

Current state of food security in China on the way of sustainability

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Food security is a crucial issue for China, as it is the foundation of national stability and the cornerstone of the people's well-being. The Communist Party of China and the Chinese government have always placed great emphasis on food security, adhering to a national strategy that ensures basic self-sufficiency in food and absolute safety in staple grains. This is to guarantee that the nation's food supply remains stable and secure, and to ensure that the Chinese people always have enough food to eat.

Food security is interconnected to a sustainable economy because:

- a stable food supply ensures that a nation can feed its population, reducing the risk of hunger, malnutrition, and social unrest. This stability is essential for sustained economic growth, as a well-nourished population is more productive and capable of contributing to the economy;
- it helps to efficient water use, soil conservation, and reduced reliance on chemical inputs, help preserve natural resources. This ensures that agricultural systems remain viable for future generations, supporting long-term economic sustainability;
- some agricultural practices, such as crop diversification and agroecology, can mitigate the impacts of climate change, ensuring food production remains resilient in the face of extreme weather events and shifting growing conditions.
- it can reduce food waste. Addressing food waste through sustainable practices can improve food security while reducing economic losses and environmental degradation;
- sustainable agriculture can boost rural economies by creating jobs, improving livelihoods, and reducing poverty. This contributes to a more balanced and inclusive economic growth model [1]

Over the past two decades (2000-2023), spanning the 10th Five-Year Plan and the 14th Five-Year Plan, with the increase in residents' income, the urbanization rate from 36.2% to 65.8%, and the change in lifestyle, Chinese residents' consumption patterns and dietary structures have changed significantly from "eating enough" to "eating well", from "quantity-oriented" to "quality-oriented".

Since 1978, China's food security policy framework has undergone significant evolution through four distinct phases: institutional reform (1978-1984), marketization (1985-1992), industrialization (1993-2003), and modernization (2004-2023). This progression reflects the country's adaptability and commitment to ensuring food security, with current policies emphasizing comprehensive support systems and technological innovation.

The consumption of staple food has dropped significantly: the per capita consumption of grains has dropped from 198.7kg in 2000 to 98.5kg in 2023, a decrease of 50.4%, reflecting the residents' shift from the traditional "quantity-oriented" to "quality-oriented". Optimization of protein intake structure: Meat consumption increased from 18.7kg in 2000 to 27.6kg in 2023, an increase of 47.6%. Poultry egg consumption increased from 6.8kg to 8.0kg, maintaining steady growth. Dairy product consumption increased significantly from 4.0kg to 19.1kg, an increase of 377.5%. Dietary structure tends to be balanced: Vegetable consumption remained relatively

stable, with a small adjustment from 109.1kg to 96.3kg, indicating that residents' diet is more scientific and reasonable [2].

For China, ensuring food security through sustainable practices is a strategic priority. The government has implemented policies to promote green agriculture, reduce food waste, and enhance climate resilience, aligning food security with the broader goals of economic sustainability and ecological protection. The government has responded to these challenges by promoting healthier dietary habits and improving the nutritional quality of food. The Chinese Dietary Guidelines, revised in 2022, recommend a balanced diet that includes a variety of foods, with an emphasis on whole grains, fruits, and vegetables. The guidelines also encourage the consumption of lean meats, fish, and dairy products in moderation.

In the context of China, the nation's food distribution system is characterized by a high degree of centralization, wherein the government assumes a pivotal and overarching role in the entire process. This encompasses the critical stages of procurement, where the government actively acquires food supplies; storage, where it meticulously manages the preservation of these supplies; and distribution, where it ensures that food reaches various regions and populations in a timely and balanced manner.

This approach reflects China's commitment to building a modern socialist society that balances economic growth with environmental stewardship. This multifaceted strategy demonstrates China's commitment to building a resilient and sustainable food security system capable of meeting the needs of its large population while adapting to emerging challenges in the global food landscape.

References

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