

AGROCLUSTER SYSTEM AND ITS FINANCIAL CHARACTERISTICS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF FRUIT GROWING, VEGETABLE GROWING AND VITICULTURE IN UZBEKISTAN.

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Abstract: Ensuring uninterrupted food supply to the population of Uzbekistan and economic growth through the export of fruit and vegetable and grape products to the world market is one of the pressing challenges of our time. This article, based on international experience, examines the main features, significance, implementation procedure and financial characteristics of the agro-cluster system being introduced in our country in the development of fruit and vegetable growing, as well as the significance of regulatory documents adopted by our state for the development of the industry.

Key words: fruits and vegetables, food security, export, investment, cluster, greenhouses, farmers, peasant (farm) enterprises, leasing, lending, financial support.

Uzbekistan has 20 million 236.3 thousand hectares of agricultural land, which is the main source of fruit and vegetable production and food security. From this point of view, the direction that is closest to the lifestyle of our people and gives the fastest results in terms of constantly increasing the well-being of the population is the organization of highly profitable intensive production in agriculture, and taking into account the need to fully utilize the existing potential and receive correspondingly high income, this sector has been reformed in the country in recent years with great intensity.

To ensure food security in the country, special attention is required to the issue of the coordinated development of agriculture and the processing industry. In order to effectively solve these problems, it is necessary to learn from the experience of developed foreign countries, that is, to organize and develop industrial clusters based on the principles of cooperation and integration between sectors of the agro-industrial complex.

The organizational and economic mechanisms of agro-industrial companies and their financing mechanisms have not yielded the expected results due to their lack of thorough thinking, their incomplete compliance with market principles, and other subjective reasons. According to unofficial data from the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic, by the beginning of 2017, more than 311 agro-firms had been established in our country, and the legal and regulatory framework for coordinating and supporting their activities had not been fully developed. The state of their financial and material and technical support was extremely unsatisfactory.

Therefore, a number of decrees and resolutions have been adopted and implemented by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh. Mirziyoyev to improve the management system in the horticultural sector and greenhouse farms, introduce effective mechanisms of

state support, establish cooperation in agriculture, increase the production volumes of high-quality, competitive and export-oriented products based on modern resource-saving technologies, and develop the food industry at a rapid pace.

Initially, in order to ensure the effective development of fruit and vegetable growing in Uzbekistan, expand the production of high-quality and competitive finished products, and export them to major foreign markets, an experiment was launched in Surkhandarya region to support the creation of a cluster approach in agricultural production in the field of fruit and vegetable products by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PF-5388 dated March 29, 2018 "On additional measures for the accelerated development of fruit and vegetable growing in the Republic of Uzbekistan". However, while the world market for fruit and vegetable products is worth \$205 billion, our share does not even reach one percent.

Opportunities are being created to increase fruit and vegetable exports to \$2.5 billion in 2020, and to increase this figure to \$5 billion in the next three years. The head of our state emphasized that to achieve this, it was necessary to correctly select crops and varieties, increase productivity and income by at least two to three times, prevent waste, properly organize product storage, logistics issues, and exports[3].

Today, the demand for ecologically clean fruit and vegetable products is high in world markets, and these products make up the main part of export revenues.

The globalization and deepening of integration processes in the world economy require a comprehensive and in-depth study of both the internal strengths and weaknesses of agrarian business, as well as its external opportunities and threats in the market. One of these opportunities is the organization of an agro-industrial group according to the cluster model.

The cluster model (from the English cluster - "growing together") is widely used in world practice as a tool for increasing the competitiveness of an economic group, region, and entire country. The main features of the cluster model are: the ability of the group to increase its share in the external market; the presence of favorable conditions in the area of its location (raw materials, qualified personnel, infrastructure, training centers, scientific institutions, etc.); the group is distinguished by its broad opportunities for effective participation of participants in the group due to strong state support, and other such positive features.

Agro-industrial clusters with advanced technologies are widespread in all states of the USA. Large agroclusters are located in the states of Washington, Oklahoma, and Louisiana, and wine production is located in the state of California. High efficiency clusters can be seen in the example of "Information technologies" in Silicon Valley and "Kinofication" in Hollywood. In Europe (Germany, France, Italy, Bulgaria, Greece, Holland, England, Switzerland, Denmark and other countries) high-tech agroclusters are widely developed. There are 380 clusters in the US, and the share of clusters in GDP is 61.4%.

In order to cover the food demand of the population of our country and to increase the volume of exports, it is necessary to increase the production of fruits and vegetables by

8-10% per year and to grow more than 1 million tons of additional products. Therefore, measures were taken to ensure that 77,000 hectares of land, which will be reused in 2020, are planted with food crops, and 200,000 hectares of vegetables are planted using the ninety-five method [4].

According to the conclusions of foreign economists, the globalization of the economy and the intensification of the competition struggle, in the current climate change, environmental and coronavirus pandemic, are organizing the economy on the basis of the cluster approach, and the regions and regions are taking the first place in economic development. Such areas and prospects determine the level of competitiveness of the state and national economy in which they are located. Regions that do not use the cluster method of economic development, i.e., use the traditional approach, are not able to achieve significant results and are becoming secondary regions.

The formation of clusters in the processing industry creates a number of competitive advantages in developing entrepreneurial activity and increasing their competitiveness: firstly, it increases labor productivity for firms and industry enterprises included in the cluster, secondly, it increases opportunities for innovative development, and thirdly, it expands new types of entrepreneurship and cluster activities.

In order to ensure the implementation of the Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PP-4406 dated July 29, 2019 "On additional measures for the further development of the fruit and vegetable and viticulture industry, the creation of an added value chain in the sector" No. PP-4549 dated December 11, 2019, and to provide additional financial support to horticulture and greenhouse farms and fruit and vegetable clusters in the republic, the Cabinet of Ministers, by Resolution No. 102 dated February 19, 2020 "On measures for additional financial support to horticulture and greenhouse farms and fruit and vegetable clusters", the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Investments and Foreign Trade, the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Karakalpakstan and regional khokimiyats Proposals were approved to identify funds from the Direct Investment Fund of the Republic of Uzbekistan, loans attracted by commercial banks from international financial institutions and foreign government financial organizations as additional financial sources for supporting greenhouse farms and fruit and vegetable clusters.

In the dynamics of fruit and vegetable exports in Uzbekistan, the country's export revenue in 2023 amounted to \$ 1.20 billion (which is 4.3% more than in 2022), including dried legumes.

Despite the "great opportunities for the development of exports" associated with the ban on the supply of fruits and vegetables to Russia from most countries, the indicators have remained almost unchanged over the past five years and have fluctuated in the trade turnover from \$ 700 million to \$ 900 million.

Our country has great potential for the development of fruit and vegetable production (cultivation) and their export to foreign markets, and in 2024, Uzbekistan's export of fruit and vegetable products increased by 15.7%.

In January-October 2024, the Kyrgyz Republic imported 222 tons of dried vegetables from Uzbekistan, the total value of which amounted to 152.8 thousand US dollars. This figure increased by 61% compared to the same period in 2023. For comparison, last year, during this period, 137 tons of products were imported, the total value of which amounted to 84 thousand dollars.

This growth can be explained by several factors. Firstly, Uzbekistan's achievements in the field of agricultural product processing and storage technologies have increased the quality of products. Dried vegetables, in particular, as a healthy and long-lasting product, are in great demand in the Kyrgyz market.

Secondly, the improvement of logistics capabilities in the region and the expansion of Uzbek-Kyrgyz trade relations have increased the volume of exports of these products. The Kyrgyz Republic plans to develop domestic production, receiving the necessary raw materials for the food industry from Uzbekistan. This, in turn, indicates that this trend is strengthening economic cooperation between the two countries. At the same time, for Uzbekistan, the growth of export volumes is an important impetus for the development of the agricultural sector, serving to increase the income of farms and processing enterprises.

In general, in 2024, Uzbekistan's export of fruit and vegetable products increased by 15.7%. Also, in accordance with the existing legislation, the procedure for reimbursement of the expenses of authorized bodies related to the issuance of permits and certificates necessary for the export of fruits and vegetables, textile products and goods by the Export Promotion Agency under the Ministry of Investments and Foreign Trade of the Republic of Uzbekistan has been introduced.

The development of the agricultural sector over the past 5 years was analyzed. In 2024, the volume of gross agricultural product in the republic reached 444.6 trillion soums, having grown by 18.5% over 5 years. The average annual growth rate of gross product over the past 5 years was 103.5%.

Uzbekistan's agricultural sector continues to occupy a leading position in the region: the volume of gross product exceeds the indicators of Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, which reflects its scale and strategic importance.

According to the World Bank, the value added per person employed in agriculture in Uzbekistan is 4.4 times higher than the world average, which indicates the efficiency of the agricultural sector and its increasing productivity. Despite the active growth of the country's population, the production of the main types of agricultural food products per capita is steadily increasing.

According to the National Statistics Committee, in January 2025, Uzbekistan exported 94.1 thousand tons of fruits and vegetables worth 81.7 million US dollars. In January 2025, the largest volume of fruit and vegetable exports in terms of value fell to Russia (23.7% of the total volume of fruit and vegetable exports), which is 2.4 times more than the volume of exports from Kazakhstan.

In January-February 2025, Uzbekistan exported 193 thousand tons of fruits and vegetables worth 175.1 million US dollars. The value of fruit and vegetable exports increased by 16.7% compared to the same period in 2024, and their share in total exports amounted to 3.8%.[9]

This, in turn, is being achieved by creating fruit and vegetable agroclusters in the regions of our Republic in order to consistently implement the decisions of the President of the Republic and the Cabinet of Ministers, ensuring food security in our country and increasing its export potential.

In this case, the intensive gardens and greenhouses built by the project initiators are provided on leasing and credit terms in accordance with the Regulation on the procedure for the construction of intensive gardens and vineyards, the construction of greenhouses and their provision to the population on leasing and credit terms, approved by the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated January 30, 2020 No. 52 "On measures to develop horticulture, viticulture and greenhouse farming within the framework of family entrepreneurship support programs".

The construction of intensive gardens and vineyards, the construction of greenhouses will be financed from the following sources:

- credits allocated within the framework of the "Every Family is an Entrepreneur" program of commercial banks, including the Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated June 7, 2018 No. PP-3777 "On the implementation of the "Every Family is an Entrepreneur" program;

- Funds of the Horticulture and Greenhouse Development Fund of the Agency for the Development of Horticulture and Greenhouse Farming under the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Uzbekistan;

- Funds of the Grape Growers and Winemakers Support Fund of the Agency for the Development of Viticulture and Winemaking under the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Uzbekistan;

- Funds of the Farmers, Dehkan Farms and Homestead Owners Support Fund under the Council of Farmers, Dehkan Farms and Homestead Owners of Uzbekistan;

- Funds of the State Employment Assistance Fund of the Republic of Uzbekistan;

- Other sources not prohibited by law.

The procedure for organizing and leasing an intensive garden, vineyard or greenhouse is as follows:

- The lessor signs a leasing agreement with the lessee, and the lessee pays an advance payment (deposit) of not less than 20 percent of the value of the leasing object to the lessor within fifteen days;

-The lessor pays an advance payment (deposit) of not less than 20 percent of the value of the leasing object to the seller;

- the leasing object, including an intensive garden or vineyard - with a grace period until they enter the harvest (depending on the type), a greenhouse - with a one-year grace period, is leased to the lessee for a period of up to seven years. In this case, the grace period is applied to the main debt.

Commercial banks may allocate loans to initiators for financing projects for the creation of intensive gardens and vineyards - with a grace period until they enter the harvest (depending on the type), and for financing greenhouse construction projects - with a 1-year grace period for a period of up to 7 years.

Commercial banks shall allocate loans for financing projects for the creation of intensive gardens and vineyards and greenhouse construction in accordance with the established procedure, based on conditions such as purposefulness, term, and payment of a surcharge.

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