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ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF EGYPTIAN FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL TRADE WITH EUROPEAN UNION MARKETS

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Abstract:

Foreign trade plays a great role to achieve economic development for almost all countries. However, Egypt being one of the developing countries is still suffering from the widening gap between increasing food imports and exports. This problem has subsequent effects on Egyptian agricultural trade balance and hence Egyptian balance of payments.

The study showed that the relative importance of the total agricultural exports to, as compared to the total national exports, reached its highest level of 16.4 % in 2017, while its lowest level was about 6.2% in 2007. For the relative importance of the total agricultural imports to, as compared to the total national imports, it reached its highest level of 22.5% in 2005, while its lowest level was about 5.5% in 2016.

It appears that the average agricultural exports covered about 5.1% of the total national imports during the period 2005-2011, while it was about 4.6% during the period 2012-2018. The decrease of the coverage of national imports by the agricultural exports in second period compared with first period was due to the increase of the total national imports by about 77.5% (bases 2005-2011). The ratio of agricultural exports coverage established around 4.6% of the total national imports during the period 2005-2018. That was due to the fact that Egyptian governments in the last years reduced the national imports specially the food commodities, and slightly increase the national exports particularly the agricultural exports.

The conduct study showed that the average total value of agricultural imports EU markets amounted to about US$ 743.35 million during the period 2005-2018, while the average total Egyptian agricultural exports with EU countries amounted to about US$ 663.9 million during the period 2005-2018.

The deficit of Egyptian agricultural balance of trade with EU markets reached about US$ 87.34 million or 1.54 % of the total deficit of Egyptian balance of trade in 2005-2011, and increased to US$ 132.85 million or about 1.01 % of the total deficit of Egyptian balance of trade in 2012-2018.

It was appear that the impact of EU liberalization on Egypt will have negative effect on agricultural balance of trade with about US$ 79.44 million during the all study period 2005-2018.

EU and Egypt established a greater liberalization of their trade in agricultural products of interest to both parties. Agricultural products originating in Egypt imported into the community shall be subject to the arrangements set out in the protocol of the agreement.

The research, based on its findings, reached some recommendations that could benefit the Egyptian economic policy makers in this field.

- Keywords: Egyptian Agricultural Trade, European Union, Common Agricultural Policy, Agricultural Imports and Exports.

1. Introduction:

Foreign trade plays a great role to achieve economic development for almost all countries. Through foreign trade, countries can get everything they need from others in exchange for exporting their surplus production and benefit from the field of international specialization on which it is based .Export is one of the main pillars on which the Egyptian national economy depends on providing its foreign exchange needs that can be used to finance economic development programs in general . There was a fluctuation in the quantity and value of Egyptian agricultural exports, whether directed to the EU markets or to other world markets, at the same time as the increase in the quantity and value of Egyptian imports in general, which in turn led to a steady increase in the Egyptian trade balance deficit, especially during the last few years Therefore, the development of Egyptian agricultural exports is one of the most important objectives of economic planners and policy makers in light of the simultaneous local, regional and global economic changes.

The Egyptian agricultural economic policy aims at developing and diversifying agricultural exports in which Egypt enjoys a competitive advantage in world markets, as well as the development of non-traditional exports, specially vegetables and fruit crops. Rely on them to increase Egyptian agricultural exports in the coming years, especially after the establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO). It should be noted that the role of agricultural marketing in the light of contemporary global economic changes is no longer limited to delivering the product to the consumer, but also includes the work of innovation and innovation, both on the consumption and production or in marketing methods themselves in line with the latest modern technologies that create a competitive advantage (Bassyiouni, 2013).

Manufactured and fresh Egyptian agricultural exports represent about 20% of total Egyptian commodity agricultural exports. There is great potential to increase Egyptian agricultural exports to about 15-20% annually.

However, Egypt being one of the developing countries is still suffering from the widening gap between increasing food imports and exports. This problem has subsequent effects on Egyptian agricultural trade balance and hence Egyptian balance of payments. Therefore, it is considered to be a main cause of the difficulties facing the economic policy. This points out the importance of the subject and highlights the need to study it.

The research aims to study the economic importance of Egyptian agricultural foreign trade and its economic importance with EU markets, and study the geographical distribution of Egyptian foreign agricultural trade with EU markets. It was based on secondary data collected from different sources.

The study depends on data of time-series to estimate some economic coefficient, and it used some economic indicators such as relative importance of agricultural exports to national exports, relative

importance of agricultural imports to national imports, and relation covering of agricultural exports to national imports.

2. Results and discussion:

2.1. Relative importance of agricultural exports to total national exports:

To obtain the relative importance of total agricultural exports to total national exports, the following definition was used:

$$RI_1 = \frac{VAE}{VNE} * 100$$

Where:

RI_1: relative importance of agricultural exports to national exports

VAE: value of agricultural exports (US$ million)

VNE: value of national exports (US$ million)

The relative importance of the total agricultural exports to, as compared to the total national exports, reached its highest level of 16.4 % in 2017, while its lowest level was about 6.2% in 2007 (table 1).

The average value of agricultural exports reached about US$ 1728.9 million during the period 2005-2011 which makes about 9.3% of the average value of the national exports during the same period. It increased to about US$ 2835.5 million during the period 2012-2018; it's an equivalent of 11.4% of the average of the total national exports.

In general, the decrease of the relative importance of the agricultural exports to the total value of national exports was due to the following factors:

- Increasing the relative importance of non-agricultural exports especially petroleum and its by-products.
- Decreasing the quality of the exported products and a weak competitiveness of the Egyptian agricultural exports in the world markets in comparison to developing countries – especially Tunisia, Morocco and European Union.
- The rate at which the domestic requirements of those commodities rises has been higher than the rate of growth of agricultural production, and consequently the exportable surplus of those commodities decreased.
- Increasing the domestic prices as a result of the increase of both domestic demand and production costs that resulted in a decrease of the comparative advantage of the Egyptian agricultural exports.
- The inefficiency of the agricultural policies and the rigidity of the production system lead to a resource allocation system and a crop rotation that do not favor a maximization of the foreign exchange earnings.
- The presence of several managerial and administrative problems which reduces the effectiveness of the organizations dealing with exports.
- The increase of the domestic demand due to increasing of both population and per capita income marginal propensity to consume.

Table (1) – The relative importance of Egyptian agricultural exports and imports during the period 2005-2018

(US$**. Million)**

	(1)	**(2)**	**(3)=(2)-(1)**	**(4)**	**(5)**	**(6)=(5)-(4)**			
Year	**National Exports**	**National Imports**	**Balance of Trade**	**Agricultural Exports**	**Agricultural Imports**	**Agric. Balance of Trade**	**(4) / (1)**	**(5) / (2)**	**(4) / (2)**

2005	8206	14821	5615	938.2	3339.8	2401.6	11.4	22.5	6.3
2006	10643	19808	9165	917.9	2407.9	1490.0	8.6	12.2	4.6
2007	13715	20586	6841	855.2	2269.4	1414.3	6.2	11.1	4.2
2008	16180	27054	10874	1202.5	3646.6	2444.2	7.4	13.5	4.4
2009	26258	52793	26535	2089.7	4819.4	2729.7	8.0	9.1	3.9
2010	24206	44958	20752	2967.6	4389.9	1422.3	12.3	9.8	6.6
2011	27359	55249	27890	3131.4	5631.4	2500.4	11.4	10.2	5.7
2005-2011	**18081**	**33610**	**15382**	**1728.9**	**3786.3**	**2057.5**	**9.3**	**12.6**	**5.1**
2012	31550	65415	33865	3025.7	8210.9	5185.2	9.6	12.6	4.6
2013	29264	74618	45354	2683.7	8825.4	6141.8	9.2	11.8	3.6
2014	28696	66902	38206	2867.0	5132.8	2265.8	10.0	7.8	4.3
2015	27542	73838	46296	2952.8	4163.0	1210.1	10.8	5.6	4.0
2016	21340	74372	53032	2852.2	4100.0	1247.8	13.4	5.5	3.8
2017	22580	69440	46860	2696.8	4575.8	1879.0	16.4	6.6	3.9
2018	25900	63360	37460	2770.2	4280.9	1510.7	10.7	6.8	4.4
2012-2018	**26696**	**59665**	**43010**	**2835.5**	**5612.7**	**2777.2**	**11.4**	**8.1**	**4.1**
2005-2018	**22389**	**46638**	**29196**	**2282.5**	**4699.5**	**2417.4**	**10.4**	**10.4**	**4.6**

Source: Compiled and computed from http://www.capmas.gov.eg

2.2. Relative importance of agricultural imports to total national imports:

To obtain the relative importance of total agricultural imports to total national imports, the following definition was used:

$$RI_2 = \frac{VAI}{VNI} * 100$$

Where:

RI_2: relative importance of agricultural imports to national imports

VAI: value of agricultural imports (US$ million)

VNI: value of national imports (US$ million)

The relative importance of the total agricultural imports to, as compared to the total national imports, reached its highest level of 22.5% in 2005, while its lowest level was about 5.5% in 2016 (table 1).
The average value of agricultural imports reached about US$ 3786.3 million during the period 2005-2011 which makes about 12.6% of the average value of the national imports during the same period. It increased to about US$ 5612.7 million during the period 2012-2018; it's an equivalent of 8.1% of the average of the total national imports.

2.3. Development of the agricultural balance of trade:

Table (1) shows that the agricultural balance of trade was continuous deficit during the study period 2005-2018. The agricultural balance of trade reached its highest level of US$ 6141.8 million in 2005, while its lowest level was about US$ 1210.1 million in 2015.

The deficit of the agricultural trade balance reached about US$ 2057.5 million during the study period 2005-2011, it increased to about US$ 2777.2 million during the period 2012-2018.

The following factors were the main reasons of the deficit in Egyptian agricultural trade balance. Some suggestions and recommendations can be drawn to minimize this deficit:
1- It is important to achieve the next points:

- Increasing the agricultural and food production through allowing free profits as an incentive.
- Rationing the import of consumer commodities specially wheat and wheat flour.
- Decreasing the gap between production and consumption of agricultural commodities.
- Increasing the production of exportable commodities.

2- It is important to improve the production structures, this recommendation aims at:
- Achieving suitable profits for the producers whose increasing the production of the agricultural export commodities.
- Creation of suitable conditions for increasing the production of these agricultural exportable commodities in which Egypt has been a comparative advantage.
- Reducing the cost of imports as a result of a competition between the public and private sector.

3- Encouragement of the exports through programs export enhancement in foreign markets.

4- Establishment of an Egyptian Marketing Boards to stimulate agricultural exports, and its insurance against commercial and non- commercial risks, these marketing boards aims to increase the agricultural exports, and put Egyptian exporter in the same competition level as the foreign exporter.

5- Egypt has the potential to export commodities other than those traditionally exported, for example, fruit and vegetable crops to other countries of North Africa, the Middle East, and European Union. However, to enter those markets successfully, Egypt must be improving significantly both quality of its products and its ability to market fresh products.

6- Encouragement the investments in marketing processes are needed and those have only recently been role of Egyptian agricultural strategy.

2. 4. Ratio of agricultural exports to national imports:

To obtain the relative importance of agricultural exports in Egyptian foreign trade, the relation covering of agricultural exports to total national imports was used. The following definition shows this relation:

$$RC = \frac{VAE}{VNI} * 100$$

Where:

RC: relation covering of agricultural exports to national imports
VAE: value of agricultural exports (US$. million)
VNI: value of national imports (US$. million)

The ratio reflects the importance of the agricultural exports for increasing the necessary foreign exchange, to import commodities and basic capital commodities on which development process in Egypt depends. Table (1) showed that the average agricultural exports covered about 5.1% of the total national imports during the period 2005-2011, while it was about 4.1% during the period 2012-2018. The decrease of the coverage of national imports by the agricultural exports in second period compared with first period was due to the increase of the total national imports by nearly 19.61% (bases 2005-2011). The ratio of agricultural exports coverage established around 4.6% of the total national imports during the period 2005-2018. That was due to the fact that Egyptian governments in the last years reduced the national imports specially the food commodities, and slightly increase the national exports particularly manufactured and fresh Egyptian agricultural exports which represent about 20%of total Egyptian agricultural exports.

2. 5. The importance of EU markets in Egyptian agriculture foreign trade

EU is one of the main markets for Egyptian exports and it is one of the major suppliers of Egyptian imports. Table (3) shows that in 2005-2011, agricultural exports to EU accounted for more than US$ 500.6 million or about 9.95 % of the total value of Egyptian national exports, and increased to US$ 777.29 million or 10.68 % of the total value of Egyptian national exports in 2012-2018. While the value of Egyptian agricultural imports from EU reached about US$ 587.95 million or 5.49 % of the

total value of Egyptian national imports in 2005-2011 and increased to US$ 910.14 million or about 4.47 % of the total value of Egyptian national imports in 2012-2018.

The deficit of Egyptian agricultural trade balance with EU reached about US$ 87.34 million or 1.54 % of the total deficit of Egyptian balance of trade in 2005-2011, and increased to US$ 132.85 million or about 1.01 % of the total deficit of Egyptian balance of trade in 2012-2018.

Table (2) – The relative Importance of Egyptian National and Agricultural imports, exports and deficit balance of trade with EU during the period (2005-2018) by (US$**. Million)**

Item	**2005-2011**	**2012-2018**
National Imports from EU	10700	20380
Agric. Imports from EU	587.95	910.14
%	5.49	4.47
National Exports to EU	5030	7280
Agric. Exports to EU	500.61	777.29
%	9.95	10.68
Deficit of Trade Balance with EU	5670	13100
Deficit of Agric. Trade Balance with EU	87.34	132.85
%	1.54	1.01

Source: Compiled and computed from:

1- Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics, Foreign Trade Bulletin, miscellaneous issues.

2- The website of the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics: www.capmas.gov.eg

2.6. The impact of EU trade liberalization on Egyptian foreign agricultural trade:

The impact of EU liberalization on Egypt will have negative effect on agricultural balance of trade during the all study period 2005-2018.Table (2) shows that the average of agricultural trade deficit in Egypt was about US$ 79.44 million. This result means that there is an improving of the deficit of agricultural balance trade with EU by increasing the export profits, and decreasing food imports. So, there are two important factors to reduce the gap between agricultural imports and exports. The first is increasing the agricultural export earnings through identifying the variable which influence export demand in the foreign markets. The second factor is reducing the domestic consumption and increasing the domestic production of cereals specially wheat. However, Egypt should ask for and offer some alternatives in the face of CAP.

2.7. The geographical distribution of Egyptian foreign agricultural trade with EU markets during the period (2005-2018):

This part deals with studying of Egyptian agricultural foreign trade with EU markets, as well as the studying of the development of the most important EU markets in their relative importance in the Egyptian agricultural trade during the period (2005-2018).

2.7.1. **The geographical distribution Egyptian agricultural imports from EU markets during the period (2005-2018):**

Table (3) showed that the average total value of agricultural imports from EU markets amounted to about US$ 743.35 million during the period (2005-2018), where France came in first place with about US$ 242.6 million, representing about 32.64%. of the total average value of agricultural imports with EU markets during the same period , While the United Kingdom came in second place, with about US$ 107.58 million, representing about 14.47%, followed by Greece in third place with about 100.2 million dollars representing about 13.48%, then Italy with about US$85.57 million representing about

11.51%, then the Netherlands. about US$ 47.85 million, representing about 6.44%, then Germany with about US$ 32.68 million representing about 4.4%, then Romania with about US$ 24.68 million representing about 3.32%, then Bulgaria with about $ 20.62 million representing about 2.77% , then Poland with about US$ US$ 18.4 million representing about 2.48%, then the Czech Republic with about US$ 9.63 million representing about 1.3%, then Lithuania with about US$ 9.29 million representing about 1.25%, followed by Denmark with about US$ 9.1 million representing about 1.22%, then Belgium with about US$ US$ 6.16 million representing about 0.83%,then Spain with about US$ 5.8 million representing about 0.78%, then Hungary with about US$ 4.0 million representing about 0.54%, then Latvia with about US$ 3.8 million representing about 0.51%, then Austria with about US$ 3.67 million representing about 0.49%, followed by Croatia with about US$ 2.67 million ,it represents about 0.36%, then Ireland with about US$2.49 million representing about 0.33%, then Slovenia, Estonia, Cyprus, Sweden, Portugal, Finland, Luxembourg, Malta, and the Slovaks with about 0.28%, 0.24%, 0.22%, 0.06%, 0.04%, 0.02%, 0.01%, 0.003%, and 0.001%, respectively, of the average total value of agricultural imports with EU markets during the period (2005-2018).

2.7.2 The geographical distribution of Egyptian agricultural exports to EU markets during the period (2005-2018):

Data of table (2) showed that the total average value of Egyptian agricultural exports with EU markets amounted to about US$ 663.9 million during the period (2005-2018), where the United Kingdom came in first place, with about US$ 144.54 million, representing about 21.77 % of the total average value of agricultural exports to the European Union countries during the period (2005-2018), while Italy came in second place, with about US$ 126.08 million, representing about 18.99%, followed by the Netherlands in third place with about US$ 99.42 million. It represents about 14.98%, then Germany with about US$ 93.29 million, which represents about 14.05%. While it has reached Belgium, about US$ 50.15 million representing about 7.55%, then Greece with about US$ 29.77 million representing about 4.48%, then France with about US$ US$ 24.14 million representing about 3.64%, then Spain with about US$ 16.81 million dollars representing about 2.53%, then Romania with about US$ 16.01 million representing about 2.41%, then Slovenia , Lithuania Poland, Bulgaria , Finland , Croatia , Hungary , Latvia, Sweden , Portugal, Ireland, Cyprus, Austria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Malta, Luxembourg, Estonia, and Slovaks with about 1.26%, 0.98%, 0.96%, 0.89%, 0.72%, 0.7%, 0.62%, 0.59%, 0.55% 0.49%, 0.48%, 0.31%, 0.29%, 0.23%, 0.21%, 0.17%, 0.08%, 0.06% and 0.003% respectively of the average total value of Egyptian agricultural exports with EU markets during the average period (2005-2018).

Table (3) - Egyptian foreign agricultural trade with EU markets during the period (2005-2018) (US$**. Million)**

Country	Agr. exports	%	Agr. imports	%	Agr.balance of trade	Total trade exchange	Coverage ratio %
U.K	144.54	21.77	107.58	14.47	36.96	252.12	134.4
Italy	126.08	18.99	85.57	11.51	40.51	211.65	147.3
Netherlands	99.42	14.98	47.85	6.44	51.57	147.27	207.8
Germany	93.29	14.05	32.68	4.40	60.61	125.97	285.5
Belgium	50.15	7.55	6.16	0.83	43.99	56.31	814.1
Greece	29.77	4.48	100.2	13.48	-70.43	129.97	29.7
France	24.14	3.64	242.6	32.64	-218.5	266.74	10.0
Spain	16.81	2.53	5.8	0.78	11.01	22.61	289.8

Romania	16.01	2.41	24.68	3.32	-8.67	40.69	64.9
Slovenia	8.35	1.26	2.1	0.28	6.25	10.45	397.6
Lithuania	6.49	0.98	9.29	1.25	-2.80	15.78	69.9
Poland	6.38	0.96	18.4	2.48	-12.02	24.78	34.7
Bulgaria	5.94	0.89	20.62	2.77	-14.68	26.56	28.8
Finland	4.81	0.72	0.13	0.02	4.68	4.94	3700
Croatia	4.66	0.70	2.67	0.36	1.99	7.33	174.5
Hungary	4.09	0.62	4.0	0.54	0.09	8.09	102.3
Latvia	3.93	0.59	3.8	0.51	0.13	7.73	103.4
Sweden	3.66	0.55	0.47	0.06	3.19	4.13	778.7
Portugal	3.25	0.49	0.27	0.04	2.98	3.52	1204
Ireland	3.18	0.48	2.49	0.33	0.69	5.67	127.7
Cyprus	2.03	0.31	1.66	0.22	0.37	3.69	122.3
Austria	1.91	0.29	3.67	0.49	-1.76	5.58	52.0
Czech	1.54	0.23	9.63	1.30	-8.09	11.17	16.0
Denmark	1.4	0.21	9.1	1.22	-7.70	10.50	15.4
Malta	1.12	0.17	0.02	0.003	1.10	1.14	5600
Luxembourg	0.54	0.08	0.1	0.01	0.44	0.64	540.0
Estonia	0.39	0.06	1.79	0.24	-1.40	2.18	21.8
Slovak	0.02	0.003	0.01	0.001	0.01	0.03	200.0
Total	**663.9**	**100**	**743.34**	**100**	**-79.44**	**1407.24**	**89.31**

Source: compiled and calculated from:
1- Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics, Foreign Trade Bulletin, miscellaneous issues.
2- The website of the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics: www.capmas.gov.eg

2.7.3. The geographical distribution of deficit Egyptian agricultural trade balance with EU markets during the period (2005-2018):

Table (3) showed that the largest deficit of Egyptian agricultural balance of trade was with France, Greece, Bulgaria, Poland and Romania with US$ 218.5 million, US$ 70.43 million, US$ 14.68 million, US$ 12.02 million and US$ 8.67 million of Egyptian agricultural balance of trade respectively in the same period 2005-2018.

3. Conclusion:

To develop Egyptian agricultural exports in the context of globalization through the use of some studies and research that have been interested in this area, and some ways that may have a positive impact on the development of Egyptian agricultural exports to the world market can be developed as follows:

- Studying world demand trends to identify promising and future agricultural export sectors.
- Developing and delivery of technical support programs to develop facilities for Egyptian exporter.
- Taking advantage of the foreign, regional and Arab agreements in which Egypt participates (WTO, GAFTA, COMESA, EU), in addition to bilateral agreements and protocols between Egypt and other countries such as Russia and China.
- Meet the quality requirements as one of the most important elements and build the competitiveness of the Egyptian agriculture and industry to face the challenges faced by the Egyptian product in the local or international markets, especially in light of the openness of the markets and the competition witnessed to satisfy the consumer and provide its requirements and needs.

- To reduce the deficit in the agricultural trade balance by taking advantage of the comparative and competitive advantages that Egypt enjoys in many agricultural crops, specially horticultural crops such as vegetables, fruits, medicinal and aromatic plants, cut flowers, and also benefit from access to foreign markets provided by international, regional and Arab agreements in which Egypt participates (World Trade Organization - Egyptian-European Partnership Agreement - African COMESA - Greater Arab Free Trade Area (QIZ) in addition to bilateral agreements and protocols between Egypt and other countries such as Russia and China.
- While the majority of farmers in Egypt are small and medium farmers whose holdings are fragmented and do not follow good agricultural practices and do not meet the European and international conditions and specifications for export, it is worth noting that about 80 % of the holdings in Egypt are less than 3 acres and about 90% of the holdings are less than 5 acres, and to connect these farmers to the local market, manufacturing, exporting and increasing productivity And the quality and improvement of their incomes, it takes work to help these farmers to consolidate agricultural exploitation and follow good agricultural practices throughout the production stages. and post-harvest transactions and fulfillment of European and international conditions and specifications for export, and this is the role of the agricultural services sector, agricultural cooperatives, agricultural research, agricultural extension, agricultural credit, contract farming, conditional incentives, public unions and relevant quality councils

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