



**HORSE BREEDING IN THE CENTRAL ASIAN REPUBLICS
DURING THE SOVIET PERIOD: MECHANIZATION,
MANAGEMENT AND COMPARATIVE INDICATORS (1927–1972)**

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Abstract. *The article offers a comparative analysis of horse breeding in the Central Asian republics in 1927–1972 in three dimensions: mechanization, management and production indicators. Data from archival documents, textbooks and a doctoral dissertation are compared. The tractor share in draught power rose from 0.3% in 1928 to 22% in 1932; in 1960–1965 the number of horses fell by 53.7% in Kyrgyzstan and by 42.4% in Uzbekistan. In 1972 Kazakhstan had 1,266.1 thousand horses and Uzbekistan 117.5 thousand; the number of foals per 100 mares was 64.7 in Kazakhstan and 42.7 in Turkmenistan.*

Key words: *mechanization, draught power, horse state farm, Ekoso, foaling rate, breed zoning, Central Asian republics.*

**SOVET DAVRIDA MARKAZIY OSIYO RESPUBLIKALARIDA
YILQICHILIK: MEXANIZATSIYA, BOSHQARUV VA QIYOSIY
KO'RSATKICHLAR (1927–1972)**

Annotatsiya. *Maqolada 1927–1972-yillarda O'rta Osiyo respublikalarida yilqichilikning mexanizatsiya, boshqaruv va mahsulot ishlab*

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chiqarish jihatlarini qiyosiy tahlil qilingan. Arxiv hujjatlari, o'quv qo'llanmalar va doktorlik dissertatsiyasi ma'lumotlari statistik ko'rsatkichlar bo'yicha solishtirildi. Natijalar 1928–1932-yillarda tortish kuchida traktor ulushi 0,3 foizdan 22 foizgacha oshganini, 1960–1965-yillarda otlar soni Qirg'izistonda 53,7 foizga, O'zbekistonda 42,4 foizga kamayganini ko'rsatdi. 1972-yilda Qozog'istonda 1266,1 ming, O'zbekistonda 117,5 ming bosh ot hisobga olingan; har 100 bosh biyadan olingan qulun soni Qozog'istonda 64,7, Turkmanistonda 42,7 bo'lgan.

Kalit so'zlar: mexanizatsiya, tortish kuchi, ot sovxosi, Ekoso, qulun olish, zotlarni rayonlashtirish, O'rta Osiyo respublikalari.

КОНЕВОДСТВО В РЕСПУБЛИКАХ ЦЕНТРАЛЬНОЙ АЗИИ В СОВЕТСКИЙ ПЕРИОД: МЕХАНИЗАЦИЯ, УПРАВЛЕНИЕ И СРАВНИТЕЛЬНЫЕ ПОКАЗАТЕЛИ (1927–1972)

Аннотация. В статье дан сравнительный анализ коневодства республик Средней Азии в 1927–1972 годах по трём направлениям: механизация, управление и производственные показатели. Сопоставлены данные архивных документов, учебных пособий и докторской диссертации. Доля тракторов в тягловой силе выросла с 0,3% в 1928 году до 22% в 1932 году; в 1960–1965 годах поголовье лошадей сократилось в Киргизии на 53,7%, в Узбекистане на 42,4%. В 1972 году в Казахстане насчитывалось 1266,1 тыс. голов, в Узбекистане 117,5 тыс.; выход жеребят на 100 кобыл составил 64,7 в Казахстане и 42,7 в Туркмении.

Ключевые слова: механизация, тягловая сила, конный совхоз, Экосо, выход жеребят, районирование пород, республики Средней Азии.

Introduction. In the Soviet period the mechanization of agriculture placed the horse in an entirely new situation: the animal that for centuries had

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been the main source of power in fieldwork and transport was gradually replaced by the machine. In the Central Asian republics this process was not uniform, and the difference in horse numbers between the republics reached several dozen times. The sector remains in the focus of state attention today: the Presidential resolution of 15 June 2017 «On additional measures for the development of horse breeding and equestrian sports in the Republic of Uzbekistan» [1] provides for improving the legal framework and increasing the number of breeding and sport horses of the Karabair and Akhal-Teke breeds [2]. It is therefore necessary to study the history of horse breeding at the scale of the whole region, on the basis of comparative indicators.

The aim of the article is to analyse comparatively the directions of change in horse breeding in the Central Asian republics in 1927–1972. For this purpose the composition of draught power, the condition of state farms in 1932, changes in horse numbers, and the 1972 indicators of numbers, foaling and output are compared.

Literature review. In Uzbek- and Russian-language literature horse breeding is covered mainly from the viewpoint of breed science and zootechnics. The textbook «Horse Breeding» by Mukhtorov and Turakulov (Tashkent, 1974) presents the state of the sector in the 1970s, including horse numbers across the USSR, stud farms and foreign trade indicators [3]. The same authors' book «Productive Horse Breeding» is devoted to horse meat and kumis production [4]. Kholmiraev's practical manual of 1988 describes the 1971 decision of the USSR Ministry of Agriculture on breed zoning by republic [5]. His doctoral dissertation, defended in 1996, deals with the scientific foundations of productive horse breeding in Uzbekistan and contains comparative data on Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia [6]. Among works on the history of the breed, the article on the Karabair in the Great Soviet Encyclopedia [7], the book «Karabair» by Shchekin and Vikhrev (Tashkent,

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1947) [8] and volume IV of the State Stud Book of the Karabair breed by Likhov (1982) [9] are noted; Nurmatov and Khafizov call the Karabair the «golden fund of Uzbekistan» and pay attention to its genetic diversity [10]. In recent years Sobirov, Madrakhimov and Javkharov have studied blood indicators of Karabair horses [11], Jabborov, Allashov and Tagaeva have described technology for the intensive rearing of Karabair foals [12], and Javkharov, Madrakhimov and Sobirov have reviewed the condition and significance of horse breeding in Uzbekistan [13]. Thus existing works are devoted mainly to breed science and zootechnics, while mechanization, management and production indicators have not been analysed together at the regional scale; this article is intended to fill that gap.

Methodology. The study relies on secondary sources, namely published textbooks and a doctoral dissertation, as well as archival documents of 1932. The comparative method was used to compare indicators of the republics within the same year, and the historical-analytical method to establish events by period and place. The indicators were divided into three groups: the composition of draught power (mechanization), organizational and management condition (state farms) and productivity (horse numbers, foals per 100 mares, output). The author's own calculations are marked separately as «author's calculation». The limitation of the study is that the sources relate to different years: data on draught power and state farms concern 1927–1932, horse numbers 1960–1984, and foaling and output indicators 1966–1972, so comparison was made within each indicator.

Analysis and results. The years 1927–1932 were a period when mechanization entered the fields of Central Asia. According to the work of Yershova, Shchekin and Samodelkin published in 1934, in 1927 not a single machine was yet in operation and all work was done by horses, oxen and camels. In 1928 tractors accounted for 0.3 per cent of total draught power and

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living power for 99.7 per cent; in 1929 the tractor share reached 3 per cent and in 1932, 22 per cent [6]. By the author's calculation, the tractor share grew about 73 times in four years, yet in 1932 78 per cent of draught power still came from living power.

Forms of management of the sector also changed in these years. In 1932 the Presidium of the Central Asian Economic Council (Ekoso) instructed that the Narin horse state farm in the territory of Kyrgyzstan be broken up and ordered the reorganization of state farms to be completed within 1932 [14]. The party-mass work clause of the decision was addressed to the central committees of the Central Asian republics and also to the Kyrgyz regional party committee (Kirobkom) [14]. The instruction to break up the Narin farm shows that horse state farms organized on an excessively large scale in the early 1930s were hard to manage. For Turkmenistan, in 1932 the Ekoso Presidium considered the delivery of fodder by the Konevodtrest (Horse Breeding Trust) to Turkmenistan and instructed the Central Asian Railway Directorate to deliver the coarse fodder shipped by the trust on time [14].

There is also information on state farms whose territory is not indicated in the document. An inspection in the summer of 1932 found that spring sowing had failed at state farms No. 41, 70 and 83, and that haymaking was wholly unsatisfactory at farms No. 69, 70, 82 and 83 [14]. Problems in breeding work were also recorded: in 1931 at farms No. 41, 54, 68 and 70 the share of cases in which the «toylash» (a stage of the breeding cycle, term kept as in the source) went badly was high; in 1932 the mating season failed at two camel-breeding state farms; and at farm No. 53 16 breeding male animals died through neglect [14].

The 1960–1970s brought changes in a different direction. According to A. Akibayev, horse numbers in Kyrgyzstan were 708 thousand in 1916 and 496.7 thousand in 1960 owing to post-war recovery, but in 1965, because of

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the technical equipping of agriculture and the declining need of the army for horses, only 230 thousand remained. In 1981 the republic's leadership took measures to develop horse breeding, and 1984 recorded 270.8 thousand horses [6]. By the author's calculation, in 1916–1965 horse numbers in Kyrgyzstan fell by about 67.5 per cent and in 1965–1984 recovered by 17.7 per cent. In 1960–1965 horse numbers fell by 53.7 per cent in Kyrgyzstan and by 42.4 per cent in Uzbekistan. The figure of 271.0 thousand horses in Kyrgyzstan in 1972 [3] is almost equal to Akibayev's figure for 1984.

In 1972 the Soviet Union had a total of 7,319.7 thousand horses, of which 1,266.1 thousand were in Kazakhstan, 271.0 thousand in Kyrgyzstan, 117.5 thousand in Uzbekistan, 46.8 thousand in Tajikistan and 16.2 thousand in Turkmenistan. Per 100 mares, 64.7 foals were obtained in Kazakhstan, 60.6 in Kyrgyzstan, 56.2 in Tajikistan, 54.4 in Uzbekistan, 42.7 in Turkmenistan and 35.7 across the Union [3]. Uzbekistan's 117.5 thousand horses are 2.3 times fewer than Kyrgyzstan's and 2.5 times more than Tajikistan's. By the author's calculation, the five republics together made up about 23.5 per cent of the Union herd, of which Kazakhstan accounted for 17.3 and Uzbekistan for 1.6 per cent.

The region's share in horse trade and output was also limited. In 1962–1968, 65.2 thousand horses were sold from the western regions of the Soviet Union to Italy, 52.4 thousand to France, 47.2 thousand to the Netherlands and 6.4 thousand to other countries; in the eighth five-year plan horses sold abroad exceeded 140 thousand. In 1966–1969 the USSR's stud farms brought a profit of 89 million soums, with profitability rising from 15.5 to 22.1 per cent [3]. In 1971 the country's collective and state farms delivered 92 thousand tonnes of horse meat (290 thousand head) to the state [4]. In the USSR 18–19 thousand tonnes of kumis were prepared in 1966–1967 and 24 thousand tonnes in 1968; 94 per cent of it fell to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Bashkiria [4]. Uzbekistan's

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3.4 thousand tonnes of horse meat in 1969 do not reach even 4 per cent of the Union volume, and the 520 tonnes of kumis planned for 1975 are 2.2 per cent of the Union's 24 thousand tonnes. Horses were sold abroad from the western regions of the country.

Differences between the republics in breeding policy became evident in 1971. By Decision No. 394 of the USSR Ministry of Agriculture horse breeds were zoned: the Lokai and Karabair for the Tajik SSR; the Akhal-Teke and Yomud for the Turkmen SSR; the Jabe and Adaev types, the Kushum and the Kustanai for the Kazakh SSR; and the New Kyrgyz, Don and thoroughbred riding breeds for the Kyrgyz SSR; in the RSFSR division of horse breeds into 10 zones was planned [5]. The Karabair, assigned to Tajikistan, according to the encyclopedia was created in Uzbekistan by improving ancient Central Asian argamaks with Mongolian, Turkmen and Arab breeds and is a local breed suited to riding and pack work [7].

Discussion. The indicators presented reveal three regularities. First, mechanization began to reduce the need for the working horse as early as the early 1930s and in 1960–1965 led to a sharp fall in horse numbers. Second, the 1932 state farm documents reveal organizational problems in the management of horse farms: fodder supply, the breeding season and the keeping of breeding animals. Third, in 1972 most of the horses of Central Asia were concentrated in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, while the sector was comparatively small in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.

Conclusions and recommendations. The analysis shows that in 1927–1972 horse breeding in the Central Asian republics did not develop evenly. The rise of the tractor share in draught power from 0.3 to 22 per cent in 1927–1932, and the fall in horse numbers by 53.7 per cent in Kyrgyzstan and 42.4 per cent in Uzbekistan in 1960–1965, show the declining need for the working horse. By 1972 Uzbekistan's 117.5 thousand horses were far fewer than Kazakhstan's



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(1,266.1 thousand) and Kyrgyzstan's (271.0 thousand) and more than Tajikistan's (46.8 thousand). Recommendations: first, comparative analysis between the republics should be continued in studying the history of horse breeding, especially by drawing on archival materials of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan; second, it is advisable to identify the farms whose territory is not indicated in the 1932 state farm documents.

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