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## **"ANALYSIS OF THE DEMAND FOR ORGANIC PRODUCTS AMONG EMPLOYEES WORKING IN THE FIELD OF ORGANIC PRODUCTION"**

**Abstract:** Employees such as agronomists, farmers, environmentalists, standardization specialists, and others not only follow the principles of organic production in their workplaces but are also expected to have a high demand for organic products in their personal lives. The article presents research materials on consumer demand for organic agricultural products in the Namangan region of Uzbekistan. The study involved 300 rural households from the Namangan region as the research sample, including 300 agricultural workers engaged in the production of organic agricultural products on 230 hectares of land. The knowledge and skills in the field of "organic production" were studied using a questionnaire developed based on the international STEPS system (Science and Technology Excellence in the Public Service).

A survey conducted by the Institute for Macroeconomic and Regional Studies (IMRS) among 720 respondents revealed a slightly higher level of demand for "green" (environmentally friendly, organic, or natural) products among the population.

According to the survey results, the demand for "green" products was approximately 2.3 times higher compared to other products. These findings indicate the need for extensive awareness campaigns among the local population and producers regarding organic products and healthy eating habits.

**Keywords:** local population, organic products, skills of population and producers, healthy nutrition, environmentally friendly.

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## **«АНАЛИЗ СПРОСА НА ОРГАНИЧЕСКИЕ ПРОДУКТЫ СРЕДИ РАБОТНИКОВ, ЗАНЯТЫХ В СФЕРЕ ОРГАНИЧЕСКОГО ПРОИЗВОДСТВА»**

**Аннотация:** Сотрудники, такие как агрономы, фермеры, экологи, специалисты по стандартизации и другие, не только соблюдают принципы органического производства на своих рабочих местах, но и ожидается, что будут иметь высокий спрос на органические продукты в личной жизни. В статье представлены материалы исследования потребительского спроса на органическую сельскохозяйственную продукцию в Наманганской области Узбекистана. В исследовании приняли участие 300 сельских домохозяйств из Наманганской области в качестве выборки, включая 300 работников сельского хозяйства, занятых в производстве органической сельскохозяйственной продукции на площади 230 гектаров. Знания и навыки в области «органического производства» изучались с помощью анкеты, разработанной на основе международной системы STEPS (Science and Technology Excellence in the Public Service).

Опрос, проведённый Институтом макроэкономических и региональных исследований (IMRS) среди 720 респондентов, выявил несколько более высокий уровень спроса на «зелёные» (экологически чистые, органические или натуральные) продукты среди населения.

Согласно результатам опроса, спрос на «зелёные» продукты был примерно в 2,3 раза выше по сравнению с другими продуктами. Эти данные указывают на необходимость проведения масштабных информационных кампаний среди местного населения и производителей по вопросам органических продуктов и здорового питания.

**Ключевые слова:** местное население, органические продукты, навыки населения и производителей, здоровое питание, экологичность.

**Relevance of the topic:** The pressing issues related to the use of organic products are considered important not only for consumers but also for producers, government agencies, and the entire society. The 21st century can be called the era of "environmentally clean" and "organic" products. In Uzbekistan, the development of this direction is primarily related to the goals of organic production aimed at preserving the health of the population and improving the environment. Based on this goal, the Republic of Uzbekistan adopted the Law No. 766 "On Organic Products" on April 22, 2022 [1]. In addition, international standards such as Organic and Global G.A.P. have been introduced, and a total of 1,276 standards covering the agricultural sector have been implemented [2]. Of these, 309 are international standards and 6 are foreign standards [3]. According to the World of Organic Agriculture Statistics report for 2019, prepared by the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL) and the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM), the Republic of Uzbekistan is among the top ten countries in the world with favorable conditions for fruit cultivation. The report also highlights that the country produces environmentally friendly fruits and has favorable land plots for organic farming [4]. The adoption of ten international standards from the ISO 28000 series is being finalized with the aim of implementing them in all enterprises and organizations involved in the creation of value chains in agriculture and food products.

Despite the favorable conditions and opportunities, the insufficient attention paid by producers and consumers to the health and environmental significance of organic agriculture is negatively affecting the reputation of initiatives aimed at producing high-quality products in the country. Moreover, it is also hindering the increase of export potential in the regions and the expansion of their geographic reach.

In this regard, based on the decision of the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated August 16, 2024, a resolution was adopted to strengthen the activities of the Sanitary-Epidemiological Welfare and Public Health Committee in the field of organic product production and sales. Based on this information, it is important to recognize that one of the key tasks is to expand

production directions through the private sector, cooperatives, and public-private partnership projects.

**Research objective:** To study consumer demand for organic products among the population of Namangan region.

**Research subjects:** A total of 280 households in the Namangan region were selected as research subjects, including 280 agricultural workers engaged in the cultivation of organic agricultural products on 225 hectares of land at the "Organic" farm located in the Yangikurgon district.

**Research methods:** Knowledge and skills in the field of "organic production" were assessed through questionnaire surveys developed based on the international STEPS (Science and Technology Excellence in the Public Service) system [2].

**Research Results and Discussion:** During the study, it was revealed that 76% of the surveyed households were not familiar with the concept of "organic products." The remaining 24% associated the term with "environmentally friendly products" (Table 1). The formation of such an understanding is linked to products imported into the domestic market from European countries. In particular, products labeled as "ecological" or "biodynamic" have been imported from Austria, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy, while "biological" products have been imported from Finland, Norway, Denmark, and Spain.

60% of the surveyed households consider products grown on household plots to be "environmentally friendly." Meanwhile, 95.0% of agricultural workers engaged in organic production have their own understanding of the term "organic agriculture." At the same time, 65.0% of respondents in households are unable to clearly express their opinion on the health benefits of these products. Furthermore, 64.0% of producers indicate a lack of understanding of the connection between organic products and health, which reflects insufficient promotion efforts regarding healthy nutrition.

**Table 1**

**Survey Results on the Role and Importance of "Organic" Products Based on the STEPS System (Percentages of the total number of survey participants)**

Respondents' Attitudes Toward the Issue	Household population	Producers
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Correctly understands the concept of “organic product”	28,0%	92,0%
The concept of “environmentally friendly product”	35,0%	12,0%
“Environmentally friendly product” refers to products grown on household plots.	65,0%	25,0%
The impact of “organic products” on health	45,0%	40,0%

## Conclusions:

1. Among the surveyed households in Namangan region, 76% do not have an understanding of the term “organic product,” while the remaining 24% associate this concept with “environmentally friendly products.”
2. 65% of respondents in households consider products grown in personal household plots and land plots as “environmentally friendly.”
3. Among agricultural workers engaged in organic product production, 95.0% have a formed understanding of the term “organic agriculture.”
4. 64.0% of producers indicate a lack of connection between organic products and health, which reflects insufficient promotion efforts regarding healthy nutrition.
5. To fully achieve these understandings, it is necessary to introduce lessons on healthy nutrition and environmental culture in schools, colleges, and universities.

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