

## FOOD SECURITY IN UKRAINE AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE AGRICULTURAL MARKET: INTERRELATIONSHIPS AND CHALLENGES POSED BY GLOBAL THREATS

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**Abstract.** The article examines the interrelationship between food security and the level of development of the agricultural sector in Ukraine in the context of global challenges and military threats. The main focus is on the etymology of the concept of “food security”, its evolution in international and national legislation, as well as contemporary approaches to defining its components. The main trends in the functioning of the agricultural sector are analysed, particularly in the context of destabilising factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and the war with Russia. Key problems are identified: disruption of logistics supply chains, complications in the sowing campaign, reduced yields, restricted access to international markets, and loss of infrastructure. Particular attention is paid to agricultural export indicators, which, despite significant losses, remain a determining factor in Ukraine's macroeconomic stability and integration into the global economic space. It has been proven that the agricultural sector is the strategic basis for food security, ensuring the satisfaction of domestic demand, the formation of foreign exchange earnings and the strengthening of Ukraine's position as one of the world's leading suppliers of grain and oilseeds. It is shown that food security encompasses three interrelated aspects: availability, access and consumption, each of which directly depends on the effectiveness of agricultural production development and state support policies. The prospects for the development of the agricultural sector, particularly in the field of crop production and oilseed seed production, as well as the importance of humanitarian initiatives such as “Grain from Ukraine” for strengthening the country's international image, are substantiated. The importance of adapting agricultural policy to EU standards, developing innovative technologies and providing systematic support to agribusiness as necessary conditions for ensuring sustainable development and strengthening food security in Ukraine and the world as a whole is emphasised.

**Keywords:** food security, national security, agricultural sector, trends in the development of the agricultural sector, support for the agricultural sector.

**JEL Classification:** Q18, Q17, Q01, F52

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Food security is a systemic factor in the socio-economic stability of a state and an integral component of national security, as it directly determines the standard of living of the population, the state of public health, social cohesion and the resilience of the economy to internal and external shocks. In the current context of intensifying globalisation processes, accelerating climate change, the transformation of global agri-food markets, as well as growing geopolitical tensions and large-scale military conflicts, the issue of

ensuring that the population has sufficient quantities of high-quality, safe and affordable food is becoming strategically important and goes beyond purely sectoral agricultural policy, transforming into a complex public administration and economic problem.

For Ukraine, the relevance of food security is significantly increased in the context of full-scale war, disruption of logistics chains, loss of part of its production potential, degradation of land resources and growing risks to the stable functioning of the agricultural sector. At the same time, the agricultural sector traditionally plays a key role in the structure of the national economy, meeting the food needs of the domestic market, generating a significant share of foreign exchange earnings and performing an important function as a global food supplier. Under these conditions, Ukraine's food security takes on a dual dimension: on the one hand, as an internal instrument of socio-economic stability and protection of the population, and on the other hand, as an element of international food stability and responsibility of the state in the global economic space, which necessitates its scientifically based research in the context of the transformation of the agricultural market and modern global threats.

## **2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

A number of researchers have studied the categorical apparatus of food security issues in Ukraine. In particular, Pruntseva et al. (2024) comprehensively substantiate food security as a multi-level system, the formation of which is determined by the interaction of sustainable development of agricultural investments, long-term investment mechanisms and the stability of the agricultural sector with the financial behaviour of households, their level of savings, macroeconomic stability and income of the population, as well as the quality of institutional management and governance, which directly affect the volume and efficiency of agricultural production. Berezin (2002) reveals the systemic problems of the formation of the Ukrainian food market, emphasising structural imbalances, institutional constraints and mechanisms of state regulation of agricultural production and food distribution. Mitsenko (2001) conducts a comprehensive assessment of the state of food security in Ukraine, taking into account global experience and justifying the possibilities of adapting international models of state policy to national socio-economic conditions. Hryhoruk et al. (2021) model the prospects for the development of bioenergy production in Ukraine, revealing its indirect impact on the agricultural market and food security. Sodoma et al. (2018) analyse agricultural receipts as a modern financial instrument that expands farmers' access to resources and increases the financial stability of agricultural production. Kravchenko et al. (2020) develop a methodology for assessing the harmony of economic relations between participants in the agri-food market, focusing on the balance of interests between producers and consumers. Ternavska (2015) focuses on the theoretical understanding of the category of "food security", tracing the evolution of its definitions and clarifying the content of the concept in the context of modern socio-economic transformations. Yakymchuk et al. (2020) develop an integrated model for assessing Ukraine's economic security, within which food security is considered as its structural component. Maksymiv et al. (2022) analyse the accounting of biological assets in the context of socially responsible activities of agricultural enterprises, linking financial transparency with the sustainability of the agricultural sector. Hrynkevych et al. (2020) examine the competitiveness of the higher education system as a sector of the economy, indirectly linking human capital with food and economic security. Kolomiyets et al. (2016) analyse the mechanisms of development of Ukraine's domestic trade market, which shapes the institutional conditions for the availability of food products. Skidan (2015) analyses the peculiarities of the development of the price situation in the consumer market and its impact on the level of food security of the state, proving the decisive role of price fluctuations and market transformations in ensuring the economic accessibility of food. Shmatkovska et al. (2022) examine the trends and conditions for the profitability of agricultural enterprises at the regional level, revealing their importance for the stability of the agricultural market and food security. Koshkalda et al. (2020; 2021) propose an algorithm for the formation of state food security policy focused on the systematic coordination of agricultural market

regulation tools and consider food security issues in the context of state regulation and public administration, emphasising the role of the state's institutional capacity.

Scientific research in this area is of strategic importance, as it allows identifying the main risks to the agri-food system, developing tools to minimise them, and promoting a harmonious combination of economic, social, and environmental interests.

The purpose of the article is to study the interconnection and interdependence of food security and the level of development of the agricultural sector of Ukraine in the context of global threats, in the context of studying the etymology of the concept of "food security" and analysing trends in the agricultural products market.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODS

The methodological basis of the study is a systematic, interdisciplinary and structural-functional approach, which allows food security to be considered as a complex socio-economic category closely linked to the transformation of the agricultural market, global challenges and military threats. The work uses general scientific and special methods of cognition, in particular analysis and synthesis – to generalise theoretical approaches to the interpretation of the concept of “food security”, systematise its components and identify the interrelationships between the development of the agricultural sector and national security; the historical-logical method – to study the evolution of the category of food security in international and national regulatory documents; comparative analysis – to compare the approaches of Ukraine and the European Union countries to ensuring food security and regulating agri-food markets.

The empirical basis of the study was formed using methods of statistical analysis and economic interpretation of official data from international organisations and state institutions, which made it possible to assess the dynamics of key indicators of the development of the agricultural sector, exports of agricultural products and the level of food security in Ukraine in the context of war. Indicative and index approaches were used to analyse Ukraine's position in the Global Food Security Index, as well as methods of structural analysis to study changes in the structure of agricultural production, employment and gross value added. The results were summarised using logical modelling, which made it possible to form scientifically sound conclusions about the role of the agricultural sector in ensuring Ukraine's food security and to outline key areas of state policy in the context of global and military challenges.

### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In today's world, the concept of security is inextricably linked to quality of life, which necessitates close attention to all aspects of security. National security encompasses a whole range of components, among which food security occupies a special place. Its key objective is to provide every person with high-quality, affordable and balanced food that meets the needs of the population. In the Law of Ukraine “On the Fundamentals of National Security”, the concept of food security has been developed in detail and is defined as the protection of the vital interests of individuals, citizens, society and the state. Within this framework, the state guarantees the physical and economic accessibility and quality of basic food products for the population, based on scientifically sound food sets. In addition, the state ensures the stability of food supplies and promotes food independence (On the Fundamentals of National Security of Ukraine, 2003).

This term first appeared in 1974 during a conference of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations. It describes a set of measures and processes related to the production and circulation of food products, as well as ensuring their safety and usefulness for consumers. The UN declaration states that each country must implement appropriate strategies and take action to achieve food security for its population (IR w Opole, 2022).

In 1996, a global summit on food issues was held, resulting in the adoption of the Rome Declaration

on World Food Security. According to the provisions of this declaration, food security is defined as an economic situation in which the population of a country and each of its citizens have access to food, drinking water and other resources in sufficient quantity, of appropriate quality and variety. This should be sufficient for the physical and social development of the individual, the maintenance of health and the promotion of the expanded reproduction of the population (Shoiko, 2017).

Global food security remains one of the most pressing issues requiring urgent attention, as it affects the lives of billions of people around the world.

Food security encompasses three main aspects:

1. Availability, i.e. ensuring sufficient quantities of appropriate food;
2. Access, which means having enough income or other resources to buy food;
3. Consumption/utilisation, which includes adequate nutrition and the body's ability to absorb nutrients.

In EU countries, food security means access to sufficient quantities of safe, nutritious and suitable food. Food safety refers to the conditions and actions that ensure that food does not cause harm or pose a threat to the health of consumers. Food safety covers the entire supply chain, from farm to fork, and is regulated by strict European Union rules on hygiene, animal and plant health, and pollution control, ensuring high quality and consumer protection.

According to the Law of Ukraine "On State Support of Agriculture of Ukraine", food security is defined as "the protection of human life interests, which is expressed in the state's guarantee of unhindered economic access to food products in order to maintain normal human life activities" (On State Support for Agriculture in Ukraine, 2004).

According to Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, States Parties to this Covenant, recognising the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger, shall take the necessary measures, both at the national level and through international cooperation, to achieve this goal. These measures shall include the implementation of specific programmes aimed at ensuring the equitable distribution of world food supplies in accordance with needs, taking into account the specific characteristics of countries as both importers and exporters of food products (Ihnatenko et al., 2024).

The lack of food security can have a significant impact on society, causing an increase in hunger and malnutrition, stimulating migration processes, provoking conflicts and causing significant economic damage. According to UN data, in 2021, 193 million people faced a food security crisis and needed urgent assistance. The main reasons for this situation were the COVID-19 pandemic, large-scale disruptions in supply chains, the climate crisis and extreme weather events (Who is responsible for security, 2024).

Since the beginning of 2022, the situation has not improved due to the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine, which has caused a global economic recession and threatened food security. This is particularly true of disruptions in the supply of Ukrainian grain to world markets.

Russia's military actions on Ukrainian territory have had serious consequences for the functioning of the existing food system, which guarantees food security for the regions and the country as a whole. Among the main problems are:

- disruption of the integrity of agricultural and food supply chains, from primary production to delivery to the end consumer. This has also affected activities aimed at creating added value in the agro-industrial sector, including production, processing and distribution,
- consumption and disposal (or destruction) of food products;
- significant complications in conducting sowing campaigns, especially in areas where fighting took place or which were recently de-occupied.

The main reasons also include land contamination, fuel shortages, and high global prices for fuel, agrochemicals, and plant protection products; limited opportunities for Ukrainian farmers to sell their products due to Russia's blockade of seaports and difficulties in organising agricultural exports due to

disrupted logistics; difficulties in meeting basic food needs in the regions of the country that have suffered the most destruction, etc.

Macroeconomic comparisons of Ukraine's food security level with other countries in the global economic space can be made by analysing the Global Food Security Index. According to official data, in 2022 Ukraine ranks 71st in the world and 26th among 26 European countries. Ukraine has persistent gaps in the development of policies to protect and adapt its natural resources, particularly agricultural water sources. Moreover, despite sufficient food reserves in the country, the availability index is low due to weak supply chain infrastructure, armed conflicts, corruption, political instability, and the lack of a clear food security strategy (Country report: Ukraine, 2022) (Figure 1).



Fig. 1. Dynamics of Ukraine's global food security index for 2012-2022

Source: compiled based on (Country report: Ukraine, 2022)

An important feature of public administration in the field of food security is ensuring the supply of necessary amounts of food for citizens. Over the past decade, the agricultural sector has become a key pillar of global food security, successfully withstanding the challenges of war and global change. Turning to the components of Ukraine's food security, it should be noted that it is the agricultural sector that guarantees the partial or complete satisfaction of its three main components, namely:

1. The agricultural sector is the basis for meeting the domestic food needs of Ukraine's population.
2. The stability of production and export of agricultural products reduces food shortages and stabilises the financing of programmes to support the population. It is also worth noting that the agricultural sector is one of the components of GDP, although its share has been declining in recent years. It peaked in 1991 at 24.5%. The agricultural sector is a stable employer, but the share of those employed is declining due to technological advances and crisis factors.
3. In 2024, Ukraine exported 78.3 million tonnes of agricultural products worth \$24.5 billion, reaching pre-war levels in these indicators (Kasian, 2025). During the war, the agricultural sector became a key export donor to the economy, providing most of the country's foreign exchange earnings (Figure 2).

An analysis of the dynamics of selected indicators shows that in 2014–2024, there was a decline in the share of the agricultural sector in Ukraine's GDP from over 12% to 7.1%, indicating a gradual diversification of the economy and a relative decline in the role of agriculture in the structure of national production. At the same time, the level of employment in the agricultural sector remains stable (14–15 %), although it shows a tendency towards a slow decline due to mechanisation and military losses of labour resources. The most significant change is the growth in the share of agricultural products in exports: from 27.8% in 2014 to a record 59% in 2024, which highlights the crucial importance of the agricultural sector as an export-oriented industry and a source of foreign exchange earnings in crisis

conditions.

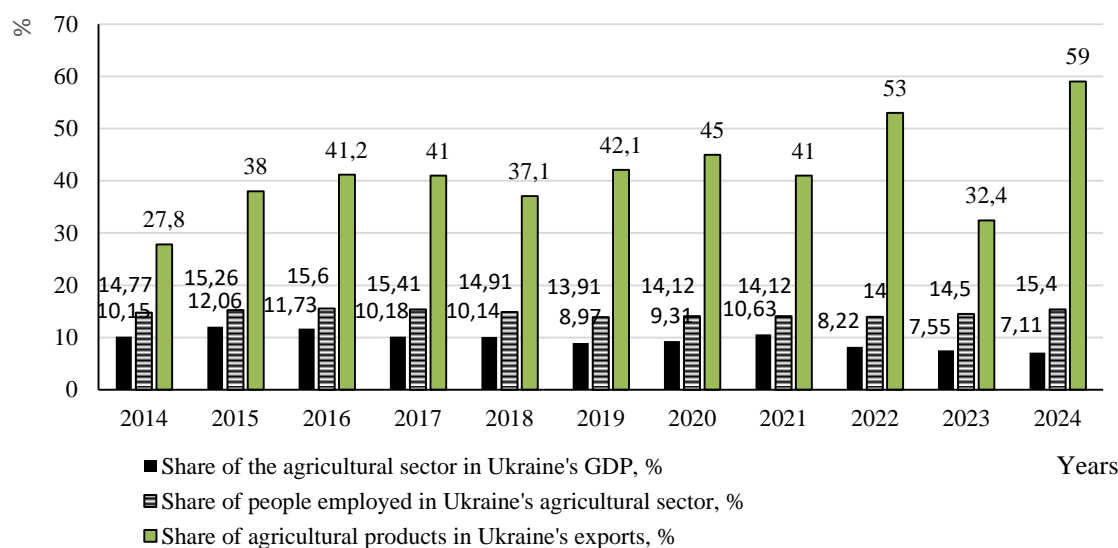


Fig. 2. Dynamics of the agricultural sector's share in GDP, employment in the agricultural sector and the agricultural sector's share in Ukraine's total exports, % for 2014- 2024

Source: compiled based on (Ukraine invest, 2024)

This functioning of the agricultural sector in Ukraine partially ensures the solution of the global problem of hunger and the achievement of world-class food security.

Despite positive trends in agricultural exports, it is important to take into account the significant losses in the agricultural sector as a result of Russia's full-scale invasion. Crop production was particularly affected, with production volumes declining significantly. The reasons for this situation were: the temporary occupation of part of the country's territory; a decrease in crop yields compared to previous years; a growing gap between world and domestic prices; additional costs related to logistics, insurance and other risks, which are currently borne mainly by Ukrainian producers. The losses to agriculture as a result of the war are estimated at \$72.7 billion.

An analysis of the state and trends in the agricultural sector suggests that the focus is on growing cereals and oilseeds (maize, wheat, sunflower). According to refined customs statistics, grain exports amounted to about 24 million tonnes in 2022, while exports of major grain processing products reached 71,900 tonnes. However, it should be noted that grain exports were almost 10 million tonnes lower than in the previous marketing season, indicating a change in the dynamics of this segment (Diachenko, Zhmudenko, 2023).

In 2024, Ukraine exported agricultural products worth \$24.5 billion, accounting for 59% of the country's total exports. The most profitable commodities were sunflower oil and corn, each of which brought in \$5.1 billion. Wheat took third place with exports worth \$3.7 billion, followed by rapeseed (\$1.8 billion) and soybeans (\$1.3 billion) (Shevchenko, 2025). The most expensive export items are:

- sunflower oil: in April 2025, the average export price was \$1,115 per tonne, which is approximately \$1.13 per litre.
- high-quality wheat: grain with a protein content of 12.5% was exported at an average price of \$275 per tonne, or about \$ 0.275 per kilogram.

However, unfavourable weather conditions and limited grain reserves led to a 13% decline in grain production in the 2024/25 marketing year, which in turn caused a 26% drop in exports.

In 2025, Ukraine faced the lowest soil moisture levels in seven years, posing a serious threat to the wheat harvest. Infrastructure damage has also become an acute problem: the destruction of the Kakhovka dam deprived 584,000 hectares of agricultural land of irrigation, which is approximately 4% of the country's total grain and oilseed production. Indirect losses to the agricultural sector due to the

war could reach \$83 billion by the end of 2025, which will have a significant impact on the country's economy.

However, despite the challenges associated with the war, Ukraine's agricultural sector has the potential for growth, especially in crop production and poultry farming, although livestock farming is in relative decline, with a decrease in cattle and pig numbers in particular (Table 1).

Tab. 1

*Indicators of the state of the agricultural sector as of 2024-2025*

Indicator	Value	Characteristic
Production volume (agricultural production index)	-18.5	Crop production was hit hardest; livestock farming proved to be more stable (index $\approx 95.3\%$ ) (Ukrinform, 2025).
Revenues from agricultural exports (foreign exchange earnings)	24.5 billion USD	growth $> 2$ billion USD compared to 2023 (Interfax-Ukraine, 2025).
Gross harvest of grain and oilseeds	$\approx 74$ million tonnes	Cereals $\approx 52.4$ million tonnes; oilseeds $\approx 21.7$ million tonnes (Press Service of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2024)
Share of agriculture in GDP	7.11	Decrease from 7.55% in 2023; long-term average for Ukraine – approximately 12.3%. (GlobalEconomy, 2024)
Share of employment in the agricultural sector	$\approx 14$	data according to IFAD, recent years ( $\approx 2023$ -2024) (IFAD Investing in rural, 2025)
Allocation of budget funds for state support of the agricultural sector	$> \text{UAH } 6$ billion	For 2025, funds were allocated as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– UAH 1 billion for the development of livestock farming and agricultural product processing;</li> <li>– UAH 4,726 million for subsidies to agricultural producers per hectare and for the maintenance of cows, sheep and goats;</li> <li>– UAH 200 million for the restoration and construction of land reclamation systems.</li> <li>– 5 million hryvnias will be allocated to compensate family farms for their single social contribution.</li> <li>– 80 million hryvnias will be allocated to provide farmers with preferential interest-free loans;</li> <li>– 1.37 billion for grants, in particular for orchards and greenhouses;</li> <li>– 1 billion hryvnia for demining agricultural land (BDO, 2025)</li> </ul>

Positive trends are possible thanks to the development of oilseed crops. Sunflower, soybean and rapeseed production has increased by more than 30% over the last ten years. This not only increases the efficiency of the agricultural sector, but also contributes to the expansion of the country's export structure. It is also worth noting that the humanitarian aspect is becoming increasingly important: the Grain from Ukraine initiative was created to provide grain to countries facing food security issues. This programme helps to strengthen Ukraine's position in the international arena as a reliable and responsible partner. In the context of European integration, Ukraine is actively adapting its agricultural policy to European Union standards. These efforts open up new prospects for expanding exports and attracting foreign investment, contributing to the country's economic development. To achieve this, state support for agribusiness plays an important role, including financial, political, technological, and

regulatory support (Figure 3).

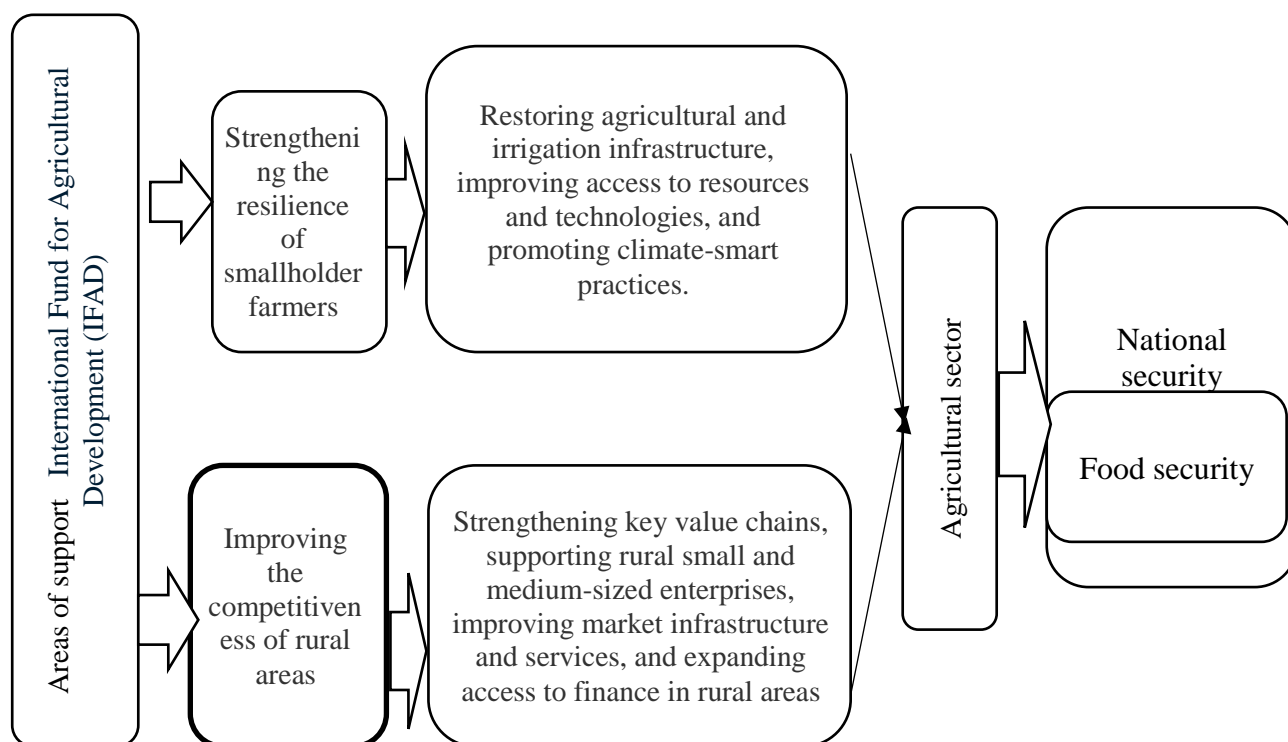


Fig. 3. Areas of support for Ukraine's agricultural sector in the context of food security

Source: author's own work

Thus, the agricultural sector in Ukraine is a key element in ensuring food security at both the national and global levels.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

Food security encompasses not only ensuring sufficient quantities of food, but also guaranteeing its high quality. Today, this aspect is under threat due to numerous challenges that are relevant at the global level. The main ones are chemical, physical and microbiological contaminants, environmental pollution and the use of genetically modified organisms. The situation is further complicated by climate change, which affects agricultural conditions in different regions of the world. Global population growth will lead to an increase in demand for food. However, the possibilities for its production are not unlimited. Therefore, in recent years, there has been much discussion about the efficiency of agriculture, the optimal use of resources in relation to benefits, and better food management.

Ukraine's food security is determined by its ability to supply the domestic food market through its balanced functioning, which contributes to the formation of a rational food structure and the availability of basic products for the population. The achievement of national interests in this area is the result of the effective activity of the country's agricultural sector, which is a key element in the stability of Ukraine's food system.

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У статті розглядається взаємозв'язок між продовольчою безпекою та рівнем розвитку сільськогосподарського сектора в Україні в контексті глобальних викликів та військових загроз. Основна увага приділяється етимології поняття «продовольча безпека», його еволюції в міжнародному та національному законодавстві, а також сучасним підходам до визначення його складових. Проаналізовано основні тенденції функціонування сільськогосподарського сектору, зокрема в контексті дестабілізуючих факторів, таких як пандемія COVID-19, зміна клімату та війни з росією. Визначено ключові проблеми: порушення логістичних ланцюгів постачання, ускладнення посівної кампанії, зниження врожайності, обмеження доступу до міжнародних ринків, втрати інфраструктури. Особливу увагу приділено показникам сільськогосподарського експорту, які, незважаючи на значні втрати, залишаються визначальним фактором макроекономічної стабільності та інтеграції України у світовий економічний простір. Доведено, що аграрний сектор є стратегічною основою продовольчої безпеки, що забезпечує задоволення внутрішнього попиту, формування валютних надходжень та зміцнення позицій України як одного з провідних світових постачальників зернових та олійних культур. Показано, що продовольча безпека охоплює три взаємопов'язані аспекти: доступність, доступ та споживання, кожен з яких безпосередньо залежить від ефективності розвитку сільськогосподарського виробництва та політики державної підтримки. Обґрунтовано перспективи розвитку сільськогосподарського сектору, зокрема у сфері рослинництва та насінництва олійних культур, а також важливість гуманітарних ініціатив, таких як «Зерно з України», для зміцнення міжнародного іміджу держави. Підкреслено важливість адаптації аграрної політики до стандартів ЄС, розвитку інноваційних технологій та надання системної підтримки агробізнесу як необхідних умов для забезпечення сталого розвитку та зміцнення продовольчої безпеки в Україні та світі в цілому.

**Ключові слова:** продовольча безпека, національна безпека, аграрний сектор, тенденції розвитку аграрного сектора, підтримка аграрного сектора, глобальні виклики.