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CONTACTS

Phone: **+998 50 737 87 88**

Website: <https://ist-journal.uz>

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REFORMS UNDERTAKEN IN THE REPUBLIC TO INCREASE PRODUCTION CAPACITY AT FOOD INDUSTRY ENTERPRISES

Gulmatov Sunnatillo Nurillayevich

Shahrisabz State Pedagogical Institute

Head of the Registrar's Office, PhD

ORCID:0009-0002-4643-0017

Email: gulmatovsunnatillo7@gmail.com

Abstract. This article examines the economic content and significance of the reforms being implemented to increase the production capacity of food industry enterprises in the Republic of Uzbekistan. During the study, the theoretical foundations of the development of the food industry, the scientific views of foreign and domestic scientists, and the institutional and economic reforms being implemented in the field were analyzed. The results of the analysis showed that attracting investments, modernization of production, introduction of digital technologies, strengthening the integration of agro-industry, and the implementation of international quality standards are of great importance in increasing the production capacity of food industry enterprises. Based on the results of the study, scientifically based proposals and recommendations were developed to increase the competitiveness of food industry enterprises, expand the level of deep processing of products, increase export volumes, and ensure the sustainable development of the industry.

Keywords: food industry, production capacity, economic reforms, industrial modernization, investments, innovations, competitiveness, agro-industrial integration, food safety, agricultural processing, economic efficiency, international standards, agribusiness, cluster system.

INTRODUCTION

In the world economy, the food industry is one of the most important sectors that ensure the quality of life and well-being of the population. This sector performs such tasks as providing the population with high-quality and safe food products, deep processing of agricultural products, creating new jobs, increasing export potential and strengthening the country's food security. Today, the deepening processes of globalization, increased competition in international markets, climate change, growing demand for food products and the need for efficient use of resources make the issue of modernization of the food industry and increasing its production capacity one of the most urgent economic tasks.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), as the population grows every year, the need for food products is also increasing. This sets the task for countries not only to increase the volume of food production, but also to improve their quality, improve product storage and processing technologies, and increase the efficiency of production processes. In this regard, the food industry is considered an important sector that ensures economic growth and serves to raise the standard of living of the population.

In the Republic of Uzbekistan, structural renewal of the economy, modernization of industry and expansion of production of high value-added products have been identified as one of the priorities of state policy. Our country has rich agricultural potential, and millions of tons of fruits and vegetables, melon products, grain, cotton, meat and dairy products are grown annually. Deep processing of these products, production of competitive finished products from them and export to foreign markets are one of the important factors in the development of the national economy.

In recent years, our country has implemented large-scale institutional and economic reforms to develop the food industry. In particular, a number of regulatory and legal documents have been adopted to protect private property rights, support business entities, improve the investment climate, technically and technologically modernize industrial enterprises, and organize innovative production. As a result, the number of food processing enterprises has increased, their production capacities have expanded, and the range of export-oriented products has increased.

In particular, in order to ensure food security in the country, fully satisfy the population's needs for basic food products, and reduce imports, the state provides a number of benefits and preferences to support food

industry enterprises. Tax and customs privileges, improving mechanisms for financing investment projects, encouraging exporting enterprises, and measures to develop production infrastructure are of great importance.

In the modern economic environment, the competitiveness of food industry enterprises is largely determined by their technological level, labor productivity, product quality, innovative activity and management efficiency. Therefore, the introduction of digital technologies, the use of automated management systems, the implementation of international HACCP, ISO 22000 and other quality standards in enterprises remains one of the important tasks. Such measures, along with ensuring product quality and safety, allow reducing production costs, increasing labor productivity and creating a competitive advantage in foreign markets.

At the same time, there are some problems in the activities of food industry enterprises, including underutilization of production capacities, obsolescence of a certain part of technological equipment, high logistics costs, lack of qualified personnel, and relatively low innovative activity. Eliminating these problems is important for further increasing the effectiveness of the reforms being implemented in the sector and increasing production potential.

In our country, within the framework of the Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan for 2022-2026, special attention is paid to the rapid development of industrial sectors, increasing the share of the processing industry, increasing export volumes, and providing the population with quality food products. The practical implementation of these tasks will serve as an important factor in strengthening the production capacity of food industry enterprises, increasing their economic efficiency, and ensuring the sustainable development of the national economy.

Ensuring food security is recognized by the world community as one of the most important socio-economic tasks of the 21st century. In recent years, global economic instability, geopolitical conflicts, disruptions in international logistics chains, climate change, water resource shortages and the consequences of pandemics have had a serious impact on the food supply systems of countries around the world. This has further strengthened the importance of increasing the volume of food production in national economies, improving the level of their processing and ensuring a stable supply of the domestic market. In this regard, increasing the production capacity of food industry enterprises is not only an economic issue, but also a strategic one.

World practice shows that in economically developed countries, up to 70-90 percent of agricultural products are processed industrially. This increases the added value of products, extends their shelf life, expands export opportunities, and ensures the competitiveness of the national economy. In Uzbekistan, the growth in the volume of products produced in the agricultural sector also creates the need to proportionally expand their processing capacities. Because it is possible to achieve several times higher economic efficiency by deep processing agricultural products than by selling them as raw materials.

The steady growth of the population in our country is also one of the main factors determining the relevance of the topic. In recent years, as a result of the increase in the population, the demand for food products has been steadily increasing. This requires an increase in the production capacity of food industry enterprises to ensure the sufficiency of products in the domestic market and price stability. Otherwise, an increase in the share of imported products in the domestic market and a decrease in the competitiveness of national producers may be observed.

In recent years, the Republic of Uzbekistan, as in all sectors of the economy, has been implementing large-scale structural reforms in the food industry. In particular, measures aimed at modernizing the industry, establishing high-tech production, expanding the production of export-oriented products, attracting investments and strengthening the participation of the private sector are accelerating the pace of development of the sector. However, in order to fully utilize the opportunities in this area, it is necessary to further improve production processes, effectively use resources and widely introduce innovative approaches.

The relevance of the topic is also directly related to the task of increasing the share of industrial sectors in the country's economy. The New Uzbekistan Development Strategy sets as priority tasks the creation of high added value in economic sectors, the rapid development of the processing industry and the increase in export volumes. In the implementation of these tasks, the food industry is one of the important driving sectors. Because this sector creates the opportunity for the effective use of the country's natural, labor and raw material resources and serves as an important source of economic growth.

Today, a significant part of the fruits and vegetables, viticulture, horticulture, livestock and poultry products grown in our country are sold or exported without processing. As a result, certain economic losses occur during the storage, transportation and sale of products. Increasing the production capacity of processing enterprises will not only solve this problem, but also increase the competitiveness of products, increase foreign exchange earnings from exports and ensure employment of the population.

In the conditions of a modern market economy, the efficiency of enterprises is determined by their innovative activity. The introduction of digital technologies, automated production systems, elements of artificial intelligence, resource-saving technologies and modern management mechanisms in the food industry makes it possible

to reduce the cost of production, increase labor productivity and optimize production processes. Therefore, ensuring innovative development in the industry is also an important area requiring scientific research.

Also, the production capacity of food industry enterprises is inextricably linked to the country's export potential. In conditions of increasing competition in international markets, the quality, safety, packaging and compliance with standards of export products are of crucial importance. In this regard, the implementation of international standards such as ISO 22000, HACCP, GlobalG.AP in production processes, product certification and improvement of mechanisms for entering foreign markets remain one of the important tasks.

In addition, the development of the food industry also serves to ensure social stability in the country. The creation of new production capacities in the sector increases employment, especially in rural areas. This has a positive impact on the growth of incomes, poverty reduction, and balanced development of regions.

Based on the above, it can be noted that one of the important scientific and practical tasks of today is to study the economic content and results of the reforms being implemented in the republic to increase the production capacity of food industry enterprises, to identify existing problems in the sector, and to develop scientifically based proposals and recommendations to solve them.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON THE TOPIC

The issue of increasing production capacity in food industry enterprises is directly related to such areas as economic theory, industrial economics, innovative development, investment policy, value chain, and food safety. Therefore, in the scientific study of this topic, it is important to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the theoretical views and practical research of foreign and domestic scientists.

In foreign economic literature, the issues of production capacity and competitiveness are interpreted primarily in connection with M. Porter's theory of competitive advantage. In his work «Competitive Advantage: Creating and Sustaining Superior Performance», M. Porter indicates value chain analysis as the main tool in shaping the competitiveness of an enterprise. In his opinion, the advantage of an enterprise is formed not only in the process of product production, but also in a system of interrelated activities such as raw material supply, production, storage, marketing, logistics and service. This approach is especially important for the food industry, since in this industry the quality of raw materials, processing technology, storage infrastructure and supply chain directly affect the cost and competitiveness of products.[1] However, a limitation of Porter's approach is that it does not sufficiently reveal social factors such as state policy, seasonality in the agricultural raw material market and food security.

P. Drucker's views on innovation and entrepreneurship also serve as an important theoretical basis for covering this topic. Drucker considers innovation not as a random process, but as a systematically managed economic activity. In his opinion, the introduction of new technologies, improvement of management methods and adaptation to market requirements are of decisive importance for the development of an enterprise. This approach is important in scientifically substantiating the need to introduce automated lines, digital control systems, energy-saving technologies and new product types in food industry enterprises.[2] At the same time, Drucker's research did not provide a sufficiently in-depth analysis of the financing of innovations, institutional barriers in developing countries and the capabilities of small businesses.

In the theory of economic development of Y. Schumpeter, innovation is interpreted as the main driving force of economic growth. By putting forward his idea of «creative disruption», the scientist emphasizes that old production methods are replaced by new technologies and new organizational forms. In the case of the food industry, this view is important in explaining the processes of modernization of enterprises, renewal of old equipment, production of new products and adaptation to the competitive environment. [3] However, Schumpeter's approach is more focused on the general theory of economic development and does not fully cover the issues of safety standards, sanitary requirements and integration with agriculture in the food industry.

FAO research on agro-industrial systems and food security is an important source for practical analysis of the topic. FAO materials consider the food system not only as a chain of production, but also as a whole chain from cultivation to processing, storage, distribution, consumption and waste management.[4] This approach is important for the Uzbek food industry, as reducing product losses, increasing the level of processing and fully forming the value chain are the main conditions for increasing the sector's potential.[5] FAO lists the tasks of strengthening food security, attracting private investment, sustainable use of natural resources, and developing science and advisory services among the priorities for the development of Uzbekistan's agro-food system for 2020-2030.

The theoretical and practical aspects of this topic are also widely covered in the studies of domestic economists. In particular, in Sh. Shodmonov's textbook «Economic Theory», the processes of production resources, economic efficiency, the balance between sectors and modernization are analyzed from the perspective of general economic theory. The scientist's approach serves as a theoretical basis for explaining the

issues of rational use of resources, increasing labor productivity and reducing production costs in food industry enterprises.[6] However, since this study was written within the framework of general economic theory, it did not specifically study the technological, logistical and export-oriented problems of food industry enterprises.

The economic theory works of A. Olmasov and A. Vakhobov cover the issues of factors of production, competition, efficiency, and development of national economic sectors in a market economy. In their view, the balance between forms of ownership, market mechanisms, and state regulation is considered an important factor in increasing production efficiency.[7] This idea justifies the need to increase the activity of the private sector in the food industry and improve state support mechanisms. At the same time, these sources provide limited coverage of empirical analysis at the sectoral level and the issue of international standards specific to the food industry.

Sh. Mustafakulov's research on the attractiveness of the investment environment is of great importance in scientifically substantiating the role of investments in increasing the production capacity of food industry enterprises. The author emphasizes that the attractiveness of the investment environment, institutional stability, infrastructure, legal guarantees and financial mechanisms are important factors affecting economic growth. In the case of the food industry, this approach justifies the need to attract investments for the organization of new processing capacities, the purchase of modern equipment and the production of export-oriented products.[8] Critically, this study analyzes the investment environment from a general economic perspective, but the impact of investments in the food industry on technological efficiency, product safety and the value chain is not studied in detail.

The research of A. Vakhobov and co-authors on the «Green Economy» can serve as an important theoretical basis for analyzing the issues of sustainable development, resource efficiency and environmental efficiency in the food industry. The use of energy-saving technologies, waste recycling, rational use of water resources and the production of environmentally friendly products in the food industry are becoming a new factor of competitiveness.[9] Therefore, domestic research on the green economy shows the need to strengthen the ecological approach to the modernization of the industry. However, even in this area, there is a lack of research based on specific industry models and calculations for food industry enterprises.

In general, the analysis of the existing literature shows that foreign scholars have mainly focused on the issues of competitive advantage, innovation, value chain and management efficiency, while local scholars have highlighted the general theoretical foundations of the modernization of the national economy, improvement of the investment climate, production efficiency and development of industries. However, the issue of increasing production capacity in food industry enterprises has not been sufficiently studied in a comprehensive manner in relation to the value chain, investment, innovation, digitalization, environmental sustainability and export standards. Therefore, this article examines this issue in the context of the reforms being implemented in the republic based on a critical-analytical approach.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methods of systematic analysis, historicism and logic, induction and deduction, analysis and synthesis, comparative and selective research, monographic analysis and grouping were used to study the reforms being implemented in the republic to increase the production capacity of food industry enterprises.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The reforms implemented in the Republic of Uzbekistan to increase the production capacity of food industry enterprises have provided significant positive changes in the economic indicators of the sector in recent years. In particular, measures taken to attract investments to the sector, create new production capacities, deep processing of agricultural products, increase export potential, and introduce digital technologies have strengthened the position of the food industry in the national economy (Table 1).

Table 1
Dynamics of food production in the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2020-2025

Years	Production volume (trillion soums)	Growth rate (%)
2020	48.6	107.8
2021	59.3	112.4
2022	72.8	109.7
2023	99.2	113.5

2024	103.7	104.5
2025	152.1	109.7

Source: Compiled by the author based on data from the National Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Analysis of the table data shows that during 2020-2025, the volume of food production increased from 48.6 trillion soums to 152.1 trillion soums, an increase of almost 3.1 times. This growth rate indicates the effectiveness of the reforms implemented in the country to modernize the food industry, launch new production lines, and stimulate the activity of the private sector. In particular, the fact that the production volume reached 152.1 trillion soums in 2025 indicates the activation of high value-added processes in the sector (Table 2).

Table 2

Dynamics of investments attracted in food industry enterprises in 2020-2025

Years	Investment volume (trillion soums)	Growth rate (%)
2020	3.4	100.0
2021	4.1	120.6
2022	5.3	129.3
2023	6.7	126.4
2024	7.1	106.0
2025	8.5	119.7

Source: Author's calculations based on data from the National Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The results of the analysis show that the volume of investments in the sector has a steady growth trend. The growth of investments allows expanding production capacities, producing import-substituting products and increasing export potential. The main part of the investments is aimed at upgrading processing equipment, building cold storage facilities and introducing packaging technologies (Table 3).

Table 3

Results of investment projects implemented in food industry enterprises in 2020-2025

Years	Number of projects	Jobs created (thousands)	Additional production capacity (thousand tons)
2020	176	6.8	520
2021	214	8.4	680
2022	257	9.9	850
2023	301	11.7	1050
2024	343	13.5	1240
2025	387	15.2	1420

Source: Author's calculations based on data from the National Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

As can be seen from the table, the increase in the number of investment projects has had a direct impact on the expansion of production capacity. By 2025, additional production capacity has reached 1,420,000 tons. This creates an opportunity to improve domestic market supply and increase export volumes (Table 4).

Table 4

Agricultural product processing rate and target indicators (%)

Indicators	2020	2022	2024	2025
Fruit and vegetable processing	12	14	15	28
Meat product processing	12	14	16	19
Dairy processing	13	15	16	20

Source: Author's calculations based on data from the National Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

As can be seen from this table, the level of processing is increasing year by year. However, this indicator is still relatively low compared to developed countries. Therefore, the state policy has identified deep processing of agricultural products and the production of high value-added products as one of the priorities.

Based on the analyses conducted, the following scientific conclusions were formulated:

- In 2020-2025, the volume of food production increased by more than 3 times;
- the volume of investments attracted to the industry has increased by 2.5 times;
- as a result of the expansion of processing capacities, the level of industrial processing of agricultural products is increasing;
- territorial imbalances remain in the food industry, with the main production volume falling on the city of Tashkent, Tashkent region and Samarkand region;
- digitalization, automation, and the introduction of innovative technologies in the sector have become an important factor in increasing production efficiency;
- By 2025, the food industry has become one of the fastest growing industries in the country.

In general, the reforms being implemented are helping to increase production capacity at food industry enterprises, expand the value-added chain, and strengthen the competitiveness of the national economy.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The food industry sector is of great strategic importance in ensuring the sustainable development of the country's economy, fully satisfying the population's needs for food products, and strengthening national food security. In this regard, it is of great scientific and practical importance to study the essence of reforms aimed at increasing the production capacity of food industry enterprises in the republic, to assess their economic efficiency, and to determine the prospects for their future development.

During this study, a comprehensive analysis was conducted of the development status of food industry enterprises, institutional and economic reforms being implemented in the sector, investment policy, innovative development processes, and key factors influencing production potential. Also, based on statistical data for 2020–2025, the economic indicators of the sector were assessed and their dynamics were analyzed.

The results of the analysis showed that the reforms implemented in the country in recent years to develop the food industry are accelerating the economic growth of the sector. In particular, the consistent growth in production volumes, increased investment, the creation of new production capacities, and an increase in the level of processing indicate that positive structural changes are taking place in the sector. According to the results of the study, in 2020–2025, the volume of food production increased by almost three times, which confirms that this sector has become one of the most actively developing sectors of the national economy.

The study found that investments play a crucial role in increasing the production capacity of food industry enterprises. Domestic and foreign investments attracted to the sector expand the opportunities for introducing modern technologies, automating production processes, improving product quality, and entering new markets. At the same time, the study confirmed that the effectiveness of investments is determined mainly by their targeting to projects that create high added value.

The analysis showed that the efficiency of food industry enterprises is directly related not only to production capacity, but also to the level of integration with the agricultural sector. The integration of agricultural production, storage, transportation and processing into a single value chain allows reducing product losses, reducing costs and increasing the competitiveness of enterprises. In this regard, the policy of developing agro-industrial clusters is one of the important factors for the future development of the sector.

The results of the study also showed the increasing importance of implementing digital technologies in food industry enterprises. The use of modern information and communication technologies, automated management systems, digital logistics and e-commerce platforms allows optimizing production processes, rational use of resources and effective management of product movement. In the future, accelerating digital transformation processes will further increase the competitiveness of food industry enterprises in international markets.

At the same time, the study also identified some remaining problems in the industry. In particular, insufficient processing capacity in some regions, outdated technological equipment, low level of introduction of scientific developments into production, problems in the logistics system and difficulties in implementing international standards are the main factors limiting the development of the industry. In addition, the still insufficient level of deep processing of products indicates that the potential for creating added value is not fully realized.

Based on the research results, the following important scientific and practical proposals can be put forward:

- improvement of mechanisms for state support for the organization of high-tech and innovative production at food industry enterprises;
- directing the bulk of investments attracted to the industry to deep processing of products;
- expanding the network of modern logistics centers, agrologistics hubs and refrigerated warehouses;

- expand the scope of implementation of international standards to ensure product quality and safety;
- improve the system of training highly qualified engineers-technologists, logistics specialists, and personnel in digital technologies for the industry;
- encourage the creation of innovative products and technologies by strengthening the integration of science, education and production;
- widely introduce environmentally sustainable and resource-efficient production models.

The scientific significance of the study is that it analyzes the interrelation of institutional, investment, innovative and technological factors of increasing production capacity at food industry enterprises and substantiates priority areas for the development of the sector in the republic. The results of the study can be of practical importance in developing state programs for the development of the food industry, increasing the efficiency of the activities of industry enterprises, and making strategic decisions in the sector.

As a final conclusion, it can be noted that the reforms being implemented in the republic to increase the production capacity of food industry enterprises are yielding positive economic results. The consistent continuation of these reforms, further expansion of the volume of innovations and investments, the widespread introduction of digital technologies, and an increase in the level of deep processing of products will make it possible to transform the food industry into one of the highly competitive and export-oriented sectors of the national economy in the future. This, in turn, will serve to ensure the stability of the country's economic growth, increase the well-being of the population, and strengthen national food security.

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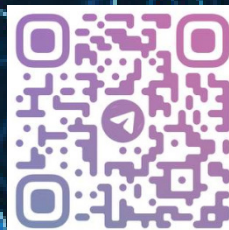
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