

THE AGRO-FOOD INDUSTRIAL WASTES IN THE PERCEPTION OF CONSUMERS FROM EASTERN ROMANIA AND THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

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The agro-food industry is a very important part of the world's economy, which continuously expands in both, Romania and Republic of Moldova. But, unfortunately, it generates huge quantities of wastes. An agro-food wastes related survey was applied to 263 consumers from Eastern Romania (116) and Republic of Moldova (147) in 2021, in order to assess the population's opinion concerning this category of waste. 145 of the interviewees were women and 118 were men. The predominant age groups were: 40-50 years (55 persons), 30-40 years (52 persons) and 20-30 (51 persons). The profession distribution was: 62 - students, 46 – self-employed and unemployed, 41 – workers, 20 - technicians, 19 – retired, 17 – engineers, 16 – teachers, 13 – drivers, 13 – scholars, and others.

Concerning the survey results, 37% considered that the agro-food industrial waste represent a moderate problem for the place where they live, while 25% considered a major problem. 43% appreciated that the agro-food wastes seriously affect the environment and 26% - moderate affect. The population from both countries has a concern to separate the wastes: major (25%), moderate (30%), small concern (22%), do not know (12%), and not at all (11%). They consider that the agro-industrial wastes can be reused: largely (40%), moderate (34%), small (14%), do not know (10%) and not at all (2%). In the place where they live, the waste is highly recovered: 27% - do not know, 25% - not at all, 21% - highly, 17% - medium, 10% - little. The majority (82%) consider that it is strongly necessary to tighten the responsibility for disposing the agro-industrial waste in places not intended and 13% moderate necessary. Also, 67% appreciate that the agro-industrial waste processing is highly required and 25% - moderate required. 69% from the surveyed people consider a major problem the need for national/international projects in the domain of processing the agro-industrial waste, and 19% consider a moderate problem.

In conclusion, the superior valorization of agro-food industrial wastes is a general aspiration of most of the population and could bring economic, social and environmental benefits.

Keywords: *economy, population opinion, recovery, survey, valorization*

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