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## **SYNERGY OF SUPERFOODS AND LOTSAVORES IN THE RESTAURANT BUSINESS**

The restaurant business plays a crucial role in the economy. The global catering market size reached USD 3.5 trillion in 2020, with revenue expected to grow to USD 4.2 trillion in 2027 [1]. However, it is not enough for restaurants to simply maximize their financial results. They should also address social and environmental issues, as this will positively affect their reputation and improve financial performance [2]. In the restaurant business, increased competition means that now customers have more dining options than ever before, from fast food to fine cuisine. As a result, customer expectations for restaurant offerings are constantly rising. Restaurants have the potential to improve nutrition and positively shape social norms. The effect of food on well-being is closely related to physical health, pleasure, and emotional aspects [3-5]. On the other hand, one of the main problems for restaurateurs in implementing healthier food and nutrition information is the loss of profit that can result [6; 7].

The inclusion of healthy food on the menu has recently become an important factor in choice, and dietary considerations have some influence on the decision to choose a place to eat. Lifestyle (weight concerns, dieting, and knowledge of the food pyramid) was observed to be an important influencing factor in healthy food choices; therefore, the quality of service and the availability of healthy food on the menu have a positive effect on the intention to return [8].

In connection with the popularization of the concept of healthy nutrition, products containing a high concentration of biologically valuable substances and having a health-improving effect on the human body, which are called superfoods, have gained considerable interest, and many consumers seek to introduce products from this list into their diet. Superfoods such as goji berries, acai, guarana, kale, quinoa, spirulina, psyllium, chia seeds, etc. are most common on the Ukrainian market. Globalization and the development of international logistics networks increasingly facilitate the marketing of food products from different countries and therefore beyond traditional sales periods. However, this also entails negative aspects due to the impact of transport on the environment, the loss of income of local producers who cannot compete, and the significant processing of products with chemicals to preserve the commodity appearance during transport and storage. This phenomenon also applies to expensive superfoods, used in restaurant dishes, which affect the price of products and are often limiting factors for both restaurateurs and visitors to public catering establishments.

The Oxford dictionary states that superfoods are products of plant origin, enriched with useful substances and trace elements. Their features are locality, environmental friendliness, and usefulness. In fact, a huge number of available products, which are traditionally practiced in the national Ukrainian cuisine, can be called superfoods. For example, low-calorie flax seeds are a real Ukrainian superfood. It contains a whole complex of vitamins A, E, B1, B2, B3, B6, B9, and C, omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids, protein and essential amino acids, calcium, phosphorus, magnesium, and zinc. Flax seeds, like chia seeds, absorb liquid, swell and have a positive effect on the digestive

tract, removing toxic substances, harmful cholesterol, and heavy metals. The product is a source of fiber and activates the intestines work.

In the Ukrainian gastronomic culture, flax seeds are added to salads, granola, smoothies, soups, bread, loaves, pancakes, crackers, pâtés, desserts, and healthy candies. Flax flour is included in cookies, snacks, buns, and muffins (gluten-free baking), and flax porridge and jelly are prepared. At the same time, the product becomes dietary and more useful. In addition, flax flour retains water better, prolonging the freshness and preserving the magnificence of baked goods. In some recipes, flax flour can be used as a substitute for butter and eggs, the baking is prepared much faster, acquires a pleasant brown color with a subtle aroma of nuts, and is perfect for all vegetarians and those who for some reason do not consume products of animal origin. Linseed oil is the champion among vegetable oils in the content of unsaturated fatty acids and surpasses olive oil.

Thus, domestic products can already compete with well-known world superfoods: buckwheat or amaranth are not inferior in nutritional value to quinoa, buckthorn berries to goji berries, flax seeds to chia, walnuts to macadamia nuts, etc.

Restaurants that support local food and organic products have been shown to have a positive effect on customers, and restaurants with local products are three times more likely to be chosen than restaurants without local products [9]. Restaurant visitors value the possibility of consuming dishes from farm products, as they associate it with local products and are more environmentally friendly, therefore sustainable production methods. Farmers could take advantage of these modern technological developments by solving the observed process of food quality perception. Restaurateurs can come to the production site themselves to buy produce directly from the farmer, including farm shops, farm hospitality schemes, roadside sales sites, pick-your-own schemes, etc.

During the presentation of Ukrainian regional superfoods, you can familiarize yourself with the traditions of local cuisine by visiting specialized events, tastings, fairs, and festivals with a strong emphasis on healthy nutrition, related products, food, and health-oriented dishes. During such events, commercial food products of the area, the technology of preparation and consumption of local products, the area itself with its historical and cultural heritage, and culinary traditions are simultaneously popularized. An interesting addition to these events can be presentations of products, for example, made of linen and hemp, namely, clothes, shoes, bags, accessories, table and bed linen, and souvenirs decorated with authentic embroidery. The target audience, or customers and users of the organic brand of the region, can be the local population, guests, and tourists.

Thus, the food service sector must commit to improving its approach to the food system and operations at all levels and take a clear stand on the pressing issues of our time, such as waste reduction, improved nutrition, food quality and safety, and overall sustainability. Several factors, namely availability, cost, nutritional value and hedonic preferences, and provision of food biodiversity that includes both locally cultivated and wild food species, play an important role in the implementation of domestic superfoods in restaurant production technology. Such a strategy based on locavores has several promising aspects:

- *social* – improvement of public health;
- *economic* – supporting the domestic producer, developing farms engaged in the cultivation of vegetable and fruit crops, as well as "niche" crops that have biological and physiological value, providing the population with useful food products, creating short food chains reducing the cost of production, improving export the potential of our country, the advancement of the hospitality industry, namely, tourism, the hotel and restaurant industry, the restoration of related local crafts;
- *ecological* – reducing the impact of transport on the environment, decreasing the use of pesticides, responsible use of water, preventing deforestation to free up space for growing superfood crops;

– *psychophysiological* – expansion of the range of products with high biological and physiological value to meet the needs of consumers who choose balanced, healthy, ecologically clean, and safe food, ensuring the accessibility of wider segments of the population to superfoods thanks to the offer of products at an acceptable price, the possibility for the consumer to monitor the entire food chain due to its locality for the purpose of obtaining information about the product, assessing its quality;

– *gastro-cultural* – familiarization with the traditions of local cuisine, technologies of preparation and consumption of local products, the area itself with its historical and cultural heritage, and culinary traditions.

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