



# Food security in Kharkiv during the war: analytical report



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Food security is an important aspect of the stability and well-being of the population of Kharkiv, especially in times of war. According to UN standards, food security implies the availability of sufficient food, physical and economic access to it, and its stability over time. Given the large-scale shelling, displacement of people, destruction of infrastructure and the risk of logistical disruption, Kharkiv's food security is facing serious challenges



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## Situational overview

### **The impact of the war**

Since the beginning of the Russian invasion, Kharkiv has been on the front lines of the war. Constant shelling has severely damaged infrastructure, including roads, food warehouses, and supply networks. As a result, delivery of food to certain areas of the city is often impossible or dangerous.

### **Logistical difficulties**

Food supplies have become unpredictable due to the partial destruction of main roads and railways. Restrictions on access to certain routes increase the cost of delivery, which directly affects price increases. The hostilities have also disrupted humanitarian corridors, making it difficult to bring in food from other regions and abroad.

# The challenges of war

The fighting has destroyed infrastructure, making it difficult to transport food to Kharkiv. The blocking of transportation routes and the destruction of logistics centers have limited access to food.

Due to the occupation of some territories and hostilities, many farmers were unable to conduct sowing and harvesting operations, which led to a decrease in production. In particular, in Kharkiv region, a significant part of agricultural land was damaged or mined.

The forced resettlement of people from dangerous areas put an additional strain on the food resources of host communities, making it difficult to provide assistance to all those in need.

Increased unemployment and lower incomes have limited purchasing power, affecting the affordability of food for many families.

Due to limited access to local resources, people in some areas of Kharkiv and the region have become dependent on humanitarian assistance, which may not be sustainable in the long term. The need for continued humanitarian aid supplies puts additional pressure on international and national organizations.



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# Sources of supply and their analysis

The Kharkiv region has historically been an important agricultural area, but the shelling has destroyed some of the territory and infrastructure, including farms and processing plants. This has significantly reduced local food production, especially in areas where access to resources or water is difficult.

Most food is imported from other regions of Ukraine or from abroad. However, the increase in transportation costs due to the hostilities has significantly increased food prices, which particularly affects vulnerable groups.

International organizations, such as the World Food Program (UN), the Red Cross, international humanitarian and food programs, and other charitable foundations, play a significant role in providing food. However, humanitarian aid is a temporary solution and cannot sustainably meet all the needs of the city's residents.

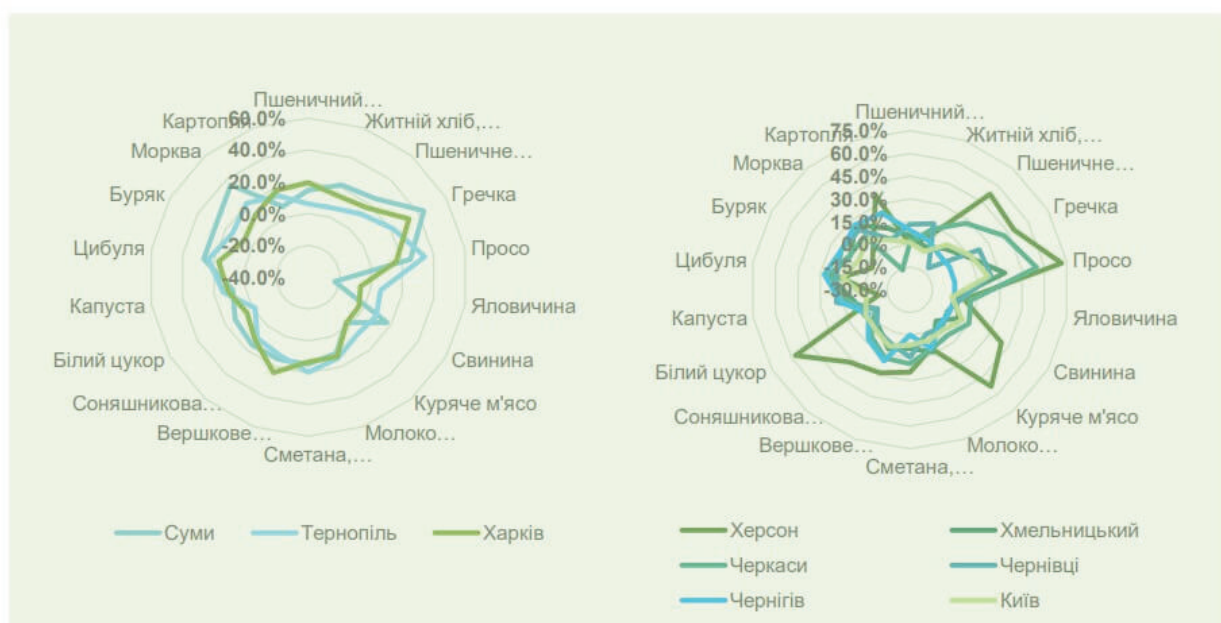
# Assessment of food sustainability

The city has limited food reserves, mostly through private initiatives and support from large retail chains. Increasing stocks and improving the storage system is a priority, as it will allow Kharkiv to respond more effectively to unforeseen events.

Local authorities and businesses are taking measures to support the resilience of the food system, such as encouraging the resumption of local production in less affected areas and supporting private farms. In particular, projects are being implemented in a number of districts to create greenhouses and small vegetable farms.

Since the beginning of the war in Ukraine, food prices in Kharkiv, like in many other cities, have experienced a significant increase. This is due to a number of both global and local factors that have led to difficult economic conditions and limited the availability of food for a large part of the population.

**РИСУНОК 1: РЕГІОНАЛЬНІ ЗМІНИ ЦІН НА ПРОДОВОЛЬСТВО, %**



Data from the Kyiv School of Economics

# Key factors for assessing food sustainability in Kharkiv

## **Availability of foodstuffs**

The war has significantly affected the production capacity of the region's agricultural sector. Due to hostilities, mined fields, and damaged infrastructure, agricultural production in the region has declined, reducing the volume of local products. Local production does not fully meet the needs of the city, which increases dependence on imports from other regions and international aid.

## **Food accessibility**

Significant increases in food prices due to inflation and logistical costs have made access difficult for many residents, especially those in socially vulnerable categories. The forced displacement of a large part of the population and the loss of jobs have reduced purchasing power, especially in the areas that have been most affected by the destruction.

## **Stability of food supplies**

Disruptions to transportation routes, attacks on local infrastructure, and the risks of hostilities have made food logistics unpredictable and volatile. Dependence on humanitarian aid has increased, and while international organizations such as the UN World Food Program (WFP) have maintained regular supplies, the security situation remains a major obstacle to sustained supply.

## **Recovery capacity**

The assessment of Kharkiv's ability to restore food resilience includes the need to restore agricultural production capacity, land demining, and provide resources and equipment. Initiatives to support local farmers (including grants and subsidies) are being implemented in the region, but their scale is not yet sufficient to fully restore food stability.

# Development of local production

One of the most effective strategies is to develop local production of products, which reduces dependence on external supplies and thus reduces the risks associated with logistics disruptions.



**Credits: open Internet sources**



Subsidies and microloans to restore damaged farms and cover the cost of new equipment.



Investments in small greenhouses and farms that will allow growing vegetables and herbs even within the city, reducing dependence on supplies from distant regions.

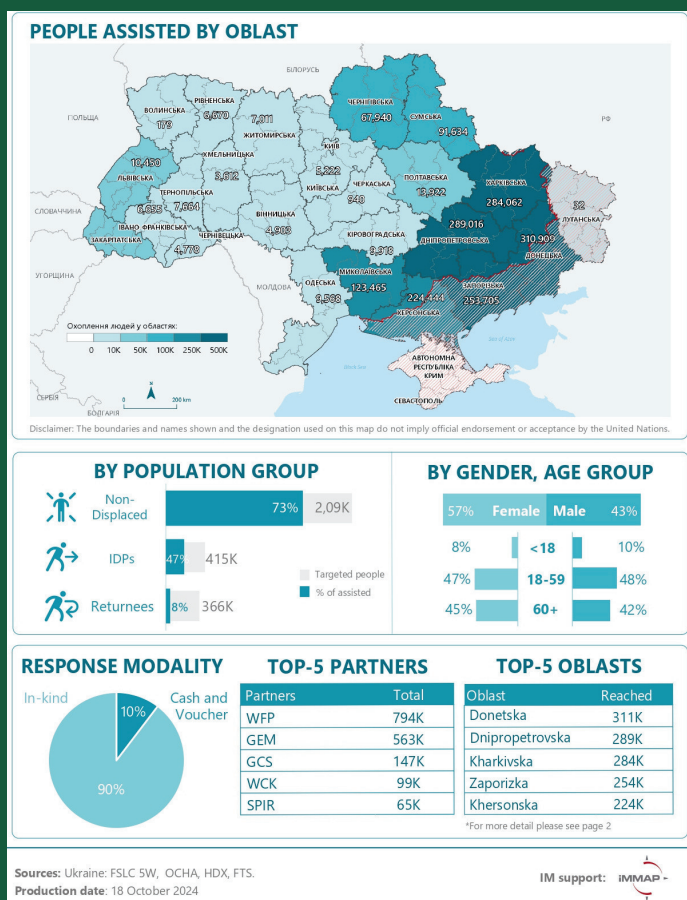


Procurement programs from local farmers, which will allow them to sell their products steadily and reduce risks for Kharkiv suppliers.

One of the most effective solutions is the development of greenhouse farms, especially for growing vegetables and herbs in urban or suburban areas. Such farms allow for year-round production and reduce dependence on seasonality. We propose several steps that will strengthen this area right now: (1) providing grants or loans for the creation of small greenhouses will increase the volume of products available on local markets; (2) energy-efficient heating and automated irrigation technologies will increase production efficiency while reducing costs; (3) supporting urban agricultural production projects for Kharkiv residents who can grow basic vegetables in small areas in yards or on rooftops will strengthen the autonomy of local communities.

# Food production and consumption

According to the Kharkiv Regional Military Administration, in 2023, the region produced 188.6 thousand tons of milk, which is 0.7% more than in 2022. Egg production amounted to almost 231 million eggs, which is 21.1% less than in 2022. Sales of livestock and poultry for slaughter amounted to 40.1 thousand tons, up 7.5% year-on-year. As a result of logistical difficulties and rising transportation costs, prices for basic foodstuffs in Kharkiv have increased by 30-50% since the beginning of the war. This has particularly affected vulnerable groups such as pensioners, large families and people with disabilities. International organizations, such as the Red Cross and other charities, have provided significant humanitarian aid to Kharkiv. However, this assistance is a temporary solution and cannot fully meet the food needs of the population.



Data from the Food Security Cluster



# Programs to support farmers and small businesses

**Affordable Loans 5-7-9% Program.** This initiative is aimed at facilitating access to bank lending for micro and small businesses. Farmers in Kharkiv region are actively using this program. Since the beginning of 2024, 7 farms in the region have received UAH 60.1 million in financing, which is one of the highest figures among Ukrainian regions.

**Compensation for the cost of agricultural machinery and equipment of domestic production.** In 2024, UAH 1 billion was allocated for this program, which allows farmers to upgrade their machinery with state support.

**Subsidies for farms.** Funding in the amount of UAH 796 million is provided, which is distributed as follows

- up to UAH 7 thousand per head of cattle (no more than 100 heads);
- up to UAH 2 thousand per head of sheep and goats (no more than 500 heads);
- UAH 4 thousand per 1 hectare of cultivated land (no more than 120 hectares).

**Support from the Government of Japan.** In 2023, the Government of Japan provided assistance to small farms in Kharkiv region by providing them with seed and mineral fertilizers. This support was aimed at farms that cultivate between 10 and 500 hectares of land.

**The World Bank's ARISE project.** In October 2023, the World Bank launched the “Emergency Project for Inclusive Support for the Recovery of Agriculture in Ukraine” (ARISE). This project aims to support more than 90 thousand Ukrainian farmers by providing them with access to concessional loans and grants. Project financing consists of a USD 230 million loan and a USD 320 million grant. In total, it is planned to mobilize about USD 1.5 billion in working capital for agricultural producers.

# The impact of inflation on food security

Tackling food inflation requires coordinated efforts, including government interventions to stabilize prices, support for agricultural productivity, and targeted assistance to protect vulnerable populations.



Credits: open Internet sources

Inflation reduces the purchasing power of consumers, meaning that people can buy less for the same amount of money. When food prices rise faster than incomes, many families, especially those on low incomes, are forced to buy less food or cheaper, less nutritious options.

Vulnerable groups, such as the elderly, low-income families, and people living in rural areas, are disproportionately affected by food inflation. Rising prices limit their ability to afford nutritious food, affecting their health and well-being.

Inflation also affects food production as it increases the cost of agricultural inputs. This can reduce the supply of food if farmers reduce production due to high costs, which can further increase prices.

# Humanitarian and food aid

With the start of the Russian Federation's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Kharkiv became one of the main targets of hostilities. The city and the region suffered significant infrastructure damage, leading to a humanitarian crisis. In response, numerous international and local humanitarian organizations have launched large-scale assistance programs to support the affected population.

## Charitable organization ADRA Ukraine

ADRA Ukraine, in cooperation with the UN World Food Program (WFP), is implementing an emergency food aid project covering the Kharkiv region. They are providing general purpose kits, essential kits, baby food, and fresh bread.



**Credits: Caritas**

## Charitable organization Caritas

Caritas Kharkiv provides food aid, including the distribution of food packages and hot meals to local residents, especially vulnerable people.

## Relief Coordination Centre

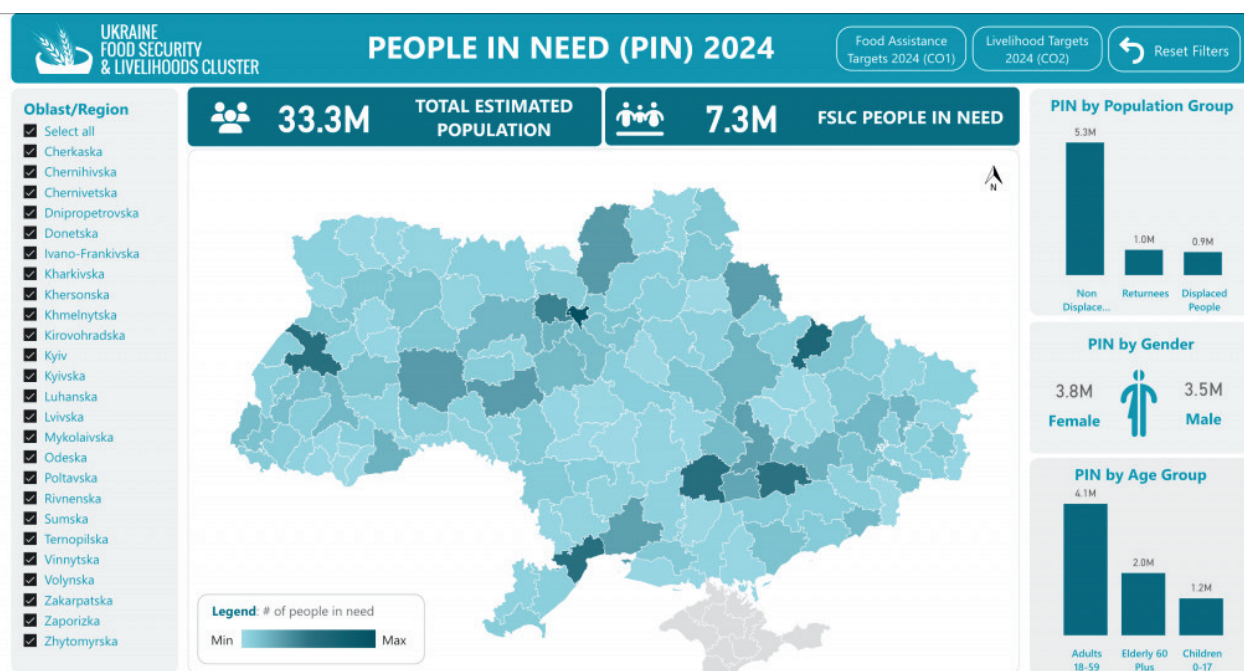
The Center cooperates with local and international organizations, coordinates humanitarian and evacuation missions, collects and processes the needs of internally displaced persons for their further implementation, and helps local organizations to attract the necessary resources.



**Credits: RCC**

# Food Security and Livelihoods Cluster

The cluster brings together UN agencies, international and national non-governmental organizations that work together to respond effectively to humanitarian needs. The Cluster holds regular meetings where partners discuss the current situation, exchange information and coordinate efforts. In particular, in September and October 2023, subnational meetings were held in Kharkiv to provide an overview of the partners' response in the region and discuss further steps. The CECP is working closely with local and international partners. For example, in August 2024, representatives of ADRA Ukraine took part in a meeting of the Cluster's partners in Kharkiv to discuss plans for further assistance to the affected population of the region. Thanks to coordination and cooperation with partners, the Cluster continues to respond effectively to the needs of communities in Kharkiv region, contributing to their recovery and development.

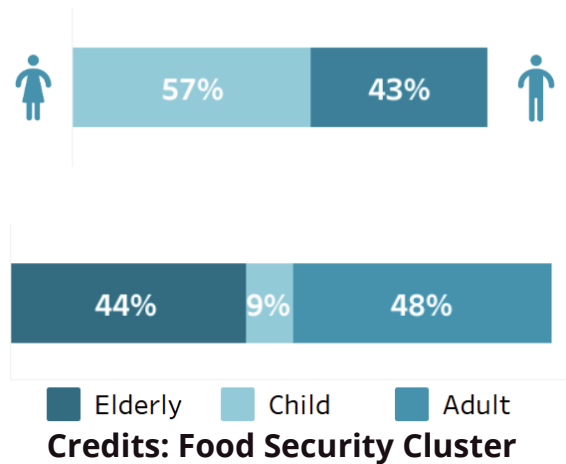


Credits: Food Security Cluster

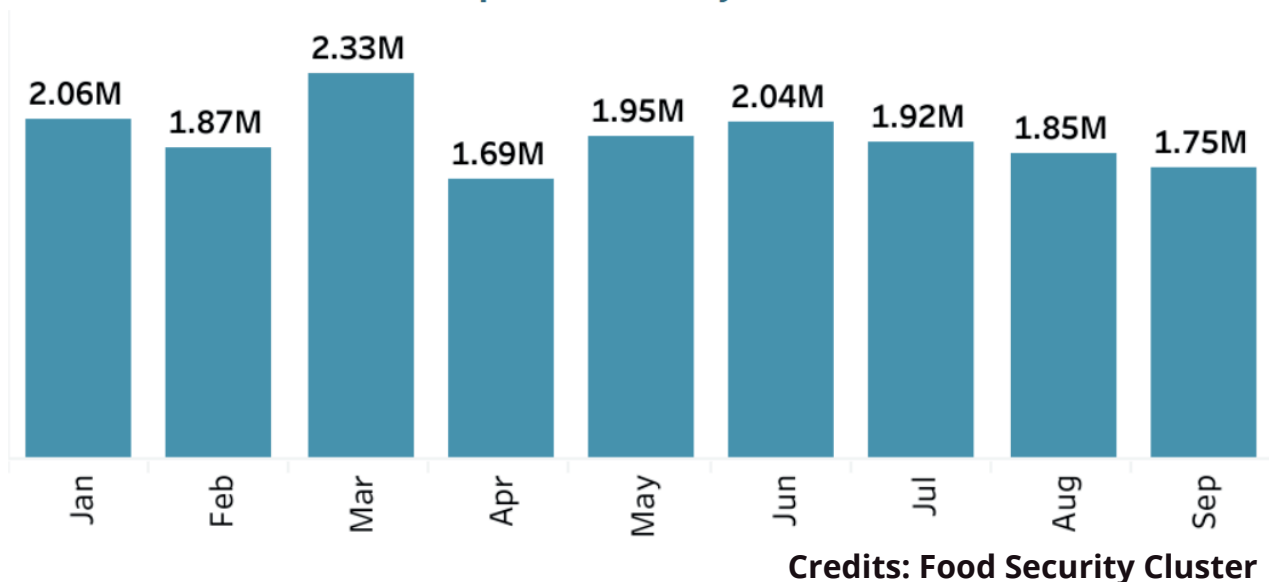
# Indicators

As of November 2024, the Food Security and Livelihoods Cluster (FSC) in Ukraine has provided significant support to the conflict-affected population. According to the data published on the official website of the CFSL, in the period from January to March 2024:

People assisted by gender and age group



People assisted by month



1. Number of people in need of assistance: 7.3 million people.
2. Number of people to be assisted: 4.7 million people.
3. Number of people who received assistance: 2.2 million people.
4. Funding requested: USD 700.6 million.
5. Funding received: USD 9.0 million.
6. Unsecured funding: USD 691.6 million.

Current data show that in 2024, the KPFI was able to partially implement the planned activities, but the needs of the population remain high. Further assistance depends on raising additional funds and improving conditions for safe and effective access to all regions of Ukraine in need of support.

# Relief Coordination Centre

The Relief Coordination Center in Kharkiv plays a key role in coordinating and delivering humanitarian aid, including food, to residents of Kharkiv Oblast affected by the hostilities. The CCC ensures coordination of the actions of various humanitarian organizations, which allows for efficient allocation of resources and avoids duplication of aid. The Center collects up-to-date data on the needs of the population and available resources on a daily basis, which facilitates a prompt response to challenges. The CCC works closely with local authorities to obtain reliable information about the needs of communities and provide them with the necessary assistance.

## Performance indicators



Evacuees: over 47,747.



Resettled persons:  
over 15,129.



Food aid provided:  
over 37,915 tons.



Hygiene aid provided:  
over 4,619 tons

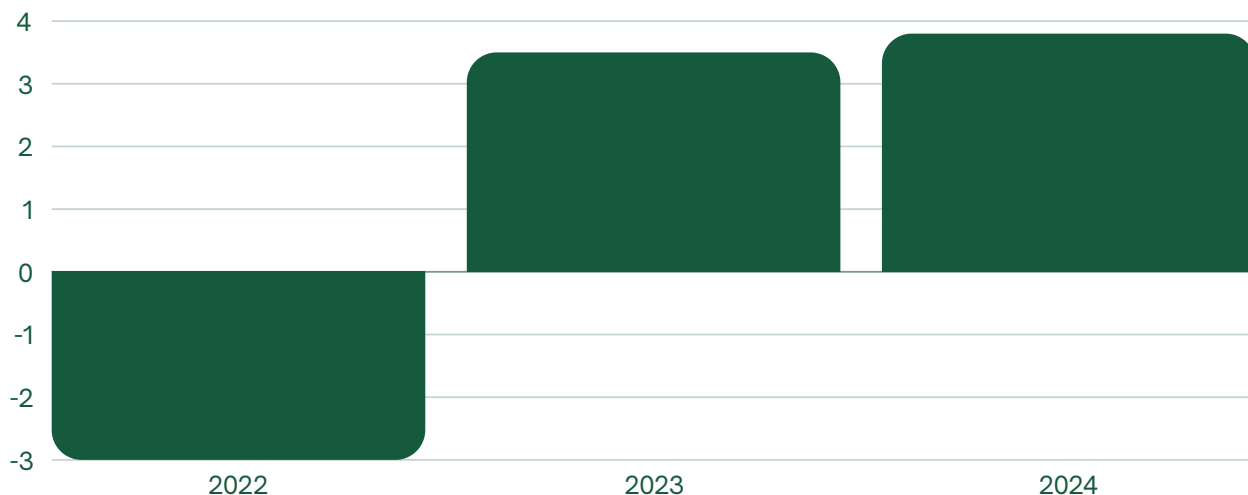
# The impact of the war on the agricultural sector



Credits: open internet sources

Kharkiv region has traditionally been one of the leading producers of grain and other agricultural crops in Ukraine. However, the active hostilities have led to a significant reduction in the area under crops. According to the Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food of Ukraine, in 2022, the area under crops in the region decreased by 30% compared to the pre-war period. This decline was caused by the occupation of part of the territory, mining of fields, and destruction of infrastructure. In 2023, thanks to demining efforts and infrastructure restoration, the area under crops increased by 15% compared to 2022, but still did not reach pre-war levels. Milk and meat production has also declined due to the loss of livestock and the destruction of livestock farms. According to the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, in 2023, milk production in the region decreased by 20% and meat production by 25% compared to 2021.

## Gross grain harvest (2022-2024)



# The impact of war and recovery

The hostilities resulted in significant losses in the agricultural sector of Kharkiv region, including reduced production, infrastructure damage and job losses. However, thanks to recovery efforts, support from the government and international organizations, and farmers' adaptation to the new conditions, the region's agricultural sector is showing gradual recovery and growth. The following data is an estimate and may differ from official statistical information, as access to such information may be limited in the context of military operations.

## Economic indicators

- In 2022, the volume of products sold decreased by 35% compared to 2021, amounting to about UAH 13 billion.
- In 2023, there was a 10% increase to UAH 14.3 billion, thanks to the resumption of production and support from the government and international partners.
- In 2024, sales are expected to further increase to UAH 16 billion.

## Number of agricultural enterprises

- As of 2022, the number of operating enterprises decreased by 20% due to the destruction and occupation of the territories, amounting to about 1,200.
- In 2023, the number of enterprises increased to 1,300 due to the resumption of operations and the registration of new businesses.
- In 2024, the number of enterprises is expected to increase to 1,400.



# Recommendations

1. Supporting farmers, in particular by providing subsidies and soft loans for small and medium-sized agribusinesses.
2. Development of greenhouse farms and urban agricultural production will ensure a constant production of fresh vegetables and herbs even in winter.
3. Repair and maintenance of major transportation arteries to ensure fast and safe transportation of products within the region and from other regions.
4. It is important to create reliable storage facilities equipped with cooling systems to avoid product losses due to improper storage.
5. Stockpiling long-life foods, such as cereals, flour, canned food, and oil, can help in crisis situations.
6. Providing food to vulnerable groups - pensioners, large families, people with disabilities and those in difficult circumstances.
7. Use an integrated platform where all organizations can see common needs and coordinate their efforts to avoid duplication and optimize the use of resources.
8. Conducting information campaigns to help residents learn about the types of assistance available and how to obtain them.
9. The use of modern technologies in agriculture (such as automated irrigation and fertilization systems) will reduce costs and increase productivity.
10. Involve universities and research centers in introducing innovations in the Kharkiv region's agriculture.
11. Organize trainings for local farmers on modern farming methods, resource management, and product marketing.



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