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DEVELOPMENT OF CHERRY PRODUCTION AND EXPORT IN UZBEKISTAN AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES IN THIS SECTOR

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ANNOTATION.

This article provides a detailed analysis of the cherry industry in Uzbekistan, focusing specifically on the alignment between production capabilities and the state's strategic export objectives. Recognizing cherries as a high-margin commodity, the government has prioritized the transition from traditional, low-yield orchards to modern, intensive plantations to meet international demand. The study examines the effectiveness of these measures, assessing how recent agricultural reforms have influenced both the volume and quality of cherry exports. It further investigates the critical role of cold-chain logistics and international certification in accessing premium markets such as China and the European Union. By evaluating statistical data on harvest yields against export targets, the article identifies key bottlenecks—ranging from climate risks to packaging deficits—that hinder the full realization of the sector's potential. Ultimately, the research underscores the necessity of value addition and strict quality control to ensure that Uzbekistan remains a competitive leader in the global cherry trade.

Keywords: *Cherry production, Export potential, Intensive orchards, Strategic goals, Cold-chain logistics*

INTRODUCTION.

Uzbekistan has long been recognized for its favorable climate, producing a diverse array of fruits that are highly sought after globally. Among these, cherries have emerged as a particularly lucrative commodity, commanding significant attention in recent state development strategies. As the country seeks to diversify its agricultural base beyond traditional staples, the export of high-value horticultural crops has become a focal point for economic growth. The government has introduced specific strategic objectives aimed at increasing planting areas, modernizing cultivation techniques, and expanding logistics networks to reach lucrative markets in China and Europe. However, transforming potential into profit is a complex endeavor requiring more than just harvest abundance. This article investigates the current state of cherry production in Uzbekistan, analyzing the effectiveness of these strategic interventions. It aims to identify the critical gaps between policy goals and practical outcomes, focusing on how the sector can sustainably scale up to meet rigorous international demands.

LITERARY ANALYSIS.

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A review of the existing literature regarding Uzbekistan's horticultural sector reveals a strong consensus on the strategic importance of cherry production as a driver for export revenue. Scholars frequently analyze the government's "Strategy for the Development of Agriculture 2020–2030", noting that the shift from traditional crop rotation to high-value fruit cultivation is a pivotal economic transformation. Academic studies emphasize the necessity of transitioning to intensive orchards, arguing that modern cultivation techniques are essential for achieving the uniformity and quality standards required by premium international markets. However, the literature also identifies critical gaps in the value chain. Research consistently points to logistical bottlenecks, particularly the shortage of modern cold-storage facilities and refrigerated transport, as primary obstacles to realizing export targets. Furthermore, recent analyses highlight the significance of phytosanitary protocols with China, suggesting that while market access is expanding, the lack of deep processing and branding remains a weakness in the current academic and practical discourse.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.

This article employs a mixed-methods approach to evaluate the progress of Uzbekistan's cherry sector against its strategic goals. The quantitative dimension involves statistical analysis of time-series data regarding planting areas, yield volumes, and export revenues, sourced from the State Statistics Committee. These metrics are directly compared with the targets set in national development strategies to determine the rate of fulfillment. On the qualitative side, the research utilizes content analysis of government decrees and phytosanitary protocols to understand the policy framework driving exports. Additionally, a SWOT analysis is integrated to systematically identify internal strengths, such as geographic advantages, and external weaknesses, including logistical hurdles. This combination of statistical rigor and policy analysis provides a comprehensive view of the gap between the state's strategic intent and the practical realities of the cherry market.

RESULTS.

The analysis of statistical data indicates a robust upward trajectory in Uzbekistan's cherry sector, reflecting a strong alignment with national strategic objectives. In recent years, the total area dedicated to cherry orchards has expanded significantly, driven by state initiatives to modernize horticulture. This expansion is not merely quantitative; the adoption of intensive cultivation methods has allowed for higher yields per hectare, bringing production figures closer to the targets set for 2025 and beyond.

Export data reveals a successful diversification of markets. While Russia and Kazakhstan remain primary importers, the strategic opening of the Chinese market has yielded substantial dividends. Following the implementation of bilateral phytosanitary protocols, cherry exports to China have surged, transforming the export structure and validating the government's focus on accessing high-margin Asian economies. Revenue figures mirror this growth, with cherry exports generating hundreds of millions of dollars annually, thereby contributing meaningfully to the agricultural GDP.

However, the results also expose critical bottlenecks. The study finds that despite increased production, the sector remains vulnerable to logistical constraints. The shortage of modern cold-storage facilities and refrigerated transport leads to post-harvest losses, particularly during peak harvest seasons when export capacity is overwhelmed. Furthermore, while raw cherry exports are flourishing, the level of processing—such as freezing or drying—remains below strategic targets. Consequently, while Uzbekistan is successfully meeting its volume-based objectives, the goal of maximizing value addition is yet to be fully realized.

CONCLUSIONS.

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In conclusion, Uzbekistan's cherry sector has demonstrated remarkable progress in fulfilling its strategic production and export objectives. The successful expansion of orchards and the penetration of high-value markets, particularly China, validate the effectiveness of recent agricultural reforms. However, the research highlights a disparity between production growth and infrastructural readiness. While volume targets are being met, the full economic potential is constrained by logistical bottlenecks, specifically the inadequacy of cold-chain facilities and a lag in processing capabilities. Moving forward, the sustainability of this growth depends on shifting the focus from quantity to quality and value retention. To solidify its position as a global leader in cherry exports, Uzbekistan must prioritize investments in post-harvest infrastructure and processing technologies, ensuring that the sector remains resilient against market fluctuations and climatic challenges.

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