

RESEARCH ARTICLE

# The Role Of Karakul Fur Trade In Commerce Between Bukhara Emirate And Russia

Zuhriddin Haydarov

National university of Uzbekistan, teacher, faculty of history, Uzbekistan

VOLUME: Vol.06 Issue01 2026

PAGE: 27-29

Copyright © 2026 Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Research Fundamentals, this is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 4.0 International License. Licensed under Creative Commons License a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

## Abstract

This article analyzes the role, price, and quantity of karakul fur in Bukhara-Russia trade relations in the second half of the 19th - early 20th centuries. It also provides information on traders engaged in the sale of karakul, their income from this trade, in which regions karakul are grown, and in which regions this trade is conducted.

## KEY WORDS

Bukhara Emirate, Russia, karakul fur, market, fair, trade, livestock farming, profit.

## INTRODUCTION

Russia occupied a central place in the Bukhara Emirate's trade relations with foreign countries. Russian products were in demand in Bukhara, and Bukharan products in Russia. Trade between the two countries increased several times by the second half of the 19th century. In the Emirate's trade relations with Russia, the trade of cotton and karakul had a special significance. These products accounted for 90% of all trade goods exported to Russia. Karakul are in high demand not only in Russia, but also in European countries, which indicates the effectiveness of their sale on the world market.

## RESULTS

In the agriculture of the Bukhara Emirate, livestock farming was one of the most profitable sectors. The majority of the population living in the emirate also engaged in livestock farming. According to the data, the total number of livestock in the emirate was 10 million head, of which 4 million were Karakul sheep [1, C.43]. In livestock farming, great attention was paid to the raising of Karakul sheep, which were raised in almost all regions of the country. In 1840-1850, 427,797 karakul fur were exported from Bukhara to Russia via the Orenburg road, and 60,583 fur were exported via the Troitsk

road [2, C.69].

By the end of the 19th century, livestock farming became a source of income for the population. The Karakul sheep breed dominated the industry. Such sheep were mostly raised in the Guzar, Chardzhou, Karshi, Karki, and Kalif principalities. In Eastern Bukhara, Karakul, Kurgantepa, and Kulyab sheep breeds were bred more often [3, C.53]. During this period, livestock breeders in the Bukhara Emirate achieved great success, and the number of sheep and lambs increased by 6 times [4, C.92]. For example, residents living in the villages of Jilikol and Karaturkman of Korgontepa province sold 21,000 pieces of blackbuck skins per year [5, C.57].

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the karakul fur trade played an important role in the emirate after cotton exports. The export of karakul fur to Russia and other foreign countries increased from year to year. In 1840-1849, 398 thousand pieces of karakul fur were exported, in 1887 - 750 thousand pieces, in 1903 - 1 million pieces, in 1909 - 1 million 800 thousand pieces, and by 1912 - 2 million pieces of karakul fur [6, C.21]. The average price of Karakul skin is 9,5 rubles, and the total price is 19 million rubles [7, B.3].

The Mirshodi market is considered one of the cheapest markets for livestock in Central Asia. According to the Mirshodi customs inspector, 10,000 to 20,000 head of livestock are transported through customs to Western Bukhara annually<sup>8</sup>, [Б.377]. It is known that middle-class traders bought livestock from this market at low prices and sold it in the Guzar and Karshi markets. It is also noted in sources that traders from various regions of Bukhara, Samarkand and Turkestan came to the Mirshodi market to buy livestock<sup>9</sup>, [C.65]. According to information, the Guzar market was mainly specialized in selling livestock. Cattle were brought to Guzar from Eastern Bukhara and Afghanistan. N.A.Maev writes that Guzar has a large livestock market, where more than 4 thousand sheep and other livestock are sold every market day<sup>10</sup>, [C.325].

Among the famous local merchants engaged in internal and external trade in the emirate, the brothers Jurabek and Mirkalon Arabov were leaders in the sale of karakul furs in the Bukhara emirate. In 1912, Jurabek Arabov sold 72,578 karakul furs, and in 1913, 151,937 karakul furs in various cities of Russia at 14 rubles per fur, making a profit of 2 million 114 thousand 518 rubles<sup>11</sup>, [C.164]. Also, Latifkhoja, Ubaydullahhoja and Saidkhoja Kasimhojaev are famous in the sale of black leather, occupying the second place in the emirate. The emir of Bukhara, Abdulahad, is also considered the leader in the sale of blackbuck skins to Russia, and he is in third place in the emirate in this regard<sup>12</sup>, [C.63].

The emir of Bukhara, Abdulahad, conducted the karakul fur trade in collaboration with more than 30 major merchants. For example, merchants such as Jurabek Arabov, Latifkhodja and Ubaydullahkhodja Kasymkhodjayev, together with the emir, invested in the karakul fur trade and shared the profits equally. They led the way in exporting karakul fur to the cities of Orenburg, Moscow, Nizhny Novgorod, the Caucasus, and St. Petersburg<sup>13</sup>, [Б.15]. Sources state that in 1889, a caravan leader from Bukhara named Abdurakhman brought a large amount of karakul skins to the Moscow and Nizhny Novgorod fairs and made a profit of 4 million tenge<sup>14</sup>, [C.210].

Due to the high demand for karakul fur in Russian cities, Bukhara merchants purchased karakul fur not only from the Bukhara Emirate, but also from neighboring regions such as Iran and Afghanistan and exported it to Russia. For example, in the 1850s, Bukhara merchants exported 40,000 karakul furs purchased from the Bukhara Emirate and Iran, worth about 30,000 rubles, to Russia. At that time, 1 karakul fur was valued

at 1 ruble 20 ts<sup>15</sup>, [C.12].

In 1868-1869, 681,873 rubles worth of karakul fur was exported from the Bukhara Emirate to Russian cities. Also, in 1869, 1871, and 1872, Bukhara merchants exported large quantities of karakul fur to the Nizhny Novgorod and Ibri fairs. In the early 1870s, merchants bought karakul fur from the Bukhara markets and sold them in Russian markets for 130-135 tenge per 10 pieces<sup>16</sup>, [C.663-664]. The volume of trade in karakul furs expanded in the trade between the two countries. For example, in 1880-1881, 4 thousand pounds of lamb and karakul furs were exported from the Bukhara Emirate to Russia, and by the end of the 1980s, this figure had reached 750 thousand pieces<sup>17</sup>, [C.50].

By the 1890s, the main exports from the emirate to Russia were karakul fur, cotton, cocoons, wool, and dried fruits. A. Gubarevich-Radobilsky notes that in the late 1890s, 1.5 million karakul furs were exported from Bukhara to Russia<sup>18</sup>, [C.96-97]. Sources indicate that during 1892-1902, Bukhara merchants Jurabek Arabov, Ziyodulla Yakubov, Tilov Kazak, and Mirzaboy Otajonov exported 1.4 million to 2 million karakul furs annually to the markets of Russia and other foreign countries<sup>19</sup>, [Б.242-243].

At the beginning of the 20th century, cattle breeding was the main source of income of the Bukhara Emirate. Karakul skins were highly valued in the Russian and European markets and were sold at St. Petersburg fairs and fairs in Lyon, France, and Nizhny-Novgorod, Russia. In 1908, 1,700,000 pieces of black leather were sold at the Nizhny-Novgorod fair alone, half of which was contributed by Russian companies and local residents, and the other half by foreign companies<sup>20</sup>, [chapter.505].

### CONCLUSION

In the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, one of the most important trade products of the Bukhara Emirate with foreign countries, in particular the Russian Empire, was karakul fur. Karakul fur grown in the emirate was exported in large quantities to the markets of Western Europe, in addition to the Moscow and Nizhny Novgorod fairs in Russia. In addition to large Bukhara merchants, the Bukhara emirs were also engaged in the karakul trade, earning large profits.

### REFERENCES

1. Ремез И.А. Внешняя торговля Бухары до мировой

- войны. –С.43.
2. Қудратов Ш.Ё. XIX аср охири- XX аср бошларида Бухоро амирлигида савдо алоқалари ва тадбиркорлик тарихи. Тарих фанлари бўйича фалсафа доктори (PhD) илмий даражасини олиш учун тайёрлаган Диссертацияси. Бухоро. 2022. Б - 69.
  3. Юсупов Ш. Очерки истории Кулябского бекства в конце XIX– и начале XX века. – Душанбе, 1964. – С.53.
  4. Тухтаматов Т. Россия и Бухарский эмират в начале XX века. – Душанбе, 1977. – С.92.
  5. Гаевский П. Кургантюбенское бекство // Известия Русского географического общества Т. 4. Вып.2, 1919-1923 гг. – С.57.
  6. Очилдиев Ф.Б. Очилдиев Ф.Б. XIX асрнинг иккинчи ярми – XX аср бошларида Бухоро амирлигида ижтимоий-иқтисодий муносабатлар. – Тошкент: FIRDAVS-SHON 2022. –Б.21.
  7. ЎзМА, И 1- жамғарма, 12-рўйхат, 1915-иш, 3-варақ.
  8. Полк. Галкин. Военно-статистический очерк средней и южных частей Сурханской долины – С.377.
  9. Туркестанские ведомости. 1894. – № 65.
  10. Маев Н.А. Очерки горных бекств Бухарского ханства ... – С. 325.
  11. Хотамов Н.Б. Роль банковского капитала в социально-экономическом развитии Средней Азии (нач, 90- годов. XIX в нач 1917 г.). – Душанбе, 1990. – С.164.
  12. Искандаров Б.И. Из истории Бухарского эмирата –М., 1958. – С.63.
  13. Хасанов М. Файзулла Хўжаев. –Т., 1990, -Б.15.
  14. Соколов А.Я. Торговая политика России в Средней Азии и развитие русско-афганских торговых отношений. –Т., “Фан”, 1971, -С.210.
  15. Губаревич-Радобильский А.Ф. Материалы для изучения хлопководства. – СПб. 1912. Вып. II. –С.12.
  16. Стремухов. Поездка в Бухару. -1875. -С.663-664.
  17. Рожевец Р.Ю. Поездка в южную и среднюю Бухару в 1906 г. - СПб, 1908.-С.50.
  18. Губаревич-Радобильский А. Экономический очерк Бухары и Туниса. –С.96-97.
  19. ЎзР МДА, 3-фонд, 2с-рўйхат, 32с-иш, 242-243-саҳифалар.
  20. Шимоновский В. В. Москве перед ярмаркой //Туркестанский сборник. Том.505.