



# THE IMPORTANCE OF FOOD WASTE REDUCTION MEASURES IN ORDER TO ENSURE FOOD SECURITY IN ROMANIA IN THE CONTEXT OF COVID-19

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**Abstract:** Measures to reduce food waste in order to ensure food security in Romania, through the process of management, minimization and reduction of food waste and guaranteeing food security are essential aspects for the proper conduct of all activities in a state. Also, a country will have food security with improved stability only when food waste reduction measures are successfully implemented.

## • Introduction

Food waste is a global issue that has become increasingly important on the public and political agenda in recent years. Current estimates indicate that a third of the food destined to human consumption is wasted or lost worldwide, leading to significant economic and environmental costs.

In Romania, the losses of food in the consumer sector are 2 to 3 times higher than other European countries, whereas the average income is much lower.

Measures to reduce food waste in Romania are essential in order to prevent and manage the negative effects generated by it.

## • Material and method

For evaluating and finding solutions to the problem of food waste in Romania, it is necessary to conduct a detailed comparative analysis, at county, regional and national levels. In order to identify the elements of the food chain through which individuals contribute to food waste, we developed a questionnaire comprised of 10 questions and distributed it to 50 volunteers, aged 20→70, divided into age groups, by decade (20→30 and so on).

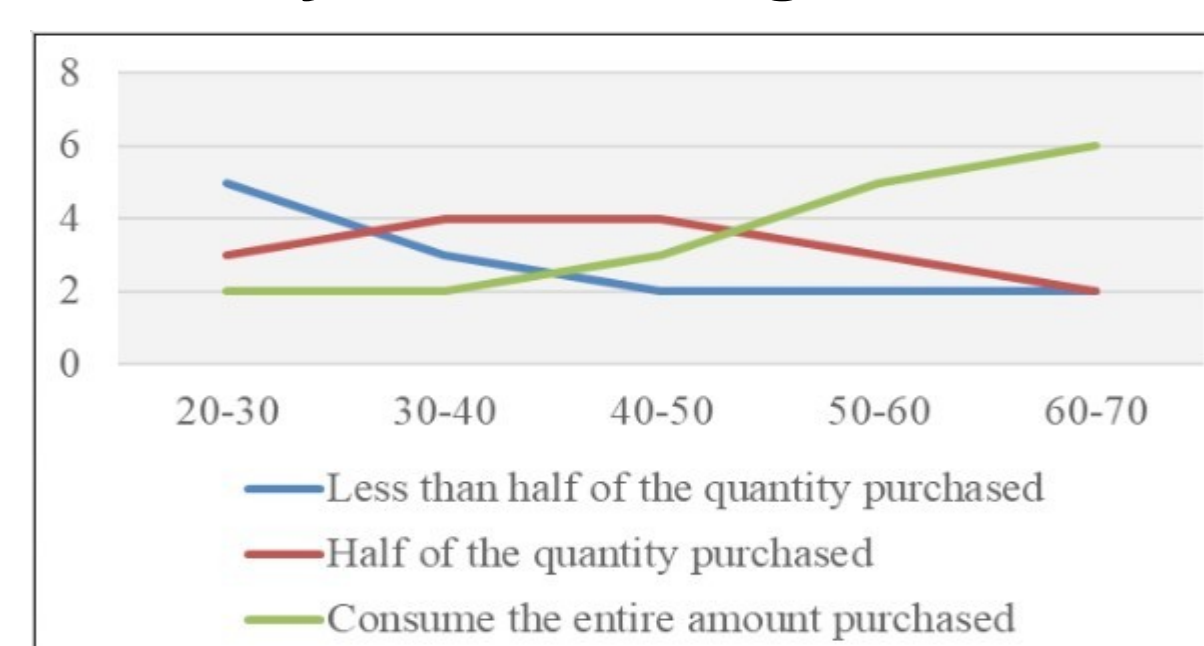
The questions were organized in 3 categories, questions 1→3 related to habits in purchasing and consuming vegetables and fruits, questions 4→6 related to meat and meat products purchasing and consuming habits, questions 7→9 related to the purchasing and consumption behavior related to milk and dairy products and question 10 asking the preferred strategy of the respondents for reducing food waste at household level.

The answers were further analyzed and interpreted in order to identify the elements related to food waste in Romania.

## • Results and discussions

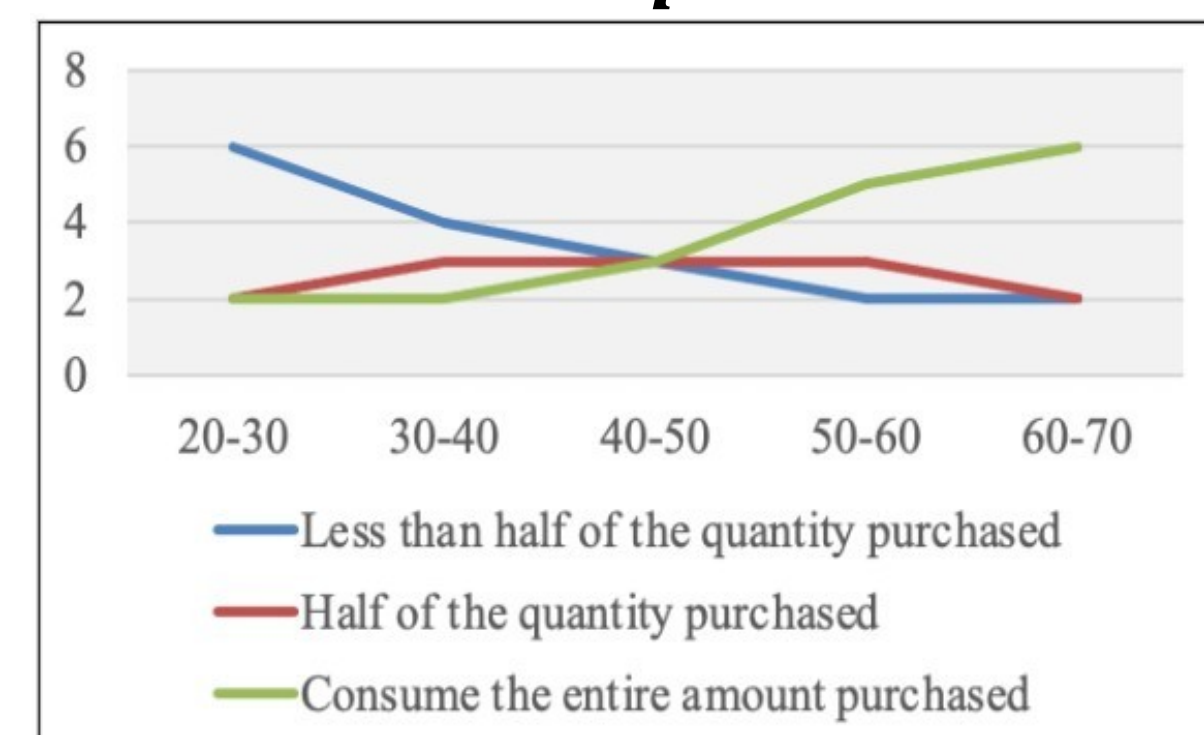
Following the application of the questionnaire, we collected relevant data on food waste and its variation, across different categories of food and phases of consumption, as well as the willingness of participants to get involved in practices of reducing food waste at home.

### 1. Fresh fruits and vegetables



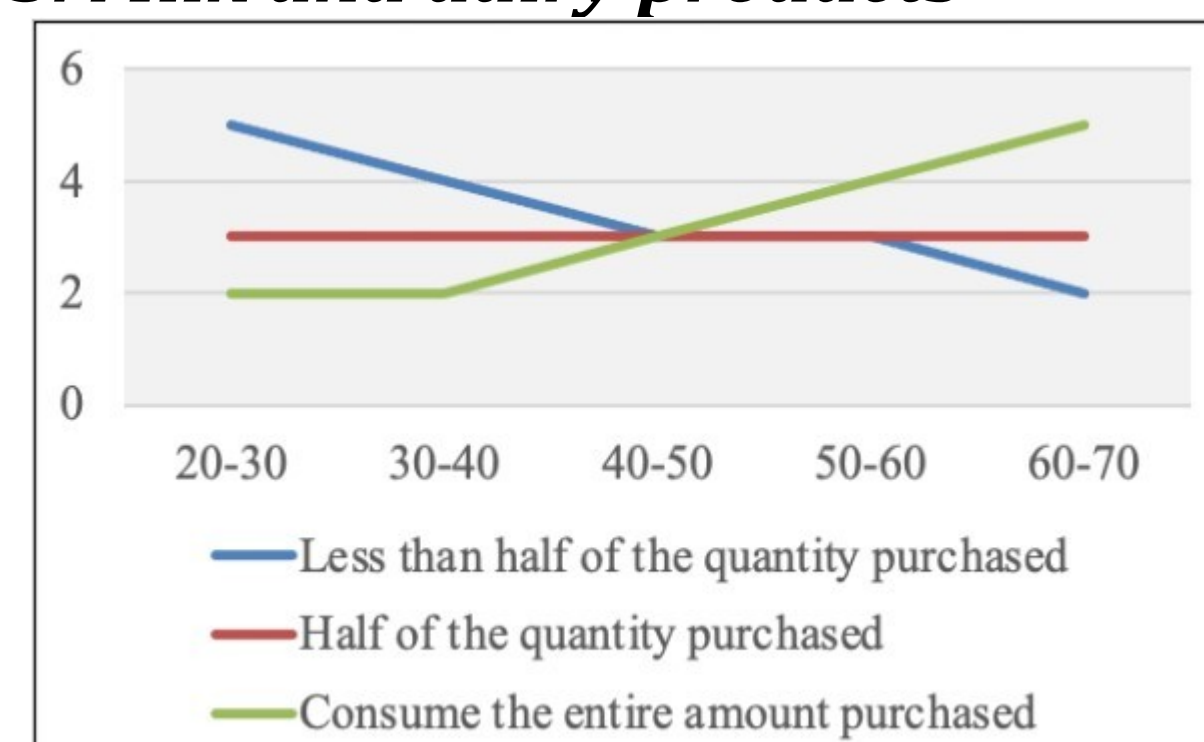
*The amount of fresh food and vegetables thrown away weekly due to spoilage/ age groups*

### 2. Meat and meat products



*The amount of meat and meat products thrown away weekly/ age groups*

### 3. Milk and dairy products



*The amount of milk and milk products thrown away weekly/ age groups*

### Ways of reducing food waste



*Variations in preference related to ways to reduce food waste*

## • Conclusions

Romania's food security is part of the national security, therefore a coherent strategy must be developed and implemented regarding this matter at national level.

In order to facilitate the reduction of food waste at household level, a series of recommendations, applicable to all population groups, must be promoted:

- Making shopping list, every time individuals go shopping
- Verify the data and ensure the understanding of the meaning of labels
- Correct storage of food, according to the instructions on the package
- Shopping more often and in smaller quantities.

Along these simple recommendations, a educational program is required, to ensure that all the citizens of Romania understand the notion and the implications of food waste.