

5. Conclusiones

Este estudio ha reunido y analizado numerosos datos e informes sobre las pérdidas y el desperdicio de alimentos. Por un lado, se calcularon los niveles y volúmenes de desperdicio en cada etapa de la cadena de suministro de alimentos. Por otro, se presentaron las causas y las posibles maneras de prevenir las pérdidas y el desperdicio de alimentos en cada etapa de la cadena de suministro de alimentos.

Dada la falta o insuficiencia de datos, se tuvieron que realizar muchas suposiciones sobre los niveles de desperdicio de alimentos, sobre todo en las etapas de distribución y consumo. Por ello, los resultados de este estudio deben interpretarse con extrema precaución.

Los estudios primero revelaron la importante falta de datos en los trabajos disponibles sobre el desperdicio de alimentos en el mundo, especialmente en lo que se refiere a la cuantificación de las pérdidas de alimentos por causa individual y en el coste de la prevención de pérdidas de alimentos. En los casos en los que existían datos disponibles, también existían importantes incertidumbres.

Es urgente que se investigue más en esta área, especialmente si tenemos en cuenta que la seguridad alimentaria es una preocupación importante en numerosas partes del mundo en desarrollo.

Si bien aumentar la producción primaria de alimentos es primordial para hacer frente al futuro crecimiento de la demanda final, las tensiones entre la producción y el acceso a los alimentos también pueden reducirse explotando el potencial de la reducción de las pérdidas de alimentos. Existen soluciones eficaces a lo largo de toda la cadena alimentaria para reducir la cantidad total de alimentos que se pierden o desperdician. Las acciones no deben orientarse únicamente hacia partes aisladas de la cadena, ya que lo que se hace (o no) en una parte tiene consecuencias en el resto. En los países de bajos ingresos, las medidas deberían ir dirigidas, en primer lugar, hacia el productor (p. ej., mejorando las técnicas de cultivo, la educación de los agricultores, las instalaciones de almacenamiento y las cadenas de refrigeración). En los países industrializados, sin embargo, las soluciones propuestas a nivel industrial y del productor serían poco rentables si los consumidores siguen desperdiciando a los niveles actuales. Hay que informar a los hogares de los consumidores y cambiar el comportamiento que provoca los altos niveles actuales de desperdicio de alimentos.

Otro punto que hay que enfatizar es que la cadena de suministro de alimentos está cada vez más globalizada. Algunos productos alimenticios se producen, transforman y consumen en partes muy diferentes del mundo. El impacto del creciente comercio internacional en las pérdidas de alimentos todavía debe evaluarse mejor.

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