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Recent areas of innovation activities in the Czech dairy industry

J. Špička, L. Smutka, R. Selby

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The aim of the article is to compare and identify differences between the innovations within the Czech dairy industry. Dairy products are the export pillars of Czech agrarian foreign trade, and the dairy industry was one of the most important recipients of public support on innovations from the Rural Development Programme (RDP). The core of this research is an analysis of sixteen projects, supported under RDP sub-measure I.1.3.2 from 2007 to September 2013. Data from the representative sample of approved projects have been converted into a set of questions and answers to enable them to be evaluated, both quantitatively and qualitatively. The dataset is analysed by means of a counterfactual analysis, descriptive statistics, and correlation analysis. The results show that innovations, and public support of innovations, enabled dairies to stabilise their profits, and to increase their competitiveness, during the period of economic crisis. There were five types of innovation trends in the Czech dairy industry in recent years: (i) The processing and efficient use of by-products (whey, buttermilk); (ii) The production of new products with health benefits; (iii) Improved processing of dairy products with particular focus on long-life products having better sensory parameters; (iv) Improved efficiency of transport and storage of milk and dairy products; (v) Improved wastewater treatment. The real innovative effect was, however, very limited because individual companies were not looking for their own new added value, but were more focused on the implementation of already-existing innovations.

Keywords:

competitiveness, innovations, milk processing, technology

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