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## DEVELOPMENT OF FOOD INDUSTRY OF NORTHERN BUKOVYNA AND KHOTYN REGION IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD

**Abstract.** *An important role in the economy of Ukraine today is played by the food industry, which leads to considerable interest in studying its development in some regions in previous times. However, the functioning of food enterprises in Northern Bukovina and Khotyn region in the interwar period has not yet been the subject of a separate scientific study.*

*An in-depth analysis of archival materials, official statistical reports, and a number of publications revealed that the food industry in the studied region at the beginning of the Romanian rule was represented by the flour, sugar, alcohol, dairy, and meat processing branches. At the same time, the food industry was best developed in Chernivtsi County.*

*By the end of the 1930s, the number of enterprises in this industry in the region had increased significantly. The range of products produced by them has also diversified. In that time according to the main indicators of the industry's development, Chernivtsi County stood out among the three counties of Northern Bukovina and Khotyn region, and a significant part of its enterprises was located in the city of Chernivtsi.*

**Keywords:** *Northern Bukovina, Khotyn region, interwar period, food industry.*

Олександр Руснак (Чернівці)

## РОЗВИТОК ХАРЧОВОЇ ПРОМИСЛОВОСТІ ПІВНІЧНОЇ БУКОВИНИ І ХОТИНЩИНИ У МІЖВОЄННИЙ ПЕРІОД

*Важливу роль в економіці України у наш час відіграє харчова промисловість, що зумовлює значний інтерес до вивчення її розвитку в окремих регіонах у попередні часи. Проте функціонування підприємств харчової галузі на теренах Північної Буковини і Хотинщини у міжвоєнний період досі не було предметом окремого наукового дослідження.*

*Поглиблений аналіз, насамперед, архівних матеріалів, офіційних статистичних звітів, а також низки публікацій дали можливість встановити, що у досліджуваному регіоні на початку румунського правління харчова промисловість була представлена підприємствами борошномельної, цукрової, спиртової, молоко- та м'ясопереробної галузей. Їх завантаженість сягала менше половини потужностей. При цьому найкраще в Північній Буковині та на Хотинщині харчова промисловість була розвинута у Чернівецькому повіті.*

*До кінця 1930-х рр. число підприємств цієї галузі у краї суттєво збільшилося. Урізноманітнися також і асортимент виробленої ними продукції. До більш поширених на початку румунського правління у регіоні товарів додалися: згущене молоко, рибні консерви, бісквіти, оцет, ванільний цукор, порошкове молоко, кавовий сурогат, ячна крупа, штучний лід, дріжджі, глюкоза і крохмаль. З трьох тогочасних повітів Північної Буковини і Хотинщини за основними показниками розвитку галузі далі вирізнявся Чернівецький, а значна частина його підприємств була розташована у самих Чернівцях.*

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Найбільшими підприємствами харчової галузі були: «Перша буковинська броварня і спиртівня», гуральня у Репушинцях, «Громадська броварня», фабрика пива «Береса», акціонерне товариство «Паровий млин», борошномельна фабрика у Липканах, цукрозавод «Жучка», Лужанська цукроварня, цукрові заводи «Хрещатик» та «Зарожани», м'ясо-ковбасна фабрика С. Подсудека, олійня на Жучці.

**Ключові слова:** Північна Буковина, Хотинщина, міжвоєнний період, харчова промисловість.

**Formulation of scientific problem and its significance.** For many years, the food industry has been one of the strategically important sectors of Ukraine's national economy. First of all, this is due to its share in total Ukrainian production. However, with the beginning of the full-scale invasion of the troops of Russian Federation on February 24, 2022, the role of the food industry as a security factor has significantly increased. After all, in the conditions of temporary occupation by enemy the part of our state's territory or destruction of enterprises by hostilities, in order to avoid problems with food supply, we have to relocate factories and plants to relatively safe regions, adjust production processes, and expand their foreign relations and more. Chernivtsi region is one of the regions of Ukraine where various productions are transported from other parts of Ukraine. At the same time, taking into account the preconditions for the development of certain industries in the region, including food in the interwar period, may be useful today.

**Analysis of recent research.** On the other hand, the urgency of the problem is exacerbated by the insufficient level of its study by historians. For example, the collective works «Bukovyna: Its Past and Present»<sup>1</sup>, «Bukovyna: Historical Essay»<sup>2</sup> and «Khotyn Region: Historical Essay»<sup>3</sup> contain mostly only reference materials on food industry enterprises between the two world wars. Also in several previous publications the author pays some attention to the general trend of industrial development of Northern Bukovyna and Khotyn region in 1918-1940 or its some branches without providing expanded characteristics of milling, production of sugar, alcohol, starch, glucose, oil and more<sup>4</sup>.

Therefore, given to these circumstances, **the aim of our article** is to study the conditions of work, to establish the total number and characteristics of production capacity of food industry enterprises in Northern Bukovyna and Khotyn region during 1918-1940.

**Presenting main material.** The food industry was well developed in Northern Bukovyna and Khotyn region at the beginning of the Romanian rule, consisting mainly of flour, sugar, alcohol, milk and meat industries. The workload of enterprises in 1921 was less than half of the capacity.

In the studied region in 1921 the food industry was the best developed in Chernivtsi County, where there were 71 enterprises with engines of different types with a total capacity of 2858 hp. There were 1,410 administrative staff and workers, and the total value of their products was more than 221 million lei. The lion's share of food enterprises accounted for mills, mostly water<sup>5</sup>.

For comparison, in Zastavna County there were 59 enterprises with a motor power of 2359 hp and 108 employees. The profit of these enterprises amounted to more than 22 million lei. In this county, most food businesses were watermills<sup>6</sup>, which were concentrated in villages near the Dniester<sup>7</sup>. There were only 7 distilleries<sup>8</sup>.

Kitsman County, although it had 26 enterprises that were well equipped with mechanical equipment (1,027 hp) and had 97 workers, but made products for only 18 million lei (out of 75 million lei possible). The number of mills here prevailed over other enterprises in the food industry, there were 18 against 8<sup>9</sup>.

The food industry of Vashkivtsi County was represented by 28 enterprises with 385 hp, where 122 people made products with a total value of over 19 million lei. Storozhynets County in this industry had 17 enterprises with a capacity of 382 hp, which involved 186 people. Production was estimated at almost 27 million lei<sup>10</sup>.

The worst situation in the food industry in 1921 was observed in Vyzhnytsia County, where there were only 4 companies with equipment for only 48 hp and 22 workers. Accordingly, they produced a little more than 2 million lei<sup>11</sup>.

The food industry of Khotyn County in 1922 was represented mainly by small water, wind, steam, manual, horse and gasoline mills. There were 1152 in total<sup>12</sup>. Of these, gasoline – 12, steam – 80, wind – 385 and water 562<sup>13</sup> (however, according to these data it is impossible to distinguish those that had a capacity of more than 5 hp). Khotyn County also had 6 slaughterhouses (specially equipped enterprises for slaughtering cattle for meat), 11 oil mills, 4 distilleries and 2 breweries, 1 malt factory and 1 sugar factory<sup>14</sup>.

By the end of the 1930s, in the region the number of food enterprises had increased significantly. These calculations must take into account changes in territorial and administrative division. After all, at that time there were only 3 counties (Chernivtsi, Storozhynets and Khotyn) left in the region, which included others that existed in the early 1920s.

In particular, in Chernivtsi County (excluding the city of Chernivtsi) were 8 permanent working mills (two in Sadhora and one in each in Boiany, Kitsman, Davydeny, Stara Zhuchka, Vashkivtsi and Zastavna), 17 distilleries (among them the largest in Vikno – of Victoria and Maxim Randa, in Luzhany – of Iacob and Iosif Peritz), 4 alcoholic beverage plants (3 in Stara Zhuchka and 1 in Rohizna), brewery in Luzhany, 3 sugar factories (in Luzhany, Stara Zhuchka and Khreshchatyk), condensed milk plant in Stara Zhuchka, a butter factory in Rohizna, 2 vegetable oil factories in Stara Zhuchka «Oil» and Nyzhni Lenkivtsi, as well as a fish factory in Kitsman<sup>15</sup>.

Directly in Chernivtsi, the food industry was represented by 5 permanent working mills (one of the largest – «Mill of Eduard Prohaska and Sons»), 8 bakeries, biscuit factory, 2 alcohol factories, distillery, 2 breweries («Beres», «Brewery of Wijnitzer & Goldstein»), 4 vinegar factories, vanilla sugar factory, 7 confectioneries, powdered milk factory, general milk processing plant, coffee surrogate, barley groats, 2 canned fish factories, 5 factories of meat products and sausage (the most famous of them – of Stanislas Podsudek) and a plant for the production of artificial ice<sup>16</sup>.

The food industry of Storozhynets County looked weaker at that time, with 68 mills, 19 distilleries (the largest in Storozhynets), a coffee substitute plant in Karapchiv, 2 distilleries in Storozhynets, 2 butter factories in Hlyboka and Banyliv, and a starch glucose factory in Banyliv, a yeast plant in Karapchiv and an alcohol distillery in Milievo<sup>17</sup>.

The food industry of Khotyn County had 241 mills (including 7 permanent working, 13 steam, 96 water, 37 wind, 88 peasant with an engine) and 12 mills were in Khotyn; 42 oil presses (5 in Khotyn), a sugar factory in Zarozhany, 3 confectioneries (2 in Khotyn), a butter factory, 4 distilleries (1 in Khotyn), a tobacco factory and a brewery (Khotyn)<sup>18</sup>.

Let's consider separately the main trends of development in the flour, sugar, alcohol, milk and meat processing industries. Until 1928, the situation was favourable for the rise of milling throughout the region, and since 1929 began a decline that led to a reduction in production in 1930 by 40% compared to the best indicators in 1928. The decline in flour production was due to reduced consumption because of declining solvency of the population both abroad and in Romania itself; saturation of foreign markets with domestic products and falling grain prices on the world and domestic markets<sup>19</sup>. In 1931, the cost of flour decreased by 30% compared to 1930, but despite such a fall in prices, consumption continued to decline. Due to the impoverishment of the population, the daily ration of flour was sharply reduced. The most severe crisis experienced the large mills, which used expensive kinds of energy. Small enterprises with lower production consumptions were in better conditions<sup>20</sup>. Only in 1934 the situation began to stabilize<sup>21</sup>. It should be noted that the mills were common in most settlements of the region. Among them were large, which could grind several tons of grain per 24 hours, and very small – a few tens of kilograms<sup>22</sup>. Residents of villages on the banks of the Prut and Dniester rivers were in a very favourable position, as they were able to use free river energy, which significantly reduced costs for production. But in such conditions could operate only relatively small mills, so in coastal villages, as a rule, there were several<sup>23</sup>.

The bakery business was closely connected with the milling. The highest level of its development in the region in the 1920s was recorded in Chernivtsi – 5 bread factories and 35 small bakeries that provided the city with bread. In rural areas, the population resolve the need for ready-made bread on their own. Stable growth of the main indicators of the industry was observed until the end of the 1920s. And already in 1931 the production of bakery products fell by a third<sup>24</sup>. Due to financial problems, bakeries often did fraud with price and weight of finished products, so during the crisis, control over bread production was strengthened by introducing a maximum price (6 lei per 1 kg) and a fixed weight of finished products. But if large enterprises could be easily checked, small ones were harder to examine<sup>25</sup>.

A similar situation was observed in brewing, which was on the rise until 1928. But even it did not escape the general economic crisis. By 1930, beer sales had fallen by 60% compared to 1928. The decline in the cost of beer, caused by serious competition in the market, which arose with the opening of a brewery in Luzhany in 1929, did not save the situation. The price of beer then fell by a third<sup>26</sup>. As of 1931, beer consumption in the region has decreased more than in other parts of Romania. It was the worst year

since World War I due to falling of wine prices. After all, the impoverished population preferred cheaper products<sup>27</sup>. In the mid-1930s, the decline in sales in Northern Bukovyna and Khotyn region continued. Along with the inability of the population to buy beer in the way of the region's brewing industry coming out of the crisis, there was also the competition with Bucharest breweries, which took 25% of sales in the studied region<sup>28</sup>. In 1936, local breweries suffered greatly from this competition. Imported beer was sold 44% below cost in order to fully conquer the Bukovyna markets. Therefore, local companies have almost stopped selling their products in Chernivtsi<sup>29</sup>.

According to the order of the Minister-Delegate of Bukovyna, issued in April 1919, in the first years of Romanian rule, due to lack of grain, it was allowed to produce alcohol only from corn or spoiled potatoes. All raw materials were subject to inspection and only in the case of getting permission small producers or factories could begin to produce alcohol<sup>30</sup>. On the one hand, such measures slowed down the development of the industry, but it must be understood that they were caused by the food crisis of 1918-1920.

Since 1921, the production of alcohol out of cereals has revived and increased capacity from year to year, and in 1930 it virtually stopped. This was due to a decline in the purchasing power of the population during the Great Depression. Residents of the region switched to the consumption of cheaper wine alcohol and increasingly resorted to home brewing. Of course, distilleries could not withstand such competition, as further reductions in prices for their products called into question the profitability of production. High taxes were also an additional burden on them<sup>31</sup>. Catastrophic for alcohol producers (including wine) was 1931, when sales of their products completely stopped. Even wine alcohol could not be sold above its cost, so the distilleries stopped completely<sup>32</sup>. The way out of the crisis in alcohol production was marked by the introduction in 1932 of a monopoly on production, which led to an improvement in the situation in the industry, and since 1933 the plants have reopened<sup>33</sup>. However, if in 1934 there was an increase in alcohol sales, in 1935 it fell significantly<sup>34</sup>.

Sugar production, which although was important not only for the region but for the whole of Romania (more than a third of its production was in Northern Bukovyna and Khotyn region), after a long period of growth during the 1920s also slowed down in 1930. Economic unrest led to falling of sales of granulated sugar, so 4 sugar factories in the region were forced to stop periodically its production<sup>35</sup>. And in 1931 they did not work at all, because sales of sugar were zero and there were still large stocks from the previous year. The fall in sugar production was the reason for the unprofitability of sugar beet production, which hit the farmers of the region who cultivated this crop. Despite the crisis, the Romanian sugar cartel did not want to reduce the price of sugar, so it began to be imported from abroad<sup>36</sup>.

In 1936, due to the growth of sugar consumption by the population, the sale of old stocks improved, but new problems arose: rising of raw materials due to low quality and yield of sugar beets, increasing of rail tariffs for transportation. As the products produced in previous years were still being sold, the sugar factories continued to operate alternately. This year, «Khreshchatyk» was completely idle<sup>37</sup>. A very good condition of the sugar industry was observed in 1937-1938. At that time, the sugar factories of the Suceava district (territories of Northern Bukovyna and Khotyn region) produced a third of Romania's sugar<sup>38</sup>. The peculiarity of the sugar industry was that it worked «during the season (autumn)»<sup>39</sup>.

Starch and glucose production was also present in the region in the interwar period. Until 1929, the industry developed steadily, and during the global economic crisis, due to falling of prices for glucose and starch and high taxes was forced to reduce production<sup>40</sup>. However, already in 1931 the situation improved. Textile and paper mills, tanning and confectionery factories began to buy these products more actively<sup>41</sup>. In the mid-1930s, the development of the industry slowed down because companies operated only for the local market and it was impossible to establish exports<sup>42</sup>.

In the interwar period, the region was actively developing confectionery, the centre of which was Chernivtsi. Local confectioners provided only a quarter of the population's needs for sweets and chocolate, so the rest were delivered mainly from other parts of Romania<sup>43</sup>.

In 1930, despite the unfavourable time for the economy of the region, a new branch of the food industry was launched – the production of chicory (coffee surrogate). Although it initially experienced some difficulties at the first stage of production, it had good prospects<sup>44</sup>.

The largest food industry enterprises that remained after World War I included the «First Bukovynian Brewery and Distillery», which was founded as a joint-stock company in 1859 by Heinrich Wagner, Marcus Zucker and Isac Rubinstein<sup>45</sup>. Although the fighting of 1914-1918 paralyzed the output of production for



a long time, the company managed to resume the work of the enterprise. And since the brewery had its own water supply and equipment, in 1920, in order to use the enterprises rationally, it was joined by an alcohol refining factory, which had the latest equipment for distillation<sup>46</sup>. Among the oldest in the region was the distillery in Repuzhyntsi, which began operating in 1832. During the fighting of World War I, it was severely damaged, but in 1920 it was restored and worked well in the interwar period<sup>47</sup>.

During the period under study, thanks to the firm of Jacob and Josef Wiznitzers the «Public Brewery» (former «Göbel», which was founded in 1860) resumed its activities. In 1912, it was modernized, but during the war it was severely damaged. The Wiznitzers, together with the Goldstein Brothers' firm, leased the old plant and technically re-equipped it with the latest equipment<sup>48</sup>, which produced 35,000 hectolitres of beer a year. The brewery's products were well valued, as they were bought in all regions of Romania<sup>49</sup>. The factory «Beres», which had been operating since 1871, was also famous in the region during the interwar period<sup>50</sup>.

In 1918-1940, the «Steam Mill Joint Stock Society» (formerly the «A. Schlossmann Steam Mill») continued to work. It was one of the oldest in the region, founded in 1866. After the fire of 1888 it was rebuilt and transformed into a joint stock company<sup>51</sup>. In 1908 Hersch Trichter, having bought the majority of shares, became the owner of the company, and in 1910 the mill burned down again. Reconstruction lasted about a year, and then it got the newest equipment, the power of which was 500 hp. In this state, it continued to work in Romanian times<sup>52</sup>. A large enterprise was located in Lipcani, Khotyn County<sup>53</sup>.

The largest in the period under study, not only in the region but throughout Romania, was the sugar factory «Zhuchka», which was established in 1901<sup>54</sup>. After the retreat of Russian army, the Austrians turned the factory into a military depot, which exploded in 1919. But in 1920, owing to the bank «Marmorosch, Blank & Co», it was reconstructed and in 1921 it started working<sup>55</sup>. Luzhany sugar factory, which was severely damaged by Russian shelling during World War I, also held a leading position in the industry. «Khreshchatyk» and «Zarozhany» factories had good positions, concentrated in Chernivtsi and Khotyn counties, respectively. Up to 500 people worked at «Khreshchatyk» after the forced reconstruction of the early 1920s caused by the destruction of the war<sup>56</sup>. In addition to the modernization of boilers, the restoration of factory buildings and water supply<sup>57</sup>, a medical centre and a bath for workers were created<sup>58</sup>. The sugar factories of Northern Bukovyna quickly joined the association of sugar producers, and Zarozhany plant only in 1931<sup>59</sup>.

Stanislas Podsudek's meat products and sausage factory, founded in 1914, was successful. In the 1920s, it employed 50 workers. Its products were out of competition and sold in their own specialty stores in many cities. The quality of the meat products of Stanislas Podsudek's factory was appreciated even by the monarchs of Romania, because for a long time Bukovynian sausages were ordered by the royal court in Bucharest<sup>60</sup>.

In the 1930s, a large oil mill (one of the largest in the region) worked in Zhuchka, producing oil and oil cake<sup>61</sup>.

**Conclusions.** Thus, the food industry plays an important role in the economy of Ukraine nowadays, which leads to considerable interest in studying its development in some regions in previous times. However, the functioning of food enterprises in Northern Bukovyna and Khotyn region in the interwar period has not yet been the subject of a separate scientific study.

In the study region, at the beginning of the Romanian rule, the food industry was represented by the enterprises of flour, sugar, alcohol, milk and meat processing branches. Their workload was less than a half of the production capacity. At the same time, the food industry was best developed in Chernivtsi County on the territories of Northern Bukovyna and Khotyn region.

By the end of the 1930s, the number of enterprises in this industry in the region had increased significantly. The range of products produced by them has also diversified. Condensed milk, canned fish, biscuits, vinegar, vanilla sugar, powdered milk, coffee surrogate, barley groats, artificial ice, yeast, glucose and starch were added to the most common goods in the region at the beginning of Romanian rule. In that time according to the main indicators of the industry's development, Chernivtsi County stood out among the three counties of Northern Bukovyna and Khotyn region, and a significant part of its enterprises was located in the city of Chernivtsi.

The largest enterprises in the food industry were: «First Bukovynian Brewery and Distillery», distillery in Repuzhyntsi, «Public Brewery», brewery «Beres», «Steam Mill Joint Stock Society», flour factory in Lipcani, sugar factory «Zhuchka», Luzhany sugar factory, «Khreshchatyk» and «Zarozhany» sugar factories, Stanislas Podsudek's meat products and sausage factory, oil mill in Zhuchka.

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- <sup>5</sup> Державний архів Чернівецької області (ДАЧО), ф. 15 Префектура Чернівецького повіту, оп. 1, *спр. 2367 Список власників промислових підприємств, зруйнованих під час Першої світової війни*, арк. 1-2.
- <sup>6</sup> ДАЧО, ф. 18 Префектура Заставнівського повіту, оп. 1, *спр. 173 Листування з примаріями про надання списків власників млинів по комунах повіту*, арк. 18.
- <sup>7</sup> ДАЧО, ф. 18 Префектура Заставнівського повіту, оп. 1, *спр. 505 Список водяних млинів по комунах повіту*, арк. 2.
- <sup>8</sup> ДАЧО, ф. 18 Префектура Заставнівського повіту, оп. 1, *спр. 499 Список спиртних заводів та млинів, розташованих на території повіту*, арк. 1.
- <sup>9</sup> ДАЧО, ф. 16 Префектура Кіцманського повіту, оп. 1, *спр. 213 Списки власників промислових підприємств по комунах повіту*, арк. 3-4.
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- <sup>12</sup> *Dicționarul statistic al Basarabiei* [Statistical Dictionary of Bessarabia], 1923, p. 364.
- <sup>13</sup> *Dicționarul statistic al Basarabiei*, p. 364.
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