



FUNDAMENTALS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FRUIT AND VEGETABLE SECTOR AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF CLUSTERS IN THEM.

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Abstract. *This article highlights the development of the fruit and vegetable sector in Uzbekistan and trends in the development of fruit and vegetable production. At the same time, based on tables, the potential of fruit and vegetable cultivation in the agriculture of the Fergana region and the role of the country in the fruit and vegetable industry were analyzed. Also, the advantages of the cluster system in the field of fruit and vegetable growing, the features of cluster development, the main tasks set for their improvement, and the work done are widely covered.*

Keywords. *Fruit and vegetable growing, cluster, agriculture, market, consumer, processing, production, agrologistics.*

Today, the rapid economic development of the agricultural sector in Uzbekistan is explained by the high role of this sector in the country's economy, including in the gross domestic product. In particular, the fruit and vegetable sector is one of the sectors that ensure Uzbekistan's integration into world agrarian and agricultural markets and foreign exchange earnings. In Uzbekistan, 40 million tons of fruits and vegetables are grown annually. However, the level of their industrial processing is about 25 percent, of which 12 percent is exported. Due to insufficient infrastructure, 30% of products are lost during harvesting and storage. The current situation requires the rational use of the opportunities being implemented in the industry, deep processing of products, further development of the food industry, and an increase in export volumes. The government of the republic pays special attention to increasing the number of modern agro-logistics centers covering the processes of harvesting, transportation, storage, processing, packaging, and export of agricultural

products. Furthermore, consistent measures are being implemented in Uzbekistan to reform the agricultural sector and introduce market mechanisms and modern technologies. In particular, the introduction of the cluster method is of paramount importance, which is an important factor in the transition to market principles, a sharp reduction in state intervention in the sphere, the pursuit of a plan, and the complete eradication of forced labor.

Issues of improving the activities of agro-clusters are of great importance in increasing the volume of production and processing of agricultural products, and the constant solution of this issue remains relevant. At the same time, clusters are a modern economic intermediary for the formation of an innovative, competitive, and efficient economy, ensuring the delivery of finished products to the consumer, the growth of productive forces, the growth of production volumes, healthy production relations, and efficiency. Moreover, it is connected with the consistent implementation of the thinking and management mechanisms of proactive specialists in clusters that combine industry and inter-industry activities. In clusters, along with the integration of industries in education, science, and production, beneficial cooperation of small enterprises of the industry, elements of cross-sectoral internal and external integration also contribute to the growth of the industry. The effective organization of the fruit and vegetable sector in our country directly depends on the effective activity of the cluster system and its interconnected enterprises. In particular, it is advisable to study the activities of the fruit and vegetable sector in the Fergana region through the following analyses. The Fergana region is one of the regions where the cultivation and processing of agricultural products are widely developed. It specializes in horticulture, viticulture, vegetable and melon growing, potato growing, and the cultivation of other food products, taking into account the soil and climatic conditions of the Fergana region.

In 2020, the Fergana region accounted for 9.3% of the total area of vegetable crops in the republic, and 7.3% of the total harvest was grown in the republic. By

2022, 11 percent of the sown areas for growing vegetables in the region accounted for 10.8 percent of the total harvest in the republic. Fergana region is the 3rd largest region in the republic in terms of vegetable crop areas, and it is also noted as the 3rd region in terms of harvesting in 2024. (Table 1).

Table 1.

Growing vegetables in Uzbekistan¹

	2019y.				2024 y.					
	crop area, ha	gross harvest, tons	crop area, %	gross harvest, %	crop area, ha	gross harvest, tons	crop area, %	gross harvest, %	place by crop area	place by gross harvest
Republic of Uzbekistan	172976	6262439	100	100	224207	10459483	100,0	100,0		
Republic of Karakalpakstan	6763	134245	3,9	2,1	16489	287743	7,4	2,8	7	13
regions:			0,0	0,0			0,0	0,0		
Andijan	14481	861675	8,4	13,8	21789	1611020	9,7	15,4	4	2
Bukhara	8253	354798	4,8	5,7	19392	768617	8,6	7,3	5	7
Jizzakh	8642	230816	5,0	3,7	11831	425252	5,3	4,1	11	10
Kashkadarya	14429	321472	8,3	5,1	14699	495547	6,6	4,7	5	9
Navoi	3268	149054	1,9	2,4	5099	291086	2,3	2,8	13	12
Namangan	13010	439425	7,5	7,0	13810	831730	6,2	8,0	9	6
Samarkand	25714	1049743	14,9	16,8	34047	1636313	15,2	15,6	1	1
Surkhandarya	13192	486419	7,6	7,8	18341	1013532	8,2	9,7	6	5
Syrdarya	4303	182711	2,5	2,9	5742	306966	2,6	2,9	12	11
Tashkent	31758	121504	18,4	19,4	24887	1066432	11,1	10,2	2	4
Fergana	16965	459348	9,8	7,3	24561	1128546	11,0	10,8	3	3
Khorezm	12198	377691	7,1	6,0	13442	596229	6,0	5,7	10	8
Tashkent city					78	470	0,0	0,0	14	14

In the Fergana region, in 2019, 18.8% of the sown areas for growing fruits and berries in the republic were occupied, and 15.3% of the total harvest in the republic was grown. The region leads in terms of sown areas for growing fruits and berries. In the region, by 2024, 15.5% of the sown areas for growing fruits and berries, or 12.7% of the total harvest in the republic, will be accounted for. Fergana region is

¹

the 1st largest region in the republic in terms of sown areas of fruits and berries, and is also the 2nd region in terms of harvesting in 2024 (Table 2).

Table 2

Fruit and vegetable growing in Uzbekistan

Territories	2019 y.				2024 y.					
	crop area, ha	gross harvest, tons	crop area, %	gross harvest, %	crop area, ha	gross harvest, tons	crop area, %	gross harvest, %	place by crop area	place by gross harvest
Republic of Uzbekistan	235257	1676330	100	100	341113	2863983	100,0	100,0		
Republic of Karakalpakstan	4661	24728	2,0	1,5	6005	57853	1,8	2,0	13	13
regions:										
Andijan	28685	358917	12,2	21,4	32861	666872	9,6	23,3	5	1
Bukhara	11057	150862	4,7	9,0	14664	304048	4,3	10,6	9	4
Jizzakh	12061	56270	5,1	3,4	19518	88313	5,7	3,1	7	11
Kashkadarya	14363	73436	6,1	4,4	19068	163197	5,6	5,7	8	7
Navoi	5683	61314	2,4	3,7	10882	103376	3,2	3,6	11	10
Namangan	24949	126294	10,6	7,5	30808	283869	9,0	9,9	6	5
Samarkand	29322	231684	12,5	13,8	46766	345514	13,7	12,1	3	3
Surkhandarya	14418	92293	6,1	5,5	50600	164507	14,8	5,7	2	6
Syrdarya	5127	19766	2,2	1,2	7247	40303	2,1	1,4	12	12
Tashkent	28692	108223	12,2	6,5	36028	129744	10,6	4,5	4	8
Fergana	44178	256411	18,8	15,3	52993	364308	15,5	12,7	1	2
Khorezm	12061	116132	5,1	6,9	13144	150803	3,9	5,3	10	9
Tashkent city				0	529	1276	0,2	0,0		

In the Republic of Uzbekistan, the level of vegetable processing in 2019 was 4.04%; by 2024, this indicator was 6.14%, however, in the Fergana region, the share of vegetable processing over the years has a downward trend, decreasing from 5.77% in 2019 to 4.10% in 2024.

In 2019, 17.1% of fruits grown in the Fergana region were processed in the region itself, and by 2024, this figure reached 18.5%. Compared to the republican level, although extensive experience has been accumulated in the Fergana region in fruit processing, drying, and the production of food products from them, it occupies practically the same position compared to the republic.

The volume of potato production in the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2018 amounted to 1694.8 thousand tons, and in 2024 it amounted to 3089.7 thousand tons, the volume of potato production, which is the main type of vegetable consumed most, has almost doubled. 21% of the grown potatoes were sold in retail on the domestic market. The remaining part was taken into production, export, and state reserves. When considering the relationship between potato cultivation and consumption, the country's population's consumption of potatoes has increased several times lower than its cultivation, because in 2018, 24% of potatoes grown were sold to the population in retail, and in 2024 this figure was 21%. When calculated per capita, in 2018, 60.5 kg of potatoes were grown in the country and 14.5 kg were allocated for retail trade, and in 2024 these figures will be 92.9 kg.

It is noteworthy that only 14.1 percent of all vegetables grown in the country were sold in retail. On average, 282 kg of vegetables were grown per capita per year, and 40 kg were sold to the population in retail. The volume of fruit and berry production in the country is also several times higher than domestic consumption. In particular, the production of fruits and berries in 2018 amounted to 1676.3 thousand tons, and in 2024 this indicator increased by 165% and amounted to 2752.7 thousand tons. The share of fruits and berries sold on the domestic market in 2018 was 33.1 percent, and in 2024 this figure was 36.51 percent. Per capita fruit and berry production amounted to 82.7 kg, and in retail trade 30.2 kg. The main part of the production volume shown in the above analytical data is the result of the activities of fruit and vegetable clusters.

Currently, more than 20 fruit and vegetable clusters operate in the Fergana region. Clusters in the region mainly specialize in growing fruits, vegetables, grapes, and legumes. A large part of the products is exported. The clusters carry out such tasks as cooperation with farms, processing, storage and export, introduction of modern technologies in agriculture, increasing labor productivity and creating new jobs. In the activities of these clusters, the high export potential, the development of processing capacities, and the introduction of innovative technologies are of particular importance. However, there are a number of problems related to the sphere of activity of clusters, and these problems still remain relevant. These problems also include insufficient processing infrastructure, complex export logistics, insufficient mini-factories and refrigerated warehouses, and lack of coordination in working with farmers.

The peculiarity of the fruit and vegetable market is, first of all, the peculiarity of the relations and means between sellers and buyers, and the fact that the buyer cannot maintain fruit and vegetable consumption for a long time even in cases where it is impossible for the producer to increase or decrease the volume of fruit and vegetable production in a timely manner. Therefore, it should be recognized both by the consumer and the producer as a specific feature of a certain system and market. Thus, the main components of the market - supply and demand - can always correspond to the position of the other party, based on the price system.

Business cooperation between fruit and vegetable producers and them is aimed at ensuring the complex interaction of distribution channels of management participants in the process of developing and implementing sales, product, price, storage, transportation and storage services, as well as communication strategies, and this process is especially important in the fruit and vegetable sector.

The process of interaction between participants in the management distribution system in the sale of fruit and vegetable products on the formation of a

unique value proposition that ensures the creation of high consumer value for the consumer,

Today, ensuring the success of industrial clusters, identifying the necessary and sufficient factors for evaluating activities are extremely important methodological tasks that are among the priority areas of the entire cluster concept.

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