

ISSUES OF PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYMENT OF RURAL POPULATION
OF THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTANҚАЗАҚСТАН РЕСПУБЛИКАСЫНЫҢ АУЫЛ ТҮРҒЫНДАРЫН
НӘТИЖЕЛІ ЖҰМЫСПЕН ҚАМТУ МӘСЕЛЕЛЕРІВОПРОСЫ ПРОДУКТИВНОЙ ЗАНЯТОСТИ СЕЛЬСКОГО НАСЕЛЕНИЯ
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Abstract. The goal is an integrated approach characterizing the state of labor resources in agricultural sector of the Republic of Kazakhstan; identifying the main problems and ways to solve them to increase employment and well-being of rural residents. **Methods** – monographic, economic-statistical, abstract-logical, qualitative and quantitative methods of scientific research. **Results** – based on application of economic-statistical method, it is noted that provision of personnel to agricultural sector of the republic's economy is unsatisfactory in terms of both quantitative and qualitative indicators. Foreign experience in supporting labor activity in agriculture has been studied. The issues of implementing state programs for sustainable development of agro-industrial complex of Kazakhstan are analyzed. The dynamics of changes in labor force nationwide by gender and age for the period from 2019 to 2023 are presented. The level of wages in agro-industrial production is shown in comparison with other sectors of economy. The authors provide data on shortage of labor reserves at the average and managerial level of agricultural enterprises. Trends in the number of employed people and reasons for the outflow of young personnel from rural areas have been identified. Proposals have been developed to increase the number of people employed in agricultural sector of the republic. **Conclusions** - scientific results obtained during the study can be used to develop and implement various government programs aimed to increase employment, level and quality of life of rural residents of Kazakhstan. The efficient use of human capital contributes to the growth of labor productivity in

rural areas. The expansion of rural employment in modern conditions is associated with development of the real sector of economy and small businesses, industry diversification, use of various types of agribusiness, primarily processing, tourism, service sector, and alternative activities of economic entities.

Аңдатпа. *Мақсаты* – Қазақстан Республикасының аграрлық секторындағы еңбек ресурстарының жай-күйін сипаттайтын кешенді тәсіл; ауыл тұрғындарының жұмыспен қамтылуын және әл-ауқатын арттыру үшін негізгі проблемалар мен оларды шешу жолдарын анықтау. *Әдістері* – монографиялық, экономикалық-статистикалық, дерексіз-логикалық, ғылыми зерттеудің сапалық және сандық әдістері. *Нәтижелері* – экономикалық-статистикалық әдіст қолдану негізінде республика экономикасының ауыл шаруашылығы саласын кадрлармен қамтамасыз ету сандық және сапалық көрсеткіштер бойынша қанағаттанарлықсыз екендігі атап өтілген. Ауыл шаруашылығындағы еңбек белсенділігін қолдаудың шетелдік тәжірибесі зерттелген. Қазақстанның АӨК тұрақты дамуы бойынша мемлекеттік бағдарламаларды іске асыру мәселелері талданған. 2019 жылдан 2023 жылға дейінгі кезеңде ел ауқымында гендерлік және жас ерекшеліктері бойынша жұмыс күшінің өзгеру динамикасы ұсынылған. Экономиканың басқа салаларымен салыстырғанда агроөнеркәсіптік өндірістергі жалақы деңгейі көрсетілген. Авторлар ауыл шаруашылығы кәсіпорындарының орташа және басқарушылық деңгейіндегі еңбек резервтерінің тапшылығы туралы деректерді береді. Жұмыспен қамтылғандар санының азаю үрдістері және жас кадрлардың ауылдық жерлерден кету себептері анықталған. Республиканың аграрлық секторында жұмыспен қамтылғандар санын көбейту бойынша ұсыныстар әзірленген. *Қорытындылар* – зерттеу жүргізу кезінде алынған ғылыми нәтижелер Қазақстанның ауыл тұрғындарының жұмыспен қамтылуын, өмір сүру деңгейі мен сапасын арттырудың түрлі мемлекеттік бағдарламаларын әзірлеу және іске асыру үшін пайдаланылуы мүмкін. Адами капиталды пайдаланудың тиімділігі ауылдық аумақтар халқының еңбек өнімділігінің өсуіне ықпал етеді. Қазіргі жағдайда ауылдағы жұмыспен қамту саласының кеңеюі экономиканың нақты секторын және шағын кәсіпкерлікті дамытумен, салалық өртаптапандырумен, агробизнестің өртүрлі түрлерін қолданумен, бірінші кезекте қайта өңдеумен, туризммен, қызмет көрсету саласымен, шаруашылық жүргізуші субъектілер қызметінің баламалы бағыттарын жүргізумен байланысты болады.

Аннотация. *Цель* – комплексный подход, характеризующий состояние трудовых ресурсов в аграрном секторе Республики Казахстан; выявление основных проблем и путей их решения для повышения занятости и благосостояния жителей села. *Методы* – монографический, экономико-статистический, абстрактно-логический, качественные и количественные методы научного исследования. *Результаты* – на основе применения экономико-статистического метода отмечается, что обеспечение сельскохозяйственной отрасли экономики республики кадрами неудовлетворительно как по количественным, так и по качественным показателям. Изучен зарубежный опыт поддержки трудовой активности в сельском хозяйстве. Проанализированы вопросы реализации государственных программ по устойчивому развитию АПК Казахстана. Представлена динамика изменения рабочей силы в масштабе страны по гендерным и возрастным признакам за период с 2019 по 2023 годы. Показан уровень заработной платы в агропромышленном производстве по сравнению с другими отраслями экономики. Авторы приводят данные по дефициту трудовых резервов в среднем и на управленческом уровне сельхозпредприятий. Выявлены тенденции уменьшения количества занятых и причины оттока молодых кадров из сельской местности. Разработаны предложения по увеличению количества трудоустроенных в аграрном секторе республики. *Выводы* – научные результаты, полученные при проведении исследования, могут быть использованы для разработки и реализации различных государственных программ повышения занятости, уровня и качества жизни сельских жителей Казахстана. Эффективность использования человеческого капитала способствует росту производительности труда населения сельских территорий. Расширение сферы занятости на селе в современных условиях связано с развитием реального сектора экономики и малого предпринимательства, отраслевой диверсификацией, применением различных видов агробизнеса, в первую очередь, переработки, туризма, сферы услуг, ведения альтернативных направлений деятельности хозяйствующих субъектов.

Key words: agriculture, labor market, employment, labor force, labor productivity, economic growth, social infrastructure, human capital, welfare.

Түйінді сөздер: ауыл шаруашылығы, еңбек нарығы, жұмыспен қамту, жұмыс күші, еңбек өнімділігі, экономикалық өсу, әлеуметтік инфрақұрылым, адами капитал, әл-ауқат.

Ключевые слова: сельское хозяйство, рынок руда, занятость, рабочая сила, производительность труда, экономический рост, социальная инфраструктура, человеческий капитал, благосостояние.

Introduction

Relevance. Increasing the rate of economic growth of the country is the cornerstone and urgent problem of every state. Head of State Kassym-Jomart Tokayev to the people of Kazakhstan “Economic course of a Just Kazakhstan” in his Message emphasized the urgent importance of this task in September 2023. At the same time, the range of six to seven percent is indicated as the main indicator of economic growth (Message from the Head of state K.Zh. Tokayev...) [1].

Sustainable economic development promotes to improving social and industrial infrastructure, increasing the well-being and employment of the population. Kazakhstan is taking and implementing consistent measures to increase the rate of economic growth of the country. The ongoing state program for the stable development of the agricultural sector is one of the main ones. The most important direction of state policy in the economy is increasing employment rates in agricultural production. It should be noted that even with the practical implementation of these programs, solutions to the problems of increasing productive employment, well-being and living standards of rural citizens are still insufficiently implemented.

The importance of research of employment in the agricultural sector of the economy of Kazakhstan is justified by its role in the entire chain of production relations in the country. Employment in agricultural production affects the provision of employment in other related sectors of the republic's economy. Agricultural production is one of the main sectors ensuring the country's food security.

In addition, one of the important problems when research employment in agricultural production is labor migration. Only the southern regions are more or less provided with labor resources. There is a shortage of professional personnel in the northern and eastern regions of our country. This problem is exacerbated by the aging workforce. Therefore, the industry employs specialists above retirement age. The above problems were a prerequisite for choosing a topic for scientific research.

The aim of the article, based on a structured analysis of employment in agriculture, is to determine ways to solve them to increase the involvement of labor resources in rural areas and the well-being of residents.

The following objectives are defined: assessment of the supply of labor resources to the agricultural sector of the republic's economy; comparative analysis of the main characteristics of the labor market in agriculture in dynamics and development of proposals for its improvement, taking into account the implementation of government programs and foreign experience.

The working hypotheses in research are based on the understanding of the thesis that the labor market in the agricultural sector should be provided with a sufficient number of professional qualified personnel. A well-developed program for attracting and retaining young professionals and current highly qualified personnel with attractive social packages is a significant factor in solving this problem.

Literature Review

Employment problems in the agricultural sector of the economy are the object of close attention of foreign and domestic researchers.

Thus, the social aspects of rural areas, the level of income and the problems of outflow of residents to urban settlements, as well as issues of effective management of sustainable development of rural areas, have been investigated in many works of domestic and foreign researchers (Agibalov A.V., Zaporozhtseva L.A. & Tkacheva Yu.V.) [2]. The scientific papers also pay special attention to the problems of the impact of digitalization on economic growth in the agricultural sector of the economy (Bagmut A. A.; Timofeeva N.S.) [3],[4]. The recommended procedures for developing a sustainable rural development strategy make it possible to more accurately assess the prospects for agricultural development, more effectively develop strategic plans for rural development and can be used as a strategic planning tool.

In the era of digitalization of the global economy, the problems of employment regulation in the agricultural sector of the economy are very relevant. A number of scientists, studying in their works the trends in the impact of digitalization of the economy on employment, draw attention to the importance of processes taking place in the labor market. Studied the problems of professional renewal of labor resources and state regulation of employment in the context of digital transformation of the economy (Satybaldin A.A.; Akimbekova Ch.U., Akhmetova G.I., Nigmatova G.Zh.) [5], [6].

When studying the problems of the labor market and employment in agriculture of Kazakhstan, economic and statistical, monographic and abstract-logical methods of scientific research were used. Qualitative and quantitative research methods were used to analyze the dynamics of the labor force in the republic as a whole and by region.

This phenomenon is somewhat paradoxical for the current situation on the labor market in the agricultural sector, where there

is a lack of qualified labor at the upper levels of management of agricultural enterprises. Particularly relevant are people who have professional skills and competencies in the use of innovative technologies for growing, producing and deep processing of agricultural raw materials.

These factors contribute to prolonged staff turnover and the outflow of young people to the city. The negative situation is most typical for remote corners of Kazakhstan: with a high proportion of the number of peasant farms, there is a low population density.

Next, let's look at the foreign experience of providing employment in agriculture. To study foreign experience in supporting employment in agriculture, we consider it first of all important to determine which countries or regions could be the subject of consideration. To do this, we can compare such indicators as the share of people employed in agriculture of the total number of people employed in the national economy, the number of unemployed in rural areas, labor productivity and income in rural areas

According to the World Bank, in the world as a whole, employment in agriculture has a steady downward trend (Global Economy Set for Weakest...) [16]. If in 1991 it was 43.4%, then in 2021 this was 26.4%, i.e. decreased by 1.6 times. The leader in the decline in employment in agriculture over 30 years was the European Union - employment decreased by 2.8 times, followed by China - 2.5, Kazakhstan - 2.4, the Russian Federation - 2.0 and Northern America - 1.8 times (Canada - 2.6 times), and in last place are the least developed countries - 1.29. It should be noted that the level of employment in agriculture in Northern America is almost 34 times lower than in the region with the least developed countries in 2021.

Due to the reduction in the number of workers in agriculture, many developed countries are striving to support this sector, improve the quality of life of the population, and create conditions for increased labor productivity, income growth, and employment. According to the International Labor Organization, in 2020, the unemployment rate for people over 15 years of age in rural areas was 2.7% less than in urban areas; for people aged 15 to 24 years, this difference was 6%, before the coronavirus pandemic, these figures were 2.5 and 6 percent, respectively (Indicator catalogue. International Labour Organization) [17]. Low-income countries experience higher unemployment in the urban sector, where it was on average 6.1% higher than

in agriculture between 2011 and 2020. The differences in unemployment rates in urban and rural areas in the European Union and Northern America during this period, despite minor fluctuations, were on average close to zero. In Russia, this figure was negative (-3.4%), i.e. unemployment in rural areas was higher than in urban areas. China and Kazakhstan were relatively close according to these indicators: Kazakhstan -1.8% and China - 2.3%.

Based on these data, it can be assumed that these indicators in isolation cannot be the main guidelines for achieving the goal of increasing well-being and quality of life in rural areas. They must be linked to the level of labor productivity in agriculture and per capita income.

According to the World Bank, the indicator of value added per worker in agriculture, forestry, and fishing (an indicator also characterizing labor productivity) in the countries of Northern America was 4 times higher than in the countries of the European Union in 2019. At the same time, Canadian agricultural producers were more productive than American ones. In terms of this indicator, the European Union is ahead of Kazakhstan by 3.3 times and the world indicator by 6.3 times.

Therefore, for Kazakhstan, the guidelines for ensuring employment and improving the quality of life of the population could be measures taken by developed countries in Europe and America. In particular, Canada's experience in solving employment problems and solving problems of agricultural development may be useful, since this country also has a large territory, a significant area of which is devoted to agriculture. Canada has similarities with Kazakhstan, it has rich land resources, a low population density, access to international markets, but the social aspect of the rural areas of this country has a number of unresolved issues: an increased level of unemployment, as well as an outflow of residents to urban settlements. Canadian authorities have developed and implemented 56 government assistance programs to support agriculture and farmers. Among the numerous areas of agricultural support outlined in these programs, the following may be of undoubted interest:

1. Support in case of emergencies:
 - natural disaster insurance;
 - providing assistance in case of emergencies and natural disasters.
2. Financing business and its infrastructure:

- lending to farmers to create new farms and improve existing ones;
- investing in priority sectors: milk production, poultry farming and egg production;
- supporting investment in infrastructure.
- 3. Financing of science and innovation:
 - financing of research and development projects for the development of agriculture;
 - providing loans for projects aimed at accelerating the demonstration, commercialization and/or implementation of innovative products, technologies, processes or services that increase the competitiveness of the agricultural sector.
- 4. Training
 - financing training for administrative staff of agricultural producers in risk management
- 5. Consulting
 - settlement of farm debts through consultations and mediation services.
- 6. Reducing young people unemployment:
 - employment and advanced training for young people, financing internships for young professionals.
- 7. Increasing competitiveness and promoting goods:
 - increasing and diversifying exports through promotional activities;
 - promoting farm products at leading world exhibitions;

- increasing the competitiveness of agriculture through the exchange of best practices, mentoring, and raising awareness.

If we consider the experience of Western European countries in increasing employment in agriculture, then subsidies allocated within the framework of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) play an important role. The total amount of subsidies has a positive impact on employment on paid labor farms in Hungary and family work in Slovenia. Rural development measures providing subsidies to agro-ecological and less favorable areas, as well as investment subsidies, are especially important for family farming work in Slovenia. There is a close link between the main type of farm employment, but support must take into account regional features, and costs can be significant.

The number of people living in rural areas as of October 1, 2023 was 7.58 million people (or 38% of the total population) in Kazakhstan (The population of Kazakhstan ...) [18]. The trend towards a reduction in rural population has been observed over the past ten years. Main characteristics of the labor market in the agricultural sector for 2019–2023 are given in table 1.

Table 1 – Main characteristics of the labor market in the agricultural sector

	2019		2020		2021		2022		2023 *	
	thousand people	%	thousand people	%	thousand people	%	thousand people	%	thousand people	%
Labor force	3 830.7	100	3 768.6	100	3 765.0	100	3 646.5	100	3 633.5	100
Including										
- men	2 051.6	53.6	2 033.5	53.9	2 020.5	53.7	1 981.7	54.3	1 959.3	53.9
- women	1 779.1	46.4	1 735.1	46.1	1 744.5	46.3	1 664.8	45.7	1 674.2	46.1
Employed population	3 648.8	95.3	3 587.5	95.2	3 584.4	95.2	3 472.4	95.2	3 461.5	95.3
Hired employees	2 369.2	64.9	2 371.3	66.1	2 369.8	66.1	2 310.0	66.5	2 316.6	66.9
Self-employed employees	1 279.6	35.1	1 216.2	33.9	1 214.5	33.9	1 162.5	33.5	1 144.9	33.1
Unemployed people	181.9		181.1		180.7		174.1		171.9	
Unemployment rate		4.7		4.8		4.8		4.8		4.7
Youth unemployment (ages 15–28)		3.1		3.3		3.2		3.2		3.2

Note: data for the 2nd quarter (Q2) of 2023. Compiled by the authors based on sources (Employment in Kazakhstan 2018-2022...; The main indicators of the labor market...) [19, 20].

Let us analyze the main indicators of the labor market in the agricultural sector. During the period from 2019 to 2023, the share of the rural labor force decreased by 5.2%. The

share of men in the labor force decreased by 4.5%, and women - by 5.9% (Employment in Kazakhstan 2018-2022...; The main indicators of the labor market...) [19, 20].

Data analysis showed that in the first half of 2023, the share of the employed population was 95.3% of the total labor force. The share of hired workers in the industry was 66.9%, and the share of self-employed workers was 33.1%. Over the period under review from 2019 to 2023, there is a noticeable slight increase in the share of hired workers by 2%, while the share of self-employed workers decreased by the same amount. That is, there is a flow of the employed population from the category of self-employed to the category of hired workers. The youth unemployment rate increased from 3.1% to 3.2%, with an average

unemployment rate of 4.76% in the period under review.

The performance of the state's economic sectors directly depends on the level of education of personnel and the corresponding levels of professional competencies. The agricultural production industry is no exception. Product production in this industry directly affects the country's food security. The labor market in the agricultural sector must be provided with a sufficient number of professional qualified personnel. Let us analyze trends in changes in the level of education in the agricultural sector of the economy of Kazakhstan (table 2).

Table 2 – Trends in changes in the level of education of the labor force in the agricultural sector (thousand people)

[illegible]

Our previous analysis revealed a decrease in the number of working-age population in agriculture. In addition, the analysis of Table 2 revealed changes in the composition of the labor force by level of education. During the period under review, there was a noticeable reduction in the size of labor resources with primary vocational and secondary general education by 19.5% and 44.4%. The share of workers with higher education in the labor force increased significantly by 25.6% and workers with secondary specialized vocational education by 6.5%. These data indicate changing requirements for human capital in a competitive agricultural labor market. To increase the level of education of the rural workforce, it is necessary to create conditions for the industry to be attractive for graduates of agricultural educational institutions.

Decent wages and guarantees of social security have been and remains important factors in retaining young professionals. In our opinion, both young people and more experienced personnel need to guarantee jobs in rural areas. In this regard, it is recommended

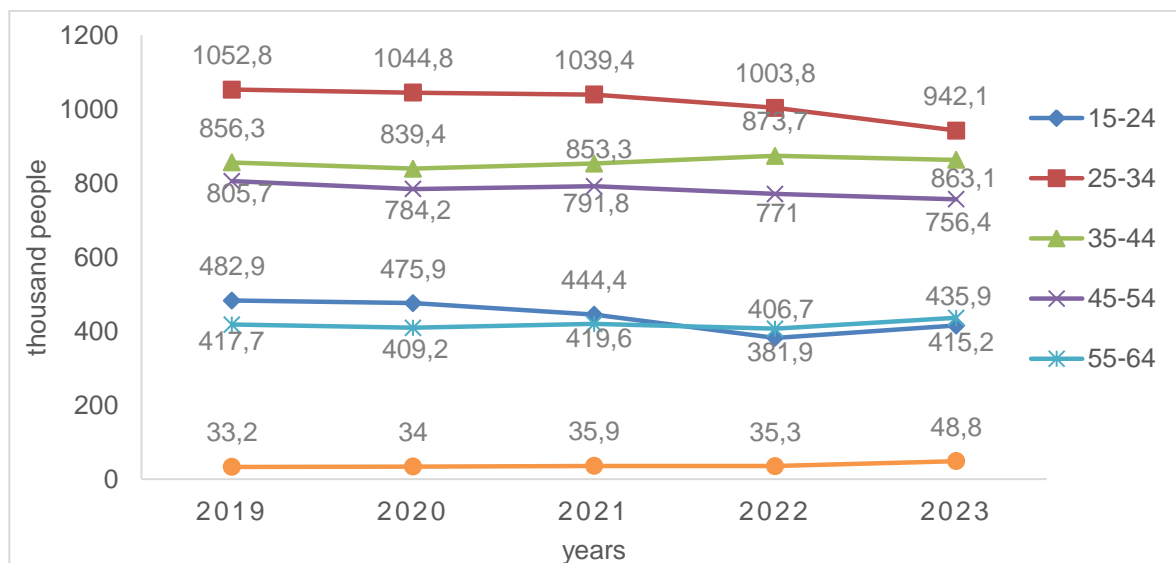
to develop separate programs in the field of rural employment, for example, taking into account the study of the experiment in India, where the world's largest rural job guarantee program is being implemented.

In modern conditions of activation of ICT, the formation, development and increase in the efficiency of use of human capital is one of the main guidelines for improving the processes of modernization and renewal of the labor market in all spheres of the country's economy. The implementation of state economic policy aimed at improving human capital, increasing the well-being and productive employment of the population are mandatory prerequisites for the development of the digital economy and social guarantees, which in turn are the basis for supporting sustainable economic growth.

The number of people living in rural areas is decreasing every year. There is a migration of rural human resources to cities. In rural settlements, the share of families with incomes below the subsistence level exceeds the urban parameter by 1.6 times. About 30% of rural residents (more than 1.2 million

people) are self-employed workers in the industry. This fact is caused by the Kazakhstan has seen significant rates of demographic growth in recent years. The age composition of the employed population is of

great importance in increasing the efficiency of agricultural production. Therefore, we will analyze the level of employment of the rural population by different age groups (figure).



Note: Compiled by the authors based on sources (Employment in Kazakhstan 2018-2022...; The main indicators of the labor market...) [19,20]

Figure – Employment of the rural population by age groups

An analysis of Figure 1 shows that the number of employed people in the age groups 15–24, 25–34 and 45–54 years in the agricultural sector of the economy decreased by an average of 10.1%. In the age group 55–64 years old there is a slight increase in the number of employed people. The greatest increase in employment was demonstrated by the age group 65 years and older (an increase of 46.9%). When analyzing employment for the period under review by gender groups, a decrease in the employment of men and women by 4.6 and 5.8%, respectively, is observed. The employment analysis carried out above indicates that men are predominantly employed in the agricultural sector of the economy of Kazakhstan.

Each region of the country is characterized by its natural, climatic and other distinctive features in the development of agricultural production. In our opinion, the availability of rural labor in the regions is of no small importance. According to the first half of 2023, the largest share of the rural labor force is concentrated in the Almaty and Turkestan regions. Each of these regions accounts for more than 17% of our country's rural workforce. The Zhambyl region can also be considered among the top three; this region accounts for, respectively, more than 8% of

the country's rural labor resources. The share of other regions of Kazakhstan is 3–5% of the total rural labor force of the republic.

As a result of the analysis for the period under review, 2019–2023, the most significant decrease in the rural labor force by more than 20% is noticeable in the Kostanay region, although this region is one of the main regions for the production of agricultural products.

As a result of the study, the importance of saturating the agricultural labor market with highly qualified specialists who are well aware of innovative technologies for growing and processing agricultural products is substantiated. It is necessary to gradually move away from the raw material orientation of agricultural exports. There is low productivity in the livestock sector. This contributes to the growth of imports of livestock products. For the development and attractiveness of the agricultural industry, it is necessary to develop the production and social infrastructure of agriculture. Solving the problems above in the study will help improve employment, well-being and quality of life for rural residents.

Discussions

As it was noted in the literary review, Kazakhstani scientists Akimbekova, Ch., Akhmetova G., and Nigmatova G., were engaged

in research on topical problems of the rural labor market (Akimbekova Ch.U., Akhmetova G.I., Nigmatova G.Zh.) [6]. Their research mainly looked at methods of government regulation and employment support. They investigated the quality of life in rural areas and the factors affecting it.

In our study, the directions of the study of employment in the field of agriculture are more detailed. A detailed analysis of the state of labor resources by age categories, level of education and other most important parameters was carried out. The authors propose to consider and adopt recommendations for retaining young specialists. Decent wages and social security guarantees have been and remain measures to stimulate the conservation and development of human resources. The impact of digitalization on agricultural employment must be taken into account.

In addition, the results of a study by Indian scientists to retain young and experienced specialists in the era of globalization of the world economy were used. In our opinion, not only young people need to guarantee jobs in rural areas, but also personnel with extensive experience in production.

It is necessary to use the experience of India, where the world's largest job guarantee program in rural areas is currently being implemented. But at the same time, it is necessary to take into account the socio-economic, geographical characteristics of our country.

Consequently, it is necessary to pay great attention to the importance of solving employment problems in the agro-industrial complex for sustainable economic growth of Kazakhstan.

In general, we assume that the results of the study may be the subject of discussion.

Conclusion

The importance of research work for the development of science is associated with the possibility of applying the results of the study to increase employment in the agricultural sector of the economy. The knowledge gained can be used by relevant government bodies at the state and regional level in the development of state programs to increase employment and well-being of the population.

In general, the development of recommendations for improving employment in the agricultural sector of the economy is based on a comprehensive and systematic approach, taking into account the following important social and economic approaches:

1. The main reasons for the lack of qualified labor resources in the agricultural industry are the incorrect planning of the

needs of agro-industrial production when forming a state order for the training of qualified specialists and the underdevelopment of social infrastructure.

2. Ensuring decent wages and guarantees of job preservation in the context of digitalization of the economy. Decent wages and guarantees of job preservation, social security remain important factors in retaining young and experienced professionals. This area has the potential for further research.

3. Taking into account the regional characteristics of the provision of labor resources. According to the first half of 2023, the largest share of the rural labor force is concentrated in Almaty and Turkestan regions. Each of this area accounts for more than 17% of our country's rural workforce. It is necessary to take into account the migration of labor in the regions.

4. Of particular importance is the improvement of the quality of labor resources and professional competencies of the labor force. It is necessary at the state level to develop an action plan to increase the professional competencies of small and medium-sized farmers. Support and incentive measures, including access to training and agricultural advice, should be provided for them.

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