

How the War in Ukraine can Changing the Global Food System

The violent invasion of Russia in Ukraine on February 24, 2022, has triggered a massive increase in food prices and imposed a risk of food shortages not only in Ukraine but also around the world. **It is not the sanctions against the Russian Federation cause the disruption in global food security and the rise in food prices, but Russian aggression against Ukraine.**

Today's global increase in prices of wheat, corn, and oilseeds has layered over previous price rises caused by higher demand and rising production costs under the COVID-19 pandemic. It can be seen that the war halted the process of the global recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, which had been traced in 2021. Meanwhile, Russia's war aggression caused two new destructive factors to food security. First, the war blocks up the markets of agricultural raw resources and final agricultural products. Second, the war significantly affects the markets of primary resources used in agricultural production. Such market shocks cause different reactions and market responses in developed and low- and middle-income countries. The food situation (insecurity) is becoming political: the increase in food prices has already harmed political processes in some countries.

The factors of the current global shock in the food market and the rapid increase in prices for agricultural products are impressive, but not unpredictable. They became yet another evidence that the global food system backed by industrial and monocultural agriculture, needs a radical transformation as it is unstable, sensitive to unpredictable changes, and unprepared for challenges.

In pre-war time Ukraine's agrarian policy was oriented toward industrial agriculture and the growth in monoculture exports. The war extremely complicated large-scale export-oriented production through splitting logistics chains, ecological disasters at industrial livestock farms, blocking export markets, etc. Amid the war, the domestic food system has shown itself flawed being excessively oriented toward the export of agricultural raw materials, given that the nutrition of the own population in the pre-war period largely depended on food imports, which was accompanied by a constant increase in prices. The specific weight of food costs in the budgets of

Ukrainian households before the war reached 50 percent, and for rural families - 60 percent or more.

Farmers and individual households demonstrated their key role in the preservation and development of local markets and food supply chains in the tough conditions of military aggression. Today, being able to quickly change the production structure, they provide the population with fresh vegetables and fruits, increase supplies of milk, meat, and eggs to local markets. Thus, the conclusion of the classic agro-economic theory regarding the sustainability of small-scale production is confirmed in practice. The main foundation of their stability is "not the economic advantages of small farms over large ones, but the important fact that a large farm is run as a capitalist enterprise for the sake of profit and rent, and a small one - to ensure the existence of the producer himself. Therefore, small-scale agriculture can exist and develop with much lower income than a large-scale capitalist one."

In Ukraine, the war has severe losses in rural areas and also threatening a food crisis inside our country. Russia set the goal to destroy the agricultural economy of Ukraine by targeting all assets – fields, agricultural equipment, warehouses, markets, roads, bridges, and ports.

Considering empirical evidence of the resilience of family-based economic entities in agriculture, the Ukrainian government should guarantee its people the right to safe food and water by reaching family food self-sufficiency / internal food security during the post-war reconstruction. Today and after the war, it goes to the need to facilitate the access of peasants and all those who want to work in agriculture to land, production resources, and finances; refusal to increase exports with simultaneous creation of short food chains and stable local food markets; preservation and increase of biodiversity, restoration of "healthy" soil and agroecological production; joint responsibility of producers and consumers for the production and consumption of high-quality and safe food.

Ukrainian academition society, farmers and farming households to push our government to postwar restore Ukraine on the basis of the European environmental strategy "Farm to Fork" and "Biodiversity". This our position corresponds to the

intentions of Ukraine regarding future accession to the European Union as a full member.

Strengthening the role of family farms, developing local food markets and shortening agri-food chains, and transitioning to an agroecological transformation with the advantages of digital technologies in local food production should become the root of the transition to sustainable agri-food systems in Ukraine and in the world.