

THE ROLE OF AGRICULTURE IN ENSURING FOOD SECURITY

Tleubergenov R. Sh.

Associate Professor of the Department of "Fundamentals of Management and Economics",
Candidate of Economic Sciences, Karakalpak State University Uzbekistan

Abstract

This article explores the role of agriculture in ensuring global food security. It analyzes the key features of world agriculture and discusses possible solutions to current challenges in food production and distribution.

Keywords: Agriculture, food security, food products, production technologies.

Introduction

The development of agriculture enabled humanity to become more self-sufficient compared to ancient times when survival depended solely on hunting and gathering. Agriculture independently emerged in at least eleven centers of origin around the world, each based on distinct crops and resources. Archaeological evidence shows that wild grains were harvested and consumed as early as 105,000 years ago, while in the Paleolithic Levant, around 23,000 years ago, wheat, barley, and oats were cultivated near the Mediterranean coast.

In recent years, global military conflicts, dependence on grain and energy supply chains, and abnormal climate changes—particularly in low-income countries—have disrupted supply chains and triggered a sharp increase in food prices, especially in 2022. Over the past two decades, the number of stunted children decreased by one-third (around 55 million). However, the COVID-19 pandemic, climate-related shocks, and ongoing conflicts threaten to reverse this progress unless effective measures are implemented.

Ensuring food security has always been a global priority. The Rome Declaration of 1996 emphasized: “We pledge our political will and our common and national commitment to continuous efforts to achieve food security for all and eliminate hunger in all countries, while reducing the number of malnourished people by half no later than 2015. We consider it intolerable that more than 800 million people around the world, particularly in developing countries, do not have enough food to meet their basic needs.” Yet, the fact that the total number of malnourished people has remained largely unchanged since then demonstrates the persistence of this challenge.

Agriculture is undoubtedly the foundation of food security. It remains one of the largest sectors of the global economy, providing not only food but also raw materials for numerous industries. Currently, over one billion people worldwide are employed in agriculture. However, the organization and effectiveness of agriculture differ significantly across countries.

The main characteristics of global agriculture include:



- Different economic and legal frameworks: Some countries rely on large-scale foreign investment and advanced production technologies, while others benefit from stronger domestic policies, market systems, and institutional support.
- Automation and innovation: High technologies are increasingly applied to production, supply, and distribution. Modern innovations, including digital tools and automated systems, make agricultural processes more efficient.
- Varied production scales: While agriculture dominates state policy and the economy in some countries, in others it is organized on a smaller scale, serving primarily local food needs.

Despite such differences, agriculture continues to evolve globally and remains a critical factor in sustainable development.

Agriculture plays a decisive role in Uzbekistan's economy, employing more than one-quarter of the labor force, with nearly half of the population living in rural areas. Uzbekistan ranks among the countries with significant agricultural output, supported by vast arable land and long-standing traditions. Nevertheless, agricultural investment yields relatively lower returns compared to industry and services. Although the sector contributes about 26% to GDP, only around 10% of agricultural products undergo processing—far below the level of developed countries, where this figure exceeds 50%. Strengthening agro-processing, adopting innovative technologies, and restoring traditional crop varieties are key to improving competitiveness and food security.

Globally, agriculture remains labor-intensive, low-profit, and characterized by slow capital turnover. Yet, it is indispensable: crops, livestock, and related products such as grains, dairy, eggs, poultry, and meat form the basis of human nutrition and are essential for social and economic stability. For this reason, all countries—regardless of their level of industrial development—prioritize the continuous support and modernization of agriculture.

References:

1. FAO. The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2023. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2023.
2. World Bank. World Development Report 2022: Agriculture for Development. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank Group, 2022. Rome Declaration on World Food Security. APK: Economics, Management. Moscow, 1997, pp. 3–7.
3. Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Agriculture Development Strategy of Uzbekistan for 2020–2030. Tashkent, 2020.
4. Abulqosimov X.P., Rasulov T.S. Ways to Ensure Food Security in Uzbekistan. Tashkent: Science and Technology, 2015.
5. Daniyarov S. The Impact of Risks in Agriculture on Food Security. Journal of Agriculture and Water Management of Uzbekistan, No. 6, 2023, pp. 30–48.

