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REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-58756.

Title: "Strategies to Increase Food Security in the European Union".

Recommendation:

Accept as it is

Accept after minor revision..... yes ...

Accept after major revision

Do not accept (*Reasons below*)

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality		Yes		
Techn. Quality		Yes		
Clarity		Yes		
Significance	Yes			

Reviewer's Name: Dr.Feroze Ahmad Mir

Detailed Reviewer's

1. Overall Assessment

The manuscript addresses an important and highly relevant contemporary issue: strengthening food security in the European Union through diversification of food supplies, import substitution, development of regional food systems, logistics optimization, short food supply chains, interregional cooperation, and reduction of technological dependence. The topic has considerable academic and policy significance, particularly in view of geopolitical instability, disruptions in international supply chains, rising logistics costs, technological dependence, and regional disparities in food accessibility.

The manuscript presents a coherent discussion of the vulnerabilities affecting European food-supply systems and proposes a combination of domestic production, diversified international partnerships, improved logistics, regional cooperation, digitalization, and targeted import substitution as mechanisms for improving resilience. The central argument that food security should not be understood solely in terms of domestic production but also in terms of diversified and resilient supply networks—is both relevant and valuable.

The paper is generally well organized, progressing from the introduction and methodological framework to results concerning import substitution, regional supply infrastructure, food clusters, technological dependence, logistics costs, short supply chains, and food-system

resilience, followed by a conclusion synthesizing the principal findings.

2. Significance and Relevance of the Study

The subject of the manuscript is significant because food security has increasingly become a global issue involving not only food availability but also accessibility,

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supply chain resilience, logistics, technology, trade diversification, and regional development.

A particularly useful aspect of the manuscript is its recognition that achieving formal self-sufficiency does not necessarily eliminate dependence on foreign inputs and technologies. The discussion of dependence on seeds, breeding material, agricultural machinery, equipment, and other technologically advanced inputs adds an important dimension to conventional analyses of food security.

The manuscript is also significant in emphasizing regional disparities in food accessibility. Its discussion of transportation infrastructure, storage facilities, retail-network density, and rural accessibility demonstrates that national-level food availability does not automatically guarantee equitable physical access to food.

The paper therefore has relevance for researchers, policymakers, agricultural planners, regional authorities, logistics professionals, and scholars working in food security and sustainable development.

3. Strengths of the Manuscript

3.1. Timely and important research topic

The manuscript addresses a highly topical issue and connects food security with geopolitical, economic, logistical, and technological risks. This broad framing strengthens the relevance of the study.

3.2. Comprehensive treatment of food-system vulnerabilities

The manuscript identifies several interconnected sources of vulnerability, including:

- dependence on external food supplies;
- dependence on imported agricultural inputs and technologies; •
inadequate logistics infrastructure;
- transportation and distribution costs;
- regional disparities in food accessibility; •
geopolitical instability;
- disruptions to international supply routes; and •
technological gaps.

This multidimensional treatment is one of the principal strengths of the paper.

3.3. Balanced approach to import substitution and international trade

Rather than presenting import substitution as a complete replacement for international trade, the manuscript argues for a combination of domestic production and diversified

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external supply channels. This is a constructive approach because it recognizes that excessive dependence on a limited number of suppliers creates vulnerabilities while complete self-sufficiency may not always be feasible.

3.4. Attention to regional and local food systems

The discussion of short supply chains, local production, food clusters, and interregional cooperation provides useful policy-oriented perspectives. The manuscript correctly highlights the potential of reducing unnecessary intermediaries and transportation distances while strengthening local producers and logistics infrastructure.

3.5. Strong policy orientation

The recommendations emerging from the manuscript are practically relevant. The emphasis on diversification of supply sources, targeted support for critical agricultural sectors, infrastructure development, digitalization, storage and processing capacity, and regional

adaptation provides a useful framework for policymakers.

3.6. Logical organization

The manuscript follows a recognizable academic structure, including Abstract, Introduction, Methods, Results, and Conclusion. The Results section is further divided into clearly identifiable thematic subsections, which makes the manuscript relatively easy to follow.

3.7. Use of relevant literature

The manuscript incorporates literature and institutional sources relating to food security, regional food systems, agricultural policy, logistics, supply chains, and sustainability. The references include academic publications as well as sources from organizations such as FAO, the European Commission/JRC, and the European Committee of the Regions.

4. Weaknesses and Areas for Improvement

Although the manuscript is suitable for publication, several aspects could be strengthened to improve its academic rigor and presentation.

4.1. Methodological framework requires greater specificity

The Methods section identifies dialectical, systemic, integrated, and analytical approaches. However, the manuscript does not sufficiently explain how these approaches were operationalized in the actual analysis. The methodology would be stronger if the authors clearly described the research design, data sources, selection criteria for evidence, analytical procedures, and specific indicators used to assess food-system vulnerability.

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4.2. Limited empirical quantification

The manuscript contains several important assertions regarding import dependence, logistics costs, regional disparities, and supply-chain vulnerabilities, but much of the analysis remains qualitative. Where reliable data are available, the authors could strengthen the paper by incorporating additional statistical evidence, comparative indicators, tables, or figures.

4.3. Clearer distinction between the European Union and individual countries

At certain points, the discussion moves between the EU as a collective system and individual national agricultural systems. Greater clarity regarding the geographical and institutional level of analysis would improve precision.

4.4. Some arguments are repetitive

The importance of import substitution, diversification, resilience, and technological independence is reiterated in several sections. Moderate reduction of repetition would make the manuscript more concise and improve the progression of the argument.

4.5. Definition of key concepts could be improved

Concepts such as “ food security,” “food sovereignty,” “import substitution,” “ food-system resilience,” and “short supply chains” would benefit from clearer conceptual definitions at the beginning of the paper. This would provide a stronger theoretical foundation for the subsequent discussion.

4.6. Stronger linkage between findings and recommendations

The recommendations are relevant, but the manuscript could make the connection between individual identified vulnerabilities and specific policy interventions more explicit. For example, each major vulnerability could be linked to corresponding policy measures and expected outcomes.

4.7. References and formatting require editorial attention

The reference section contains useful sources, but several entries exhibit inconsistent formatting, spacing, capitalization, and presentation of URLs. These issues should be corrected during editorial processing to conform to the journal's prescribed reference style.

4.8. Clarification of recent geopolitical references

The manuscript refers to the “conflict in Ukraine and the Middle East crisis of 2026” and associates these developments with changes in food imports and logistics. Because

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these are temporally sensitive claims, the authors should ensure that the relevant statements are supported by sufficiently specific and authoritative sources.

5. Originality and Contribution

The manuscript's principal contribution lies in its integrated perspective on food security. Rather than considering food security merely as a question of agricultural output, the paper connects it with supply diversification, import substitution, logistics, regional infrastructure, technological dependence, short supply chains, and digitalization.

The argument that resilience requires a combination of domestic productive capacity and diversified international supply relationships is particularly useful. The manuscript also contributes by emphasizing that technological dependence may persist even where apparent self-sufficiency in basic food commodities has been achieved.

The proposed transition toward more resilient regional food-supply systems, supported by diversified suppliers, targeted import substitution, digital agriculture, and improved storage and processing infrastructure, provides a coherent policy framework.

6. Presentation and Writing Quality

The manuscript is generally written in a formal academic style and maintains a consistent thematic focus. The organization into numbered sections and subsections facilitates readability.

Nevertheless, some sentences are lengthy and contain multiple ideas that could be divided for greater clarity. Minor grammatical, stylistic, spacing, and reference-formatting corrections are also advisable before final publication.

These are editorial and presentational issues rather than fundamental problems with the manuscript.

7. Specific Recommendations to the Authors

The following minor improvements are recommended:

1. Clarify the precise research objective and research question(s) in the Introduction. 2. Expand the Methods section by explaining how the identified analytical approaches were applied.
3. Where possible, incorporate additional quantitative evidence to substantiate major

claims.

4. Clearly distinguish EU-level findings from country-specific observations. 5.

Define the principal conceptual terms at an early stage of the manuscript.

6. Reduce repetition concerning import substitution and food-system resilience.

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7. Strengthen the direct connection between identified vulnerabilities and proposed policy interventions.

8. Verify and update references supporting recent geopolitical developments. 9.

Standardize the reference list according to the journal's prescribed style.

10. Undertake a final language and formatting check before publication.

8. Final Evaluation

The manuscript addresses a significant contemporary research problem and offers a useful integrated discussion of strategies for improving food security in the European Union. Its strengths include the relevance of the topic, multidimensional treatment of food-system vulnerabilities, attention to regional and technological dimensions of food security, practical policy implications, and use of relevant academic and institutional literature.

The weaknesses identified above are primarily related to methodological detail, quantitative substantiation, conceptual clarification, repetition, and editorial consistency. They do not undermine the central contribution or overall value of the manuscript.

Recommendation to the Editor

Recommendation: ACCEPT FOR PUBLICATION

The manuscript is considered suitable for publication because it addresses an important and timely subject, provides a coherent analysis, and offers meaningful implications for strengthening food-system resilience in the European Union. I recommend acceptance for publication, subject to minor editorial and presentation-level revisions concerning methodological clarification, reference formatting, language polishing, and strengthening of selected empirical statements.