Lomonosov Moscow State University

Eurasian Center for Food Security

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ECFS published the third annual series of research projects (case studies) to analyze key food security issues in selected countries of the Eurasian region. The publication is now available online.

Also, in the January issue, an ECFS expert discusses the main results of the FAO and IFPRI conference on accelerating the end of hunger and malnutrition in the world.

Don't forget to check the new events of 2019—see our updated Event Calendar!

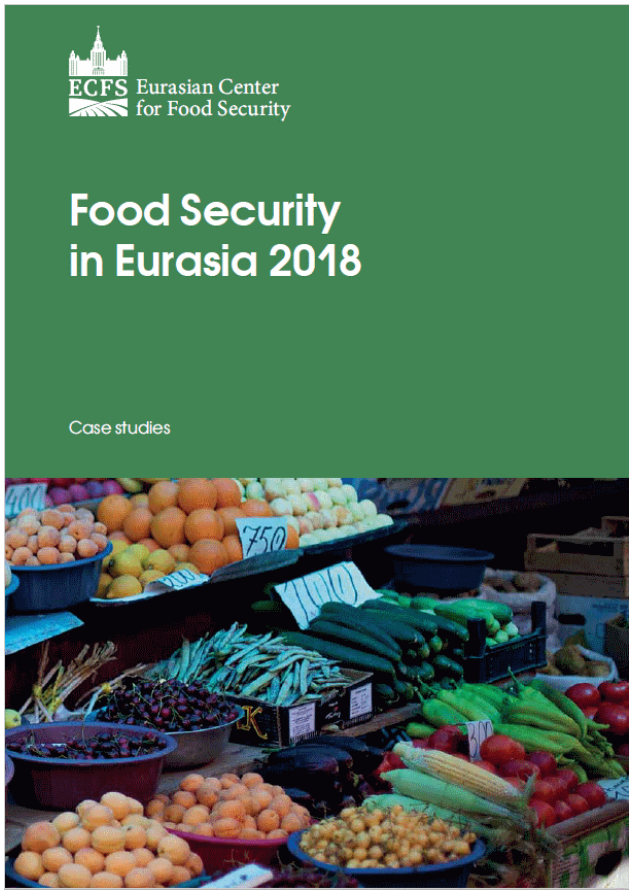
New Research on Food Security Issues in Eurasia

By Yulia Mitusova

Ensuring food security, reducing food loss, and increasing the efficiency of food value chains are significant issues for the Eurasia region. Policy makers in Eurasia need updated information and relevant evidence to design and implement effective and timely policy measures that will ensure food security and nutrition for all. Moreover, these policy measures not only need to be economically feasible but also need to consider the potentially conflicting goals and interests of different stakeholder groups.

Food Security in Eurasia 2018 is the third in a series of annual publications of the Eurasian Center for Food Security at Lomonosov Moscow State University and presents a set of seven food policy case studies. This year's case studies offer evidence to support policy making in the areas of food loss and waste in the horticulture sector, food security in the Far North, school meals program development, organic agriculture, and food value chains. The focus countries for

for the current set of studies include Armenia, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation, and Uzbekistan.



In the study on sustainable development of the argi-food sector in the Russian Far North using the example of Yakutia, **A. Naumov** and **D. Sidorova** suggest a set of institutional, economic, and environmental measures that would ensure the sustainable development of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia). This republic is the largest constituent territory of the Russian Federation, and it has unique climatic conditions and cultural traditions. The implementation of the policy options recommended by the authors would improve food self-sufficiency and involves interaction between stakeholders at different levels.

Y. Mitusova and **S. Meloyan** analyze the wild harvest value chain in Armenia and suggest policy measures intended to develop this sector and reduce poverty in rural areas. The authors discuss the important socioeconomic role that wild harvesting plays in rural Armenia; they conclude that developing policy options aimed at strengthening the wild harvest value chain requires a strategic approach based on accurate wild harvest sector data and stakeholder consultations.

A. Maksimov and **Y. Kalinichenko** suggest national policy measures to build mutually beneficial relationships between local agriculture producers and the National School Meals Programme in the Kyrgyz Republic. The authors concluded that school meals and local production should be closely interrelated, and a well-established supply chain in this sector could play an important role in national food security and nutrition in the Kyrgyz Republic.

Two case studies in the current publication analyze issues in the horticulture value chain—one in Uzbekistan and the other one in the Kyrgyz Republic. In a study on improving fruit and vegetable value chains in Uzbekistan, **D. Ilina** and **M. Karimov** identify key issues in the functioning of this value chain and make recommendations for its improvement. The authors discuss two alternative scenarios for the development of the horticulture sector: (1) continuing the current policy, and (2) liberalizing the horticulture sector on the basis of gradual land reform, introducing for-pay water use, and abolishing government contract practice. The authors conclude that liberalizing the sector along with current policy measures would help accelerate the horticulture sector's growth, reduce losses in production and sales, and increase the efficiency of natural resource management.

E. Kelemetov and **E. Yakubovich** discuss the issue of agriculture produce loss in horticulture and its impact on food security in the Kyrgyz Republic. The authors analyze the key causes of loss occurring at all links in the fruit and vegetable value chain, and develop policy measures to reduce loss while boosting the food security of the country. Improving the storage and sales infrastructure and building mutually beneficial relations between producers, processors, and distributors are immediate priorities in horticulture.

The issue of agriculture loss is also discussed in the case study on wheat value chain performance in Armenia by **N. Harutyunyan** and **E. Belova**. To improve the performance of the wheat value chain and to promote food security in Armenia, the following policy options are recommended: enhancing access to quality seeds by developing the seed production industry in Armenia, reducing wheat loss, promoting inclusive institutional food procurement arrangements that provide better access for small companies, and developing the agricultural market information system for the wheat industry.

In a case study on organic agriculture in Uzbekistan, **V. Koshelev** and **S. Dusmuratova** estimate the potential of organic farming for Uzbekistan and identify public measures needed to support the transformation from conventional to organic production. The authors conduct a financial analysis of an Uzbek organic potato farm and conclude that economic measures stimulating the development of organic agriculture (for example, government support covering certification costs and costs for buying organic seeds during the conversion period) can play a critical role in ensuring the financial viability of an organic project.

The studies presented in this publication not only provide valuable evidence about important food policy issues in Eurasia but also serve as a tool for policy makers designing measures to promote food security in the region. Moreover, the case studies serve an educational purpose: they may be used at universities as a participatory food policy learning tool to strengthen the analytical capacity of students.

How Can We Accelerate the End of Hunger and Malnutrition in the World?

By Arthur Rykalin

Accelerating the end of hunger and malnutrition in the world was discussed by 650 experts from around the world at a joint conference of the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The Accelerating the End of Hunger and Malnutrition Conference was held on November 28–30, 2018 in Bangkok, Thailand. Five plenary and six parallel sessions in three days, 30 side events, the launch of the *Global Nutrition Report 2018*, the launch of FAO publications on dynamic development, changing demographics, and changing diets and smart food of the future with participants from 65 countries and six continents, 119 speakers—all these large-scale resources were aimed at finding a solution to the problem of providing all people with high-quality and affordable food.

Greeting words and keynote speeches were given by the Vice President of Zambia **I. Vina**, the Prime Minister of Rwanda **E. Ngirente**, the First Lady of Ethiopia **Z. Tayyachev**, and the Minister of Agriculture and Cooperatives of Thailand **G. Bunrah**.

Participants of the FAO and IFPRI joint conference

In 2015 the global community adopted the 17 Global Goals for Sustainable Development and planned to get rid of hunger and malnutrition on the planet by 2030, but the results are not comforting yet and there has been no global progress in this direction. Since 2015, the number of undernourished people has only increased, and a growing number of problems are associated with obesity, overweight, and associated diseases.

It is necessary not only to wage a direct struggle against hunger and malnutrition, but also to fight poverty. Without raising the standard of living and income it is difficult to get serious results on this issue. At the same time, there should be an increase in the level of education and literacy—especially in the field of nutrition—because an increased income can result not in improving the nutrition system in the family but, on the contrary, in increasing the consumption of "toxic" food.

A. Akhter, the representative of IFPRI in Bangladesh, spoke about using microcredit and training to fight poverty and hunger in rural areas of Bangladesh. According to this expert, the fight against poverty has to be focused and to the point. Throughout the world, poverty and hunger are most often concentrated in rural areas. According to **N. Gebre-Ab**, the former Chief Economic Adviser to the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, the general agrarian policy in the country may miss out on targeted work with socially vulnerable groups of the population, therefore targeted work is needed.

The Minister of Agriculture of Rwanda, **G. Mukeshimana**, spoke about the positive experience of

involving young people in agriculture. Young rural entrepreneurs in Rwanda mostly trade not traditional crops but fruits, vegetables, and eggs—goods with high added value.

To improve the quality of nutrition and fight obesity in Chile, a special product labeling system is used. Labels are placed on packages: "plenty of salt," "plenty of fat," "plenty of sugar," "lots of calories." If at least one such label is on a product, then it cannot be advertised on the Internet or on TV, and it cannot be supplied to schools and other social institutions. Food consumption at a young age is more emotion-driven; therefore, according to **G. Girard**, Senator and President of the Commission on Health and the Commission on the Challenges of the Future, it is necessary to protect children from the effects of advertising and marketing tricks.

The conference also addressed the role of new technologies in raising living standards. To successfully use these new technologies, it is necessary to be able to attract investments and create a favorable infrastructure. Artificial intelligence, blockchain, genomes, e-commerce, alternative proteins—all these technologies, according to conference participants, can open up new opportunities for solving the problem of how to improve the quality of nutrition.

According to UNICEF data, to date about 2 billion people on the planet are experiencing a shortage of essential micronutrients, 151 million children are lagging behind in development, and 51 million children are nutritionally depleted. Improving the performance of small farms and adapting agriculture to climate change; diversifying food production; fortifying food; and implementing biovitaminization, social protection, and educational programs on changing food and eating habits were offered as solutions.

Furthermore, 2 billion adults on the planet are overweight or obese. An unhealthy diet is one of the most important causes of illness and death in the 21st century. As possible solutions, experts suggested diversifying agricultural production, promoting healthy diets, educating the public about nutrition and food addiction, providing more accessible healthy food, regulating and labeling food, and using healthy food in public organizations.

A new challenge to tackling hunger and unhealthy nutrition is growing urbanization. It is expected that by 2050, 67 percent of the world's population will live in the cities. In the meantime, the situation in the cities is contradictory: some people suffer from malnutrition (or undernourishment); others suffer from overweight/obesity. More accessible healthy and nutritious food, social protection, inclusive economic growth, and a change in food habits can help in solving the problems of "urban" nutrition.

To accelerate the fight against hunger and poor nutrition, efforts need to be made in different directions simultaneously. Collecting and processing accurate data, creating incentives for processors and retailers to focus on healthy food, creating incentives for agricultural producers to diversify, engaging a wide range of stakeholders in a dialogue to find a common solution to the problem, and responding quickly to military conflicts and natural disasters and mitigating their consequences—these and other actions can bring the global community closer to solving the nutrition problem.

Despite the obvious social benefits of quality food available to all, investment in this direction is not enough. The conference experts suggested, first, increasing the effectiveness of existing investments; second, attracting funds through public-private partnerships; and, third, creating innovative sources of local funding.

Video recordings of speeches from the conference, presentations of speakers, electronic posters, and resources on the topic can be found at these links.

Event Calendar 2019

Date	City, Country	Event
February 12–13	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia	The First FAO/WHO/AU International Conference on Food Safety

February 28	—	International Innovation Award for Sustainable Food and Agriculture (Please submit a nomination before **28 February 2019**)
March 24–26	Budapest, Hungary	3rd Agriculture and Climate Change Conference
April 8–12	Moscow, Russia	International scientific conference of students and young scientists "Lomonosov-2019"
April 23–24	Geneva, Switzerland	FAO/WHO/WTO International Forum on Food Safety and Trade
May 13–15	Brussels, Belgium	Frontiers in Food Safety And Nutrition
May 20–24	Antwerp, Belgium	AquaConSoil: Sustainable Use and Management of Soil, Sediment and Water Resources: 15th International Conference
June 26–28	Halle (Saale), Germany	IAMO Forum 2019: Small Farms in Transition: How to Stimulate Inclusive Growth?
October	TBD	The Eurasian Food Security Conference 2019 (updated website coming soon)
December 5	TBD	World Soil Day–2019 (conference website will be available later)