

Territorial Food Markets in Ukraine: Insights from Smallholders and Consumers

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Abstract

This study investigates local territorial food markets in Ukraine, examining their role in supporting smallholder producers and ensuring people access to safe, diverse food. The research addresses the lack of data on local markets and aims to provide evidence-based insights for policy, advocacy, and planning, with particular attention to vulnerabilities revealed by the ongoing war. The analysis focuses on Kyiv, a major metropolitan center, and Zhytomyr, a smaller regional city, capturing diverse local conditions. The study employs an adapted FAO methodology, which includes preliminary market analysis and structured questionnaires for sellers and buyers, and additionally draws on supplementary unstructured interviews to capture local insights. Across Kyiv and Zhytomyr, 25 markets were examined, with interviews conducted at 19 sites. The methodology was minimally adjusted to account for local conditions while maintaining comparability with international approaches. Findings demonstrate that local markets are resilient and adaptive, providing both economic and social functions. Smallholder producers face challenges in accessing sales channels, with some relying on informal markets and others formalizing trade. Consumers, particularly vulnerable ones, value direct interaction, product choice, and quality assurance. Short supply chains, which are direct producer-to-consumer links, have proven essential during the war, supporting food security and the right to food. This is particularly important for strengthening resilience in crisis-affected territories. The study highlights the need for targeted support from authorities to maintain markets with producer-sellers, improving producers' access to sales channels and consumers' access to safe, affordable local food. The adaptation of the FAO methodology offers a framework for systematic monitoring and planning of territorial food markets, contributing to resilient local food systems in Ukraine.

Keywords: territorial food markets, short food supply chains, smallholder producers, right to food

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