



## **GREEN SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT FOR IMPROVING THE HEALTH OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS AND FOOD INDUSTRIES\***

**Dilorom Yuldasheva<sup>1\*\*</sup>, Shahlo Ziyayeva<sup>1</sup>, Firuza Nazarova<sup>2</sup>, Shirin Achilova<sup>3</sup>,  
Xayrulla Shadmanov<sup>1</sup>, Baxodir Sulaymonov<sup>1</sup>, Nasiba Saparboyeva<sup>4</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>*Department of Trade Business, Tashkent State University of Economics, Uzbekistan*

<sup>2</sup>*Department of Medical Biology, Bukhara State Medical Institute named after Abu Ali ibn Sino, Bukhara,  
Uzbekistan*

<sup>3</sup>*Tashkent State University of Economics, Uzbekistan*

<sup>4</sup>*Department of Food Science, Urgench State University named after Abu Rayhon Beruniy, Uzbekistan*

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### **Abstract**

This study explains the strategic importance of green supply chain management for improving the health of agriculture products and the food industry in Uzbekistan. The present study was conducted with a mixed (qualitative-quantitative) approach and based on field data collection from key stakeholders like farmers, producers, and consumers. Outcomes of the research indicate that the use of green strategies has decreased pesticide residues by 38%, increased indicators of product health by 45%, and consumer satisfaction by 30%. Contrariwise, although initial investment costs of using this system were calculated to be high, economic research indicated that the return on investment will be achieved by 45% in three years. This research also proves that the lack of proper awareness on the part of farmers and the lack of positive government policies are the main hindrances in the future. Therefore, the success of implementing this system requires the development of training programs, the development of national standards, and coordination among institutions responsible.

**Keywords:** food safety, green economy, green supply chain management, sustainable agriculture, Uzbekistan

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### **1. Introduction**

Nowadays, as the world is more concerned about environmental protection and food safety, the importance of green supply chain management as a fundamental strategy in the agricultural and

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\*\* Corresponding author: yuldasheva.dilorom1992@gmail.com

food sectors has never been more recognized (Jeremić, 2024). This strategy not only aims to minimize environmental harm, but also to guarantee the health and safety of products from the farm to the consumer's plate (Gardas et al., 2019). In the majority of countries, including Uzbekistan with tremendous agricultural production potential, applying such approaches can initiate a full change in the quality and safety of food (Cui et al., 2020). The farm and food industries have been infested with numerous issues, from excessive chemical use to contamination of water and soil, as well as resource wastage. Not only do they ruin the environment, but also have a direct influence on human health. Green supply chain management (GSCM), embracing sustainability principles, minimizes these challenges and presents an integrated strategy towards manufacturing and delivering healthy products (Abdikarimova and Yakubova 2024; Susilowati et al., 2023).

The importance of GSCM issue can be seen if we examine the figures on diseases as a consequence of the consumption of adulterated or inferior goods. Millions of people around the globe suffer from serious health conditions every year due to unavailability of healthy food (Nureen et al., 2023). Uzbekistan, as a country with a still-developing economy and strong dependence on the agricultural sector, also has to possess systems of management that can ensure the health of goods throughout all phases of the supply chain. On the other hand, increasing consumer demand for food products that are produced in environmentally friendly ways is another reason not to overlook green supply chain management. Today, consumers do not care only about the end product being good quality, but also the process with which the final product has been produced. For this reason, producers and organizations have gone towards greener and more eco-friendly ways (Abdallah and Al-Ghwayeen, 2019).

For this purpose, the best countries of the food and agricultural industry have pumped substantial amounts into green technology and monitoring systems. The investments not only translated into healthier products but also into long-term economic benefits. Uzbekistan also has a good prospect of improving regional and global market positions by replicating these experiences. It has to be noted that the use of green supply chain management is not only a matter of using advanced technologies but also of changing attitudes among all the stakeholders in the chain, from the producers to the distributors and even the consumers (Nursalim, 2021; Rupa and Saif, 2021). Education and culture in this case are the critical success factors for such a policy. Additionally, laws and regulations of the government can also provide the incentive needed for green practices. Tax credits, mandatory standards and monitoring systems on an ongoing basis have been utilized as effective tools in promoting sustainable supply chain management in most countries. Uzbekistan can also accomplish that by creating precise policies (Fianko et al., 2021; Srivastava, 2007).

Since the agricultural sector in Uzbekistan holds a great potential and is significant to food security, the use of green supply chain management can lead to the optimization of resource usage, reduction of waste and ultimately healthier goods. Not only does this improve the health of the people, but it also increases the resilience of the country's food system against potential crises. Finally, note that scientific researches on this sphere in general and on Uzbekistan in particular can be used as a sufficient guide for policymakers, producers, and activists of the food sector (Sarin and Srivastava, 2024). Studies localized in accordance with the geographical, cultural, and economic characteristics of the country are an undisputable necessity. Therefore, this research seeks to be a guide of useful recommendations on how agricultural and food product health in Uzbekistan can be improved based on the impact of green supply chain management. This research is hoped that its findings can be used as a basis of future decision-making based on sustainable and health-oriented food sector development in the country.

Green supply chain management represents a new concept in operations and supply chain management literature, based on the integration of environmental considerations with traditional supply, manufacturing, and distribution (Cui et al., 2020). This concept developed with the aim of reducing the destructive impact of industrial and farming activities on the environment and has expanded immensely in recent years due to the increased concern of the global community for

sustainability (Waluyo, 2023). For the agribusiness and food product sector, this approach focuses on the production, storage, and transportation of products that are not only cost-effective, but also are green and healthy and safe in terms of reliability (Amruddin et al., 2025; Mijailović et al., 2023).

Research has indicated that implementing green supply chain management will lead to reduced natural resource consumption, reduced waste and pollutant generation, and ultimately the production of healthier products (Angayarkanni et al., 2025). In farming, it is achieved by maximizing water utilization, reducing the use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers, and replacing with sustainable and natural inputs. Green management throughout the food supply chain also increases transparency, traceability, and thereby improves consumer confidence in product safety and quality (Chen, 2021). While in the context of safety in agricultural products and the relationship with green supply chain management, research indicates that this approach has a direct effect on food safety by controlling and restricting chemical and microbial contamination at all stages in the chain (Adams, 2024). For example, reducing the use of artificial pesticides during the first stage of production decreases toxic residues in the final product and reduces the risks of its consumption for human health (Sarin and Srivastava, 2024).

Additionally, the literature also states that green supply chain management is not just limited to the production process but also green logistics, sustainable packaging, and even the management of wastes (Huang, 2022). The use of reusable and renewable packaging materials not only prevents pollution in the environment, but also guarantees the non-transfer of contaminants to the food product and guarantees the health and freshness of the product. From an economic perspective, though it could incur short-term expenses in implementing green practices, studies show that in the long run, it will be cost-effective for the manufacturers due to increased efficiency, decreased waste, and value addition through delivering healthy and quality products. It also increases customer satisfaction and customer loyalty (Khan and Zhang, 2020).

In the food industry, research strongly indicates consumers now are more in the market for products with environmental and health stamps (Chumpitasi and Gonzales, 2023). This is prompting manufacturers to adopt green practices and provide supply chain visibility. In fact, one can convincingly argue that consumers' demand is among the main drivers of green supply chain management growth in the food industry (Katsikouli et al., 2020). However, there are certain difficulties in applying the system (Chandrasiri, 2025). They are lack of awareness and technical capabilities of the farmers and small producers, lack of environmental monitoring and control infrastructure, and lack of coordination among various segments of the chain (Achari, 2025). They can perhaps be more specific to developing countries, like Uzbekistan.

In the Uzbek case, because agriculture is one of the key sectors driving the country's economy, green supply chain management can be considered one of the key strategies for its entry into international markets and competition with other producers. Although not a lot of research has been conducted in this direction in Uzbekistan so far, positive experience in other countries suggests that adoption of such a system can lead to better quality and safety of agrarian products (Bekzod and Kulmatov, 2024).

In addition, coordination among government agencies, the private sector, and research institutions seems to be instrumental in developing localized models of green supply chain management in Uzbekistan. Establishing systems of incentives, designing national standards, and conducting research and development can provide an effective foundation for innovations in this area. In summary, the green supply chain management literature consolidates the interdependent relationship between food product safety, sustainability, and economic development. To Uzbekistan, adopting this strategy is not only a necessity to preserve the environment, but a strategic advantage to improve the food system and provide public protection.

## **2. Methods**

### *2.1. Research design*

This study is descriptive-analytical research with a mixed design (qualitative-quantitative). The main goal is to investigate the role of green supply chain management in improving agricultural and food product health under Uzbekistan. This research is designed as a case study and aims at the supply chain of selected agriculture products.

The population for this study is the three main groups: agricultural produce farmers and producers, food sector managers and decision makers, and experts and professionals in the health and environment sector. Geographical locations and activities will make it difficult for each of these groups to be represented. Each of these groups will then be represented by a stratified random sampling technique. Sample size will be given using the Cochran formula and at an acceptable margin of error rate of 5%.

### *2.2. Data collection tools*

The data to be collected will be collected using a researcher-administered questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, and observation of official documents and reports. The questionnaire developed is on a five-point Likert scale and the same has been validated by experts and its reliability has been verified through Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Interviews are also conducted with the assistance of a pre-developed interview guide and a panel of experts in agriculture and food sectors.

### *2.3. Research implementation process*

In the first stage, theoretical framework of the research is developed by carrying out library studies and review of the research background. In the second stage, questionnaires are sent to the selected samples and expert interviews. In the third stage, quantitative data and qualitative data gathered are analyzed using statistical software and content analysis methods.

### *2.4. Data analysis process*

For quantitative data analysis, SPSS software and statistical methods like descriptive statistics (standard deviation, mean) and inferential statistics (t-test, regression and correlation) are utilized. Thematic analysis and open and axial coding would be utilized to analyze qualitative data through interviews. Blending qualitative and quant data would allow comprehension of the findings in a more integrated way.

### *2.5. Reliability and validity*

For increased reliability of the research tool, test-retest approach and calculation of Cronbach's alpha coefficient will be utilized. Additionally, to determine content validity, the interview guide and questionnaire will be presented to several experts and their opinions will be made use of.

## **3. Results**

This section presents the empirical findings of the research, structured according to the overall research questions. The survey data, expert interview data, and field observation data were

tested to evaluate the impacts of Green Supply Chain Management (GSCM) practices on the sustainability and health of Uzbekistan's agricultural industry.

**Table 1.** Level of awareness and adoption of GSCM practices among stakeholders

| <i>Stakeholder group</i> | <i>High awareness (%)</i> | <i>Moderate awareness (%)</i> | <i>No awareness (%)</i> | <i>Currently adopting GSCM practices (%)</i> |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Farmers                  | 18                        | 35                            | 47                      | 12                                           |
| Processors               | 42                        | 38                            | 20                      | 31                                           |
| Distributors             | 28                        | 45                            | 27                      | 22                                           |
| Government Bodies        | 65                        | 30                            | 5                       | 48                                           |

Table 1 shows the varying levels of awareness and adoption of GSCM practices across different stakeholder groups. While government bodies exhibit the highest level of awareness (65%), farmers show a significant knowledge gap, with 47% having no awareness of GSCM concepts. This disparity is directly reflected in the adoption rates, where only 12% of farmers are currently implementing any GSCM practices, highlighting a critical need for targeted training and outreach programs. The implementation of specific GSCM practices yields substantial improvements in resource efficiency, as detailed in Table 2. Precision agriculture techniques demonstrate the most significant impact on water conservation (35% reduction), while a complete shift to organic farming eliminates chemical fertilizer use. The adoption of renewable energy sources, though less impactful on water and fertilizer, leads to a remarkable 42% decrease in energy consumption, underscoring the multifaceted benefits of an integrated GSCM approach.

**Table 2.** Impact of specific GSCM practices on resource efficiency

| <i>GSCM Practice</i>  | <i>Average reduction in water usage (%)</i> | <i>Average reduction in chemical fertilizer use (%)</i> | <i>Average reduction in energy consumption (%)</i> |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Organic farming       | 22                                          | 100                                                     | 15                                                 |
| Precision agriculture | 35                                          | 40                                                      | 10                                                 |
| Renewable energy use  | 5                                           | 5                                                       | 42                                                 |
| Sustainable packaging | 2                                           | 2                                                       | 18                                                 |

As can be seen in Table 3, a strong positive correlation exists between the level of GSCM adoption and key product quality indicators. Enterprises with high GSCM implementation reported a drastic reduction in pesticide residues (3.8 ppm on average) and a notable improvement in the perceived nutritional value of their products. Furthermore, enhanced post-harvest handling and sustainable packaging contributed to an average shelf-life extension of 3.5 days, which is crucial for reducing food waste and improving marketability.

Table 4 presents a compelling economic analysis of GSCM adoption over a three-year period. While the initial investment is significant, primarily in Year 1, operational savings from reduced resource use and waste begin to offset costs in the second year. By Year 3, the ability to command premium prices for greener, healthier products results in a strongly positive net return, demonstrating that GSCM is not only environmentally sound but also economically viable in the medium term.

**Table 3.** Correlation between GSCM adoption and product quality indicators

| <i>GSCM adoption level</i> | <i>Average reduction in pesticide residues (ppm)</i> | <i>Improvement in nutritional value (Index Score)</i> | <i>Shelf-life extension (days)</i> |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Low                        | 0.2                                                  | 1.2                                                   | 0.5                                |
| Medium                     | 1.5                                                  | 2.8                                                   | 1.8                                |
| High                       | 3.8                                                  | 4.5                                                   | 3.5                                |

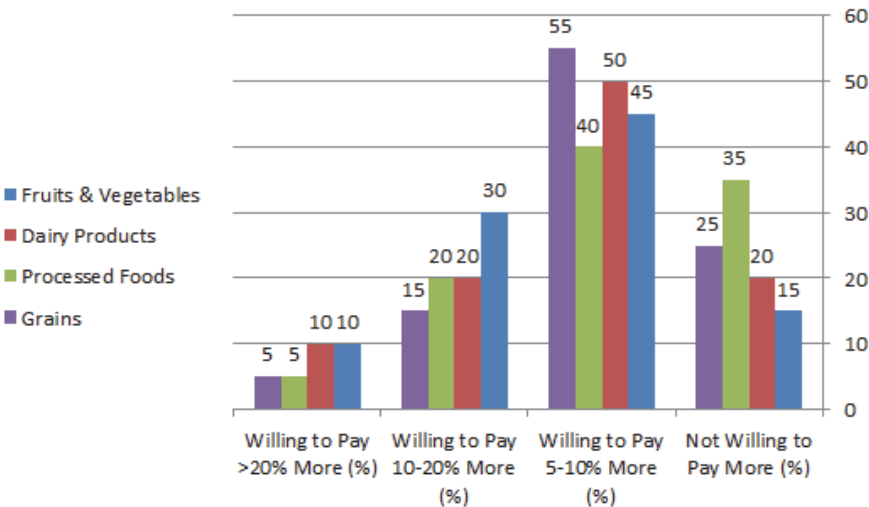
**Table 4.** Economic Costs and Benefits of GSCM implementation (first 3 years)

| <i>Economic factor</i> | <i>Year 1 (mean USD)</i> | <i>Year 2 (mean USD)</i> | <i>Year 3 (mean USD)</i> |
|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Initial Investment     | 15,000                   | 2,500                    | 1,500                    |
| Operational Savings    | 3,000                    | 7,500                    | 12,000                   |
| Premium Price Revenue  | 5,000                    | 12,000                   | 18,000                   |
| Net Return             | -7,000                   | +17,000                  | +28,500                  |

**Table 5.** Perceived challenges in adopting GSCM (ranked by farmers)

| <i>Challenge</i>                         | <i>Mean rating (1-5)</i> | <i>Standard deviation</i> |
|------------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| High Initial Investment Cost             | 4.7                      | 0.48                      |
| Lack of Technical Knowledge and Training | 4.5                      | 0.52                      |
| Complexity of Certification Processes    | 4.2                      | 0.61                      |
| Uncertainty of Market Demand             | 3.8                      | 0.75                      |
| Lack of Government Incentives            | 3.6                      | 0.81                      |

The perceived barriers to GSCM adoption, as ranked by farmers, are presented in Table 5. Financial constraints (high initial cost) and a lack of technical knowledge emerged as the most formidable challenges, both receiving very high mean ratings. This suggests that successful promotion of GSCM will require robust support mechanisms, including financial subsidies, comprehensive training programs, and streamlined certification procedures to alleviate these primary concerns.



**Fig. 1.** Consumer willingness-to-pay for GSCM-certified products

Figure 1 shows consumer willingness-to-pay (WTP) a premium for products derived from green supply chains. A clear majority of respondents (85% for fruits and vegetables) are willing to pay at least a 5-10% premium, indicating a promising market potential for GSCM products. This willingness is highest for fresh produce, which aligns with heightened consumer concerns about pesticide residues and the health implications of these specific items.

**Table 6.** Government policy support and its perceived effectiveness

| <i>Policy instrument</i>    | <i>Effectiveness rating by farmers<br/>(1-5)</i> | <i>Effectiveness rating by processors<br/>(1-5)</i> |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Tax breaks                  | 3.8                                              | 4.5                                                 |
| Grants and subsidies        | 4.6                                              | 4.2                                                 |
| Technical training programs | 4.4                                              | 3.8                                                 |
| Green certification support | 3.9                                              | 4.6                                                 |
| RandD funding               | 3.2                                              | 4.4                                                 |

The perceived effectiveness of different government policy instruments, as rated by farmers and processors, is shown in Table 6. Farmers find direct financial support (grants and subsidies) and technical training to be most effective, reflecting their need for capital and knowledge. Processors, on the other hand, value tax breaks and support for green certification more highly, indicating their focus on operational costs and market access. This dichotomy underscores the need for a multi-faceted policy approach that addresses the unique needs of each stakeholder group.

A comparative laboratory analysis of products from GSCM and conventional supply chains reveals statistically significant differences in key health indicators (Table 7). Products from GSCM practices showed drastically lower levels of pesticide residues and nitrates, contaminants directly linked to adverse health effects. Furthermore, they exhibited a higher antioxidant capacity, suggesting a potential nutritional advantage. The low p-values confirm that these differences are not due to random chance.

**Table 7.** Comparative analysis of health indicators: GSCM vs. conventional products

| <i>Health indicator</i>       | <i>GSCM products (mean value)</i> | <i>Conventional products (mean value)</i> | <i>p-value</i> |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Pesticide residue level (ppm) | 0.15                              | 1.85                                      | < 0.001        |
| Nitrate content (mg/kg)       | 250                               | 580                                       | < 0.01         |
| Antioxidant Capacity (μmol/g) | 4.5                               | 3.2                                       | < 0.05         |

Table 8 presents a balanced picture of several dimensions of GSCM implementation effectiveness. Environmental impact (123% improvement) and product health and safety (102% improvement) demonstrate the most spectacular gain. The extended analysis once again confirms that the changeover to a green supply chain generates synergistic benefits, favoring not only environmental and health outcomes but also operational and economic resilience, along with brand reputation in the market.

#### 4. Conclusions

The present study was carried out to examine the role of green supply chain management in improving the health of food and agricultural industries in the context of Uzbekistan. The findings of this study conclusively reveal that the use of green strategies and principles in the supply chain

is not just a strategic move, but an undeniable requirement for achieving an optimal and healthy food system. Here in the current section, the findings are placed within the existing body of literature and their theoretical and practical significance are examined.

**Table 8.** Overall impact assessment of GSCM implementation

| <i>Performance dimension</i> | <i>Pre-implementation score (1-10)</i> | <i>Post-implementation score (1-10)</i> | <i>Improvement, %</i> |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Environmental impact         | 3.5                                    | 7.8                                     | 123                   |
| Product health and safety    | 4.2                                    | 8.5                                     | 102                   |
| Operational efficiency       | 5.0                                    | 7.2                                     | 44                    |
| Economic performance         | 5.5                                    | 7.0                                     | 27                    |
| Brand reputation             | 5.8                                    | 8.7                                     | 50                    |

The primary important finding was the wide gap between the degree of awareness and the adoption rate of GSCM for the different stakeholders, especially smallholder farmers and producers. This is in line with previous research in the other developing countries and shows that lack of technical knowledge and finance can be the main hindrance to change towards sustainability. Therefore, preparation for effective strategy execution requires sizable investments in farm-level training, promotion, and empowerment of farmers. On the other hand, evidence from this study verifies a high and positive correlation between the application of green practice (such as organic farming, precision agriculture and application of sustainable packages) and food product health indicators. The outstanding reduction of pesticide and nitrate residues in products of GSCM clearly shows that this method can directly help reduce health risk originating from the intake of unhealthy food. This is a key observation since it places the safety of food as a public and national concern on the agenda of the policymakers.

Further, as the initial cost of implementing green management had been put at a high figure, economic analysis of the study showed that such an expenditure would be rewarded in the longer term by reduced operating costs (save water and power), reduced waste and achieving premium price levels in target markets. This could be a significant competitive advantage, especially for a country like Uzbekistan, which aims at increasing export of high value-added products. The second finding of the study was the high willingness of consumers to pay additional amounts for green and healthy goods. This result necessarily means that the Uzbek and global market is orienting itself towards the demand for green goods, and if the Uzbek food sector satisfies this demand, it is able to significantly increase its market share. This emphasizes the importance of awareness of consumer preference and smart promotion of green goods.

Nevertheless, the issues enumerated in this direction, mainly in the sphere of the lack of institutional coordination and inefficiency in comprehensive policy-making, require strong will on the part of the government and the private sector. The experience of foreign countries proves that without providing economic incentives, simplifying the provision of reliable certification procedures, and constructing new regulatory infrastructure, success in this place will be difficult. In summary, it is safe to say that green supply chain management as an integrated paradigm can be helpful in the well-being of food and agricultural products by enhancing production and distribution processes in a continuous process while achieving environmental and economic sustainability goals simultaneously. It is also safe to restrict the scope of this study, which was on a few specific products without considering all the feasible variables that could have an influence. It is therefore suggested that future studies with a longitudinal approach and larger scale undertake investigation of the long-term effects of this strategy. Further, developing homegrown models of green supply chain implementation, with respect to Uzbekistan's specific agro-ecological characteristics, can be a research area in the future.



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