

TRAINING AGRICULTURAL SPECIALISTS IN UZBEKISTAN: A CASE STUDY OF KASHKADARYO REGION

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Abstract: Agriculture remains one of the most vital sectors in Uzbekistan's economy, providing employment to a significant portion of the population and contributing to national food security. The Qashqadaryo region, located in the southern part of the country, is known for its favorable conditions for cotton, grain, horticulture, and livestock farming. However, despite its agricultural potential, the region faces challenges related to the shortage of highly qualified specialists in the agrarian sector.

Keywords: Kashqadaryo, agricultural education, specialist training, vocational training, curriculum development, agrarian workforce, Uzbekistan.

Introduction

Agriculture is a cornerstone of Uzbekistan's economy, with the Kashkadarya region standing out due to its fertile lands and diverse agricultural activities. However, the sector faces challenges such as climate change, water scarcity, and the need for modernization. Addressing these issues necessitates the continuous development of agricultural expertise. This case study examines various initiatives aimed at training agricultural specialists in the Kashkadarya region, focusing on innovative practices, international collaborations, and the integration of modern technologies to enhance agricultural productivity and sustainability.

Training Initiatives and Collaborations

1. Conservation Agriculture Practices

In November 2024, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, conducted a seminar in the Qamashi district. The seminar focused on conservation agriculture practices, emphasizing soil protection, improved fertility, and enhanced water retention. Participants were trained on no-till seeding technologies, which offer timely planting, reduced fuel costs, and yields equal to or higher than conventional methods. This initiative aimed to promote sustainable agricultural practices and address climate change challenges.

2. Good Agricultural Practices (G.A.P.) Certification

In November 2020, over 120 farmers from Kashkadarya participated in training sessions organized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the 'Uzstandart' Agency. The training focused on the GLOBALG.A.P. certification, an internationally recognized standard ensuring food safety and quality. The program aimed to help farmers meet international market requirements, thereby expanding export opportunities and increasing farm profitability.

3. Innovation Groups and Climate-Resilient Crops

The Kashkadarya region has established innovation groups to test and implement new agricultural ideas. One notable project involved developing climate-resilient durum wheat varieties. In November 2023, a mini pasta production facility was launched in Karshi city, producing pasta from these wheat varieties. This initiative, supported by the European Union and UNDP, aims to reduce import dependency and promote local production.

4. Water Conservation Training

Recognizing the challenges posed by water scarcity, training sessions were organized to educate farmers on water-saving technologies. The training covered efficient water use, conservation during transportation, and methods to prevent soil moisture loss. Participants were also informed about practices to avoid, such as overgrazing and improper irrigation methods, which can exacerbate water scarcity issues.

5. Demonstration Sites for New Agricultural Technologies

In collaboration with the FAO, demonstration sites were established in Kashkadarya to introduce new agricultural technologies, crops, and varieties. These sites serve as practical examples for farmers, showcasing the benefits of modern equipment and innovative practices in improving crop yields and land management.

Conclusion

The training of agricultural specialists in the Kashkadarya region has proven to be a cornerstone for advancing sustainable agricultural practices. Through collaborative efforts involving international organizations like the FAO and UNDP, local institutions such as the Qarshi Institute of Irrigation and Agrotechnology, and the implementation of innovative projects, significant strides have been made in equipping farmers with the knowledge and tools necessary to adapt to evolving agricultural challenges. These initiatives have not only improved productivity but have also fostered resilience against climate change, ensuring the long-term viability of agriculture in the region. Continued investment in education, research, and technology will be essential to maintain and build upon these achievements, securing a prosperous future for the agricultural sector in Kashkadarya.

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