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**NUTRITION IN THE EXPENDITURE PART OF THE BUDGETS  
OF THE PEASANT FARMS OF UKRAINE DURING THE NEP PERIOD (1921 – 1929)**

**Abstract.** *The purpose of the research is to analyze the structure of peasant farms expenditures budgets for food for their families comprehensively and their ratio to other expenses and actual incomes of peasant families during the financial year. The methodology of the research is based on the principles of systematicity, reliability, historicism, logic. General scientific (analysis, synthesis, generalization) and special historical (historical typological, historical systemic) methods have been used. The scientific novelty is that for the first time in modern domestic historiography the costs of food in the peasant farms budgets' formation during the NEP (New Economic Policy) and their ration to other actual expenditure and income during the financial year have been considered. Quantitative and qualitative indicators of food have been analyzed; the quantity of the consumed staple food and their power value has been traced in dynamics. The Conclusions. It has been determined that the plant products prevailed in the average daily consumption of the rural population. According to the norms of the annual consumption of staple food of peasants in the district of the USSR, it was depicted that everywhere more than half of all consumed products was bread with certain regional differences*

in the share of the annual consumption of rye and wheat bread. At the same time, along with the increase in the absolute consumption of bread products, which were considered to be the basis of the rural population nutrition, their qualitative composition changed slowly, hence, it reflected some improvement in the economic condition of the peasantry. The daily norm for products of animal origin was not high. The peasant budgets reflected the difficult material life of peasant families in the 1920s, including the problem of food costs. The peasant families were forced to tighten their belts, in particular, to limit the already modest food standards and did not give any grain to livestock in order to get out of the predicament. The family abnegated itself any factory products – manufactories, shoes, sugar, kerosene and even needles became luxuries. It was noted that by reducing the cost of food, the peasants tried to balance the expenditure part of their budget and ensure its deficit. As a result, the diet of most farms was impoverished, especially in the spring, when there was a shortage of meat, milk and dairy products, while the consumption of bread and potatoes exceeded the norm. Prior to that, the quality of products, especially bread, in many cases was low.

**Key words:** expenditure part, budget, new economic policy, nutrition, ration, energy value, peasant economy.

### ХАРЧУВАННЯ У ВИТРАТНІЙ ЧАСТИНІ БЮДЖЕТІВ СЕЛЯНСЬКИХ ГОСПОДАРСТВ УКРАЇНИ В ДОБУ НЕПУ (1921 – 1929)

**Анотація. Мета статті** – аналіз структури витрат бюджетів селянських господарств на харчування своїх родин та їх співвідношення з іншими витратами і фактичними доходами селянських родин упродовж господарського року. **Методологія дослідження** ґрунтується на принципах системності, достовірності, історизму, логічності. Використано загальнонаукові (аналізу, синтезу, узагальнення) та спеціально-історичні (історико-типологічний, історико-системний) методи. **Наукова новизна** полягає у тому, що вперше у сучасній вітчизняній історіографії розглядаються витрати на харчування при формуванні бюджетів селянських господарств у період НЕПу та їх співвідношення з іншими фактичними витратами і доходами впродовж господарського року. Аналізуються кількісні і якісні показники харчування, простежується в динаміці кількість спожитих продуктів харчування, їх енергетична цінність.

**Висновки.** З'ясовано, що у середньому добовому споживанні сільським населенням переважали продукти рослинного походження. Норми річного споживання основних продуктів харчування селян у розрізі округ УСРР показують, що повсюдно понад половину усіх спожитих продуктів складав хліб з певними регіональними відмінностями щодо питомої ваги у річному споживанні житнього і пшеничного хліба. Одночасно зі збільшенням абсолютного споживання хлібних продуктів – основи харчування сільського населення, поволі змінювався і їх якісний склад, що засвідчило деяке поліпшення економічного стану селянства. Щодо продуктів тваринного походження, то їх денна норма була невеликою. Селянські бюджети відбивали складне матеріальне життя селянських родин у 1920-х рр., в тому числі і проблеми витрат на харчування. Щоб вийти зі скрутного становища, селянські родини змушені були обмежувати і без того скромну продовольчу норму, не давати ніякого зерна худобі. Родини відмовляла собі в будь-якій фабричній продукції – мануфактурі, взутті, цукрі, гасі і навіть голки ставали предметами розкоші. Зазначається, що за рахунок скорочення витрат на харчування селяни намагалися збалансувати витратну частину свого бюджету і забезпечити його бездефіцитність. Унаслідок цього харчовий раціон більшості селянських господарств був збідненим, особливо у весняний період, коли спостерігалася нестача м'яса, молока і молочних продуктів, натомість споживання хліба і картоплі перевищувало норми. До того ж, якість продуктів, особливо хліба, в багатьох випадках була низькою.

**Ключові слова:** витратна частина, бюджет, нова економічна політика, харчування, раціон, енергетична цінність, селянське господарство.

**The Problem Statement.** The study of the evolution of the peasant economy during the pre-farm period remains relevant today, as it provides a deeper understanding of the features and patterns of agricultural policy of that time and they should be taken into account when

solving modern problems of the Ukrainian countryside. The analysis of the structure and share of food in the expenditure part of the budget of peasant farms, which was one of the key peasant issues and determined the material standard of living of peasants objectively and its dynamics during the NEP, is especially relevant.

Owing to the nutrition costs analysis of the formation of the expenditure part of peasant budgets and their ratio to actual incomes during the financial year, the level of functioning and efficiency of peasant farms during the NEP could be seen.

**The Analysis of Recent Research Works and Publications.** Diverse researchers of the history of the Ukrainian village of the pre-collective farm period covered the topic of nutrition expenditures in the budgets of peasant farms of the NEP era upon to one degree or another, paying specific attention to the nutrition of peasant families. Numerous aspects of the issue were reflected in the works written by M. Hurevych (Hurevych, 1927), O. Kataiev (Kataiev, 1928), V. Kalinichenko (Kalinichenko, 1997, 2012), V. Lazurenko (Lazurenko, 2012, 2019), A. Morozov (Morozov, 1993), V. Olianych (Olianych, 2014), I. Rybak (Rybak, 2008), O. Sushko (Sushko, 2002) and other researchers. The issues were covered by S. Bilan (Bilan, 2019), S. Kornovenko (Kornovenko, 2018), L. Lanoviuk (Lanoviuk, 2018), V. Lozovyi (Lozovyi, 2021) indirectly, who studied some issues of the agricultural development and situation of the village in the 20s and 30s of the XXth century.

However, the issue was not studied comprehensively, and the available developments do not give a holistic view of the expenditures of peasant families concerning food and their share in the total expenditures of peasant families as an important component of the functioning of peasant farms in Ukraine in 1921 – 1929.

**The purpose of the research** is to analyze the structure of peasant farms expenditures of budgets for food for their families comprehensively and their ration to other expenses and actual incomes of peasant families during the financial year.

**The Main Material Statement.** The main structural part of the expenditure item of the budget of peasant farms was the cost of food. This is because the state of nutrition characterized the financial situation and ability to work of peasant families. Based on this, it is appropriate to do research on the cost of food for peasants.

It was found out that each peasant farm spent an average of 6.6 krb. on food (golden pre-Soviet karbovantsi), based on the analysis of the monetary budgets of 3422 peasant farms in 1923 – 1924. At the same time, the amplitude of indicators in this part of the expenditure budget between seedless farms and those that had more than 15 acres of land ranged from 2.1 krb. in the first and 15.7 krb. – in the others (Kotsur & Tarapon, 2010, pp. 145–146).

It should be mentioned that budget surveys found out the annual consumption of products by members of peasant families per “eater” a year earlier. Hence, in Sumy district of Kharkiv hubernia (province), it consisted of 10 poods of rye, 5 – 6 poods of wheat, about 2 poods of barley, 1 pood of buckwheat, 1 pood of millet and about 15 poods of potatoes. The structure of sowing areas was planned in accordance with the above-mentioned norms (Byudzhety, 1924, pp. 34–97).

According to a statistical survey of the budgets of peasant farms in Ukraine conducted in 1923 – 1924, it was clearly shown that the peasants consumed a high proportion of products grown and produced on farms. In particular, in January of 1924, the products of plant origin (in pounds per capita) prevailed in the daily diet of the rural population: rye bread – 1,404; wheat bread – 0.307; various flour (pastries, condiments, etc.) – 0.286; various cereals – 0.207; peas, legumes and lentils – 0.069; potatoes – 1,121; cabbage – 0.205; cucumbers

– 0,085; onion – 0.063; root crops – 0.107; mushrooms, berries, fruits (dried, salted), etc. – 0.048 (Trudy ... Vyp., 1924, p. 322).

Owing to the calculations given by V. Kalinichenko, we've got an idea concerning the daily diet of the Ukrainian peasant. According to him, the daily diet of the Ukrainian peasant in November of 1925 on average consisted of 630 g of baked bread (including home baking), 90 g of other products from flour, 70 g of cereals, 600 g of vegetables (of which 400 g of potatoes), 80 g of meat, 210 g of milk, 13 g of lard, 3 g of butter, 13 g of fish (Kalinichenko, 1993, pp. 265–266).

The generalized data in terms of individual districts of the UkrSSR, representing the main agricultural areas, provided an idea of the quantitative indicators of the annual diet of the rural population, while highlighting some regional differences (Table 1).

Table 1

**Annual consumption of staple food in the districts of the UkrSSR per eater according to the results of three surveys in 1925 (in poods)**

District	Rye bread	Other types of bread	Flour	Beef	Pork	Other meat	Fish, herring	Milk	Eggs
Berdychiv	12,19	1,73	3,06	0,45	0,43	0,28	0,38	7,27	0,14
Bila Tserkva	13,34	0,95	3,30	0,48	0,37	0,19	0,24	5,76	0,14
Kyiv	13,37	0,74	3,00	0,58	0,31	0,55	0,43	6,04	0,09
Kryvyi Rih	8,09	7,65	3,45	0,57	0,43	0,42	0,46	6,50	0,18
Odesa	4,17	8,42	2,94	0,43	0,39	0,54	0,67	6,99	0,32
Pavlohrad	8,59	8,0	3,29	0,49	0,26	0,34	0,33	4,45	0,15
Poltava	16,23	3,36	3,47	0,48	0,48	0,66	0,49	5,86	0,14
Romen	13,00	2,65	3,58	0,35	0,67	0,73	0,32	6,48	1,11
Chernihiv	11,92	5,14	3,49	0,27	0,79	0,73	0,50	5,04	0,11

Based on: (Materiialy... Berdychivska okruha, 1926, p. 22; Materiialy... Bilotserkivska okruha, 1926, p. 26; Materiialy... Kyivska okruha, 1926, p. 34; Materiialy... Kryvorizka okruha, 1926, p. 23; Materiialy... Mariupilska okruha, 1926, p. 22; Materiialy... Odeska okruha, 1926, p. 24; Materiialy... Pavlohradaska okruha, 1926, p. 22; Materiialy... Poltavaska okruha, 1926, p. 24; Materiialy... Romenska okruha, 1926, p. 22; Materiialy... Chernihivska okruha, 1926, p. 21).

It should be mentioned that based on the analysis of the qualitative composition of the diet of the peasants of that time, other products of plant origin had a limited range. Neither the publications of that time nor the memoirs of contemporaries, with some exceptions, mentioned the consumption of melons and fruits from their own garden. Such kind of situation occurred primarily due to the small area of the farmyard and taxes on fruit trees.

The daily norm of products of animal origin was small: in 1921 it was on average 80 g, and in 1925 even less – 60 g. In addition, the peasants ate meat several times a year, mostly on religious holidays – at Christmas, Easter and other holidays and commemorated family events. The contemporaries also stated the chronic shortage of meat: “If the father slaughters a piglet for Christmas, so is the piglet for the whole year. The piglet weighting 70–80 kilograms, and maybe a quintal, how who feeds” (Kotsur & Tarapon, 2010, p. 146).

Owing to the data obtained from expeditionary budget surveys, which made it possible to trace the dynamics of the staple food consumption in more detail, especially bread, by peasants from the beginning to the practical collapse of the New Economic Policy (1927 – 1928) (Table 2).

Table 2

**Dynamics of annual consumption of rural bread products  
population of the UkrSSR in 1923 – 1928 (per capita)**

Financial years	Consumed bread products (pounds)	Including	
		flour	%
1923/1924	12,90	11, 92	93,1
1924/1925	11,27	10,39	92,3
1925/1926	12,63	11,80	93,4
1926/1927	13,44	12,36	92,0
1927/1928	13,73	12,62	91,9

*Based on: (Kataiev, 1928, p. 43).*

The above-mentioned figures show that after the crop failure of 1921, and after the famine, during the next two crop years, the absolute norms of grain consumption by peasants increased dramatically, reflecting the general improvement in the economic condition of the peasantry.

In general, the quality of flour also improved, not only in economically strong farms with a greater abundance of products, but also in weaker farms with the less sown area. It was possible to make the following statistical calculations (Table 3) due to the analysis of budget materials by group differentiation.

Table 3

**Dynamics of the specific weight of wheat flour in the diet of peasant farms  
in accordance with sown area size in 1924 – 1927 (in %)**

Financial years	Low sowing areas	Medium sowing areas	Large sowing areas
1924/1925	20,6	29,5	42,8
1925/1926	23,7	30,7	57,6
1926/1927	31,6	43,1	60,3

*Based on: (Kataiev, 1928, p. 44).*

According to the above-mentioned data, it follows that the quality of the annual rate of flour per capita in the specified period increased in low sowing farms by 74.7%, in medium sowing farms – by 63.8% and in large sowing farms – by 60.4%. Hence, the rate of flour per capita in economically stronger peasant families was lower, the diet – more varied and more balanced.

Regarding the place and quality of products of animal origin in the diet of peasants, there was an increase in fat consumption during the period of 1924 – 1928, mainly due to increased lard standards (Table 4).

Table 4

**Dynamics of the annual rate of fat consumption by the rural population  
of the UkrSSR in 1924 – 1928 (in poods)**

Financial years	Total fat of animal origin	Including	
		Lard	Butter
1924/1925	0,36	0,29	0,07
1925/1926	0,42	0,36	0,06
1926/1927	0,49	0,12	0,37
1927/1928	0,50	0,42	0,08

*Based on: (Kataiev, 1928, pp. 44–45).*

A crucial indicator of the quality of nutrition of peasant families is considered to be the energy value and quality of the daily diet of one person (the number of net calories). The quality of the daily diet in January of 1924 can be judged by the content of the main nutrients consumed by peasant families: protein – 117.4 grams; fat – 75.8 grams; carbohydrates – 746.5 grams (Table 5).

Table 5

**The state of nutrition of the rural population of the UkrSSR  
in 1921/1922 – 1923/1924 financial years (daily number of net calories per eater)**

1921/1922		1922/1923		1923/1924	
October	February	October	February	February	June
3621	3013	4074	4013	4247	4320

*Based on: (Trudy... Vyp. 5, 1924, p. 220; Trudy... Vyp. 7, 1924, p. 337).*

Due to the Bolsheviks' policy of the "military communism", which led to reduced agricultural production and declining productivity, which exacerbated food shortages, the low level of calories and the general deterioration of food and starvation of the rural population in the 1921/1922 financial year could be seen. The drought that engulfed Ukraine, especially the southern regions, also became apparent.

The peasant food was poor in protein. According to researchers, the level of meat, lard, and butter consumed by peasants was lower than the norm, forcing members of peasant families to eat more bread and potatoes (Kalinichenko, 1997, pp. 265–266). The above-mentioned conclusions can be confirmed by the survey, which was carried out in June of 1924, according to which the share of animal products in terms of calories digested in non-sowing farms of Ukraine was 22.3%, low sowing – 16.0%, medium sowing – 18.3%, large sowing – 19, 8% (Trudy..., 1928, p. 155).

The peasant budgets reflected the difficult material life of peasant families in the 1920s, including the food costs issue. The party functionaries evidenced poor diet of peasant food and life poverty. According to the report drawn up by the Central Committee of the CP (B) in 1924, it was stated that "according to six comrades working in the field", the poor economy is making every effort to make ends meet, compensating for the deficit by malnutrition and additional earnings" (Narysy..., 2010, p. 141).

At the same time, the official publications of that time contained information about more prosperous peasant budgets, probably for propaganda reasons. Hence, the magazine "Poltavskyi Selianyn" (The Poltava Peasant) included an extensive article, written by O. Tkachenko "The budget of my farm", in which the author analyzed in detail, with digital calculations, the annual budget of his farm in the 1927/1928 financial year. Based on the information in the article, we found out that the family consisting of three people – the owner of the farm, his wife and mother, owning 6.35 acres of land, during the year had the following consumer structure per eater (products from their own farm): rye and wheat bread – 6.75 poods, potatoes – 9.3 poods, lard, sunflower oil and onions – 0.66 poods, meat – 1.66 poods, eggs – 66.6 pcs., cabbage – 2.3 poods, beets – 1, 66 pounds. In addition, during the year the family consumed some purchased food like sugar, tea, rice (oilseeds), salt, fish, millet, dried pears, berries. In this family, which was not typical for the village at that time, there was even enough money for 5 bottles of vodka and 15 bottles of beer. In general, the budget of this economy was deficit-free (Tkachenko, 1928, pp. 11–13).

Despite some improvement in the nutrition of peasants during the NEP period, the issue remained one of the most acute in the formation of budgets of peasant farms. The peasants tried to balance the expenditure part of their budget and ensure its deficit by reducing the cost of food. As a result, the diet of most farms was impoverished, especially in the spring, when there was a shortage of meat, milk and dairy products, while the consumption of bread and potatoes exceeded the norm. Prior to that, the quality of products, especially bread, was in many cases low.

**The Conclusions.** Hence, the cost of food for members of the peasant economy was the main part of the expenditure part of the budget of most farms and ranged from 20–25% of total family expenditures. The share of food expenditures in monetary and physical terms differed in groups of farms and, as a rule, was higher in economically stronger farms. In addition, some fluctuations in food costs also depended to a large extent on low prices due to unfavourable natural and climatic conditions and on the peculiarities of the state agricultural policy (land supply, taxation, pricing).

As for the quality of the diet of peasant families, it was found that its basis, with the exception of certain purchased products, was the products of own farms, mostly of vegetable origin – bread and potatoes. At the same time, more than half of the annual consumption was rye and wheat bread.

Taking into consideration the prospects of peasant studies, as emphasized by the Ukrainian researchers (Prysiazhniuk, 2018), the problem proposed in the article needs further elaboration through the involvement of new documentary and statistical sources.

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