

MARKETING RESEARCH OF THE AGRO-FOOD MARKET OF LUHANSK REGION: THE BASIS FOR ENCOURAGING FOREIGN INVESTMENTS IN OVERCOMING THE CONSEQUENCES OF A MILITARY CONFLICT

Formulation of the problem. The overcoming of the consequences of the military conflict in the Donbas in its economic component is only possible under the conditions of elaboration of a system of scientific and practical measures aimed at ensuring effective production and commercial activities in the Luhansk and Donetsk oblasts of domestic business entities. The reality is that Ukraine itself is not in a position to ensure the overcoming of the consequences of a military conflict. This will require comprehensive and extensive assistance from the international community. However, this kind of cooperation can only begin with the availability of such elaborate measures that are built into clear and transparent Projects and Programs with the necessary derivative mechanisms for implementation.

According to the economic structure of the regional subcomplex controlled by Ukraine in the Luhansk region, it has a far-reaching agro-food orientation. Therefore, it is quite logical that the development of appropriate scientific and practical measures should be based on comprehensive marketing researches of the regional agro-food market.

Analysis of the scientific study of the problem under investigation. Theoretical, methodological, and scientific and practical basis for the development of this problem are the fundamental positions of F. Kotler [1] and J.-J. Lamben [2]. S. Kosenkov sufficiently thoroughly worked out not only the general content of marketing research, but also the relevant applied aspects: the method of their conduct and a certain toolkit [3]. N. Butenko [4] and V. Ratinsky [5] focused on marketing researches of industrial goods.

As for the development of marketing research problems at the regional level (and especially regional agro-food markets), they were only launched in Ukraine in recent years. I. Budnykevich, I. Havrysh and N. Popadinets discovered their theoretical, methodological and predictive components and prospects for use in order to increase the attractiveness of the regions [6; 7].

Market researches of the agro-food markets of Luhansk region and Donetsk region in the conditions of the military conflict and post-war Donbas – in general, are only beginning to take shape. There are reasons to believe that their works may be considered as their starting basis, which are sponsored by entire research teams under the direction of V. Gorbunin, E. Libanova and O. Amosha [8; 9], as well as some domestic scientists –

M. Kisil [10], A. Kolosov [11], V. Chebotarov [12]. However, a fairly wide range of such approaches and assessments should be taken into account. Therefore, the promising proposal of a group of scientists of the Institute of Industrial Economics of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine under the leadership of O. Amosha on the development of the Concept of the State Target Program for the Restoration and Peace Building in the Eastern regions of Ukraine with the submission of the corresponding substantiated Project [13] deserves all possible support.

The purpose of the article is to reflect the conclusions of the comprehensive marketing research of the agro-food market of Luhansk region for the purpose of the subsequent substantiation of proposals to international charitable organizations regarding the development and implementation of their grant policy in helping to overcome consequences of the military conflict in agro-food sector of Donbas.

Presentation of the main material of the article.

Comprehensive marketing research of the agro-food market of the Luhansk region was conducted by the NGO "Resurs. Help. Development." In October-December 2017 with the encouragement of the teaching staff and students of the Chair of Economic Theory, Marketing, and Entrepreneurship of the Luhansk Taras Shevchenko National University.

The appeal of this Public organization to the Chair of Economic Theory, Marketing, and Entrepreneurship of LNU was not accidental. In addition to many years of work on the agro-food and world economic issues chair [14], since 2015 on its basis, with the involvement of lecturers of other higher educational institutions of Ukraine, there is a communication and consulting center of several leading international non-governmental charity organizations. The arsenal of this center is a scientific and practical support for the development and implementation of business plans of beneficiaries of international charitable organizations in the field of micro-entrepreneurship, development of advertising products and activities of international organizations in the field of public relations in the context of charitable donations in the Donbas [12; 15].

The main goal of this complex marketing research of the agro-food market of the Luhansk region is to justify proposals for international investors to identify the priority directions, forms and volumes of charitable aid

in the industrial and commercial chain "regional producer – trade and distribution chain – end consumers" in order to improve the socio-economic and institutional status of the region.

Methodical tools for conducting this study were three to a certain extent separate, but coordinated and complementary research - the constituent components.

The first is an analysis of potential opportunities and corresponding resource needs of producers of agro-food products of the Luhansk region in the sphere of small and mid-sized businesses in order to increase volumes and expand the range of these products (an integral part in determining the prospects for creating new jobs) – the B2B market.

The second: an assessment of the prospects of the trading enterprises operating in the region to increase the volume of sales of food products of regional producers – producers of the Luhansk region (B2B market).

The third. Analysis of the preferences of end-user consumers in the Luhansk oblast concerning the purchase of food products from regional producers (B2C market).

The methodological support for the implementation of integrated marketing research was made up of three separate questionnaires (in accordance with the specified components - components), developed by specialists of the NGO and teachers of the department. These questionnaires included cross-cutting questions for each group of respondents regarding certain areas of production, marketing and consumption of food products. In addition to the questionnaires for the first and second components, additional questionnaires for personal in-depth interviews (respectively, for producers of agricultural products and trade enterprises selling food products) were further developed.

The questionnaires and interviews-interviews on the three research-components compiled cover all 12 administrative-territorial districts of the Luhansk region, which are controlled by Ukraine. Given the complexity of each of the research – components, the first and the second of them were carried out only by experts of NGO "Resource. Help. Development". The third study – the component (and also – the economics-mathematical processing of the collected material for the first two components) was conducted by the students of the Educational and Scientific Institute of Economics and Business of the Luhansk Taras Shevchenko National University (mainly in the fields of Marketing and Economics) under the guidance of volunteer lecturers. In order to provide an appropriate level of field marketing research, students were trained and briefed on each of them on the corporate letterhead of the NGO "Resurs. Help. Development." With the signature of the head of the organization with the "wet stamp" was given a description of the purpose of this Project with the contact data of the responsible lecturers of the department.

The questionnaire for analyzing and evaluating the preferences of consumers - end consumers of food products was carried out according to a questionnaire containing 14 questions (mostly in the open form) – with the number of possible answers from 3 to 7. It was conducted by students through a personal interview at places of purchase – production of food products, as well as visiting buyers at their place of residence and / or at their workplaces by students-interviewers.

In order to ensure the objectivity and representativeness of the findings of marketing research, much attention was paid to determining its sample. After elaborating several approaches, the methodology specifically developed for the research of the food market [16] was used for the basis. In accordance with this method, calculation of sample was carried out according to the formula (1):

$$SS = \frac{Z^2 \times (p) \times (1 - p)}{c^2}, \quad (1)$$

where Z – Z factor (for 95%);

p – percentage of respondents interested or answers;

c – confidence interval in decimal form.

In this case, the general population, in this case, the amount of population in the territory of Luhansk oblast, which Ukraine controls, was calculated as the number of available population of the territory. For this, the materials of the Ministry for Temporary Occupied Territories and Internally Displaced Persons [17] were used. The estimated sample size of consumer preferences for end consumers of food products was 475 people.

In order to ensure the representativeness of the sample, the share of different categories of questioned buyers corresponded to their specific weight from the total population of the Luhansk region. In particular, apart from the actual internally displaced persons, the inhabitants living: in the cities of regional submission (Severodonetsk, Rubizhne, Lisichansk) were allocated; in district centers; in urban-type settlements; in countryside. The specific weight of these categories of inhabitants of the oblast was calculated on the basis of data from the Main Directorate of Statistics in the Luhansk oblast [18].

According to the results of the marketing research, it was found that significantly more purchases of Luhansk region, compared with imported food products from other regions of Ukraine and countries, prefer to products of regional producers. This indicator varies a little over the selected product groups.

Thus, the share of buyers who prefer local vegetables, fruits and berries is about 72%; milk and dairy products – 70%; meat and meat products – over 60%. (Fig.).

However, in general, such perception of local food products is characteristic of all isolated consumer groups: both in the place of residence and in terms of welfare.

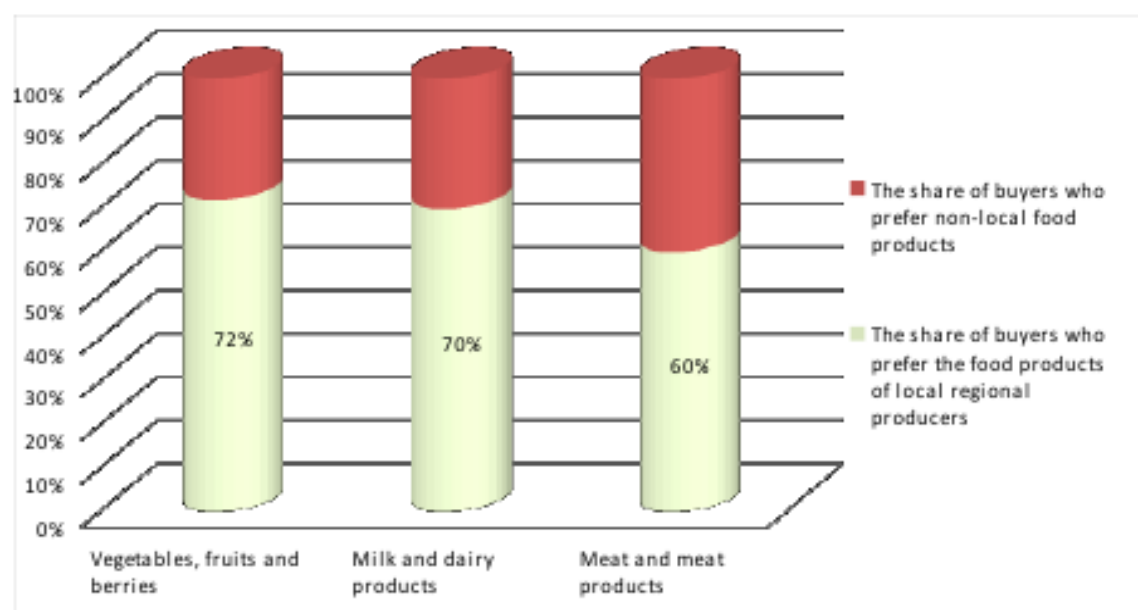


Fig. Consumer preferences of buyers of Luhansk region concerning local and imported foodstuffs

At the same time, it was frankly unexpected that, after three and a half years of life in a counter-terrorist operation, about 75% of consumers in the Luhansk region identify themselves as average welfare buyers; 10% – as buyers with a high level of well-being and only 15% – as citizens with a low level of well-being. However, the given self-identification of buyers has received a rather vivid confirmation of respondents' answers to other questions (indirectly specifying and to a certain extent – veiled) questionnaires.

The first. More than 63% of the region's customers consider the quality of goods and their convenient packaging and packaging (and not the price) as the main factor when buying food products. According to generally accepted in the modern world marketing approach, for 80% of the population with low welfare the prevailing factor when buying goods is the price, not the quality of goods and other derivative properties of the product itself [1; 2].

The second. Remaining supporters of local food products, over 67% of consumers consider their quality of food products to be the main drawback (and not uncompetitive price, or – something else at the discretion of the questioned).

The results of the study confirmed the expectation that for most buyers, the main places of purchase of food products remain traditional markets, bazaars and stores selling goods under the traditional scheme – "through the counter". It is significant that even in cities of regional subordination, where the stores of several leading national retail networks – "ATB", "Silpo", "Velyka Kyshenya" and "Brushnichka", as well as several regional trading networks (and that is characteristic – even for buyers with quite high income level) supermarkets for 57% of buyers, at best, "occupy" only the second-third position (Table).

Table

Ranking of places for food products' purchase by consumers of Luhansk region

Places for the purchase of food products	Fruits and vegetables	Meat and meat products	Milk and dairy products
Traditional market-bazaars	1	1	1
Small wholesale bases	3	5	6
Supermarkets	2	2	2
Corporate distribution and itinerant peddling by manufacturing enterprises	4	4	3
"Small architectural form" shops	3	3	4
Street trade of small producers	5	6	5

It should be noted that the most popular on the given sign is a separate commodity position – vegetables, fruit and berries in supermarkets are bought by only 47% of buyers. Meat and meat products and milk and dairy products to a greater extent in the industrial cities of the region, which already have a much higher level of trade service, are not bought in supermarkets: in traditional bazaars markets, in stores selling "through the counter" and in places of street trade of small producers.

As for district centers, urban-type settlements and rural areas, there are 60-70% (by different product groups) in the general market, the leaders of the purchase and sale of food products are traditional markets-bazaars, small-scale bases (such place for food products' purchasing initially wasn't planned for indication as a possible answer) and street trade of small producers.

At the same time, we consider it necessary to take into account the following important fact that objectively "provoked" buyers of the Luhansk region not to speak of supermarkets: in modern conditions, even the most powerful and in terms of the number of stores, and in terms of sales, the trading network in the region (such is "ATB") has launched activities not even in all regional centers of the region. At the same time, the mental "attraction" of consumers of Luhansk region to the former classical forms of the sale and purchase of food products is quite obvious (this is a common and persistent phenomenon in general for post-Soviet countries).

The survey did not reveal the unique advantages of the region's buyers regarding the propensity to buy semi-finished goods. On this basis, supporters of such food products are about as much as those who prefer traditional cooking. However, somewhat unexpected was the fact that in rural areas, semimanufactured goods already enjoy approximately the same popularity as in industrial cities (the advantage in favor of the latter is fixed within the statistical error). It was also unexpected that among buyers with high, middle and low welfare, about 50% of buyers tend (or – do not refuse) to buy semimanufactured food products.

Buyers of Luhansk oblast were extremely solid in their reluctance to support local food producers at their own expense. Those who wanted were less than 3%, which is generally within the limits of statistical error. Again, it makes sense to note this feature of a mental nature: in developed countries, buyers are, to a certain extent (and at their own expense) inclined to further support local food producers (there is a rather widespread readiness of buyers, especially in Australia and Switzerland, at 3-5-7% pay more for local goods, provided the same quality with competitors' goods from other regions and countries).

Quite contradictory should be considered buyers' answers to the last question of the questionnaire: regarding the perception of the largest deficit in regional food products by certain commodity groups (subject to the

openness of this issue). About 72% of buyers consider milk and dairy products as the biggest deficit; 70% – meat and meat products; 66% – vegetables, fruits, berries and melons. The controversy here is that the most expected deficit was the commodity position of meat products (almost 100% except for supermarkets, imported from the neighboring Kharkiv region, mainly the products of the meat processing plants "Ukrainsky" and "Saltivsky").

The results of the conducted comprehensive marketing research confirm the general conclusion about the crisis stage of the agro-food market of Ukraine. On the background of certain positive phenomena and trends that have begun to gain momentum in recent years, in general, the Ukrainian agro-food market is characterized by its deep structural deformation, dependence on the situation of world commodity and financial markets, raw material orientation, incapacity of the state regulatory policy, decrease of purchasing power the main sections of the population.

With regard to the agro-food market of Donbas, in particular – part of the Luhansk region controlled by Ukraine, the above-mentioned crisis phenomena are even more heightened and actualized.

Processing of the collected materials of complex marketing research (directly – questionnaires, as well as generalization of in-depth surveys of commodity producers and entrepreneurs of the trade sphere) are the basis for classification of additional problems of the agro-food market of the region. They largely arose as a result of a military conflict (or – exclusively as a result of a military conflict).

The first. Significant collapse of local agro-food product markets for regional commodity producers.

The second. The deterioration of the quality of agribusiness products of regional commodity producers (primarily – vegetables and goods of animal origin).

The third. Significant increase on the regional market of the share of imported goods from other regions of the country and other countries of the world.

The fourth. Strengthening of the raw material orientation of commodity producers' economic activity and, as a consequence, the scarcity of local deep-processed and high value-added food products.

The fifth. The loss of small-scale trade in agro-food products and the critical condition of road transport.

Conclusions from the presented research. The generalizations of the comprehensive marketing research on the agro-food market conducted on the basis of the conducted Luhansk region ground the following.

The military conflict has largely transformed the content and problems of the regional agro-food market: its main limiting factor, unlike other regions of Ukraine (except to a certain extent, the Donetsk region), focuses not on the scale of production (although the majority of food products are also underused by citizens and irrational structure of nutrition in general), but in the area of

purely market (marketing) problems. They are reduced to where and how to sell what is produced (and potentially produced).

So, in modern conditions in Luhansk region in the agro-food sector, the main problem is the infrastructure provision of the regional market. This problem has become so urgent, which has become a significant constraining factor not only for the production of agricultural products but also for the social development of the region.

The prospects for further development of this problematics are the elaboration of specific proposals for international charitable organizations for the formulation of their grant policy to assist in overcoming the consequences of the military conflict in the Donbas: substantiation of promising areas of cooperation with the local business community in the region; identification of priority business ideas aimed at solving isolated problems, as well as the most effective forms, mechanisms and volumes of assistance on priority business ideas.

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Чеботаров Є. В. Маркетингові дослідження агропродовольчого ринку Луганської області: підґрунтя заохочення іноземних інвестицій у подоланні наслідків військового конфлікту

У статті представлено загальні висновки проведеного Громадською організацією «Ресурс. Допо-

мога. Розвиток» за участю викладачів та студентів кафедри економічної теорії, маркетингу та підприємництва Луганського національного університету імені Тараса Шевченка комплексного маркетингового дослідження агропродовольчого ринку Луганської області в умовах військового конфлікту на Донбасі. На основі опрацювання проведеного анкетування та інтерв'ю з товаровиробниками, суб'єктами господарської діяльності торговельного сектора та кінцевими споживачами продовольчих товарів класифіковані основні проблеми сучасного регіонального агропродовольчого ринку Луганської області. На підґрунті визначених проблем розроблено пропозиції для міжнародних благодійних організацій щодо організації та практичної реалізації їх грантової політики, спрямованої на подолання наслідків військового конфлікту.

Ключові слова: Луганська область, регіональний агропродовольчий ринок, комплексне маркетингове дослідження, військовий конфлікт, громадська організація, міжнародна благодійність, подолання наслідків військового конфлікту.

Чеботарев Е. В. Маркетинговые исследования агропродовольственного рынка Луганской области: основы поощрения иностранных инвестиций в преодолении последствий военного конфликта

В статье представлены общие выводы проведенного Общественной организацией «Ресурс. Помощь. Развитие» с участием преподавателей и студентов кафедры экономической теории, маркетинга и предпринимательства Луганского национального университета имени Тараса Шевченко комплексного маркетингового исследования агропродовольственного рынка Луганской области в условиях военного конфликта на Донбассе. На основе обработки проведенного анкетирования и интервью с товаропроизводителями, субъектами хозяйственной деятельности торгового сектора и конечными потребителями продовольственных товаров классифици-

рованы основные проблемы современного регионального агропродовольственного рынка Луганской области. На основе определенных проблем разработаны предложения для международных благотворительных организаций по организации и практической реализации их грантовой политики, направленной на преодоление последствий военного конфликта.

Ключевые слова: Луганская область, региональный агропродовольственный рынок, комплексное маркетинговое исследование, военный конфликт, общественная организация, международная благотворительность, преодоление последствий военного конфликта.

Chebotarov Ie. Marketing research of the agro-food market of Luhansk region: the basis for encouraging foreign investments in overcoming the consequences of a military conflict

The article presents the general conclusions of the conducted by NGO "Resource. Help. Development" with the involvement of lecturers and students of the Chair of Economic Theory, Marketing and Entrepreneurship of the Lugansk Taras Shevchenko National University integrated marketing research of the agro-food market of Luhansk region in the conditions of the military conflict in the Donbas. Based on the elaboration of questionnaires and interviews with commodity producers, business entities of the trading sector and end consumers of food products, the main problems of the modern regional agro-food market of Lugansk region have been classified. On the basis of the identified problems proposals for international charitable organizations have been worked out on the organization and practical implementation of their grant policy in helping to overcome the consequences of a military conflict.

Keywords: Luhansk region, regional agro-food market, complex marketing research, military conflict, public organization, international charity, overcoming the consequences of military conflict.

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