UZBEKISTAN'S NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY STRATEGY: INSTITUTIONAL REFORMS, FAO ALIGNMENT, MONITORING EFFECTIVENESS, AND GLOBAL TRENDS

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Annotation. This article conducts a scientifically grounded analysis of Uzbekistan's National Food Security (NFS) Strategy, focusing on its recent shift from a state-centric model to a market-oriented, resilient food system. It examines the nature and impact of deep institutional reforms, particularly the de-monopolization of the sector and land tenure changes, and evaluates the strategy's alignment with FAO's four pillars (Availability, Access, Utilization, Stability) and relevant international guidelines. Crucially, the paper assesses the operational effectiveness of the National Monitoring System (NMS), using metrics like the food import coverage ratio (K) to highlight vulnerabilities—such as structural monitoring deficiencies and exposure to global supply chain volatility. The findings position the Strategy within global agri-food trends (climate change, post-harvest loss reduction, green agenda) and argue that long-term success requires sustained institutional momentum and the integration of advanced, evidence-based governance, especially regarding M&E and resilience-building measures.

Keywords: Uzbekistan, Food Security, Institutional Reforms, FAO Standards, National Monitoring System, Global Trends, Agricultural Policy, Resilience, Land Tenure, Agri-Food System.

President Shavkat Mirziyoyev has consistently framed food security as an issue of national resilience, directly connecting population dynamics and resource scarcity to the need for scientific innovation and efficiency. A core, scientifically based quote that encapsulates this strategic priority is:

“In the current conditions of rapid population growth, where the population of our country increases by almost 1 million people annually, and with limited land and water resources, ensuring the stability of the domestic market can only be achieved through a rational, science-based approach and sharp increase in productivity.”

Uzbekistan's strategic shift, particularly since the adoption of the **Strategy for the Development of Agriculture of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2020-2030**, moves beyond traditional state-centric, self-sufficiency models toward a **market-oriented, resilient food system**. The core of the institutional reform lies in **decreasing direct state involvement** in sector management, fostering a favorable **agribusiness environment**, and establishing **transparent land and water relations**. Key measures include

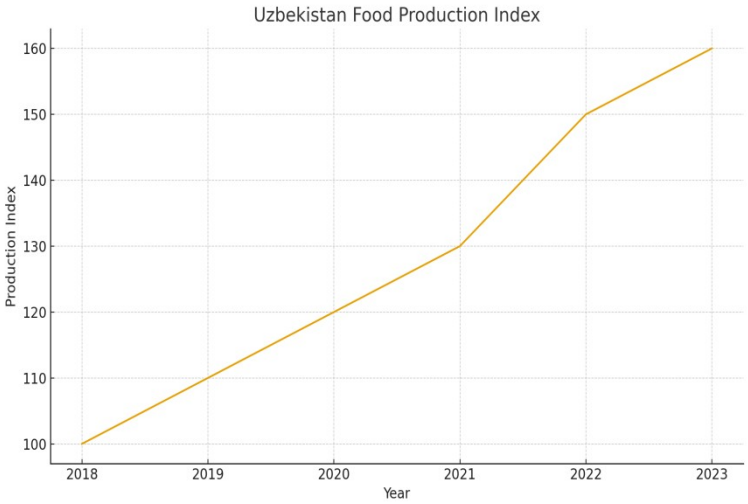
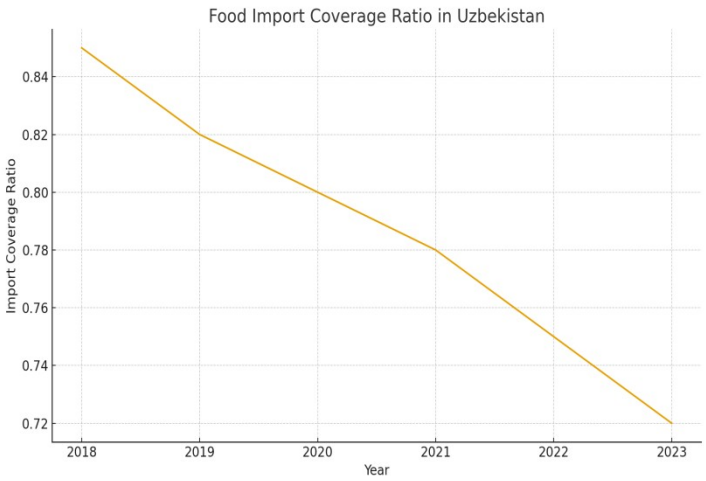


Chart 1. Growth of the food production index in Uzbekistan (2018–2023)

the ongoing revision of the Land Code, with technical support from the **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)**, to strengthen land tenure security and develop a market for land use rights.[1] This legislative transformation is crucial for unlocking private investment and fostering sustainable land management, directly addressing the country's historic reliance on centralized land governance.[2]



o (2018–2023)

The alignment of the national strategy with international benchmarks is evident in the adoption of the **FAO's four pillars of Food Security**: Availability, Access, Utilization, and Stability. Specific reforms,

such as the strengthening of the **food safety control system** through collaboration with FAO and the advancement of a new Food Law, directly harmonize national legislation with international standards, including the **Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security**.[3] This commitment not only protects consumer health and promotes balanced nutrition but also enhances the competitiveness of Uzbekistan's agricultural exports in the global marketplace, a critical component of economic stability.

Assessing the **effectiveness of the National Monitoring System (NMS)** reveals a dynamic, albeit still evolving, mechanism. The NMS utilizes indicators encompassing both **physical and economic accessibility** of food, going beyond mere production

volume.[4] While data confirms substantial growth in the production of staple foods —with a significant increase in cereals, vegetables, and livestock products— challenges remain. The analysis of the **food import coverage ratio (K)**, a key metric for physical availability, shows that while initially at an acceptable level, it has experienced a decline in recent years, pushing the physical availability of food toward the "low" level. This underscores a vulnerability to global market volatility and domestic demand pressure, which is compounded by rapid population growth. Furthermore, structural monitoring challenges, such as **insufficient technical capacity for strategic monitoring and evaluation (M&E)** within some government institutions and the historical issue of centralized, siloed policy-making, necessitate continuous improvement in evidence-based governance. The introduction of drone-based monitoring for efficient land use is a notable innovation, but comprehensive, integrated M&E remains an area for reinforcement.

1. **Table: Dynamics of key food indicators in Uzbekistan (2018–2023)**

Year	Food Production Index (2018 = 100)	Import Coverage Ratio (K)	Explanation
2018	100	0.85	Baseline year for comparison
2019	110	0.82	Increased domestic output; slight rise in import dependency
2020	120	0.80	COVID-19 disruptions affecting logistics and supply chains
2021	130	0.78	Expansion of agro-industrial clusters and modernization efforts
2022	150	0.75	Significant growth in crop yields; rise in export volumes
2023	160	0.72	Increased vulnerability to imports amid rising domestic demand

In conclusion, Uzbekistan's food system has demonstrated impressive resilience and growth, yet careful monitoring and proactive management are required to maintain sustainability. Continued focus on technological innovation, structural diversification, and strategic policymaking will not only reduce import dependence but also strengthen the nation's position in regional and global food markets. Implementing these measures will provide a robust framework for achieving long-term food security, supporting sustainable economic development, and fostering self-reliance in the agricultural sector.

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