Conceptual paper

An innovative approach to food security policy in developing countries

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Received 23 December 2015
Accepted 18 January 2016
Available online xxx

JEL classification:
F63
O11
O12
O13
Q18

Keywords:
Innovativeness
Food security model
Developing countries

ABSTRACT

The article describes and analyzes the innovative concept of food security policy and presents theoretical microeconomic model of food security by Abdulai (2000) that explains individuals’ demand for food ingredients. The literature review involves both direct and indirect policy measures that ensure food security in developing countries. These policies involve direct interventions involving structural changes in relative prices and targeted food subsidies, and indirect measures such as improving agricultural infrastructure, the general economic environment, and providing farmers with new farm technologies to increase food production. The manuscript shows the efforts several food security policy researchers have put to examine policy options and their impacts on food security.

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Enfoque innovador a la política de seguridad alimentaria en los países en vías de desarrollo

RESUMEN

El presente artículo describe y analiza el concepto innovador de política de seguridad alimentaria. Y también presenta un modelo teórico microeconómico de seguridad alimentaria creado por Abdulai (2000), que explica la demanda individual de ingredientes alimenticios. El estudio de la bibliografía incluye las medidas políticas tanto directas como indirectas, que garantizan la seguridad alimentaria de los países en desarrollo. Estas políticas incluyen intervenciones directas que conllevan cambios estructurales en precios relativos y...
Introduction

The twenty-first century is replete with uncertainty and complexity: game-changing trends are transforming the world. Indeed, uncertainty will be a key feature of the 21st century. Global trends affect regions, countries, industries, and even firms in heterogeneous ways. These trends entail both challenges and opportunities (Guillén & Ontiveros, 2012).

Food-borne disease remains a real and formidable problem in both developed and developing countries, causing great human suffering and significant economic losses. Dangerous pathogens and contaminants in food are on the increase as travel and tourism grow. Up to one-third of the population of developed countries may be affected by food-borne diseases each year, and the problem is likely to be even more widespread in developing countries. Pathogens have been the leading cause of food-borne poisoning or illness. Companies and governments lose in billions, if food-borne illness is widespread and food scams and scandals are exposed. This may also lead to bankruptcy and companies’ liquidations.

Germany dominates the market and is the fastest growing European food safety testing market followed by United Kingdom. Recent food price hikes and the global economic crisis left their mark, as the number of hungry and malnourished people increases worldwide, particularly in developing countries. Evidence shows that about 902 million people in the developing world were malnourished in 2008, reflecting an increase of about 65 million since 2000–2002 (FAO, 2009). The latest estimates indicate that about 795 million people in the world – just over one in nine – were undernourished in 2014–16. Changes in large populous countries, notably China and India, play a large part in explaining the overall hunger reduction trends in the developing regions (FAO, 2015).

The impact of the declines in household income from the global economic downturn has been compounded by the relatively high food prices in many developing countries, resulting in further increases in the number of undernourished households in developing countries. This development makes it increasingly difficult to achieve the first millennium development goal (MDG) of halving the number of hungry people by 2015. Fanzo et al. (2010) identify lack of political will at both global and national levels as the major cause of the growing divergence from this important MDG. Although food insecurity had attracted little attention in the media and political agendas of developed countries during the last decades, the situation changed in 2008 as riots over higher food prices occurred throughout the developing world (Falcon & Naylor, 2005; Fanzo et al., 2010). The rising numbers of food-insecure persons and global insecurity contribute to renewing international interest in food security policies of developing countries.

Food security involves ensuring both an adequate supply of food and access of the population to that sully, mostly through generating adequate levels of effective demand via income growth or transfers. Both micro and macro factors include adoption of new technologies, fiscal and exchange rate policies that affect overall economic growth and income distribution influence on food security in developing countries. The policies associate with food security and usually involve structural changes in relative prices, the general economic environment, and other measures such as targeted food subsidies, improving technologies, and institutions available to farmers and consumers (Weber, Staatz, Holtzman, Crawford, & Bernsten, 1988). Policymakers often confront the dilemma of higher food prices to induce increase of food production and the food security of low-income consumers, as higher prices impose a heavy cost on this group of consumers. Governments use a variety of short and long term policy options to promote food security in the developing world. Some measures affect food availability on local markets, others the individuals entitlements to obtain food, while others tend to influence food utilization, i.e., how many nutrients an individual obtains from a given supply of food. Developing countries use the concept of food security and the various approaches to promote food security. A simple microeconomic model of food security develops and discusses the operational issues on food security strategies. Mellor (1978) maintains that an employment program, or an income transfer program for the poor or improve their food status, will be inefficient in assisting them unless provision is made for an enlarged supply of basic food commodities. Thus, policies geared at improving food security should include both income generation and food production measures. Modern food security policy comes into being at the turn of the twentieth century in response to scandals in the meat packing and food processing industries (Sinclair & Baldwin, 1996). Command and control forms of security regulation characterize the first generation of food security law. Early twentieth century industrial management practices such as continuous line inspection, visual product inspection, and detailed specification of approved hygiene practices influence on national food security policy. At the heart of this second generation of food security policy is an emerging global consensus on the need for a preventive, public-health-focused policy that fosters integrated management of food-borne hazards from farm to fork. This consensus calls for use of modern science-based risk management instruments that enhance efficiency.
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