

UO'K 94 (575.1)

**REORGANIZATION OF THE FERGANA VALLEY FOR THE NEEDS OF
AGRICULTURE IN 1941-1942.****Rasulbek Abdurasulov**

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This article analyzes the reorganization of agriculture in the Fergana Valley during the early years of World War II to adapt to wartime conditions, as well as the challenges faced in fulfilling state production plans. It highlights the extensive involvement of elderly people, women, and children in agricultural labor to compensate for men conscripted to the frontlines, the introduction of new crop varieties, and the economic difficulties encountered in the agricultural sector.

Keywords: Fergana Valley, cotton growing, political departments, collective farm, production, sugar beet, state farm, state plan, grain crops, livestock farming.

On June 22, 1941, the fascist Germany's invasion of the Soviet state posed a number of complex challenges for the country's agriculture. In addition to supplying raw materials to industry and providing food to the population, agriculture was now also required to fully support the front lines. On the eve of the war, in 1940, the total population of the Soviet Union was 194.1 million, of which 131.0 million, or 67.5%, were rural inhabitants. In the structure of agriculture, the socialist sector was dominant: there were 236.9 thousand kolkhozes (collective farms) and 4.2 thousand sovkhozes (state farms), with 18.7 million households organized in the kolkhozes [1, p. 373].

The productivity of the agrarian sector in the national economy was very low, the kolkhoz economy was in crisis, and the food shortages in cities and hardships in rural areas during 1940–1941 clearly demonstrated this. All of these were consequences of the agrarian policies implemented during the 1930s under Stalin's leadership [2, p. 74]. The outbreak of war dealt a further heavy blow to the country's agriculture, severely weakening the USSR's agrarian potential. Prior to the war, 40% of the population lived in areas that were later occupied by the fascist invaders [3, p. 166]. These territories accounted for 38% of total grain production, 84% of sugar beet production, and housed 38% of the country's large cattle population [4, p. 42].

The extreme conditions during the initial period of the war required the mobilization of all available resources through harsh measures. However, this led to weakened or even lost communication between high-level party bodies and grassroots

party organizations, as well as the rapid growth of strong bureaucratic tendencies within the party-state apparatus, threatening to turn authoritarian rule into the dominant principle across society [5, pp. 197–198].

With the onset of the war, coercion, pressure, and the imposition of heavy obligations on peasants intensified, and administrative-command methods became more widespread. All state power was concentrated in the hands of the State Defense Committee (GKO), led by Stalin. The Central Committee of the Communist Party (VKP[b]) effectively became a political branch of the State Defense Committee, and the apparatus of the Politburo took full control of the Soviet government's activities. The loss of the country's southern and western regions to the fascists also led to a sharp decline in the technical support for agricultural production. Before the war, 35% of all combine harvesters, 28% of the tractor fleet, and a significant portion of transportation vehicles were located in those regions. The occupied territories accounted for 30% of the country's total agricultural production capacity [6, p. 369].

Due to the difficulties in evacuating some agricultural equipment, much of it was either dismantled locally or destroyed. A certain number of tractors and vehicles were handed over to the Red Army. By the end of 1941, the agricultural machine-tractor fleet had decreased by 242,000 tractors, 61,000 combine harvesters, and 162,000 automobiles compared to the prewar level. The remaining agricultural production capacity dropped to nearly 60% of the prewar level [7, p. 415]. In the unoccupied parts of the Soviet Union (excluding the territories occupied by the Nazis), plowing and traction machinery in kolkhozes and MTS (Machine and Tractor Stations) decreased by 32%, and the number of vehicles decreased by 89%. There was a significant reduction in the labor force in kolkhozes [8, p. 7].

The occupation of the country's most important agricultural production regions during the initial months of the war further weakened the agricultural sector of the national economy, creating major challenges in supplying the front and the home front with food and raw materials. Under extremely difficult and unfavorable conditions, the country's peasants took on the very heavy responsibility of restructuring agriculture for wartime needs and supplying the army and population with the necessary food and raw materials.

From the first days of the war, such a heavy and complex responsibility fell on the shoulders of the working people of the southern regions of the country, including the republics of Central Asia, particularly Uzbekistan. The essence of militarizing agriculture was that its primary burden shifted to the eastern regions of the country, including Uzbekistan, which became one of the main bases for the production of weapons and food for the front. The fascists had occupied large areas in the western

part of the country that had previously been the main source of agricultural products. Due to 41% of the railway network falling into the hands of the invaders, the transportation of food and agricultural raw materials became severely limited.

Militarizing the agrarian sector of the economy was carried out under very difficult and complicated conditions. From the early months of the war, the material and technical base and human resources in rural areas were drastically reduced. Indeed, most of those subject to conscription were from rural areas; in 1940, 70% of the republic's total population lived in rural areas. The rural population was the largest source of army conscripts, and many kolkhoz chairmen, accountants, agronomists, brigade leaders, drivers, tractor operators, mechanics, ordinary kolkhoz members, and sovkhos workers were mobilized to the war from the first days. Additionally, part of the rural population was mobilized to build defensive structures near the front, to work in coal mining and other sectors of industry. All this led to a significant reduction in the workforce of the republic's kolkhozes and sovkhos, creating a resource shortage in agricultural production [9, p. 40].

The eastern regions of the Soviet state, including the Central Asian republics, were forced to change the established system of collective farming. In Uzbekistan, rural workers created their own food bases, as there was no hope for receiving food supplies from the western provinces. Agricultural sectors that had not existed before the war, such as sugar beet cultivation, were introduced in the republic. Deliveries of grain, livestock products, vegetables, fruits, and other goods to the state significantly increased, and the land allocated to such crops expanded.

The militarization of agriculture was carried out under extremely difficult conditions. The pre-war material and technical base and production capacity of agriculture were drastically reduced. Along with human resources, agricultural machinery such as freight vehicles, tractors, trailers, carts, and other equipment were also requisitioned for front-line needs. MTSs (Machine and Tractor Stations), kolkhozes (collective farms), and sovkhos (state farms) were compelled to transfer their best equipment to support the war effort. Additionally, many horses from kolkhozes and sovkhos were taken for the front, despite the fact that they were the main working animals used in agriculture (for plowing, hauling loads, etc.). In 1941 alone, the Namangan region sent 94 vehicles—GAZ AA-47 and ZIS 5-47 models—as well as 1,420 horses for the needs of the Red Army [10, p. 6].

During the war years, the supply of spare parts and fuel-lubricant materials for agricultural machinery also significantly declined. The shortage of such essential resources, coupled with the conscription of skilled tractor operators and mechanics into the military, caused a notable drop in the efficiency of the available machinery. At the

same time, the level of mechanization in agricultural production steadily decreased year by year. The growing volume of agricultural work could only be accomplished through strict labor discipline and the expansion of production based on horse and manual labor.

By the decision of the State Defense Committee of the USSR dated July 4, 1941, the relevant commissariats were tasked with developing a military-economic plan to ensure national defense. This plan was aimed at the effective utilization of industrial capacities by relocating enterprises from territories potentially subject to occupation by German fascists to the eastern regions of the country [11, p. 278].

From the first days of the war, the government of Uzbekistan, along with all local party and Soviet organizations, began the process of restructuring and militarizing the republic's economy, including its agricultural sector. In December 1941, the 5th Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan, based on the wartime circumstances, adopted a resolution to increase the sown area in the republic by 521,800 hectares, of which 347,200 hectares were irrigated land. The expansion of arable land aimed to boost the production of raw cotton and raise the grain harvest to 15 million centners (compared to 5.5 million centners harvested in 1941). Additionally, it was decided to cultivate sugar beet—a new crop for Uzbekistan's agriculture—on 70,000 hectares and ensure a minimum yield of 250 centners per hectare. The plenum also provided directives to improve productivity in livestock breeding, sericulture (silk production), and other agricultural sectors [12, p. 78].

Following the directive of the USSR State Defense Committee, the Andijan Regional Party Committee and the Regional Executive Committee assigned local agricultural workers the task of delivering 55,923 centners of grain to the state in 1941. Of this amount, 37,464 centners were to be provided by kolkhozes, 10,000 centners by individual kolkhoz members, 538 centners as outstanding debts from kolkhozes, and 3,099 centners from kolkhoz members. Additionally, the region was tasked with delivering 29,855 centners of rice, including 22,312 centners from kolkhozes and 1,000 centners from kolkhoz members [13, p. 167].

In 1941, special attention was paid to the development of vegetable farming—one of the important branches of agriculture in Andijan region. That year, specific measures were implemented to produce 1,200 tons of cabbage, 1,390 tons of tomatoes, 175 tons of cucumbers, and 4,051 tons of melons and watermelons [14, p. 45].

For Fergana region, the task was set to increase the number of horses in agriculture to 29,188 by 1941 and to 31,295 by 1942, as well as to increase the number of camels to 390. Furthermore, plans were made to raise the number of large-horned cattle by 2,795 heads in 1941 [15, p. 14].

At a meeting of party activists held in Namangan region on October 20, 1941, a resolution was adopted to further increase agricultural production in the region. According to the decision, cultivated land in the region was to be expanded by an additional 7,800 hectares, and the cotton procurement plan was to be fulfilled by November 20 [16, p. 39].

On the eve of the war, the regions of the Fergana Valley were considered the primary cotton-producing areas of the republic, where cotton cultivation had become the main branch of agriculture. For example, in Andijan region, 302,298 tons of cotton were produced in 1939, and 311,690 tons in 1940. The target set for 1941 was 310,487 tons. In Fergana region, 230,431 tons were produced in 1939, and 217,761 tons in 1940, with a 1941 target of 232,731 tons. In Namangan region, 178,440 tons of cotton were produced in 1939, and 188,535 tons in 1940, with a 1941 target of 182,762 tons. Across the republic as a whole, 1,399,243 tons of cotton were harvested in 1939, 1,387,847 tons in 1940, and the production obligation for 1941 was set at 1,469,897 tons [17, pp. 1–2].

In 1941, Andijan region had 645 kolkhozes, with 96,774 households (either family-based or individual) as members. The total number of kolkhoz members was 477,779 people, including 108,083 men, 104,199 women, and 26,250 adolescents aged 12 to 16 [18, p. 9]. In the same year, 30,410 hectares were sown with grain crops, 126,476 hectares with cotton, and 1,153 hectares with potatoes. In addition, vegetables were grown on 1,756 hectares and melons on 1,850 hectares. By the end of 1941, the region had harvested 126,427 tons of raw cotton, with an average yield of 23.2 centners per hectare; grain crops yielded an average of 14.0 centners per hectare [19, p. 3].

In Namangan region in 1941, 520 kolkhozes were operating, with 78,518 households or 360,504 people registered as members. Among them were 88,674 men, 77,209 women, and 15,524 children aged 12 to 16 [20, p. 65]. That year, 33,007 hectares were planted with grain, 81,768 hectares with cotton, 711 hectares with potatoes, 1,578 hectares with vegetables, and 1,188 hectares with melons. The average cotton yield in 1941 was 21.1 centners per hectare, and the grain yield was 9.6 centners per hectare. A total of 1,718,289 centners of cotton were harvested in the region [21, p. 66].

In 1941, Fergana region had 1,001 kolkhozes with 110,032 households or 510,410 people as members. Among them were 116,002 men, 110,383 women, and 23,880 children aged 12 to 16. That year, 24,128 hectares were planted with grain crops, 137,113 hectares with cotton, 1,965 hectares with potatoes, 2,410 hectares with vegetables, and 2,540 hectares with melons. The average grain yield was 12.0 centners

per hectare, and the average cotton yield was 16.0 centners per hectare. In 1941, kolkhozes in Fergana region produced 136,963 tons of raw cotton [22, p. 74].

In 1941, cotton yield in kolkhozes amounted to 18.2 centners per hectare in Fergana region, 23.1 centners in Namangan, and 25.7 centners in Andijan. Across the republic, the average cotton yield in kolkhozes was 18.2 centners per hectare [23, p. 10]. In state farms (sovkhozes), the cotton yield in 1941 was 26.4 centners per hectare in Andijan and 26.5 centners in Namangan [24, p. 13].

An administrative-command approach toward agriculture, especially toward kolkhozes and kolkhoz workers, was clearly reflected in the establishment of emergency party bodies in rural areas and political departments in Machine-Tractor Stations (MTSs) and sovkhozes. The decision to establish these political departments was signed by Stalin on November 17, 1941. According to this decision, the main task of the political departments of MTSs and sovkhozes was to intensify political work among MTS and sovkhoz personnel, as well as among kolkhoz workers, and to reorganize discipline and order to ensure timely fulfillment of agricultural work plans. Another responsibility assigned to these departments was to strengthen revolutionary vigilance and uncover hostile actions by former kulaks and other saboteurs [25, p. 202].

As of March 1, 1941, in the then Fergana region (before the formation of Andijan and Namangan regions—R. Abdrasulov), 290,152 hectares of land had been plowed for cotton cultivation, fulfilling only 2.5% of the plan [26, p. 49].

As of May 1, 1941, there were 1,002 kolkhozes in Fergana region. These included: 64 in Oltiariq district, 108 in Bag‘dod district, 113 in Kaganovich district, 99 in Kirov district, 77 in Qo‘qon district, 70 in Quva district, 61 in Kuybishev district, 87 in Marg‘ilon district, 116 in Molotov district, 72 in Toshloq district, 69 in Fergana district, and 66 in Frunze district [27, p. 17].

At the working meeting of the Organizational Committee of the Supreme Soviet of the Uzbek SSR for Andijan region held on April 16, 1942, additional measures were outlined for the development of agriculture in the region in 1942. In particular, the Organizational Committee adopted a resolution on the status of early potato planting in kolkhozes in Andijan. It was noted that early potato planting was unsatisfactory in Andijan, Oltinko‘l, and Lenin districts. As of April 10, 1942, only 300 hectares had been planted with early potatoes, representing just 40% of the planned target. The plan for early vegetable crops covered 265 hectares, or 33% of the goal. The “Yangi Dehqon,” “Kaganovich,” and “8 March” kolkhozes in Andijan district had not fulfilled their early potato planting obligations at all [29, p. 3].

According to a resolution of the Executive Committee and Bureau of the Party Committee of Fergana region dated May 3, 1942, a state plan for the development of

agriculture in the region was established for that year. Specifically, it was planned to cultivate 226,500 hectares of land in kolkhozes, including 14,340 hectares for industrial crops, 38,800 hectares for fodder crops, 8,500 hectares for vegetables and melons, 35,800 hectares for grains, 7,000 hectares for repeated planting, and 2,900 hectares of inter-row planting in orchards and mulberry plantations [30, p. 33].

The state plan for 1942 set the following yield targets: an average of 15.7 centners per hectare for grain, 17.5 centners for cotton, and 281 centners for sugar beet. At the same time, kolkhoz members were tasked with planting potatoes on 600 hectares of their personal plots [31, p. 33].

According to a resolution adopted by the Organizational Committee of the Uzbek SSR Supreme Soviet and the Organizational Bureau of the Central Committee of the Uzbek Communist Party (Bolsheviks) in May 1942 regarding the state plan for agricultural development in 1942, it was decided that in 1943 the total area for autumn sowing in Andijan region would be 7,000 hectares. Of this, 2,000 hectares were to be irrigated land, 1,000 hectares between young trees (particularly mulberry plantations), 2,000 hectares in conditionally irrigated lands, and 2,000 hectares in rain-fed hilly lands [32, p. 74].

At the meeting of party activists of Namangan region held on October 20, 1941, the situation at the front was discussed, and a resolution was adopted to further increase the production of agricultural products. The same resolution stipulated that cultivated land was to be expanded by 7,800 hectares and that the cotton procurement plan was to be fulfilled by November 20 [33, p. 80].

In the first year of the war, the state procurement plan for food products was successfully completed. By the end of July 1941, three times more grain had been delivered in Uzbekistan compared to the same period of 1940. Kolkhoz members of Andijan oblast delivered 9,855.7 tons of grain in a short period.

Increasing the number of horses was crucial both for the front and for the rear, especially for use in agriculture as working animals. Therefore, the Fergana oblast executive committee and the oblast party committee took this matter seriously and developed a plan to increase the number of horses to 29,188 in 1941 and to 31,295 in 1942, and the number of camels to 390.

In 1941, Fergana region delivered 219,104 tons of cotton to the state, as well as 187,746 head of large cattle—including 4,138 head from kolkhozes—fulfilling this part of the plan by 133.9%. The number of sheep reached 181,609, fulfilling the plan by 117.6%, including 94,814 from the kolkhoz sector, which amounted to 131% of the plan. The number of goats reached 44,508, achieving 124.5% of the plan, including 188,894 head delivered from kolkhozes—170.4% of the target [34, p. 82].

Fergana region achieved further success in livestock production in 1942. That year, the number of large livestock reached 56,048 head, compared to the planned 55,000—fulfilling the obligation by 101.2%. The number of sheep and goats reached 37,200 head, exceeding the planned 31,000—achieving 117% of the plan.

On July 16, 1941, the Andijan oblast party committee held a special discussion on livestock issues and adopted a resolution to increase the number of large livestock to 97,476 by the end of the year. This target was exceeded by early 1942. By the fourth quarter of 1941, 11,500 centners of meat had been delivered to the state from the oblast, thereby fully meeting the obligation in this area [35, p. 83].

Thus, the war had a devastating impact on the productive capacities of agriculture in the republic, including the Fergana Valley. From the first year of the war, agricultural workers in Uzbekistan were forced to labor under extremely difficult conditions—facing acute shortages of material, labor, and food resources.

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