

**TRENDS AND PROSPECTS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF FRUIT AND
VEGETABLES IN UZBEKISTAN**

Jumayeva Zamira Bustonovna

Asian International University

Senior Lecturer of the Department of Economics

Annotation: The article highlights the importance of fruit and vegetable clusters in the agricultural sector of the economy and issues of improving the management mechanisms of fruit and vegetable clusters.

Keywords. Cluster, region, development, production, processing, fruit and vegetable growing, world market, foreign experience, management, organizational economic mechanism.

Analysis of the experience of developed countries in the cultivation, storage, processing, and export of fruit and vegetable products shows the need to develop cooperation and clusters of producers of these products. Leading economic researchers emphasize that the cluster-based approach improves efficiency, reduces costs, and increases competitiveness in international markets.

It is well known that the existing natural and climatic conditions in Uzbekistan allow for the sustainable development of agricultural products, in particular fruit and vegetable growing. The President and the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan pay great attention to the development of this sector as a priority in the process of transitioning the industry to market relations. The fact that a significant part of the country's foreign exchange earnings is generated from the sale of fruit and vegetable products in foreign markets also indicates the priority of fundamental reforms and accelerated development of the sector.

Several important policy documents have been adopted in this direction, including the Decrees of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated March 29, 2018, No. UP-5388 "On Additional Measures for the Accelerated Development of Fruit and Vegetable Growing in the Republic of Uzbekistan" and dated October 23, 2019, No. UP-5853 "On Approving the Strategy for the Development of Agriculture of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2020–2030." Similarly, the Resolutions of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated October 17, 2018, No. PP-3978 "On Additional Measures to Increase the Efficiency of Promoting Fruit and Vegetable Products to Foreign Markets" and dated March 14, 2019, No. PP-4239 "On Measures for the Development of Agricultural Cooperation in the Fruit and Vegetable Sector" demonstrate the strategic importance of this industry.

The development of the fruit and vegetable sector has a direct impact on several industries, including food processing, logistics, and packaging. It also plays a key role in the country's agricultural exports and significantly affects the social sphere. The effectiveness of sustainable development in this area directly influences the living standards of the rural population and, more broadly, the social well-being of the entire population of the country. Ultimately, the primary goal of these reforms is to ensure food security, which is reflected in the positive results of economic reforms carried out in the "New Uzbekistan" and the continuous improvement in the living standards of the population.

At the same time, challenges remain. Experts note the lack of systematic implementation of effective market mechanisms, particularly in the development of fruit and vegetable growing and viticulture. The insufficient application of scientific methods leads to incomplete use of the existing opportunities. For instance, calculations show that it is possible to obtain seven times more income from grapes, six times more from cherries, and five times more from walnuts than

from raw cotton grown on one hectare of land. Nevertheless, current levels of processing and exports remain low.

As the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Sh. Mirziyoyev, pointed out: “Today, only 15 percent of the fruits and vegetables grown in our country are processed, and only 8 percent are exported. In particular, in Syrdarya, Jizzakh, Khorezm, Kashkadarya, and Tashkent regions, these indicators remain low. Does the export of fruits and vegetables worth 860 thousand tons, or 620 million dollars, correspond to our capabilities and potential? No, of course not!”

A comparative analysis with developed countries highlights the need to adopt advanced technologies. For example, in countries such as Spain, Italy, and Turkey, fruit and vegetable production is highly mechanized, and cold chain logistics are integrated into every stage of the value chain. By contrast, in Uzbekistan, there is still a lack of modern equipment for cultivating orchards and vineyards, as well as for sowing and harvesting vegetables and potatoes. Moreover, the supply of fuel and lubricants, mineral fertilizers, and seeds to farms, as well as measures to combat plant diseases and pests, are not yet organized at the proper level.

Additional measures and perspectives

To accelerate progress, several directions are important:

- **Cluster development and cooperation:** Establishing agro-clusters will allow producers, processors, and exporters to work together, reduce costs, and improve bargaining power in international markets.
- **Logistics and storage infrastructure:** The creation of modern refrigeration warehouses and logistics hubs will minimize post-harvest losses, which currently account for up to 25–30% of fruits and vegetables in some regions.
- **Export diversification:** Expanding export destinations beyond traditional markets such as Russia and Kazakhstan towards the European Union, Middle East, and East Asia would increase resilience and profitability.
- **Science and innovation:** Research centers and agricultural universities must develop modern cultivation technologies, pest control systems, and value-added processing methods.
- **Financial and institutional support:** Access to affordable credit, insurance mechanisms, and government-backed investment incentives are essential for farmers and agribusinesses.

The fruit and vegetable sector of Uzbekistan holds enormous potential not only for ensuring domestic food security but also for turning the country into a major exporter of high-value agricultural products. Building on the favorable natural and climatic conditions, the government’s reforms, and the lessons from developed countries, Uzbekistan can achieve rapid growth in this field. To do so, it is necessary to focus on deep processing, modern storage facilities, innovation-driven production, and stronger international trade integration. These efforts will ultimately contribute to sustainable rural development, higher living standards, and the diversification of the national economy.

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