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ABSTRACT

Of the dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

NAKHCHIVAN AUTONOMOUS REPUBLIC FOOD SAFETY PROVISION DIRECTIONS

Speciality: 5311.01 – Organization and management of enterprises

Field of science: 53 - Economic sciences

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GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DISSERTATION

Relevance and Degree of Development of the Topic. Throughout the historical development stages of society, the regulation of food security, which is an integral part of each state's economic security system, has been one of the primary strategic directions. The rapid increase in the ratio between demographic development and material production of goods, which favors the former, has highlighted the issue of food shortage since the first half of the 20th century. In the 1970s, the potential threats were studied at the international level, and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations recommended the preparation of relevant concepts and programs for countries.

In response to this issue, which is of special importance at the international level, the UN adopted the Rome Declaration on World Food Security in 1996.

In September 2000, the Millennium Summit was held by the UN in New York, attended by the heads of state of 191 countries. The Millennium Declaration was signed, committing to halve the number of the world's poor by 2015.

Currently, many countries have adopted a Food Security Concept that aims to achieve food independence, ensure food supply, i.e., meet the daily nutritional needs of the population, provide conditions for all categories to consistently obtain high-quality food products, and define the goals for studying and eliminating problems in this area. Food security also justifies the need to establish reserve funds required to ensure the population's food provision in emergency situations according to established international standards, for at least a minimum level over a defined time period. It outlines the need to define the economic and social aspects of security in terms of quantity and quality, to develop a legal and regulatory framework, and to formulate important organizational measures programs.

In this regard, the problem of food security of the population of the Republic of Azerbaijan has been identified as a strategic task, and a program of measures aimed at increasing the production of local, diverse food products and meeting the population's demand has been developed.

In the subsequent period, four relevant programs were adopted, covering the years 2004-2008, 2009-2013, 2014-2018, and 2019-2023, within the "State Program on Socio-Economic Development of the Regions of the Republic of Azerbaijan." The tasks related to food security set out in these programs have been largely resolved across the republic's regions, as well as the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic. The tasks outlined in the program for 2023-2027 are also being successfully implemented. This program also envisages the establishment of State Agrarian Development Centers (Daim) in Nakhchivan, as well as a free economic zone and an industrial park.

The State Program for ensuring reliable food provision for the population of Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, approved by the Decree of the Supreme Assembly of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic dated September 17, 2008, has defined solutions to the problem as a legal framework. The policy aimed at developing agriculture, the source of food production, has been implemented in conjunction with solving the food security problem of the region.

Researching the results of the increasingly refined food security policies, analyzing the changes in quality and quantity in the provision of food to the population of the Autonomous Republic, and summarizing the findings on the creation of food reserves for emergency situations are of particular relevance. Additionally, in the continuation of the Millennium Development Goals, the topic maintains its relevance within the framework of the "Azerbaijan 2030" agenda, adopted by the UN General Assembly under the "Agenda 2030" for Sustainable Development. In our opinion, five of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outlined in that agenda are directly related to food security policy, including: Ending poverty, Ending hunger, Responsible production and consumption, Climate action, and Protecting the land ecosystem.

It is essential to examine the level of food provision based on local economic resources, to determine the real relationship between demographic development and food production, to investigate the difficulties that arise in the transportation of food products from producer to consumer, and to find ways to resolve these issues, especially in the context of preventing rural-to-urban migration.

The scientific and practical importance of the works dedicated to the development of national industry and agriculture by Azerbaijan's prominent economists such as Z.Ä. Samadov, A.X. Nuriyev, E.A. Guliyev, F.P. Rahmanov, İ.H. Aliyev, R.Ə. Balayev, H.B. Allahverdiyev, B.X. Atashov, R.Ə. Balayev, R.M. Əliyev, H.A. Khalilov, A. Muradov, Q.Ş. Mammadov, A.A. Qurbanzade, V.İ. Ibrahimov, N. Shalbuzov, and others, should also be highly valued in this context. These works, although not specifically dedicated to food security, have addressed the issue as part of broader economic and national security problems.

The study of the international and national scientific and theoretical findings on the food security issue, generalizing them, and determining the applicability of such findings greatly enhance the importance of this research. Authors such as H.M. Ayerakva, N. Brooks, A. Begley, C. Svamitan, P.G. Knight, J.C. Jackson, and others from Europe, as well as researchers from Turkey such as Deniz Göktan, Günnür Tuncel, Umut K., Fikri Başoğlu, Hasan V., Mustafa Tayar, and researchers from post-Soviet countries like Q.A. Sevryukova, V.A. Boqomolov, I.L. Matsenovich, I.A. Minakov, A.M. Babaşkina, and others, have all discussed the problem in the context of demographic and technological changes occurring worldwide.

The causes of the problem and the factors influencing its solutions have been scientifically generalized. The practical significance of the theories in the academic literature is assessed. The studies emphasize the importance of international cooperation in solving this issue, as no country can address the problem alone. The study of the impact of international economic and trade relations, as well as the regulation of food product exports and imports, especially in the context of agriculture and ecology, plays a significant role in food security.

Object and Subject of the Research. The object of the research is food production enterprises and food security in the Nakhchivan

Autonomous Republic. The subject of the research is the theoretical, methodological, and practical issues of ensuring food security.

Aim and Objectives of the Research. The aim of the research is to evaluate the current situation in the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic and prepare theoretical, methodological, and practical proposals for improving food security.

The aim also necessitates the resolution of several interconnected scientific, methodological, and practical tasks, including:

- Investigating the economic content and mechanism of ensuring food security as one of the most important components of national economic security;
 - Analyzing theoretical perspectives on food security issues;
- Studying the directions for the formation of food security systems in the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic and analyzing the factors affecting it;
- Assessing the level of food security in the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic and the dependency of the food market on imports;
- Evaluating the impact of increasing agricultural exports on food security;
- Identifying the possibilities for increasing and improving agricultural enterprises;
- Developing forecasts for the production indicators of food products;
- Identifying directions for improving state regulation of food security.

Research Methods. The research employs methods such as comparative analysis, synthesis, induction-deduction, statistical analysis, as well as economic-statistical and econometric methods for forecasting.

The theoretical-methodological basis of the research is based on neoclassical economic theory, contemporary economic concepts, food security, agricultural economics, and other practical studies, as well as the decrees and orders of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, laws adopted by the National Assembly of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and regional programs and decrees developed by the Supreme Assembly of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic.

Key Provisions Defended:

- The acceleration of globalization has both positive and negative impacts on ensuring food security.
- While implementing state protectionism measures, attention should be paid to the population's standard of living and purchasing power.
- The level of food security in the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic can be considered satisfactory.
- The efficient and waste-free use of food products, as well as the creation of strategic food reserves, is an important factor in ensuring food security.
- Based on the production indicators of three enterprises located in the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, it can be concluded that improving the level of food security in Nakhchivan is desirable.
- According to the analysis and forecasts, the growth rate of livestock products (meat and dairy products) in the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic will be 10.83% and 2.32%, respectively, by 2030.
- In the near future, in order to ensure food security in Nakhchivan, it is necessary to improve the accessibility of production enterprises to long-term, low-interest bank loans, develop logistics structures, regulate food prices, form competitive markets, and promote innovative agriculture.
- In the long term, ensuring food security in the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic requires the development of a unified commodity policy, the improvement of food product quality and standards, and the increase of agricultural product production either replacing imports or produced locally.

Scientific Novelty of the Research:

• The concepts of "food security," "food supply," and "food safety," which are sometimes used interchangeably in the scientific literature, have been clarified, and their essence has been explained.

- The self-sufficiency level for several products in the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic (based on the production indicators of three enterprises) has been calculated.
- To reduce the dependence of the food market in Nakhchivan on imports, the implementation of guaranteed minimum prices with government orders and the support for the production of importsubstituting products has been justified.
- Forecast calculations have been developed considering the food security system and its individual indicators.
- Three main modules (economic, trade, and social) for ensuring food security in the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic in the short and medium term have been defined, and measures for their implementation have been identified.

Theoretical and Practical Significance of the Research:

- The theoretical significance of the dissertation lies in advancing the theory of food security in accordance with the conditions of an economy undergoing reforms and enhancing scientific knowledge in theoretical approaches to state policy aimed at improving food provision in contemporary conditions.
- The practical significance of the research lies in the use of its results by state authorities in improving methods and forms of economic governance, especially in the preparation of programs, strategic documents, national and sectoral programs, and projects in the field of food security.
- Certain provisions of the dissertation (concerning the general conditions and specific forms of ensuring food security) can be used in the teaching process at Nakhchivan State University for courses such as "State Regulation of the Economy," "Macroeconomics," "World Economy," "Economics of the Agricultural Sector," "World Food Security," and "Economic Security," as well as in special courses on economic reforms in the Republic.
- Research materials can also be used when ensuring reliable food provision for the population and regulating the food market.

Approval and Application:

• The content of the research has been presented in the materials of national and international scientific conferences and has been

published in eight articles (four abroad) and seven theses (five abroad), as recommended by the Higher Attestation Commission under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

• The main results and recommendations of the research have been accepted for implementation by the Ministry of Economic Development of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic (letter No. 352/2021, dated July 26, 2021).

Volume of the Dissertation:

• The dissertation has been written in accordance with the requirements set by the Higher Attestation Commission under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The dissertation consists of the following sections: title page (384 character spaces), table of contents (1,745 character spaces), general description (15,432 character spaces), main content (202,632 character spaces: Chapter I: 38,256 character spaces, Chapter II: 71,221 character spaces, Chapter III: 93,155 character spaces), conclusion (13,568 character spaces), and bibliography (25,360 character spaces), totaling 259,121 character spaces.

STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

Introduction

Chapter I: Theoretical and Methodological Foundations of Food Security

- 1.1. The Essence of Food Security and Its Determining Factors
- 1.2. Theoretical Approaches to Food Security Issues
- 1.3. The Role of Food Security in the Economic Security System

Chapter II: Analysis and Evaluation of the Current Situation of Food Security in the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic

- 2.1. Aspects of Agricultural Reforms in the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic
- 2.2. Evaluation Based on the Analysis of the Current State of Food Security in the Autonomous Republic
- 2.3. The Impact of Food Security on the Formation of the Consumer Market in Azerbaijan and Its Regions

Chapter III: Ways to Improve the Level of Food Security in the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic

- 3.1. Improvement of Food Security Provision in the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic
- 3.2. Directions for Improving the Export Potential of Agricultural Enterprises
- 3.3. Forecast of Agricultural Product Production Indicators
- 3.4. Directions for Improving State Regulation of Food Security

Conclusion References Appendices List of Abbreviations

MAIN CONTENT OF THE DISSERTATION

In the introduction of the dissertation, the relevance of the topic, the degree of its development, the goals and objectives of the research, the research methods, the key points presented for defense, the scientific novelty of the study, its theoretical and practical significance, the approval and application of the dissertation, the name of the organization where the work was carried out, the structure and volume of the dissertation are provided.

In Chapter I, titled "Theoretical and Methodological Foundations of Food Security," food security is characterized as a crucial component of national security. It is emphasized as a key indicator of the population's health and the overall level of economic development. Internationally significant declarations reflecting the essence of food security, as well as decisions made at the World Food Conference organized by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), are considered. The specialization of agricultural production and its adaptation to existing demands is seen as the main source of food security. The necessity of implementing state measures to stimulate long-term investments in agriculture is highlighted. The importance of regulating these processes by a legal framework, as well as financing and implementing them, is also emphasized. Several factors ensuring national food security and food sovereignty, including the level of food production, economic benefits of food production, food value, population consumption capabilities, average monthly salary levels, state benefits for lowincome individuals, and the country's existing food reserves, are analyzed. It is argued that the lack of social welfare programs, weak economic conditions, and political instability are factors that hinder efforts to reduce food insecurity and hunger. The necessity of further improving a risk-based, preventive food security system using Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) approaches is emphasized. The production and reserve of food, which is ecologically clean, quantitatively and qualitatively meets market demands, are conditioned by these approaches. The "National Program for Ensuring the Reliable Supply of Food Products to the

Population of the Republic of Azerbaijan," approved by President Ilham Aliyev, sets forth new approaches for achieving the country's food independence.

The dissertation also discusses the internal threats to economic security, including the imperfection of the legislative framework, growing regional socio-economic disparities, economic structural deformation, low investment activity, low competitiveness of domestic products, payment issues, an imperfect tax system, high inflation, and the elevated share of poverty and the shadow economy. The classification of factors posing serious threats to the national economy, such as the strong deformations of the economic structure, the dissolution of scientific and technological potential, declining investment and innovation activity, the country turning into a fuel-raw materials exporter, increasing social stratification, rising external debt, dependence on imports, and outflows of currency, are presented.

In Chapter II, titled "Analysis and Evaluation of the Current State of Food Security in the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic," the agricultural reform process initiated under the leadership of Heydar Aliyev in the early 1990s is analyzed. The legal framework laid down through decisions like those concerning "Colleges and Sovkhozes of Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic" and "Privatization Proposals for Non-Profitable Kolkhozes and Sovkhozes" is summarized. The analysis reflects the positive dynamics in food security, showing the impact of private farming initiatives, investment, credits, and tax benefits on the growth of food production. Graphs reflecting production and productivity indicators for several products in the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic are provided and analyzed. The importance and results of agricultural reforms, including internal and external factors affecting food security, are summarized.

Chapter III, titled "Ways to Improve the Level of Food Security in the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic," discusses the population growth in Nakhchivan, forecasting a population of over half a million in the next 30 years if the current growth trend continues. The changes in the ratio between urban and rural populations are also highlighted. Data on the annual production figures of local

enterprises ("APF" LLC, "Cahan Tea" LLC, "Nehram Food Industry" LLC) are analyzed. The potential risks of food scarcity in the future and the scientific relevance of researching ways to ensure food security are discussed. Measures to improve food security, including the importance of agricultural-based clusters in ensuring food security, are highlighted with graphical depictions.



Chart 1. Advantages of regional clusters

 $Source: [Compiled \ by \ the \ author \ based \ on \ 180]$

Information is provided on the moving average, univariate and system regression models, VAR, AR, MA and ARMA models used for time series forecasting. When building the ARMA model, a table and graph were compiled on the forecast indicators for total meat and dairy products up to 2030 using the Box-Jenkins iteration age using the Eviews7 application statistical PP. Let's look at the table and graph reflecting the forecast indicators for milk production: (See: Table 1. and graph 2.)

Table 1. Forecast prices for total milk production (2024-2030)

No.	Years	Forecast data
1	2024	91771.85
2	2025	92450.89
3	2026	93080.57
4	2027	93470.41
5	2028	93783.38
6	2029	93886.70
7	2030	93897.65

Source: Compiled by the author.

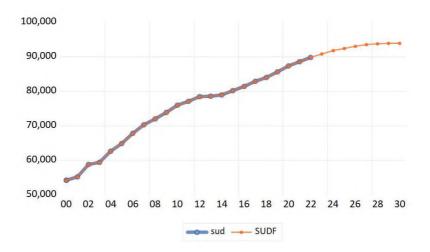


Chart 2. Milk production (2000-2022) and forecast indicators (2024-2030)

Source: Compiled by the author

The strategic goal of the state's regulatory policy is to ensure the uninterrupted fulfillment of domestic food market demand in a timely and adequate manner. Proposals for the further improvement of the implemented state regulatory policy have been made. During the examined period, the state regulation of food security in the Autonomous Republic played a significant role in achieving the strategic objectives of food security and in ensuring the timely and

quality provision of food products to the population. The results of these achievements have been summarized.

The following main generalizations and conclusions can be drawn from the dissertation:

- 1. The modern state's independence is increasingly determined by the state of food security, which necessitates the constant search for its provision directions and mechanisms. In this regard, the responsibility of regions and the agricultural enterprises operating within them to ensure their territories with food and agricultural raw materials is sharply increasing. The solution to the problem of ensuring food security in the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic is a complex and multifaceted process that covers various aspects of its institutional, economic, and social activity.
- 2. The dissertation clarifies the concept of food security, its objectives, subjects, levels, threats, and criteria. The definition of food security has been expanded and completed. National agricultural production, food reserves, regulation of food supply through import-export, and international food assistance are realized through the rational and efficient use of a set of internal and external factors. Additionally, the potential of the agricultural sector to ensure food accessibility and to resist new risks and threats to the country's food sovereignty has been identified as a key factor in food security.
- 3. The dissertation highlights the special role of the Autonomous Republic's food market in solving the food security tasks. The specificity of the food market in the Autonomous Republic, consisting of a wide range of commodity and service subjects, is discussed. It is noted that the diversification of farms in the Autonomous Republic helps stimulate local agricultural production and the development of the food market. This creates higher competition, eliminates monopolies, and generates additional income.
- 4. The author notes the significant role of small entrepreneurship in addressing food security issues in the Autonomous Republic. Entrepreneurs in rural areas do not require large investments. At the same time, they help saturate the markets with food products, contribute to increasing employment, and

provide tax revenues to the budget. It is concluded that small businesses should be developed by creating relevant infrastructure (information centers, monitoring, consulting). Attention should also be given to providing small businesses with qualified personnel through training and professional development.

- 5. The dissertation states that a crucial role in ensuring the region's food security lies in improving the state regulation mechanisms of the regional food market. The author outlines the directions for improving state regulation of the agrarian-food market: regulating intersectoral and interregional relations, ensuring price parity between agriculture and other sectors of the economy for guaranteed supplies of agricultural products, raw materials, and food for state and regional needs, financial-credit regulation of the agroindustrial complex, applying collateral operations, agricultural protectionism, and supporting the creation of innovative economies in the agro-industrial complex.
- 6. The trends of agricultural reforms in the Autonomous Republic have been analyzed, and based on the results of ensuring food security in Azerbaijan, proposals have been made. The research of the period during which the achieved results occurred, the analysis of factors that might lead to food problems, preventive measures, and other aspects of agricultural entrepreneurship and state support in food security have been analyzed scientifically for the first time in the context of the Autonomous Republic.
- 7. The dissertation analyzes the dynamics of the development of the food security system, examining both external and internal factors that ensure its dynamic development, and highlighting the specific features of its evolution. The analysis revealed issues in the development of the food security system that need to be addressed, including a high level of dependency on foreign products in the information technology sector, the unequal distribution of communication and telecommunication infrastructure in the country, and the competitiveness issues of the domestic communication sector. These challenges provide the basis for the future prognosis of the food security system.

- The necessity of adopting the "Concept of Ensuring Food Security of the Republic" is emphasized in the work, which should address the following points: the provision of the population with locally produced food products, the resolution of issues related to maintaining and continuously improving their standard of living, social orientation in addressing these issues, the state regulation of the increase in agro-industrial production, foreign economic policy ensuring international division of labor beneficial to the country based on the priorities of local producers and consumers, the formation of state food reserves and other food stocks for providing food to the population in large cities and during emergencies, the creation of food aid funds to support underprivileged groups of the population, the improvement of production organization to ensure reliable food supply for the population of the republic by mobilizing the capabilities of local agro-industrial production, and the development and adoption of measures for applying scientific and technological progress to increase the efficiency of the agricultural sector.
- 9. Based on the analysis of the speed and intensity of changes in the food security system of the Republic and its individual indicators over time, a forecasting model for the formation and change of these indicators until 2030 has been developed and approved. The model suggests that the improvement of the mechanisms for regulating the sustainable development of the republic's food security system will lead to an expansion in the variety of food products, an increase in their quality, and the development of infrastructure and competition in the republic's food products and services market.
- 10. Based on the analysis carried out in the dissertation, it is concluded that the level of food security in the autonomous republic depends on the financial stabilization of agricultural enterprises, the increase in their competitiveness, and their efficiency. To achieve this, the leaders and specialists of these enterprises must undertake the following actions: conduct a detailed analysis of the economic situation of the enterprises, refine the production structure in accordance with the current market conditions and available

production capacity, restore and improve the quality of the initial accounting system, conduct independent certification of personnel and reduce the number of employees who do not have the necessary qualifications, implement internal accounting, and improve the system of material incentives.

- 11. The agricultural sector of the economy of the Autonomous Republic can ensure food security of the autonomous republic and the country in the current conditions by strengthening state protectionism, with the purpose of financing target programs for productivity, land reclamation, roads, and social and industrial infrastructure of rural settlements from the budget; forming a network of new enterprises, associations, and cooperatives to serve agricultural producers; and organizing regional wholesale markets and exchanges. It has been substantiated that reducing the dependency of the food market in the autonomous republic on large international food corporations and ensuring food security requires combining the state protectionism measures (such as guaranteed prices with state orders, legislative solutions for price parity issues, extending and partially writing off debts in the agribusiness sector, etc.) with the optimal functioning of the market mechanism in the internal food market.
- 12. The main problems and prospects for solving the issue of ensuring food security in the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic have been identified. The following problems are listed: the inaccessibility of long-term and low-interest bank loans for production enterprises; the underdevelopment of the logistics structure in the autonomous republic; the insufficient efficiency of the state's price regulation mechanism; monopolistic elements in food markets that hinder fair competition; the underdeveloped infrastructure of the food products market; and the lack of innovative agricultural technologies.

The prospects include: the development of a unified commodity policy, systematic improvement of the quality of food products, and harmonization with international standards, as well as the imposition of restrictions on the importation of goods that can be produced locally;

- the development of recommendations for strengthening the food security of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, taking into account the development characteristics of the autonomous republic and the economic specialization in the production of agricultural products;
- improving the food security system of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic through the application of scientific and technological approaches (such as the use of artificial intelligence in assessing agricultural productivity, which will allow for faster assessment of food safety, improve the quality of food products, and reveal new factors and patterns);
- the development of forecasting and monitoring systems: the development and implementation of tools to identify emerging problems and risks in food safety, timely measures to control, prevent, and monitor these problems, as well as the creation of new and flexible processes to rapidly adapt to the demands of food supply chains.
- 13. Three main modules (social, economic, and trade) for ensuring food security in the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic in the near and medium-term have been identified, and measures for their implementation have been recommended.

Module 1 - Social Measures

Ensuring the necessary standards for the consumption of basic food products for all segments of the population, regardless of their status, improving access to medical and educational services, implementing special programs for housing acquisition, strengthening the legal protection of farmers, reducing the tax and bureaucratic burden on the export of goods from the autonomous republic, etc.

Module 2 – Economic Measures

State support for productive agricultural producers, regular monitoring of food security, supporting agricultural producers to ensure the large-scale reproduction of incomes and the implementation of rural development state programs, the development of various forms of consumer cooperation, and creating

conditions for the establishment of a developed financial, credit, and banking infrastructure in the agribusiness sector.

Module 3 – Trade Measures

High-level protection of the national food market, the formation of a competitive environment, the creation of value chains including production, supply, processing, and sales, improving all logistics links, eliminating barriers to food transportation, and creating conditions for deepening the specialization of the autonomous republic to assist in increasing the productivity of basic food products.

The following covers the content of the dissertation: scientific articles published:

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