

RECENT SERICULTURE SITUATION IN BULGARIA

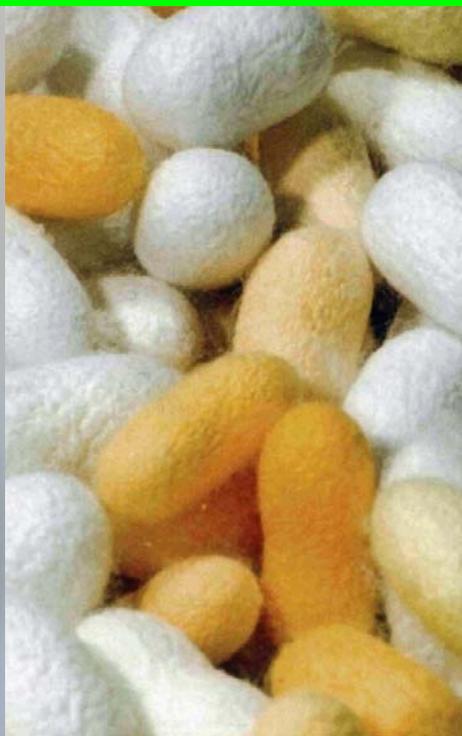
By

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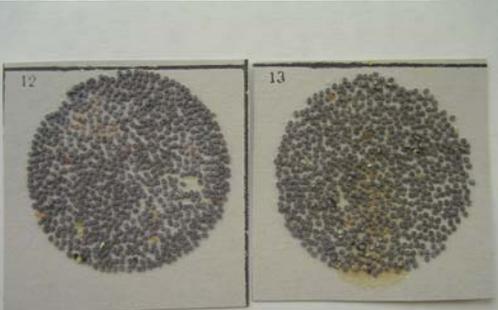
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The organizations and companies dealing with sericulture development in Bulgaria are the Sericulture Experiment Station in Vratza, Agricultural University in Plovdiv, Thracian University in Stara Zagora, and the private companies Bulsilkmill Ltd, Sofia, Bulgarian Association of the Silk Producers, Processors and Exporters, Sofia and Textile cluster Bulgarian silk J.S.C., Sofia. Research with the silkworms and also teaching is also performed at the Forestry University, Agronomy faculty, Sofia and Plovdiv University.



During the last two years the Sericulture Experiment Station (SES) in Vratza has continued and expanded its activities in conducting complex researches in sericulture, national silkworm and mulberry germplasm maintenance, production of mulberry saplings, silkworm eggs, dry cocoons, raw silk and ready silk commodities.



The station appears to be one of the biggest mulberry sapling and silkworm egg producer in Europe presently. SES – Vratza incubates the silkworm eggs and distributes to selected farmers newly hatched silkworm larvae.



Upon the larval distribution the station makes a contract with each farmer, taking the obligation to buy his cocoons produced. After cocoon harvesting the farmers bring them to the station where the staff makes their evaluation and the cocoons are purchased, based on their quality.



During the last two years the fresh cocoon purchasing price has been 6 Euros per kg. The station uses about 70 % of the cocoons purchased for egg production and the rest are sold either as dry cocoons or processed to raw silk and silk commodities.



SES – Vratza has also it's own mulberry plantations and silkworm rearing houses for cocoon production.



The company Bulsilkmill Ltd has a silk twisting plant with an annual capacity of about 30 t of raw silk. All the raw silk is imported, mostly from China and the ready product is exported to Italy.



Association of the Silk Producers, Processors and Exporters has ambitious plans for planting over 8000 ha mulberry plantations all over the country and starting a big cocoon and silk production, but so far the activities are restricted mostly to negotiations with several municipalities for renting some land and buildings.

The company Textile cluster Bulgarian silk has been trying for several years to get a big loan in order to start sericulture development projects, but so far they do not have the necessary financial capacity to begin a significant cocoon and silk production.

Due to the SES – Vratza efforts the sericulture has been included in 4 measures of the EU Programme for rural areas development, namely

- Professional training, informational activities and scientific knowledge dissemination;**
- Establishment of farms by young farmers;**
- Modernizing the agricultural farms;**
- Semi-subsistence farms development.**

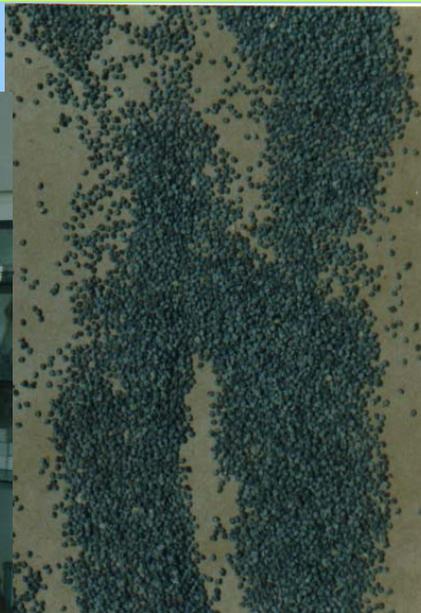


SES – Vratza proposed a project for training in sericulture and it has been approved by the Rural areas development program, so it is planned to train 120 farmers in the second half of this year.



The main constraints facing the sericulture development in Bulgaria are as follows:

- The cocoon producers expect to have a fresh cocoon purchasing price not less than about 6 Euros/kg, but the raw silk price at the world market is still too low, thus not allowing to pay a so high price for the fresh cocoons and as a consequence the Bulsilkmill Ltd company still prefers to import raw silk from China than to organize a local production of cocoons/raw silk in Bulgaria;



- The European Union subsidy in amount of 134 Euros/box of silkworm eggs reared is still not allowed for Bulgaria even though the Bulgarian Government sent an official request to the EC for solving this problem.



If the trend for raw silk price increase continues and the problem with getting the EU subsidy of 134 Euros per box of eggs reared is solved most probably it would lead to a gradual sericulture revival and development in Bulgaria.



We consider that the present constraints facing the sericulture development in Bulgaria are mainly economical and organizational, but not technical. All the other preconditions are available, such as own rich sericulture germplasm and own production of high quality silkworm eggs.



High level university education in sericulture, availability of highly productive mulberry varieties, system for silkworm larvae distribution, cocoon purchasing and initial processing, resulting in a good cocoon quality control, over 1.3 million single mulberry trees and over 10,000 households with tradition and experience in rearing of silkworms, rearing houses and equipment.



In conclusion Bulgaria may be considered as a European country, having a good potential for sericulture development thus it could be created either as a promising high quality raw silk source or as a silk processor and trader.



A basket of yellow lemons is the central focus of the image, resting on a white, textured cloth. The lemons are bright yellow and appear fresh. The background is a soft-focus view of the white cloth and more lemons.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION !

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