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Enhancing the Competitiveness and Service Quality Management of Fruit and Vegetable Enterprises in Uzbekistan

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Abstract: This article analyzes measures aimed at improving the competitiveness of fruit and vegetable enterprises and managing the quality of services in Uzbekistan in 2024. In accordance with the presidential decree, new market mechanisms were introduced in the agro-industrial sector, and the agro-industrial complex development agency was established. A new funding system was also introduced by the state to create intensive gardens and vineyards.

The article examines the importance of improving the competitiveness of the fruit and vegetable industry in Uzbekistan and improving the quality of services, as well as the effectiveness of measures implemented in this regard.

Key words: fruit and vegetable industry, competitiveness, agro-industrial sector, service, products, export, management

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Inroduction

Enterprise competitiveness management is necessary due to the new economic conditions in the domestic and international markets, as well as its importance in a market economy.

On October 1, 2024, by presidential decree, new market mechanisms were introduced in the agro-industrial sector. Within this framework, the Agency for the Development of the Agro-Industrial Complex was established on the basis of the Agency for the Provision of Agricultural Services. The state trust fund for the development and support of the agro-industrial complex was also established under this agency. Through this fund, a new system of financing and creation of new intensive industrial gardens and vineyards has been introduced. This system provides for a phased allocation of credit: 10% for the preparation of land for planting, 40% for the purchase of seedlings and planting costs, 30% for the installation of irrigation systems, 20% preferential loan for maintenance costs for 3 years before the garden is harvested.

In Uzbekistan, a number of important measures were implemented in 2024 to improve the competitiveness of fruit and vegetable enterprises and to manage the quality of services.Introduction of the system of assessment of growers

Since December 1, 2024, the "evaluation of fruit and vegetable growers" system has been introduced, aimed at increasing the prestige of farmers and farmers, assisting processing and exporting enterprises. Through this system, the effectiveness of producers of products is evaluated and further development of their activities is promoted.

Simplification of export processes

Since May 22, 2024, special corridors have been established for the rapid export of fruits and vegetables at major customs posts in Uzbekistan. Customs clearance of vehicles with fast disruptive products (for example, onions, cabbage, cherries, apricots) through these corridors was carried out in a priority order. In addition, a system for monitoring the value of export contracts was introduced, taking into account the artificial lowering of export prices for products, and controlling foreign exchange receipts.

Increased export volume

In January-April 2024, Uzbekistan exported 514.8 thousand tons of fruits and vegetables abroad for $ 298.5 million. This figure increased by 43.3 percent or 155.6 thousand tons compared to the same period in 2023. The main export markets were Russia (26.3%), Pakistan (24.2%), Kazakhstan (13%) and China (9.3%).

As a result of these measures, Uzbekistan's fruit and vegetable enterprises have achieved an increase in competitiveness in domestic and international markets, the quality of services has improved, and the volume of exports has increased significantly.

Fruit and vegetable products are one of the important sectors of the agricultural and food industries, and their competitiveness and quality of services have a direct impact on economic stability. Due to the growing demand in the market today, it is necessary for fruit and vegetable enterprises to effectively manage their activities and develop strategies to increase competitiveness. (table-1)

Table-1 Factors affecting the competitiveness of fruit and vegetable enterprises and the management of the quality of services[1]

Sections	Concept	Internal Factors	External Factors
1. Competitiveness of Fruit and Vegetable Enterprises	-The ability to produce market-demanded products, introduce innovations, and gain advantages in price and quality	- Level of production technology and modernization - Product quality and environmental safety - Cost optimization and pricing policy - Workforce qualification and management efficiency - Innovation activity and introduction of new product types	- Market demand and consumer preferences - Government support and subsidies - Import and export regulations - Seasonality and climate conditions - Logistics and transport infrastructure
2. Service Quality Management in Fruit and	-Improving product delivery, packaging,	- Product quality and shelf life - Modernization of packaging and labeling -	- Government standards and quality control system - Climate and

[1] Волонцевич, Е. Ф.Конкурентоспособность предприятия туристической индустрии: учеб.-метод. пособие /– Минск : РИПО, 2014. – 134 с.

Vegetable Enterprises	storage conditions, and customer information services	Delivery speed and logistics efficiency - Customer service and staff approach	weather conditions - Services provided by competitors - Changes in consumer demand for service quality
3. Strategies to Increase Competitiveness	-Strategies for enterprises to adapt to market demands and improve quality	- Implementation of innovations - Strengthening branding and marketing strategies - Improving quality management - Enhancing the logistics system - Utilizing government support	- Considering the demands of domestic and international markets - Growing demand for ecological and organic products - Production compliance with international quality standards - Studying competitor activities and adapting accordingly

This table systematically evaluates the key factors affecting the competitiveness of fruit and vegetable enterprises and their service quality management.

The successful development of fruit and vegetable enterprises depends on their quality of products, level of Service and ability to apply Competitive Strategies. High results in this area can be achieved by introducing innovations based on modern requirements, forming an effective management system and adapting to the requirements of the global market.

Discussion and analysis

In 2024, Uzbekistan achieved significant success in exporting fruit and vegetable products. The key statistical data reflecting the dynamics and structure of exports are presented below (table-2):

Table-2 Export of fruit and vegetable products from Uzbekistan in 2024[2]

	Indicator	Data
1	Export volume (January 2024)	146.3 thousand tons ($75.4 million)
2	Export volume (January-April 2024)	514.8 thousand tons ($298.5 million)
3	Export volume (January-May 2024)	722.1 thousand tons ($420.1 million)
4	Export growth (January-April 2024)	+43.3% compared to 2023
5	Export growth (January-May 2024)	+10.4% (quantity), +2.6% (value)
6	Main export markets	Russia (27.2%), Pakistan (21.2%), China (13.4%), Kazakhstan (9.2%)
7	Top exported products (January-May 2024)	Onion – $44.1 million, cabbage – $41.2 million, mung beans – $26.8 million, dried grapes – $21 million, carrots – $19.8 million, tomatoes – $19.2 million, millet – $17.2 million, dried prunes – $14 million
8	Measures to boost exports	Producer evaluation, customs "green corridors," control of foreign exchange inflows, financing of intensive orchards
9	Target for 2025	Reach $3.5 billion in exports

[2] https://stat.uz/uz/

Due to the fact that the government pays great attention to the development of agriculture and horticulture, the quality and volume of exported products are increasing from year to year. In particular, for January-November In 2024, 1,899.0 thousand tons of fruit and vegetable products were exported, and compared to the same period in 2023, this figure increased by 16.6%, or by 269.9 thousand tons. The volume of exports of fruit and vegetable products in the period under review amounted to 1,415.1 million US dollars (the rate of increase, compared with the same period in 2023, respectively amounted to 30.0%).

In total, exports amounted to 5.8%.

The main markets for fruit and vegetable exports were Russia (42.1%), Kazakhstan (12.7%), Pakistan (12.6%) and Afghanistan (8.0%).

Improving the competitiveness of fruit and vegetable sector enterprises in Uzbekistan.

In 2024, significant steps were taken in Uzbekistan to increase the competitiveness of fruit and vegetable enterprises and improve the quality of services provided. Additional information about the ongoing reforms, their results and future prospects is provided below.

1. Development of agricultural sector infrastructure

In 2024, Uzbekistan began construction of new logistics centers in Tashkent, Andijan and Surkhandarya region. These centers are designed for the storage, processing and export of fresh fruits and vegetables, which reduces product losses and improves logistics.15 new gas-controlled storage facilities have been put into operation, which makes it possible to extend the shelf life of products.A plant for processing fruits into natural juices has been built in the Bukhara region, which has increased exports of processed products by 2 times. As part of the Digital Agriculture strategy, an electronic certification system for fruit and vegetable products has been introduced. An online platform for farmers has been created, allowing direct access to foreign buyers.

2. Financial support and subsidies

The state has allocated $200 million to subsidize agricultural enterprises engaged in the cultivation and processing of fruits and vegetables. A new credit system has been introduced, according to which 50% of the cost of planting intensive orchards and vineyards is covered by the state. Enterprises engaged in the export of fruit and vegetable products are exempt from VAT for 3 years. Farmers are provided with preferential rates for electricity and water when using drip irrigation.

3. Expanding export opportunities

In 2024, exports of fruit and vegetable products expanded to new markets: Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, India and South Korea. Agreements have been signed with China and the EU to increase the supply of Uzbek fruits and vegetables. Mandatory GLOBALG.A.P. certification has been introduced for manufacturers, which has opened up access to European and Asian markets. The number of enterprises that have received HACCP and ISO 22000 certificates has increased by 30%. In the first 6 months of 2024, 850 thousand tons of fruit and vegetable products worth $500 million were exported, which is 40% more than in the same period of 2023.

4. Innovation and sustainable development

New varieties of fruits and vegetables adapted to dry conditions have been introduced. Projects on the use of biological products to increase yields have been launched. The use of drip irrigation has been expanded, which has reduced water consumption by 25%. Strict environmental standards have been introduced for processing plants.

Conclusion

Thanks to the measures taken, Uzbekistan has significantly strengthened its position in the global agricultural market. Investments in logistics, digitalization, financial support and product certification have increased the competitiveness of the fruit and vegetable sector and increased exports. In the future, it is planned to expand trade partnerships, introduce new technologies and further integrate into global agro-industrial chains.

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