

# ECONOSCITECH INTEGRATION

ISSUE  
6

INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC  
ELECTRONIC JOURNAL



**TASHKENT STATE  
UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS**



**American University  
of Technology**

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**ISSN: 3060-5075**



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**2026**

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THE SCIENTIFIC-POPULAR  
ELECTRONIC JOURNAL  
"ECONOSCITECH-INTEGRATION"  
HAS BEEN REGISTERED UNDER  
THE NUMBER C-5669651 BY THE  
AGENCY FOR INFORMATION AND  
MASS COMMUNICATIONS (AOKA)  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN,  
EFFECTIVE FROM OCTOBER 9, 2024.

In accordance with Resolution No. 384/6 dated April 10, 2026, issued by the Presidium of the Supreme Attestation Commission under the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation of the Republic of Uzbekistan, this journal is included in the list of recommended international scientific publications for publishing the primary research findings of doctoral dissertations in the field of Economic Sciences.

**Partners: Tashkent State University of Economics / American University of Technology in Tashkent (AUT)**

Electronic publication, Issue 6. 374 pages.  
Approved for publication on Iyun, 2026.

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# THEORETICAL AND ECONOMIC FOUNDATIONS FOR ENHANCING THE COMPETITIVENESS OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS IN GLOBAL MARKETS

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**Abstract.** This article examines the theoretical and economic foundations for enhancing the competitiveness of agricultural products in global markets. The study analyzes the key determinants of agricultural competitiveness, including product quality, the implementation of innovative technologies, the development of logistics infrastructure, and compliance with international standards and certification requirements. Particular attention is paid to strengthening export potential, diversifying export destinations, and expanding the production of high-value-added agricultural goods.

The article also explores the role of innovation, efficient resource utilization, market-oriented production, and institutional support in improving the position of agricultural products in international markets. Based on the findings, scientific and practical recommendations are proposed to improve export performance, enhance the competitiveness of agricultural producers, and ensure the sustainable development of the agricultural sector amid global economic integration.

**Keywords:** agricultural products, competitiveness, global market, export potential, innovative technologies, logistics infrastructure, international standards, certification, product quality, high-value-added production, agricultural economics, sustainable development.

**Аннотация.** В данной статье рассматриваются теоретические и экономические основы повышения конкурентоспособности сельскохозяйственной продукции на мировых рынках. В исследовании анализируются ключевые факторы, влияющие на конкурентоспособность аграрной продукции, включая качество продукции, внедрение инновационных технологий, развитие логистической инфраструктуры, а также соответствие международным стандартам и требованиям сертификации. Особое внимание уделяется укреплению экспортного потенциала, диверсификации экспортных направлений и расширению производства сельскохозяйственной продукции с высокой добавленной стоимостью.

В статье также раскрывается роль инноваций, эффективного использования ресурсов, рыночно ориентированного производства и институциональной поддержки в укреплении позиций сельскохозяйственной продукции на международных рынках. На основе полученных результатов предложены научные и практические рекомендации, направленные на повышение экспортной эффективности, усиление конкурентоспособности сельскохозяйственных производителей и обеспечение устойчивого развития аграрного сектора в условиях глобальной экономической интеграции.

**Ключевые слова:** сельскохозяйственная продукция, конкурентоспособность, мировой рынок, экспортный потенциал, инновационные технологии, логистическая инфраструктура, международные стандарты, сертификация, качество продукции, производство продукции с высокой добавленной стоимостью, аграрная экономика, устойчивое развитие.

## INTRODUCTION

Ensuring the sustainable development of a country's economy requires enhancing the competitiveness of agricultural products in global markets. In particular, the intensification of competition in global food markets and the tightening of international standards and quality requirements necessitate the introduction of modern production technologies in the agricultural sector, the deep processing of products, and the expansion of export potential. From this perspective, studying the theoretical and economic foundations for the formation of competitive advantages of agricultural products in international markets is considered one of the urgent scientific issues.

In recent years, Uzbekistan has implemented systematic reforms aimed at stimulating agricultural exports, supporting exporting enterprises, and expanding opportunities to enter new foreign markets. In particular, Resolution No. PQ-5184 of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, dated July 13, 2021, improved mechanisms for the financial support of export activities<sup>1</sup>, while Presidential Decree No. PF-47, dated March 14, 2025, is aimed at simplifying export procedures and stimulating the production of high-value finished products. In addition, Resolution No. PQ-136, dated April 8, 2025, established an important legal framework for increasing the export potential of agricultural products and developing processing chains<sup>2</sup>.

To create favorable conditions for exporters in the country, profit tax and social tax rates were set at 1% until 2028 for business entities that sell fruit and vegetable products in modern packaging. Furthermore, a system was introduced to cover part of the costs associated with obtaining international certifications such as Organic, Global G.A.P., Halal, ISO 22000, and ISO 14000. These measures contribute to increasing the competitiveness of domestic products in international markets.

To develop the export infrastructure for agricultural products, a Central Export Headquarters and 14 regional export headquarters were established under the Quarantine Agency, and a system for coordinating export processes was introduced. In addition, the launch of the “Agroko‘makchi” mobile application, the “e-Phyto Solution” system, and the “e-PhytoUz” information platforms has enabled the digitalization and simplification of export procedures. As a result, phytosanitary certificate exchange has been established with 120 countries.

The reforms being implemented are yielding positive results. In particular, during January–May 2026, exports of fruit and vegetable products and food industry goods amounted to USD 1.075 billion, representing 108% of the forecast indicator and a 13% increase compared to the corresponding period of the previous year. The export geography expanded to 81 countries, including successful entry into new markets such as Senegal, Panama, New Zealand, Ghana, and Ireland.

These results demonstrate the effectiveness of state policy in increasing the competitiveness of agricultural products in global markets. Therefore, this article scientifically analyzes the theoretical and economic foundations for enhancing the competitiveness of agricultural products in global markets, the factors shaping competitive advantages, and the priority directions for developing export potential, using Uzbekistan’s experience as an example.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Issues related to enhancing the competitiveness of agricultural products in global markets have been widely examined by foreign and domestic scholars, as well as in the analytical reports of international organizations. The existing literature shows that agricultural competitiveness is a multidimensional concept that depends not only on natural resource endowments but also on product quality, innovation capacity, logistics infrastructure, export diversification, compliance with international standards, and the ability to create higher added value.

Among foreign scholars, M. Porter made a fundamental contribution to the theory of competitive advantage. In his view, the competitiveness of countries and industries in international markets is determined by the interaction of factor conditions, demand conditions, related and supporting industries, firm strategy, structure, and rivalry<sup>3</sup>. Porter’s approach is particularly important for the agricultural sector because it demonstrates that competitiveness cannot be achieved only through low production costs. In the author’s view, this theory is highly relevant to agricultural exports, since the sustainable competitiveness of agricultural products increasingly depends on quality improvement, technological modernization, branding, logistics efficiency, and value chain development.

D. Ricardo’s theory of comparative advantage also occupies an important place in explaining the export potential of agricultural products. Ricardo argued that countries benefit from international trade when they specialize in producing goods in which they possess relative efficiency advantages<sup>4</sup>. This approach remains theoretically significant for explaining why countries with favorable natural and climatic conditions can successfully participate in agricultural trade. However, in the author’s opinion, the classical theory of comparative advantage should be interpreted in the modern context alongside innovation, certification, logistics, and institutional capacity, because natural advantages alone are no longer sufficient to ensure stable positions in highly competitive global food markets.

1 Decree No. PF-47 of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated March 14, 2025. On Measures to Improve Export Procedures and Stimulate the Production of Finished Products with Added Value.

2 <https://lex.uz/uz/docs/-7469633> Resolution No. PQ-136 of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated April 8, 2025. On Additional Measures to Increase the Export Potential of Agricultural Products and Develop Processing Chains.

3 Porter, M. E. The Competitive Advantage of Nations. New York: Free Press, 1990.

4 Ricardo, D. On the Principles of Political Economy and Taxation. London: John Murray, 1817

J. Schumpeter's theory of innovation provides another important theoretical basis for analyzing agricultural competitiveness. Schumpeter emphasized that innovation creates new combinations of production factors and serves as a key driver of economic development and competitive renewal<sup>5</sup>. From the author's perspective, this approach is especially applicable to the agricultural sector, where the introduction of modern technologies, digital solutions, precision farming, improved processing methods, and resource-saving practices directly contributes to productivity growth and the production of higher-quality export-oriented goods.

In addition, the works of P. Krugman and B. Balassa are important for understanding international trade competitiveness. Krugman's ideas on economies of scale and market structure show that international competitiveness is influenced not only by factor endowments but also by specialization, market access, and production efficiency<sup>6</sup>. Balassa's concept of revealed comparative advantage is widely used to assess the export competitiveness of specific sectors and product groups<sup>7</sup>. In the author's view, these approaches are useful for evaluating the position of agricultural products in global markets, particularly when analyzing export structure, market concentration, and the comparative strength of individual agricultural commodities.

The global value chain approach, developed by G. Gereffi and other scholars, is also relevant to the study of agricultural competitiveness. This approach emphasizes that competitiveness is shaped not only at the production stage but throughout the entire value chain, including input supply, production, processing, storage, packaging, certification, logistics, marketing, and distribution<sup>8</sup>. The author considers this approach particularly important for Uzbekistan's agricultural sector, since the country's export performance depends significantly on its ability to shift from exporting raw agricultural products to processed, standardized, branded, and value-added products.

Reports prepared by international organizations, including the FAO, WTO, and the World Bank, also provide important methodological and empirical foundations for the study of agricultural competitiveness<sup>9</sup>. These organizations emphasize that the export potential of agricultural products is directly linked to product quality, food safety systems, logistics infrastructure, compliance with international sanitary and phytosanitary standards, certification mechanisms, and the development of value-added production. In the author's view, the practical value of these reports lies in the fact that they connect theoretical principles of competitiveness with measurable indicators, policy instruments, and international best practices.

Domestic scholars have also made a significant contribution to the study of agricultural modernization, export potential, and competitiveness. S. Umurzakov examined issues related to the modernization of the agricultural sector and the expansion of export opportunities<sup>10</sup>. His research highlights the importance of structural reforms, investment attraction, and modernization of production infrastructure. The author agrees with this approach, as modernization is a necessary condition for improving the quality and export readiness of agricultural products.

A. Vahobov studied the factors influencing foreign economic activity and export efficiency<sup>11</sup>. His works emphasize the role of macroeconomic stability, institutional mechanisms, export policy, and the effective organization of foreign trade relations. In the author's opinion, Vahobov's approach is important because agricultural competitiveness should be analyzed not only at the enterprise level but also within the broader system of foreign economic policy, trade facilitation, and institutional support.

B. Yusupov analyzed the economic efficiency of agricultural product exports<sup>12</sup>. His research focuses on the relationship between production costs, export revenues, market prices, and profitability. From the author's perspective, this approach is methodologically important because competitiveness must be evaluated not only by export volume but also by economic efficiency, profitability, and producers' ability to maintain stable positions in foreign markets.

Sh. Mustafaqulov paid particular attention to innovation in the agricultural sector and the formation of competitive advantages in international markets<sup>13</sup>. His research shows that innovation, investment activity, and technological renewal are among the main drivers of competitiveness. The author supports this view

5 Schumpeter, J. A. *The Theory of Economic Development: An Inquiry into Profits, Capital, Credit, Interest, and the Business Cycle*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1934.

6 Krugman, P. R. *Rethinking International Trade*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990; Krugman, P. R., & Obstfeld, M. *International Economics: Theory and Policy*. Boston: Addison-Wesley, 2009.

7 Balassa, B. "Trade Liberalization and 'Revealed' Comparative Advantage." *The Manchester School*, Vol. 33, No. 2, 1965, pp. 99–123.

8 Gereffi, G. "International Trade and Industrial Upgrading in the Apparel Commodity Chain." *Journal of International Economics*, Vol. 48, No. 1, 1999, pp. 37–70; Gereffi, G., Humphrey, J., & Sturgeon, T. "The Governance of Global Value Chains." *Review of International Political Economy*, Vol. 12, No. 1, 2005, pp. 78–104.

9 FAO. *The State of Agricultural Commodity Markets*. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; WTO. *World Trade Report*. Geneva: World Trade Organization; World Bank. *Enabling the Business of Agriculture*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

10 Umurzakov, S. *Agrarian Policy and Agricultural Economics*. – Tashkent: Iqtisod-Moliya, 2019. – 384 p.

11 Vahobov, A. V. *International Economic Relations*. – Tashkent: Sharq, 2021. – 512 p.

12 Yusupov, B. Y. *Ways to Increase the Efficiency of Agricultural Product Exports*. – Tashkent: Fan, 2020. – 286 p.

13 Mustafaqulov, Sh. Sh. *Agribusiness and Innovative Development*. – Tashkent: Innovative Development Publishing House, 2022. – 340 p.

and considers that, under modern global market conditions, agricultural producers can strengthen their competitiveness only through the systematic introduction of innovative technologies, digital management tools, resource-saving methods, and modern processing capacities.

The practical results achieved in recent years in the development of agricultural exports in Uzbekistan confirm the theoretical views discussed above. In particular, during January–May 2026, exports of fruit, vegetables, and food products amounted to USD 1.075 billion, reaching 108% of the forecast target. The export geography expanded to 81 countries, including successful entry into new markets such as Senegal, Panama, New Zealand, Ghana, and Ireland. In addition, Russia, with USD 313 million; Afghanistan, with USD 293 million; Kazakhstan, with USD 123 million; Kyrgyzstan, with USD 51 million; and China, with USD 50 million, became the main export markets for Uzbekistan's agricultural products. In the export structure, wheat flour accounted for USD 174 million, beans for USD 114 million, non-alcoholic beverages for USD 62 million, cabbage for USD 55 million, dried grapes for USD 52 million, and cherries for USD 42 million. These indicators demonstrate the gradual strengthening of the competitiveness of national agricultural products in international markets<sup>14</sup>.

The methodological basis of this study includes systematic analysis of theoretical approaches, comparative analysis, statistical analysis, and economic generalization. The systematic approach was used to examine the competitiveness of agricultural products as a complex economic category influenced by production, technological, institutional, logistical, and market-related factors.

The comparative method was applied to analyze the views of foreign and domestic scholars on competitiveness, comparative advantage, innovation, and export efficiency. Statistical analysis was used to assess recent trends in Uzbekistan's agricultural exports, including export volume, export geography, commodity structure, and major destination markets. Economic generalization made it possible to formulate scientific and practical conclusions regarding the main directions for enhancing the competitiveness of agricultural products in global markets.

The analysis of the aforementioned scientific views and practical results shows that enhancing the competitiveness of agricultural products in global markets is directly related to product quality, processing level, logistics infrastructure, compliance with international standards, innovation capacity, efficient resource utilization, and the expansion of export markets.

In the author's view, the competitiveness of agricultural products should be understood not as a static indicator but as a dynamic process requiring continuous technological modernization, institutional support, market diversification, and integration into global value chains.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study, the following scientific and methodological approaches were used to examine the theoretical and economic foundations for enhancing the competitiveness of agricultural products in global markets and to identify factors contributing to the development of export potential.

Analytical and methodological approach — factors shaping competitiveness were analyzed through the study of scientific literature, reports of international organizations, economic theories, and research materials related to the competitiveness of agricultural products.

Comparative and benchmarking analysis method — the export indicators of Uzbekistan's agricultural products were compared with the experience of developed and developing countries, and the competitive advantages of products in international markets, as well as existing challenges, were identified.

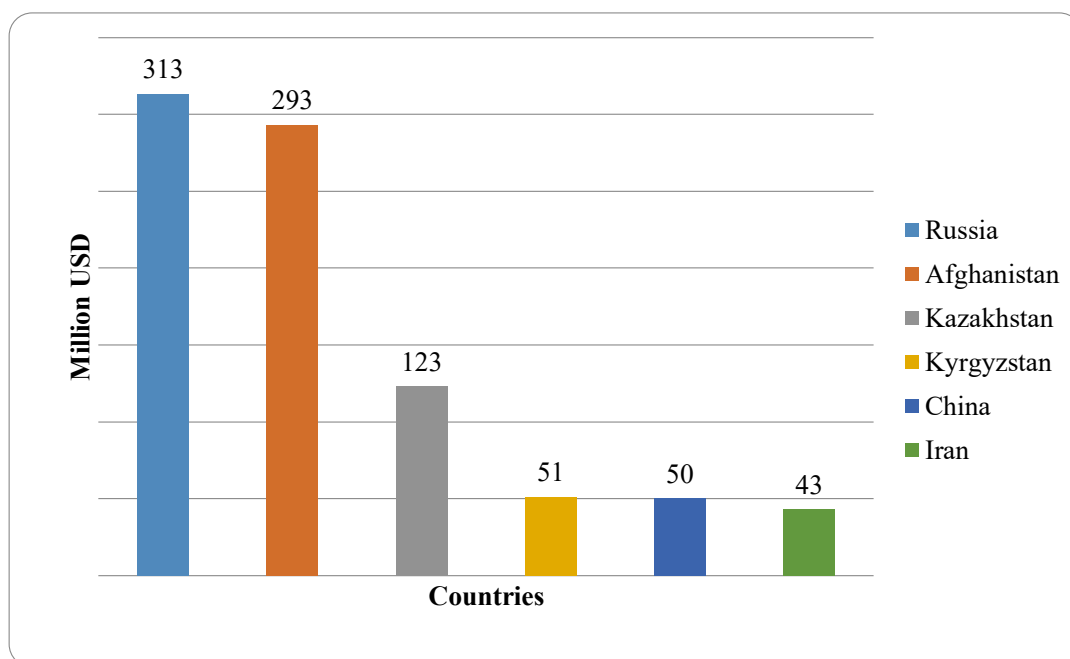
Statistical analysis method — available statistical data on exports of fruit, vegetable, and food products, export volumes, export geography, and indicators of major export products were analyzed, and their dynamics were evaluated.

Economic analysis method — economic factors affecting the competitiveness of agricultural products, including product quality, production costs, logistics expenses, processing level, and the impact of export infrastructure, were examined.

Systematic approach method — production, processing, logistics, certification, and export processes that ensure the competitiveness of agricultural products in global markets were considered as a single integrated system, and their interrelationships were evaluated.

Based on these methods, the theoretical and economic aspects of enhancing the competitiveness of agricultural products in global markets were studied, and scientific and practical conclusions and recommendations were developed to further strengthen the country's export potential (Figure 1).

14 National Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan. (2026). Foreign trade statistics of fruit and vegetable products. Tashkent: Statistics Agency.



**Figure 1. Export Volume of Fruit, Vegetable, and Food Products by Uzbekistan's Main Export Markets (January–May 2026, million USD)**

As shown in the figure, during January–May 2026, Russia and Afghanistan remained the leading destinations for Uzbekistan's exports of fruit, vegetables, and food products. Exports to these countries amounted to USD 313 million and USD 293 million, respectively. Kazakhstan (USD 123 million), Kyrgyzstan (USD 51 million), China (USD 50 million), and Iran (USD 43 million) also ranked among the country's major export markets.

These indicators demonstrate the growing competitiveness of Uzbekistan's agricultural products in international markets, the continued expansion of export geography, and the steady increase in external demand for domestically produced agricultural goods. Overall, the results indicate the positive impact of ongoing measures aimed at strengthening export potential, diversifying foreign markets, and increasing the supply of agricultural products that comply with international quality and safety standards.

## ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

During the study, the theoretical and economic foundations for enhancing the competitiveness of agricultural products in global markets were examined, and the main factors influencing this process were analyzed. The analysis showed that the competitiveness of products in international markets directly depends on their quality, production costs, logistics expenses, level of processing, compliance with international standards, and the degree of development of export infrastructure.

According to the data analyzed, the reforms implemented in Uzbekistan to promote agricultural exports and enter new markets are yielding positive results. In particular, during January–May 2026, exports of fruit, vegetable, and food products amounted to USD 1.075 billion, reaching 108% of the forecast indicator. This ensured a 13% increase compared to the corresponding period of the previous year. Export geography expanded to 81 countries, including entry into new markets such as Senegal, Panama, New Zealand, Ghana, and Ireland.

The analysis also revealed significant changes in the export structure. In particular, wheat flour (USD 174 million), beans (USD 114 million), non-alcoholic beverages (USD 62 million), cabbage (USD 55 million), dried grapes (USD 52 million), and cherries (USD 42 million) ranked among the leading export products. The growing external demand for these products contributes to strengthening the position of domestic producers in international markets.

In addition, Russia, Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, China, and Kyrgyzstan have emerged as the main export markets. Export volumes to Russia amounted to USD 313 million, while exports to Afghanistan reached USD 293 million. These indicators confirm the strong demand for Uzbekistan's agricultural products in regional and international markets.

The results of the study indicate that further enhancing the competitiveness of agricultural products in global markets requires expanding deep processing capacities, improving logistics infrastructure, introducing international certification systems, and diversifying export destinations. At the same time, increasing the share of high-value-added finished products and widely adopting innovative technologies will further strengthen the competitive advantages of national products in global markets.

The results of the study show that export support policies, production efficiency, and the development of market infrastructure play an important role in enhancing the competitiveness of agricultural products in global markets. The findings confirm the factors emphasized in M. Porter's theory of competitive advantage, including the efficient use of production resources, the creation of domestic and external demand, and the role of innovation.

The analysis demonstrated that the growth of agricultural exports in Uzbekistan is associated not only with increased production volumes but also with the simplification of export procedures, improvement of the phytosanitary control system, and entry into new markets. In particular, the expansion of export geography to 81 countries and successful penetration into new markets indicate that national products are becoming increasingly competitive in international markets. This situation strengthens the position of domestic producers in foreign markets and creates opportunities for diversifying export risks.

At the same time, several challenges were identified during the study. In particular, the shortage of working capital among exporting enterprises, high logistics costs, rising energy prices, and intense competition in certain foreign markets complicate efforts to maintain price and quality advantages. In particular, the increase in production costs at processing enterprises negatively affects product cost levels and intensifies competition in international markets.

The analysis of global food market trends also revealed new opportunities for Uzbekistan. The growing demand for food products in Asian countries, declining agricultural production volumes in some states, and changes in international trade flows create opportunities for Uzbek exporters to enter and expand their presence in promising markets. From this perspective, directing export policy toward high-income markets, certifying products according to international standards, and developing modern logistics systems remain important tasks.

Overall, the study results demonstrate that a favorable institutional environment created by the state, export support mechanisms, deep processing of products, and the introduction of innovative technologies are decisive factors in increasing the competitiveness of agricultural products in global markets. Future measures in these areas will further strengthen the position of national agricultural products in international markets.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study found that increasing the competitiveness of agricultural products in global markets is an important factor in the country's economic development. The findings revealed that the competitiveness of products in international markets directly depends on their quality, production costs, level of processing, logistics infrastructure, compliance with international standards, and state support mechanisms for exports.

The analysis confirmed that the reforms being implemented in Uzbekistan to develop agricultural exports are yielding positive results. In particular, the increase in exports of fruit, vegetable, and food products to USD 1.075 billion during January–May 2026, the expansion of export geography to 81 countries, and entry into new markets indicate the growing competitiveness of national products in international markets. Although Russia, Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, China, and Kyrgyzstan continue to account for a large share of export markets, entry into new and promising markets is important for ensuring export diversification.

The study identified the need to expand deep-processing capacities, reduce logistics costs, introduce international certification systems, and widely implement innovative technologies in production in order to strengthen the competitive advantages of agricultural products. Furthermore, financial support for exporting enterprises, the development of new export markets, and an increase in the share of high-value-added products will further enhance the competitiveness of national products in global markets.

In general, enhancing the competitiveness of agricultural products in global markets requires the comprehensive development of production, processing, logistics, and marketing systems. The continued implementation of reforms in this direction will further increase Uzbekistan's export potential, strengthen its position in international markets, and ensure the sustainable development of the agricultural sector.

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**Proofreader:** Xondamir Ismoilov  
**Layout and Designer:** Hasan Maqsudov

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**2026. № 6**

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