

THE GENERAL STATE OF AGRICULTURE IN KARAKALPAKSTAN AND  
PROBLEMS IN THE RICE SECTOR

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**Abstract:** This article analyzes the general state of the agricultural sector in the Republic of Karakalpakstan in the years after World War II and the main problems that arose in the rice (rice) sector. The study highlights the impact of factors such as the post-war economic recovery processes, the shortage of labor resources, the shortage of means of production, and the breakdown of the water management system on the development of the agricultural sector.

**Keywords:** Post-war period, Karakalpakstan, agriculture, agrarian policy, recovery process, labor resources, shortage of means of production, lack of equipment, irrigation system, water management, irrigated areas, water shortage, soil salinity, rice cultivation, rice cultivation.

**Аннотация:** В статье анализируется общее состояние аграрного сектора Республики Каракалпакстан в послевоенные годы и основные проблемы, возникшие в рисоводстве. Раскрывается влияние таких факторов, как процессы послевоенного восстановления экономики, дефицит трудовых ресурсов, дефицит средств производства, а также развал системы водопользования, на развитие аграрного сектора.

**Ключевые слова:** Послевоенный период, Каракалпакстан, сельское хозяйство, аграрная политика, процесс восстановления, трудовые ресурсы, нехватка средств производства, нехватка техники, ирригационная система, водное хозяйство, орошаемые площади, дефицит воды, засоление почв, рисосеяние, рисосеяние.

In the post-war years, Karakalpakstan's agriculture was in a difficult situation. Due to the war, many farmers went to the front and most of them did not return, agricultural machinery was outdated, and the land reclamation condition deteriorated. In addition, the lack of water resources also hindered the development of agriculture.

The state paid great attention to solving these problems. Measures were taken to mechanize agriculture, develop new lands, and improve irrigation and land reclamation systems.

Despite such difficulties, the farmers of Karakalpakstan managed to restore agriculture through their own labor. The volume of cotton, rice, and other crops increased year after year. This served to restore the republic's economy and improve the food supply of the population. The achievements made in the agriculture of Karakalpakstan in the post-war period laid the foundation for further development of the industry in subsequent years.

The law "On the Five-Year Plan for the Restoration and Development of the National Economy of the USSR in 1946-1950", adopted on March 18, 1946, emphasized the need to significantly increase the cultivation of grain crops, especially wheat, rice and legumes, in order to improve the food supply of the population and create the necessary grain reserves in the country. In particular, it was determined that by the end of the year it was necessary to increase the annual grain harvest to 127 million tons, achieving an average yield of 12 centners per hectare of land.

Despite the importance of the tasks set out in the law, achieving them was not easy. Post-war agriculture was in a very difficult situation. Many agricultural machinery was out of order, there was a shortage of labor, and land productivity had decreased. A number of measures were taken



to increase grain production. In particular, new lands were developed, the reclamation of existing lands was improved, and the use of mineral fertilizers was expanded.

Also, great attention was paid to updating the fleet of agricultural machinery and increasing the level of mechanization. However, all these measures did not give the expected results. In many cases, plans were not implemented. The reasons for this were various: unfavorable weather conditions, disruptions in the supply of equipment, a shortage of qualified personnel, etc.

Among irrigated agricultural crops, rice cultivation has also developed in our country. However, due to the long period of inattention to rice cultivation in the USSR, the area under rice cultivation and the volume of its production have sharply decreased. In particular, from 1913 to 1960, the area under rice cultivation in the USSR decreased from 270,000 hectares to 95,300 hectares, that is, by 2.8 times, and its production decreased by 1.7 times. As a result of the systematic reduction of rice cultivation areas, the need arose to import rice from other countries.

This was noted by D. Palvanov also confirms, "The production of rice raw materials in the country has increased by 4.6 times over the past three to five years, and the level of supply of the population with this product has increased significantly. Despite this, the needs of the USSR population are still not fully satisfied at the expense of its own production, and part of the rice consumed is imported from abroad."

In the 50 years after 1917, and more precisely in 1967, they began to use a very simple but very effective method to describe the achievements of socialism. They began to use the phrase "relative to 1913." Although everything in the country has always been excellent with lies and rapid deception, they only began to think about statistics in the late 60s. It is worth noting that they achieved considerable success in this regard<sup>1</sup>.

This is, in fact, a manipulation, in which they tried to hide the shortcomings of their development and pretend to be successful. As an example, we can cite the statistical data on rice cultivation, given by G. P. Kozlov.

The dynamics of the development of rice cultivation in the USSR from 1913 to 1965<sup>2</sup>.

Indicators	years							
	1913	1940	1953	1958	1960	1962	1964	1965
<b>Rice area, thousand hectares</b>	270,0	177, 6	137,1	106,2	95,3	120,5	188,0	213,0
<b>Yield, centners/hectare</b>	11,9	17,3	16,1	20,1	19,7	22,6	23,4	26,3
<b>Gross yield, thousand tons</b>	322,5	303,1	221,4	215,9	186,5	272,3	410,0	570,0

If we analyze the above statistics, the dynamics of the development of rice cultivation in the USSR from 1913 to 1965 reflects its own changes and trends. During this period, changes in cultivated areas, increased yields, and improved agricultural technology played an important role in the development of rice cultivation.

Although these figures were much lower compared to other developed countries. The situation in the Karakalpak ASSR was even more deplorable. In particular, in order to more fully satisfy the

<sup>1</sup> Электрон ресурс: <https://dzen.ru/a/ZTeb6iqkbVcBAiZe> Каралган вақти: 20.08.2025. 21:31

<sup>2</sup> Козлов Г.П. Внутрихозяйственное землеустройство рисоводческих совхозов Каракалпакской АССР. Автореф. дисс. на соискание уч. степени кандид. экономических наук. Ташкент, 1968. – 6 с.



needs of the population of cotton-growing regions for rice, rice purchased from foreign countries began to be imported to these areas. However, rice imports could not significantly affect prices on the collective farm market, since imported rice did not produce well enough to make pilaf, the traditional dish of the Uzbek and Karakalpak peoples. The price of rice groats from local rice varieties continued to rise on the market<sup>3</sup>.

In the Karakalpakstan ASSR, irrigation construction work was carried out in conjunction with the continuous expansion of irrigated land, especially cotton fields. In particular, in 1945, there were a total of 147 thousand hectares of irrigated land, of which 57 thousand hectares were allocated for cotton, 20.3 thousand hectares for alfalfa, 7.7 thousand hectares for rice and 62 thousand hectares for other crops. By 1950, the area of irrigated land had reached 150.8 thousand hectares. Of this, cotton accounted for 76 thousand hectares, alfalfa for 31.8 thousand hectares, rice for 7.2 thousand hectares and other crops for 35.8 thousand hectares<sup>4</sup>. If we analyze these statistics, we see that while other cultivated areas have expanded, rice cultivation has, on the contrary, decreased. Several factors have caused the reduction in rice cultivation areas. The policy of cotton monopolization has had a significant impact on the economic development of the republic. The increase in plans for cotton cultivation from the center forced local authorities to reduce the areas under other crops, including rice. The state of irrigation systems also affected rice yields. Outdated, inefficient irrigation facilities did not allow for water conservation, which in turn made it difficult to grow water-intensive crops such as rice. In conditions of water scarcity, priority was given to cotton. Insufficient agrotechnical measures also led to a decrease in rice yields. Low use of fertilizers, poor pest control, and other factors affected both the quality and quantity of rice.

The Amu Darya Delta has long been a nesting ground for Asian locusts, and the natural conditions of the delta are favorable for their mass reproduction. The large accumulation of locusts in the delta, as a result of the corresponding hydrogeological conditions (floods, droughts), leads to the flight of locust swarms and their settlement not only within the territory of the autonomous republic, but also far beyond its borders. This leads to the destruction of large areas of arable land and natural pastures, causing serious damage to the national economy.

As early as 1946, the area of high-density damage by locusts expanded to 430 thousand hectares. At the end of 1946, when the locusts flew beyond the territory of the autonomous republic, the observation and extermination post was transformed into the Amu Darya Expedition to Combat Asian Locusts, which had 12 production sites, 339 permanent and 176 seasonal employees.

By 1949, the area of damage had been reduced to 6,000 hectares. After 1949, funding was cut and excavation plans were significantly reduced in relation to the actual area damaged, which led to a sharp increase in the area of damage, which by the fall of 1952 amounted to 377.6 thousand hectares.

The mistakes made in the organization of the locust control service in 1942-1951, when control and control were weakened, were repeated in the reorganization of the agricultural pest control service in 1960, when the expedition to combat Asian locusts was combined with the mass agricultural pest control detachment. During the reorganization, the staff of the Asian locust control service was reduced, and its provision with material and technical means was minimized<sup>5</sup>. In Karakalpakstan, the area of agricultural crops other than cotton, especially their productivity, was very low. Because the condition of irrigation networks had deteriorated even more than before the war. But land reclamation work had not yet been taken up, in 1946 there were only 4 submersible pumps in Karakalpakstan, which could not even perform 3% of the

<sup>3</sup> Палванов Дж. Рисовый комплекс Каракалпаки. Нукус: «Каракалпакстан», 1977. – 100 с.

<sup>4</sup> Очерки истории Каракалпакской АССР. — Т, 1964. – 305 с.

<sup>5</sup> ҚР МА Р-551 ф., 2-руйхат, 2308 йиғма жилд, 15-16 варақлар.



work of clearing the canal heads from silt. Therefore, this work was almost entirely carried out by the hands of collective farmers - dehkans.

In such conditions, it was difficult to develop agriculture and obtain a bountiful harvest. The monopoly of cotton in Karakalpakstan hindered the development of other crops and reduced the fertility of the land. Animal husbandry in the republic was also underdeveloped, and the lack of water in pastures and the weakness of the feed base led to a decrease in the number of livestock.

Despite this, the people of Karakalpakstan worked tirelessly to develop agriculture and boost the economy. In the difficult post-war years, the people of collective farms and state farms united to develop new lands, restore irrigation and land reclamation facilities, and repair agricultural machinery. For example, in the Kegeyli district, instead of the master plan for the development of wastelands, 7,809 hectares of wastelands were developed, and the wastelands development plan was implemented by 103%<sup>6</sup>.

In particular, great efforts were made to achieve high results in cotton cultivation. Each collective farm and state farm made plans to increase cotton yield and grow high-quality cotton and sought to implement them. Agrotechnical measures such as irrigation, fertilization, and hilling were carried out in cotton fields on time.

In addition, special attention was paid to the development of vegetable and melon crops, horticulture, and viticulture in Karakalpakstan. New gardens and vineyards were established around cities and district centers. Collective farms and state farms tried to provide their population with vegetable and melon products. However, it was not possible to provide the local population with these products in sufficient quantities. For example, at a meeting in the Kungirat district, this situation was clearly visible: If we plant potatoes on 25.5 hectares, melons on 64.4 hectares, and vegetables on 20 hectares, will we be able to provide for the farmers, workers, and employees of our district? Of course, this is impossible, it was emphasized. Thus, thanks to the selfless labor of the people of Karakalpakstan, significant achievements have been made in agriculture. Cotton yields have increased, the area under other crops has expanded, and livestock breeding has begun to develop.

S. Nurzhanov and E. Madreimov in their article noted that the adoption by the government of a number of measures to restore agriculture implied an improvement in the mechanism for using the labor of the rural population, that is, its militarization. For example, the resolution On measures to eliminate violations of the Charter of agricultural artels in collective farms seemed to help strengthen collective farms economically, but on the contrary, it had a significant impact on the material situation of the broad masses of peasants in Karakalpakstan<sup>7</sup>.

In addition, the process of mechanization of agriculture did not produce the desired results. Most of the equipment delivered to the villages was outdated and in poor condition. There was a lack of qualified specialists to repair and maintain it. As a result, most of the equipment remained idle, and farmers remained dependent on manual labor.

According to the law on the restoration of the national economy of the Karakalpakstan ASSR, 100 million soums were allocated for water management. It was planned to reconstruct the lower reaches of the Pakhtaarna, complete the construction of the Lenin Canal, reconstruct the Kizketken, Kuvonishjarma canals, and carry out other irrigation works. However, most of them were not implemented, and the work that was done did not yield significant results. In the post-war years, siltation of the lands of the southern districts continued. In particular, the main Pakhtaarna canal, which supplied water to two districts (Tortkul, Beruniy) and its lower reaches,

<sup>6</sup> ҚР МА Р-616 ф, 1-руйхат, 491-йизма жилд, 4-варақ.

<sup>7</sup> Нуржанов С., Мадреймов Е. Социальные аспекты восстановления сельского хозяйства Каракалпакстана в послевоенный период//гуманитарные научные вестник. 2023. №6. – 17 с.



was in a very poor condition. Therefore, siltation and sedimentation continued, and sometimes 6-7 cubic meters of water flowed instead of the standard 15-20 cubic meters per second.

In order to rectify the situation, the government took a number of measures. In particular, work was started on the reconstruction and cleaning of the Pakhtaarna canal. Projects were also developed to build new irrigation systems and modernize existing ones. However, these measures were not enough, because the roots of the problem were much deeper.

The problems in water management were not only technical, but also organizational and management shortcomings. Issues such as the rational use of water resources, maintenance and maintenance of irrigation systems, and improvement of land reclamation were largely ignored. In addition, the remoteness from the center and the difficulty of communications also hindered the solution of the problems.

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