

Economic and Geographical Peculiarities of Territorial Organization of Livestock in the Azerbaijani Part of the Greater Caucasus

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Abstract

This paper is devoted to the development of livestock activity in Azerbaijani part of the Greater Caucasus. Historical peculiarities, current condition and also privileges of prospective development of livestock in Azerbaijan Republic as well as the researched part of its territory are analyzed. Latest situation in this economic field is reflected on the indicators of given tables and figure.

Keywords: livestock, pasture, farmer, forage base, productivity

Enlargement of international relations, the involving of foreign investors into business activities, and also the food supply in the condition of relatively high growth of population are considered to be the urgent issues for Azerbaijan at the contemporary period. From this view, developing agriculture in order to meet the requirements for food, as well as increase of food security has great importance for the country.

In Azerbaijan, the development of livestock historically had been playing significant role in the lives of rural population. The determination of relevant priorities with considering existing problems in farming serve for the improvement of level of living among the rural population, the creation new jobs and achieve rapid development in the country. Therefore, the economic and geographical investigation of livestock industry is topical for Azerbaijan. Farming businesses are spread in Azerbaijani part of the Greater Caucasus more due to range of such factors as large territory, favorable natural condition, highlands and foothill areas, plenty of fruitful lands, water resources and long traditions.

In Azerbaijan, after gaining independence in 1991, there was a need to establish new relations concerning land management, and consequently, Law “On bases of the agrarian reform” (18.02.1995) and Law “On land reform” (16.07.1996) were adopted.

In accordance with these laws, new property relations based on economic liberty, social justice and national identity, and also the developing efficient land management, taking into consideration market economy and initiative activity in entrepreneurship were established. After the adoption of the laws, lands of agricultural importance were distributed to citizens free of charge whereas owners were enabled to freely sale, purchase, donate, lease, and inherit their lands (Imrani, Zeynalova, 2014).

After the adoption of Law “On Land reform”, the land fund of the Azerbaijan Republic started to be used in three property forms:

1. Public lands – 44,2% (3,8 million ha). 2. Municipal lands – 31,4% (2,7 million ha). 3. Private lands – 24,4% (2,1 million ha).

Azerbaijan Republic has 86,6 thousand sq. km, of which, 4517 thousand ha of lands are the planted areas. Meanwhile, perennial planted areas make up 260 thousand ha, as well as the temporarily (in order to increase natural fertility of lands) non-used areas make up 108,3 thousand ha, pastures – 2567 thousand ha, courtyard areas – 253,1 ha, and forest territories – 103,7 thousand ha.

Azerbaijani part of the Greater Caucasus includes Absheron, Mountainous Shirvan, Guba-Khachmaz and Sheki-Zagatala economic regions.

The total area of these territories makes 27,408 sq. km, or 31,63% of Azerbaijan's territory. The population number is 4084,5 thousand persons or 43,65% of the total indicator. Among these four regions, Absheron is the most populated area which shares 65,83% (Imrani, Zeynalova, 2014).

Table 1: Main indicators of Economic-Geographic Region in Azerbaijani Part of The Greater Caucasus

Economic-geographic region	Territory, sq.km	Population number, thousand persons	Total production output by main fields, million manat	Agricultural products, million manats	including	
					planting	livestock
Absheron	5,490	2689,2	45683,5	104730,9	23770,8	80960,1
Daghligh Shirvan	6,060	295,9	525,1	214149,0	103042,0	111107,0
Guba-Khachmaz	7,025	511,7	1314,7	499331,4	270156,9	229174,5
Sheki-Zagatala	8,833	587,7	1476,4	449528,5	254226,0	195302,5
Total	27,408	4084,5	48999,7	1267739,8	651195,7	616544,1
Azerbaijan	86,6	9356,5	61480,3	4844628,4	2458172,5	2386455,9

This table is compiled on the basis of data of "Regions of Azerbaijan" (Yearly bulletin of State Statistical Committee of Azerbaijan Republic). 2013.

It is notable that till 1920s, animal husbandry has been developing weakly in Azerbaijan. Summer- and winter pastures were used at less extent and at primary level, despite that they were rich in grass cover. Meanwhile, veterinary and animal technician services were at the low level of development, while cattle-breeding also was low-efficient and was based on chosen species of cattle. Relevant high-skilled specialists also were lacking at sufficient level. In 1930, collectivization of farms was started, and eventually, part of state-owned lands was given to create kolkhozes and sovkhoses (collective farms). In a short time, new species of cattle were imported to the country, and works of artificial insemination were implemented. Eventually, "Azerbaijani mountainous merinos" was available. In this period, sheep-breeding farms were supported by government. New species of high wool production importance adapted successfully to grazing both in highlands and semi-desert summer pastures, enduring also to motion in long distance.

Currently, summer and winter pastures are serving a role of forage base for farming. These pastures together with lands under forest fund of the country make approximately 75% (2 million 846 thousand hectare) of overall public lands. There are great opportunities for the development of planting, vegetable-growing and gardening which play important role in strengthening of forage base of farming.

Cattle-breeding is known as one of ancient and main fields of agriculture in the territory of Azerbaijan. This activity was an integral part of socioeconomic life of the indigenous population for centuries. Settled- and migratory forms of cattle-breeding were typical for this territory (Mammadov, 1998). Some achievements on providing demand for beef, mutton and chicken have been reached in recent years. This process has been observed also in the territory of the Greater Caucasus.

Table 2: Number of Domestic Animals in the Economic and Geographical Regions Located in Azerbaijani Part of the Greater Caucasus

Economic-geographic regions	Domestic animals					
	cattle	buffalo	sheep	goat	pig	poultry
Absheron	21256	116	208008	14172	546	2213601
Daghligh Shirvan	124317	16543	784442	68643	4085	1292223
Guba-Khachmaz	85246	3086	520533	32013	554	2727928
Sheki-Zagatala	69067	4977	653941	58418	657	845237
Total	299886	24722	2166924	173246	5842	7078989
Azerbaijan	1177666	123899	7979424	651115	6746	25172690

This table is compiled on the basis of data of "Agriculture of Azerbaijan" (Yearly bulletin of State Statistical Committee of Azerbaijan Republic). 2014.

25,5% of cattle, 19,9% of sheep, 26,6% goats, 86,6% of pigs, 28,1% of chickens are shared with the Absheron, Guba-Khachmaz, Daghligh Shirvan and Sheki-Zagatala economic regions. It should be noted that cattle and buffalos are concentrated chiefly in the Aran, Ganja-Gazakh and Daghligh Shirvan, whereas chickens in Aran, Ganja-Gazakh and Lankaran, and pigs in the four regions of the Greater Caucasus (Agriculture of Azerbaijan, 2014).

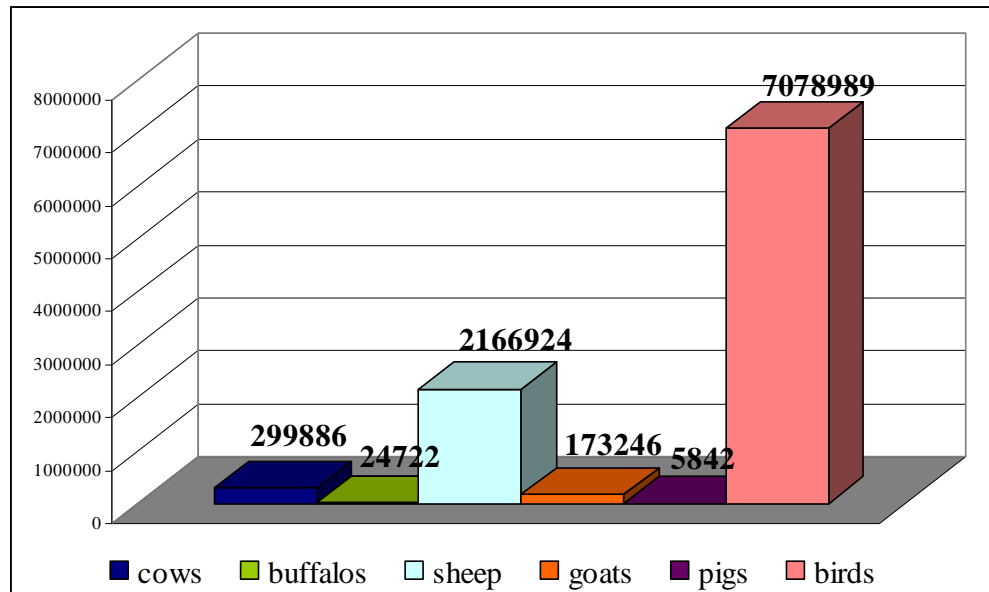


Figure1: Number of Domestic Animals in the Territory of Azerbaijani Part of the Greater Caucasus

The existence of large natural grazing areas and fertile pastures, and also alpine and sub-alpine meadows, as well as long-term traditions in the territory of Greater Caucasus, allow increase output and productivity in livestock production. This makes necessary the creation of facilities in food and light industries that will be based on complete processing and meet contemporary requirements. These products may be very useful in terms of meeting demand for foods not only in the regions but also in the country.

Taking the above-mentioned into consideration, it is concluded that in order to maintain food security of Azerbaijan, both farmers and individuals engaged in agriculture may deal with production of corn, soybean and other mixed crops after gathering barley and wheat in the future. This would significantly facilitate the forage supply in livestock. Such activity would positively affect not only forage base but also fertility of soil cover in those planted areas in the future. Moreover, particular attention should be given to training of qualified personnel in order to determine perspective priorities of sustainable development in competitive agriculture.

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