

Liberalization of Trade of Agricultural Products as the Way to Solve Food Problem

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The article researches the problems of liberalization of trade of agricultural products as the way to solve food problem. It was established that the main object of international critics is the agricultural policy in the EU countries and Japan. But apart of the widespread viewpoint, the amount of the federal support of agriculture per a farmer in the USA is not lower than the EU countries. These countries find complete understanding and support of their position in Japan. The EU countries and Japan developed a common conception of “multifunctional” agricultural activity. According to the conception the agriculture (with the exception of production function) has a great importance from the point of view of ecology, environmental protection, saving rural landscape, recreation etc.

The objective of the article was to study the process of liberalization of trade of agricultural products and definition of its consequences.

In the process of research we applied a complex approach which foresees certain distribution of functions while studying one object of research, systematization of the results which allows disclosing peculiarities of the process of liberalization of trade of agricultural products. The generalization of facts and relations were carried out with the help of interpretation methods such as dialectical and structural, historical and logical.

The research allowed defining that the costs for holding current trade strategies which were defined by the traditional instruments of regulation of the market (import quotas, export subsidies, direct support of farmers), disparity of internal and external marks of the development of national agricultural systems should be paid by

developed as well as developing countries. One of the results of a complete liberalization of the world food market will be its restructuring in favour of developing countries, increase of tempos of growing agricultural systems on the background of growing world process on food products.

Key words: *liberalization, protectionism, international trade, food market, food safety, food problem.*

У статті досліджено процес лібералізації торгівлі сільськогосподарською продукцією як шлях до вирішення продовольчої проблеми. Встановлено, що головним об'єктом міжнародної критики традиційно є сільськогосподарська політика у країнах ЄС і Японії. Однак, всупереч поширеній думці, розмір державної підтримки сільського господарства в розрахунку на одного фермера в США аніскільки не нижче, ніж у країнах ЄС. Ці країни знаходять повне порозуміння і підтримку своєї позиції у Японії. Спільно з Японією була розроблена концепція «багатофункціональності» сільськогосподарської діяльності. Відповідно до неї сільське господарство, крім виробничої функції, має також велике значення з точки зору екології, захисту навколишнього середовища, збереження сільських ландшафтів, рекреацій тощо.

Мета статті полягала у дослідженні процесу лібералізації торгівлі сільськогосподарською продукцією та визначенні його наслідків.

В процесі дослідження було використано комплексний підхід, який передбачає при єдиному об'єкті дослідження певний розподіл функцій по його вивченню, систематизацію результатів, що дозволяє розкрити сутність і наслідки процесу лібералізації торгівлі сільськогосподарською продукцією. Узагальнення фактів і зв'язків здійснювалося за допомогою інтерпретації методів - діалектичного та структурного, а також історико – логічного.

Проведене дослідження дало змогу визначити, що витрати на проведення поточних торговельних стратегій, поява яких визначена традиційними інструментами регулювання ринку (імпортні квоти, експортні субсидії, пряма допомога фермерам), диспаритетом внутрішніх і зовнішніх орієнтирів

розвитку національних агропродовольчих систем, однаково несуть як розвинені, так і країни, що розвиваються. Одними з наслідків повної лібералізації світового ринку продовольства будуть його реструктуризація на користь присутності країн, що розвиваються, збільшення темпів зростання агропродовольчих систем останніх на тлі зростаючих світових цін на продовольчі товари.

***ключові слова:** лібералізація, протекціонізм, міжнародна торгівля, продовольчий ринок, продовольча безпека, продовольча проблема.*

The topicality of the problem and its relation with key scientific and practical tasks. The main object of international critics is the agricultural policy in the EU countries and Japan. But apart of the widespread viewpoint, the amount of the federal support of agriculture per a farmer in the USA is not lower than the EU countries. But the structure of the support is different. The USA subsidizes mostly export and other forms of support of exporting agricultural products and the EU countries subsidize direct support of farmers.

Recently the European Union even began attacking the countries exporting agricultural products. Its demands are soundly motivated: as the objective of WTO is to facilitate free trade than to give central attention to the trade of agricultural products. That is why the EU intends from the USA, Australia, Canada and other countries to stop state export subsidizing and to refuse the practice of trade of agricultural products with the help of state organizations such as the Australian or Canadian agency of wheat export. At the same time the EU countries have no intention to refuse from direct financial help for their farms.

Analysis of recent scientific research. A substantial contribution into the research of the issue of the world trade of agricultural products from the point of view of sufficient food safety was made by the following scholars: P.T. Sabluk, O.G. Bilorus, I.V. Vlasov, B.J. Pashaver, Y.Y. Luzan, V.K. Berehovyy and others [1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6]. But at the same time the problem of liberalization of trade of agricultural products in the EU countries and the USA has not been studied fully.

The objective of the article was to study the process of liberalization of trade of agricultural products and define its consequences.

Main material. The EU countries have complete understanding and support from the side of Japan. The EU countries and Japan developed a common conception of “multifunctional” agricultural activity. According to the conception the agriculture (with the exception of production function) has a great importance from the point of view of ecology, environmental protection, saving rural landscape, recreation etc. Most radical supporters of the conception, especially in Japan, state that agriculture is a cultural phenomenon, national and international cultural asset which should be protected. These arguments are used to justify the necessity of its further support.

Another example is China which is very serious to the external aspect of the problem of food safety.

It is possible that from the point of view of macroeconomic efficiency it is more profitable for China not to expand the production but to import the necessary amount of grain from the USA or Australia annually where the cost of the products are considerably lower. But taking into account the political character when grain is considered to be a strategic product it is not possible to depend on import. A big dependence on import leads to immense risks which are not acceptable for the food policy of China. According to this fact the volumes of import should not exceed 5% of the total domestic consumption and other 95% should be produced nationally.

The contradictions in the frames of WTO do not end in the struggle between developed and developing countries. Industrially developed countries cannot find common language on the issue of liberalization of trade of agricultural products. Their strategy in the agrarian policy became the key object of international critics many times especially the issue of the support of farmers.

According to the data of the Kern group (18 countries that are quite dependable on the export of agricultural products) the annual subsidies to agriculture in the developed countries are 200 milliard dollars.

The financial support is one of the most serious barriers in the world trade. Its presence contradicts with the interests of developing countries which in other case

could considerable improvement of their economic situation through expansion of export of agricultural products to the developed countries.

Besides, the WTO countries have extremely high level of customs taxation of certain products especially agricultural products – 25-30%, and sometimes there are absolutely forbidden rates of several hundreds of per cent.

The above-mentioned contradictions conditioned the failure of the WTO conference (in Seattle) at the end of 1999 and made the discussion worse concerning most important problems of the regulation of development of agricultural system.

In November 2001 at the WTO conference of ministers in Doha (Qatar) there was an agreement achieved about the beginning of the new lasting round of international negotiations. The subject of the negotiations was the liberalization of agricultural sector, particularly the reduction of subsidies on export of agricultural products with the prospect of their complete liquidation.

In the USA in May, 2002 a bill about the allocation of about 180 milliard dollars for the American farmers during the following 10 years was adopted. This is equivalent to the average increase of subsidies of 5,5 milliard dollars compared with the previous law about the financial support of the American farmers. The result of decrease of subsidizing of the American agrarian sector was the growth of overproduction, decrease of prices on agricultural products and which is worse, the disruption of the process of the liberalization of trade of agricultural products in the frames of the new round of trade negotiations.

The problem of subsidizing the export-oriented farming negatively influences the balance of the world trade. In September 2003 at the WTO meeting in Cancun (Mexico) as a result of confrontational and sharp discussion “Group 21” was formed (according to the number of members) with the leaders from India, Brazil and China. The representatives of this group count half of the Earth population and 60% of agricultural workers.

Because of the contradictions the meeting of WTO country-members in Cancun finished with failure. The similar result according to the viewpoint of Z.

Romanova showed that WTO which is a part of the world power structure goes through considerable discordance and crisis [7].

Taking into account the above-mentioned facts it is possible to conclude that food safety cannot be achieved only with the help of introduction of the agreed principles and rules of the international trade.

The issue of liberalization of the market of agricultural products which is able to increase food safety became quite complex. The importance of solving this problem became more significant for despite the increase of the world food production the number of starving people in many developing countries grew up. The country may not have finance to purchase food products which are in great amount on the world markets.

It was established that there are two basic ways to provide food safety at the national level: to strive for food provision (the concept of self-provision) and to create opportunities to pay for the import systematically (the concept of import). Some countries implement the policy which encourages the production of sufficient amount of food to provide a minimum necessary level of consumption and to protect from the situations when it is impossible to import food even at higher prices [8].

Self-provision of food means satisfying the needs for food mostly with the help of domestic deliveries with minimum dependence on foreign trade. The efficiency of realization of the concept of self-provision of food is influenced by a number of factors which should be counted in the process of formation of internal policy. The factors include the possibility to use technologies which increase the yield; the influence of agriculture by social changes and political instability; various forms of degradation of the environment.

The sustainable use of internal agricultural resources of every country plays an important role in sufficient food safety. Stimulation of internal agricultural production softens the anxieties of the population concerning the lack of food in the cases of unforeseen events. Internal production is the mechanism of risks insurance such as reduction of import or poor harvests in country-exporters. Moreover, it facilitates food safety and carries out other functions such as: protection of the

environment, soil and water resources, development of rural areas, saving landscapes and traditional cultures. The situation in this sphere is very important from the social and economic points of view for the countries with a big share of agricultural working power.

The import of food can make a considerable contribution into sufficient food safety. The countries that try to solve the problem in this way encounter two serious tasks: firstly, to save food import at the necessary level (in other words to have currency resources which are enough to pay) and secondly, to provide a stable access to the sources of this import.

The concept of import with the basic approach to pay for the purchased products by itself, allows creating export potential which provides currency earnings that are enough to import food products in the amount sufficient to the demands of the population.

In the process of development and realization of the policy of food safety it is important to take into consideration that food is a special category of product. For country-importers it is a strategic product and its purchase and stable delivery guarantee the stability in the society; for country-exporters it is the instrument of political and economic pressure as they can use the embargo on deliveries to have influence on other countries.

Another peculiarity of food supplies is that a product has its added value which is not always returned due to the market mechanisms. In other words, in order to provide sufficient food safety the government has sometimes to pay sums which do not correspond to the real value of the purchased food products. The funds directed to strategic food import may be considered as “vulnerability price” of the country. Possible losses because of a sudden loss of the access to one or more products depend on the probability of this case as well as on its intensity and durability. It means that the “vulnerability price” will be less if such a probability is relatively low. Thus purchasing agricultural products from friendly countries are less dangerous and the “vulnerability price” in this case is minimal.

To our mind the diversity of the problem of food safety dictates the necessity to find the other way of its sufficiency (the concept of self-provision in connection with import). The optimal variant might be the combination of the following elements: encouragement and expansion of domestic food production, provision of stable import, creation of necessary food reserves. And a leading element can be any from the above-mentioned depending on the situation in every separate country.

The developed countries hold the dominant place in the world food system. They produce and consume more than 2/3 of the world food (by value) with only 15% of the world population. Their proportion in the world food export is about 64% (including 65% of finished products and 61% of agricultural raw materials) and in the import 67% (69 and 64% correspondently).

The developing countries with mostly 4/5 of all the population produce about 1/3 of all food products and consume a little more than 1/3 of the world consumption. The proportion of these countries in the world export of food is about 32% (in equal amounts in export of processed products and agricultural raw materials) and in import about 26% (24% of import of finished products and 29% of raw materials). The inconsiderable level of consumption of food is conditioned by a low level of economic development in income per capita in the developing countries.

The situation of the food safety is constantly supported by economically developed countries and characterized by the necessary for their population amount of high quality food products. The countries which do not keep pace in the economic and agrarian development, do not carry out systematic modernization of their agrarian sector will have difficulties to keep sufficient food safety. Moreover, in the conditions of economic expansion the developed countries try to strengthen their economic influence on the developing and the rest of the countries with the help of presence on their domestic markets. To achieve the goal they often apply measures in order to weaken the agrarian sector of the competitive countries as well as the countries which consume exported agrarian products.

The Kern group countries stand for the maximum liberalization of international agricultural markets including a considerable reduction of import tariffs, complete

abolition of export subsidies (in the EU in the first place), the abolishment of tariff quotas and minimization of internal support. They think that a long-term liberalization of the world agricultural trade does not let highly effective producers to fully realize their competitive advantages.

The Kern group has the American support in many questions but the USA effectively support and protect a range of the sectors of national economy (production of sugar, honey, ground nut, dairy products, wool etc).

The EU countries, Switzerland, Norway, South Korea and Japan are the main opponents of the Kern group and speak for the possibilities to give considerable state support to this sector and export subsidies, to pay much attention to the food safety, sustainable social and economic development and support of the formed ecosystems in rural areas, safety of food products and other so-called “non-trading aspects” of the economy of agrarian sector.

This group of countries suggested a thesis about the peculiarity and multi-functionality of the agrarian sector and the problems in this sphere cannot be solved with the help of only market mechanisms including industrially developed countries. They think that different types (models) of national agricultural systems that have been formed in the world as a result of the specific historical development and different climatic conditions demand a flexible approach and this fact should be taken into account while working out the WTO norms in the sphere of international trade of agricultural products as well as in the issues of internal policy of allied countries.

The developing countries have no common position, they are not ready to go further to decrease import tariffs on agricultural products and stand for radical reduction of subsidies on production and export of agricultural products by the developed countries and for simultaneous improvement of access of their products on the markets. They also insist on getting more freedom in the questions of state support of the agricultural sector. The non-uniformity and contradictions in the positions of the developing countries are caused by the fear that the real reduction of export subsidizing and internal support in the EU and the USA will considerably increase the costs of the poorest countries on import of food and negatively influence

the volumes of the acquired food help. The country-exporters of agricultural products are not satisfied with the overestimated sanitary and phyto-sanitary norms which make the access to the markets of the developed countries more difficult. A special position is held by the group of countries with the so-called “transition economy”. They think that specific situation in the agrarian sector in the period of market reforms should be taken into consideration while defining their duties in the frames of new agreements on agriculture. But the position of this group of countries does not have full support from the side of the majority of negotiating developing country-members.

But in general it is important to evaluate the Uruguay round as the victory in the formation of the world food market and the foundation of basic functional principles of the agrarian and international trade policy. The completion of the round is not the final solution of the problem of the world market but a certain stage in the world power struggle.

Most likely the general lines of the final agreements on agriculture will appear only as a result of a compromise between the biggest producers and exporters of agricultural products and at the same time “leading players” in WTO and they are the USA and the EU. The compromise is important in the issues of the amount and conditions of further limitation of internal support and export subsidizing. At the same time we should take into consideration the role of other chief players of the Kern group and different groups of countries which have formal possibility to block making the decisions that will not satisfy them.

Immense regulations of the world food markets as well as the development the world economy have another aspect under modern conditions. And it is solidifying dominant positions of the developed countries which will get more validity that facilitates structural changes in the world agriculture. The changes can make stable the dominant position. In this case the stabilization of the world food system and achievement of the world food safety will be carried out due to the decrease of level of national food safety of many country-importers.

The possibility of the development of the world food system according to the model by which there will be no measures taken to provide own food safety as a part of national sovereignty leads to the development of the world food system and may also lead to a better stability but at the expense of certain loss of the national food independence. Here we see the dilemma and we have to find the way to solve the problem through the stimulation of national production at least by the countries which have potential for this.

The country-exporters of food are united by the possibility to reduce internal costs on support of agriculture due to common liberalization of trade and to increase the world prices so that part of the costs will be settled by consumers. So, there will be general increase of the world prices with the corresponding relocation of the costs on the food from exporters to importers.

But this situation may have several counterarguments. The average change of the world prices which is conditioned by the trade policy is about 5% of basic food products. This long-term effect is very inconsiderable in comparison with latest changes in prices. Moreover, due to the presence of infrastructural and transport costs the influence of price increase of basic kinds of food products on the national producers is impossible to track especially in the agrarian countries. Actually most part of the products which were produced in the majority of countries are not sold on the world markets. They are sold only on domestic and regional markets. Thus, general influence of the changes in trade policy on the incomes of farming producers of basic food products in poorer developing countries will in most cases inconsiderable.

As the basic food products that are sold on the world markets with the high degree of price transformation, application of temporary measures of protection is possible in the case when there is a big probability in reduction of protectionist measures on the world markets during short and middle terms of time. As a result the world prices will rise and national production will have to compete with the production which is sold according to the unchanged prices. But even in these cases the protectionist measures should be temperate.

It is important to take into account the difficulties of correction of the policy after the trade changes will be eliminated. Besides, if protectionist measures are introduced, there should be developed reliable strategies to go out of this situation.

Apart of the above-mentioned arguments concerning the change of the world prices there are sometimes demands to protect national sectors of production of basic food products in order to provide food safety. This should be accepted with precaution. Firstly, the costs of protectionist measures are paid by consumers especially with low-income consumers that spend most of their income on food. And this happens in the situation when the majority of people from rural area are poor and in some countries they are net-buyers of food products. Secondly, the main reason of the absence of food safety is poverty and low purchasing power of the population but not the lack of food products although among agrarian countries there are some exceptions. If the branch is already under the influence of protectionist measures then an accelerated liberalization (which is a considerable part of economy and produces products for export) of the sector may in short-term period lead to unemployment and poverty especially among poor people that do not have material assets or knowledge to get benefit from the arising possibilities.

In this case it is necessary to apply measures of temporary support of risk groups which will get a chance to have benefits of economic growth and to keep up trade reforms. Those who have productive assets should get this temporary support not only to save incomes but also to make the transition to competitive kinds of activity easier.

The governments during this period of liberalization and reduction of active tariffs need support and may set the limits on prices in order to lessen the vulnerability of the world price fluctuations. But this may happen only if the measures are allowed by the latest agreement of WTO. The minimum price levels that are provided with the help of temporary increase of import customs duties may relieve producers from extra losses during the years when the world prices are too low.

At the same time when the world prices are too high it is possible to low customs duties. We should recognize that this mechanism increases price instability if only tariff protection is not set on the high level but this protection will possibly not be effective or fair. In order to minimize economic costs any of the schemes of changeable taxation and exclusion will definitely increase protectionism. It is necessary to set clear rules of holding precautionary interventions which should not serve the interests of big enterprises but to act so that temporary increase of tariffs will be really sort and infrequent. Today it is impossible to give an example of the successful application of these preventive measures but there are cases when they really did not work.

On the whole trade policy in the sphere of basic food products should realize that protectionism of the domestic production sometimes does no good to poor people [9]. It is also not as effective in support of farmers as alternative strategies such as expansion of access to the assets and investments into research, education, experience exchange and improvement of agricultural infrastructure which stimulates the increase of production. But because of political sensibility of the markets and specific character of the influence of trade policy for every country it would be sensible to achieve certain flexibility in the frames of trade rules if this will not interfere the movement towards the liberalization of market relations.

Further decrease of protectionism against import and taxation of agricultural products export may create fiscal dilemma for many agrarian countries which use the acquired incomes on the needs of the state investment. In the southern countries of Africa the taxes on trade are about the fourth of all state earnings, in the countries of Asia and Pacific region this figure equals 15%. Agriculture stays to be a dominant sector of economy in the majority of agrarian countries and will continue to increase the earnings of central and local governments in accordance with the level of economic development. The four key principles which should be applied in the taxation of the agrarian sphere are still in power.

They include the absence of discrimination measures, minimization of productivity losses, the presence of the effective system of taxation and the possibilities of its application.

Agriculture should not pay taxes which are higher than in other sectors of economy and they should be built into the system of general tax on added value, on incomes and on profit. Taxes of the ready-made products and the consumption of supplies in production should be minimal. Taxes on land may considerably reduce losses in efficiency and stimulate production but in the countries of agrarian type they usually are not used. The tax on produced products may be changed by consumer taxes (on sale or added value) but that is acceptable for the countries that have administrative possibilities to introduce the taxes.

The potential for the introduction of new taxation schemes will take many years. At the transitional stage in order to provide financial earnings it is possible to use taxation of products and intermediate materials.

Although recent data present a contradictive picture of movement towards alternative sources of earnings it allows making the conclusion of how to contract the reduction of income from trade. The developed countries renewed everything they had lost during trade reforms. The countries with medium income retained from 45 to 60 cents from every dollar of not-retained income. The low-developed countries retained only 30 cents of a dollar [10]. But the experience of the low-developed countries is various. Malawi, Uganda and Senegal could renew a considerable part of the lost earnings to the budget.

The useful fact here might be the expansion of taxation base due to the reduction of the number of various tax preferences, simplification of the system of calculating rates in the improvement of financial administration and also excise taxes and expansion of VAT base on the sphere of consumption. On the contrary, the systems of calculation of the size of added value with the diversity of tax rates and weak administrative potential make the renovation tempos very slow. The trade reform may condition a parallel conduction of additional national tax reforms and considerable improvement of the quality of state assignments on agriculture.

The degree of increase of proposition from the side of small farms in return to trade reforms and price policy is characterized by the quality of rural infrastructure (roads, transport, energy supply, telecommunications), markets, financing of the agrarian sector and scientific research. In the areas where these elements are poorly developed they need additional investments to have benefits from the reforms.

On the other side, if these non-price factors are present but the internal macroeconomic and branch policy slows down the stimuli to produce, then the corresponding reaction from the side of the proposition may be inconsiderable. Many countries with the agrarian type of economy non-price elements are badly developed and need significant investments especially into market infrastructure, institutes, research and services of experience and knowledge dissemination and investment of natural resources management. In order to use agriculture in the interests of development such investments will be in long-term plan more important than trade reforms.

State assignments are often drawn out of the sphere of these long-term investment needs and are directed on subsidizing of agriculture. The subsidies are in most cases non-effective and often lead to the waste of resources. They are also expensive for farmers in the terms of lost possibilities and incomes. And in the cases of long-term investments into the main capital there is usually little money for the support of its functionality and servicing which provide the stability of investments.

Agricultural subsidies are considered here as payments from the state budget on most important products of individual consumption such as materials that are used in agricultural production. The subsidies may help to overcome temporary failures of markets (in the frames of more general strategies), decrease constant costs on infrastructure and to minimize risks. But they are rarely used for these goals bringing benefits to big farmers and often they are difficult to be cancelled. All this leads to the inefficient and irrational usage of resources.

Thus, the issue of the quality of state costs (the efficiency of resources usage) is often more important than the issue of their volumes.

Conclusion. So, the key elements which are on the agenda of the nearest future should facilitate further correction of prices through trade reforms and internal policy. Then the additional tax reformation will allow compensating the losses of incomes from trade and make reinvestments into this sector, providing quality increase in state payments. It will also support additional programmes to ease the transformation process and wide-scale investments into social needs which in its turn stimulate sustainable and long-term growth.

Thus, the costs for carrying out current trade strategies which are defined by traditional instruments of market regulation (import quotas, export subsidies, direct support of farmers) as a disparity of internal and external marks of the development of national agricultural systems are paid by the developing as well as by the developed countries. The results of the complete liberalization of the world food market will be its restructuring in favour to the presence of developing countries, increase of tempos of growth of agricultural systems in the conditions of growing world prices on agricultural products. The presented variant of further agricultural development politicizes the problem of the state and international regulation of the branch. It makes developed countries, even in the conditions of growing prices of agro-protectionism, to take anti-liberalization measures which stimulates the growth of economic importance of not one-sided (for example under WTO guidance) but two-sided international agreements in the sphere of trade of agricultural products. This leads to changes in the infrastructure of global liberalization (functions of international organizations, legal norms, and material basis) which is more active in the chain of industrial spheres and services.

In the conclusion we may state that the national food safety is realized as the most important condition of the state sovereignty, its internal policy as a serious measure of its independence in the international relations.

It may concern only countries that have a corresponding agricultural potential and they are able to keep the system of self-sufficiency due to the creation of necessary economic conditions.

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