



The Role of Food Independence in Ensuring Economic Security

^{1*} Eshov Mansur Pulatovich, ² Nasirkhodjaeva Dilafruz Sabitxanovna

¹ Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs, Tashkent State University of Economics, DsC., professor

² professor of Tashkent State University of Economics., DsC

Tel.: (+99890)-981-77-87

E-mail: ndiliya@yandex.ru

*Corresponding Author

Abstract: The article explores processes related to the role of food independence in ensuring economic security. Situations related to the conditions and factors of ensuring food safety in Uzbekistan are systematized. According to the results of the research, directions for ensuring food safety in Uzbekistan are justified. By evaluating the existing possibilities of food cultivation in Uzbekistan, the effectiveness of the existing possibilities of ensuring food security was analyzed. In this regard, the position of the existing shortcomings and the relationship with its development features are given. In accordance with the results obtained in the research process, scientific proposals and practical recommendations have been formulated to improve the food safety system in Uzbekistan.

Key words: economic security, economic potential, agricultural products, export potential, continuous growth, natural resources, competitiveness, rational consumption standards.

INTRODUCTION

In the world, the population is growing at a high rate, the price of food products is increasing, and the shortage of the necessary amount of resources is increasing. The fact that "a food crisis was declared in 39 countries in 2008 and in 55 countries in 2020" is assessed by international experts as a negative consequence of globalization[20]. According to the report of the World Food Organization, "in order to meet the food needs of the population today, the volume of production should increase by 50% compared to 2013. Because it is estimated that the world population will reach 10 billion people by 2050" [21]. This requires to look for ways to increase the production of food products in developing countries and to review the state policy on regional specialization. In the world, there is a need to study the theoretical and methodological problems aimed at improving the functioning mechanism of the regional food market and to develop modern scientific approaches. In this regard, specialization of the region based on natural and economic conditions, increase of capital accumulation and investment attractiveness, improvement of the structure of export and import, expansion of the supply volume and types of products, improvement of the effectiveness of state regulation and regional programs, food security in unfavorable market conditions special attention is

paid to issues of provision. The results of this research are evaluated as a system of measures aimed at ensuring economic growth and social stability.

In the 2020-2030 Strategy of Uzbekistan's agricultural development, priority areas such as ensuring food security, production of high value-added products, creating a favorable agribusiness environment, modernization of agriculture and increasing investment attractiveness directions are set. As a result, state support for agriculture, effective use of natural and economic potential of regions, sharp increase in food production, and improvement of export and import structure are being introduced.

Food safety is one of the most urgent tasks facing the countries of the world. Today, the UN also emphasizes that it is time to completely change the approach to food production and distribution. After all, in an ideal situation, agriculture, forestry and fisheries are able to fully provide food for everyone and create a source of income for people, as in the brochure. Moreover, in such a case, both agriculture will develop in the interests of people, and the implementation of environmental protection measures will be ensured. Why is such a prestigious organization that serves the well-being and future of humanity promoting the idea of renewing views on this matter? The reason is that today's indifference to nature, increasing anthropogenic impact on it, wastefulness, the growing difference in the food balance between advanced and developing countries, and climate change are causing a number of negative factors. Our gifts, fresh water, oceans, forests, biological diversity are rapidly decreasing, land fertility is decreasing and soil is degrading. As a result, according to the UN, 815 million of the world's population are starving, and by 2050 this number will increase to 2 billion. enough for a person. 12.9 percent of them live in developing countries 45 percent of deaths among children under the age of five are caused by malnutrition. Currently, every year 3.1 children die because of this[24].

In addition, it was found that one out of every four children on our planet is stunted for their age. 66 million people of school age. boys and girls come to classes involuntarily hungry. 23 million of them. Lives in Africa. Another side of the matter. Agriculture is the largest employer in the world. Today, 40 percent of Kurrai's population earns their living through this industry. It is the main source of income and employment for families in poor villages. In developing countries, five million small farms, mostly dryland, supply 80 percent of food. Therefore, investing in this area will increase the country's ability to supply products to local and foreign markets, as well as ensure food security for the population.

Recently, another initiative in the field was launched by the UN. That is, a global campaign to combat food waste was announced. This also serves food safety. According to the information of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), 1.3 bln. tons of food products are thrown away [23].

According to the statistics of the organization, every year in the world about four billion. tons of food would be produced, if they were used wisely and distributed, it would actually reach all the people of the planet. Due to factors such as the above, prices in the world food markets are rising. The global financial and economic crisis observed in the last ten years caused this problem to become acute. Its complications are still felt. After all, food security represents the ability of the country's population to provide itself with such basic products. It also means getting rid of excessive dependence on food imports.

When will the government's food safety policy be effective? When the levels of production and import are rationally harmonized, guaranteed opportunities for the population are created, international pragmatic cooperation is developed, and food reserves that are periodically renewed are aimed at. Therefore, the issue of food safety is a guarantee of ensuring the independence, socio-economic and political stability of Uzbekistan as well as all other countries. This problem has not lost its relevance in our country. At the same time, the demand for food products is increasing, and

the per capita consumption is increasing due to the growth of the population. Consequently, in the last three years, the approach to ensuring food safety, increasing the quality of agricultural products and export potential in our country has completely changed, it has been turned into a priority of state policy.

Related Work

R.Barrenar[1], S.Boynes[2], O.Bukenya[3], R.Dennisp[4], from foreign economists, the role of the country's food independence in ensuring economic security and aspects related to its institutional foundations. Researched by economists such as D. John[5], R. Capone[6], S. Kim[7], R. Kolz[8], S. Negi[9] and I. Khalid[10]. Indicators of population consumption assessment and directions of ensuring food safety in Uzbekistan S.S. Gulomov, M.Sh.Barbakadze[11], M.Abdusalyamov[12], O.Abdullaev[13], T.M. Researched by economists such as Akhmedov[14], B.B. Berkinov[15], D.M. Karimova[16], A.V. Mamatkulov[17], F.Kh. Nazarova[18], Sh.H. Nazarov[19].

Research methodology

Research methods such as functional-structural, quantitative, systematic and comparative analysis and hierarchical analysis were widely used in conducting the research.

Analysis and results

Worrying situations are emerging in the world food security, despite the difficulties in solving this issue in our republic under the influence of a number of factors mentioned above, it is necessary to regularly increase the volume of production of agricultural products in our country, both in quantity and quality, and on this basis, food -significant results have been achieved in terms of strengthening the food supply. In the following years, optimization of the size of cultivated areas of farms, updating of the agricultural equipment park, introduction of modern agro-technologies to production, improvement of seed-breeding works, introduction of regionalized varieties of crops, improvement of the melioration of irrigated lands and irrigation Extensive and well-thought-out work has been done to introduce advanced water-saving irrigation methods. As a result, the productivity of the main types of crops in the republic had a trend of continuous growth.

It is known that agriculture is the leading branch of the economy in Uzbekistan. It employs 3.6 million people, i.e. 27% of the people employed in the economy. The sector's share in GDP is 32%, while the land area used in the sector occupies 45% of the territory of the republic. At present, more than 180 types of agricultural and food products are exported to more than 80 countries. Another important point is that the cluster method of production in agriculture has been introduced and is gaining popularity. This is confirmed by the fact that 62% of the agricultural land is covered by cotton and textiles, 8% by livestock and 7.5% by fruit and vegetable production. Among these, there are a number of unused opportunities for further development of the sector, increasing farmers' income, ensuring food security and sustainable use of natural resources.

The decree of the head of state on January 16, 2018 "On measures to further ensure the country's food security" and the strategy for the development of agriculture of Uzbekistan for 2020-2030, which is being developed at the same time, are from this point of view is relevant. For example, the strategy states that the share of undernourished people in Uzbekistan as of 2018 is 6.3 percent. Reducing this share to 5 percent by 2021, to 3 percent by 2025, and to zero by 2030 has been set as a priority [24]. So what to do about it? It is no secret that the regulation of export-import operations in our country, obstacles in the import of high-demand food products, unhealthy competition, monopolization of imported products by some economic entities, artificial increase in prices, a number of problems, such as the occurrence of shortages, are still encountered. It is natural

that such situations seriously damage the working environment in the field, the country's investment opportunities and its reputation in the world market. Therefore, the implementation of the above Decree will allow filling the markets of our country with high-quality, cheap and safe food, strengthening the purchasing power of the population, and developing a healthy competitive environment.

At the same time, we would like to draw attention to the existence of the following problems in the system of production, storage and processing of agricultural products: there are inefficiencies in the delivery of food products, first of all, fruits and vegetables from the field to the consumer; the level of processing of agricultural raw materials is not at the required level; issues of modernization and technical-technological re-equipment of agriculture and processing industry have not been fully resolved; there is a shortage of varieties of agricultural products with high storage and transportation capabilities, seeds; opportunities to improve sorting, calibration, beautiful packaging and design of agricultural products are not being used enough; the capacity of refrigerated warehouses, which allow to keep food at the required temperature throughout the year, is not enough to meet the demand; transport and logistics systems for the delivery of food products to domestic and foreign markets are not sufficiently developed.

It is known to many that some economic subjects were given a number of individual customs, tax and other benefits and preferences for importing food products from abroad. As a result, billions of state funds were spent. But this practice did not justify itself. The import of food products has been turned into a monopoly by some entities.

The import of the above products is carried out through the electronic trading system of commodity exchanges and foreign exchanges at the expense of the funds of the fund for the stabilization of prices in the domestic consumer market. Purchase of food products, savings income and expenses are announced on a single portal. So, the trade of food products imported from abroad is carried out transparently. Most importantly, on the basis of this Decree, the legislative and regulatory framework in the field is being improved.

In short, all the problems and techniques of reducing the price of food products in the country, ensuring their quality and safety, putting an end to speculation, eliminating bureaucracy, and establishing regular communication and cooperation with foreign investors and partners. there is an end to the evil spirits. Therefore, as experts, we would like to offer the following to ensure food safety in Uzbekistan:

- to further strengthen the legislation aimed at ensuring the productive and efficient use of land and water resources in agriculture, to achieve a higher share of food products in the composition of agricultural products;
- improvement of the water use system in order to grow agricultural food products in the necessary volumes.

In particular, in the event that the projects envisaged by the neighboring countries in the field of hydropower are implemented and the water supply is reduced accordingly, it is required to introduce drip irrigation in irrigated lands in 2025 to compensate for the water shortage. This requires a large investment, of course.

But it should not be forgotten that drip irrigation allows to reduce the amount of mineral fertilizers used to a certain extent. This helped to reduce the cost of food production and solve the problem of soil quality deterioration. Hence, productivity and profit from additional volumes of food production will also increase. At the same time, it is also important to encourage the introduction of modern agro-technologies to solve the problems of increasing the yield of agricultural products and productivity in animal husbandry, and to create an effective system of procurement and preparation, distribution, processing and sale of agricultural food products.

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, the implementation of effective methods of preservation of fresh and processed food products is the demand of the time. Because by 2025, it is aimed to transfer Uzbekistan to the group of countries with a higher average income. This leads to a corresponding change in lifestyle, behavioral patterns, and diet. Taking this into account, it will be necessary to ensure the increase of the share of processed food products for several goods. In addition, the introduction of nutritional standards and norms (including the availability of trace elements and necessary nutrients, control of harmful substances, various additives, dyes, flavoring agents, emulsifiers, compliance with preparation, transportation technologies control), as well as the mechanism of control over the quality of food should be further developed. 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.

Internal factors of ensuring food safety in Uzbekistan are:

- volume, quality of land and water resources used in the production of food products in agriculture and possibilities of their effective use;
- level of introduction of innovative technologies in the field of production, storage and sale of food products, including environmentally friendly products;
- level of competitiveness of food products produced in the country in domestic and foreign markets;
- state of development of the potential of the national food industry;
- ratio of import and export of food products;
- the level of meeting the demand for food products of the broad strata of the population in terms of product types, volume and quality at the expense of domestic production;
- the growth rate of consumer goods prices in accordance with the income of the population;
- the stability of the local supply of seeds and seedlings, which are of guaranteed variety and quality, and are popular in domestic and foreign markets;
- systematic organization of selection and breeding works to improve the breed of livestock and increase the productivity of local breeds;
- existence of a supply and demand coordination system based on regular study of the demand of the domestic market;
- the stability of the supply of material and technical resources required for the production of agricultural food products and the proportionality of the growth rate of the prices of products and the material and technical resources used for their production and the prices of services provided;
- the level of infrastructure development in regions, especially in rural areas, and the availability of mechanisms for its promotion;
- the productivity of natural pastures and the establishment of a system of their effective use;
- lack of working capital and high bank loans for production development;
- conformity of contractual relations between suppliers of raw materials and processors to market mechanisms.

Mechanisms for ensuring food safety are ensured by implementing the following activities in harmony on the basis of established target criteria:

- introduction of a system of food safety identification, evaluation and anticipation of possible risks at the level of all regions of the republic;
- introduction of a system of regulatory and legal documents harmonized with international requirements for ensuring food safety;
- sustainable development of the agro-industrial complex and implementation of a regulation

and management system for ensuring food safety, which ensures the fulfillment of the target criteria set at the level of all regions of the republic.

The increase in the total volume of food imports was influenced by the increase in average import prices at the level of about 55-60%, while the increase in the volume of exports of imported products and products made from them was influenced by 40-45%. we can see. Liberalization of foreign trade in our country, reduction of various defined and non-defined restrictions, measures to eliminate monopoly are implemented step by step. It is also necessary to take practical measures to ensure sustainable economic growth, satisfy the population's demand for food products, and ensure price stability by diversifying the geography of foreign trade, types of products and raw materials, and retailers and supplier countries. At the same time, limiting the export of food products in the main countries that supply food products to the domestic market as the main problem of ensuring food safety in Uzbekistan. As a result of wide-ranging economic reforms carried out in our country, in the assessment of 2012, the level of economic acceptability of food products in Uzbekistan was 35.1%, the level of availability and sufficiency was 44.9%, the level of quality and safety was 42.5%, and the average index was 40.8%. In 2021, an increase to 65.6, 55.1, 53.4 and 54 percent was provided, respectively.

According to the analysis, the increase in the production of the main types of food products per capita in 1991-2019 is due to their somewhat closer to the rational consumption standards set by the World Health Organization and the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Uzbekistan in this regard, grains, vegetables and sugar products, nutritious crops. and in terms of products, it indicates that it has been exceeded (Table 1).

Table 1.

In 1991-2021, the ratio of the volume of production of the main types of agricultural products per capita in Uzbekistan to rational consumption standards (%) [25]

Product types	In relation to WHO norms,%			Regarding the standards of the MHU of the Republic of Uzbekistan ,%		
	1991 y	2006 y	2021 y	1991 y	2006 y	2021 y
Don	76,7	206,3	159,1	71,7	192,7	148,6
Potatoes	17,9	95,4	85,5	17,8	95,1	85,2
Vegetables, fruits and nutritious jackets	146,9	249,6	247,3	153,7	261	258,7
Fruits and berries	31,1	119,5	96,9	30,2	115,9	93,9
Meat (live weight)	54,6	99,6	103,7	52,4	95,6	99,6
Milk	36,4	76,4	78,0	35,6	74,8	76,3
Eggs (pieces)	24,6	83,2	91,0	21,8	73,8	80,7

The above positive circumstances can be evaluated as the final result of the economic reforms carried out in the agrarian sector during the years of independence. In particular, per capita production of potatoes, milk and dairy products, eggs, fruits and berries, meat (in live weight) has somewhat approached the level of their rational consumption standards. The production of grain products is ensured by 150% on average compared to the standards of rational consumption per capita. However, this situation does not mean that food security has been achieved in terms of grain production in the country. The reason is that one of the indicators characterizing the safety of food includes the level of import dependence on these products. After all, the analyzes show that the trend of importing a significant amount of grain and flour in our country every year is maintained. This, in turn, is explained by the fact that there is no direct opportunity to use the raw materials of grain grown in our republic for consumption as bread and bakery products.

On the other hand, grain raw materials are grown mainly in irrigated fields. This, in turn, is one of the main internal threats that prevent the implementation of the task of achieving food security in the conditions of limited water resources and the continuation of this trend in the future. According to these recommendations, the per capita consumption of bread and bakery products has always been higher than the level of rational norms. In 2021, the actual level of consumption per capita is 183.6% and 263.7% higher for vegetable oil than the standards recommended by the WHO and the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Uzbekistan. has been achieved. Also, in 2021, compared to 1991, the real consumption level of meat and meat products increased from 44.2% to 61.6% and from 42.5% to 59.2%, respectively, in relation to rational norms. Such positive changes can be recognized as a positive result of cooperation between the agricultural sector of our republic and the global agrarian economy sector. Therefore, in 2015, our country was awarded as one of the 14 countries awarded by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) for achieving the Millennium Development Goals in the field of food security.

Table 2.

The dynamics of changes in the level of actual consumption of basic food products per capita compared to rational consumption standards [25]

Product types	The standard of rational consumption according to WHO (kg/1 person, in 1 year)	Standard of rational consumption according to UzR (kg/1 person, in 1 year)	In relation to WHO standards, %		In relation to the norms of the MHU of the Republic of Uzbekistan, %	
			1991 y.	2021 y.	1991 y.	2021 y.
Bread and bakery products	120,5	129	141,1	147,4	131,8	137,8
Meat and meat products	70,1	73	44,2	61,6	42,5	59,2
Dairy products	404	413	45,3	66,8	44,3	65,4
Vegetable and fruit products	140,3	134,1	76,3	197,6	79,8	206,7
Vegetable oil	13,1	9,1	91,6	183,6	131,8	263,7
Sugar, confectionery products	36,5	40,5	32,8	85,5	29,6	77,03

In Uzbekistan, there are trends of preservation of external and internal threats that hinder the sustainable development of agricultural production and the achievement of food security. In our opinion, they are reflected in the following:

- due to the acceleration of urbanization processes and other factors, agricultural arable land, in particular, irrigated land, is decreasing per capita;
- the state of land reclamation, the level of utilization of the potential of the reclamation system remains low compared to the optimal state, in particular, the useful work coefficient of irrigation systems is equal to 0.63;
- there are lands that were previously irrigated, but turned into gray lands, left out of the agricultural cycle, the levels of degradation of lands, especially pastures, are increasing;
- as a result of environmental and climate changes, a shortage of land and water resources is expected and their deterioration in quality is expected to increase;
- there is a tendency to produce the main types of agricultural and food products quantitatively at the level of medical standards, and some of them even more than the standard level.

Conclusions and suggestions

Diversification of production, improvement of land and water relations, creation of a favorable agribusiness environment and high added value chain, support for the development of cooperative relations, wide introduction of market mechanisms, information and communication technologies in the field, as well as effective use of scientific achievements and in order to increase the potential of personnel, the "Strategy for the development of agriculture of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2020-2030" was adopted. According to it: Food security depends on a wide range of socio-economic, demographic and environmental factors and is one of the main components of the country's development. The absolute increase in the demand for land, water and energy resources as a result of the population growth in the country, as well as the sudden change in climate are the main factors affecting food security.

There are threats to food from the point of view of economic freedom, the high level of income distribution, the increase in the consumer price index of food products. Depending on the agricultural orientation of the region and how agricultural production develops, the proposed indicators and criteria for assessing the food security of the region may change, additional criteria and assessment indicators are currently can be done.

The main goal of ensuring food security in the country is to develop and effectively implement a state policy aimed at providing all residents of the republic with quality food products.

In the course of the research, the following proposals were made to improve the practice of ensuring food safety:

- improvement of the mechanisms of providing food to the population in need of social protection, as well as integration of producers of agricultural products with social facilities;
- it is necessary to develop the scientific demand of agricultural crops for mineral fertilizers as a level of influence on food safety and to use mineral fertilizers in a differentiated manner. In addition, it is desirable to form a system for regulating and controlling the use of chemical agents used in agricultural products, as well as laboratory analysis of residual amounts of nitrates, pesticides and heavy metal salts in the products when they are released for consumption;
- the development of agriculture, which is the main sector in ensuring food security, largely depends on the availability of water resources and their rational and effective use. Therefore, water resources are an important factor in ensuring food security of the country. Therefore, it is necessary to introduce a strict calculation of water, to improve the technical conditions of irrigation networks, to improve the melioration of irrigated lands, to create an automated management and monitoring system in the system, to pay special attention to the diversification of agricultural production;
- introduction of the system of state intervention purchases in the cultivation of spiked grain, gradual abandonment of the mechanism of state regulation of prices of agricultural and food products, and introduction of the mechanism of purchase of spiked grain at market prices based on quota;
- development of a long-term program to promote a healthy consumer culture;
- introduction of a food safety assessment system based on internationally recognized methodologies and best practices and continuous monitoring;
- development of network programs to intensify the production of socially important products;
- to carry out research aimed at increasing productivity in animal husbandry, sustainable intensification of fish and poultry meat, as well as milk production.

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