

Export and Import Indicators of Georgian Agri-food Products during the Pandemic: Challenges and Opportunities

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Abstract : Introduction. The paper analyzes the main indicators of export and import of Georgian agri-food products; identifies positive and negative trends under the pandemic; based on the revealed problems substantiates the need for modernization of the agri-food sector. It is argued that low production and productivity rates of food products negatively impact achieving the optimal export-to-import ratio; therefore, it leads to increased dependence on other countries and reduces the level of food security. Research objectives. The objective of the research is to identify the key challenges based on the analysis of export-import indicators of Georgian food products during the pandemic period and develop recommendations on the possibilities of post-pandemic perspectives. Research methods. Various theoretical and methodological research tools are used in the paper; in particular, a desk research is carried out on the research topic; endogenous and exogenous variables affecting export and import are determined through factor analysis; SWOT and PESTEL analysis are used to identify development opportunities; selection and grouping of data, identification of similarities and differences is carried out by using analysis, synthesis, sampling, induction and other methods; a qualitative study is conducted based on a survey of agri-food experts and exporters for clarifying the factors that impede export-import flows. Contributions. The factors that impede the export of Georgian agri-food products in the short run under COVID-19 pandemic are identified. These are: reduced income of farmers, delays in the supply of raw materials and supplies to the agri-food sector from the neighboring industries, as well as in harvesting, processing, marketing, transportation, and other sectors; increased indirect costs, etc. The factors that impede the export in the long run areas follows loss of public confidence in the industry, risk of losing positions in traditional markets, etc. Conclusions are made on the problems in the field of export and import of Georgian agri-food products in terms of the pandemic; development opportunities are evaluated based on the analysis of the agri-food sector potential. Recommendations on the development opportunities for export and import of Georgian agri-food products in the post-pandemic period are proposed.

Keywords : agri-food products, export, and import, pandemic period, hindering factor, development potential

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