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South Africa- Food Security During COVID Pandemic

Development of a Strategic Food Reserve in Under-Resourced Communities in South Africa to Avoid Malnutrition and Hunger During Pandemic Outbreaks

Abstract

The outbreak of Covid 19 in 2020 showed the world that pandemics are real and that they can cause major impacts on populations, economies, and food security. Millions of people died from Covid 19 but how many died because of hunger or malnutrition due to the impact of Covid 19 on the food supply chain? Not many people are discussing this issue. In the country of South Africa, many critical food systems such as meat packing plants, agricultural farms, and grocery stores were shut down or produced a significantly lower output due to front-line workers becoming ill or dying. In this paper, I discuss the development of food reserve banks that will ensure that food is available for the citizens of South Africa during a pandemic.

Introduction

There are currently 56.5 million people that reside in South Africa. Over 100 thousand people have died from Covid 19 in South Africa. But over three million people were infected with Covid 19 in South Africa. The major crops grown in South Africa are soybeans, sunflower seeds, and groundnuts. There are seven major grocery chains in South Africa. South Africa gets most of its food imported from neighboring countries and other countries outside the continent.

The Impact of COVID on the Food Supply Chain

Over 13 countries in Africa had a food shortage due to covid 19. According to the World Health Organization, it says, "But the sharpest rise in hunger was in Africa, where the estimated prevalence of undernourishment – at 21 percent of the population – is more than double that of any other region." The government in South Africa had minimal resources and strategies to help the food shortage in South Africa. Causing an inflation on the prices of food in South Africa because of the shortage. According to Agricultural Economics Today it states, "Thus, the general rise in global prices overshadowed the improved domestic crop supply in the 2020/21 production season." Companies and small businesses had employee shortages due to Covid 19.

Strategic Food Network Reserve and Food Security

Reserve banks are central banks that reserve funds for companies. There are globally different reserve banks in the world and have the same benefits. For example on the federal bank reserve New York it states, " **Flexible Work Arrangements**, a variety of alternative work schedules are

available to help balance career and personal needs. **Tuition Assistance**, reimbursement is available for approved undergraduate and graduate educational expenses. **Back-Up Dependent Care**, back-up daycare is available for children at facilities nationwide, as well as in-home back-up child and adult/eldercare.” All in all, a reserve bank is a source of backup in times of need.

Strategic food and nutrition reserves are back up plans that guarantee food during a national crisis such as natural disasters or viruses. In a previous time before the natural disaster or virus happen, grocery store owners would contact food suppliers to reserve certain produce for them. For example, farmers reserve citrus fruits such as lemons and oranges in time for cold and flu season. When the time is needed the food is transferred through the network from the farmers reserving the produce. Then the produce leaves the reserve when it is needed by the people in the grocery stores.

Food reserve banks would be beneficial for the financial inflation for South Africa. According to the article Inflation warning in South Africa it says, “**Headline inflation is now well above the SARB’s 4.5% midpoint objective and also outside the upper limit of the full 3–6% inflation target range, said Cassim.**” Due to the help from the extra help from the government on funding, inflation in South Africa has increased. This affects the amount of people who can afford the produce even in the food shortages. If South Africa is able to reserve food and rely less on the government, their inflation will be lowered. South Africa will also gain funding by trading their reserved goods with different countries that are in need.

To keep money and produce from being wasted periodic reviews from the consumers, buying habits for grocery items will be collected from grocery store owners. The owners will then contact the farmers informing them to reserve the popular items at that time. Grocery stores will be incentivized to participate because it will give them a way to deal with food shortages. Producers and farmers will be incentivized to participate because it will give them a platform to produce more food knowing that it will not be wasted.

Conclusion

The world community has been impacted by Covid 19. There have been millions of deaths and a lot of destroyed families. One area that has been overlooked is the impact of Covid 19 on food security and the food chain. Many wealthy countries were able to weather the storm, but many developing countries have suffered and continue to suffer. The solution that I propose is the development of food reserve banks that will ensure that food is available for the citizens of South Africa during a pandemic.

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