

Circular economy – possible opportunities and challenges in Hungarian farming sector

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The outbreak of the war in Ukraine, which has been ongoing for over a year, has significantly affected Europe, particularly its energy system, leading to a variety of problems and imbalances caused in the agricultural sector. In the view of a growing concern over resource scarcity, global climate change, environmental degradation, and the rising demand for nutritious food, circular economy (CE) has emerged as a potentially effective strategy to support sustainable, restorative and regenerative agriculture. As a factor of sustainable development, the concept of circular economy has been increasingly important in recent years, both in academics and in rural municipalities. It has been discussed on a regular basis as a mechanism of better waste management through recycling, reuse and recovery. However, the European Commission has adopted a circular economy package on waste management in 2015, the European concept of the circular economy is also widely questioned on the practicality, and consequences. In the view of policy level, circular economic practices have been developed without any explicit discussion or consideration of system boundaries. The only recommended use of policy instruments is to encourage circulation, rather than to resist the effects of the linear economy. The growing interest of the agricultural industry for the implementation of the circular economy has led to inquire about its direct connection with sustainability since there is a growing interest in the direction of economic development to create a zero-waste economy.

In this study, we assessed the possible strengths and weaknesses on the development of the circular economy in the Hungarian agricultural sector. As a strategy, circular economy represents an innovative practice of resource allocation that considers the production of goods and the reuse of their waste. By integrating the circular economy with environmental thinking and initiatives into the current systems of agriculture, the model may be the ideal solution for increasing social and environmental impacts of agriculture in Hungary.

Based on the main findings, proposed research directions and changes to facilitate the implementation of circular economy in agricultural production system. For this reason, our future work requires further exploration of applicable integration strategies.

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