

UDC: 94(575.1):631.1:502/504

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**HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF COTTON AND KARAKUL FARMING
DEVELOPMENT IN BUKHARA REGION (1950-1960)**

Abstract. This study analyzes cotton and karakul farming in Uzbekistan's Bukhara region during 1950–1960 within the framework of Soviet agricultural modernization. Drawing on primary sources and statistical data, it highlights state-led interventions that boosted production, with cotton yields rising by 157% and karakul output by 89% through irrigation and mechanization. At the same time, it shows how these gains caused soil salinization and early water scarcity, linking past policies to present challenges. The study concludes with lessons for advancing sustainable farming in modern Uzbekistan.

Keywords: Soviet agriculture, cotton production, karakul farming, environmental impact, agricultural history, Bukhara region, Uzbekistan

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**ИСТОРИЧЕСКИЙ АНАЛИЗ РАЗВИТИЯ ХЛОПКОВОДСТВА И
КАРАКУЛЕВОДСТВА В БУХАРСКОЙ ОБЛАСТИ (1950–1960 ГГ.)**

Аннотация. В исследовании рассматривается развитие хлопководства и каракулеводства в Бухарской области Узбекистана в 1950–1960 гг. в контексте советской аграрной модернизации. На основе архивных источников и статистических данных показано, что государственные меры позволили увеличить урожайность хлопка на 157% и производство

каракуля на 89% благодаря ирригации и механизации. Вместе с тем выявлены экологические последствия, включая засоление почв и ранние проявления дефицита воды, что связывает политику прошлого с современными проблемами. В заключении подчеркиваются уроки, важные для развития устойчивого сельского хозяйства в современном Узбекистане.

Ключевые слова: сельское хозяйство СССР, хлопок, каракуль, экология, аграрная история, Бухара, Узбекистан.

Introduction; 1950-1960 is a period of strategic importance in the Bukhara region under the influence of Soviet centralized planning policy in agriculture. During these years, the region has experienced a sharp increase in the field of cotton growing and karakul [1, B. 45]. Major irrigation projects such as the Amu-Bukhara machine channel were built for the development of cotton growing and new technologies were introduced [2, B. 112]. However, improper management of water resources and excessive irrigation led to salinity of lands [3, B. 78].

Analysis of the literature; This study analyzes the scientific literature on the development of cotton and karakul in Bukhara region in 1950-1960. A number of key sources will be used to better understand the agricultural policy of the period and its socio-economic consequences. Aliyev et al. "45]. This source, especially in Bukhara region, emphasizes the traditional importance of karakul and analyzes the industrialization measures taken through the state farms [5, B. 48]. It also provides valuable information on the improvement of breeds and the introduction of scientific animal husbandry [5, B. 52]. In the article "Analysis of socio-economic indicators of Bukhara region" (2025) the gross regional product, income and employment of the region are given on the basis of statistics [6, B. 112]. This article demonstrates how the cotton monoculture contributed to economic growth, but at the same time caused problems such as water shortages [6, B. 115].

Methodology; This study applies a multi-dimensional methodology to analyze cotton and karakul farming in Bukhara during 1950–1960. Historical and qualitative content analysis of archival documents and statistical reports form the core of the research [8, p. 15]. Key sources include five-year plans of the Uzbek SSR Ministry of Agriculture and production reports from regional kolkhozes [9, p. 233]. Comparative and spatial analyses were used to trace production trends and map the geographical spread of agricultural development [10, p. 78]. Quantitative data from Soviet agricultural censuses were statistically processed to measure growth rates and resource allocation [8, p. 22], while ethnographic insights, drawn from oral histories of former agricultural workers, shed light on the social impacts of these policies [9, p. 240].

Results; In the 1950s–1960s, Bukhara region experienced profound agricultural transformation, especially in cotton and karakul farming. The construction of the Amu-Bukhara Machine Canal allowed irrigation of arid lands, which sharply increased cotton yields—by 1960 they were 157% higher than in 1950—making the region a key supplier of cotton to the Soviet Union [11; 12]. Parallel to this, karakul farming was modernized through state farms and scientific breeding programs, which improved pelt quality and quantity. By the late 1960s, annual output reached about 1.4 million pelts, an 89% increase over 1950, and Bukhara's products gained international recognition, especially in European fur markets, contributing significantly to foreign exchange [13–15]. However, these successes came with serious environmental costs. Expanding irrigation led to widespread soil salinization, which by 1965 affected nearly 62% of irrigated land, while groundwater rose by an average of 2.3 meters, further degrading soil quality. Excessive water extraction for cotton also initiated long-term water scarcity problems [16]. At the same time, rural society was reshaped through the creation of 48 new state farms and the reorganization of 72 collectives. Mechanization advanced rapidly, with tractor supply per hectare rising by 240%, and the workforce shifted toward permanent employment in

state farms, reducing subsistence farming. As a result, by 1960 cotton and karakul together accounted for 78% of the region's agricultural output value, compared to 52% in 1950, which strengthened economic specialization but also made the region vulnerable to market fluctuations and environmental constraints.

Discussion; Bukhara's agricultural development in 1950–1960 reflects the dual impact of Soviet modernization policies, combining notable achievements with serious socio-environmental costs. Cotton yields rose by 157% thanks to large-scale irrigation projects such as the Amu-Bukhara Canal, while karakul production grew by 89% through scientific breeding in state farms [12, p. 45; 13, p. 33]. Yet these successes came at a high price, as salinization affected 62% of irrigated land by 1965 and rising water tables signaled looming scarcity [16, p. 78;]. At the same time, rural life was transformed through the creation of 48 state farms, which, alongside collective farms, reshaped traditional practices and deepened reliance on centralized systems [19, p. 112]. Mechanization, with tractor availability increasing by 240%, boosted efficiency but disrupted pastoral livelihoods, while specialization in cotton and karakul—together forming 78% of agricultural output by 1960—enhanced economic returns but heightened vulnerability to market shifts and environmental pressures. Thus, Bukhara's experience mirrors broader Soviet agricultural policies in Central Asia, where production goals outweighed ecological sustainability and community needs. Short-term gains from irrigation and mechanization ultimately created long-term environmental degradation and socio-economic dependency, challenges that continued to shape the region for decades.

Conclusion; The 1950–1960 period marked a transformative era for agriculture in the Bukhara region. The large-scale irrigation projects and mechanization measures implemented by the Soviet government led to significant growth in cotton cultivation and karakul farming. The construction of infrastructure facilities such as the Amu-Bukhara Machine Canal provided new

impetus to the region's agriculture [11, p. 45]. As a result, cotton yields increased by 157%, while karakul pelt production rose by 89% [12, p. 33; 14, p. 67]. However, these achievements came with certain negative consequences. Over-intensive irrigation led to soil salinization [16, p. 78].

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