



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

Ing. Msc. Liza Melina Meza Flores¹; Eco. Karla Gabaldoni Schreiber²

¹ Spokesperson for Slow Food - Lima Community (email: lizameflo@yahoo.com)

² Co-Coordinator of Slow Food Peru (email: gruposlowfoodperu@gmail.com)

Introduction

As a result of this health crisis, during the first months of lockdown restrictions (March-April 2020), it became visible that the **small scale producers of minimal processed foods face many limitations** to maintain their production; to adapt to new forms of distribution during unusual events, to be efficiently involved in marketing; and to ensure that their products will be consumed by, not only the final consumers in the Peruvian cities, but also by rural consumers and other small scale businesses (processing companies, specialized shops, restaurants, etc). At the same time, up to April 2020, the **exporting companies increased their sales** (IPE, 2017), because there was a newfound preference for fresh and healthy food worldwide. The situation, then, only implies an outflow of fresh and healthy food at a time when it is necessary to have a nourished population to overcome this health crisis. Additionally, taking into consideration that 32.7% of the Peruvian population over 15 years old have comorbidities: obesity, diabetes and hypertension (INEI, 2020), which are associated to poor eating habits, and almost 10% of the population is undernourished (FAO, 2019)

Methodology during lockdown



Results and Conclusions: Challenges and Proposals

Challenges for small scale producers of minimal processed foods: From production to consumption (Multi-stakeholders' perspectives)

Production	Distribution	Comercialization	Consumption
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No official mapping of small scale producers and their needs. • High losses because due to quarantine, curfew and roadblocks, traders are not able to buy • The low prices offered by middlemen did not cover the costs of production and the farmers preferred not to sell. • Because of the quarantine, some producers were not allowed to go to their farms or gardens to carry out maintenance activities or harvest. • Difficulties to obtain inputs. • The reduction of the sales and savings has caused a reduction in land preparation and sowing. • Low Access to formal banking and other financial services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The transport of their products is restricted due to new legislation with bureaucratic requirements and untrained personnel to enforce them. This situation benefited middlemen and farmers with a higher level of organization and production. • The curfew limited the distribution routes, number of clients and times. As small scale producers had to ride to Lima, and back before curfew, no proper cold chain. • No proper cold chain. Shipping mostly in non-refrigerated vehicles, as it is expensive for non-associated farmers. Also there was no cooling system store the surpluses. Thus, food waste is generated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informality limits public procurements and commercialization to formal enterprises (small scale processors, cafes, restaurants, stores, etc.), and also impacted formal enterprises, which can not compete. • Some of them have gone-out of business because of the corona recession and the high costs to apply the new sanitary regulations. • Food waste because farmers' markets, Bio-Fairs and Bio-stores do not have a cold system for the minimal processed foods. • Markets are Focus of contagion. Therefore, commercialization areas must comply to biosecurity standards. • Some producers could not adapt to the new on-line selling and payment system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The stress of living with uncertain access to food and economic downturn, such the current pandemic, forces households to adjust their food consumption to a limited or affordable budget (FAO, 2019). • This is most dangerous as the most vulnerable people in the poorest districts of Lima rely on "common pots" to feed their families. • People staying at home are more exposed to advertisements of cheap ultra processed foods and offers to pay with credit cards. • Change of patterns of consumption of young population, as they prefer to consume industrial products (Slow Food, 2017). • Only half of Peruvian households owns a fridge to preserve food.

Opportunities for the Peruvian government to change the food system during and after COVID-19 (Multi-stakeholders' perspectives)

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data base and georeferencing of producers - Promote formalization - Extension of GMO moratorium, which ends in 2021. - Monitoring pesticide use. - Promote agroecology and provide incentives to ecological producers. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote sustainable short chains and efficient delivery routes. - Encourage solidarity Baskets coordinated directly by consumers - Boost alliances between farmers and secondary producers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support New Zero Waste and ecological initiatives (Farmers markets). - Assist formalization of businesses and simplify processes. - Public purchases for hospitals, schools, nursery schools, homes for the elderly, etc. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Connect ecological producers with the over 300 common pots. - Implement food education at schools and in mass media. - Buy local and ecological foods - Promote Community supported agriculture – Consumer Coops. |
|--|--|---|--|