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PROBLEM SOLVING APPROACH TO FOOD SECURITY

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Abstract

The article reviews a food security issue, as one of the most important in the contemporary Russian economy. Several facts condition a significant interest to this issue. Food facility for the population is a key factor of economy, social and political security of the state. Agro-industrial complex (AIC), which provides food security of the country, is a key structural factor in the system of the national economy. Russian AIC provides 4.6 % of GDP (2015) and 6.7 % (2014) of total labour in the country. It has been emphasized that food security in all its manifestation reflects its ability to provide a balanced and sustainable development of the economy. Providing optimal balance between domestic production and import supplies of food supplies is vitally important. Only when the domestic food market is stable the state can have independent national and foreign policies. These circumstances prove the necessity of economic research in food security and independence, analysis of their economic nature and significance for a state prosperity. The following tasks have been solved: the internal matter and evolution of the food security concept have been disclosed, the concept “food security” has been specified relative to contemporary conditions of national economy; the role of multisided regulation of external economic relations in food security has been determined; a combination of key factors in Russia food security at the present time has been determined.

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1. Introduction

In contemporary reorientation of political relations one of the priority fields of the country development is provision with competitive domestically produced food, able to substitute import products and provide food security.

Contemporary content of the concept “food supply” means combination of four aspects: physical existence (availability), economic availability, food safety (nutrition) and consistency (stability) of its supply. Here, food safety and its consistency are the key factors providing food security (Ushachev, 2008). Food presence at the national scale is determined by the combination of the national food supply, import, food aid and domestic production, selling and transport infrastructures.

Economic availability means that population has enough money to buy food according to physiological standards of nutrition in the existing structure of foodstuff consumption, system of prices and income level. It is determined by the resources level available to the household: subsistence farming, capability to receive sufficient income, which allows satisfying the food needs, conducted national social policy, and prices level for food products.

Food safety means provision of the food quality prescribed by the accepted quality standards and prevention of production, distribution and consumption of poor food, able to do harm to the public health.

Economic and social systems of the country must guarantee sustainability of food supply that is its availability to every citizen not only for a short period but in the long-term run. Sustainable food access depends on food supplies in the country, ecological state of the agriculture lands.

2. Problem Statement

Food security has been studied in many works by national and foreign scientists and specialists. Most of them deal with separate aspects of the issue; while the combination of factors influencing food security in Russia has not been studied yet, that necessitates further study of the issue, understanding of knowledge from the point of view of improving Russian agricultural policy and providing country’s food security. The importance of internal and external factors of food security determines the issue topicality. (Lomakin, 2017). With greater country’s involvement into international processes nowadays food facility of the country and population with necessary food resources for child birth and life activity becomes especially important. In its turn the main domestic factor is the state and dynamics of AIC of the country. It is necessitates the study of various international practice and control and enabling mechanisms for AIC and agriculture products producers by the state. Nowadays, the state is the main financial support for the agricultural progress, hence, the system of food security in general.

3. Research Questions

The subject of the study is combination of theoretical, methodological and practical issues of food security development.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to analyze the influence of national and international factors on the state of food security in Russia and its regions in order to develop means and methods of its improvement.

5. Research Methods

The methodological grounds for the research are methods of generalizing and grouping statistical information, abstract-logical, functional and comparative analysis, and historical approach to the food security concept.

6. Findings

Food security has a significant place in the country's security. As the last is a system object, food security and its provision should be studied in combination with other components of the national security. Food security closely interacts with foreign policy, military, economic and social security.

Protection of government and citizenship in Russia from food security dangers is the sphere of the constant concern of the state and the object of science attention. Interrelation of food and economic security of the state is expressed via AIC and its role in the economy of the country. As Ushachev (2008) notes AIC development takes a leading place in food security provision of any state. Consequently conducted state policy aimed at the AIC development is a key factor of achieving food security.

Dealing with the AIC role in the state economy let's describe its close connection with other branches of the economy. AIC interacts with other branches, that is, why its development is a necessary condition for country's food independence and it provides complex development of its economy in general. That is why limit indicators of economic security include indexes describing AIC activity results, such as gross grain harvest and imported food share in the total amount of food resources. The purpose of the long-term agrarian policy is formation of effective and sustainably developing AIC conforming international standards, providing food security of the country, saturating food market with products affordable for all population and resources for industry, concurrent income equalization and other social parameters in agriculture with corresponding national average (Mikitaeva, 2018).

Thus, the system of food security is closely related with provision of population with food with corresponding state of AIC and population life activity. Transformations in country's economy resulted in deep changes in AIC, which decreased its potential, agriculture production, food import increase. High import resulted in suppression of local food producers from national markets. Massive import resulted in poor food and deficit in staple food, especially meat. The worst impact was on regions of the North-Caucasian economic zone, as its subjects mostly rely on agricultural production, and the financial state of the population on these areas depends on agriculture efficiency. These negative facts resulted in unemployment increase, consumer demand decrease, increase in share of population beyond the poverty level, food consumption decreased below recommended levels. During this period the state somewhat lost its food independence, as food facility of Russia approximately 40 % depended on the import (Agriculture & Rural Development, 2017).

The modern agrarian sector of the economy is characterized by insignificant growth and unsustainable development of agriculture and food industry, price disparity, debt overburden of food producers at high interests, rising inflation on food products. Guarantee of food security in conditions of Russia entrance into the World Trade Organization and participation in European Economic Union, sanctions, is connected with activation of science-technical and technological development, based on innovative-investment and society-oriented economy. Estimating the influence of new geopolitical conditions, agriculture scientists point out the necessity of agrarian policy reconstruction, as her modern state does not allow solving system problems with food sovereignty guarantee, agricultural profitability increase for its technical-technological modernization, improving food competitiveness on the foreign and local markets and sustainable development of the agriculture lands (Mikitaeva, 2018). The main content of the agrarian policy in most developed countries is state support of AIC with different economical tools: subsidies, grants, and privileges (Tekueva, Bayzulayev, Volov, & Shurdumova, 2017).

It is necessary to create effective organizational-economic terms of food security in the country and its regions, overcoming threshold limits of food sovereignty and self-sufficiency in food resources. Food sovereignty as a component of national food security is studied in works by A. Arkhipov, A. Altukhov, D. Vermel, A. Gordeev, G. SHmelev and others. They determine food security as food sovereignty, or ability of the agro-industrial complex provide independent production, storage, processing or distribution of products among the citizens of the country with main products in the range necessary for active healthy life. Altukhov, Kulikov, and Semin (2018) say that “the main component of the food security is food sovereignty, which is achieved by sustainable home production of food in the amount not less than the threshold values and its ratio in tradable resources of the domestic market with necessary products” (p. 286). Thus, food security provides both food sovereignty and manufacturing food consumption, real, economic, and social availability of quality and safe food for all population in the amount necessary for active and healthy life. Within this approach Ushachev (2008) uses a term “sustainable food facility”.

Agaev (2000) loads the concept “food security” with two meanings. The first is connected with purely economical process of food facility”. The second is caused by the importance of food facility for national security in its national and foreign forms”. The situation on the global food market is changing constantly. Macroeconomic tendencies also influence it and cause sharp changes in global prices for food, increase of population of the developed countries, increasing number of consumers, but not food producers, as well as ecological and agro-ecological issues, sharpening lack of resources for agro-industrial production and other factors. As professor Belokrylova (2004) states “food security of the modern Russia is made of national food security resulting in independence from the import (self-sufficiency of the food system), and food security of the citizens, guaranteed real and economic availability of food for every citizen of the country, with high consumer quality and properties, necessary for active and healthy life” (p, 84).

Nowadays, numerous measures are being taken to develop the food facility system and food security of Russia. It has been testified by passing the “Doctrine of food security in Russia” where food security is understood as the state of the economy when the country has food sovereignty, guaranteed real and economic availability of food for every citizen in the amounts not less than required norms for active and healthy life (Food Security Doctrine of Russian Federation, 2010). Factors providing food security are

introduced in Russian National Security Doctrine till 2020.

One of the significant trends of food policy reforming in order to provide food security must be supporting close connection of food policy with other trends, and first of all, with energy policy, land policy, marine and water resources policy, ecological policy. Actions of the state and administrative bodies in these spheres should be coordinated. Strengthening state influence in agriculture economy do not support fundamental changes in the agriculture industry and creating conditions country's food security (Samygin, Baryshnikov, & Mizurkina, 2017).

Food sovereignty (or security) of the country means strategic reserve of power, tillable lands, mineral fertilizers, food enough to provide the population according to the norms of crisis situation during the whole emergency mobilization measures, foreseeing the transformation of the country's survival system for overcoming or damage compensation imposed by the crisis situation. The major premise for food dependence refuses to support own food producers, excessive food import and consumption of the imported products.

That is why the issue of food security should be studied both in relation to the country and subjects of the Russian Federation (Grigorian, Agarkov, Arutiunov, & Belova, 2018). The concept of food security of a separate subject of the Russian Federation is figurative as security means presence of outside threat. That is why in relation to a separate region of the country the question is about organization of the reliable food supply system for the population, in ideal – about fully independent self-sufficiency with main products. In fact, food security of a separate subject of the country does not differ from national food security, except the fact that external food sources for a separate subject of Russia can be located in other parts of the country and are not related with security threats, and foreign import is controlled by the state.

Rodnina (2011) defines the concept “food supply of the population as an integral combination of factors, processes and results of productive power functioning, social-labour sphere and industrial relations for needs satisfaction of the population. Food facility category for population is characterized by quantitative and qualitative parameters of regional economy development” (p.59). According to this, food facility essence for population is determined not by the elements or parameters of this sphere but by “the constellation of the factors, processes and results of labour forces reproduction, social labour sphere and industrial relations”, which are reference points for food facility. The point of view of Rodnina that food facility for the population is characterized by qualitative and quantitative parameters of regional economy development. It turns out that all the characteristics of regional economy (for example, Gross Regional Product, investments into economy and other) characterize food facility for the population.

We think that food facility sphere, which has a significant role in state social obligations should be considered as a sphere of activity where personal and social interests are combined, personal needs in food are satisfied.

A stable system for food supply for population in RF subjects is the basis for the reliable food security of the whole state (Markov, 2011). The key structural elements of the regional food security are in the figure 01.

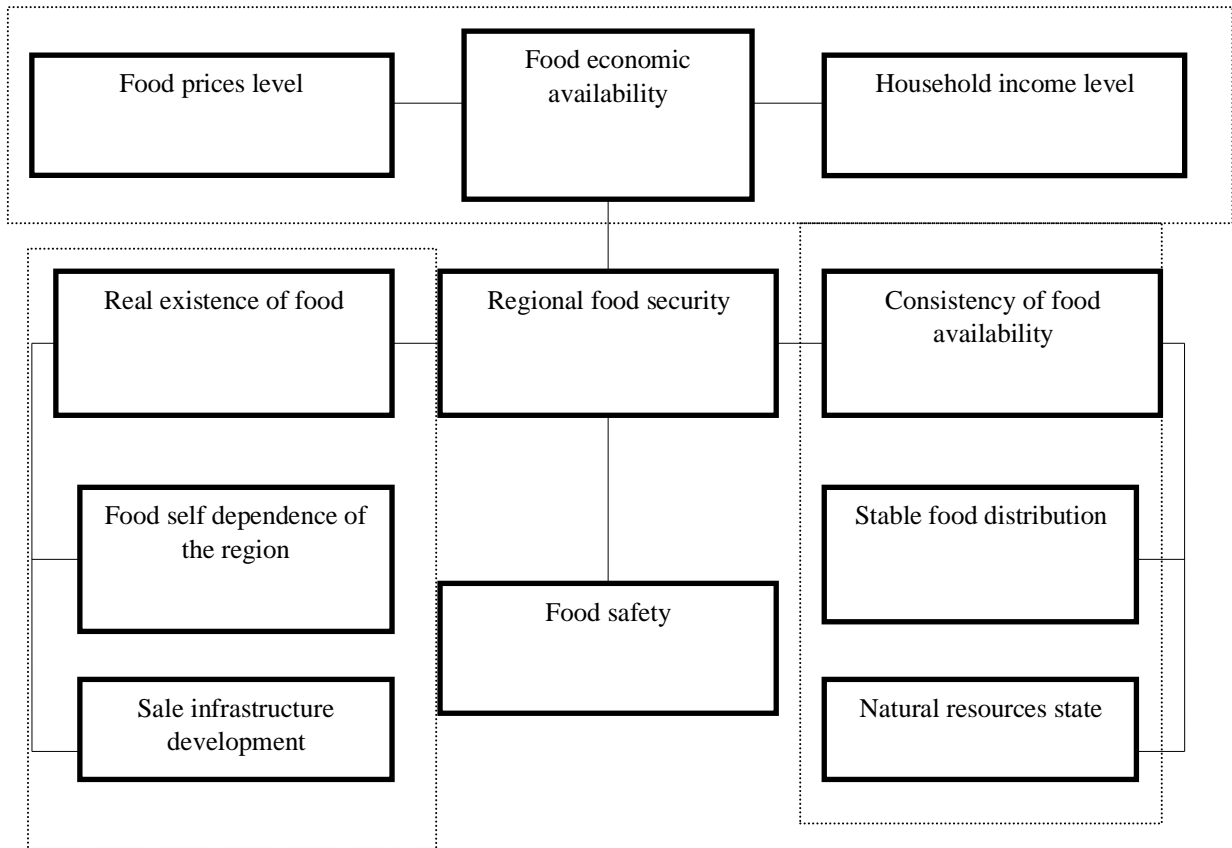


Figure 01. Key elements of the regional food security

At the same time, the content of regional food security can change depending on the conditions of every region and its resources. There is a task at the regional level to create and distribute food resources, provide all the population of the country with food. Food supply for the population is one of the structural elements of the AIC of the region and has functions: real and economical availability of food sufficient in quality, quantity, safe nutritious food, sustainable activity for production of necessary volumes and range of food products, corresponding products logistics, and their consumer correspondence.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion we should note the following. It is important to develop agricultural food policy aimed at the enhancing food security of the country from the point of view of AIC. Here most scientists understand that the food security of the country is determined not only by agricultural food policy but by the global macro economy development. So, low income of population makes food unavailable for population in the amount sufficient for normal life. High population differentiation of the population by the income level creates groups of population with constant undernutrition, which is also a factor of food threat. Besides, food quality also has an important role in food supply for population: on the whole high in calories but disbalanced in minerals food can also do harm to the nation development. In this regard for recommendations in agricultural policy as well as social policy for food security of the country are necessary as well as in food quality control.

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