

Food Safety - The Primary Objective of Human Society Existence

Tabita Cornelia Adamov, Tiberiu Iancu, Andrea Feher, Cosmina Simona Toader, Mihaela Iancu

Banat's University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine, Timișoara, 300645, Calea Aradului, 119, Romania

Abstract

Food has played, plays and will play a decisive role in the existence and development of human society. The level of food quality, causes physical, social and moral society health. In this sense food security is an essential goal of economic and social development, being an essential component of security of life and national security.

Evolution of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), in terms of food security, was due not only changes in agriculture, but also came in response to the demands of society in general. Amongst these is growing concerns about hygiene and food safety and animal welfare.

European consumers want safe and wholesome food and the EU wants to ensure that all its citizens consume food with high quality standards. Food safety policy has undergone an extensive refurbishment. The objective of this reform was to ensure that EU legislation on food safety is as complete as possible, and consumers benefit as much information about potential risks and measures to be taken to minimize them.

The goal of a modern economy, is the correlation of quantitative and qualitative food production with consumer demand. It thus requires knowledge of the physiological needs of consumers, leading to demand for agricultural products.

Keywords: food consumption, food needs, food security

1. Introduction

In time, the concept of food safety had several definitions, meanings and connections, but in the present it represents the sum of aspects which allowing the population to have full access to food. Each individual is allowed the fundamental right, the right to food, even if it is not properly supplied everywhere. So, it is necessary to establish the physiological need of the human body in order to establish the consumption needs. The food safety represents a fundamental component of the human life safety and also an important condition of the socio-economical development.¹

The insurance of the food self-sufficiency – a concept related to the food safety – was and still is a basic objective of the agricultural policies in many countries of the world where this objective has not been reached yet.

2. Materials and methods

The At international level we can notice important discrepancies both quantitative and qualitative of the products and services, according to the development level of the country. These discrepancies are more obvious as the development level of the country is lower.

The most important need of the contemporary civilization is represented by the qualitative and quantitative alignment of the food production with the consumers' demand. We have to find an answer for the consumer who is concerned about

* Corresponding author: Tabita Corneia Adamov, 040723729932, tabitaadamov2003@yahoo.com

the usage value of the food related to the food market dynamism conditions.

In order to study the food safety problem we realized a statistical analysis of the data related to this subject, important both for the present and for the future. This is not an exhaustive analysis because this is a very large subject which concerns the entire world.

3. Results and discussion

Ensuring food safety and high standards concerning the health and life of animals is not just a legal problem. PAC offers stimulants for the farmers in order to increase the efficiency in these areas. [1]

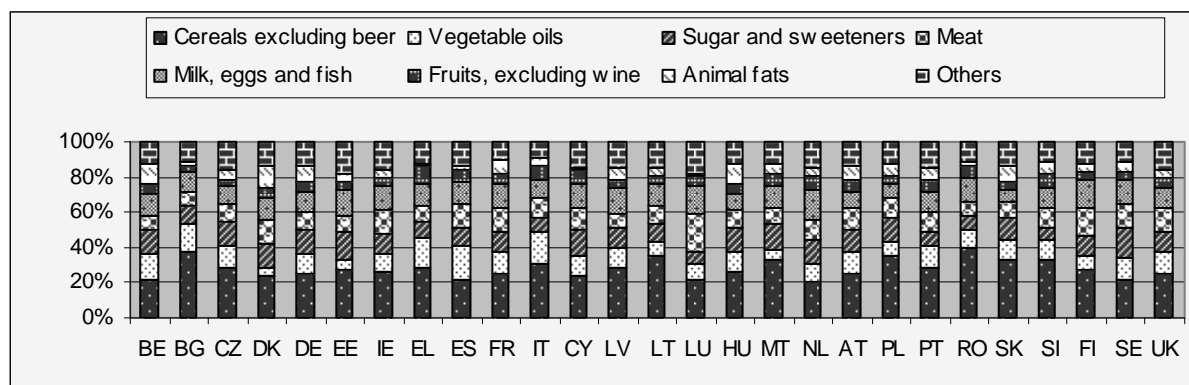


Figure 1. The structure of consumption in EU-27, 2008 [2]

Respecting the standards from this area by applying the eco – condition principles is an advantage of the entire society, but it can represent important expenses for the farmers, so they will receive through the rural development policy some financial support in order to make the necessary improvements.

In present, a condition of the modern economy is represented by the quantitative and qualitative alignment of the food production with the demands of the consumers. So, it is necessary to establish the physiological need of the human body in order to establish the consumption needs.

In reality there are two types of food products' demand: a real demand corresponding to a physiological consumption and a reliable demand determined by the spending capacity.

Comparing the food consumption in Romania and in Europe we can notice that, in the structure of the Romanian food consumption predominate the vegetable origin products: cereals, potatoes and vegetables. The structure of the European food consumption (figure 1) is represented by a high percentage of high nutritional value products represented by animal origin products.

In figure 2 we make a comparison between the Romanian food consumption and the international consumption.

From this comparison we can mention the following conclusions:

- Concerning the cereals, in Romania, they have a lower percentage in the food consumption structure than in the international consumption (40.1% compared to 46.6%);
- Vegetable oils have close percentages in the consumption structure: 10.0% at national level and 9.5% at international level;
- The sugar represents 8.5% in the international consumption and 7.6% in the Romanian consumption;
- The situation is similar for the meat, representing 8.3% at international level and 7.7% in Romania;
- The milk, eggs and fish represent a percentage of 14.4% in the national consumption structure while at international level this percentage is lower, only 6.7%;
- In Romania, the average fruit consumption is higher than the international consumption, proved by the percentage in the total food consumption, 6.5% in our country compared to 5.6% in the world;

- Concerning the animal fat consumption, this is almost equal, in Romania this represents 2.0% of the total consumption and 2.2% at international level.

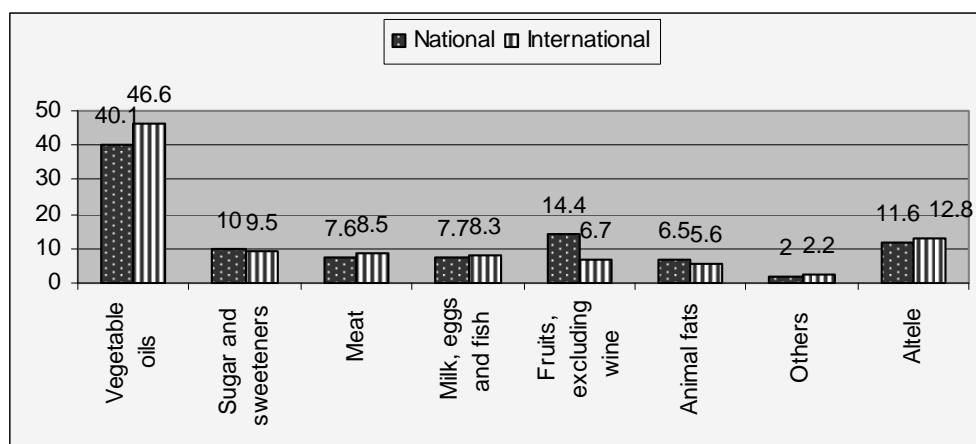


Figure 2. The structure of food consumption in Romania and worldwide, 2008, [2,3]

The consumers' behavior concerning the consumption level and structure (including food) is always correlated with the income level, with the price system for the products on the market, with the expectations concerning the future incomes, with the habits concerning food, with the population structure according to sex and age, with the family size, with the influence of advertising, etc.

For this reason we present a concise evolution of the changes of the food consumption of Romanian population in the period 1990 – 2007.

Analyzing the data from table 1 we can notice that at national level, in the period 1990 – 2007, there were the following changes in the consumption structure:

- The meat consumption has improved with 9.3%;
- Concerning the milk and dairy product consumption, this increased very much, with 80.4%;
- The sugar consumption has decreased compared to 1990 with 8.8% (27.3% in 1990 and 24.9% in 2007);

- Also decreased the cereal consumption with 1.6%;

- The vegetable consumption increased with 43.1%;

- A higher increase was registered for potatoes, the consumption was increased with 61.8%;

- Increases can be noticed also for the fruit consumption, an average of 39.8% for the analyzed period;

- The egg consumption registered also a certain increase: 8.9%;

- The fish and fish product consumption decreased in 2007 to $\frac{3}{4}$ from the consumption registered in 1990;

Decreases can be noticed also for animal fats, in 2007 these were reduced with 35.3% compared to 1990.

In the structure of the population expenses for consumption, predominant are the expenses for purchasing food products and alcohol free beverages. Although, in the period 2005 – 2007, they had a decreasing tendency, they have an important percentage in 2007, 41.7%.

Table 1. Changes of the average food consumption in the period 1990 – 2007, [3]

Specification	UM	1990	2007	2007/1990%
Meat and meat products (equivalent of fresh meat)	Kg	61.0	66.7	+ 9.3
Milk and dairy products (equivalent of milk, excluding butter)	Litri	140.1	252.8	+ 80.44
Sugar and sweets (equivalent of sugar)	Kg	27.3	24.9	-8.8
Cereal products (equivalent of flour)	Kg	158.5	156.0	- 1.6
Vegetables and vegetable products, leguminous for seeds and melons	Kg	127.0	181.7	+ 43.1
Potatoes	Kg	59.4	96.1	+ 61.8
Fruits and fruit products (equivalent of fruits)	Kg	59.5	83.2	+ 39.8
Eggs	Buc	246.0	268.0	+ 8.9
Fish and fish products	Kg	5.1	3.8	-25.5
Animal fats	Kg	5.1	3.3	-35.3

Sursa: Calculation of data from the Statistic Registry of Romania, 2003 and 2008

An important role has the knowledge of the self-consumption system, because a large share of the population families produce for self – consumption, the production is not subject of the

sell – purchase activity from the market, it is use by the producer and its family.

In Romania, the self – consumption has an important percentage in the total food consumption.

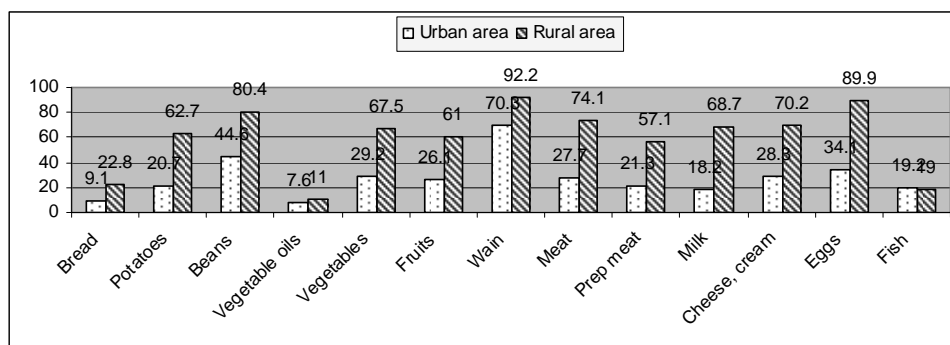


Figure 3. The percentage of self – consumption, according to product groups and averages, in Romania, in 2005 (%)

The analysis of the self – consumption percentage for food products highlights the following (figure 3):

- The percentage of self – consumption for the main products is higher in the rural areas but has significant levels also in the urban areas;
- The families from the rural area insure the consumption mostly from their own production, the production variations determining fluctuations of consumption;

- Also in the urban area the self – consumption has significant percentages for some products (bean seeds and other leguminous for seed, wine, eggs), but with a lower value compared to the rural area;

- For the products bought exclusively from the market, the self – consumption is very reduced;

- Per total families, the highest percentage of self – consumption is registered for wine (85.5%), bean seeds (65%), eggs (60%), the percentages are considerably higher in the rural

areas: wine (92.2%), bean seeds (80.4%), eggs (89.9%);

- We can notice also, the high level of self – consumption for vegetables (46.1%) and fruits (38.3%) per total families, in the rural areas these percentages are 67% for vegetables and 61% for fruits;

- For the animal origin products, meaning fresh meat, milk, cheese and cream, about half of consumption is from own resources per total families.

The high percentage of self – consumption from the total consumption shows a low degree of development and organization of the food product markets associated usually with a lower level life standard of the population.

The future realization of the food consumption model in its optional form of general saturation, can take place both by increasing the incomes and by reducing the real terms of food product prices so that the percentage of money expenses of the population for food consumption from total consumption expenses decreases in comparable terms from 50% to approximately 15 – 20 % as it is in the developed countries of European Union.

The satisfaction of food needs of the population depends not only on the existence of food availabilities but also on the reliable demand of the population as a consequence of the increase of the gross product and of the non-food costs level.

Today, the expenses for food exceed 50% of the population income. Such a situation represents an obstacle for the domestic market development and an important obstacle for the economical development.

The food problem at international level can be characterized by important qualitative and quantitative differences between countries and groups of countries, but also for the same country, due to the discrepancies between the food resources and needs, between the nominal demand and the reliable demand. In the present situation it is necessary to find durable solutions which combine efficiency with effectiveness.

Ensuring food safety and high standards concerning the animals' health and well being is not only a legal matter. PAC offers stimulants for farmers in order to improve the efficiency in this area. Respecting the standards by applying eco-conditional principals is an advantage for the entire society but lead to important expenses for

the farmers, so that they are offered, through the rural development policy, financial support in order to help them make the necessary improvements.

Ensuring the highest level of food safety standard in EU, but also the food safety represent key-priorities of Commission policy, reflected in directions, regulations and specific measures.

The food policy is not only the agriculture or food industry problem but of the entire economy. To get over this situation depends on the macro-economical and area policy, on the gross domestic product, on the national and regional labor productivity, on the incomes and prices, which can generate a higher reliable demand, the expansion of the domestic market and economical stimulation effects.

So, for the establishment of food and nutritional policies – which represent the basic instruments for achieving this objective – it is necessary to start the risks and limits and opportunities analysis in order to find the most efficient ways and methods for preventing the difficulties concerning the food safety.

4. Conclusions

Ensuring the food for population represents a vital problem characterized by a dynamic evolution but with many inequalities in the world countries concerning the needs, the degree and the means for satisfying these needs.

The human food consumption is a domain where the relation economic development – food development shows the most powerfully the interdependence. In this case, the economic development strategies are conditioned sine qua non by the success of the food strategies. Today, all the countries in the world decided to ensure or to raise the degree of food self – satisfaction.

The food safety means the adoption of food policies concerning:

- The production of food, sufficient as volume, structure and quality, in order to satisfy the food needs of the population for the entire year, ensuring the realization of high quality products;

- The accessibility of the entire population to the necessary food, the combination of justice criteria with economic efficiency in the

▪ production and distribution of food aiming to continuously raise the efficiency;

▪ The realization of food products with higher nutritional complexity, cleaner and of a higher quality aligned with the international standards.

The future realization of the food consumption model in its optional form of general saturation can take place both by increasing the incomes and by reducing in real terms the prices of food products so that the percentage of financial expenses for consumption of the population in the total expenses to decrease from over 50% to almost 15 – 20% as it is registered in the European Union countries.

Ensuring food safety represents, for the contemporary society, not only a vital problem for a great part of the world population but also a major requirement for a normal life at international level.

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