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## **FOOD SELF-SUPPLY IN NEW CONSUMER TRENDS**

*The article presents premises inscribing food self-supply in new trends occurring in consumer behavior and shows the opinions of consumers on food self-supply. The analysis used research conducted in 2017 in the Mazowieckie voivodship among representatives of rural households. Food self-supply is part of the concept of sustainable development and sustainable consumption. It is an example of the greening of consumption, and of conscious and collaborative consumption. The most important factors entering food self-supply into new consumer trends are natural and healthy food produced in accordance with sustainable development, care for health and the natural environment, cultivating traditions, but also product individualization related to the use of free time.*

**Key words:** food self-supply, consumption, prosumption, household, consumer trends.

**JEL Codes:** D12; D16, E21, M30.

### **Introduction**

Issues related to consumption are a current and growing research problem in economics. Since the second half of the 20th century, societies in developed countries have undergone intensive changes in consumer behavior. These changes occur within the hierarchy and level of needs, means and methods of satisfying needs and criteria for making purchasing choices. There is an increase in consumer interest in natural food from their farm or allotment (so-called 'return to nature'), and the share of consumers who care about the health of family members or the state of the natural environment is increasing.

The purpose of this study is to identify the prerequisites for food self-supply in new trends in consumer behavior and to show the opinions of respondents on this topic.

Analyzing the definitions of food self-supply in the literature and new trends in consumer behavior, we can talk about food self-supply as the independent production of food without the market, i.e. most often from land allotments, from self-production (farm) or independent processing (preparation) of food from products from self-production or from previously purchased products.

Currently, we are dealing with the phenomenon of excessive consumption, which leads to the waste of manufactured goods (overproduction), degradation of the natural environment, increasing the disparities in society at the local and global level, the gradual destruction of non-renewable natural resources and other adverse effects. Although consumption is an attribute of a modern, highly developed civilization, and the buyer of goods and services is a key figure in a competitive economy, consumer organizations and movements are increasingly thriving. They aim to reduce the negative phenomena that result from excessive consumption. New tendencies in the behavior of

buyers of goods and services have emerged, which are a counterweight to the phenomenon of over-consumption, including such tendencies as sustainable consumption, self-centeredness, greening of life and consumption, conscious consumption, collaborative consumption and prosumption. Food self-supply, considered in the 1990s as a relic of the past, is now gaining importance and is in line with new consumer trends of the 21st century.

Zalega defines new consumer trends as objective and long-term directions of general consumer choices, behaviors and preferences, which are a consequence of socio-political, legal, cultural, demographic and technological changes taking place in the market environment. They are a source of incentives for creating new products<sup>1</sup>. The most important determinants of consumer behavior today are naturalness and sustainable development, health and healthy nutrition, multi-sensory experiences, convenience, digitization and individualization<sup>2</sup>.

Food self-supplying is part of the concept of sustainable development and sustainable consumption<sup>3</sup>. Sustainable consumption is the optimal, conscious and responsible use of available natural resources, goods and services by individuals, households, communities and local communities, business environments, local governments, national governments and international structures, following the principles of sustainable development. Sustainable consumption aims to meet the needs and increase the quality of life for all in a local and global dimension while respecting human and labor rights, taking into account the possibility of meeting the needs of other people, including future generations, and in preserving and restoring natural capital. The emphasis on the role of food self-supply in the concept of sustainable development is argued by the fact that food from self-supply is fresh – without industrial fixing processes, or loss of nutrients due to storage and food additives (e.g. preservatives). Besides, it does not generate costs in transport over long distances, or energy costs during storage in refrigerated conditions, and does not pollute the environment with excess organic and packaging waste. Food coming from self-grown crops does not go through the industrial processing phase and the market. This means that the supply chain is, in this case, the shortest possible ("from field to plate"). It also helps to reduce unethical waste of food.

The phenomenon of self-supply is also part of new consumer trends called the greening of consumption. The greening of consumption is manifested in the interest in food from organic production due to concern for health and environmental protection<sup>4</sup>. Eco-consumers promote an environmentally friendly way of consumption. The degree of greening of consumption is also evidenced by consumer actions taken after the end of

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<sup>1</sup> T. Zalega: Nowe trendy i makrotrendy w zachowaniach konsumenckich gospodarstw domowych w XXI wieku, *Konsumpcja i Rozwój* 2013, nr 2(5), pp. 3-21.

<sup>2</sup> G. Maciejewski, S. Mokrysz: New trends in consumption on the coffee Market, *Zeszyty Naukowe SGGW, Polityki Europejskie, Finanse i Marketing*, 22(71), Warszawa 2019.

<sup>3</sup> A. Kozera, R. Głowicka-Wołoszyn, J. Stanisławska: Rola samozaopatrzenia w gospodarstwach domowych w Polsce w układzie grup społeczno-ekonomicznych ludności, *„Marketing i Rynek”* 2014, nr 6 (CD), pp. 397.

<sup>4</sup> S. Żakowska-Biemans: Ekologizacja konsumpcji i jej przejawy w zachowaniach konsumentów na rynku żywności - praca przeglądowa [Ecologisation of consumption and its symptoms in consumers' behavior on the food market], *Zeszyty Naukowe, Uniwersytet Ekonomiczny w Poznaniu*, nr 206, Poznań 2011, pp. 217-225.

consumption in relation to durable and perishable goods and waste from their consumption<sup>5</sup>.

Household behavior in terms of greening of consumption is manifested in the following activities:

- economical (rational) use of consumer goods,
- limiting the consumption of goods, the production of which consumes very large amounts of rare, non-renewable resources or creates hazardous post-consumer waste,
- purchasing and consuming goods that leave a small amount of waste,
- sorting and recycling options for most post-consumer waste,
- consuming organic products, both food and industrial goods,
- resignation of disposable goods, and the use of reusable goods,
- replacing car transport with public transport or ecological means of transport (e.g. by bicycle),
- consuming goods that do not come from inhumane animal husbandry, as well as the exploitation and slave labor of people,
- staying in the natural environment more often,
- using energy-saving, water-saving and material-saving goods in the production and consumption of households, etc.<sup>6</sup>

Domocentrism means meeting consumer and other needs at home or in another place chosen by the consumer. Therefore, consumers produce food and prepare meals in their homes, which is a form of spending free time with the family. Zalega regards the phenomenon of producing products on their own or limiting the use of services to perform them yourself (natural consumption) as domocentrism<sup>7</sup>. Modern consumers are so-called "home users"<sup>8</sup>. Everything that has to do with the house and the people to feel at home, is very popular<sup>9</sup>. The number of supporters of spending free time among the family is growing. Therefore, consumers produce food and prepare meals in their homes. Return to home leads to family rehabilitation and restoration of its superior value. The main feature characterizing the phenomenon of domocentrism is escaping into privacy and preference for private consumption<sup>10</sup>. Individualization of lifestyles favors such behavior<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> K. Pawlak-Kołodziejka: Ekologizacja konsumpcji, jej uwarunkowania i przejawy na rynku żywnościowym [The greening of consumption, its conditions and indications on the food market], *Przedsiębiorczość i Zarządzanie*, Tom XVII, Zeszyt 4, Część III, pp. 145–160 [w:] Łódź- Warszawa, 2016, J. Moczydłowska, Z. Patora-Wysocka (red.) *Nowe trendy w zarządzaniu – perspektywa marketingowa i personalna*.

<sup>6</sup> E. Kieźel: *Konsument i jego zachowania na rynku europejskim*, PWE, Warszawa 2010, pp. 188.

<sup>7</sup> T. Zalega: Nowe trendy konsumenckie jako przejaw innowacyjnych zachowań współczesnych konsumentów, „*Nierówności Społeczne a Wzrost Gospodarczy*” 2016, nr 46, pp. 209.

<sup>8</sup> J. Rachocka: Dekonsumpcja, domocentryzm, ekologizacja życia – nowe tendencje konsumenckie w rozwiniętych gospodarkach rynkowych, [w:] T. Bernat (red.), *Problemy globalizacji gospodarki*, Polskie Towarzystwo Ekonomiczne, Szczecin 2003, pp. 190.

<sup>9</sup> J. Berbeka: Nowe tendencje w zachowaniach konsumentów, „*Marketing i Rynek*” 1999, nr 1, pp. 17.

<sup>10</sup> Cz. Bywalec: *Konsumpcja w teorii i praktyce gospodarowania*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2007, pp. 137.

<sup>11</sup> A. Lebiejko: Domocentryzm a wirtualizacja zachowań konsumentów na rynku usług, *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego, Problemy Zarządzania, Finansów i Marketingu* Nr 15, nr 608, 2010, pp. 388.

The phenomenon of food self-supply is part of the prosumption trend. Prosumption means the interpenetration of production and consumption until the boundaries between them are blurred<sup>12</sup>. Prosumers are people who, by choice, produce or co-produce specific goods and services. Some of them pursue their passions in this way. Others want to be free from mass production in the process of meeting their needs. Various factors lead to buyers' involvement in prosumption, including reduction of working time, the reluctance of educated people to take boring work, rising costs of qualified workforce, increase in interest in physical activity as a method of mental rest, desire to improve quality goods, and the need for self-expression<sup>13</sup>.

Conscious consumption is also called "responsible consumption". It is understood as making consumer choices based on knowledge of their social, ecological and political consequences. In practice, conscious consumption means acquiring information about products and services, the production process, the possibilities of utilization – and on their basis making the most socially and ecologically responsible choices possible<sup>14</sup>. However, conscious consumption occurs not only when we buy products and services friendly to people and the environment, but also when we consciously decide to produce goods or services on our own. Conscious consumption explores solutions such as reducing the use, sharing and reuse of products. Also, in ethical (conscious) consumption it is also important to consider the entire life of the product, not only how it was created, but also what will happen to it when it ceases to be needed. Self-provision of goods and services by households should, therefore, be considered as conscious consumption.

Cooperative consumption, also known as sharing, mesh, "collaborative consumption" or "shared economy" is one of many new trends in the behavior of modern households in many countries around the world<sup>15</sup>. It includes borrowing, exchanging, barter contracts or paid access to goods, in opposition to ownership<sup>16</sup>. Collaborative consumption is based on the idea of sharing and the so-called product service approach, i.e. focusing on the product's function without having to own it. Cooperative consumption solutions range from simple neighborhood exchange of services, through various types of libraries, to city bikes that are becoming more widespread in Europe (a system that allows residents to use bicycles at special stands in selected locations at selected points in the city for a short time), or car-sharing systems (e.g. ZipCar)<sup>17</sup>. Collaborative consumption not only reduces individual consumption and unnecessary purchases but also strengthens integration and social ties. According to the definition of self-supply which is presented by many authors, this phenomenon includes gifts given to

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<sup>12</sup> B. Jung: Kapitalizm postmodernistyczny, *Ekonomista*, nr 5–6, 1997, [za:] Cz. Bywalec, L. Rudnicki, 2002, *Konsumpcja*, PWE, Warszawa.

<sup>13</sup> E. Kiezel: Konsument i jego zachowania na rynku europejskim, PWE, Warszawa 2010, pp. 182-183.

<sup>14</sup> K. Szeniawska: Świadoma konsumpcja, [https://globalna.ceo.org.pl/sites/globalna.ceo.org.pl/files/swiadoma\\_konsumpcja.pdf](https://globalna.ceo.org.pl/sites/globalna.ceo.org.pl/files/swiadoma_konsumpcja.pdf) [access: 03.02.2020].

<sup>15</sup> T. Zalega: Nowe trendy w zachowaniach konsumpcyjnych miejskich gospodarstw domowych w okresie kryzysu, *Marketing i Rynek* 2013, 8, pp. 25.

<sup>16</sup> R. Botsman, R. Rogers: *What's Mine Is Yours: The Rise of Collaborative Consumption*, Harper Collins, New York 2012, pp. 15-16.

<sup>17</sup> T. Zalega: New consumer trends [in:] Burchard-Dziubińska M. (ed.), *Towards a green economy. From ideas to practice*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Łódź 2015.

other households that were produced on the farm or the allotment<sup>18</sup>. Neighboring exchange of products from household self-supply is included in the trend of collaborative consumption. Such activities allow the use of resources wasted so far and giving them new added value for their owner<sup>19</sup>.

Rural households benefiting from self-supply play an important role in the landscape, economic viability and socio-cultural areas in multifunctional rural development<sup>20</sup>. In addition to production functions, attention should also be paid to the other functions of these entities, such as protection against poverty and exclusion, creating social capital, cultural capital, caring for the youngest and oldest inhabitants of the village, shaping the rural landscape, supplying more naturally produced food to the market and higher quality.

So-called second homes are becoming more and more popular in rural areas. Having a second home outside the city is an ideal way to implement and develop the self-supply function of the household and to rest in nature.

## **Materials and methods**

The analysis used literature studies and primary data from surveys conducted on a sample of 302 rural households. The research was conducted in 2017 in ten selected communes of the Mazowieckie voivodship in Poland. The questionnaire was prepared in paper form, each respondent was informed about the purpose of the study, how it was used and assured of its full anonymity. The survey asked respondents to determine the scale of using food self-supply and the importance of this form of meeting consumer needs. To measure the level of food self-supply, a consumption structure meter was used to determine the share of food from self-supply in total consumption. The declared level of food self-supply (very low, low, average, high) was the subjective answer of respondents.

## **Results and discussion**

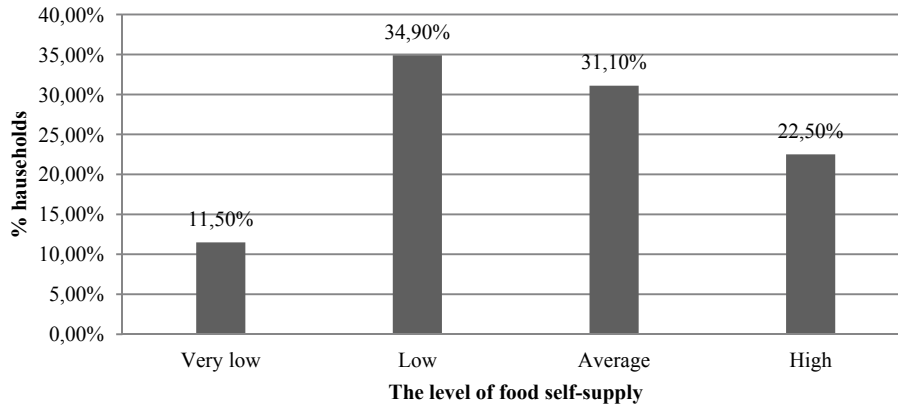
Household members participating in the survey showed great interest in the consumption of food from their own production. More than half of the respondents use food products made on their farm or in the garden to a medium or high degree (Figure 1).

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<sup>18</sup> A. Kozera, R. Głowicka-Wołoszyn, J. Stanisławska: Rola samozaopatrzenia w gospodarstwach domowych w Polsce w układzie grup społeczno-ekonomicznych ludności, „Marketing i Rynek” 2014, nr 6 (CD), pp. 387.

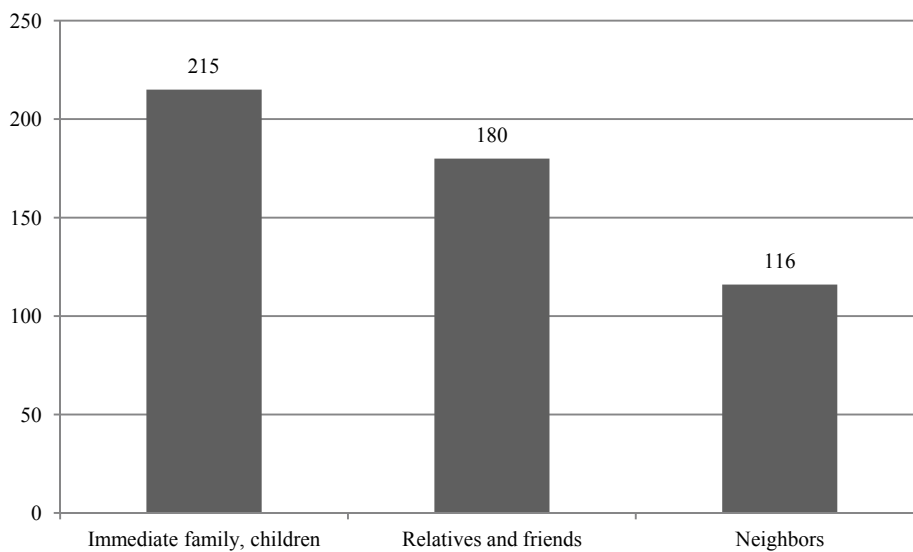
<sup>19</sup> L. Gansky: *The Mesh: Why the Future of Business Is Sharing*, New York 2010, Penguin Books.

<sup>20</sup> J. Zegar: Kwestia gospodarstw samozaopatrzeniowych w Polsce, „Więś i Rolnictwo” 2007, nr 1, pp. 33–57.



**Figure 1.** The level of food self-supply in the surveyed households  
Source: author's own study based on surveys.

Respondents who declared the use of self-supply were also asked about the frequency of consumption of such products. One-third of respondents consumed food from self-supply at least 4 times a week. Every fourth respondent did it every day. 12% of respondents used self-supply two or three times a month, and 8% - less than once a month.

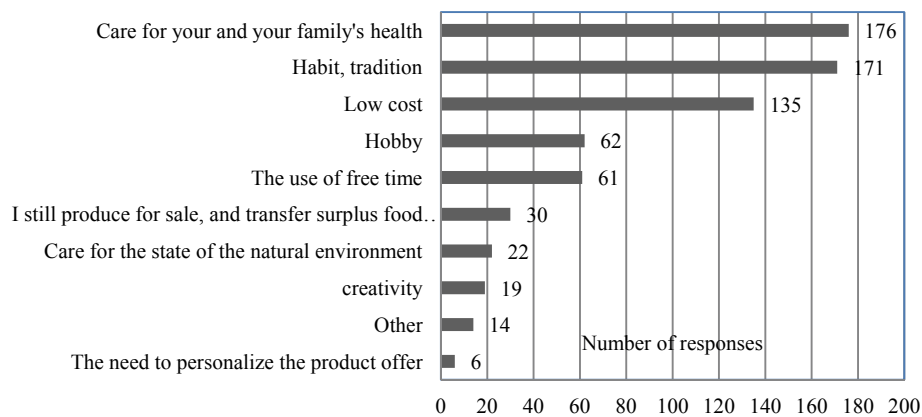


**Figure 2.** Transfer of products from food self-supply (number of indications)  
Source: author's own study based on surveys.

Products from self-supply are usually given to family, free of charge, relatives and friends, and less often to neighbors. The frequency of such free food donations varies

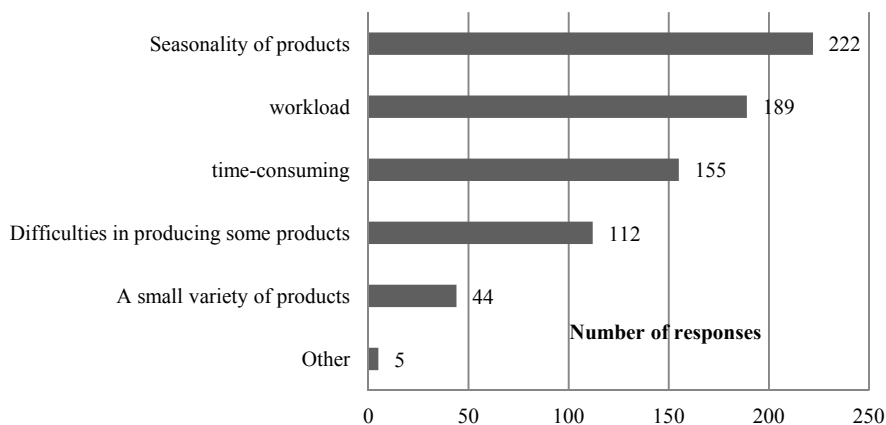
greatly. Every fifth household transfers products once a year or several times a year. Most households (32%) share food several times a month. 75% of respondents answered in the affirmative to the question of whether they consume food received free of charge from family gifts or neighborhood exchange, and which were self-made by these people.

The next assessment concerned the indication of which of the factors most significantly affect the production of food on their own (a maximum of 3 answers could be indicated). Every fourth respondent replied that he produces food on his own due to his and his family's health and because of family traditions and habits. Another most frequently mentioned reason is low production cost (19% of respondents), hobby (9%) and use of free time (9%). Less than 5% of respondents said they could transfer the surplus from production for sale to the household. Few indicated concern for the state of the natural environment, creativity or the need to personalize the product offer (Figure 3).



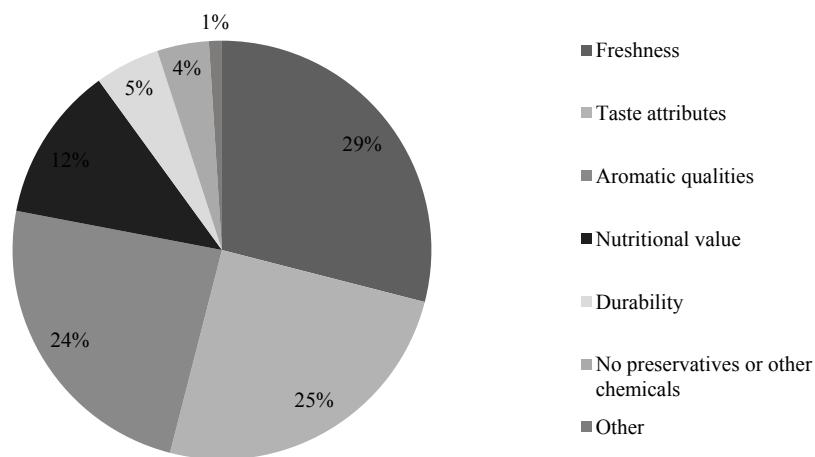
**Figure 3.** Factors determining the use of self-supply in the respondents' opinion  
Source: author's own study based on surveys.

In addition to factors influencing the decision to use self-supply, consumers are also affected by the features/properties of food products from their production. Respondents mentioned the features that in their opinion have the greatest impact on households producing food on their own (a maximum of 3 answers could be given). The most popular are freshness (29% of respondents), taste (25%), smell (24%) and nutritional values (12%). The durability and lack of preservatives or chemicals in such foods were indicated by 5% and 4% of respondents, respectively.



**Figure 4.** Disadvantages of food self-supply in the respondents' opinion  
Source: author's own study based on surveys.

According to respondents, the biggest disadvantages of food self-supply include the seasonality of food produced (31%), labor consumption (26%) and time consumption (21%). 15% of respondents indicated difficulties in the production of some products, while the disadvantage for 6% was the small variety of products (Figure 4).



**Figure 5.** Product features, in the respondents' opinion, which have the greatest impact on self-food production  
Source: author's own study based on surveys.



Respondents valued products from self-supply for freshness (29%), taste (25%) and fragrance (24%). Only 4% of respondents pointed out that food from self-supply lacked chemicals and various preservatives (Figure 5).

The respondents were almost unanimous as to the choice between food products produced on their farm and bought in the store. 76% thought that self-produced food on their farm provides more satisfaction and satisfaction than from a store. Only 20% had a different opinion.

Almost 3/4 of respondents declared that they would also eat food from self-supply in the future. For 47% it is very likely, and for 31% it is quite likely. This is a very satisfactory result, given that only 4% of respondents thought it was very unlikely. No opinion in this regard was declared by 12% of the surveyed population.

## Conclusions

The role of self-supply in rural households in Poland is still very important and fits in with new consumer trends. This is due to the traditions and patterns of consumption shaped over many years, but also to new trends resulting from the socio-political, legal, cultural, demographic and technological changes observed on the market. It can be assumed that this phenomenon will continue to exist not only for economic but also for health and environmental reasons. Respondents declare that they want to use self-supply in the future. Self-supply is, therefore, part of the trend of sustainable consumption and the greening of life. 74% of consumers prefer self-made food products rather than those bought in the store for health reasons. The disadvantages of food self-supply most frequently mentioned by the respondents are seasonality of food produced, and the labor and time involved. Research shows that both the phenomenon itself and opinions on products from the self-production of rural households are very positive. An interesting research thread is the location of the topic of food self-supply in the model of green economic growth such as sustainable development on production and consumption, which is gaining importance in modern economics.

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## **Samozaopatrzenie żywnościowe w nowych trendach konsumenckich**

### **Streszczenie**

W Artykule przedstawiono przesłanki wpisujące samozaopatrzenie żywnościowe w nowe trendy zachodzące w zachowaniach konsumentów oraz ukazanie opinii respondentów na temat samozaopatrzenia żywnościowego. W analizie wykorzystano badania własne przeprowadzone w 2017 roku w województwie mazowieckim wśród przedstawicieli wiejskich gospodarstw domowych. Samozaopatrzenie żywnościowe wpisuje się w koncepcję zrównoważonego rozwoju i zrównoważonej konsumpcji. Jest przykładem ekologizacji konsumpcji, konsumpcji świadomej i kolaboratywnej. Najważniejsze czynniki wpisujące samozaopatrzenie żywnościowe w nowe trendy konsumenckie to naturalna i zdrowa żywność produkowana w zgodzie ze zrównoważonym rozwojem, dbałość o zdrowie i stan środowiska przyrodniczego, kultywowanie tradycji, ale także indywidualizacja produktowa związana z wykorzystaniem czasu wolnego.

**Słowa kluczowe:** samozaopatrzenie żywnościowe, konsumpcja, prosumpcja, gospodarstwo domowe, trendy konsumenckie.

**JEL Code:** D12; D16, E21, M30.

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