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UKRAINIAN AGRO-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX IN THE FRAMEWORK OF GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY

The agro-industrial complex of our country is one of the key sectors of the national economy, which not only meets domestic food needs but is also an important player in the global market. In the context of global food security, Ukraine's contribution to the international food market at the end of 2021 was equivalent to providing food for 400 million people.

Even despite the war that has been going on in independent Ukraine since February 24, 2022, more than 41 million tons of grains, oilseeds, and their products were exported. This helped Ukraine maintain its 5th place among the world's largest agricultural exporters [1; 2].

However, according to UN statistics, in 2022, approximately 828 million people were in severe food insecurity, i.e., undernourished. The main problem that caused this gap in food security was the 50% rise in wheat prices in March last year, which was caused by the blockade of Ukrainian ports, active hostilities on the part of Russia in the fields, and the impossibility of harvesting due to the occupation and mining of Ukrainian territories. This issue was partially resolved through the «green corridor» mediated by Turkey, as 569 ships have left the ports since August 1, exporting 14.3 million tons of Ukrainian food [2].

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) food price index is now hovering near its highest level in history (in February 2022, it reached a maximum of 140.7), and countries are becoming poorer due to inflation and the excessive strengthening of the dollar against other currencies. In addition, there is less fertilizer in the world, and the global fertilizer price index is twice as high as two years ago, which will be especially noticeable during the harvest in 2023 [1; 3].

It is for these reasons that Ukraine needs even more active support, as it is critically important for strengthening food security on the planet. One of the first urgent appeals for support was the «FLASH APPEAL UKRAINE».

On November 26, 2023, a new international initiative Grain from Ukraine was launched, under which food is exported to Africa and Asia. As of March 2023, this is slowly bringing us closer to the pre-war levels of wheat exports to needy countries such as Ethiopia, Kenya, and Yemen (3 million tons of Ukrainian agricultural products have already been shipped). However, the population in these countries has increased in recent years, which means that more food exports are needed [1].

The Ukrainian agro-industrial development strategy until 2030 still envisages providing food for 1 billion people. Therefore, it is planned to increase the sown area for oilseeds by 10-15% and reduce it by 10-12% for grains and corn due to expensive logistics in order to reach the 2022 targets this year, and active reforms are underway in the fish, meat and dairy sectors (for example, the Ministry of Agrarian Policy and the State Service of Ukraine for Food Safety and Consumer Protection, together with experts from the Swiss-Ukrainian QFTP program, have developed a plan for the development of the organic and dairy sectors, which have been significantly affected by the war) [1].

Thus, to ensure the sustainable development of Ukraine's agro-industrial complex and preserve the world's food security, it is necessary to develop innovative technologies, improve product quality, expand export markets, and reduce the impact of global challenges such as climate change, the coronavirus pandemic, and war. However, in addition to the actions of the state apparatus, one of the most promising ways to minimize the risk of food shortages in the world will be to increase foreign investment in Ukraine's agriculture and create new programs to support farmers.

References:

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