

SOME EUROPEAN CONSIDERATIONS ON THE FOOD INDUSTRY MODERNITY

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Rezumat: Modernizarea actuală a industriei alimentare trebuie bazată pe un complex de investigații efectuate, atât sub aspect tehnologic, cât și ținând cont de fenomenele sociale, politice, economice, care se petrec în prezent pe tot globul pământesc. Lucrarea scoate în evidență doar câteva prezențe asociative a specialiștilor din Europa, care se implică competitiv în soluționarea marilor probleme legate de alimentația populațiilor, în condiții de cantitate și calitate a alimentelor care să asigure o garanție de viață sănătoasă a consumatorilor. Deși neangajate politic, fără vreo asociere cu instituțiile publice, aceste organizații non-profit, determină dezbateri în cadrul unor grupuri internaționale de specialiști, cu finalitatea întocmirii unor sinteze care să inspire politicienii în luarea deciziilor.

Cuvinte cheie: modernizare, industria alimentară, context european

Introduction

The important role of the food industry to society is proved everywhere throughout the globe. The interest in increasing its performance is great, both for consumers, but, especially for manufacturers. The projections show world population will always consume more. As a result, future demand for agricultural products is expected to slow further - to 1.6 percent a year for the period 1997-99 to 2015 and to 1.4 percent for 2015 to 2030. In developing countries the slowdown will be more dramatic, from 3.7 percent for the past 30 years to an average 2 percent for the next 30. [1]

Figure 1 presents the average consumption per capita ("per capita"). It may be noted that already in 2030 only 10% of the population will have a lower average consumption of 2500 kcal / person / day. [6]

Traditionally, the developing countries as a whole have had a net surplus in agricultural trade. In value terms this peaked at US\$17.5 billion in 1977. The trend since then has been for their imports to grow faster than their exports. The agricultural trade balance of the developing countries has gradually dwindled until, by the mid-1990s, it was more often negative than positive. The highest recorded deficit was US\$6 billion, in 1996. [1], [6]

Globally, there is enough land, soil and water, and enough potential for further growth in yields, to make the necessary production feasible. Yield growth will be slower than in the past, but at the global level this is not necessarily cause for alarm because slower growth in production is needed in the future than in the past. However, the feasible can only become the actual if the policy environment is favorable towards agriculture.

The producers have satisfied effective market demand in the past, and there is every likelihood that they will continue to do so. But effective demand does not represent the total need for food and other agricultural products, because hundreds of

millions of people lack the money to buy what they need or the resources to produce it themselves. [1]

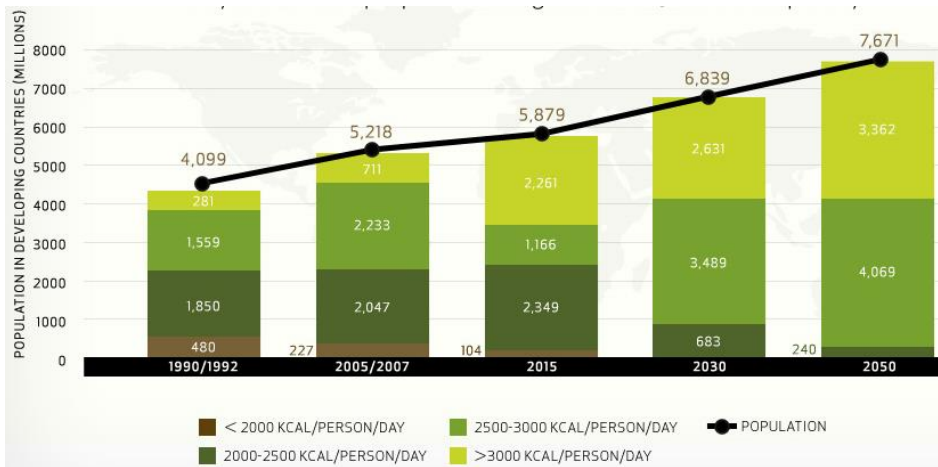


Fig. 1. – Food consumption „per capita”[6]

It is necessary to determine the directions of modernization. *What means the modernization of the food industry?*

There is a situation of duality of interests:

- **Manufacturers** aim to realize a high production at minimum cost and with swift sale.
- **Consumers** seeking to find in the market always good food, with high quality, healthy, but at prices as low as possible.

In Europe, there are multiple concerns to find those optimal solutions that satisfy everyone.

European institutional and organizational concerns

For to support the EU organisms in the establishing of the guidelines were created several groups and organizations that are directly involved in the studies and analyzes carried by experts.

The issue of modernizing the food industry is interdependent, being connected with the progress of *agricultural technology* and the *technological advancement* of the machinery industry. Decisions are needed on the future of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), which accounts for nearly 40 percent of the EU budget. The CAP should be broadened in scope to encompass the entire food chain. [2] These challenges can be solved together with farmers, who are the weakest link in the food chain. The commitment and behavioral change of all the other players in the food chain is required, including the consumer who should be nudged into a more climate-smart and healthy diet. [1]

Modernity is reflected also in cognitive development, the informational, cultural citizens. Although retailers have become dominant, to the detriment of the input and food industries, we still do not pay the true cost of food. It is need a public and political

debate about the functions of the food chain and the willingness to support a transition towards sustainable modes of production.

Global Harmonization Initiative (GHI)

The Global Harmonization Initiative (GHI) is the international non-profit network of individual scientists and scientific organizations working together to promote harmonization of global food safety regulations and legislation. GHI engage and empower food scientists and experts in industry, government and academia to voice scientific consensus and make recommendations on food safety laws and regulations, globally. The aim is to provide objective and fact-based advice that will help harmonize conflicting regulations and legal policies to:

- Eliminate trade barriers that masquerade as food safety protections
- Reduce the needless destruction of safe foods within and across international borders
- Promote the use of innovative food safety technologies around the globe
- Lessen the potential for foodborne illness and pandemic outbreaks.

For government and public health agencies responsible for overseeing the safety of the international food supply, harmonization of food safety and quality standards and regulatory requirements [4]

ISEKI Food Association (IFA)

IFA is an **independent European non-profit organization**, established in 2005 by representatives of university institutions, research institutes, companies and associations related to food, coming from all over the world. ISEKI means *Integrating Food Science and Engineering Knowledge Into the Food Chain*. The IFA **mission** is to support

- **Lifelong learning in the food sector**, encompassing both **academia & industry**
- **Teachers and Trainers** to improve efficacy of teaching
- **Students** to gain knowledge more easily
- **Industry staff / Food professionals** to make use of research results.
- **Researchers** to facilitate collaboration

in order to assure the best possible competences for all working in the food sector; and thus contributing to serving the consumer with safe and good food. [5]

European Hygienic Engineering & Design Group

The **European Hygienic Engineering & Design Group** (EHEDG) is a consortium of equipment manufacturers, food industries, research institutes as well as public health authorities and was founded in 1989 with the aim to promote



hygiene during the processing and packing of food products. The principal goal of EHEDG is the promotion of safe food by improving hygienic engineering and design in all aspects of food manufacture. EHEDG actively supports European legislation, which requires that handling, preparation processing and packaging of food is done hygienically using hygienic machinery and in hygienic premises (EC Directive 2006/42/EC for Machinery, EN 1672-2 and EN ISO 14159 Hygiene requirement). The EHEDG mission is defined as: "**EHEDG enables safe food production by providing guidance as an authority on hygienic engineering and design**". [3]

European legislation requires that the handling, preparation, processing and packaging of food is done hygienically, with hygienic machinery in hygienic premises (according to the food hygiene directive, the machinery directive and the food contact materials directive). The equipment manufacturers and users are responsible to implement these requirements and EHEDG provides them guidance on the essential hygienic design standards in compliance with national and international legislation.

These associations gather experts, mostly academics, who have capacity for analysis and synthesis of issues offered by the market reality, businesses, the social condition of all consumers, watching and reducing poverty, the number of under-nourished, and of the other nutritional sick.

Conclusions

These organizations associate the modernity, suggesting, in terms of industrialism and industrial society, harnessing all progress in science and technology, ensuring food security, nutrition subject to the conditions set by doctors and gastronomes for a more stable consumer health. The modernization does not mean giving up traditional food, but with their production, particularly or industrial, to achieve the maximum hygienic and sanitation conditions, for greater security on consumer health.

Upgrading food from the perspective of globalization can be effective in the widest sense, in terms of improving the educational system, to the youth, but extending to all ages, to social and professional categories, urban and rural.

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