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THE CONCEPT OF FOOD SECURITY AND THE CHALLENGES OF ITS ENSURING IN MODERN CONDITIONS

Abstract. Purpose. The aim of this article is to formulate the author's definition of the concept of food security and to identify the key challenges to its provision under current conditions. **Results.** Based on an analysis of scientific perspectives, the article proposes an original definition of food security. It outlines the key dimensions of food security and emphasizes that the war in Ukraine has a negative impact not only on the country's food security and agricultural sector, but also on the entire European region. This leads to rising inflation rates and, consequently, increases in the prices of goods and services. The significance of food security lies in its influence on public health, economic stability, and national security as a whole. Furthermore, it is argued that ensuring food security contributes to reducing hunger and poverty, while simultaneously promoting sustainable agricultural practices, efficient food distribution systems, and resilient supply chains of various food products. The article asserts that food security cannot be effectively ensured without active governmental support and international cooperation. Under conditions of global climate change, economic challenges, and political instability, food security becomes a crucial factor for national development and the preservation of social, economic, and political stability. **Conclusions.** Thus, the absence of food security affects billions of people around the world, depriving them of their fundamental right to access nutritious food and, in some cases, leading to devastating consequences for individuals and society. The war in Ukraine adversely affects food security and the functioning of agriculture not only domestically but across Europe, resulting in inflationary pressures and increased costs of goods and services. These factors pose short- and medium-term challenges. However, promising efforts are being undertaken by individuals, organizations, and governments to address food insecurity. Therefore, the importance of collective international action in overcoming this crisis cannot be overstated.

Key words: security, food security, agricultural production, agriculture.

1. Introduction

Ensuring food security in Ukraine is one of the most critical aspects of national security, as it determines the state's ability to provide its population with sufficient quantities of food of adequate quality. Food security encompasses not only issues of food production and availability, but also storage, processing, and the regular provision of food products to the population. In the context of global climate change, economic challenges, and political instability, the issue of food security becomes particularly significant for the country's development and the preservation of social, economic, and political stability.

Certain problematic aspects related to food security have been addressed in the scholarly works of H.N. Alishov, Kh.A. Hryhorieva, Ya.A. Zhalilo, I.V. Ihnatenko, V.H. Mazurenko, K.M. Rechka, among others. However, despite

the considerable body of theoretical research, the scientific literature still lacks a comprehensive definition of the concept of food security, as well as a systematic analysis of the challenges to its provision under current conditions.

Accordingly, the aim of this article is to propose an authorial definition of the concept of food security and to highlight the key challenges to its provision in the modern context.

2. Priorities in Ensuring an Adequate Level of Food Security

Food security is achieved through various sectors, among which agriculture occupies a central position. This is confirmed by the fact that agriculture serves as the foundation of Ukraine's agro-industrial complex. The latter represents a set of national economic sectors encompassing agriculture, fisheries, the food industry, and agricultural processing, along

with their material, technical, and financial support. Agriculture contributes to food, economic, environmental, and energy security, and promotes the development of technologically interconnected industries and the socio-economic foundations of rural development. In Ukraine, the agricultural sector accounts for approximately 10% of GDP and nearly 40% of export revenues (Ukraine: Rural Dominion, 2024).

O.V. Fraier emphasizes that thanks to the comprehensive research conducted by UN environmental commissions, the Club of Rome, and other international organizations, a scientifically grounded understanding of the current environmental crisis has been developed. This facilitated the formulation of conceptual foundations for harmonizing socio-economic and environmental development, which were reflected in the concept of sustainable development. Over recent decades, the principles of sustainable development have attracted significant interest from scholars, policymakers, and economic actors. In the second half of the 20th century, the problem of the imbalance between the growing needs of society and the limited resources of the biosphere became more acute, posing a threat not only to individual ecosystems but to humanity as a whole. Modern civilization faces the necessity of environmentally safe development, in which agriculture plays a crucial role.

The key principles of sustainable development in the agricultural sector—as a core component of the agri-food system—are aimed at balancing the growth of agricultural production, the stability of social life in rural areas, and the preservation of the natural environment. This highlights the need for simultaneous economic growth, environmental protection, social progress, and the improvement of the socio-cultural standards of rural life (Fraier, 2018).

Currently, Ukraine's top priority in ensuring an adequate level of food security is to saturate the domestic market with domestically produced agricultural and food products. This goal is supported by implementing elements of an agricultural protectionism strategy. According to experts, state support for the sector is among the most important aspects of addressing the country's food security challenges at the current stage. The importance of the agro-industrial complex must be reassessed within the national economy, and the strategy for its reform should be revised to account for the need to reduce threats to food security. Ukraine must also develop an effective mechanism for protecting its national interests in international relations while addressing food-related issues (Zhalilo, 2011).

So, what exactly is meant by the concept of food security? According to paragraph 2.13

of the Law of Ukraine “On State Support for Agriculture of Ukraine,” food security is defined as “the protection of the vital interests of individuals, which is expressed in the state’s guarantee of unhindered economic access to food in order to maintain normal human life activity” (Law of Ukraine on State Support for the Agricultural Sector, 2004). Despite this legislative definition, numerous interpretations of this scientific category exist in academic literature.

3. The Formation of the Concept of “Food Security”

According to Ya.A. Zhalilo, food security is the level of food provision to the population that ensures socio-economic and political stability within society, sustainable and high-quality development of the nation, the family, and the individual, as well as the sustainable economic growth of the state (Zhalilo, 2011).

V.V. Mushenko views national food security as the state’s guaranteed ability, based on the principle of self-sufficiency in essential food products and their economic and physical accessibility, to meet the needs of the population—each individual citizen included—with food of appropriate quantity, variety, and quality, regardless of external and internal factors, at a level that supports human health and intellectual development (Mushenko, 2011).

H.M. Alishov defines state food security as the degree to which the population is provided with ecologically clean and health-beneficial domestically produced food, in accordance with scientifically grounded norms and at affordable prices, while also preserving and improving the living environment (Alishov, 2017).

A.R. Arakelova, A.Ye. Hrynko, and Yu.V. Yevtifiieva interpret food security as the condition of a state’s economy whereby the population as a whole, as well as each individual, is guaranteed access to food, drinking water, and other food products of the quality, variety, and quantity necessary and sufficient for physical and social development, as well as for ensuring public health (Arakelova, Hrynko, Yevtifiieva, 2022).

V.O. Zubko emphasizes that the food sector should be understood as a set of social relations arising in the process of ensuring unimpeded economic access to food for the purpose of maintaining normal life activity. He identifies specific features of the food sector as a subject of administrative-legal regulation, which include: the presence of specially authorized public administration entities with powers in the food sector; the substantive orientation of public administration tools towards regulation of the food sphere; the possibility of applying control and supervisory measures to ensure compliance with the law; and the possibility

of imposing administrative liability for violations in the food sector (Zubko, 2024).

I.V. Ihnatenko, A.S. Krechyk, and K.O. Perepelytsia point out that food security is often addressed at the national level, primarily in terms of reducing excessive dependence on food imports through domestic market saturation with national products. However, they also stress that this approach is the subject of academic debate, with many Western scholars moving away from national and regional perspectives. Instead, they argue for a global or international level of analysis, noting that food security is not only an economic category but also one concerned with guaranteeing the right to food access (Ihnatenko, Krechyk, Perepelytsia, 2014).

Analyzing several scholarly concepts, R. Mudrak, V. Lahodiienko, A. Osipova, O. Froter, and K. Sokoliuk conclude that many researchers define food security through four key criteria:

1. **Physical availability** – the presence of sufficient food of appropriate type and quality throughout the country, regardless of the food's origin (national production, reserves, imports, or food aid).

2. **Economic and physical access** – all citizens must have access to the necessary resources for acquiring food, including financial means and access rights to resources for producing or obtaining food. Physical access implies that people, regardless of their physical condition, must be able to obtain food without barriers.

3. **Stability of access** – uninterrupted access to sufficient food for all citizens, even during natural disasters, economic disruptions, or military conflicts.

4. **Safe food consumption** – the ability to consume food safely and in a way that supports health, including proper preparation and storage practices aligned with modern sanitary and hygiene standards, as well as access to safe drinking water (Mudrak, Lahodiienko, Osipova, Froter, Sokoliuk, 2024).

According to the **1996 World Food Summit**, “Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” [12]. The Summit outlined four core dimensions of food security:

1. **Food availability** – related to the “supply side” of food security, determined by levels of food production, stockpiles, and net trade.

2. **Economic and physical access to food** – the mere presence of food at the national or international level does not guarantee food security at the household level. Concerns about inadequate food access have led to policy focus on income, expenditures, markets, and prices.

3. **Food utilization** – refers to how the body uses nutrients from food. Adequate energy and nutrient intake result from good care and feeding practices, food preparation, dietary diversity, and intra-household food distribution. Together with biological use of food, these determine nutritional status.

4. **Stability** – even if one's food intake is adequate today, food security is not ensured if there is periodic or seasonal lack of access. Adverse weather, political instability, or economic factors (e.g., unemployment, rising food prices) may compromise food access over time (*What is Food Security?*, 2023).

4. Conclusion

In light of the above, food security can be defined as a condition in which all individuals have consistent, uninterrupted physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and preferences for an active and healthy life. The importance of food security lies in its direct impact on public health, economic stability, and the national security of the state as a whole.

Furthermore, it is reasonable to conclude that ensuring food security contributes to reducing hunger and poverty while simultaneously promoting sustainable agricultural practices, efficient food distribution systems, and resilient supply chains for various types of food products. Achieving food security is virtually impossible without active government support and international cooperation.

The absence of food security affects billions of people worldwide, depriving them of the fundamental right to access nutritious food, and in some cases, resulting in devastating consequences for individuals and society. The war in Ukraine has had a negative impact on food security and the functioning of agriculture not only within the country but across Europe, contributing to rising inflation and, consequently, increased costs of goods and services. These developments present short- and medium-term challenges.

Nevertheless, promising efforts by individuals, organizations, and governments to combat food insecurity are increasing. Therefore, the importance of coordinated international cooperation in addressing this crisis cannot be overstated.

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ПОНЯТТЯ ПРОДОВОЛЬЧОЇ БЕЗПЕКИ, А ТАКОЖ ПРОБЛЕМИ ЇЇ ЗАБЕЗПЕЧЕННЯ В СУЧАСНИХ УМОВАХ

Анотація. Мета статті полягає у формулюванні авторського визначення поняття продовольчої безпеки, а також виділити проблеми її забезпечення в сучасних умовах. **Результати.** У статті, спираючись на аналіз наукових поглядів вчених, запропоновано авторське поняття продовольчої безпеки. Виділено ключові аспекти продовольчої безпеки. Акцентовано увагу на тому, що війна в Україні негативно впливає на продовольчу безпеку та функціонування сільського господарства не тільки в нашій країні, але й у всій Європі, призводячи до зростання рівня інфляції, а відтак і зростання вартості товарів та послуг. Значущість продовольчої безпеки полягає в її впливі на здоров'я населення, економічну стабільність і національну безпеку держави в цілому. Окрім того, з огляду на зазначене вище, цілком справедливим буде констатувати, що забезпечення продовольчої безпеки означає зменшення голоду, бідності, одночасно сприяючи сталим сільськогосподарським практикам, ефективним системам розподілу продовольства та стійким ланцюгам постачання продовольчих товарів різноманітного характеру. Забезпечення продовольчої безпеки є фактично неможливим без державної активної підтримки та міжнародної співпраці. В умовах глобальних змін клімату, економічних викликів і політичної нестабільності питання продовольчої безпеки набуває особливого значення для розвитку країни та збереження соціальної, економічної та політичної стабільності. **Висновки.** Таким чином, відсутність продовольчої безпеки впливає на мільярди людей у всьому світі, позбавляючи їх основного права на доступ до поживної їжі, а в окремих випадках призводячи до жахливих наслідків для окремих людей та суспільства. Війна в Україні негативно впливає на продовольчу безпеку та функціонування сільського господарства не тільки в нашій країні, але й у всій Європі, призводячи до зростання рівня інфляції, а відтак і зростання вартості товарів та послуг. Все це створює проблеми на коротко- та середньострокову перспективу. Проте багатообіцяючі зусилля, які докладають окремі особи, організації та уряди для боротьби з продовольчою безпекою, зростають. А відтак, неможливо переоцінити важливість спільної роботи всіх держав щодо подолання цієї кризи.

Ключові слова: безпека, продовольча безпека, сільськогосподарська продукція, сільське господарство.