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From Small-scale Food Production to Consumption in Peru: First Effects of Covid-19

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Abstract

Peru is a country of food diversity, which is directly linked to its 36 ecosystems, varying from Andean, Amazonian, coastal, dry forests, moors and aquatic ecosystems. This richness derives in a diversity of cultures and food consumption habits. In this context, family farmers feed 80% of the Peruvian population and micro and small enterprises represent 95% of all enterprises nationwide. But despite having legislation for promoting and developing these small organisations, they face many limitations regarding the maintenance of production, distribution and marketing. The situation has been aggravated due to COVID-19. However, since the pandemic started, the agro-exporting companies are the ones that have increased their sales by 6%. Additionally, Peru is importing potato and potato flour from European countries, while family farmers of native potatoes are being paid cents per kilo of their products.

In this paper we argue that the food system in Peru should be developed at the small scale level with short chains, guaranteeing diversity all year around. To achieve it, first, the governmental agencies must purchase healthy and nutritious foods from local family farmers, livestock owners, harvesters, fishermen and processors within the framework of Food Complementary Programs. Second, stakeholders at all levels must support solidarity baskets development and consumers' coops formations. With these two proposals, local economies are revitalised, while guaranteeing a nutritious, regional and even native food, directly from small producers and in accordance with the traditions of the localities

We found that it is also key to improve the cold chain, working in cooperation with restaurants and processing plants, minimising food waste. Governmental Agencies, in cooperation with NGOs and civil society organisations, such as Slow Food, must combine and generate an accessible and updated database of producers and formal carriers. Finally, as an operational support, simple manuals on the documents, sanitary and formalisation requirements and procedures for the transport and commercialisation of food, in Spanish and local languages should be created and shared all around the country.

Finally, to protect the highly nutritious native biodiversity, the moratorium on GMOs must be maintained to guarantee food sovereignty and adaptation to climate change.

Keywords: Covid-19, direct purchases, Food distribution, Food Sovereignty, food Systems, Short Chains