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PROSPECTS FOR PERSIMMON CULTIVATION IN UKRAINE: NEW HORIZONS FOR AGRIBUSINESS

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Problem Statement. In the context of war, the agricultural sector becomes an essential source of income for many regions. Culturing persimmons may be an alternative for farmers who have suffered losses due to military actions. Persimmons have a high demand in the market, both in Ukraine and abroad, which can provide stable profits. The persimmon (Diospyros) is a fruit that is becoming increasingly popular worldwide due to its taste qualities and nutritional value. Traditionally, persimmons have not been widespread in Ukraine, but considering climate change and rising average temperatures, this crop could become promising for cultivation in various country zones. The southern regions, particularly Odesa, Mykolaiv, and Kherson oblasts, have favorable conditions for its development. As frost-resistant varieties are selected, growing persimmons in the central areas is also possible.

Main Material Presentation. Persimmons are a rich source of vitamins A, C, and E, dietary fiber, and many antioxidants that help strengthen the immune system and reduce the risk of many diseases. Persimmons can be consumed fresh or as dried fruits, jams, preserves, and other products. The fruits are used in traditional medicine to treat various ailments, such as gastrointestinal issues, cardiovascular diseases, etc. The vitamins and minerals in persimmons improve overall health [1, 2].

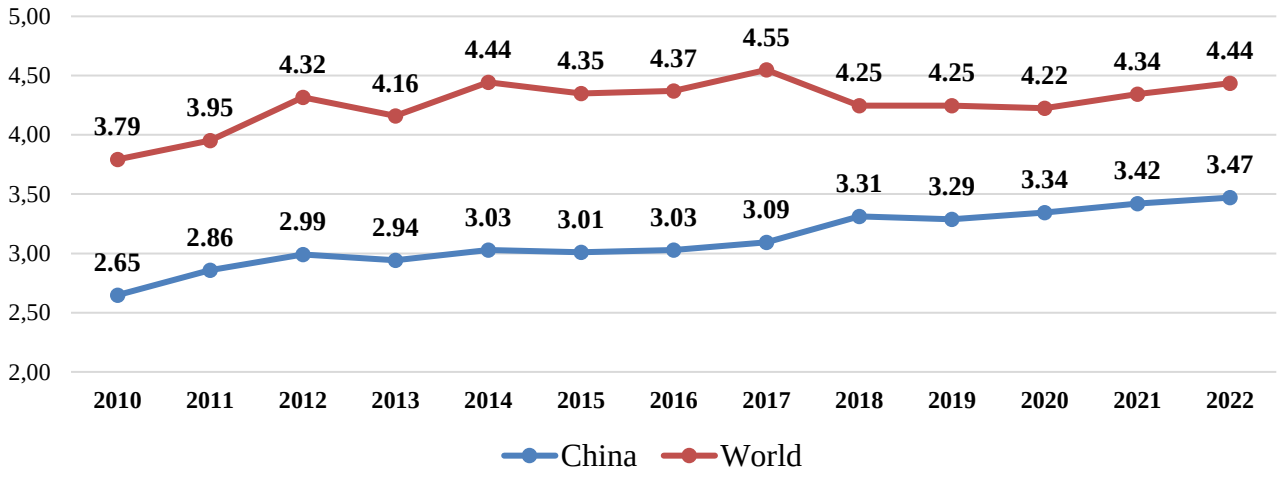
Persimmons are resilient to climate change and can adapt to new conditions. They require a temperate climate with sufficient sunlight. They can withstand short-term droughts, making them promising for cultivation in conditions where traditional crops may suffer losses due to extreme weather events. Persimmons prefer fertile, well-drained soils with a neutral or slightly acidic reaction. Many regions in Ukraine have soils suitable for growing this crop [3].

The cultivation of fruit plantations, such as persimmons, contributes to improving the ecological situation: trees absorb carbon dioxide, produce oxygen, and promote the preservation of biodiversity. This is important in the context of global climate change.

The selection of varieties is a crucial factor for successfully cultivating persimmons. Modern persimmon varieties have high resistance to many diseases and pests, which reduces the need for pesticide use and increases yield. This is especially important in conditions of limited access to resources during wartime.

According to FAO data, the largest producers of persimmons are countries in Asia, particularly China, Korea, and Japan [4]. China is the leader in persimmon production, accounting for over 70% of the global volume (pic. 1).

The country cultivates many varieties of persimmon, including Japanese persimmon (Diospyros kaki). Spain is one of Europe's largest producers of persimmons due to its favorable climatic conditions. There are numerous varieties of persimmons grown worldwide using various technologies. For example, in Spain and Italy, greenhouse cultivation of persimmons is actively developing, allowing for high yields throughout the year.

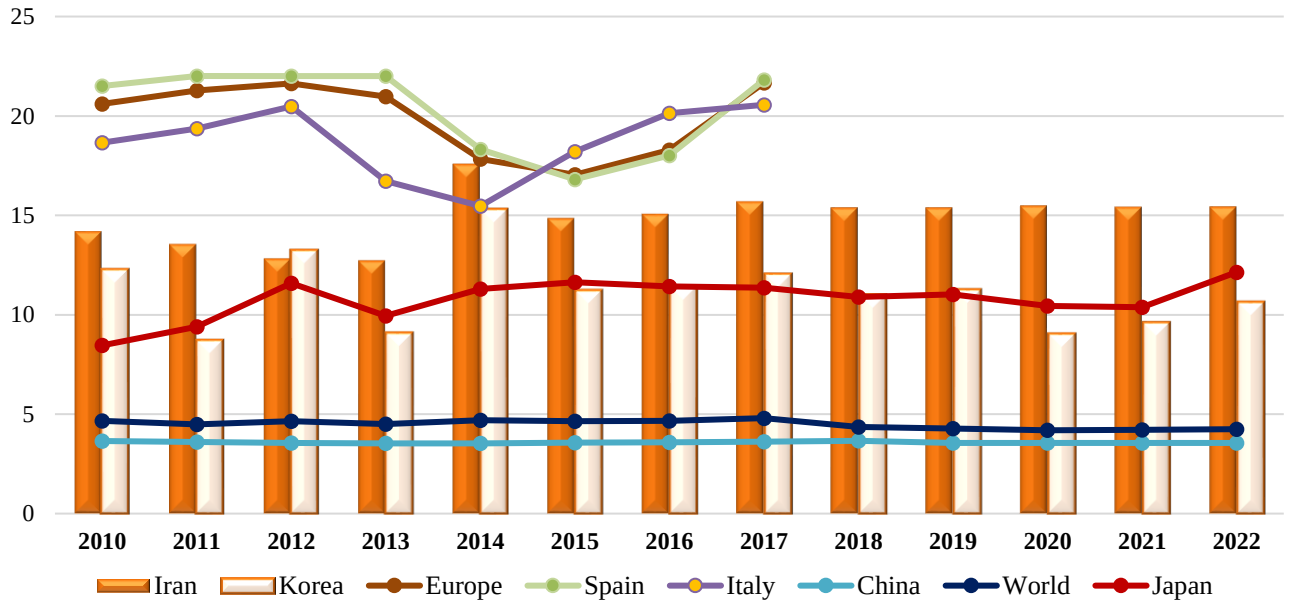


Picture 1 – **Dynamics of the gross harvest of persimmons in the world and China, million t**

Source: authors' development according to FAOSTAT, 2022

The yield of persimmons can vary depending on the region, technological elements, and varieties. Globally, the average yield of persimmons is about 10-15 tons per hectare. This level can reach 20-25 tons per hectare in some countries due to intensive agronomic practices. In European countries such as Spain and Italy, the yield of persimmons ranges from 10 to 15 tons per hectare, depending on growing conditions and varieties (pic. 2).

In Ukraine, traditional and new varieties of persimmons are grown and adapted to local onditions. The most popular varieties include "Kakho," "Tangelo," and "Fuyu." Persimmon cultivation in Ukraine has yet to become widespread, but with the adaptation of varieties and proper care, the yield can be approximately 5-10 tons per hectare in the initial stages. Over time, with appropriate agronomic development, this yield level may increase. Growing persimmons is an essential source of income for farmers in many regions. The growing interest in healthy eating and exotic fruits creates demand for persimmons in domestic and foreign markets, making this crop economically viable [5].



Picture 2 – **Persimmon yield in different countries, t/ha**

Source: authors' development according to FAOSTAT, 2022

Persimmons have high profitability compared to traditional crops, so their cultivation can become a lucrative business for farmers, create new jobs in agriculture, and contribute to the development of local economies.

Conclusions: Persimmons are an essential crop with rich nutritional, medicinal, and economic significance. In the context of climate change, their resilience and ability to adapt to drought make them a promising crop for cultivation in arid regions. This crop can become a delicious and healthy product on the tables of Ukrainians and a profitable business for farmers. With the right approach to technological elements, variety selection, and marketing, persimmons can take a worthy place in Ukrainian agriculture, contributing to the region's economic development and improving the population's quality of life. Persimmons are a promising crop with great potential for growth in Ukraine and other countries. The yield of persimmons varies depending on the region, but overall, it has the potential to achieve high figures with proper care and variety selection. Increasing the area of persimmon plantations could become one of the effective strategies for adapting to climate change.

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