

УДК 341.1/614.3

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## **FALSIFICATION OF FOOD PRODUCTS IN THE MARKETS AND THEIR EXAMINATION**

<http://doi.org/10.23939/law2025.45.213>

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The article is devoted to the study of food product falsification in the markets, forensic examinations of food products from the markets and prospects for changes in the future. The article outlines the types of falsification, examples of falsification of various product categories, and methods of detecting falsification during inspections. Given that this problem is widespread globally, the experience of other countries is also outlined, and their legislation regulating counterfeiting is analysed, as well as Ukraine's regulations, and an example of court practice on product counterfeiting is provided. We described the difficulties that arise during expert studies of food products from the market, which sometimes make it impossible or at least partially complicate such inspections. Given the widespread phenomenon of falsification and scientific and technological breakthroughs, it is quite possible and, of course, extremely necessary to make changes to address this problem in the near future. We also proposed solutions to eliminate the problem at least partially, and the changes include: modernisation of legislation, replacement of equipment with more modern and accurate equipment for more detailed results and conclusions, and creation of registers that will speed up many processes. In addition, rapid tests to detect certain falsifications and the launch of mobile laboratories that would be useful for the examination of goods from markets could bring positive changes. All this could speed up the examination process, improve the accuracy of research and, most importantly, reduce the number of food falsifications in the markets. Since the prevalence of falsification affects the Ukrainian economy in particular, it is necessary to address this problem as soon as possible to

**preserve the economy, as it will have an increasingly worse outcome for the economy not only of Ukraine but also of the whole world, as this problem is global and has a negative impact on all countries.**

**Keywords: forensic commodity expertise, falsification, types of falsification, research on the market, food products expertise.**

**Formulation of the problem.** The theme of the article is quite relevant today due to the prevalence of food falsification on the markets in various ways. At the same time, the number and capabilities of commodity examinations to detect the fact of falsification are increasing. Accordingly, this issue needs to be addressed to reduce the frequency of such cases, which, in its turn, have a significant impact on the economy and reduce consumer confidence.

**Analysis of the study of the problem.** Various domestic and foreign scientists have studied this problem, and their works have become the basis for further study of the problem of falsification. Among such scientists are Jorge Barros Velasquez, who studies the genetic identification of meat and fish products falsification, Gordon L. Robertson, whose scientific interests are methods of detecting food falsification, and L. O. Nazarenko, who is engaged in the identification of quality and assessment of food competitiveness. It is also worth mentioning Y. O. Lupenko, who studies the impact of economic factors on food quality, Martin Lundstrom, who studies chemical methods of detecting falsification, David Bailey, whose research interests include the impact of economic and social factors on product quality, and other researchers whose works in some way reflect the issues of expertise and food fraud, which are quite common today.

**The purpose of the article** is studying the peculiarities of conducting food product examinations in the markets, ways to detect their falsification in the current conditions and prospects for possible changes in the future due to the development of technology.

**Presenting main material.** The problem of product falsification in the markets has been and remains quite widespread, as not all products are always certified and tested for compliance with quality indicators. In such circumstances, unscrupulous sellers often abuse their position and violate the requirements for the sale or storage of food products. However, in the event of product falsification, it can be detected by conducting a commodity expertise.

The study of food products in the markets is a forensic commodity examination and is carried out in accordance with the Instruction on the appointment and conduct of forensic examinations and expert studies. The objects of commodity expertise and, in fact, product inspections at markets are consumer goods and raw materials. The tasks of such studies include determining changes in quality indicators, compliance with the conditions and terms of storage of commodity products in accordance with the applicable rules, determining the value of commodity products, etc. [1; 2].

The falsification of various products, including dairy products, meat and meat products, and many other goods, is a fairly common phenomenon in the markets. As for the definition of the term falsification, counterfeit products should be considered products manufactured with a violation of technology or unlawful use of a trademark or service mark, or copying the form, packaging, external design, as well as unlawful reproduction of goods of another manufacturer [3]. Counterfeiting often occurs in the form of fake packaging of a well-known company, but the consumer qualities of such goods may be questionable. In addition, a common form of product falsification is the replacement of components with certain food additives, which significantly reduces the cost of the product, but can potentially attract buyers with this factor.

Among the types of falsification, scientists distinguish the following: assortment, quality, quantity, cost and information falsification [4]. Assortment falsification occurs when various substitutes for goods are used in full or in part. Sometimes, in assortment falsification, the substitute has a similar name, and in quality falsification, there is a change in the actual quality, which is most often the addition of food additives or substitution of a lower grade. Quantitative falsification is characterised by deviations from the norm, for example, a lower weight or volume of the product than specified in the documentation. Information

falsification is the deception of consumers by means of inaccurate or incomplete information about a food product. In addition to these types, technological and pre-sale falsification are also distinguished depending on the place of commission [5].

As for examples of the most common falsifications according to the categories of products sold in the markets, among meat and meat products, these include stale, mouldy, pungent rotten smell and other signs that pose a health hazard when consumed. Smoked meat products may contain unsmoked areas, discolouration, contamination, and incomplete products (i. e., undercooked or undercooked). All of these are signs of falsification.

Milk and dairy products are popular food products in the markets. According to the practice of examinations, these products are usually falsified by adding water, soda, or even starch or chalk. In the manufacture of butter, the additives are often butter or cottage cheese.

Honey is usually divided into edible, medicinal and non-food honey, which is also called poisonous and is strictly prohibited for sale (nectar from the rosemary, andromeda, azalea, etc.). Honey is falsified by adding artificial sugar or other additives. In addition, the high acidity of honey and a number of other factors make it impossible to sell and consume it. The results of tests conducted by the American news resource Food Safety News showed that as many as 76 % of honey samples in grocery stores were devoid of any pollen, indicating processing or falsification [6].

In many confectionery products, quality falsification is more common due to the lack of the most valuable raw materials in the recipe [7]. That is, sometimes manufacturers may reduce the required amount of sweeteners, spices, butter and other ingredients. In candies, chocolate icing may be added instead of cocoa butter (an expensive ingredient), and too much water and sugar may be added to increase the weight of the icing [8]. Also, such products are of lower quality due to the replacement of cheaper ingredients, but at the same time, they often do not correspond to their cost and, if consumed frequently, cause harm to the body.

Depending on the areas of research carried out for the expert assessment of a particular food product, commodity expertise involves the study of consumer properties of a product, which is quite common for products on the market. Such a study is the analysis and evaluation of consumer properties of a product using expert methods based on the results of tests (inspection) [9]. The object of this type of commodity expertise is selected samples of food products from markets, as well as material items containing information about the commodity origin of the object of study [10]. Methods for detecting falsification during inspections of food products in markets are:

- organoleptic method (determination of the values of quality indicators of goods based on the analysis of the perception of human senses [11, p. 14]);

- laboratory method (research in laboratories, during which reagents, special utensils, devices are used);

- method of quality determination (determination of food quality using quantitative indicators); metrological method (for accurate measurement and comparison of quantities), etc.

In general, in practice, experts distinguish between 4 stages of food examination:

- Stage 1 is the study of the type of object of forensic food examination, the study of the nature and condition of packaging, determination of the terms of sale, etc.;

- Stage 2 involves the determination of organoleptic indicators;

- Stage 3 is the study of physical and chemical parameters (in accordance with the requirements of regulatory and technical documents for these products);

- At the 4th and final stage, the cost of the products is investigated.

Based on the results obtained, the expert draws up a conclusion, which is important, in particular, for litigation [12, p. 58–59]. During the course of the examination, the incompleteness of the samples provided may cause difficulties, which sometimes makes it impossible to conduct the study, and inaccuracies may be caused by inappropriate packaging for transport and a number of other factors.

Ukrainian legislation provides for liability for violation of the established standards for the manufacture and sale of food products. For example, Chapter 15 of the Code of Administrative Offences of Ukraine deals, inter alia, with violations in the field of trade. For example, Article 159 refers to violations of

trade rules at markets, and the sanction of this article provides for a warning or a fine. Article 160 regulates hand-to-hand trading in unspecified places, namely streets, squares, yards, entrances, squares and other unspecified places, and entails a fine of one to seven tax-free minimum incomes [13]. The State Service of Ukraine for Food Safety and Consumer Protection (SSUFSCP) plays a significant role in checking the quality of food products on the markets, as it controls the safety of products, conducts sanitary and epidemiological expertise, and is the central executive body that implements state policy in the field of sanitary legislation [14]. It should also be noted that forensic commodity expertise is an important factor in court decision-making, as this research helps to identify violations of quality standards, confirm falsification, etc. An example of a falsification case from Ukrainian court practice is case No. 440/3640/22, in which the Poltava District Administrative Court considered a case concerning violations of food legislation on the market, namely the detection of *E. coli* bacteria and other numerous violations. The plaintiff, in turn, applied to the court to cancel the decision of the controlling authority that had found violations in the production and imposed a fine. The court dismissed the company's claim [15].

Since the phenomenon of food falsification is global, other countries have their own legislative mechanisms and practices to address this problem. In our opinion, they should be taken into account to improve the problematic issues of legislation and introduce changes in the consumer market of Ukraine.

Currently, the United States of America has two main laws regulating counterfeiting: The Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (FD&C Act) and the Food Safety Modernisation Act (FSMA). The latter act deals with anti-counterfeiting measures, while the FD&C Act prohibits the production and sale of adulterated or mislabelled food products. In the European Union, the main legal acts are Regulation (EU) No. 1169/2011 and Regulation (EC) No. 178/2002, which are responsible for the provision of food information by manufacturers and the general principles of such legislation.

In addition to the above-described falsification, the problems of trade in the markets include the lack of documentation and certificates, the unknown origin of food products, and the non-compliance of food products with safety requirements (according to DSTU ISO 22000:2019 (ISO 22000:2018, IDT)). With numerous violations in the markets, the trust of buyers in such places decreases, since neglect of food safety requirements and the risk of falsification are unacceptable, as this leads to the creation of a negative reputation. That is why the regulation of expert activities and the fight against food falsification in the markets requires modern changes in order to prevent a decrease in product quality and meet consumer requirements.

**Conclusions.** As of today, there are problematic aspects in the legislation of Ukraine regarding the examination and falsification of food products in the markets. Thus, certain norms of the legislation are not fully regulated, and accordingly, they need to be updated and clarified. The lack of clear rules and requirements slows down the pace of reducing the prevalence of falsification, so perfect legislation is needed to improve the state of examination and reduce the number of falsified products in the markets. In some places, sanctions provide for small amounts of fines, which affects the prevalence of changes in the quality of food products, unreliable information on packaging, etc. Since in Ukraine the issues of falsification of food products in the markets are quite problematic and unresolved, it is advisable for us to borrow the experience of the USA, the European Union countries and other states to implement qualitative changes to eliminate existing shortcomings.

In the era of intensive development of technologies, in the next 5–10 years we can expect certain positive changes, in particular, in conducting commodity expertise, their effectiveness in detecting falsified food products in the markets. It is likely that laboratories in Ukraine may undergo changes, for example, modern equipment will appear, which will allow experts to make more accurate and substantiated conclusions. In particular, these may be more modern devices that will provide automatic conclusions on the expert sample. In addition, mobile laboratories may also appear, which would be extremely useful for food product expertise on the market, because in this case it would be possible to take samples directly from the point of sale or even perform express tests to detect falsification directly on the market. An improvement would be the automation of the inspection process, which would reduce the human factor in expert studies; automation could be the creation of software that would allow for the rapid detection of inconsistencies in

the quality standards of the relevant products, the introduction of artificial intelligence systems that could identify possible falsification, and a possible improvement in this area could be unified registers thanks to the development of blockchain technology.

The problem under study requires a timely solution to eliminate the extremely negative phenomenon of violation of food product quality standards. In particular, one of the options for achieving success could be to improve the control system, including more frequent inspections by the State Service for the Protection and Promotion of Food Safety in the markets. In addition, increased accountability, for example, increasing fines for food adulteration, could have a positive impact on this problem. Such enforcement measures could have a positive effect and lead to a decrease in the number of cases of adulteration.

Due to globalization, the fight against adulteration of products requires immediate changes, as without this it will become increasingly widespread. At the moment, counterfeiting is an incredibly common phenomenon in every country, which is why there is a need to regulate counterfeiting everywhere, because it harms not only national economies, but can also harm the human body. Moreover, the speed of the spread of the problem leads to an increase in counterfeiting, so there is a need for immediate changes to stop such prevalence.

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*Дата надходження статті: 12.01.2025 р.*

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### **ФАЛЬСИФІКАЦІЯ ХАРЧОВИХ ПРОДУКТІВ НА РИНКАХ ТА ЇХ ЕКСПЕРТИЗА**

Стаття присвячена дослідженню питань фальсифікації харчової продукції на ринках, судово-товарознавчим експертизам харчових товарів з ринків та перспективам змін у майбутньому. Окреслено види фальсифікації, приклади фальсифікації різних категорій продукції, а також методи виявлення фальсифікації під час перевірок. У зв'язку з тим, що ця проблема є глобально поширеною, вказано досвід й інших країн та проаналізовано їх законодавство, яке регулює питання фальсифікації, також проаналізовано нормативно-правові акти України, надано приклад судової практики щодо фальсифікації продукції. Описано труднощі, які виникають під час експертних досліджень харчових товарів з ринку, що інколи унеможливають або ж хоча б частково ускладнюють проведення таких перевірок. З огляду на поширення явища фальсифікації та науково-технічні прориви цілком можливі й, звісно, вкрай потрібні зміни щодо розв'язання цієї проблеми у близькому майбутньому. У статті запропоновано способи розв'язання для усунення проблеми щонайменше частково, власне серед змін можна виокремити: модернізацію законодавства, заміну устаткування більш сучасним і точним для детальніших результатів і висновків, створення реєстрів, які пришвидшать багато процесів. До того ж позитивні зміни можуть дати експрес-тести для виявлення певних фальсифікацій, започаткування мобільних лабораторій, які були б доцільними для експертиз товарів із ринків. Усе це може пришвидшити процес експертиз, вплинути на точність досліджень і найголовніше – зменшити кількість фальсифікацій харчових продуктів на ринках. Оскільки через поширеність фальсифікування страждає, зокрема, економіка України, потрібно якнайшвидше усувати цю проблему для збереження економіки, адже це матиме дедалі гірший результат для економіки не лише України, а й усього світу через те, що ця проблема є глобальною й здійснює свій негативний вплив на всі країни.

**Ключові слова:** судово-товарознавча експертиза, фальсифікації, види фальсифікації, дослідження на ринках, експертиза харчової продукції.