territories.

A national conference on the control and protection of forest areas has been organized, and specific measures and actions have been identified aimed at improving control activities on the protection of forest areas and game.

New software for an electronic logbook for sites under Article 206 has been introduced, as well as the issuance of transport tickets for shipping wood from these sites.

Cross-checks between RDFs were carried out in 2024. 206 sites under Art. 206 of the Forest Act, 191 sites for timber extraction, 85 motor vehicles hunters, and 37 individuals were checked. 230 finding protocols and 52 AEAVs have been compiled.

Established violations

In 2024, a total of 13,439 violations of forest legislation were found, 3,445 fewer than in 2023. 8,473 acts establishing administrative violations were drawn up, reporting a decrease of 2,101 compared to 2023. The perpetrators of 1,738 violations were not found.

The largest number of acts for established violations were drawn up in the area of Berkovitsa Regional Directorate - 905 acts, Stara Zagora Regional Directorate - 706 acts, Sliven Regional Directorate - 666, Sofia Regional Directorate - 659 acts and Burgas Regional Directorate - 657 acts. The regional directorates with the fewest acts are Smolyan Regional Directorate - 59, Blagoevgrad Regional Directorate - 114 and Plovdiv Regional Directorate - 280.

According to the ownership of the forest territories, 2,535 violations in state-owned property, 186 violations in municipal property, 918 violations in property of individuals and legal entities were established.

The RDF employees drew up 153 citations for violations by employees of the territorial units of SFR/SHU, 384 citations to foresters practicing private forestry practices, and 37 citations to people involved in management and protection of municipality-owned forest areas.

In 2024, 46 coercive administrative measures were imposed pursuant to Art. 253 from the Forest Act, 15 more than 2023.

Activity of the regional forestry directorates

In 2024, forest inspectors in the RDF carried out 344,449 inspections, of which 26,132 in sites under Art. 206 of the Forestry Act, 44,015 in sites for timber harvesting, 102,643 on vehicles, 46,878 on hunters, 13,609 on fishermen, 105,774 on individuals, 948 for truffle harvesting and 4,450 other inspections. 5,494 acts were drawn up.

Illegally cut wood and disposal actions with wood, without documents proving its legal origin, in the amount of 6,789 cubic meters, were found.

Activity of the teams at EFA

Within 2024, a total of 5,426 inspections were carried out, of which 633 on sites under Art. 206 of the Forestry Act, 631 on sites for timber extraction, 279 on persons protecting forest territories entrusted to them, 1,850 on vehicles, 929 on hunters, 163 on fishermen, 926 on individuals and 15 under Regulation (EU) No. 995/2010.

207 AEAVs have been drawn up, of which 201 are under the Forests Act, 5 under the Forestry and Hunting Act and 1 under the Fisheries and Aquacultures Act.

453 prescriptions were given to the RDF with finding protocols for additional inspections and drafting of

acts.

Illegally cut wood and disposal actions with wood, without documents proving its legal origin, in the amount of 782 cubic meters, were found.

Activity of the state-owned enterprise under Art. 163 of the Forest Act

In 2024, a total of 274,739 inspections were carried out by employees of the SEs and their divisions, of which 82,367 were on timber harvesting sites, 62,213 on vehicles, 95,215 on hunters, 221 on fishermen, 33,635 on individuals, 378 on truffle harvesters and 710 other inspections. 2,426 CEAVs, 1,026 statements of findings to an unknown perpetrator, and 289 statements of findings without CEAVs were drawn up.

Illegally cut wood and disposal actions with wood, without documents proving its legal origin, in the amount of 5,935 cubic meters, were found.

Implementation of Regulation 995/2010

In 2024, the EFA participated in 1 face-to-face and 5 online meetings related to the implementation of Regulation (EU) No 995/2010, including in the Deforestation Regulation Committee, as the two working groups were merged.

In connection with the implementation of effective control, during the year the RDFs carried out 1,305 inspections, 276 more than in 2023.

Interaction with other institutions

As a result of the concluded agreements for cooperation and interaction and the annual plan of the Ministry of Interior for counteracting the violations related to forest, game and fish resources, in 2021 a total of 20,884 joint inspections were carried out, which is 53 less than in 2023. 782 sites under Art. 206 of the Forest Act, 462 sites for timber extraction, 3,185 vehicles, 11,086 hunters, 154 fishermen and 5,215 individuals were inspected.

105 statements of findings and 759 citations were drawn up, of which 739 under the Forest Act, 19 under HGPA and 1 under other laws.

196 inspections with EAFA employees, 11 with employees of the Executive Agency "Labor Inspection", 12 with employees of the National Revenue Agency, 26 with employees of the MoEW, 234 with representatives of NGOs, over 1200 with PBZN and 401 with other institutions, were carried out.

11. Strategic Planning, Improvement of the Regulatory framework and International Activities

The following regulatory documents were prepared in 2024:

- Resolution of the Council of Ministers amending and supplementing the Regulations for the Implementation of the Hunting and Game Preservation Act (promulgated, SG, issue 68 of 2024);
- Decree of the Council of Ministers on the adoption of the Tariff for the fees collected in the EFA system (announced SG, issue 53 of 21.06.2024, in force from 01.07.2024);
- Decree of the Council of Ministers amending and supplementing the Fee Tariff under the Hunting and Game Preservation (promulg. SG, issue 75 of 3.09.2024, in force from 1.10.2024);
- Decree of the Council of Ministers on making changes to the maximum amounts of expenditure commitments that can be incurred in 2024 under the budget of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, approved by the State Budget Act of the Republic of Bulgaria;
- Organizational regulations of the directorates of natural parks in Bulgaria (promulgated SG, issue 1 of 2025);
- Draft Ordinance amending and supplementing Ordinance No. 8 of 2011 on felling in forests, in connection with the need to regulate the use of mechanized forestry equipment in forest areas;
- Draft amendment to Ordinance No. 1 of 2012 on the control and protection of forest areas, in connection with the proposed amendments to Ordinance No. 8 of 2011 on felling in forests;

- Draft Ordinance amending and supplementing Ordinance No. 5 of 2014 on construction in forest areas without changing their purpose, in connection with the proposed amendments to Ordinance No. 8 of 2011 on felling in forests;
- Draft amendment to Ordinance No. 9 of 2019 on the protection of forest areas from diseases, pests and other damage in order to improve protection activities in forest areas.

Implementation of strategic activities and priorities in the forest sector through projects funded by the EU and other international donors

In 2024, a total of 12 project ideas/proposals were considered at meetings of the committee for reviewing project ideas and project proposals at the IAG. 9 project proposals have been submitted, of which 3 are in the evaluation process, 2 have been approved and 4 have not been approved.

One project proposal has been developed - "Action plans for sustainable management of forest genetic resources and for the development of sustainable and modern forest protection activities in Bulgaria"

In 2024, the following projects are currently being implemented:

- “Measures for the protection of the Lesser Spotted Eagle and its habitats in Bulgaria” under the LIFE program of the European Union;
- “Empowering the Central and Eastern European Countries to Develop Bioeconomy Strategies and Action Plans - CEE2ACT under the Horizon Europe program of the European Union in the field of bioeconomy;
- “Towards climate-smart forest connectivity for large carnivores in the Balkan-Carpathian region (ForestsConnect)", with leading partner WWF Bulgaria, under the Interreg "Danube Region" Program 2021- 2027;
- "Using forest genetic resources to increase opportunities in the context of environmental and social challenges";
- Expert participation was taken in the project "Energy Statistics: support for the Energy Union and further disaggregation of final energy consumption”, implemented by the NSI.

12. Financing and investments in forest areas

12.1. Executive Forest Agency

In 2024, the Executive Forest Agency reported revenues with a total amount of BGN 7,012,548.

The costs of the EFA set for 2024 for the implementation of the Budget Program “Specialized Activities in Forest Territories" and the Budget Program "Planning, Protection from Encroachments, Fires and Forest Protection" amounted to BGN 39,474,300.

The approved final budget of EFA for 2024 amounts to BGN 47,114,351, with total expenditure of BGN 47,114,351 being reported.

During the year, investments (capital expenditures) amounting to BGN 72,870 were made, of which BGN 71,700 for the acquisition of fixed assets and BGN 1,170 for the acquisition of software products and software product licenses.

12.2. State forestry enterprises

The reported revenues from the overall activity of the state-owned enterprises for 2024 are BGN 457.5 million, and the total expenses - BGN 460 million. Compared to 2023, enterprise revenues increase by 10% and expenses by 9%.

The total financial result of SEs from their operating activities in 2024 was a loss in the amount of BGN 2.5 million after taxation.

According to the approved financial plans for 2025, to carry out their overall activities, SEs plan revenues in the amount of BGN 495.1 million and expenses in the amount of BGN 493.9 million.

The investments made by the six SEs in 2024 are worth 59.145 million leva, 11.947 million leva less than the previous year. Of these, 43.640 million leva (74%) were implemented with funds from the Forest Investment Fund - 43.640 million leva more than in 2023, for the implementation of the following activities:

- design of 25 km of new roads - 0.414 million leva;
- construction and overhaul of forest roads and transport technical infrastructure - BGN 26.252 million;
- afforestation activities - 13.870 million leva;
- purchase of forest territories - BGN 3.104 million.

With funds from the business activity, 29 buildings, 175 vehicles and 34 pieces of specialized equipment were purchased and major repairs were carried out on 52 buildings and technical facilities for a total value of 11.794 million leva.

The funds available in the Forest Investment Fund as of December 31, 2024 totaled BGN 41.815 million, or BGN 27.875 million less than at the end of 2023.

According to the approved financial plans for 2025, to carry out their overall activities, SEs plan revenues in the amount of BGN 427.1 million and expenses in the amount of BGN 447.7 million.

13. Administrative service

In 2024, 28 meetings of the Commission for consideration of applications for entry of individuals and traders in the public registers of EFA under Art. 235 and Art. 241 of the Forest Act, as a result of which certificates were registered and issued to 264 individuals for forestry practice. Certificates of 285 traders for carrying out activities in the forest territories have been registered and issued.

During the year 190 merchants were deregistered from the public register under Art. 241 (1) of the Forest Act, and 58 natural persons were deregistered under Art. 235 of the Forest Act. 12 natural persons and 6 legal persons were refused entry in the public registers of EFA.

As of 31.12.2024, the total number of natural persons registered for forestry practice is 12,667, and of registered traders - 4,603.

26 tests were conducted in accordance with Art. 236a of the Forest Act, for which a total of 439 candidates appeared, of which 192 passed.

Numerous consultations were held with owners, private foresters and other interested persons by phone, e-mail, in the reception of the MAF, and during the field inspections.

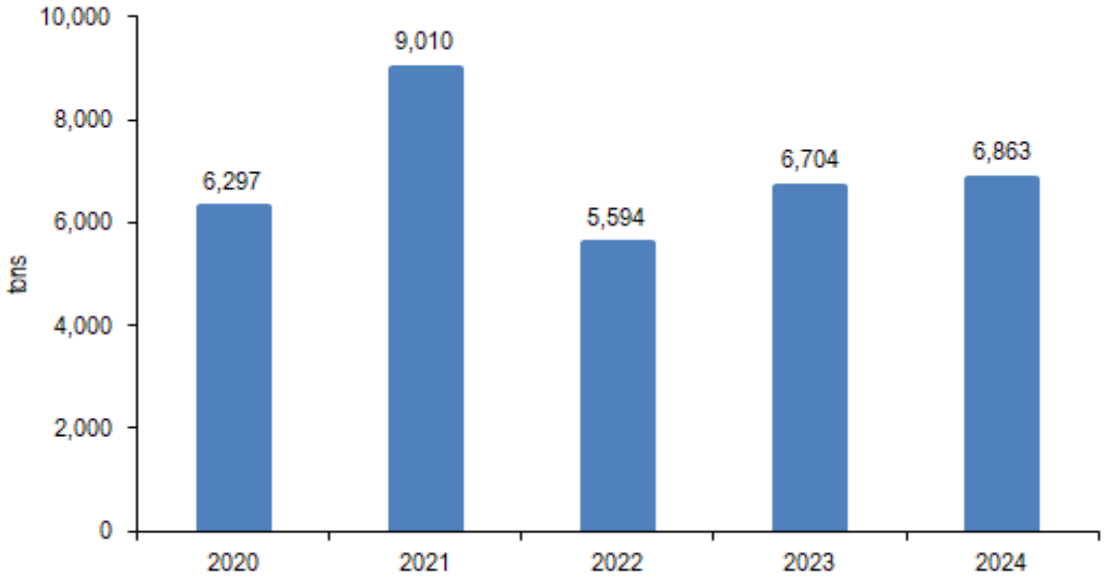
VII. FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE

1. Catch and production of fish and other aquatic organisms

Catch of fish and other aquatic organisms

According to data from the Executive Agency for Fisheries and Aquaculture (EAFA), in 2024 the total catch of fish and other aquatic organisms from commercial fishing in the country amounted to 6,862.5 tons - 2.4% more on an annual basis, of which 6,784.2 tons in the Black Sea and 78.3 tons in the Danube River. Compared to 2023, the catch in the Black Sea increased by 1.8%, and that in the Danube River more than doubled.

Figure VII.1. Total catch of fish and other aquatic organisms in the country, tons



Source: EAFA

The total amount of marine fish caught in 2024 reached 4,162.6 tons, 77.3 tons or 1.9% above the 2023 level. Traditionally, the most significant catch was sprat (salmon, bream, sprat), amounting to 2,836.6 tons, which is 427.6 tons or 13.1% less on an annual basis. Among the other Black Sea fish species, the catch of Black Sea mullet is more significant - 373.8 tons, whitefish - 238.5 tons, horse mackerel - 237.5 tons and anchovy - 235.7 tons. The catch of Black Sea mullet increased by 55% compared to the previous year, and that of bream and anchovy - many times over. The quantities of bonito (by 42.7 tons or nearly 34 times), sea thresher (by 73.2%) and Black Sea whiting (by 20.5%) caught are also significantly higher, while there is a decrease in horse mackerel (by 36.1%) and hake (by 30.7%).

In 2024, the catch of rapana, representing a major share of the catch of aquatic organisms in the Black Sea, amounted to 2,297 tons, without significant change compared to the previous year (0.3%). The catch of black sea mussels decreased by 25.5% compared to 2023, while the white sand mussel, which has seen significant interest in recent years, recorded a growth of 41.8%.

The amount of diadromous fish species (sardine) caught in the Black Sea is 7.32 tons, 46% more than the previous year.

Table VII.1. Total catch of fish and other aquatic organisms in the country per water basins, tons

	2022	2023	2024	Change 2024/2023
Catch in the Black Sea - total, including:	**5,546.5**	**6,667.1**	**6,784.2**	**1,8%**
- saltwater species	2,812.6	4,085.3	4,162.6	1,9%
- diadromous fishes, Pontic shad	6.8	5.0	7.3	46,0%
- veined rapa whelk, mussels and shrimps	2,727.0	2,576.8	2,614.4	1,5%
Catch in the Danube River - total, including:	**47.8**	**36.7**	**78.3**	**113,2%**
- freshwater fish	47.0	36.4	75.3	106,9%
- diadromous fishes, Pontic shad	0.8	0.3	2.5	847,0%
- other aquatic organisms	0.02	-	0.4	-
Total catch of fish and other aquatic organisms	**5,594.3**	**6,704.1**	**6,862.5**	**2,4%**

Source: EAFA

The total catch of freshwater fish in the Danube River in 2024 increased twofold on an annual basis, to 75.3 tons, with a significant increase observed in most fish species. Only the quantities of crucian carp caught decreased - by 20.5% and silver crucian carp - by 57.1%. The most significant catch is white silver bream - 16.3 tons, white barbel - 13.2 tons and carp - 10.1 tons, followed by that of European catfish - 6.9 tons, blue bream - 6.1 tons, grass carp - 4.4 tons, etc.

The catch of diadromous fish (Pontic shad) in the Danube River amounts to 2.5 tons, which represents a multiple increase compared to 2023.

Table VII.2. Catch of fish and other aquatic organisms from commercial fishing bodies in 2024

	Type of fish/aquatic species	Quantity (tons)
	A. The Danube River	
1	Danube bleak /Chalcalburnus chalcoides/	0.310
2	Grass carp /Ctenopharingodon idella /	4.407
3	Silver carp /Hypophthalmichthys molitrix/	16.317
4	White barbel /Barbus barbus/	13.198
5	Zander /Sander lucioperca/Stizostedion lucioperca/	1.740
6	Crucian carp /Carassius carassius/	0.000
7	Pontic shad, Danube mackerel /Caspialosa pontica/Alosa pontica/	2.526
8	Common roach (Rutilus rutilus)	0.000
9	Vimba bream /Vimba vimba/	6.066
10	Burbot /Urophycis spp/	0.000
11	Ide /Leuciscus idus/	0.000
12	Pound-scaled barbel /Barbus cyclolepis/	0.000
13	Common bream /Abramis brama/	5.694
14	Bighead carp /Aristhichthys nobilis/	4.136
15	Goby / Gobiidae/	0.00
16	Asp box /Aspius aspius/	1.292
17	Chub /Leuciscus cephalus/	0.065
18	European perch /Perca fluviatilis/	0.000
19	Common nase /Chondrostoma nasus/	0.749
20	European catfish /Sillurus glanis/	6.933
21	Sabrefish /Pelecus cultratus/	0.005
22	Prussian carp /Carassius sp./	2.176
23	Blreak /Alburnus alburnus/	1.630
24	Common rudd /Scardinius erythrophthalmus/	0.035
25	Carp /Cyprinus carpio/	10.113
26	Blue bream (Abramis ballerus)	0.027
27	Pike /Esox lucius/	0.393
28	Freshwater crayfish (Astacus leptodactylus)	0.431
29	Tench	0.012
	Total for the Danube river	**78.256**
	B. Black Sea	
1	Atherina /Atherina spp./	1.237
2	White sand mussel / Mya arenaria /	216.839
3	Bottom sea worm	0.001
4	Garpike (Belone belone)	1.554

	Type of fish/aquatic species	Quantity (tons)
5	Leaping mullet /Liza saliens/	1.630
6	Turbot /Psetta maxima/	91.198
7	Pontic shad, Danube mackerel /Caspialosa pontica/Alosa pontica/	7.322
8	Gurnard	0.850
9	Sea bass / Dicentrachus labrax/Morone labrax /	0.004
10	Bluefish /Pomatomus saltatrix/	238.532
11	Common stingray /Dasyatis pastinaca/	0.487
12	Thornback ray /Raja clavata/	39.349
13	Monkfish /Lophius piscatorius/	0.028
14	Snouted sole /Solea solea/	0.014
15	Flathead mullet /Mugil cephalus/	2.672
16	Common prawn /Leander spp./	0.00
17	Sea crow	0.187
18	Yellow crab /Eriphia verrucosa/	0.176
19	Atlantic bonito /Sarda sarda/	43.934
20	Flounder /Platichthys flesus luscus/	0.079
21	Golden grey mullet/ Liza aurata /	0.275
22	Family Goby /Gobiidae/	15.950
23	Sand shrimp / Crangon sp./	1.401
24	Rapana /Rapana spp./	2,296.959
25	Scad /Trachurus mediterraneus ponticus/	237.541
26	Hogfish	0.909
27	Spicara	0.052
28	Anchovy /Engraulis encrasicholus ponticus/	235.725
29	Sprat /Sprattus sprattus sulinus/	2,836.626
30	Black mussel /Mytilus galloprovincialis/	99.178
31	Black Sea Mullet /Mullus barbatus ponticus/	373.835
32	Spiny dogfish /Squalus acanthias/	13.012
33	Black Sea whiting /Merlangius merlangus euxinus/	26.617
34	Black Sea mackerel	0.00
35	Mykonos	0.063
36	Others	0.00
	Total for the Black Sea	**6,784.236**
	Total for the Black Sea and the Danube River	**6,862.492**

Source: EAFA

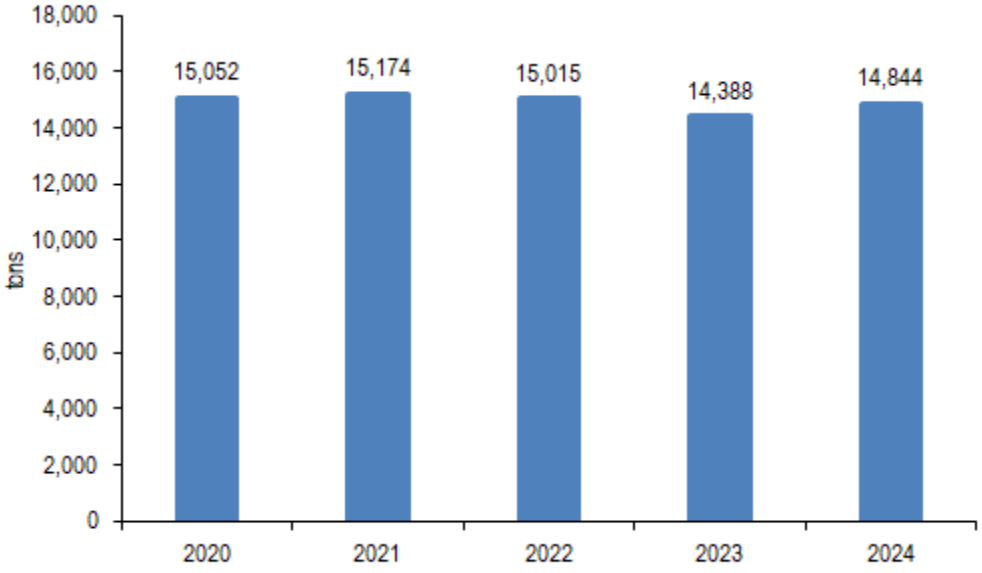
In the first six months of 2025, a total commercial catch of fish and other aquatic organisms was reported in the amount of 3,936.9 tons, 2.8% more than in the same period of 2024. The catch in the Black Sea amounted to 3,909.3 tons, and that in the Danube River - 27.6 tons.

Production of fish and other aquatic organisms

According to EAFA data, by the end of 2024, the total number of active fish farms in the country was 690. Of these 668 were for freshwater aquaculture and 22 - for marine aquaculture.

In 2024, a total of 14,844 tons of aquaculture (stocking material, fish and other aquatic organisms for consumption) were produced in specialized fish farms - 3.2% more than the previous year.

Figure VII.2. Production of fish and other organisms in specialized fish farms for the period 2020 - 2024, tons



Source: EAFA (data for 2024 as of 30.06.2025)

The total reported production of stocking material in fish farms is 1,592.2 tons, marking an increase of 12.6% compared to the previous year. This is mainly due to the higher production of stocking material of some of the main fish species raised in fish farms, such as rainbow trout - by 6.3%, carp - by 8.1%, spotted silver bream - by 13.3%, grass carp - by 21.7%, white silver bream - by 58.3%, African catfish - by more than twice, Russian sturgeon - by more than four times.

In 2024, the production of fish and other aquatic organisms for consumption amounted to 13,251.8 tons - 2.4% more on an annual basis. Traditionally, the production of fish for consumption from the rainbow trout, carp and bighead carp species was the largest. Compared to the previous year, there was a significant increase in the production of fish for consumption of the species rainbow trout - by 20.9%, carp - by 4.5%, white silver bream - by 36.1%, grass carp - by 20.2% and blue bream - by 78.6%.

The production of fish species that are by-catches in extensive and semi-intensive hot water farms - bream, bleak, perch and red perch was reported during the year. These species are not subject to targeted breeding and rearing in aquaculture.

The main species of marine aquaculture grown in the coastal waters of the country is the black mussel. In 2024, its production fell by 33.5% compared to the previous year, to 1,697.9 tons.

Table VII.3. Production of fish stocking material, fish and aquatic organisms in fish farms, tons

No.	Common and local names	Fish stocking material		Fish for human consumption		Total weight	
		2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024
1	Brown (Balkan) trout	3.15	3.12	11.91	13.12	15.06	16.24
2	Rainbow trout	300.79	319.61	4,718.64	5,703.86	5,019.43	6,023.46
3	Brook trout	0.00	0.02	0.34	0.25	0.34	0.27
4	Pike	1.49	1.21	9.02	6.76	10.51	7.97
5	Tench	0.02	0.02	0.22	0.00	0.24	0.02
6	Bleak (Danube bleak)	0.00	0.00	0.52	0.54	0.52	0.54
7	Bream	0.00	0.00	2.92	4.18	2.92	4.18
8	Carp	558.48	603.79	3,463.43	3,620.11	4,021.91	4,223.90

No.	Common and local names	Fish stocking material		Fish for human consumption		Total weight	
9	Crucian carp	0.00	0.00	2.02	0.10	2.02	0.10
10	Prussian carp	5.38	8.31	241.53	285.37	246.90	293.68
11	Silver carp	30.28	47.94	83.54	113.71	113.82	161.65
12	Bighead carp	246.01	278.72	931.13	867.64	1,177.13	1,146.36
13	Grass carp	152.21	185.17	149.64	179.88	301.85	365.04
14	Black carp	0.00	7.72	0.32	0.17	0.32	7.89
15	Catfish	32.71	34.51	201.62	171.61	234.33	206.11
16	Channel (American) catfish	0.10	0.00	4.51	5.97	4.61	5.97
17	Zander	9.08	8.13	59.58	33.38	68.66	41.51
18	European perch	0.00	0.00	0.12	0.42	0.12	0.42
19	Sterlet	0.00	0.00	3.62	7.25	3.62	7.25
20	Beluga sturgeon	0.00	0.00	22.89	40.89	22.89	40.89
21	Starry sturgeon	0.00	0.00	0.30	0.20	0.30	0.20
22	Russian sturgeon	2.62	11.90	255.52	234.37	258.14	246.27
23	Black mussel	0.00	0.00	2,551.52	1,697.94	2,551.52	1,697.94
24	Other hybrids of the Sturgeon family	0.43	1.38	41.87	67.52	42.26	68.90
25	Paddlefish	65.60	69.80	72.19	57.82	137.79	127.62
26	Green algae	0.00	0.00	10.97	19.31	10.97	19.31
27	Rudd	0.00	0.00	0.35	0.93	0.35	0.93
28	African catfish	3.99	10.09	35.84	16.32	39.83	26.41
29	Siberian sturgeon	0.00	0	54.75	43.62	54.75	43.62
30	Crayfish	0.01	0.10	1.40	0.63	1.41	0.64
31	River crab	0.00	0.00	0.20	0.00	0.20	0.00
32	Bester	0.00	0.00	16.72	10.74	16.72	10.74
33	Common prawn	0.00	0.00	22.61	22.63	22.61	22.63
34	Tilapia	1.43	0.68	0.15	1.09	1.58	1.77
35	Pacific oyster	0.00	0.05	2.00	0.60	2.00	0.65
36	Common Roach	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
37	Nase	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
38	Atlantic trout	0.00	0.05	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.05
39	Sunny sea bass	0.00	0.00	0.00	22.85	0.00	22.85
	Total	**1,413.80**	**1,592.20**	**12,937.91**	**13,251.79**	**14,387.65**	**14,844.00**

Source: EAFA (data for 2024 as of 30.06.2025)

In 2025, an increase in the number of fish farms and, accordingly, in aquaculture production is expected. The construction of new farms, as well as the modernization and increase of production capacities of existing holdings contribute to the development of the sector.

2. Import and export of fish and fish products

Import

According to NSI data, in 2024, the total import of fish and fish products into the country amounted to 39,306 tons, 2.7% below the level of 2023. Compared to the previous year, there was a decrease in the import

of frozen fish and fillets, mollusks and other aquatic invertebrates (live, fresh, chilled, frozen, dried), prepared and canned fish foods and canned crustaceans and mollusks, and an increase in that of live fish, fresh and chilled fish, salted and dried fish and crustaceans.

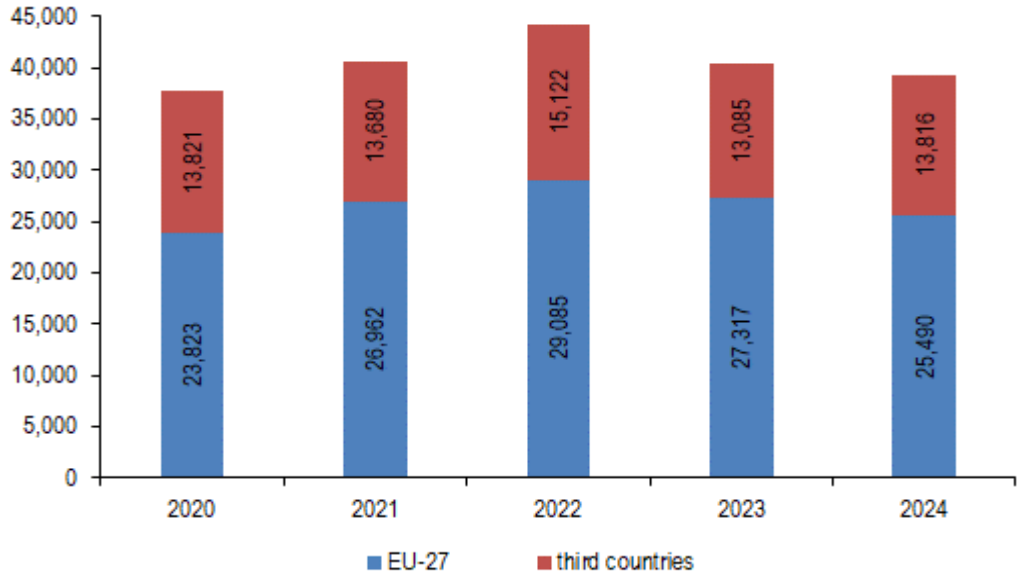
Table VII.4. Import of fish, other aquatic organisms and fish products, tons

Products	2023	2024	Change 2024/2023
Fish, other aquatic organisms and fish products - total, including:	**40,402**	**39,306**	**-2,7%**
Live fish - freshwater and saltwater	623	693	11,1%
Fish, fresh or chilled, excluding fillets	5,719	6,321	10,5%
Fish - frozen, excluding fillets	16,034	15,835	-1,2%
Fish fillets and other fish meat, fresh or chilled, frozen	4,189	3,959	-5,5%
Fish - dried, salted, smoked	514	691	34,3%
Crustaceans	3,908	4,173	6,8%
Mollusks*	3,055	2,405	-21,3%
Aquatic invertebrates other than crustaceans and mollusks	594	101	-82,9%
Ready foods and canned fish; caviar	4,431	4,309	-2,7%
Crustaceans and mollusks, tinned	1,334	818	-38,6%

Source: NSI data and MAF calculations.
**Also includes some terrestrial mollusks that cannot be distinguished.*

Deliveries of fish and fish products from EU Member States in 2024 will shrink by 6.7% year-on-year, to 25,490 tonnes (65% of the total volume for the year). Main partners are Spain (5.8 thousand tons), Greece (4.3 thousand tons), Denmark (3.5 thousand tons) and the Netherlands (2.9 thousand tons), followed by Latvia, Germany, Poland, etc.

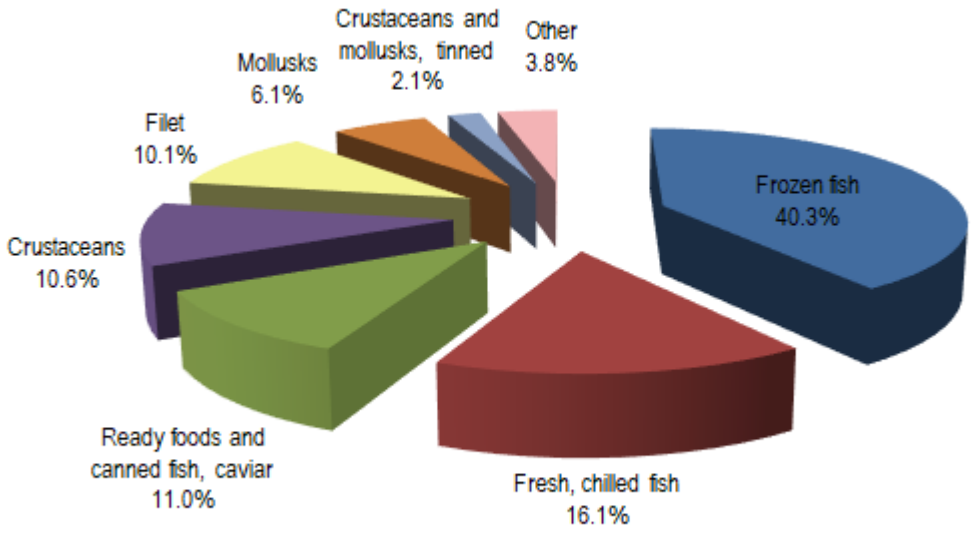
Figure VII.3. Import of fish and fish products from the EU and third countries, tons



Source: NSI

The quantity of fish and fish products imported from third countries amounted to 13,816 tons, 5.6% above the level of the previous year. The most significant imports are from Norway (2.6 thousand tons), Morocco (2.5 thousand tons), Turkey (1.6 thousand tons), Canada (1.2 thousand tons) and China (1.0 thousand tons).

Figure VII.4. Structure of import of fish and fishery products in 2024



Source: NSI data and MAF calculations.

Traditionally, the leading import is frozen fish. In 2024, 15,835 tons of frozen fish, excluding fillets, were imported - 1.2% less year-on-year. The most significant remains the supply of frozen mackerel - 8,180 tons, 4.3% above the previous year's level. Relatively large quantities of frozen fish of the following species have also been imported: hake - 1,558 tons, sprat, bream or sprat - 576 tons, sardines - 392 tons, herring - 309 tons, salmon - 267 tons, shark - 221 tons, cod - 123 tons, horse mackerel - 110 tons and trout - 303 tons.

Among the other product groups, a serious annual decline was observed in the import of aquatic invertebrates other than crustaceans and molluscs - by 82.9%, canned crustaceans and molluscs - by 38.6%, molluscs (live, fresh, chilled, frozen, dried) - by 21.3%. Although much less, imported quantities of fillets (by 5.5%) and ready-made and canned fish foods (by 2.7%) also decreased. A significant increase compared to 2023 is reported in the import of salted and dried fish - by 34.3%, and more moderately - in that of live and fresh and chilled fish - by about 11% each, and crustaceans - by 6.8%.

According to preliminary data, in the first six months of 2025 a total of 18,343 tons of fish, other aquatic organisms and processed fishery products were imported, which is 9.8% more on an annual basis. There was a slight increase in supplies from the EU by 1.4%, to 11,676 tons, and a growth in imports from third countries of 28.4%, to 6,667 tons.

Export

According to NSI data, a total of 13,185 tons of fish, other aquatic organisms and fish products were exported in 2024, which is 10% less than the previous year. There is a decrease in the export of most types of products ranging from 0.4% (canned crustaceans and molluscs) to 40% (molluscs - live, fresh, chilled, frozen, dried and frozen fillets). On the other hand, exports of prepared foods and canned fish increased by 5.8% year-on-year, and that of crustaceans by 15.6%. Although it has increased nearly sixfold, the amount of aquatic invertebrates exported, other than crustaceans and mollusks, relatively few remain.

Table VII.5. Export of fish, other aquatic organisms and fish products, tons

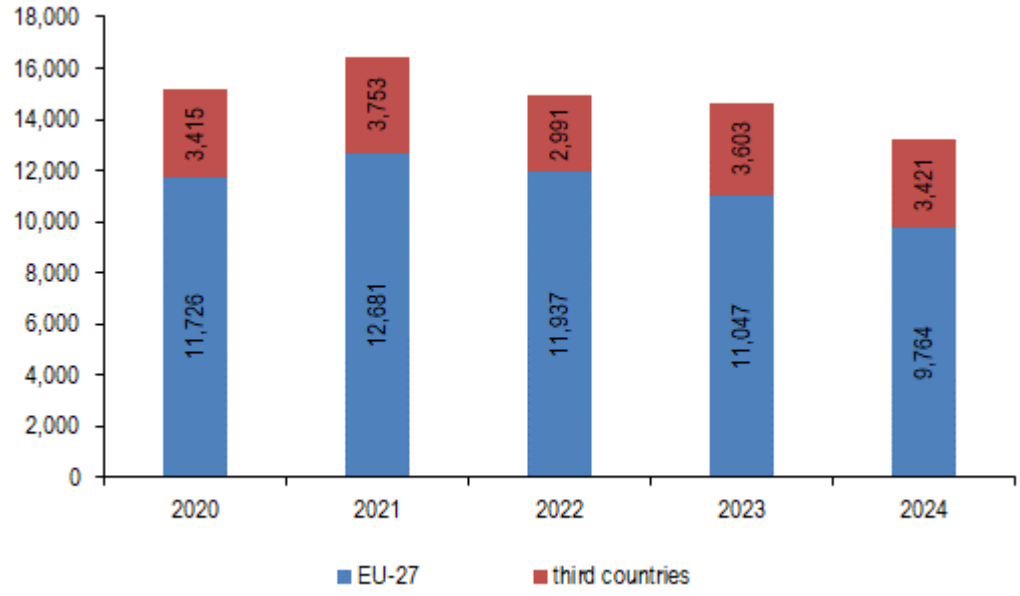
Products	2023	2024	Change 2024/2023
Fish, other aquatic organisms and fish products - total, including:	**14,650**	**13,185**	**-10,0%**
Live fish - freshwater and saltwater	1,105	1,084	-1,9%
Fish, fresh or chilled, excluding fillets	2,316	2,264	-2,3%

Products	2023	2024	Change 2024/2023
Fish - frozen, excluding fillets	2,100	1,702	-18,9%
Fish fillets and other fish meat, fresh or chilled, frozen	929	560	-39,7%
Fish - dried, salted, smoked	723	585	-19,2%
Crustaceans	122	141	15,6%
Mollusks*	1,780	1,067	-40,0%
Aquatic invertebrates other than crustaceans and mollusks	0.058	0.326	462,1%
Ready foods and canned fish; caviar	3,702	3,916	5,8%
Crustaceans and mollusks, tinned	1,874	1,867	-0,4%

Source: NSI data and MAF calculations
**Also includes some terrestrial mollusks that cannot be distinguished.*

About 74% of total exports of fish and fish products in 2024 are formed by shipments to the EU, which shrink by 11.6% year-on-year, to 9,764 tons. The most significant quantities are directed to Romania (5,136 tons) and Sweden (1,929 tons), followed by those to Greece (667 tons), Poland (513 tons), Belgium (487 tons), Spain (478 tons), etc.

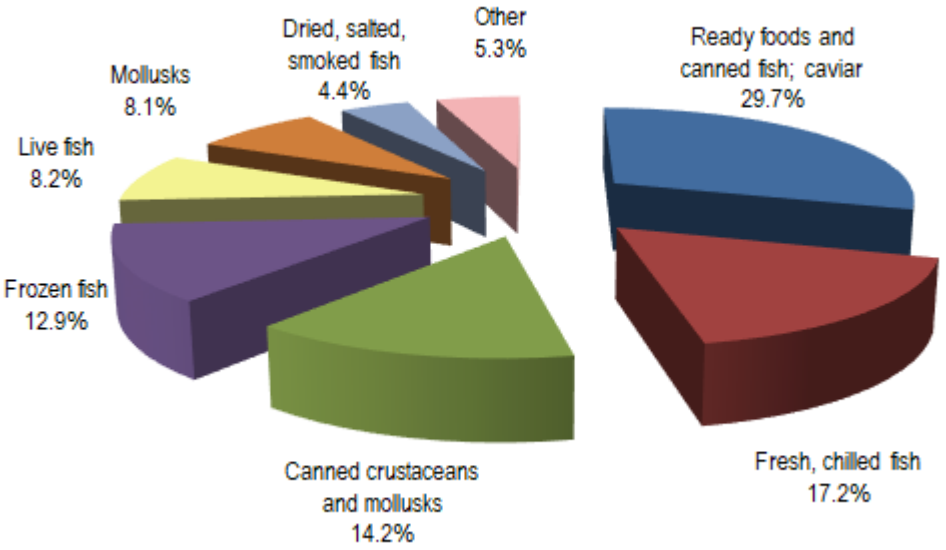
Figure VII.5. Exports of fish, other aquatic organisms and fishery products to the EU and third countries, tons



Source: NSI

Exports of fish and fish products to third countries amounted to 3,421 tons, 5% less than in 2023. The quantities were mainly sold in Serbia (1,617 tons), Bosnia and Herzegovina (449 tons), the United Kingdom (287 tons), Japan (244 tons), China (177 tons) and South Korea (172 tons).

Figure VII.6. Structure of exports of fish and fishery products in 2024



Source: NSI data and MAF calculations.

Preliminary data for the first half of 2025 indicate a decrease in exports of fish, other aquatic organisms and processed fish products by 7% year-on-year, to 5,969 tons. This includes 4,438 tonnes for the EU and 1,531 tonnes for third countries, 6.7% and 8% below the level of a year ago, respectively.

3. Maritime and Fisheries Program 2014 - 2020 and Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Program 2021 - 2027

3. 1. Maritime and Fisheries Program 2014 - 2020 (MFP)

In 2024, efforts were made to successfully implement and complete the Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Programme 2014 - 2020 (MFP) and to reduce the risk of loss of funds. The measures taken to improve the implementation of the MFP are through intensive communication with beneficiaries, the introduction of electronic contracts and simplified costs, shortened deadlines for evaluation, follow-up control, verification and payment, etc.

In order to minimize the negative consequences for the sector from Russia's war against Ukraine (related to increased costs and disruptions in trade), measures to compensate fishing operators under measure 1.9 continue in 2024. "Temporary suspension of fishing activities due to Russia's war in Ukraine, which threatens the security of fishing activities or hinders the economic viability of fishing operations" and under measure 5.3 "Marketing measures" for compensation to all subsectors - Fishing, Aquaculture and Processing.

In 2024, 151 MFP contracts were concluded, which are distributed by Union priorities (UPs) as follows:

Union priority 1: Promoting environmentally sustainable, innovative, competitive and knowledge-based, resource-efficient fisheries

Main achievements under UP 1 - 23 contracts were concluded in 2024 worth 356,378 BGN (182,216 EUR).

Calls announced under measures:

At the end of 2023, an acceptance was announced under Measure 1.9 "Temporary suspension of fishing activities due to Russia's aggressive war against Ukraine, which threatens the security of fishing activities or hinders the economic viability of fishing operations", with projects being accepted until March 27, 2024.

Financial implementation at UP 1 level by the end of 2024:

In 2024, 23 contracts worth 356,378 BGN (182,216 EUR) were concluded.

The total progress under UP2 in terms of public expenditures paid to beneficiaries in 2024 amounted to BGN 329,799 (EUR 168,626) in grants.

The certified funds at the priority level in 2024 amount to BGN 5,033,446 (EUR 2,573,600) of BFA (the amount of certified costs also includes those contracted in previous years).

The total agreed funds at the priority level, cumulatively until 31.12.2024, amount to 38,047,706 BGN (19,453,782 EUR) of BFA.

The total funds paid cumulatively until 31.12.2024 amount to 37,105,151 BGN (18,971,853 EUR) of BFA.

Total certified funds by 31.12.2024 amount to 35,400,316 BGN (18,100,172 EUR).

Union priority 2: Fostering environmentally sustainable, innovative, competitive and knowledge-based resource-efficient aquaculture

Main achievements under UP 2 - In 2024, no contracts were concluded under this priority.

Measures opened for calls: There are no open measures under this priority in 2024.

Financial implementation at UP level by the end of 2024:

The public expenditure paid to beneficiaries in 2024 amounted to 1,190,101 BGN (608,498 EUR) of BFA.

The certified funds in 2024 amount to 2,229,214 BGN BFA or 1,139,796 EUR BFA (The amount of certified costs also includes contracts certified in previous years.)

The total funds contracted at the priority level by the end of the reporting period amounted to BGN 41,859,961 (EUR 21,402,987) of BFA.

The total funds disbursed by the end of the reporting period amounted to 32,844,258 BGN (16,793,260 EUR) of BFA.

The total funds certified by the EC by the end of the reporting period amounted to 30,375,498 BGN (15,530,984 EUR).

Union Priority 3: Promoting the implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy

Under Union Priority 3, the program includes 2 measures and approved project proposals, which are implemented by a specific beneficiary, the Executive Agency for Fisheries and Aquaculture.

Main achievements under UP 3 - no contracts concluded in 2024.

Measures opened for calls: In 2024, there are no open admissions under measures 3.1 "Control and Implementation" and measure 3.2 "Data Collection under the National Program for Data Collection and Management in the Fisheries Sector 2017 - 2019" under this priority. The adoption of these measures began in 2017 and has a deadline of 2023. No payments were made under UP3 during the period.

Financial implementation at UP level by the end of 2024:

The certified funds in 2024 amount to 2,576,591 leva (1,317,410 euros) of BFA.

The total contracted funds by the end of the reporting period amount to 20,757,473 BGN (10,613,290 EUR) in grants.

The total funds disbursed by the end of the reporting period amounted to 20,599,729 BGN (10,532,635 EUR) of BFA.

The total funds certified by the EC by the end of the reporting period amounted to 17,072,275 BGN (8,729,049 EUR) of BFA.

Union Priority 4: Increasing Employment and Territorial Cohesion

In 2024, no procedures for the measures have been announced and no contracts have been concluded, given the end of the programming period. The focus is on submitting requests for final payments, verifying and certifying expenses.

Main achievements under UP 4 - In 2024, no contracts were concluded under the approved 9 CLLD strategies of the local fisheries initiative groups (FLAGs).

Total by the end of 2024 207 contracts were concluded, including projects on preparatory assistance, projects under the strategies of the FLAG and ongoing expenses of the FLAG.

Financial implementation at UP level by the end of 2024:

The overall progress under UP 4 in terms of public expenditures paid to the beneficiaries in 2024 amounted to BGN 6,051,953 (EUR 3,094,362) grant.

The certified funds in 2024 amounted to BGN 9,735,833 (EUR 4,977,929) in grants under the priority.

The total agreed funds for projects from the FLAG strategies until the end of 2024 are in the amount of BGN 34,208,542 (EUR 17,490,818) grants, incl. preparatory assistance and running costs of the FLAG or 100% of the priority budget, 207 Agreed.

The total funds disbursed amount to 32,480,723 BGN or 16,607,384.56 euros.

The total funds certified by the EC by the end of 2024 amount to 31,536,117.39 BGN (16,124,408.11 EUR) of grants.

Union Priority 5: Fostering marketing and processing

Main achievements under UP 5 - 128 administrative contracts for grants were concluded in 2024

Measures opened for calls:

At the end of 2023, admission was announced under 5.3 "Marketing Measures" - sector "Fisheries", sector "Aquaculture", sector "Processing of fishery and aquaculture products" under Art. 68, paragraph 3 of Reg. (EU) 508/2014 amended with Reg. (EU) 2022/1278 financial compensation for operators in the sector related to the military situation in Ukraine.

Under Measure 5.3 Marketing Measures - Fishing Sector, 23 contracts for the provision of grants worth 642,393 BGN (328,456 EUR) in grants have been concluded.

Under Measure 5.3 Marketing Measures - Aquaculture sector, 67 contracts for the provision of grants worth 4,593,542 BGN (2,348,677 EUR) have been concluded.

Under Measure 5.3 Marketing Measures - sector "Processing of fishery and aquaculture products", 38 contracts for the provision of grants worth 6,075,550 leva (3,106,427 euros) in grants have been concluded.

Financial implementation at UP level by the end of 2024:

Under UP 5 - the agreed funds in 2024 amount to 11,311,485 BGN (5,783,559 EUR) of BFA.

The amount of BGN 14,261,537 (EUR 7,291,920) in BFAs paid under the priority in 2024.

The certified funds in 2024 are 16,647,267 leva (8,511,743 euros) of BFA.

A total of 41,945,839 leva (21,446,895.78 euros) of grants have been agreed under the priority.

A total of 41,475,120 leva (21,501,490 euros) in grants were paid.

A total of 41,107,268.25 leva (21,018,135 euros) of BFAs have been certified under the priority.

Union Priority 6: Integrated Maritime Policy

Main achievements under UP 6 - a total of 8 contracts are implemented under UP 6.

Measures opened for calls:

In 2024, no measures were announced under UP 6.

Financial implementation at UP level by the end of 2024:

The total funds agreed to date under UP 6 amount to 5,304,383 BGN or 2,712,130 EUR in BFA.

The total funds disbursed to date amount to 4,752,887 BGN (2,430,150 EUR) of BFA.

The total funds certified by the EC by the end of the reporting period amounted to BGN 4,650,821 (EUR 2,377,964) EMFF.

Pursuant to the Agreement for Delegation of Functions for Implementation of the RDP 2014 - 2020, the SFA - Paying Agency, as the Intermediate Body of the Managing Authority, verifies the expenditures upon submission of a request for payment.

In 2024, payment requests according to the table below were accepted, verified and paid through UMIS 2020.

Table VII.6. Projects paid under measures of the MFP 2014 - 2020 for the period 01.01.2024 - 31.12.2024 (BGN)

Measure	Number of projects	Amount paid	National funding	European funding
1. 8. Investments for improvement of the infrastructure in the fishing ports, investments for improvement of unloading berths. Construction or modernization of boat docks	8	3,708,266.58	991,590.48	2,716,676.10
1. 9. Temporary cessation of fishing activities (Ukraine)	44	698,882.22	186,881.09	512,001.13
2. 2. Productive investments in aquaculture	7	1,740,306.24	435,076.57	1,305,229.67
2. 3. Encouraging new aquaculture producers, developing sustainable aquaculture	1	108,079.77	27,019.94	81,059.83
2. 5. Aquaculture providing environmental services	4	362,250.08	90,562.52	271,687.56
3. 1. Control and enforcement	4	1,225,223.54	122,522.35	1,102,701.19
3. 2. Data collection	1	467,773.79	93,554.76	374,219.03
4. 2. Implementation of community-led local development strategies	76	8,005,252.61	1,200,787.95	6,804,464.66
5.3. Measures for market supply - Ukraine	174	13,875,307.06	3,468,826.74	10,406,480.32
5. 4. Processing of fishing and aquaculture products	9	2,710,610.39	677,652.65	2,032,957.74
6. 3. Raising awareness of the marine environment	1	2,340.00	585.00	1,755.00
7. 1. Technical assistance	10	3,050,256.05	762,564.02	2,287,692.03
Total:	**339**	**35,954,548.33**	**8,057,624.07**	**27,896,924.26**

Source: SFA

Overall progress in the implementation of the Maritime and Fisheries Program 2014 - 2020 as of 26.06.2025

Priority 1: Promoting environmentally sustainable, innovative, competitive and knowledge-based, resource-efficient fisheries

Measure 1.1. "Diversification and new forms of income" - one payment has been made with a total value of the grant of BGN 131,027.

Measure 1.2. "Investments for the improvement of hygiene, health, safety and working conditions on board or individual equipment", provided that the specified investments exceed the requirements under Union law or national law - payments made - 2 with a total value of the grant of BGN 15,762.

Measure 1.3. "Permanent cessation of fishing activities" payments made - 8 with a total value of the grant of BGN 483,173.

Measure 1.6. "Conservation and restoration of marine biodiversity and ecosystems and compensation regimes" - payments made - 7 with a total value of the grant of BGN 718,217.

Measure 1.7. "Added value, product quality and use of unwanted catches" - payments made - 4 with a total value of the grant of BGN 359,673.

Measure 1.8. "Investments for improvement of the infrastructure in fishing ports, investments for improvement of the unloading berths. Construction or modernization of boat docks" - payments made - 36 with a total value of the grant of BGN 29,398,929.

Measure 1.9. "Support for owners of fishing vessels and fishermen to overcome the economic consequences of the outbreak of COVID-19 due to temporary cessation of fishing activities" - payments made - 147 with a total value of the grant of BGN 4,697 542.

Measure 1.9. "Temporary suspension of fishing activities (Ukraine) " - payments made - 61 with a total value of the grant of 1,198,264 leva.

Priority 2 "Promoting environmentally sustainable, innovative, competitive and resource-efficient knowledge-based aquaculture"

Measure 2.2. "Productive investments in aquaculture" - payments made - 107 with a total value of the grant of 21,243,221 leva.

Measure 2.3. "Fostering new aquaculture producers, developing sustainable aquaculture" - payments made - 22 with a total value of the grant of BGN 5,756,217.

Measure 2.5. "Aquacultures providing environmental services" - payments made - 18 with a total value of the grant of 1,498,844 BGN.

Measure 2.6. "Support for producers of fish and other aquatic organisms to address the economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic" - payments made - 105 with a total value of the grant of BGN 3,598,249.

***Priority 3* "*Fostering the implementation of the CFP*"**

Measure 3.1. "Control and enforcement" - payments made - 48 with a total value of the grant of BGN 14,261 496.

Measure 3.2. "Data collection" - payments made - 11 with a total value of the grant of BGN 5,510,153.

***Priority 4* "*Increasing employment and territorial cohesion*"**

Measure 4.1 "Preparatory assistance for CLLD strategies, including the establishment of a National Fisheries Network" - payments made - 13 with a total value of the grant of BGN 506,394.

Measure 4.2. "Implementation of community-led local development strategies" - payments made - 480 with a total subsidy value of BGN 32,242,151.

Priority 5 Fostering marketing and processing

Measure 5.1. "Plans for production and marketing" - 2 payments made with a total value of the grant of 121,523 BGN.

Measure 5.3. "Establishment of producer organizations, of associations of producer organizations or of interbranch organizations. Search for new markets and improvement of the conditions for marketing fishery and aquaculture products" - payments made - 10 with a total value of the grant of 1,367,440 leva.

Measure 5.3. "Marketing Measures – Ukraine" - payments made - 219 with a total value of the grant of 18,817,596 leva.

Measure 5.4. "Processing of fishery and aquaculture products" - payments made - 50 with a total value of the grant of 18,917,791 BGN.

Measure 5.4. "Support for processing enterprises of fishery and aquaculture products to overcome the economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic" - payments made - 35 with a total value of the grant of BGN 2,650,962.

***Priority 6* "*Fostering the implementation of the Integrated Maritime Policy*"**

Measure 6.1. "Integrated maritime surveillance" - payments made - 4 with a total value of the grant of BGN 2,959,680.

Measure 6.3. "Increasing knowledge about the state of the marine environment" - payments made - 10 with a total value of the grant of 1,793,207 leva.

***Priority 7* "*Technical Assistance*"**

87 payments were made with a total value of the grant of 15,146,081 BGN.

Table VII.7. Paid projects under measures from the MFP 2014 - 2020 for the period 01.01.2025 - 30.06.2025 (BGN)

Measure	Number of projects	Amount paid	National funding	European funding
1. 8. Investments for improvement of the infrastructure in the fishing ports, investments for improvement of unloading berths. Construction or modernization of boat docks	0	-6,362.40	-1,701.31	-4,661.09
2. 2. Productive investments in aquaculture	0	-33,183.76	-8,295.94	-24,887.82
4. 2. Implementation of community-led local development strategies	7	444,349.12	66,652.37	377,696.75
5.3. Measures for market supply - Ukraine	1	91,236.96	22,809.24	68,427.72
5. 4. Processing of fishing and aquaculture products	0	-56,482.70	-14,120.67	-42,362.03
6. 3. Raising awareness of the marine environment	1	102,065.64	25,516.41	76,549.23
7. 1. Technical assistance	1	975,927.36	243,981.84	731,945.52
Total:	**10**	**1,517,550.22**	**334,841.94**	**1,182,708.28**

Source: SFA

Monitoring

According to Art. 2 of the Agreement for Delegation of Functions for Implementation of the 2014-2020 MFP, the inspections completed for the implementation of the beneficiaries' production programs, for the use of the financed assets for their intended purpose, as well as inspections for the implementation of the monitoring result indicators for the projects whose last year of monitoring is 2022. In 2023, 204 projects falling under a monitoring period after the final payment of the grant were selected for administrative and on-site inspections on the basis of risk analysis. The results of the inspections were summarized and reported to the MA of the MFP.

3.2. Maritime Affairs, Fisheries and Aquaculture Programme 2021 - 2027 (MFAP)

In 2024, the implementation of the MFAP is being strengthened, as the large resources committed in the announced procedures and the short process of evaluating the submitted project proposals are a prerequisite for timely achievement of the financial commitments under the MFAP. The implementation and reporting of projects has been significantly facilitated by the introduction of simplified costs.

In 2024, admissions are open for the following types of activities:

- Processing of fishing and aquaculture products;
- Collection and processing of data for fisheries and aquaculture for scientific purposes;
- Productive investments and innovations in aquaculture;
- Permanent cessation of fishing activities;
- Maritime surveillance;
- Marketing;
- Plans for production and marketing;
- Improving the infrastructure of fishing ports, fish markets, landing sites and marinas to facilitate the landing and storage of unwanted catches.

32 contracts were concluded under the type of activity open for acceptance in the previous year - "Capacity building and preparatory actions in support of the development and future implementation of Community-Led Local Development strategies" worth 687,376 BGN BFA. One contract was also concluded for

the type of activity "Collection and processing of data for fisheries and aquaculture management and for scientific purposes".

Expected data for 2025

Table VII.8. Forecast for payments under the MFAP 2021 - 2027 for 2025 (BGN)

Union priorities	Types of activities by priority	EMFF	National co-financing	Total financial resources
Priority 1 Promoting sustainable fisheries and the restoration and conservation of aquatic biological resources	1.1.1 Improving the infrastructure of fishing ports, fish markets, landing sites and marinas to facilitate the landing and storage of unwanted catches	5,040,000.00	2,160,000.00	7,200,000.00
	1.3.2 Permanent cessation of fishing activities	175,000.00	75,000.00	250,000.00
	1.4.1 Control and enforcement	6,300,000.00	2,700,000.00	9,000,000.00
	1.4.2 Collection and processing of data for fisheries and aquaculture for scientific purposes	1,612,580.52	691,105.94	2,303,686.46
Priority 2 Promoting sustainable aquaculture activities and the processing and marketing of fishery and aquaculture products	2.1.1 Productive investments and innovations in aquaculture	3,500,000.00	1,500,000.00	5,000,000.00
	2.1.2 Aquaculture providing environmental services	700,000.00	300,000.00	1,000,000.00
	2.2.1 Processing of fishery and aquaculture products	6,650,000.00	2,850,000.00	9,500,000.00
	2.2.2 Marketing	560,000.00	240,000.00	800,000.00
	2.2.3 Plans for production and marketing	82,530.00	35,370.00	117,900.00
Priority 3 Creating the prerequisites for the growth of a sustainable blue economy and stimulating the development of communities engaged in fisheries and aquaculture in coastal and inland areas	3.2 Implementation of Community-led local development strategies	168,000.00	72,000.00	240,000.00
Technical assistance	Technical assistance	1,330,000.00	570,000.00	1,900,000.00
Total amount of contracted funds		**26,118,110.52**	**11,193,475.94**	**37,311,586.46**

Source: MAF, Maritime and Fisheries Directorate

Table VII.9. Calls under the MFP 2021 - 2027 for 2025 (BGN)

Item No.	Name of the procedure	Objectives of the grant provided under the procedure	Total amount of the grant under the procedure	Date of announcement of the procedure	Deadline for submission of project proposals	Grant amount per project	
						minimum	maximum
Priority 1 Promoting sustainable fisheries and the restoration and conservation of aquatic biological resources							
1	Permanent cessation of fishing activities	Support for permanent cessation will contribute to the adaptation of the fishing fleet to fish stocks. The aim is to achieve a balanced	3,500,000.00	2nd quarter	60 days from the date of announcement of the procedure	not applicable	according to methodology

Item No.	Name of the procedure	Objectives of the grant provided under the procedure	Total amount of the grant under the procedure	Date of announcement of the procedure	Deadline for submission of project proposals	Grant amount per project	
						minimum	maximum
		fleet for sustainable use of the available resources					
2	Support to improve the economic and social status of fishing operators	The support is aimed at supporting the improvement of the economic and social condition of operators from the Fisheries sector	1st call - 3,538,601 2nd call - 2,500,000	1st quarter 4th quarter	First term 60 days from the date of announcement of the procedure Second term 30 days after the end of the first term Third term 30 days after the end of the second term	15,000.00	450,000.00
3	Specific equipment of the fishing vessel, activities and innovations aimed at protecting the environment and biodiversity	The support is aimed at supporting operations related to supporting the acquisition of specific equipment for the fishing vessel, activities and innovations aimed at protecting the environment and biodiversity	1st call - 4,888,382.40 2nd call - 1,500,000	1st quarter 4th quarter	First term 60 days from the date of announcement of the procedure Second term 30 days after the end of the first term Third term 30 days after the end of the second term	6,000.00	200,000.00
4	Protection of the ecological status of the marine environment	The implementation of the activities will contribute to the better management or conservation of marine biological resources in line with the Biodiversity Strategy.	2,235,200.00	3rd quarter	First term 60 days from the date of announcement of the procedure Second term 60 days after the end of the first term	20,000.00	800,000.00
Priority 2 Promoting sustainable aquaculture activities and the processing and marketing of fishery and aquaculture products							
5	Aquaculture providing environmental services - non-productive investments sector in farms related to the implementation of direct conservation actions to limit the conflict between piscivorous species and aquaculture; - compensation for Natura 2000 farms sector	Promote aquaculture production that ensures a high level of environmental protection, animal health and welfare, as well as public health and safety;	1st call - 4,920,000 2nd call - 6,563,340	1st quarter 4th quarter	First term 90 days from the date of announcement of the procedure Second term 60 days after the end of the first term;	1. for the non-productive investment sector - 15,000 2. for compensation sector - not applicable	1. for the non-productive investment sector - 200,000 2. for the compensation sector - according to the methodology

Item No.	Name of the procedure	Objectives of the grant provided under the procedure	Total amount of the grant under the procedure	Date of announcement of the procedure	Deadline for submission of project proposals	Grant amount per project	
						minimum	maximum
6	Productive investments and innovations in aquaculture	The investments will increase competitiveness and achieve sustainable growth of aquaculture in Bulgaria. The new jobs created and the raised qualifications of the employed will support the economic development of the sector and its associated areas	20,000,000.00	3rd quarter	First term 90 days from the date of announcement of the procedure Second term 60 days after the end of the first term; Third term 60 days after the end of the second term;	30,000.00	up to 1,000,000.00
7	Productive investments and innovations in aquaculture, sector "Aquaculture Innovation"	The investments will increase competitiveness and achieve sustainable growth of aquaculture in Bulgaria. By introducing innovations, the development of the bioeconomy will be facilitated and the principles of the circular economy in aquaculture production will be achieved.	10,000,000.00	3rd quarter	90 days from the date of announcement of the procedure	30,000.00	not applicable
8	Processing of fishing and aquaculture products	The aim is to establish and modernize the country's processing plants by improving their energy efficiency and decarbonization, which will lead to a reduction in the negative environmental impact associated with the Green Transition	5,000,000.00	2nd quarter	First term 90 days from the date of announcement of the procedure Second term 60 days after the end of the first term; Third term 60 days after the end of the second term.	30,000.00	Up to 2,000,000.00
9	Marketing	Activities to promote local products from fishing, aquaculture and processing will lead to an increase	955,800.00	3rd quarter	90 days from the date of announcement of the procedure	not applicable	955,800.00

Item No.	Name of the procedure	Objectives of the grant provided under the procedure	Total amount of the grant under the procedure	Date of announcement of the procedure	Deadline for submission of project proposals	Grant amount per project	
						minimum	maximum
		in consumption in the country of Bulgarian production. Conducting communication campaigns will motivate consumers to make informed, healthy food choices.					
Priority 3 Creating the prerequisites for the growth of a sustainable blue economy and stimulating the development of communities engaged in fisheries and aquaculture in coastal and inland areas							
10	Implementation of Community-Led Local Development strategies, including ongoing costs and activities to promote the territory	Increasing the quality of life of people in communities dependent on fisheries and aquaculture through a sustainable blue economy, using and strengthening environmental, cultural, social and human resources	46,772,789.36	1st quarter	90 days from the date of announcement of the procedure	not applicable	Max. amount of eligible grant for one strategy under EMFF: - For a FLAG composed of two municipalities – up to BGN 2,933,700, of which up to 25% for running costs and promotion - For a FLAG composed of three or more municipalities – up to BGN 3,911,600, of which up to 25% for current expenses and promotion The maximum amount of eligible grant for one project under the CLLD strategy is 391,160 BGN.

Source: MAF, Maritime and Fisheries Directorate

4. Common Fisheries Policy

The Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) aims to create the conditions for the sustainable development of the Fisheries sector, including commercial and recreational fisheries, aquacultures, trade and processing of fisheries and aquaculture products.

One of the elements of the CFP is the common organization of the markets (CMO) in fisheries and aquaculture products, which aims to protect producers and ensure environmental sustainability and economic viability of the fisheries and aquaculture products market. A major factor in achieving the CMO objectives is

fishery and/or aquaculture producer organizations, associations of producer organizations, and interbranch organizations in the Fishery sector.

In 2024, in connection with the implementation of control over professional organizations in the fisheries sector, recognized under the Fisheries and Aquaculture Act and Regulation No. 7 of 2018 on the conditions and procedure for recognizing organizations of producers of fishery products and aquaculture products, associations of producer organizations and interbranch organizations in the fisheries sector and for approving production and marketing plans, inspections were carried out to establish their compliance with the requirements of the regulatory framework and to determine the degree of implementation of the Production and Marketing Plans of the recognized producer organizations - the Black Sea Sunrise Association and the Black Sea Mussel Producers' Organization Association. The Standing Committee for the Recognition of Producer Organizations of Fishery Products and/or Aquaculture Products, Associations of Producer Organizations and Interbranch Organizations in the Fisheries Sector and for the Control of Activities carried out 8 inspections and held 4 meetings in 2024. A Production and Marketing Plan for 2024 of the Black Sea Mussel Producer Organization Association was approved.

In compliance with the requirements of European legislation and with the aim of providing accessible and understandable information to consumers regarding fishery and aquaculture products offered on the market, the national list of used commercial designations of fishery and aquaculture products was updated and supplemented during the year.

In order to protect the populations of fish and other aquatic organisms, a number of restrictions and temporary prohibitions on fishing in natural and artificial water bodies throughout the country were introduced in 2024. Conditions have been created for the protection of fish and other aquatic organisms during their reproduction period. Measures have been introduced to regulate the use of fish resources during the dark part of the day and to carry out stocking in certain water bodies. To protect the main species of white sand mussels, subject to commercial fishing, a restriction has been introduced on their catch during the spring breeding maximum in the period May 1 - June 7, 2024. In order to reduce the impact of commercial fishing on the structure of bottom ecosystems in the Black Sea, an area has been designated in the Bulgarian waters (the "Byala - Obzor" area) in which the use of beam trawls is prohibited for a period of 2 years.

In 2024, the management of fish resources in the Sopot, Gorni Dabnik and Dabnika dams was assigned to amateur fishing associations under Article 11 of the Fisheries Act. According to the procedure set out in Regulation No. 22 of 10.12.2007 on the procedure for granting the management of fish resources in artificial water bodies - state property to associations for recreational fishing, the associations entrusted with the management of fish resources for recreational fishing carry out control and protection of the dams, as well as activities related to the sustainable management of fish resources, their protection and restoration. For this purpose, minimum annual stocking standards have been set, subject to compliance with the existing applicable legislative and administrative requirements for carrying out stocking.

In connection with the need to bring the Fisheries and Aquaculture Act (FAA) into line with the latest amendments to European legislation in the fisheries control system, in 2024, active work is underway to prepare a draft Act amending and supplementing the FAA. In addition, the changes are also due to identified shortcomings in the regulation of public relations related to the implementation of commercial, recreational fishing and aquaculture, as well as the need to introduce legal norms creating conditions for more effective implementation of the CFP and the CMO of EU fishery and aquaculture products.

At the 47th Annual Meeting of the GFCM held in 2024, a number of topics related to the conservation of marine biological resources, relevant fisheries and marine aquaculture in the Mediterranean and Black Seas were discussed, concerning the main conclusions and management advice arising from the 10th session of the Black Sea Working Group, the 25th session of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC), the 15th meeting of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Aquaculture (CAQ) and the 17th session of the Compliance Committee (CoC). As a result of the discussions, a set of recommendations and resolutions have been proposed, addressing identified problems, threats or scientific advice. Of essential importance for Bulgaria is the adoption of a recommendation on the multiannual management plan for turbot fisheries in the Black Sea (geographical subarea 29). In order to stimulate the sector and deter illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, an increase in the total allowable catch of turbot in the Black Sea (10% increase in the EU quota) has been

adopted for the next 4 years, while work is underway to define additional technical measures to mitigate bycatch in turbot fishing, collect data on fishing effort and discards at sea, as well as to strengthen control measures. The EU's request to transfer the amount of turbot catch quota not used by the EU (Bulgaria and Romania) in 2023 (for Bulgaria in the amount of 7.6 tons) to the fishing opportunities for 2025 has been approved. Thus, Bulgaria's total fishing opportunities for turbot catch in 2025 amount to 90.26 tons.

Other decisions of significant interest to the country are the adopted recommendations on management measures for the sustainable exploitation of sprat in the Black Sea, which, among other things, calls for an assessment of climate impacts on the species, in order to provide more complete advice in preparing a long-term management plan, as well as on management measures for the sustainable exploitation of rapan in the Black Sea (implementation of transitional measures, including freezing of fishing capacity or fishing effort of vessels fishing for rapan with beam trawl, as well as assessment of the management strategy, establishment of requirements for the system for monitoring fishing vessels, authorized vessels/divers, fishing logbooks and port inspections). A complete ban on sea fishing for sturgeon has been introduced *(Acipenseridae)*) in the Black Sea, as well as appropriate monitoring, control and surveillance measures, awareness-raising campaigns and training for the safe release of incidentally caught specimens. The currently effective measures for the Black Sea spiny shark are complemented by enhanced data collection, awareness-raising campaigns and the safe release of specimens of the species in cases of bycatch.

In 2024, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development actively works and participates in the working formats of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in connection with Bulgaria's accession to the OECD. During the 134th session of the OECD Committee on Fisheries (COFI) at the end of November 2024, a technical review was conducted by the OECD of the compliance of Bulgarian legislation, policies and administrative practices with the OECD legal instruments in the field of fisheries and aquaculture, and the results of the review of our country's accession to the committee were presented. As a result, the review of Bulgaria's accession to the OECD in the fisheries section was successfully completed.

In connection with the Action Plan for the Protection and Restoration of Marine Ecosystems for Sustainable and Resilient Fisheries (Marine Plan) published by the EC in 2023, part of the package of measures to improve the sustainability and resilience of the fisheries and aquaculture sector in the EU, Bulgaria has prepared a national Roadmap for the implementation of the measures and actions provided for in the Marine Plan, developed jointly by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and the Ministry of Environment and Water, in partnership with experts from the public sector in the field of fisheries and the environment, as well as representatives of scientific organizations.

Planned activities in 2025

The following is foreseen in 2025:

- Designation of fishery sites permitted for recreational fishing during the dark part of the day;
- Designation of water bodies for stocking, according to Art. 22a (5) of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Act;
- Introduction of a ban on fishing at the fisheries sites under Art. 3 (1.1) and (1.2) of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Act during the breeding period of fish;
- Introduction of a temporary ban on the fishing of white sand mussels;
- Approval of Annual Reports on the implemented activities under the Plans for production and marketing of the recognized producer organizations in the fisheries sector;
- Approval of a new Production and Marketing Plan of the Black Sea Mussel Producers' Organization;
- Carrying out an inspection to establish compliance with the requirements for recognition of inter-branch organizations in the sector of organizations of the APRP BG FISH;
- Participation in meetings with the EC and GFCM, in connection with the adoption by GFCM of measures for the protection and management of commercially valuable species, subject to fishing in the Black Sea, as well as measures of a horizontal nature (control, data collection, etc.);

- Continuation of activities to prepare a draft of the Law on the Law on the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
- Participation in the 18th meeting of the GFCM Compliance Committee, the 11th meeting of the Work Group for Black Sea (WGBS) and the 48th annual meeting of the GFCM in order to protect Bulgaria's interests in decision-making on the management of fisheries in the Black Sea;
- Taking measures to implement activities from the Roadmap for the implementation of the EU Action Plan: Conserve and restore marine ecosystems for sustainable and resilient fisheries.

VIII. PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AGRICULTURAL POLICY DOCUMENTS FROM THE NATIONAL STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK IN 2024

- **The National Development Program Bulgaria 2030** is the main strategic document setting the framework of policies for the development of the agrarian sector.

Within the framework of **Priority 6 "Sustainable agriculture"** of the Program, sub-priorities and areas of impact are formulated, aimed at the development of an intelligent, sustainable and diversified agricultural sector, which would guarantee the country's food security.

Under **Priority 9 "Local Development"** of the Program, sub-priorities and areas of impact aimed at preserving the viability and accelerating the economic development of rural areas are set.

In order to achieve the goals set in the National Development Program Bulgaria 2030 in the fields of agriculture, fisheries, forests and rural areas, a complex of measures is set and their implementation is monitored in the three-year action plans under the Program. The possibilities of various instruments are used - the Rural Development Programme 2020-2024, the Strategic Plan for Agriculture and Rural Development 2023-2027, the EU Recovery and Resilience Mechanism, the Maritime and Fisheries Programme 2014-2020, the Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Programme 2021-2027. (Data on the application of these instruments are presented in subsection IV. SUPPORT TO THE AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY and subsection VII. FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE, item 3. Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Programme 2014-2020 and Maritime Affairs, Fisheries and Aquaculture Programme 2021-2027 of this Report).

- **General strategy for the management and development of hydromeliorations and protection from the harmful effects of water**

The document outlines the need to restore an effective and efficient hydro-ameliorative sector as a prerequisite for economically viable, competitive agriculture, resilient to the impacts of climate change and providing protection from the harmful effects of water.

In fulfillment of the objectives of the strategy in 2024 progress is reported regarding the implementation of investments (financed under the RDP 2014- 2020) related to the reconstruction and modernization of sites from the hydromelioration fund, as well as projects for the efficient use of water in agricultural holdings. 27 projects for the rehabilitation of hydromelioration facilities for irrigation and protection from the harmful effects of water are in the process of implementation.

During the period February - April 2025, a reception was held under the intervention "Investments in Irrigation Infrastructure" from the SPRD 2023-2027 in two directions - for irrigation associations and other private providers and for "Irrigation Systems" EAD. Through support under the intervention, activities related to tangible and intangible investments for the reconstruction and modernization of the existing irrigation infrastructure used only for agricultural purposes and located outside agricultural holdings will be supported. A total of 38 project proposals have been received with a requested subsidy value of BGN 248,339,307, which are in the process of being reviewed and evaluated.

More specific data on the activities carried out in the field of hydromelioration and protection from the harmful effects of water in 2024 are presented in subsection V. ACTIVITIES RELATED TO AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, item 2. Hydromeliorations of this Report.

- **Strategy for digitization of agriculture and rural areas of the Republic of Bulgaria**

In implementation of the Strategy, a single information system of electronic registers for the purposes of the specialized administration (ERSA) was built in the ministry.

With funds from the RDP 2014-2020, the NRRP and the SPARD 2023-2027, measures from the Strategy aimed at technological modernization and digitalization in agriculture are being implemented.

According to the RDP 2014- 2020 the increase of the innovation capacity of the Agriculture sector is stimulated by supporting the cooperation between business and science (research and innovation, partnership for the exchange and transfer of innovations, development of infrastructure for experimentation and access to it). By the end of 2024, under sub-measure 16.1 "Support for the formation and functioning of operational groups within the framework of the European Innovation Partnership" of the RDP 2014-2020, the implementation of contracts for financial support for the activities of 24 operational groups is being financed.

In connection with the commitments of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food under the National Recovery and Sustainability Plan, the project "Digitalization of Farm-to-Fork Processes" is being implemented. The investment project, with a deadline of December 31, 2025, envisages the construction of an Electronic Information System in Agriculture for data exchange between the public administration and economic entities in the sector, which will ensure integration and compatibility of data from various information systems, registers and databases, within and outside the Agriculture sector. The purpose is digitization and unification of information resources in agriculture, creation of conditions for monitoring the progress of the implementation of the objectives of the green deal in the field of agriculture, optimization of the business environment and reduction of the administrative burden.

Under the project "Fund for Promoting the Technological and Ecological Transition of Agriculture", 1,520 contracts have been concluded with agricultural producers for the provision of investment support in the amount of BGN 315,562,820. The financial assistance is aimed at acquiring assets from agricultural holdings, contributing to their accelerated technical renewal and widespread introduction of digital innovations into agricultural practice.

In the period December 2024 - February 2025, admission is open under Intervention II.G.1. "Support for Operational Groups within the European Innovation Partnership" from the SPARD 2023-2027 to finance the first step in the implementation of innovative projects - the creation of an operational group. 118 applications for assistance have been received and are in the evaluation procedure. According to the indicative annual schedule for the planned admissions, in the period September - November 2025, applications for the second step - providing financial assistance for the functioning of an operational group - will be accepted.

Trainings and consultations are held to develop the digital skills and qualification of those employed in agriculture. Training events were held on topics related to precision agriculture, systems for electronic process management, the possibilities of using blockchain technologies in agriculture.

- **Updated National Action Plan for Sustainable Use of Pesticides in the Republic of Bulgaria (NAPSUP)**

The progress in the implementation of the NAPSUP is reported in annually prepared Annual Reports on the monitoring and control of the implementation of the Updated National Action Plan for the Sustainable Use of Pesticides in the Republic of Bulgaria. The reports are published on the website of the Bulgarian Food Safety Agency.

The implementation of the Plan for the period 2020-2024 is to be reported and updated with the introduction of quantitative risk indicators.

Data on completed activities under the 2024 Plan are presented in subsection V. ACTIVITIES RELATED TO AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, item 3. Plant protection and phytosanitary control of the Agricultural report.

- **National Strategy for the Development of the viticulture and winemaking in the Republic of Bulgaria 2005 - 2025**

In the conditions of membership in the EU and implementation of the Common Agricultural Policy, the development of the Viticulture and Winemaking subsector is stimulated through the implementation of National Programs to support the viticulture and winemaking sector.

According to the National program for supporting the viticulture and winemaking sector for the period 2008-2013 1,820 ha of wine vineyards were restructured and management techniques were improved on 5,574 ha.

With the financial support under the National Program to Support the Viticulture and Winemaking Sector for the period 2014- 2018 3,715 ha of wine vineyards were restructured and the management techniques of 2,930 ha of vine plantations were improved.

In 2023 the implementation of the National Program to Support the Viticulture and Winemaking Sector 2019- 2023 has ended. The implementation of the activities provided for in it contributed to the achievement of the set indicators for the implementation of the relevant measures in the NDP Bulgaria 2030. For the period 2021- 2023 4,578.9 ha of wine vineyards have been restructured, which represents 14.2% of the area with grape plantations in agricultural holdings in 2023 (32,178 ha), with a set target value of 8%.

In October 2023, the implementation of interventions in the viticulture and wine sector under the SPARD 2023-2027 began. For the financial year 2024, nearly 200 financial assistance contracts were concluded with a value of approved financial assistance of BGN 35,206,792.

For the fiscal year 2025, over 220 applications for financial assistance were received. As of mid-2025, 87 financial assistance contracts have been concluded, with an approved subsidy amounting to BGN 26,530,579.

Data on the state of the viticulture and winemaking sector in 2024 are presented in subsection II. DEVELOPMENT OF THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR IN 2024 AND FORECASTS FOR 2025, item 2.5. Viticulture and wine production of the Report.

- **National Program for Prevention and Reduction of Food Loss 2021 - 2026**

The national program for the prevention and reduction of food loss in Bulgaria has been prepared in accordance with national and European commitments to reduce food waste. The main objective of the program is to create and develop measures and mechanisms to reduce food loss in the production, commercial and consumer spheres, as well as to encourage food donation.

In implementation of the measures of the Program in 2024, information materials related to explaining the difference between the expiration date and the minimum durability date of foods, and the proper storage of foods in the household, have been prepared and printed. Information materials have been developed for students on the topic of preventing and reducing food waste.

- **National Action Program to contribute to the implementation of the objectives of the Farm to Fork Strategy by 2030**

In 2024, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food implemented the reform "Update of the Strategic Framework of the Agricultural Sector" included in Component 6 "Sustainable Agriculture" of the NRRP. Its essence lies in the development of a National Action Program to contribute to the implementation of the objectives of the Farm to Fork Strategy by 2030. The document was approved by Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 857/13.12.2024.

The program builds on the strategic framework for managing the agricultural sector, regulated in the National Development Program Bulgaria 2030. It outlines objectives, measures and activities aimed at protecting the climate, the environment, biodiversity and natural resources in the field of agriculture for the period up to 2030, in line with the priorities and objectives of the EU Farm to Fork Strategy and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The applied agrarian policy contributes to the maintenance of stable macro-indicators of the sector. At the same time, agriculture is faced with a number of challenges that have been increasing in recent years - increasingly visible manifestations of extreme weather events that have a direct negative effect on agricultural production, worsening international relations and foreign political instability, instability of international markets for agricultural products, deepening demographic problems. In these conditions, the focus of policy is on better risk management and the widespread introduction of new technological and digital solutions into agricultural practice, allowing the production of sustainable products with fewer resources. Emphasis is placed on stabilizing incomes and strengthening the market positions of agricultural producers, creating new jobs and ensuring employment in rural areas.

SECTION B

PROGRAM FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN 2026

The state policy in the agricultural sector is aimed at modernizing and increasing the competitiveness of Bulgarian agriculture, sustainable development of the fisheries and forestry improving working conditions and quality of life in rural areas, sustainable management of natural resources and compliance with high safety standards in the food production and supply chain. The main challenges in the development of the sector include the need to improve irrigation infrastructure, reduce administrative burdens, and enhance digitalization. Combating climate risks, including droughts, floods and hailstorms, requires better management of water resources and investments in irrigation infrastructure and protection of agricultural production. In the forestry sector, a challenge is monitoring and protecting forests from fires and illegal activities. In the fisheries sector, the priority is to ensure sustainable exploitation of resources and reduce illegal fishing.

The priorities and objectives of the policy in the agricultural sector and the measures for their achievement in 2026, set out in this section, are in accordance with the Management Program of the Republic of Bulgaria for the period 2025-2029, as well as with the National Development Program BULGARIA 2030. In 2026, the Strategic Plan for the Development of Agriculture and Rural Areas for the period 2023-2027 and the Maritime Affairs, Fisheries and Aquaculture Programme 2021-2027 will be implemented, which provide for interventions financed by the European Agricultural and Fisheries Funds. Activities will be finalized to implement the National Plan for Restoration and Sustainability of the Republic of Bulgaria, including investments to increase the sustainability and competitiveness of the sector and its readiness to meet the challenges of the green and digital transition.

PRIORITY 1: DEVELOPMENT OF COMPETITIVE, MARKET-ORIENTED AND CLIMATE-RESISTANT AGRICULTURE

GOAL 1: GUARANTEEING FAIR AND STABLE INCOME TO AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS

MEASURES:

- Providing annual support to farmers through direct payments.
- Using state aid support mechanisms to improve the socio-economic sustainability of agricultural holdings and promote the production of quality crop and livestock production

GOAL 2: MODERNIZED AND TECHNOLOGICALLY RENEWED FACILITIES AND ENTERPRISES, ACCELERATED INTRODUCTION OF INNOVATION AND DIGITIZATION

MEASURES:

- Stimulating the investment activity of agricultural holdings and enterprises for processing/marketing of agricultural produce through the implementation of support measures under the SPARD
- Giving investment support under the National Recovery and Resilience Plan through the Fund for Promotion of the Technological and Ecological Transition of Agriculture project.

GOAL 3: STRENGTHENING THE POSITIONS OF FARMERS IN THE FOOD SUPPLY CHAIN

MEASURES:

- Promoting the association of farmers in groups and producer organizations by providing financial support under the SPARD
- Implementation of market support measures through the SPARD instruments

GOAL 4: CREATING OPTIMAL CONDITIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF EFFICIENT IRRIGATION AGRICULTURE AND PREVENTION OF THE RISK OF FLOODS, DISASTERS AND ACCIDENTS

MEASURES:

- Rehabilitation of the existing hydro-ameliorative irrigation infrastructure in the Republic of Bulgaria
- Undertaking actions to construct the unfinished hydro-ameliorative infrastructure projects
- Rehabilitation and modernization of drainage pumping stations

GOAL 5: INCREASING THE PRODUCTION OF ORGANIC AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

MEASURES:

- Implementation of the measures and activities of the National Plan for the Development of Organic Production until 2030.
- Providing support for the development of organic agriculture through measures under the SPARD

GOAL 6: SUPPORTING THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR TO IMPLEMENT ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE PROTECTION MEASURES

MEASURES:

- Encouraging farmers to implement activities that contribute to environmental and biodiversity protection and to make investments in production and processing aimed at environmental protection under the SPARD.

GOAL 7: IMPROVEMENT OF PROCESSES RELATED TO THE USE AND CONSERVATION OF AGRICULTURAL LANDS

MEASURES:

- Improving the efficiency of land allocation processes from the State Land Fund
- Improving control over the use of agricultural land and its protection
- Creation of a unified system for managing SLF lands

GOAL 8: MITIGATING THE IMPACT OF RISKS IN AGRICULTURE ON THE ACTIVITY AND INCOME OF EMPLOYEES IN THE INDUSTRY

MEASURES:

- Implementation of tools to support farmers in the prevention and management of risks in agriculture with European and national funds
- Expansion and compaction of the hail protection system

GOAL 9: IMPROVING THE EFFICIENCY OF THE AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY SYSTEM

MEASURES:

- Providing support for vocational training and improving the knowledge and practical skills of farmers
- Development and strengthening of the Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System (AKIS) with the help of integrated advisors and implementation of innovative projects

GOAL 10: DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE AS A TOOL FOR GENERATION OF INNOVATIVE POLICIES IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

MEASURES:

- Creation of new scientific products related to sustainable development of competitive agriculture, conservation and efficient use of natural and genetic resources for mitigation and adaptation to climate change, transition to bioeconomy, and circular economy
- Continuation of policies for genomic evaluation of high-yielding animals

GOAL 11: ENHANCING THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN HEALTH AND CONSUMER INTERESTS IN FOOD

MEASURES:

- Improving control along the agri-food chain and preventing food-related incidents
- Approval by the Council of Ministers of a draft of a new Law on Veterinary Medical Activities and a draft of a new Law on the Professional Organization of Veterinarians
- Improving control over the use of veterinary medicinal products
- Applying a high level of control regarding compliance with the requirements of the legislation and the implementation of the measures set out in the National Program for the Prevention, Control, Supervision of Animal Diseases and Zoonoses for the period 2025- 2027, and updating the measures if necessary in accordance with the epizootological situation and applicable legislation
- Limiting the use of plant protection products that are total herbicides and plant protection products that are of the first professional category of use
- Control of the implementation of the objectives set out in the revised National Action Plan of the Republic of Bulgaria for the sustainable use of pesticides to reduce the risks and impact of the use of pesticides
- Control of the maximum permissible limits of pesticide residues in final plant products
- Promoting the implementation of good biosecurity practices in family and small livestock farms and good practices among food producers and consumers in order to prevent food losses
- Modernization of the animal identification system and registration of livestock facilities
- Implementation of a consistent policy for cooperation with branch organizations in the foods sector to develop standards that aim to increase the quality of basic food products
- Finalizing the implementation of the National Program for the Prevention and Reduction of Food Loss (2021-2026)

GOAL 12: INCREASING EFFICIENCY IN THE ACTIVITIES OF PUBLIC ENTERPRISES IN THE INDUSTRY

MEASURES:

- Effective management of sole proprietorships in the industry and taking action to restructure them

GOAL 13: CREATING A GOOD BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY AND IMPROVING ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

MEASURES:

- Creation and introduction of a unified administrative system for the management of lands with changed purpose
- Commissioning of an Electronic Information System in Agriculture under the investment "Digitalization of Processes from Farm to Table" from the National Recovery and Sustainability Plan
- Expansion of electronic administrative services

- Development of the Integrated Information System of the BFSA, VetIS, with the aim of increasing the awareness of farmers and facilitating their activities, assisting veterinarians in the implementation of the National Program for the Prevention, Control, and Eradication of Animal Diseases and Zoonoses and reflecting the results of their practice

PRIORITY 2: MOBILIZING THE POTENTIAL OF RURAL AREAS TO ACHIEVE BALANCED SOCIAL AND TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT

GOAL 1: DIVERSIFICATION OF THE ECONOMY OF RURAL AREAS AND INCREASING EMPLOYMENT OF THE LOCAL POPULATION

MEASURES:

- Implementation of integrated multisectoral strategies for local development, based on the characteristics of the specific territory and developed on the basis of local needs and potential
- Promoting investments in non-agricultural activities through support under the SPARD

GOAL 2: IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN RURAL AREAS

MEASURES:

- Implementation of investments under the SPARD for the construction and/or reconstruction of technical infrastructure, municipal road and street network, reconstruction and modernization of the water supply network and sewage system
- Providing support for preserving the spiritual and cultural life of the population in rural areas

PRIORITY 3: DEVELOPMENT OF A SUSTAINABLE AND ECONOMIC VIABLE FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE SECTOR

GOAL 1: CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF FISH RESOURCES IN AQUATIC ECOSYSTEMS

MEASURES:

- Introduction of measures to protect fish populations in water bodies on the territory of the country and to carry out sustainable fishing
- Alignment of national fisheries legislation with the latest amendments to the EU fisheries control system

GOAL 2: IMPROVING THE COMPETITIVENESS AND SUSTAINABILITY OF THE FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE SECTOR

MEASURES:

- Modernization of the fishing fleet
- Promoting investment activity and the introduction of innovations in the Aquaculture sub-sector
- Stimulating modernization and innovation in the processing of fishery and aquaculture products
- Ensuring a safe, secure and sustainable sea through maritime surveillance and data exchange at European level
- Combating illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing
- Promoting the participation of local communities in the sustainable development of coastal and inland fisheries areas

PRIORITY 4: DEVELOPMENT OF A SUSTAINABLE AND VIABLE FORESTRY SECTOR

GOAL 1: SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT, CONSERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF BIODIVERSITY AND CONTRIBUTION TO CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION

MEASURES:

- Approval by the Council of Ministers of the "National Strategy for the Development of the Forestry Sector in the Republic of Bulgaria for the Period Until 2030"
- Increasing the capacity of state forestry enterprises to fight forest fires
- Providing support for reducing biodiversity loss, protecting forest habitats and reducing illegal activities in forest areas, preventing damage from forest fires, natural disasters and catastrophic events, and for afforestation and restoration under the SPARD
- Providing support for the implementation of environmental activities for forests in Natura 2000, maintenance of newly created and restored forests, improvement of the health and sustainability of forest ecosystems, primary wood processing and maintenance and improvement of biodiversity in forest ecosystems under the SPARD

GOAL 2: INCREASING THE ROLE OF FORESTS IN THE ECONOMIC GROWTH OF THE COUNTRY

MEASURES:

- Conducting a current inventory of 40% of forest areas
- Maintaining forests in good health, restoring damaged forest areas through afforestation and supporting their natural regeneration:
  - Preparing a forecast for expected attacks by diseases and pests;
  - Timely issuance and implementation of guidelines for the implementation of sanitary and forest protection measures and activities.
- Sustainable supply of wood for the processing industry

GOAL 3: GUARANTEEING TERRITORIAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND THE PARTICIPATION OF ALL KEY STAKEHOLDERS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FORESTRY POLICIES

MEASURES:

- Visualization of forests in the existing information environment by updating the geographic portal for forests
- Ensuring levels of access to the developed info system in order to ensure more active participation of the society and the institutions in terms of the control on the forest activities
- Preparation of a "Methodology for conducting a national forest inventory" and commissioning the conduct of a National Forest Inventory
- Prevention and measures to prevent illegal activities in forest areas:
  - Reviewing and, if necessary, updating the existing agreements for joint activities with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, EAFA, the National Revenue Agency, the Main Labor Inspectorate, the Road Infrastructure Agency, and other institutions for the control and prevention of illegal actions in the forest territories
  - Implementation of a module to the Information System (IS) of the Executive Forestry Agency for permitting, control and tracking of the extraction, trade and transport of non-timber forest products
  - Monitoring the use of biomass from forestry for energy production
  - Introduction of new software for the sites under Article 206 of the Forestry Act

- Development and launch of the "National Forest Pedagogy Program"

A set of instruments for financial support with European and national funds will be implemented in 2026 to implement the measures and achieve the goals of the agricultural policy.

With regard to agriculture, the interventions from the Strategic Plan for the Development of Agriculture and Rural Areas 2023-2027 will be applied, and the development of fisheries and aquaculture production will be supported through the Maritime Affairs, Fisheries and Aquaculture Programme 2021-2027.

Despite the limitations of the national budget, the sustainable development of agriculture will be promoted with a national resource - through schemes for transitional national aid, supplementing the support with European funds for direct support, and state aid.

In 2026, the implementation of projects financed with funds from the National Recovery and Resilience Plan will be completed, related to investments in activities ensuring the protection of environmental components and mitigating the effects of climate change, the introduction of innovative production and digital technologies, the digitization of processes in the industry and communication between the administration and business.

To support the agricultural sector in 2026, funds in the amount of 4,233.8 million leva (2,164.7 million euros) will be needed, including:

- For direct payments - 1,645.9 million leva (841.5 million euros) per financial year.
- For market measures - 170.7 million leva (87.3 million euros) per financial year.
- For transitional national aid - 96.4 million leva (49.3 million euros) per financial year.
- For state aid (including tax relief schemes) - 750 million leva (383.5 million euros). Additional financial resources may be made available if necessary and financially feasible.
- For payments under interventions from the CAP Strategic Plan financed by the EAFRD - 1,379.7 million leva (705.4 million euros).
- For the implementation of measures to support fisheries and aquaculture - 53.8 million leva (27.5 million euros).
- For implementation of activities under the National Water Resources Strategy - 137.3 million leva (70.2 million euros) including VAT.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1

GROSS AND FINAL PRODUCTS FROM THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR FOR 2024 (AT PRODUCER PRICES)

(million BGN)

Code	Products	Current prices															
		Gross output	Losses	Initial stocks	Used per unit			Processed by producers	Own consumption	Sales			Sales - total	Production of goods from fixed capital at own expense	Closing stocks	Change in stocks	Final production
					Seeds and propagating material	Feed supplements	Other			in the country		abroad					
										in the sector	outside the sector						
a	b	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
01	Cereals	3,513.0	2.0	1,397.6	93.3	62.0	6.2	9.0	7.4	231.3	3,362.0	52.2	3,645.3		1,085.4	-312.1	3,411.5
01.1	Wheat and spelt	2,481.1	1.0	833.3	79.4	22.6	0.7	0.9	4.0	52.4	2,470.7	19.4	2,542.5		663.3	-169.9	2,400.0
01.1/1	Soft wheat	2,436.3	1.0	821.8	78.1	22.3	0.7	0.9	3.8	46.4	2,429.5	17.8	2,493.7		657.6	-164.2	2,356.5
01.1/2	Durum wheat	44.8		11.5	1.3	0.3			0.2	6.0	41.2	1.6	48.8		5.7	-5.7	43.5
01.2	Rye	5.0	0.2	3.0	0.6	1.6				1.0	2.3		3.3		2.3	-0.7	4.2
01.3	Barley	337.8	0.3	41.0	8.8	10.6	0.5	0.7	0.9	41.0	277.1	11.9	330.0		27.0	-14.0	328.2
01.4	Oat and cereal mixtures	19.6		7.4	1.0	1.0	0.1	0.4	0.1	4.3	8.7	0.2	13.2		11.2	3.8	18.5
01.5	Corn for grain	565.9	0.5	445.5	0.9	19.6	0.9	1.5	1.0	125.7	541.4	17.5	684.6		302.4	-143.1	563.6
01.6	Rice	73.1		47.5	1.6		3.9	5.1	0.6	0.4	38.7	3.2	42.2		67.2	19.7	67.6
01.7	Other cereals	30.5		19.9	1.0	6.6	0.1	0.4	0.8	6.5	23.1		29.5		12.0	-7.9	29.4
02	Industrial Crops	1,733.0	2.0	643.0	5.1	6.8	2.7	21.1	10.7	181.4	1,613.7	1.3	1,796.5		531.1	-111.8	1,723.2
02.1	Oilseeds	1,552.2	1.4	588.1	1.9	3.6	1.0	0.4	3.5	153.4	1,483.9	0.9	1,638.2		490.3	-97.7	1,547.9
02.1/1	Rapeseed and colza	136.0		8.6	0.3		0.1			17.4	119.4	0.1	136.9		7.3	-1.3	135.6
02.1/2	Sunflower	1,405.5	1.4	571.8	1.4	3.5	0.7	0.4	3.5	136.0	1,354.2	0.5	1,490.7		475.7	-96.1	1,402.0
02.1/3	Soy	0.6		4.4	0.1	0.1					1.8		1.9		2.9	-1.4	0.5
02.1/4	Other oilseeds	10.1		3.3	0.1		0.2				8.3	0.3	8.7		4.4	1.1	9.8
02.2	Protein crops	38.4	0.5	14.6	2.6	3.1	0.3		0.1	3.0	24.7	0.1	27.8		18.6	4.0	35.0
02.3	Tobacco	34.8		17.7				1.5	4.5	16.9	19.8		36.8		9.7	-8.0	34.8
02.4	Sugar beet																
02.5	Other industrial crops	107.6	0.1	22.6	0.6	0.1	1.4	19.2	2.6	8.1	85.3	0.3	93.7		12.5	-10.1	105.5
02.5/1	Fiber crops	1.4								0.1	1.0	0.3	1.4				1.4
02.5/2	Hops	1.0		1.0							1.6		1.6		0.4	-0.6	1.0
02.5/3	Other industrial crops	105.2	0.1	21.6	0.6	0.1	1.4	19.2	2.6	8.0	82.7		90.7		12.1	-9.5	103.1
03	Forage crops	205.3	0.2	90.8	0.7	101.3	5.6	5.3	0.1	28.6	73.4		102.0		80.9	-9.8	198.8
03.1	Corn for silage	59.0	0.1	24.1		27.5	1.5	2.0		10.4	13.0		23.4		28.6	4.6	57.4
03.2	Root fodder																
03.3	Other forage crops	146.3	0.1	66.7	0.7	73.8	4.1	3.3	0.1	18.2	60.4		78.6		52.3	-14.4	141.4
04	Vegetables	529.4	0.3	18.5	0.4	1.5	1.5	1.9	0.5	70.2	385.3	10.7	466.2	59.5	16.1	-2.5	527.2
04.1	Fresh vegetables	439.6	0.1	3.8	0.4	0.4		1.9	0.1	64.4	369.2	4.1	437.7		2.8	-1.0	439.1
04.1/2	Tomatoes	130.6						0.1		12.2	118.3		130.5				130.6
04.1/3	Other fresh vegetables	309.0	0.1	3.8	0.4	0.4		1.8	0.1	52.2	250.9	4.1	307.2		2.8	-1.0	308.5
04.2	Nurseries and flowers	89.8	0.2	14.7		1.1	1.5		0.4	5.8	16.1	6.6	28.5	59.5	13.3	-1.5	88.1
04.2/1	Nurseries	16.8	0.2	7.4			1.5		0.3	5.8	7.1	5.2	18.1		4.1	-3.3	15.1
04.2/2	Decorative plants, including Christmas trees	13.5		7.3		1.1					9.0	1.4	10.5		9.2	1.8	13.5
04.2/3	Creation and cultivation	59.5												59.5			59.5
05	Potatoes	75.7		15.6	1.2				0.4	23.2	49.2	2.7	75.1		14.6	-1.1	74.5
06	Fruits	343.9	0.1	7.9			0.6	20.4	2.2	40.5	257.2	14.4	311.8		16.7	8.8	343.2
06.1	Fresh fruits	236.1		7.9			0.4	6.2	0.6	26.4	179.8	14.0	220.1		16.7	8.8	235.7
06.1/1	Apples	23.5		3.4			0.3	1.8	0.4	2.0	17.2	0.6	19.7		4.7	1.2	23.2

Code	Products	Current prices																
		Gross	Losses	Initial	Used per unit			Processed by	Own consumption	Sales			Sales -	Production of	Closing	Change	Final
06.1/2	Pears	2.5		0.3				0.1	0.1	0.4	1.8	0.4	2.6			-0.2	2.5
06.1/3	Peaches	17.0								0.1	16.6	0.3	17.0				17.0
06.1/4	Other fresh fruits	193.1		4.2			0.1	4.3	0.1	23.9	144.2	12.7	180.8		12.0	7.8	193.0
06.4	Grapes - total	107.8	0.1				0.2	14.2	1.6	14.1	77.4	0.4	91.7				107.5
06.4/1	Dessert grapes	12.8						0.1		0.6	12.1	0.1	12.7				12.8
06.4/2	Other grape	95.0	0.1				0.2	14.1	1.6	13.5	65.3	0.3	79.0				94.7
07	Wine																
07.1	Table wine																
09	Other crops	56.4		14.5	3.4				0.4	10.1	43.2	0.1	53.4		13.7	-0.8	53.0
09.2	Seeds	56.4		14.5	3.4				0.4	10.1	43.2	0.1	53.4		13.7	-0.8	53.0
09.3	Other plant products																
10	**Crop production (from 01 to 09)**	**6,456.7**	**4.6**	**2,187.9**	**104.1**	**171.6**	**16.6**	**57.7**	**21.7**	**585.3**	**5,784.0**	**81.4**	**6,450.3**	**59.5**	**1,758.5**	**-429.3**	**6,331.4**
11	Livestock	1,243.5		427.8				34.4			1,081.1	38.2	1,119.3	94.5	423.1	-4.5	1,243.5
11.1	Cattle	190.8		257.3				2.7			119.7		119.7	65.8	259.9	2.7	190.8
11.2	Pigs	478.8		46.4				19.6			412.1	38.2	450.3	5.1	50.2	3.8	478.8
11.3	Horses																
11.4	Sheep and goats	168.5		58.2				8.0			143.3		143.3	23.6	51.8	-6.4	168.5
11.5	Poultry	405.4		65.9				4.1			406.0		406.0		61.2	-4.6	405.4
11.6	Other animals																
12	Livestock production	1,097.8		124.0		25.3	44.7	29.5	20.2	103.9	910.5	47.2	1,061.7		40.4	-83.7	1,027.8
12.1	Milk	693.0				22.2		27.3	5.4	43.4	594.7		638.1				670.8
12.2	Eggs	303.4		7.9			26.7	1.8	7.6	38.1	182.4	47.2	267.8		7.4	-0.6	276.7
12.3	Other livestock production	101.4		116.1		3.1	18.0	0.4	7.2	22.4	133.4		155.8		33.0	-83.1	80.3
12.3/1	Unwashed wool	1.3								0.2	1.1		1.3				1.3
12.3/2	Silkworm cocoons																
12.3/3	Other livestock production	100.1		116.1		3.1	18.0	0.4	7.2	22.2	132.2		154.5		33.0	-83.1	79.0
13	**Livestock production (11+12)**	**2,341.3**		**551.8**		**25.3**	**44.7**	**63.9**	**20.2**	**103.9**	**1,991.6**	**85.4**	**2,181.0**	**94.5**	**463.5**	**-88.2**	**2,271.3**
14	**Production of agricultural goods (10+13)**	**8,798.0**	**4.6**	**2,739.7**	**104.1**	**196.9**	**61.3**	**121.6**	**41.9**	**689.2**	**7,775.6**	**166.8**	**8,631.3**	**154.0**	**2,222.0**	**-517.5**	**8,602.7**
15	**Production of agricultural services**	**547.8**									**547.8**		**547.8**				**547.8**
16	**Production from agriculture (14 + 15)**	**9,345.8**	**4.6**	**2,739.7**	**104.1**	**196.9**	**61.3**	**121.6**	**41.9**	**689.2**	**8,323.4**	**166.8**	**9,179.1**	**154.0**	**2,222.0**	**-517.5**	**9,150.5**
17	**Non-agricultural inseparable secondary activities**	**298.1**							**298.1**								**298.1**
17.1	Processing of agricultural products	298.1							298.1								298.1
17.1/1	- cereals	15.4							15.4								15.4
17.1/2	- vegetables	34.6							34.6								34.6
17.1/3	- fruits	21.9							21.9								21.9

Code	Products	Current prices																
		Gross	Losses	Initial	Used per unit			Processed by	Own consumption	Sales			Sales -	Production of	Closing	Change	Final
17.1/4	- wine	38.5							38.5								38.5
17.1/5	- animals	60.4							60.4								60.4
17.1/6	- animal products	121.9							121.9								121.9
17.1/6/1	- milk	121.9							121.9								121.9
17.1/7	- other	5.4							5.4								5.4
17.2	Other inseparable secondary activities																
18	**Production from the Agriculture sector (16+17)**	**9,643.9**	**4.6**	**2,739.7**	**104.1**	**196.9**	**61.3**	**121.6**	**340.0**	**689.2**	**8,323.4**	**166.8**	**9,179.1**	**154.0**	**2,222.0**	**-517.5**	**9,448.6**

Source: NSI

ANNEX 2

VALUE OF GROSS PRODUCTION AND GROSS ADDED VALUE FROM AGRICULTURE (AT PRODUCER PRICES) FOR THE PERIOD 2022-2023

(million BGN)

Code	Products	2022	Coefficient of variation	2023	Coefficient of variation	2024
a	b	1	2	3	4	5
01	Cereals	5,644.7	-25.5	4,203.0	-16.4	3,513.0
01.1	Wheat and spelt	3,785.6	-27.3	2,751.5	-9.8	2,481.1
01.1/1	Soft wheat	3,747.1	-27.6	2,713.4	-10.2	2,436.3
01.1/2	Durum wheat	38.5	-1.0	38.1	17.6	44.8
01.2	Rye	9.9	-42.4	5.7	-12.3	5.0
01.3	Barley	341.2	-14.7	291.2	16.0	337.8
01.4	Oat and cereal mixtures	13.8	-3.6	13.3	47.4	19.6
01.5	Corn for grain	1,408.7	-28.6	1,006.4	-43.8	565.9
01.6	Rice	53.0	53.6	81.4	-10.2	73.1
01.7	Other cereals	32.5	64.6	53.5	-43.0	30.5
02	Industrial Crops	2,974.4	-40.7	1,763.5	-1.7	1,733.0
02.1	Oilseeds	2,784.8	-42.7	1,594.5	-2.7	1,552.2
02.1/1	Rapeseed and colza	340.4	-53.5	158.3	-14.1	136.0
02.1/2	Sunflower	2,429.0	-41.5	1,420.3	-1.0	1,405.5
02.1/3	Soy	12.9	-51.2	6.3	-90.5	0.6
02.1/4	Other plant crops	2.5	284.0	9.6	5.2	10.1
02.2	Protein crops	28.9	-6.2	27.1	41.7	38.4
02.3	Tobacco	26.2	33.2	34.9	-0.3	34.8
02.4	Sugar beet					
02.5	Other industrial crops	134.5	-20.4	107.0	0.6	107.6
02.5/1	Fiber crops	1.3	30.8	1.7	-17.6	1.4
02.5/2	Hops	1.3	-23.1	1.0	0.0	1.0
02.5/3	Other industrial crops	131.9	-20.9	104.3	0.9	105.2
03	Forage crops	206.7	9.9	227.2	-9.6	205.3
03.1	Corn for silage	68.9	5.4	72.6	-18.7	59.0
03.2	Root fodder	0.1	-100.0	0.0		0.0
03.3	Other forage crops	137.7	12.3	154.6	-5.4	146.3
04	Vegetables	485.1	2.8	498.7	6.2	529.4
04.1	Fresh vegetables	370.1	8.6	402.1	9.3	439.6
04.1/2	Tomatoes	126.7	1.3	128.4	1.7	130.6
04.1/3	Other fresh vegetables	243.4	12.4	273.7	12.9	309.0
04.2	Nurseries and flowers	115.0	-16.0	96.6	-7.0	89.8
04.2/1	Nurseries	10.9	66.1	18.1	-7.2	16.8
04.2/2	Decorative plants, including Christmas trees	19.2	-9.9	17.3	-22.0	13.5
04.2/3	Creation and cultivation	84.9	-27.9	61.2	-2.8	59.5
05	Potatoes	89.5	-13.3	77.6	-2.4	75.7
06	Fruits	347.1	-9.1	315.4	9.0	343.9
06.1	Fresh fruits	240.4	-12.7	209.8	12.5	236.1
06.1/1	Apples	28.2	-23.0	21.7	8.3	23.5
06.1/2	Pears	2.6	-23.1	2.0	25.0	2.5
06.1/3	Peaches	23.2	-59.5	9.4	80.9	17.0
06.1/4	Other fresh fruits	186.4	-5.2	176.7	9.3	193.1
06.4	Grapes - total	106.7	-1.0	105.6	2.1	107.8
06.4/1	Dessert grapes	14.1	1.4	14.3	-10.5	12.8
06.4/2	Other grape	92.6	-1.4	91.3	4.1	95.0
07	Wine					
07.1	Table wine					
09	Other crops	48.6	8.0	52.5	7.4	56.4
09.2	Seeds	48.6	8.0	52.5	7.4	56.4
09.3	Other plant products					
10	**Crop production (from 01 to 09)**	**9,796.1**	**-27.1**	**7,137.9**	**-9.5**	**6,456.7**
11	Livestock	1,076.6	18.7	1,277.6	-2.7	1,243.5
11.1	Cattle	201.4	-11.9	177.4	7.6	190.8
11.2	Pigs	351.5	36.4	479.4	-0.1	478.8
11.3	Horses					
11.4	Sheep and goats	154.0	19.4	183.9	-8.4	168.5
11.5	Poultry	369.7	18.2	436.9	-7.2	405.4
11.6	Other animals					
12	Livestock production	1,241.0	-0.6	1,233.7	-11.0	1,097.8
12.1	Milk	789.7	-9.8	712.2	-2.7	693.0
12.2	Eggs	318.6	24.6	397.0	-23.6	303.4
12.3	Other livestock production	132.7	-6.2	124.5	-18.6	101.4
12.3/1	Unwashed wool	1.5	-6.7	1.4	-7.1	1.3
12.3/2	Silkworm cocoons					

Code	Products	2022	Coefficient of variation	2023	Coefficient of variation	2024
12.3/3	Other livestock production	131.2	-6.2	123.1	-18.7	100.1
13	**Livestock production (11+12)**	**2,317.6**	**8.4**	**2,511.3**	**-6.8**	**2,341.3**
14	**Production of agricultural goods (10+13)**	**12,113.7**	**-20.3**	**9,649.2**	**-8.8**	**8,798.0**
15	**Production of agricultural services**	**595.3**	**0.1**	**595.7**	**-8.0**	**547.8**
16	**Production from agriculture (14 + 15)**	**12,709.0**	**-19.4**	**10,244.9**	**-8.8**	**9,345.8**
17	**Non-agricultural inseparable secondary activities**	**273.2**	**9.4**	**299.0**	**-0.3**	**298.1**
17.1	Processing of agricultural products	273.2	9.4	299.0	-0.3	298.1
17.1/1	- cereals	83.0	-86.4	11.3	36.3	15.4
17.1/2	- vegetables	27.3	85.0	50.5	-31.5	34.6
17.1/3	- fruits	18.1	0.0	18.1	21.0	21.9
17.1/4	- wine	41.1	1.9	41.9	-8.1	38.5
17.1/5	- animals	77.1	-15.4	65.2	-7.4	60.4
17.1/6	- animal products	18.4	471.2	105.1	16.0	121.9
17.1/6/1	- milk	18.4	471.2	105.1	16.0	121.9
17.1/7	- other	8.2	-15.9	6.9	-21.7	5.4
17.2	Other inseparable secondary activities					
18	**Production from the Agriculture sector (16+17)**	**12,982.2**	**-18.8**	**10,543.9**	**-8.5**	**9,643.9**
19	**Intermediate consumption**	**7,322.8**	**-10.2**	**6,574.6**	**-10.3**	**5,896.1**
	Losses	13.9	-64.7	4.9	-6.1	4.6
19.01	Seeds and propagating material	508.0	-4.9	483.2	3.3	499.0
19.01/1	supplied by other agricultural holdings	49.0	39.2	68.2	5.0	71.6
19.01/2	purchased outside the sector	276.8	13.0	312.7	3.4	323.2
	produced and consumed on the farm itself	182.2	-43.9	102.3	1.9	104.2
19.02	Fuels and oils	1,305.7	-10.3	1,171.5	-10.3	1,051.0
19.02/1	- electricity	125.7	5.9	133.1	-6.5	124.5
19.02/2	- gas	48.1	-6.2	45.1	-9.8	40.7
19.02/3	- other fuels	1,126.7	-12.5	985.9	-11.0	877.6
19.02/4	- others	5.2	42.3	7.4	10.8	8.2
19.03	Fertilizers and soil improvers	1,412.7	-18.4	1,152.7	-17.6	950.1
19.03/1	supplied by other agricultural holdings	26.5	52.1	40.3	-33.3	26.9
19.03/2	purchased outside the sector	1,386.2	-19.8	1,112.4	-17.0	923.2
19.04	Plant protection products and pesticides	511.8	0.4	513.8	-1.5	506.1
19.05	Veterinary costs	221.6	-27.1	161.6	-24.5	122.0
19.06	Feed supplements	1,479.3	-8.7	1,351.0	-10.9	1,203.8
19.06/1	supplied by other agricultural holdings	534.9	1.0	540.1	-9.8	487.0
19.06/2	purchased outside the sector	612.0	1.0	618.3	-11.8	545.1
19.06/3	produced and consumed on the farm itself	332.4	-42.1	192.6	-10.9	171.7
	Feed supplements, not included in the final production	49.9	-31.3	34.3	-26.5	25.2
19.07	Maintenance and repair of machinery and small inventory	415.5	-8.7	379.4	-8.4	347.5
19.08	Building maintenance	176.8	-12.4	154.8	-9.8	139.6
19.09	Agricultural services	595.3	0.1	595.7	-8.0	547.8
19.10	PHYSIM	68.8	-26.5	50.6	6.1	53.7
19.11	Other goods and services	563.5	-7.5	521.1	-14.5	445.7
	supplied by other agricultural holdings	137.7	-17.1	114.2	-9.2	103.7
	purchased outside the sector	337.7	-7.8	311.2	-9.8	280.7
	produced and consumed on the farm itself	88.1	8.6	95.7	-35.9	61.3
20	**Gross value added at producer prices (18-19)**	**5,659.4**	**-29.9**	**3,969.3**	**-5.6**	**3,747.8**

Source: NSI

ANNEX 3

INTERMEDIATE CONSUMPTION, FACTOR EXPENDITURE, OTHER SUBSIDIES AND TAXES FOR 2024

(million BGN)

Elements of intermediate consumption	To create gross output at producer prices	To create the final production at basic prices	Produced and consumed on the farm itself	Purchase of goods and services for intermediate consumption	
				from other agricultural units	from units outside the industry
a	1	2	3	4	5
Losses	4.6		4.6		
Seeds and propagating material	499.0	394.8	104.2	71.6	323.2
Fuels and oils	1,051.0	1,051.0			1,051.0
- electricity	124.5	124.5			124.5
- gas	40.7	40.7			40.7
- other fuels	877.6	877.6			877.6
- others	8.2	8.2			8.2
Fertilizers and soil improvers	950.1	950.1		26.9	923.2
Plant protection products and pesticides	506.1	506.1			506.1
Veterinary costs	122.0	122.0			122.0
Feed supplements	1,203.8	1,203.8	171.7	487.0	545.1
Feed supplements, not included in the final production	25.2		25.2		
Maintenance and repair	487.1	487.1			487.1
- maintenance and repair of machines and small inventory	347.5	347.5			347.5
- maintenance of buildings	139.6	139.6			139.6
Agricultural services	547.8	547.8			547.8
PHYSIM	53.7	53.7			53.7
Other goods and services	445.7	384.4	61.3	103.7	280.7
Intermediate consumption	5,896.1	5,700.8	367.0	689.2	4,839.9
Use of fixed capital	1,232.2	1,232.2			1,232.2
- equipment	990.2	990.2			990.2
- buildings	108.8	108.8			108.8
- creation and cultivation	19.5	19.5			19.5
- others	113.7	113.7			113.7
Compensation of employees	1,822.9	1,822.9			1,822.9
Other taxes on production	28.0	28.0			28.0
Other subsidies on production	2,466.1	2,466.1			2,466.1
Rent	2,312.7	2,312.7			2,312.7
Interest paid	187.2	187.2			187.2
Interest received	87.4	87.4			87.4

Source: NSI

ANNEX 4

VALUE OF FINAL PRODUCTION, GROSS VALUE ADDED AND ENTREPRENEURIAL INCOME IN AGRICULTURE (AT CURRENT BASIS PRICES) FOR THE PERIOD 2022 - 2024

(million BGN)

Code	Products	2022	Coefficient of variation	2023	Coefficient of variation	2024
a	b	1	2	3	4	5
01	Cereals	5,485.4	-25.2	4,104.0	-16.9	3,411.5
01.1	Wheat and spelt	3,644.8	-26.8	2,667.7	-10.0	2,400.0
01.1/1	Soft wheat	3,607.4	-27.1	2,630.6	-10.4	2,356.5
01.1/2	Durum wheat	37.4	-0.8	37.1	17.3	43.5
01.2	Rye	9.7	-45.4	5.3	-20.8	4.2
01.3	Barley	328.7	-13.9	283.1	15.9	328.2
01.4	Oat and cereal mixtures	13.1	-4.6	12.5	48.0	18.5
01.5	Corn for grain	1,405.9	-28.6	1,003.7	-43.8	563.6
01.6	Rice	51.3	56.1	80.1	-15.6	67.6
01.7	Other cereals	31.9	61.8	51.6	-43.0	29.4
02	Industrial Crops	2,971.0	-40.0	1,783.8	-1.4	1,758.0
02.1	Oilseeds	2,754.2	-42.3	1,589.6	-2.6	1,547.9
02.1/1	Rapeseed and colza	316.3	-50.1	157.8	-14.1	135.6
02.1/2	Sunflower	2,422.9	-41.5	1,416.3	-1.0	1,402.0
02.1/3	Soy	12.6	-50.8	6.2	-91.9	0.5
02.1/4	Other plant crops	2.4	287.5	9.3	5.4	9.8
02.2	Protein crops	56.3	-0.5	56.0	19.1	66.7
02.3	Tobacco	26.2	32.4	34.7	0.3	34.8
02.4	Sugar beet					
02.5	Other industrial crops	134.3	-22.9	103.5	4.9	108.6
02.5/1	Fiber crops	3.3	6.1	3.5	28.6	4.5
02.5/2	Hops	1.3	-23.1	1.0		1.0
02.5/3	Other industrial crops	129.7	-23.7	99.0	4.1	103.1
03	Forage crops	205.5	7.7	221.4	-10.2	198.8
03.1	Corn for silage	68.4	4.7	71.6	-19.8	57.4
03.2	Root fodder	0.1	-100.0			
03.3	Other forage crops	137.0	9.3	149.8	-5.6	141.4
04	Vegetables	512.5	3.9	532.6	5.0	559.2
04.1	Fresh vegetables	397.5	9.8	436.6	7.9	471.1
04.1/2	Tomatoes	135.1	2.2	138.1	2.0	140.8
04.1/3	Other fresh vegetables	262.4	13.8	298.5	10.7	330.3
04.2	Nurseries and Flowers	115.0	-16.5	96.0	-8.2	88.1
04.2/1	Nurseries	10.9	60.6	17.5	-13.7	15.1
04.2/2	Decorative plants, including Christmas trees	19.2	-9.9	17.3	-22.0	13.5
04.2/3	Creation and cultivation	84.9	-27.9	61.2	-2.8	59.5
05	Potatoes	97.7	-22.6	75.6	-0.5	75.2
06	Fruits	386.4	-8.0	355.4	10.3	391.9
06.1	Fresh fruits	278.3	-10.4	249.3	11.4	277.8
06.1/1	Apples	32.5	-19.4	26.2	-6.9	24.4
06.1/2	Pears	3.3	-15.2	2.8		2.8
06.1/3	Peaches	27.1	-53.1	12.7	41.7	18.0
06.1/4	Other fresh fruits	215.4	-3.6	207.6	12.0	232.6
06.4	Grapes - total	108.1	-1.9	106.1	7.5	114.1

Code	Products	2022	Coefficient of variation	2023	Coefficient of variation	2024
06.4/1	Dessert grapes	15.5	1.3	15.7	23.6	19.4
06.4/2	Other grape	92.6	-2.4	90.4	4.8	94.7
07	Wine					
07.1	Table wine					
09	Other crops	41.3	25.2	51.7	2.5	53.0
09.2	Seeds	41.3	25.2	51.7	2.5	53.0
09.3	Other plant products					
10	**Crop production (from 01 to 09)**	**9,699.8**	**-26.6**	**7,124.5**	**-9.5**	**6,447.6**
11	Livestock	1,151.0	18.4	1,362.5	-2.3	1,331.5
11.1	Cattle	227.5	-4.7	216.8	8.0	234.1
11.2	Pigs	351.5	36.4	479.4	-0.1	478.8
11.3	Horses					
11.4	Sheep and goats	202.3	13.4	229.4	-7.1	213.2
11.5	Poultry	369.7	18.2	436.9	-7.2	405.4
11.6	Other animals					
12	Livestock production	1,182.6	-0.8	1,172.7	-7.7	1,082.5
12.1	Milk	812.9	-9.6	734.9	-1.3	725.5
12.2	Eggs	271.5	27.4	345.8	-20.0	276.7
12.3	Other livestock production	98.2	-6.3	92.0	-12.7	80.3
12.3/1	Unwashed wool	1.5	-6.7	1.4	-7.1	1.3
12.3/2	Silkworm cocoons					
12.3/3	Other livestock production	96.7	-6.3	90.6	-12.8	79.0
13	**Livestock production (11+12)**	**2,333.6**	**8.6**	**2,535.2**	**-4.8**	**2,414.0**
14	**Production of agricultural goods**	**12,033.4**	**-19.7**	**9,659.7**	**-8.3**	**8,861.6**
15	**Production of agricultural services**	**595.3**	**0.1**	**595.7**	**-8.0**	**547.8**
16	**Production from agriculture (14 + 15)**	**12,628.7**	**-18.8**	**10,255.4**	**-8.2**	**9,409.4**
17	**Non-agricultural inseparable secondary activities**	**273.2**	**9.4**	**299.0**	**-0.3**	**298.1**
17.1	Processing of agricultural products	273.2	9.4	299.0	-0.3	298.1
17.1/1	- cereals	83.0	-86.4	11.3	36.3	15.4
17.1/2	- vegetables	27.3	85.0	50.5	-31.5	34.6
17.1/3	- fruits	18.1		18.1	21.0	21.9
17.1/4	- wine	41.1	1.9	41.9	-8.1	38.5
17.1/5	- animals	77.1	-15.4	65.2	-7.4	60.4
17.1/6	- animal products	18.4	471.2	105.1	16.0	121.9
17.1/6/1	- milk	18.4	471.2	105.1	16.0	121.9
17.1/7	- other	8.2	-15.9	6.9	-21.7	5.4
17.2	Other inseparable secondary activities					
18	**Production from the Agriculture sector (16+17)**	**12,901.9**	**-18.2**	**10,554.4**	**-8.0**	**9,707.5**
19	**Intermediate consumption**	**6,988.7**	**-9.3**	**6,337.4**	**-10.0**	**5,700.8**
19.01	Seeds and propagating material	325.8	16.9	380.9	3.6	394.8
19.01/1	supplied by other agricultural holdings	49.0	39.2	68.2	5.0	71.6
19.01/2	purchased outside the sector	276.8	13.0	312.7	3.4	323.2
19.02	Fuels and oils	1,305.7	-10.3	1,171.5	-10.3	1,051.0
19.02/1	- electricity	125.7	5.9	133.1	-6.5	124.5
19.02/2	- gas	48.1	-6.2	45.1	-9.8	40.7
19.02/3	- other fuels	1,126.7	-12.5	985.9	-11.0	877.6

Code	Products	2022	Coefficient of variation	2023	Coefficient of variation	2024
19.02/4	- others	5.2	42.3	7.4	10.8	8.2
19.03	Fertilizers and soil improvers	1,412.7	-18.4	1,152.7	-17.6	950.1
19.03/1	supplied by other agricultural holdings	26.5	52.1	40.3	-33.3	26.9
19.03/2	purchased outside the sector	1,386.2	-19.8	1,112.4	-17.0	923.2
19.04	Plant protection products and pesticides	511.8	0.4	513.8	-1.5	506.1
19.05	Veterinary costs	221.6	-27.1	161.6	-24.5	122.0
19.06	Feed supplements	1,479.3	-8.7	1,351.0	-10.9	1,203.8
19.06/1	supplied by other agricultural holdings	534.9	1.0	540.1	-9.8	487.0
19.06/2	purchased outside the sector	612.0	1.0	618.3	-11.8	545.1
19.06/3	produced and consumed on the farm itself	332.4	-42.1	192.6	-10.9	171.7
19.07	Maintenance and repair of machinery and small inventory	415.5	-8.7	379.4	-8.4	347.5
19.08	Building maintenance	176.8	-12.4	154.8	-9.8	139.6
19.09	Agricultural services	595.3	0.1	595.7	-8.0	547.8
19.10	PHYSIM	68.8	-26.5	50.6	6.1	53.7
19.11	Other goods and services	475.4	-10.5	425.4	-9.6	384.4
	supplied by other agricultural holdings	137.7	-17.1	114.2	-9.2	103.7
	purchased outside the sector	337.7	-7.8	311.2	-9.8	280.7
20	**Gross value added at basic prices (18-19)**	**5,913.2**	**-28.7**	**4,217.0**	**-5.0**	**4,006.7**
21	Use of fixed capital	1,124.4	9.6	1,232.2		1,232.2
21.1	- equipment	894.6	9.0	975.2	1.5	990.2
21.2	- buildings	102.7	12.9	115.9	-6.1	108.8
21.3	- creation and cultivation	21.3	17.4	25.0	-22.0	19.5
21.4	- other	105.8	9.7	116.1	-2.1	113.7
22	**Net value added at basic prices (20-21)**	**4,788.8**	**-37.7**	**2,984.8**	**-7.0**	**2,774.5**
23	Compensation of employees	1,393.2	17.3	1,634.9	11.5	1,822.9
24	Other taxes on production	73.4	-44.4	40.8	-31.4	28.0
25	Other subsidies on production	2,468.2	-6.7	2,302.5	7.1	2,466.0
26	**Income by factors (22 - 24 + 25)**	**7,183.6**	**-27.0**	**5,246.5**	**-0.6**	**5,212.5**
27	**Net operating surplus / Net mixed income (22 - 23 + 25)**	**5,790.4**	**-37.6**	**3,611.6**	**-6.1**	**3,389.6**
28	Rent	2,490.7	1.7	2,532.2	-8.7	2,312.8
29	Interest paid	103.0	81.9	187.4	-0.1	187.2
30	Interest received	42.5	94.6	82.7	5.7	87.4
31	**Entrepreneurial income (27 - 28 - 29 + 30)**	**3,239.2**	**-69.9**	**974.7**	**0.2**	**977.0**

Source: NSI

ANNEX 5

FINAL PRODUCTS AND GROSS VALUE ADDED (AT BASIC PRICES) - 2023 - 2024 - AMOUNT AND INDICES OF THE CHANGE - 2024 COMPARED TO 2023

Code	Products	Current value for 2023 - BGN million	Physical volume index (previous year =100)	Value for 2024 at previous year's prices - BGN million	Price index (previous year =100)	Current value for 2024 - BGN million	Index of change in current value (2023 = 100)
a	b	1	2	3	4	5	6
01	**CEREALS**	4,104.0	96.1	3,942.7	86.5	3,411.5	83.1
01.1	Wheat and spelt	2,667.7	103.2	2,752.6	87.2	2,400.0	90.0
01.1/1	Soft wheat	2,630.6	102.7	2,702.1	87.2	2,356.5	89.6
01.1/2	Durum wheat	37.1	136.1	50.5	86.1	43.5	117.3
01.2	Rye	5.3	84.9	4.5	93.3	4.2	79.2
01.3	Barley	283.1	136.6	386.7	84.9	328.2	115.9
01.4	Oat and cereal mixtures	12.5	183.2	22.9	80.8	18.5	148.0
01.5	Corn for grain	1,003.7	66.5	667.3	84.5	563.6	56.2
01.6	Rice	80.1	95.3	76.3	88.6	67.6	84.4
01.7	Other cereals	51.6	62.8	32.4	90.7	29.4	57.0
02	**INDUSTRIAL CROPS**	1,783.8	91.3	1,628.6	107.9	1,758.0	98.6
02.1	Oilseeds	1,589.6	89.6	1,423.6	108.7	1,547.9	97.4
02.1/1	Rapeseed and colza	157.8	77.2	121.9	111.2	135.6	85.9
02.1/2	Sunflower	1,416.3	91.2	1,292.1	108.5	1,402.0	99.0
02.1/3	Soy	6.2	9.7	0.6	83.3	0.5	8.1
02.1/4	Other oilseeds	9.3	96.8	9.0	108.9	9.8	105.4
02.2	Protein crops	56.0	136.4	76.4	87.3	66.7	119.1
02.3	Tobacco	34.7	86.2	29.9	116.4	34.8	100.3
02.4	Sugar beet						.
02.5	Other industrial crops	103.5	95.4	98.7	110.0	108.6	104.9
02.5/1	Fiber crops	3.5	125.7	4.4	102.3	4.5	128.6
02.5/2	Hops	1.0	90.0	0.9	111.1	1.0	100.0
02.5/3	Other industrial crops	99.0	94.3	93.4	110.4	103.1	104.1
03	**FEED CROPS**	221.4	92.2	204.1	97.4	198.8	89.8
03.1	Corn for silage	71.6	81.4	58.3	98.5	57.4	80.2
03.2	Root fodder	0.0		0.0		0.0	
03.3	Other forage crops	149.8	97.3	145.8	97.0	141.4	94.4
04	**Vegetables**	532.6	106.5	567.1	98.6	559.2	105.0
04.1	Fresh vegetables	436.6	110.2	481.1	97.9	471.1	107.9
04.1/2	Tomatoes	138.1	111.1	153.4	91.8	140.8	102.0
04.1/3	Other fresh vegetables	298.5	109.8	327.7	100.8	330.3	110.7
04.2	Nurseries and flowers	96.0	89.6	86.0	102.4	88.1	91.8
04.2/1	Nurseries	17.5	79.4	13.9	108.6	15.1	86.3
04.2/2	Decorative plants, including Christmas trees	17.3	101.7	17.6	76.7	13.5	78.0
04.2/3	Creation and cultivation	61.2	89.1	54.5	109.2	59.5	97.2
05	**POTATOES**	75.6	96.7	73.1	102.9	75.2	99.5
06	**FRUITS**	355.4	113.7	404.1	97.0	391.9	110.3
06.1	Fresh fruits	249.3	118.5	295.3	94.1	277.8	111.4
06.1/1	Apples	26.2	104.6	27.4	89.1	24.4	93.1
06.1/2	Pears	2.8	121.4	3.4	82.4	2.8	100.0
06.1/3	Peaches	12.7	167.7	21.3	84.5	18.0	141.7
06.1/4	Other fresh fruits	207.6	117.1	243.2	95.6	232.6	112.0
06.4	Grapes - total	106.1	102.5	108.8	104.9	114.1	107.5
06.4/1	Dessert grapes	15.7	85.4	13.4	144.8	19.4	123.6

Code	Products	Current value for 2023 - BGN million	Physical volume index (previous year =100)	Value for 2024 at previous year's prices - BGN million	Price index (previous year =100)	Current value for 2024 - BGN million	Index of change in current value (2023 = 100)
a	b	1	2	3	4	5	6
06.4/2	Other grape	90.4	105.5	95.4	99.3	94.7	104.8
07	**WINE**						.
07.1	Table wine						.
09	**OTHER PLANT CROPS**	51.7	95.4	49.3	107.5	53.0	102.5
09.2	Seeds	51.7	95.4	49.3	107.5	53.0	102.5
09.3	Other plant products						.
10	**CROP PRODUCTION (FROM 01 TO 09)**	7,124.5	96.4	6,869.0	93.9	6,447.6	90.5
11	**LIVESTOCK**	1,362.5	101.2	1,379.4	96.5	1,331.5	97.7
11.1	Cattle	216.8	103.0	223.3	104.8	234.1	108.0
11.2	Pigs	479.4	107.4	515.1	93.0	478.8	99.9
11.3	Horses						
11.4	Sheep and goats	229.4	85.5	196.2	108.7	213.2	92.9
11.5	Poultry	436.9	101.8	444.8	91.1	405.4	92.8
11.6	Other animals						
12	**LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION**	1,172.7	94.9	1,112.9	97.3	1,082.5	92.3
12.1	Milk	734.9	97.4	715.6	101.4	725.5	98.7
12.2	Eggs	345.8	91.0	314.6	88.0	276.7	80.0
12.3	Other livestock production	92.0	89.9	82.7	97.1	80.3	87.3
12.3/1	Unwashed wool	1.4	100.0	1.4	92.9	1.3	92.9
12.3/2	Silkworm cocoons						
12.3/3	Other livestock production	90.6	89.7	81.3	97.2	79.0	87.2
13	**LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION (11 + 12)**	**2,535.2**	**98.3**	**2,492.3**	**96.9**	**2,414.0**	95.2
14	**AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION (10 + 13)**	**9,659.7**	**96.9**	**9,361.3**	**94.7**	**8,861.6**	**91.7**
15	**PRODUCTION OF AGRICULTURAL SERVICES**	**595.7**	**89.5**	**532.9**	**102.8**	**547.8**	**92.0**
16	**PRODUCTION FROM AGRICULTURE (14 + 15)**	**10,255.4**	**96.5**	**9,894.2**	**95.1**	**9,409.4**	**91.8**
17	**NON-AGRICULTURAL INSEPERABLE SECONDARY ACTIVITIES**	**299.0**	**97.8**	**292.3**	**102.0**	**298.1**	**99.7**
17.1	Processing of agricultural products	299.0	97.8	292.3	102.0	298.1	99.7
17.1/1	- cereals	11.3	136.3	15.4	100.0	15.4	136.3
17.1/2	- vegetables	50.5	68.1	34.4	100.6	34.6	68.5
17.1/3	- fruits	18.1	113.3	20.5	106.8	21.9	121.0
17.1/4	- wine	41.9	84.2	35.3	109.1	38.5	91.9
17.1/5	- animals	65.2	90.0	58.7	102.9	60.4	92.6
17.1/6	- animal products	105.1	116.6	122.5	99.5	121.9	116.0
17.1/6/1	- milk	105.1	116.6	122.5	99.5	121.9	116.0
17.1/7	- other	6.9	79.7	5.5	98.2	5.4	78.3
17.2	Other inseparable secondary activities						
18	**PRODUCTION FROM THE 'AGRICULTURE' INDUSTRY (16 + 17)**	**10,554.4**	**96.5**	**10,186.5**	**95.3**	**9,707.5**	**92.0**
19	**INTERMEDIATE CONSUMPTION**	**6,337.4**	**92.7**	**5,873.2**	**97.1**	**5,700.8**	**90.0**
19.01	**SEEDS AND PROPAGATING MATERIAL**	380.9	96.1	365.9	107.9	394.8	103.6
19.01/1	- seeds and propagating material supplied by other agricultural enterprises	68.2	97.4	66.4	107.8	71.6	105.0

Code	Products	Current value for 2023 - BGN million	Physical volume index (previous year =100)	Value for 2024 at previous year's prices - BGN million	Price index (previous year =100)	Current value for 2024 - BGN million	Index of change in current value (2023 = 100)
a	b	1	2	3	4	5	6
19.01/2	- seeds and propagating material purchased outside the sector	312.7	95.8	299.5	107.9	323.2	103.4
19.02	**FUELS AND OILS**	1,171.5	91.5	1,072.0	98.0	1,051.0	89.7
19.02/1	- electricity	133.1	90.8	120.8	103.1	124.5	93.5
19.02/2	- gas	45.1	95.6	43.1	94.4	40.7	90.2
19.02/3	- other fuels	985.9	91.3	900.3	97.5	877.6	89.0
19.02/4	- others	7.4	105.4	7.8	105.1	8.2	110.8
19.03	**FERTILIZERS AND SOIL IMPROVERS**	1,152.7	100.9	1,162.9	81.7	950.1	82.4
19.03/1	- fertilizers supplied by other agricultural enterprises	40.3	81.6	32.9	81.8	26.9	66.7
19.03/2	- fertilizers purchased outside the sector	1,112.4	101.6	1,130.0	81.7	923.2	83.0
19.04	**PLANT PROTECTION PRODUCTS AND PESTICIDES**	513.8	85.9	441.3	114.7	506.1	98.5
19.05	**VETERINARY COSTS**	161.6	72.1	116.5	104.7	122.0	75.5
19.06	**FEED SUPPLEMENTS**	1,351.0	95.6	1,291.6	93.2	1,203.8	89.1
19.06/1	- feed supplements supplied by other agricultural holdings	540.1	96.7	522.5	93.2	487.0	90.2
19.06/2	- feed supplements purchased outside the sector	618.3	94.6	584.8	93.2	545.1	88.2
19.06/3	- feed supplements produced and consumed on the holding	192.6	95.7	184.3	93.2	171.7	89.1
19.07	**MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR OF MACHINES AND SMALL EQUIPMENT**	379.4	86.8	329.4	105.5	347.5	91.6
19.08	**MAINTENANCE OF BUILDINGS**	154.8	86.9	134.5	103.8	139.6	90.2
19.09	**AGRICULTURAL SERVICES**	595.7	89.5	532.9	102.8	547.8	92.0
19.10	**PHYSIM**	50.6	103.2	52.2	102.9	53.7	106.1
19.11	**OTHER GOODS AND SERVICES**	425.4	87.9	374.0	102.8	384.4	90.4
20	**GROSS VALUE ADDED AT BASIC PRICES (18-19)**	**4,217.0**	**102.3**	**4,313.3**	**92.9**	**4,006.7**	**95.0**

Source: NSI