



DIRECTIONS FOR ENSURING FOOD SECURITY IN UZBEKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

Achieving food security and independence involves overcoming various risks and threats. The most probable and dangerous risks should be recognized: natural, weather and man-made; economic and industrial; innovative. Macroeconomic risks, including those related to the global market situation, as well as political risks of a national and global scale, have a strong impact on the agri-food complex. Threats to achieving food security are associated with a low income level of a significant part of the population, underdeveloped infrastructure, depreciation of fixed production assets, a shortage of personnel in agriculture, and an inefficient management system.

Keywords: Agricultural production, Global Hunger Index, Government policy, Fluctuations (volatility) of the prices, Food production, Food security, indicators, Productivity, Self-sufficiency, Food supply, Food consumption, Undernourished population, The criteria for ensuring food security and independence, The share of agriculture in the gross domestic product.

INTRODUCTION

Ensuring food security is a guarantee of ensuring the independence of Uzbekistan, socio-economic and political stability in the country. Situations such as natural disasters, lack of water for irrigating land, and droughts on earth as a result of climate change make it difficult to grow food products. As a result, prices in the world food markets are rising.

It is a clear proof that the level of financial condition of families has decreased in 54 countries of the world, the majority of the population of more than 20 countries is suffering from hunger, the average life expectancy of the population has decreased in 12 countries, and more than 840 million people of the world are suffering from hunger



in recent years [1]. That is why issues of ensuring food safety are given great importance all over the world.

The criteria for ensuring food security and independence are linked to indicators of the share of domestic products in the total volume of commodity resources of the domestic market. These indicators for different types of products are at the following levels: at least 80% - sugar, vegetable oil, fish; at least 85% - meat; at least 90% - milk and dairy products; at least 95% - grain, potatoes.

DATA AND METHODS

In the process of research, theoretical methods of induction, deduction, generalization and comparison were used. The necessary materials are investigated on the basis of the methods of typological analysis, the synthesis of statistical data.

MAIN RESULTS

In 2010–2020 the share of agriculture in the gross domestic product of Uzbekistan has slightly decreased - from 28.7% to 26.1% [2]. The industry is characterized by sustainable growth rates (4.7% annually on average for the period 2010-2020). In the context of the pandemic in 2020, agriculture recorded a growth of 3.0%. In Central Asia, Uzbekistan is one of the leading producers of cotton, horticultural products, fruits and berries. However, the volume of gross value added at purchasing power parity of agriculture per one employed in the industry in Uzbekistan amounted to 17.7 thousand dollars, which is two times lower than labor productivity in Belarus and Russia.

Food production is still important for the economy, despite a significant decrease in the share of this industry in the volume of industrial production - from 14.5 to 11.5% in the period from 2010 to 2020. The food industry amounted to 8.9% over period 2010–2020 The industry is a priority, has strategic and social importance in terms of food security and employment policy. Within the framework of state and regional development programs in the industry, large investment projects are being implemented aimed at deep processing of raw materials and equipping enterprises with innovative technologies. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the industry provided significant support to the economy, with the food industry recording an 8.7% growth in 2020. Uzbekistan is a net importer of food items. The negative trade balance is about \$500 million per year. More than 60% of all food imports of Uzbekistan are high-calorie basic products, such as grain and grain products, vegetable oil and raw materials for its production, as well as sugar.



The main risks and factors affecting food security are population growth, increasing demand for land, water and energy resources, as well as dramatic climate change. In recent years, as a result of the implementation of a number of measures in the country to strengthen food security, Uzbekistan has gradually strengthened its position in the world and gradually improved its status in global rankings. In the overall ranking from 2019 to 2021, having taken 78th place out of 113 in 2021, the total score of Uzbekistan decreased by 0.7 units [3]. Thus, the improvement in ranking positions is due to a large regression in achieving food security in other countries during the pandemic. The score allowed Uzbekistan to maintain its place in the group of countries with a moderate level of food security. In 2021, Uzbekistan ranked 21st out of 135 countries in the Global Hunger Index. It is worth noting that in 2020 the country was in 30th place. Kazakhstan is in 28th place, Kyrgyzstan is in 40th, and Turkmenistan is in 48th [4].

The ranking of countries is determined by summing up the following indicators - the proportion of the undernourished population, the proportion of children under the age of five who are underweight, the proportion of children under the age of five who are stunted, and the mortality rate of children under the age of five. However, the main challenges that need to be addressed are the problems of achieving a stable food supply for vulnerable segments of the population, increasing the purchasing power of low-income households, and preventing sharp fluctuations in prices and output.

In Uzbekistan, between 2000 and 2020, despite the fact that the permanent population of the country increased by 1.4 times and the total area of cultivated land decreased by 12.1%, wheat production from food products was increased by 1.63 times, potatoes -4.29, vegetables -3.5, fruits- 3.62, grapes -2.62, meat (live weight) - 3.0, milk- 3.03. and eggs -6.23. Most importantly, this growth was not driven by extensive factors, but by intensive factors such as productivity and productivity [5].

In 2019, the Ministry of Health of the Republic approved the medical standards for food consumption. According to these norms, self-sufficiency in grain for the production of bakery products is 32.4 percent, fruits and berries - 14.4 percent, rice - 58.1 percent, eggs - 68.3 percent, fish products - 43 percent (Table 1). Increasing the volume of production of these products changes the per capita consumption of products in the country in the direction of quality.



Table 1 Level of self-sufficiency in agriculture and food products of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2020 year [6]

No	Product type	Unit of measure	2020 year	Produced per capita (population 34,558 million people)	Average demand per person per year, kg	Food self-sufficiency level, in %
1	Wheat	thousand tons	6016,3	27,5	84,2	32,6
2	Rice	thousand tons	284,9	8,2	14,2	58,1
3	Legumes	thousand tons	330,9	9,6	5,4	177,3
4	Potatoes	thousand tons	3143,5	91,0	48,6	187,2
5	Vegetables, total	thousand tons	10459,5	302,7	107,1	282,6
7	Fruits and berries	thousand tons	2864,0	9,5	65,8	14,4
8	Grapes	thousand tons	1639,2	47,4	15,5	306,0
9	Meat (live weight)	thousand tons	2 526,2	55,4	44,2	125,3
10	Milk (dairy products)	thousand tons	11 009,9	318,6	301	105,8
11	Egg	million pieces	7 825,0	226,4	331,7	68,3
12	Fish	thousand tons	144,08	4,2	9,7	43,0

As the President of the country Sh.Mirziyoev noted, "Strengthening the health of our people, establishing a healthy lifestyle is a vitally important issue for us. The purpose of agricultural reforms is to ensure food security and increase people's well-being, along with economic benefits" [7].

As a result of various external influences, at a time when serious risks are arising in the field of food supply all over the world, it should be noted that remarkable measures are being taken to strengthen food security in our republic. At the same time, the increase and fluctuations (volatility) of the prices of some agricultural products were observed in the food markets of our country. In order to provide the population with socially important food products and prevent price fluctuations, it is appropriate to introduce state procurement and commodity interventions using minimum and maximum prices.

An important factor in ensuring the competitiveness of agriculture is the development of value chains.



The high costs of collection, transportation, storage, processing, packaging and certification in the delivery of products from the field to final consumers reduce the profits received by agricultural producers. For example, the average cost of mineral fertilizers in the world has increased by 70-80% compared to last year. The most significant increase was in the prices of nitrogen fertilizers, which are the basis for the growth of all agricultural crops. In the cost of nitrogen fertilizers, up to 80-90% are the costs of natural gas. Many plants for the production of nitrogen fertilizers simply stopped, because it is necessary to raise prices for nitrogen fertilizers by 5-8 times in order to maintain the economic feasibility of production. However, fertilizers, despite some recent weakening of gas prices, continue to rise in price, and demand remains high [8].

It is also important to encourage the introduction of modern agro-technologies, to create an effective system of procurement and preparation, distribution, processing and sale of agricultural food products in order to solve the problems of increasing the productivity of agricultural products and productivity in animal husbandry. In particular, it is necessary to create a mechanism that provides food products throughout the year and reduces seasonal price fluctuations. From this point of view, it is necessary to implement effective methods of storage of fresh and processed food products. By 2030, it is intended that Uzbekistan will join the group of countries with higher than average income [9].

CONCLUSION

It is necessary to develop and effectively implement a state policy aimed at providing safe and quality food at stable prices for the entire population, namely:

- improvement of mechanisms for providing food to socially vulnerable segments of the population, as well as the integration of agricultural producers with objects of social importance;
- introduction of a food security assessment system and ongoing monitoring based on internationally recognized methodologies and best practices;
- development of long-term programs to promote a culture of healthy eating;
- development of sectoral programs to intensify the production of socially significant types of products;
- carrying out research work aimed at increasing the productivity of animal husbandry, sustainable intensification of the production of fish and poultry meat, as well as milk.
- introduction of a system of intervention purchases in the domestic market of agricultural products;



- improvement of mechanisms for providing food to socially vulnerable segments of the population, as well as the integration of agricultural producers with objects of social importance.

This leads to a corresponding change in lifestyle, behavioral patterns, and diet. Taking this into account, it will be necessary to ensure the increase in the share of processed food products for several goods. In addition, the introduction of food standards and norms (including the presence of microelements and necessary nutrients, control of harmful substances, various additives, dyes, flavors, emulsifiers, control of compliance with preparation, transportation technologies), as well as control over the quality of food it is necessary to further develop the mechanism.

In order to improve the diet of the population, it is necessary to spread the necessary information about healthy nutrition, and in this regard, it is necessary to increase the activity of medical institutions.

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