WAYS TO INCREASE THE EFFICIENCY OF MEAT PRODUCTION IN UZBEKISTAN

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DOI:https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22983632

Abstract: This thesis analyzes the current state of meat production in Uzbekistan, the economic significance of the livestock sector, and the core factors influencing production efficiency. Furthermore, practical proposals are developed to scale up meat output by consolidating the forage and fodder base, adopting modern intensive technologies, advancing selective breeding practices, and extending financial and structural support to farming enterprises.

Keywords: livestock farming, meat production, efficiency, profitability, fodder base, intensive technology, food security.

Introduction

Today, ensuring the sustainable provision of high-quality food products to the population remains one of the primary priorities of national agrarian policy. Meat products hold a central position in human nutrition, serving as the essential source of protein and vital nutrients. Consequently, developing livestock farming and elevating meat production efficiency represent pressing strategic challenges. While total livestock numbers across the country have steadily grown in recent years, productivity parameters and unit production costs have not yet fully reached international competitive standards. This reality demands a more rational deployment of available resources and a determined drive toward heightened economic efficiency.

On October 22, 2025, the Committee on Agrarian and Water Management Issues of the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis reviewed a status report delivered by the Committee for Veterinary and Livestock Development on the execution of the "Program for the Development of the Livestock Sector and Its Branches in the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2022–2026." As emphasized in the report, systemic initiatives are actively implemented nationwide to guarantee reliable supplies of livestock commodities, expand meat and dairy flows to the domestic consumer market, reinforce feed production, and boost output of competitive goods for both local and export destinations.

Presently, the total gross volume of livestock output in the agricultural sector stands at 225.8 trillion UZS. Notably, cattle inventory reached 14.7 million head, sheep and goats totaled 24.6 million head, meat yield (live weight) amounted to 3.2 million tons, and milk yields reached 13.2 million tons over the reviewed operational period.

Under the programmatic framework, 6,694 investment projects valued at an aggregate of 26.3 trillion UZS were executed across livestock branches, generating more than 86,000 permanent and seasonal jobs. In the first nine months of the current year alone, 1,085 projects worth 5.1 trillion UZS were realized, adding over 19,000 new job opportunities.

The committee hearing highlighted that 27 major livestock clusters worth 450 billion UZS have been founded in specialized districts. Operating enterprises currently include 8,054 cattle-rearing entities and 3,691 sheep- and goat-farming operations—reflecting a 30% expansion compared to earlier periods.

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Furthermore, $536.3 million in funding was mobilized via projects backed by international financial institutions. Pedigree breeding farms increased to 2,500 operations, distributing 71,000 head of purebred cattle and 310,000 head of purebred sheep and goats to agricultural producers and rural households.

On the feed front, crop management improvements raised average forage productivity from 8 tons of feed units per hectare in 2023 to 11 tons per hectare this year. To cultivate aquaculture, conserve water and land assets, and elevate yields, fish farming reservoirs were shifted to intensive regimes, covering 12,000 hectares. Coordinated measures for intensive aquaculture are advancing across districts including Andijan, Khatyrchi, Karmana, Uchkurgan, Naryn, Bostanlyk, Orta Chirchik, Yangiyul, Khiva, and Gurlen/Koshkupir.

During parliamentary deliberations, deputies engaged in direct dialogue with livestock farmers and fodder growers. Discussions centered on reinforcing veterinary safety frameworks, broadening specialized scientific research and extension advisory services, securing animal health safeguards, and scaling advanced cultivation practices for fodder crops. Concluding the session, targeted priority tasks were confirmed and formalized via an official committee resolution.

Analysis and Results

Pursuant to the Presidential Resolution of February 8, 2022, "On measures to further develop livestock farming and strengthen the livestock fodder base," direct subsidies per kilogram of meat delivered by livestock operations were raised from 2,000 to 4,000 UZS, while payments per liter of milk were increased from 200 to 400 UZS. Imported specialized agricultural machinery was exempted from all duties and fees, concessional credit lines totaling $170 million were made accessible, and crop rotation schedules incorporating forage crops were mandated across more than 200,000 hectares of cotton and wheat land.

Implementation is actively underway in Tashkent Region, where 43 modern livestock complexes were planned for commissioning. To date, 32 complexes have begun commercial operation, with the remaining 11 currently under active construction.

According to data reported by Tashkent Today, the global average price for one kilogram of beef climbed to $6.90 (~88,000 UZS) in September 2025, marking the highest global benchmark registered since 1960. Within Uzbekistan, domestic meat prices rose three times faster than headline annual inflation, driven by four consecutive months of upward price adjustments and approaching an annualized 10% rate of increase. The primary underlying cause rests in the lengthy biological production cycle of cattle (approximately two years) alongside overall slaughter supply constraints.

Additional structural pressures include:

- **High production inputs:** Raising cattle demands up to 15,000 liters of water per kilogram of meat produced;
- **Climatic stress and aridity:** Severe droughts continually compress forage availability;
- **Trade frictions:** Global supply chains face recurring geopolitical and trade-related disruptions;
- **Logistics overhead:** High fuel costs push up transportation and delivery expenses;
- **Epidemiological risks:** Disease outbreaks among European cattle herds limit breeding imports;
- **Demand shifts:** Sustained post-pandemic spikes in global meat consumption.

Globally, beef accounts for 24% of all consumed meat, trailing poultry (33%) and pork (36%). Industry analysts caution that over the next 10–15 years, beef prices may continue to accelerate, turning beef into a "luxury commodity."

In domestic consumer retail during September, the price of boneless beef rose by 25.2%, and bone-in cuts surged by 23.2%. A driving factor is pasture depletion relative to total livestock density: previous

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grazing parcels reassigned to monoculture wheat and cotton farming have severely reduced accessible natural range. Because household smallholdings produce the vast bulk of local meat, sharp price fluctuations in cottonseed meal (shrot) and expeller cake (jmiq), pasture contraction, and administrative frictions have driven daily feeding expenses upward.

Against this surge in local prices, foreign imports expanded significantly. In September 2025 alone, 14,100 tons of beef valued at $62 million (792 billion UZS) were imported. The unit import price reached $4.38/kg (56,000 UZS), an 18% increase year-on-year.

Boosting the efficiency of meat output hinges on multiple strategic pillars, chief among them being the forage base. Adequate nutrition with balanced, energy-dense feeds directly shortens fattening cycles and improves carcass yield; hence, expanding high-yield forage crops and introducing cost-effective feeding technologies are paramount.

The second major lever involves modern intensive operations: modernized feeding, biosecurity controls, and preventive veterinary protocols minimize animal mortality while suppressing production overhead. Automation and mechanized distribution elevate labor productivity.

Concurrently, disciplined selective breeding enables the dissemination of genetically superior meat-specialized breeds, dramatically increasing slaughter weight per animal.

From an economic perspective, ensuring steady access to preferential credit, transparent subsidy disbursement, and targeted capital investments will stabilize farming balance sheets and establish a scalable foundation for modern animal husbandry.

Conclusion and Proposals

The findings demonstrate that to elevate the efficiency of meat production, stakeholders must prioritize:

1. **Expanding and enriching the feed and fodder base;**
2. **Accelerating the commercial adoption of intensive and innovative agricultural technologies;**
3. **Upgrading livestock breeding genetics and artificial insemination systems;**
4. **Broadening targeted financial support and credit access for livestock farms;**
5. **Modernizing regional slaughtering, cold-chain processing, and logistics networks.**

Executing these targeted structural measures will reliably expand domestic meat yields, fortify national food security, and ensure the long-term economic profitability of Uzbekistan's livestock value chain.

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