

RESEARCH ON THE PHENOMENON OF FOOD WASTE IN ROMANIA

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Keywords: food waste; food waste impact; food losses; zero hunger; SDGs; Expiration date;

Abstract

Through this doctoral thesis, I aimed to delve into and thoroughly evaluate the phenomenon of food waste in Romania. With careful consideration of statistical data, previous research, and economic trends, this paper seeks to provide a comprehensive perspective on how food waste impacts not only Romanian households' budgets but also the national economy as a whole.

Structured into five chapters, the thesis begins by addressing the current stage of research, outlining scientific perspectives on food waste. The second chapter is dedicated to providing an overview of the phenomenon both in the European and national contexts, focusing on the evolution

of legislation and the strategic framework for combating food waste. The third chapter analyzes the phenomenon globally, situating Romania within the international landscape of food waste. The fourth chapter represents the qualitative research component, analyzing data collected through a self-administered questionnaire titled "Food Waste in Romania." Finally, in the fifth chapter, statistical data on food waste in Romania is examined, with a focus on the possibility of making predictions regarding the evolution of the phenomenon using econometric models. The thesis ends with a section of conclusions and recommendations regarding the reduction of food waste in Romania.

From a global perspective, food waste is a problem with negative impacts on the environment, economy, and society at large. The authors emphasize that solutions to this issue involve both education and changing consumer behavior, as well as improving infrastructure and logistic processes.

Studies highlight that food waste affects not only end consumers but also producers, processors, and distributors. Food packaging, labeling, and portion sizes can influence consumer behavior and the level of waste. Additionally, lack of information and weak infrastructure contribute to food waste in developing countries.

Research proposes various solutions for reducing food waste, such as donating unsold food, recycling food waste, or implementing more efficient supply and storage techniques. Composting is also considered a solution, but it requires attention to avoid negative secondary effects.

Building upon the research's objectives and theoretical framework presented in the first part of the work, chapters 4 and 5 provide an overview of food waste in Romania. It is concluded that food waste is a serious problem with significant implications for Romania's economy and the environment, especially when financial losses from food waste reach approximately 16,813.73 million RON in 2020. In conclusion, the thesis emphasizes that food waste represents not only an economic loss but also a threat to environmental sustainability and food security.