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CHALLENGES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF LIVESTOCK FARMING IN SURXONDARYO REGION

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Abstract
This article discusses the problems that have arisen in the development of the livestock sector in Surxondaryo region. It analyzes key challenges such as limited feed resources, water scarcity, inefficient management practices, insufficient veterinary services, and the impact of socio-economic conditions on livestock productivity. The study also emphasizes the need for modernization, improved infrastructure, and state support to ensure sustainable growth of the livestock industry in the region.

Keywords: Surxondaryo region, livestock sector, animal husbandry, agricultural development, rural economy, feed supply, water scarcity, veterinary services, sustainable agriculture, productivity, modernization, farming challenges.

INTRODUCTION

In Surxondaryo region, the small size of peasant land plots does not allow farmers to fully provide feed for their livestock. Only 57% of them are able to (at least partially) supply livestock with feed produced by themselves. However, the majority (75%) are forced to purchase feed. In addition, 62% of peasant farms are engaged in collecting feed for livestock, mowing hay, and gathering food waste. Grazing cattle along roadsides, canals, and other areas is widespread. In particular, the grazing of livestock by hired herdsmen in public pastures is not

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widely practiced due to the shortage of pastures. Not all cattle-raising farms have their own feed base—70% grow feed on their plots, while only 50% have access to pastures. Therefore, 91% of surveyed farmers are able to graze their livestock in public pastures, 42% are engaged in feed collection (mowing hay, collecting food waste, etc.), and 11% graze their livestock along roadsides, canals, and other areas.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODS

The most common feed crop in peasant farms is maize. In 2007, 30% of surveyed households in Surxondaryo region cultivated this crop, and it accounted for 45% of their total self-produced feed. 19% of households grow perennial grasses. Other forage crops are very rare in peasant plots. Many households also use straw as livestock feed.

The feed structure in most farms of the region is dominated by perennial grasses and maize, which are grown by most farms and account for about 80% of all feed produced on farms. Nearly two-thirds of farms grow small amounts of grain crops as livestock feed.

As of 2007, more than half of peasant farms (54%) that cultivated feed crops experienced feed shortages. The main reason was land scarcity and low productivity of feed crops. 37% of farmers could not fully supply their cattle with feed produced on their own land. 56% identified land shortage for feed production as the main cause. This can be explained by administrative restrictions on allocating land for feed crops due to cotton and grain production priorities. In some areas, lack of irrigation water is also a serious problem[1].

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

Many peasant farms cannot afford to purchase sufficient feed due to high prices (especially for compound feed and oilcake) and shortages of quality feed. As a

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result, livestock is mainly fed with straw and maize, which is considered nutritionally inadequate.

According to survey results, feed shortages exist in most farms (65%), and 9% of households cannot provide sufficient feed for their livestock at all.

By 2007, only 40% of farmers were able to adequately supply their livestock with feed. Even in relatively better conditions such as Tashkent region, this figure did not exceed 70%. More than half of farmers provide only minimal feed to maintain livestock, while 10% cannot provide even the minimum level.

According to the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources (2006), feed availability in farms and agricultural enterprises was 67% (in feed units). However, this was largely achieved through straw production. Straw production exceeded the norm by 306%, hay by 68%, haylage by 56%, silage by 60%, fodder beet by 0.18%, and green mass by 45%.

Some researchers estimate that actual feed supply was only 42% instead of the official 67%, indicating that many farms could not operate sustainably. Therefore, many farms shifted from livestock specialization to crop production.

For households with livestock numbers ten times higher, the problem is more serious. By 2007, calculations based on allocated feed crop land showed that feed provision in peasant farms was 25% lower than in agricultural enterprises. Feed grown on household plots covered only 5–10% of demand for hay, succulent feed, and green mass, 1% of silage demand, and 274% of straw demand.

Between 1991 and 2007, cattle numbers, meat, and milk production in the country increased by 40–46%, while feed crop areas decreased by nearly 70%. Land previously used for feed crops was reassigned to wheat production under the national grain self-sufficiency strategy. As a result, feed crop land per cattle unit decreased from 0.2 ha in the 1980s to 0.1 ha in the 1990s and to 0.05 ha after 2000.

In Surxondaryo region, as in other regions, land quota systems for cotton and grain production and state procurement policies restricted free land allocation for

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other crops, including fodder crops. Even in livestock farms, a large share of irrigated land was used for cotton and wheat, which contradicts land-use regulations. As a result, only one-third of allocated feed crop land was actually used.

The legal framework for land use also had limitations. The Land Code provided 0.3–0.45 hectares of irrigated land per conditional livestock unit, which was insufficient for proper feed supply.

Natural pasture alone could not meet feed requirements without supplementing maize and alfalfa, requiring additional land. Low land quality reduced crop yields. Existing feeding norms were also below recommended standards.

Expanding livestock production in Surxondaryo requires increasing cultivated areas for feed crops. However, due to limited irrigated land, farms faced the problem of subleasing land from other agricultural enterprises.

When analyzing feed crop production in Surxondaryo farms, the following issues must also be considered:

- feed crops are often grown on low-quality land with low productivity;
- crop rotation systems are not properly implemented;
- there is a lack of seed production, agricultural machinery, fertilizers, and fuel resources;
- farms that do not produce cotton and grain do not receive state support materials[2].

Households with large numbers of cattle also lack sufficient land for feed crops. Only a small portion of household plots (0.03–0.05 ha) can be used for feed crops due to residential buildings, gardens, and other uses.

According to the State Statistics Committee, the total area of feed crops in households was 63.6 thousand hectares. Crop residues provided only a few percent of livestock feed requirements.

The situation with pastures in Surxondaryo region is also complicated. In 1991, 92% of pastures were under the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources.

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Due to overgrazing, lack of rotation, and degradation, pasture areas decreased by 40%. Some degraded pastures were transferred to reserve lands or forest funds.

Today, the country has about 13 million hectares of pasture land, mostly in Karakalpakstan, Bukhara, Kashkadarya, and Navoi regions. Surxondaryo has relatively fewer pastures.

Collecting silage in desert and foothill areas creates logistical difficulties, requiring labor and transport, which increases costs. Lack of organized brigades for silage production reduces efficiency.

In 2000, pasture lands in the region covered 854.2 thousand hectares, while the total pasture area in the country was 15,881.2 thousand hectares. About 44% of Surxondaryo pastures are located in foothill areas[3].

Due to permanent settlement of population, pressure on pastures around villages and water sources has increased, leading to overuse and degradation. Poor-quality grazing reduces livestock productivity and may eventually render pastures unusable. Seasonal pasture use previously helped prevent degradation.

In general, the shortage of pasture and feed resources leads to a decline in livestock productivity.

In 2000, due to a dry spring, natural grasses in the republic's pastures failed to grow and develop. As a result, in Kashkadarya region (Dehqonobod, G'uzor, Bohoriston, Muborak, Qamashi districts), 47–54% of sheep became thin and reached low to medium fattening levels. In Samarqand region (Nurobod, Qo'shrobod districts), this figure was 35–42%, and in Surxondaryo region (Qumqo'rg'on, Sherobod districts), 37–43% of sheep fell into poor or average body condition.

In the Uzun Forestry Enterprise of Sariosiyo district, as of January 1, 2005, there were 2,464 sheep and goats. The enterprise contributed to providing livestock products to the population; however, the lack of pastures for winter feeding seriously hindered livestock expansion and management.

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In 2007, a severe shortage of pastures was observed in the region. Available pastures, including those belonging to farms, had significantly decreased. More than half of cattle farmers acknowledged that public pastures were insufficient for grazing livestock. Due to the lack of feed and pastures, livestock owners were forced to purchase feed. At the same time, due to the favorable natural conditions and the availability of diverse grasses, pastures previously allowed sheep to increase in number and gain weight.

However, during this period, many farmers mistakenly considered bran and various feed mixtures as compound feed and oilcake. About one-third of livestock owners in the region purchased hay, and 17% purchased maize (leaves and cobs are used as feed). Peasant farms rarely purchased other types of feed (bran, oilcake, root crops, grain crops, and straw). In most cases, livestock owners purchased feed from individuals and farmers.

In 2006, 81% of regional farmers purchased an average of 2.5 tons of compound feed, which was higher than other types of purchased feed. However, it should be noted that even purchasing compound feed was a problem during these years, as this resource was produced and sold under strict state control. Factories producing compound feed were not allowed to sell directly to markets or farmers. Feed was mainly sold through commodity exchange markets, and supply was very limited. To submit a purchase request, farmers had to provide many documents, and approval was not guaranteed.

In reality, compound feed could be purchased in cash from the market or other farmers, but at a much higher price than exchange rates[4].

In 2006, 26% of farmers purchased hay and grass, and 10% purchased fodder maize. These feeds were mainly bought in small quantities from private individuals and other farms. Other types of feed were also rarely purchased from markets or farmers. About 30–60% of farmers were unable to purchase sufficient feed due to high prices. In addition, oilcake and husk were rarely available on the market.

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According to experts, one of the main problems in ensuring livestock feed supply in the region was the unsatisfactory system of production and distribution of compound feed. The quality of compound feed was low, and it often contained mechanical impurities. The moisture and volatility level of oilcake and husk reached 16.8%, whereas according to state standards it should be 9–11% for oilcake and up to 14% for husk. The recommended ration for cattle should consist of 15–20% compound feed, but this standard was not met in most farms and peasant households. Compound feed was mainly supplied to poultry farms and collective livestock enterprises[5].

CONCLUSION

The analysis shows that livestock development in Surxondaryo region and other parts of the republic has been significantly constrained by pasture degradation, insufficient feed production, land scarcity, and inefficient feed distribution systems. Climatic factors such as drought, along with institutional and economic challenges, have further reduced livestock productivity and worsened animal feeding conditions. The shortage of quality feed, high prices, limited access to compound feed, and underdeveloped supply systems have forced many farmers to rely on low-nutrition feed sources.

Overall, sustainable development of the livestock sector requires improving feed production systems, expanding fodder crop areas, restoring pasturelands, modernizing feed processing and distribution, and strengthening state support mechanisms for farmers.

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