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ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL RISKS OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION AND WAYS TO REDUCE THEM

In the context of today's challenges related to climate change, globalization and war, Ukraine's agricultural production faces numerous environmental and social risks that require immediate solutions.

Given the current state of society and global risks, the environmental aspects of sustainable development in agribusiness are of particular importance. Key aspects of environmental risks of agricultural production in Ukraine:

1. Climate change and weather patterns: Extreme weather events can negatively impact crop yields and production. Land, floods, droughts, and other weather disasters can lead to significant losses.
2. Soil and water contamination: The use of pesticides, mineral fertilizers, and other chemicals can lead to soil and water contamination. This can affect product quality and consumer health.
3. Biodiversity loss: Reduced plant and animal diversity can lead to the loss of natural resources and an increased risk of disease.
4. Environmental crises and disasters: For example, accidents in chemical plants, leaks of toxic substances, soil and water pollution can have a serious impact on agribusiness.
5. To mitigate these risks, farmers and the government should work together to implement sustainable practices, use environmentally friendly technologies, and conserve natural resources. It is also important to ensure effective control over the use of chemicals and the implementation of environmental standards.

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The social risks of agricultural production in Ukraine in 2024 have several aspects that should be taken into account:

1. Impact of the war on the agricultural sector: The war significantly complicates agricultural production, as farmers cannot quickly move their activities elsewhere. This poses risks to the safety of employees and the ability to run a household.

2. Adapting to wartime: Farmers are forced to adapt to new conditions, which includes changes in planning and resource use. Studies show that about 41% of agricultural producers consider the 2024 sowing campaign difficult.

3. Economic difficulties: Forced austerity and the abandonment of fertilizers during the 2024 sowing season indicate the economic difficulties faced by farmers [2].

4. Changes in the structure of acreage: Forecasts indicate a decrease in the yield of major crops by 12-17% and changes in crops for sowing.

5. Logistics and sales of products: Difficulties with logistics and sales of products due to hostilities and blocking of transport routes [3].

6. Social stability: Instability in a country can lead to an outflow of labor and a decrease in employee motivation.

To reduce social risks, it is important to provide support to farmers, including financial assistance, access to resources and information on safe farming practices. It is also necessary to promote the creation of sustainable supply chains and markets.

The majority of surveyed farmers consider the 2024 sowing campaign difficult (41%), while the majority of agricultural producers have not changed their acreage in 2024 compared to 2023 (63%) (Fig. 1).

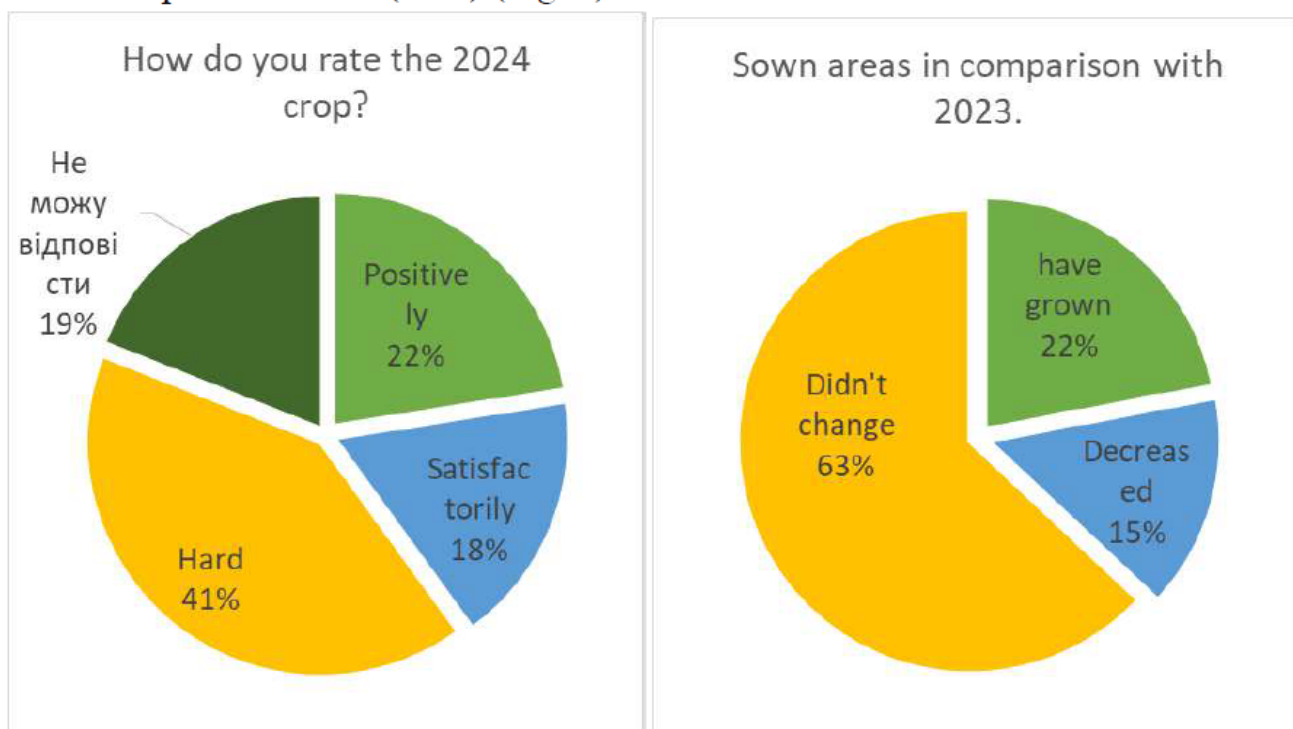


Fig 1. How was the 2024 sowing campaign [2]

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An important aspect is also human capital and its preservation, development and protection in Ukraine both now and in the post-war period. Investments play a key role in the development and well-being of employees, the creation of new jobs, the availability of education and the protection of human capital [1].

Environmental risks include soil degradation, mined areas, water pollution, biodiversity loss, and negative impacts on human health due to toxic substances in food. Social risks encompass issues of employment, employee health and safety, and impacts on local communities. Ways to mitigate these risks are to implement environmentally sustainable practices, plan measures for the greening of the agricultural sector, apply nature-based solutions, as well as take into account environmental standards and requirements for the agricultural sector in Ukraine and the EU.

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