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INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC ELECTRONIC JOURNAL

WAYS TO DEVELOP FRUIT PROCESSING ENTERPRISES BASED ON THE CLUSTER SYSTEM

Yusufova Laylo G'ayrat qizi
Assistant Lecturer, Department of Accounting and Marketing,
Tashkent Institute of Textile and Light Industry

Annotation. This article examines ways to develop fruit processing enterprises based on the cluster system. It analyzes the scientific and practical experience of European countries, recent research on cluster system development, modern cluster-based strategies for fruit processing enterprises, the European Union's development targets through 2030, new types of packaging materials used in European countries, and the European Union's largest research and innovation programme for 2021–2027. Based on the findings, the study proposes scientifically grounded practical recommendations aimed at addressing existing challenges and improving the development of fruit processing enterprises in the country.

Keywords: cluster system, cluster strategy, fruit processing, European experience, scientific research, European Union Programme 2021–2027, innovative packaging materials, cluster system development.

Аннотация. В данной статье рассматриваются пути развития предприятий по переработке фруктов на основе кластерной системы. Проанализированы научно-практический опыт европейских стран, современные научные исследования в области развития кластерной системы, современные кластерные стратегии развития предприятий по переработке фруктов, целевые показатели развития Европейского союза до 2030 года, новые виды упаковочных материалов, применяемых в европейских странах, а также крупнейшая научно-исследовательская и инновационная программа Европейского союза (ЕС) на 2021–2027 годы. На основе проведённого анализа разработаны научно обоснованные практические предложения и рекомендации, направленные на устранение существующих проблем и совершенствование деятельности предприятий по переработке фруктов в нашей стране.

Ключевые слова: кластерная система, кластерная стратегия, переработка фруктов, европейский опыт, научные исследования, программа ЕС на 2021–2027 годы, современные упаковочные материалы, развитие кластерной системы.

INTRODUCTION

The development of fruit processing enterprises has been rapidly advancing worldwide, and international practice demonstrates steady progress in this sector from year to year. In global experience, the cluster system occupies a prominent position and is recognized as one of the most effective mechanisms for promoting the development of various sectors of the economy. Currently, numerous modern approaches and innovative solutions are being widely implemented within the framework of the cluster system.

As a result, fruit processing enterprises have achieved significant improvements in innovation capacity, the adoption of international best practices, economic efficiency, and inter-enterprise cooperation. Moreover, the cluster approach contributes to increasing production and processing volumes, expanding product assortments in international markets, diversifying product types, and improving the financial performance of enterprises. Therefore, the efficient and rational use of the cluster system creates new opportunities for the sustainable development and enhanced competitiveness of fruit processing enterprises.

The widespread adoption of modern and innovative development approaches used in international practice can significantly contribute to the growth and competitiveness of fruit processing enterprises in Uzbekistan. At present, studying advanced practices in fruit processing enterprises, identifying new innovative development pathways, analyzing economic efficiency indicators, and implementing modern solutions in domestic fruit processing enterprises are among the most pressing issues to be addressed in this sector.

European countries are considered among the global leaders in the development of fruit processing enterprises based on the cluster system. This is largely due to the fact that the cluster model has become a highly developed mechanism extensively integrated into both the agricultural and industrial sectors. In many European countries, cluster-based cooperation plays a crucial role in organizing and managing production processes, as it provides substantial economic benefits and promotes efficient resource utilization.

As a result, these countries have accumulated significant experience in the effective implementation of cluster systems. Therefore, studying the experience of European countries is essential for enhancing the development of fruit processing enterprises in Uzbekistan. The adaptation and implementation of these innovative practices can contribute to solving existing economic challenges faced by domestic fruit processing enterprises, improving their operational efficiency, and strengthening their competitiveness in both domestic and international markets. For this reason, the development of fruit processing enterprises through a cluster-based approach remains highly relevant and significant in the current economic environment.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A number of scientific studies on cluster development and the fruit processing industry have been conducted by leading foreign economists, including John Stuart Mill, Alfred Marshall, Joseph Schumpeter, Michael Porter, Stuart Rosenfeld, as well as Y. Liu, X. Wang, E. Julius, T.L. Trojer, L.P. Okidi, Z.Y. Naku, I.B. Suryaningrat, P. Dixit, R. Ravichandran, W. Amilia, Y. Wibowo, A.S. Rusdianto, D.R. Karismasari, K. Otsuka, M. Ali, A. Singh, T. Pandey, and J. Oakeshott [1].

The scientific works of these scholars primarily focus on the formation and theoretical foundations of the cluster system, the development of clusters in the food industry, the advancement of agro-industrial and fruit processing clusters, and the improvement of fruit processing industries. In addition, their studies extensively examine issues such as enhancing food processing capacities, reducing post-harvest losses in farming systems, implementing strategies for agro-cluster development, and establishing theoretical and methodological foundations for horticultural supply chains and sustainable smallholder clusters engaged in fruit processing. These studies have made a significant contribution to understanding the role of cluster-based development in improving the efficiency, competitiveness, and sustainability of fruit processing enterprises. Furthermore, they provide an important theoretical and methodological basis for adapting international best practices to national conditions and developing effective cluster models in the fruit processing sector.

Among scholars from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), significant scientific research has been carried out by Pyotr V. Stroev, O.V. Pivovarova, K. Barmuta, B. Matjonov, R. Shichiyakh, O. Dymchenko, G.V. Astratova, O.A. Rushchitskaya, Ch.N. Onwusiribe, A.M. Izmaylov, S. Ugrimova, T. Tuhkanen, N. Andreeva, M. Kabanenko, A. Tkacheva, S. Saginova, M. Karimbergenova, T. Taipov, G. Saparova, I.M. Kuksa, G.Ya. Levkiv, N.O. Telichko, O.G. Charykova, E.V. Salnikova, Alexander V. Chayanov, I.N. Buzdalov, T. Buzina, A.I. Allakhverdiyev, N.V. Ermalinskaya, and E.A. Kozhevnikov [2].

The studies conducted by these researchers focus on a wide range of issues related to the agricultural sector and cluster development. In particular, they examine the current state, challenges, and prospects of cluster initiatives in agriculture; effective mechanisms for agro-cluster development; agro-industrial systems in foreign countries; agro-marketing clusters within industrial complexes; problems and prospects of cluster development; theoretical and practical aspects of the agricultural sector; modeling innovative cluster-based development of the agro-industrial complex under globalization and digitalization; cooperation in fruit and vegetable production; and the development of national fruit and berry markets.

In Uzbekistan, a number of economists, including B. Salimov, M. Yusupov, Ch. Murodov, Sh. Hasanov, I. G‘aniyev, T.T. Jo‘rayev, M.E. Hamidov, X. Urdushev, S. Eshankulov, J. Abdushukurov, R. Asamov, R.X. Ergashev, R.M. Husanov, Q.A. Choriyev, A.S. Xo‘jayev, S.A. Rakhmatullayev, E.X. Botirov, I.I. Tuksanov, O.Kh. Khamidov, A.H. Berdiyev, and Q.J. Mirzayev [3], have conducted extensive research on pressing issues related to the agricultural and fruit-growing sectors.

Their studies address export-oriented fruit and vegetable clusters, optimization of horticulture, the establishment of sustainable agriculture in Uzbekistan, cooperation in the fruit and vegetable sector and

ways to improve its efficiency, the development of fruit clusters in Uzbekistan, scientific and practical foundations of farm management, the involvement of farmers and dehqan farms in cooperative processes, the characteristics of innovative fruit and vegetable clusters, innovative marketing activities in the agro-industrial sector, key priorities for the development of the fruit and vegetable industry, and important features of service development based on clustering.

However, despite the considerable scientific contributions made in these areas, the issue of developing fruit processing enterprises based on the cluster system has not been comprehensively investigated. In particular, insufficient attention has been paid to the theoretical foundations, organizational mechanisms, and practical approaches for improving the activities of fruit processing enterprises through cluster-based development. Therefore, this study aims to fill this research gap by comprehensively examining ways to develop fruit processing enterprises based on the cluster system. The relevance of this topic, along with its theoretical and practical significance, serves as the main rationale for selecting this research area and highlights its importance in the context of modern economic development.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This article extensively applies such methods as logical reasoning, a systematic approach, statistical analysis, observation, and scientific generalization. Based on existing methodological approaches, the study relies on international experience in the fruit processing industry, statistical data, and scientific research aimed at the development of this sector.

The research findings are developed through a comprehensive review and analysis of relevant scientific literature and empirical data related to fruit processing enterprises. Special attention is paid to studying global best practices, identifying key development trends, and evaluating statistical indicators that reflect the performance and efficiency of the industry.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Currently, there are a number of modern approaches to developing fruit processing enterprises based on the cluster system worldwide. The study and broad implementation of these practices have become a requirement of the modern era. This is because the adoption of scientific innovations and advanced solutions in the sector contributes to strengthening the economic stability of fruit processing enterprises in Uzbekistan. According to global experience in the development of cluster systems, European countries occupy a leading position in this field.

In European countries, the cluster system is currently one of the fastest-growing and most effectively implemented development models. The wide opportunities and innovative achievements of cluster-based systems make a significant contribution to the global advancement of fruit processing enterprises in Europe. Due to the rapid development of cluster systems, it is expected that, within the next five years, many industrial practices in European countries will further evolve based on the following modern approaches:

agricultural practices will be transformed to reduce carbon emissions, including the rational use of fertilizers and water, as well as the wider implementation of integrated pest management systems;

the use of renewable energy sources in processing enterprises will increase, including solar, wind, and bioenergy;

circular economy practices will become more widespread in processing industries. For example, by-products such as pits, shells, and husks may be used for boiler heating during drying processes. In addition, surplus fruit materials, such as peels, can be used to produce value-added products, including essential oils, cosmetics, and health-related ingredients.

The implementation of these modern development approaches indicates that, over the next five years, a high level of economic efficiency can be achieved through the effective use of cluster systems. To address climate change challenges, the European Union has adopted a formal policy aimed at becoming the world's first climate-neutral continent by 2050 under the European Green Deal. For the export of processed fruits, vegetables, and dried nuts to the EU market, several key regulatory frameworks are particularly important, including the Farm to Fork Strategy, the Biodiversity Strategy, and circular economy regulations, which serve as the main compliance requirements (Figure 1).

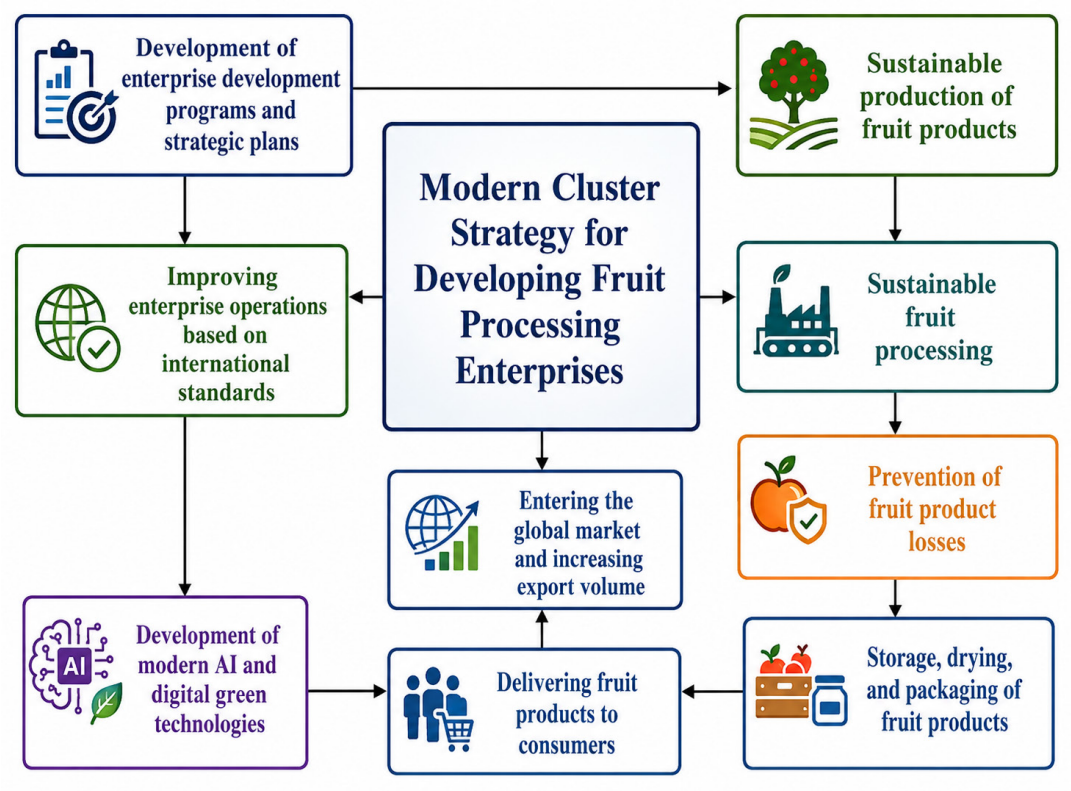

Figure 1. "Modern cluster strategy for the development of fruit processing enterprises"[1]

Figure 1 presents a modern cluster strategy for the development of fruit processing enterprises, proposed as a scientific innovation. The figure scientifically substantiates the organizational and economic opportunities of a modern strategy based on the cluster system in the development of fruit processing enterprises. The strategy presented in Figure 1 is considered new, as this interpretation of a cluster-based development strategy has not yet been widely reflected in practical applications.

Based on the conducted research, this strategy may be regarded as an innovative approach aimed at improving the activities of fruit processing enterprises. It demonstrates the modern capabilities of the cluster system and supports the practical implementation of artificial intelligence, digital technologies, and green technologies. From an economic perspective, the strategy creates conditions for sustainable fruit production, promotes the development of a stable fruit processing system, reduces fruit losses, and introduces modern approaches to the storage, drying, and packaging of fruit products.

As a result, an improved system for delivering fruit products to consumers is formed. This, in turn, creates opportunities for entering global markets and increasing export volumes. Therefore, the implementation of this strategy in fruit processing enterprises contributes to their organizational and economic development.

The practical application of this scientific innovation in fruit processing enterprises in Uzbekistan has created new strategic management opportunities based on a modern cluster system. As a result, production and processing capacity increased by 3%. This growth was achieved through the introduction of the proposed strategy, which improved production and processing systems in enterprises and strengthened their organizational and economic capacities through new transformations.

The implementation of this strategy demonstrates that it is one of the modern approaches to developing fruit processing enterprises based on the cluster system. This is because the opportunities provided by the new strategy contribute to strengthening cluster-based development mechanisms within enterprises. According to the experience of European countries, several modern approaches to developing fruit processing enterprises based on cluster systems have been successfully applied and have produced significant results.

First, the development of the cluster system in fruit processing enterprises creates new opportunities for enterprise growth. According to the experience of European countries, cluster-based development has contributed to the expansion of organic food consumption and the transition of at least 25% of agricultural

1 Developed based on scientific research conducted by the author

land in the European Union to organic farming. This is considered one of the modern advantages of the cluster system. Organic farming refers to an agricultural system that limits or prohibits the use of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, genetically modified organisms (GMOs), and other synthetic inputs in crop production. The development of this practice contributes to the use of natural methods in fruit cultivation and ensures the production of environmentally friendly and high-quality fruit products. According to the European Union's Organic Action Plan, the expansion of this farming system is expected to continue until 2030.

Second, one of the modern approaches to developing fruit processing enterprises based on the cluster system is the effective use of cluster mechanisms to reduce pesticide application. As a result, the use of chemical or biological substances applied in agriculture to protect crops from pests, diseases, and weeds is reduced. The main objective of this approach is to support the production and processing of natural products. Reducing the use of such substances in agriculture also contributes to the development of environmentally friendly processing practices in enterprises.

Third, another modern approach to developing fruit processing enterprises based on the cluster system is the improvement of the supply chain by utilizing cluster opportunities. This contributes to the creation of a continuously operating and efficiently coordinated supply chain within enterprises.

Fourth, the development of the cluster system also contributes to improving fruit packaging materials and reducing packaging waste. As a result, new types of fruit packaging are introduced, and environmentally friendly, low-waste packaging materials are developed.

The four modern approaches discussed above have broad development potential and have been adopted as key strategic directions in European countries up to 2030. The implementation of these opportunities in enterprises in Uzbekistan can contribute to the development of fruit processing enterprises based on the cluster system and support the growth of their economic potential by 2030. In European countries, target indicators related to the reduction of chemical pesticide use and related risks by 2030 have been developed within the framework of EU trends. These indicators are presented in Figure 2.

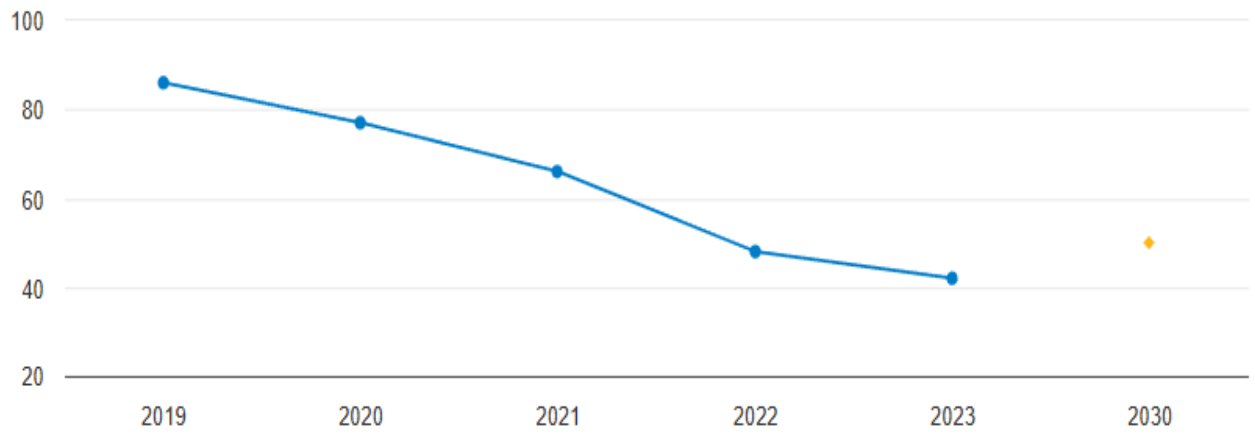

Figure 2. Indicators of European Union trends on the use and risk of chemical pesticides up to 2030[2]

Figure 2 illustrates European Union trend indicators related to the use and risks of chemical pesticides up to 2030. The figure shows that new reforms aimed at reducing these indicators are being implemented, resulting in a gradual and continuous decline in their levels. The main objective of these measures is to reduce the use of chemical agents and increase their replacement with non-chemical alternatives through the development of the cluster system.

This approach is also aimed at promoting the use of natural inputs, accelerating green economy practices at the global level, and ensuring sustainable agricultural development. In addition, in European countries, sustainable solutions are being developed and implemented in practice in the processed fruit, vegetable, and nut sector based on the development of cluster systems up to 2030.

Table 1 presents the names of new types of materials used in fruit product packaging (Table 1).

2 European Commission, July 2025

Table 1
"Types of new materials used in fruit product packaging in European countries" [3]

No.	Names of new materials
1	Cardboard materials
2	Steel materials
3	Aluminum materials
4	Glass materials
5	Bioplastic materials

Currently, the new types of materials presented in Table 1 are widely used in fruit product packaging in European countries. The table identifies five types of packaging materials, among which bioplastic is considered one of the most promising and environmentally friendly options. Bioplastic is produced from plant-based sources and is regarded as safe for consumer use. Fruit products packaged in bioplastic containers can better preserve their quality and may be stored for a longer period of time. Other types of packaging materials are also widely used depending on the type of fruit product and its processing characteristics. For example, cardboard-based materials are mainly used for juice packaging.

These five types of packaging materials contribute to maintaining the quality of processed fruit products. By 2030, the share of bioplastic materials in fruit product packaging is expected to increase significantly. The main reason for this is that bioplastic materials are made from plant-based sources, are environmentally safe, and do not pose risks to consumer health. Fruit products packaged in bioplastic containers retain their quality for a longer period, which significantly extends their shelf life. At the same time, negative environmental impacts are reduced, and a sustainable packaging system consistent with the principles of the green economy is formed.

Another important direction for the development of the cluster system in European countries is the European Union's largest research and innovation programme for 2021–2027. This programme provides grants for science, technology, and innovation projects in European countries and partner organizations. It is recognized as the European framework for new scientific and innovation prospects. Its structure includes Cluster 6, which covers food, bioeconomy, natural resources, agriculture, and the environment.

In general, Cluster 6 includes research activities in these areas, and the purpose of the programme is to expand knowledge, strengthen capacities, and develop innovative solutions in the relevant sectors. The main objective is to ensure the transition to a sustainable circular economy, promote the efficient use of natural resources, and strengthen food security. The programme is also aimed at reducing environmental degradation, stopping and reversing biodiversity loss in terrestrial, inland water, and marine ecosystems, and improving natural resource management through transformative changes in urban and rural economies and societies.

As a result, the programme contributes to ensuring food security for all within planetary boundaries through knowledge, innovation, and digitalization in agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture, and food systems. It also supports and accelerates the transition to a low-carbon, resource-efficient circular economy and sustainable bioeconomy, including forestry. Based on the modern opportunities provided by this programme, Cluster 6 research is actively developing in European countries, and new practical solutions are being introduced to address challenges in these six major areas.

In Uzbekistan, the wider implementation of similar research aimed at developing cluster systems in fruit processing enterprises can create new opportunities. At present, the development of fruit processing enterprises based on the cluster system, as well as the improvement of this system through the development and broad implementation of modern solutions, is one of the urgent issues requiring practical attention.

In addressing these issues, the broad application of international innovative experience, scientific research reviewed above, and the scientific innovations developed by the author may be considered one of the modern innovative approaches aimed at developing the cluster system in fruit processing enterprises in Uzbekistan.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, the development of a cluster system in fruit processing enterprises creates new opportunities for enterprises, facilitates access to international markets, and contributes to the expansion of international cooperation. It also supports the production of goods that meet international standards, the adoption of global best practices, the resolution of economic challenges faced by enterprises, and the improvement of economic

3 https://www.cbi.eu/market-information/processed-fruit-vegetables-edible-nuts/trends ma'lumotlari asosida muallif tomonidan ishlab chiqilgan.

efficiency. Furthermore, the cluster-based approach promotes the development of the green economy and green technologies.

In addition, the development of fruit processing enterprises based on the cluster system creates a foundation for introducing modern scientific research in cluster development, advancing digital and artificial intelligence technologies, adopting new practices in the fruit processing sector, and widely implementing modern management approaches in this field.

As discussed above, several modern approaches to the development of fruit processing enterprises based on cluster systems in European countries have been reviewed. These approaches contribute to addressing existing problems and shortcomings in the sector. The effective use of such experience in Uzbekistan will create new opportunities for improving the activities of fruit processing enterprises.

As a practical recommendation, the newly developed cluster strategy may be considered one of the modern approaches aimed at developing the sector. The effective use of the potential of this strategy will contribute to increasing the economic capacity, competitiveness, and sustainable development of fruit processing enterprises.

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