

Optimization of the agricultural sector in France to suppress malnutrition
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Improving nutrition and reducing these costs requires a multisectoral approach that begins with food and agriculture and includes complementary interventions in public health and education. The traditional role of agriculture in producing food and generating income is fundamental, but the entire food system – from inputs and production, through processing, storage, transport and retailing, to consumption – can contribute much more to the eradication of malnutrition. [2] France is the biggest agricultural manufacturer in the EU. Even though its agriculture employs only 6 % of the labour force and represents only 2 % of GDP, it is one of the most dynamic industries in the country. Food processing industry achieved sales of some 122 billion euros in 2002. With about 400.000 employees in 2001 the food industry was the first largest employer in French manufacturing. Dairy products in France posted a trade surplus of 7.7 billion euros and grain trade increased at 1.4 billion euros. [1] The directors of hyper- and supermarkets and manufacturers regularly organize monitoring of the customers' food needs and willings. In this way consumers ultimately determine what they eat and therefore what the food system produces. [2] But nevertheless a person may be undernourished due to a lack of essential vitamins and minerals provided by a diverse diet or to an illness that limits the absorption of nutrients.

Improving the nutrition of women of childbearing age and young children is critical. Poor nutrition during the 1000 day period from conception through the first two years of life adversely affects the development of the child's brain and body, severely compromising growth, learning, and future health and productivity. Women make daily food production and consumption decisions for their families. Women are much more likely than men to spend additional income on food and healthcare, so increasing women's income is likely to have a proportionally greater impact on children's health and nutrition. [3] Agricultural policies and research must continue to support productivity growth for staple foods while paying greater attention to nutrient-dense foods and more sustainable production systems. Traditional and modern supply chains can enhance the availability of a variety of nutritious foods and reduce nutrient waste and losses. Better governance of food systems at all levels, facilitated by high-level political support, is needed to build a common vision, to support evidence-based policies, and to promote effective coordination and collaboration through integrated action. [2]

References:

1. "France", "La documentation Française", Paris - 2005, 228 pages.
2. "The State of Food and Agriculture 2013" // FAO.org
3. <http://carleton.ca/curo/wp-content/uploads/Ag-Nutrition-Request-for-LOI-1.pdf>