

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON AGRICULTURE AND HORTICULTURE IN THE BUKHARA EMIRATE IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY

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Abstract: This article examines the development of agriculture and horticulture, the main branches of the rural economy in the Emirate of Bukhara during the early 20th century. It also provides important insights into the primary crop varieties and the distinctive types of horticulture practiced in the region.

Keywords: grain, rice, corn, vegetable crops, horticulture sector, industrial crops, viticulture, tobacco cultivation.

INTRODUCTION

The peasants of the Emirate, in addition to cultivating grain crops, also had experience in growing rice. Rice was mainly cultivated in the Hisor, Zarafshan, Surkhandarya, and Kashkadarya regions. In Eastern Bukhara, rice was grown on 84,000 desyatinas of land, of which 34,000 desyatinas were located in the Hisor beklik. In addition, high-quality rice seeds were cultivated in the beklirks of Miyankol, Shahrisabz, Sarijuy, and Denov, and were sold across the Turkestan region [1;28].

Among grain crops, maize (corn) was also one of the leading crops and was cultivated throughout the territory of the Bukhara Emirate. Archival sources report that up to 300 poods of harvest per year were gathered from locally grown maize cultivated in the well-irrigated agricultural fields of the Emirate. According to the researcher I.A. Remez, maize was cultivated on 200,000 desyatinas of land across the entire Bukhara Emirate, yielding abundant harvests. It should be noted that maize, which occupied nearly 20 percent of the Emirate's total cultivated land, played an important role in providing local peasants with leguminous products.

MAIN PART

In the Bukhara Emirate, various other horticultural crops were also cultivated, meeting both the needs of the population and the demands of external trade. Early- and late-ripening varieties of melon crops were classified. More than ten types of melons ripened at the beginning of summer, and among the population, varieties such as Kukcha, Börikalla, Qariqiz, Barganoy, Zargori Osiyo, Shakarpora, Qashqariy, and Bekzodiy were particularly popular [2;137]. In October and November, late-ripening melon varieties such as Obinavvot, Qora Qotir, and Zarmitani were harvested in the Emirate's melon fields. Russian researcher N. Khanykov described several varieties of pumpkins and noted that melons were one of the main income-generating horticultural crops for the population.

It is important to emphasize that the horticulture sector also developed significantly within the territory of the Emirate. The fertile orchards of the Emirate produced fruits such as grapes, apples, apricots, cherries, quinces, and pomegranates. In addition, dried fruits such as walnuts, pistachios, and raisins were exported to the Russian Empire and even to parts of Europe. According to researchers, the local population often bartered fresh and dried fruits at high rates in exchange for sugar imported from Russia. Other sources, however, indicate that the

population consumed fruits and vegetables primarily for their own needs, and the surplus was sent to Russia and other countries for sale or barter [3;226].

According to sources, the gardeners of the Bukhara Emirate stood out in the Central Asian region for their exceptional horticultural skills. The grape products grown by hereditary gardeners in districts such as Bukhara, Qorakol, and Kattakurgan in the central part of the Emirate, as well as in Guzor, Chiroqchi, Qarshi, and Shahrisabz of the Qarshi oasis, were highly valued even beyond the borders of the Emirate. In the city of Bukhara alone, twelve different varieties of grapes were cultivated [4;121]. The fresh varieties of grapes were primarily consumed by the local population when in season, while certain types were dried to produce raisins. Especially well-suited for raisin production were grape varieties popularly known among the people as maska and shibirgon. Raisins were categorized into two main types - soyaki (shade-dried) and oftobi (sun-dried). Soyaki raisins were prepared by drying fully ripened grapes in shaded areas, while oftobi raisins were produced by drying the fruit directly under the sun. Soyaki raisins, in particular, were exported to foreign countries [5;77]

Some villages of the Emirate were fully specialized in the cultivation of grapes and raisins. In particular, the villages of Gazarak and Khufar in the Sarijuy beklik, as well as the Denov beklik in the Surkhan oasis, were engaged in grape export. The fruits from these regions gained recognition not only in Tsarist Russia but also in certain parts of Europe. The villages of Hovuz, Vakhshavor, and Sino in the Denov beklik were renowned for their grapes, while the village of Dashnobod was famous for its pomegranates [6;119].

Tobacco cultivation had also developed as a distinct sector within the agriculture of the Emirate. This industrial crop was cultivated in the territories of the Kattakurgan and Qarshi bekliklar and supplied to other regions as well. According to researcher D. Djuraboev, among the tobacco varieties grown across the Emirate, the Qarshi tobacco was especially notable for its high quality. In certain agricultural fields in the Shahrisabz, Yakkabog, and Denov bekliklar, tobacco was also cultivated and harvested in specific quantities. The main reason tobacco cultivation did not spread widely throughout the Emirate was due to the difficulties associated with growing this industrial crop.

By the late 19th and early 20th centuries, cotton cultivation had become the main branch of agriculture in the Bukhara Emirate. The cotton planting season across the Emirate typically began shortly after the Navruz holiday, mainly in early April, while the harvest was collected during the Mezon season - that is, in August and September [7;233].

In the agricultural fields of the Emirate, the local Bukhara variety of cotton was predominantly sown. Due to its high fiber quality, it was considered the most marketable variety in the region. In addition to the Bukhara variety grown for fiber production, other types of cotton - known as Safed and Maka - were also cultivated, primarily used for oil extraction [8;144].

With the rapid development of the textile industry in the Russian Empire during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the demand for new raw material sources steadily increased. For example, while in 1885 the Russian textile sector processed 7 million poods of cotton, by 1895 this figure had reached 8.5 million poods, and by 1905 it rose to 18 million poods. Meanwhile, even in the United States - the primary supplier of cotton raw materials to Russian textile factories - the outbreak of the Civil War had led to a decline in cotton production. This situation not only intensified the demand for cotton fiber but also prompted the Tsarist government to initiate the establishment of cotton plantations in the khanates of Central Asia.



To meet the growing demand, American cotton varieties began to be cultivated throughout Central Asia, including in the Bukhara Emirate, replacing local cotton types. According to sources, seeds of the American cotton variety were first brought into the Bukhara Emirate in 1860 through merchant Said Ma'ruf, who acted as an intermediary for the V.A. Bikovsky Trading House. In the initial year of planting, only 10 poods of harvest were obtained from the American variety, but within a year, this figure had increased to 21 poods [9;62].

In order to compare the productivity of local and foreign (primarily American) cotton varieties, a number of trial experiments were also conducted. For example, in 1888, a Russian merchant named S. Mazov rented a 30-desyatina plot of land in central Bukhara and sowed it with American cotton. As a result, he harvested a significantly larger yield compared to the local jaydari (traditional) cotton variety [10;62].

It should be noted that the American cotton variety required considerably more water and labor than the local types. Since the seeds were not yet adapted to the regional conditions, they demanded special care and maintenance.

Gradually, the American cotton variety began to dominate the agricultural fields and markets of the Bukhara Emirate. In trade relations, while one kilogram of local cotton was priced at 10 rubles, the American cotton variety was valued at 12 rubles [11;61].

American cotton seeds also began to be distributed free of charge to farmers in the Emirate. For example, in 1887, the trading company Kudrin & Co. distributed 20,000 poods of cotton seeds free of charge to farmers in Central Bukhara, Tashkent, and Margilan. A similar practice was also observed in the Chorjuy beklik in 1899.

With each passing year, the area of land allocated to American cotton steadily expanded, and by 1905, 100,000 poods of American cotton were harvested. This figure rose to 150,000 poods in 1906 and reached 200,000 poods by 1908. The regions of Zirabulok and Ziyovuddin had completely switched to American cotton varieties, while Karmana, Gijduvon, and Piridast had partially transitioned.

However, due to the degradation of farmland and the inadequacy of irrigation infrastructure, cotton yields began to decline by the early 20th century. For example, in 1911, a total of 950,000 poods of cotton were harvested across the Bukhara Emirate, but by 1912, this number had dropped to 720,000 poods [12;4].

The decline in cotton production prompted the Tsarist government to pay greater attention to the Emirate's agricultural sector. Emergency measures were introduced: farmers were given small amounts of cash as advances, and in some areas, cotton seeds were distributed free of charge. As a result, the situation gradually began to improve. In 1913, 60,000 desyatinas of land were planted with local cotton seeds and 2,000 desyatinas with American cotton, yielding a total harvest of 2,375,000 poods of cotton. By 1915, American cotton was planted on half of a 100,000-desyatina cotton field, resulting in a harvest of 3 million poods [13;30].

World War I had significant socio-economic, military, and political consequences for all participating countries. The agricultural sector being analyzed in this section was also affected by wartime conditions. Due to the war, Russia's access to raw cotton from the United States and Egypt sharply declined. Consequently, the Tsarist regime renewed its focus on the cotton fields of Central Asia. To encourage local farmers, cotton purchase prices were slightly increased. Green crop areas were reduced, and cotton fields were expanded. In several bekiks of Eastern Bukhara, cotton became the dominant crop. American cotton seeds began to be

planted in the Surkhan oasis regions of Denov, Boysun, Sherobod, Hisor, Qorqontepa, Qubodiyon, and Kulob.

Travelers and merchants who visited the khanates of Central Asia noted in their memoirs that cotton cultivation and trade had increasingly become the main occupation of the population. In particular, it was recorded that in the central markets of the Bukhara Emirate, one batman of cotton was valued at up to 50 tanga, while in the vicinity of the city of Qarshi, the price ranged between 42 and 46 tanga. Because cleaning cotton from its seeds required laborious effort, the price of ginned, ready-to-use cotton reached between 6 and 8 gold tanga per batman [14;79].

CONCLUSION

Overall, by the early 20th century, the expansion of cotton cultivation in the Emirate, along with the introduction of American cotton varieties, led to a decline in the cultivation of other crops. The production of melons, fruits, and vegetables was significantly reduced. In animal husbandry, the preparation of karakul pelts gradually became a leading economic sector. After cotton, the second major source of income came from the sale of karakul skins. The deteriorating condition of irrigation infrastructure had a negative impact on agricultural productivity. Moreover, the archaic land tenure system hindered the introduction of new technologies and reforms.

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