

# Innovation as a Factor in Sustainable Development of Russia's Agriculture

Nadezhda N. Semenova<sup>\*</sup>, Irina A. Ivanova and Svetlana G. Busalova

*Faculty of Economics, Ogarev Mordovia State University, Saransk, Russia*

**Abstract:** Sustainable agriculture is an integral aspect of the sustainable development of a socio-economic system. In this regard, innovation is considered to be one of the leading factors ensuring the development of sustainable agricultural since it increases the efficiency and competitiveness of the industry in the domestic and foreign markets. This study presents a system of recursive equations characterizing the innovations occurring within agricultural organizations in the regions of the Russian Federation. Additionally, the study assesses the sustainability of agricultural development in Russia by calculating the integrated index of five components: economic, innovative, social, ecological, and institutional. Also, the authors built a regression model that estimates the influence of innovation on the sustainability of agricultural development in Russia.

**Keywords:** Sustainable development, sustainable agriculture, innovation, innovative development.

## INTRODUCTION

Russia's agricultural sector is the main producer of vital agricultural products, and any agricultural sector plays a crucial role in ensuring the food security and food independence of a country (Pargaru, Stancioiu, Ladaru, and Teodor, 2019; Krylatykh and Mazloeva, 2016; Kormishkina, Semenova, Krutova, and Sausheva, 2013). According to some scholars, in the near future we can expect a higher demand for food accompanied by aggravated environmental problems due to intensive farming (Skaf, Buonocore, Dumontet, Capone, and Franzese, 2019; Czyzewski, Matuszczak, and Muntean, 2018; Caraka, Chen, Toharudin, Pardamean, Yasin, and Wu, 2019; Ivleva, Ivleva, and Ivleva, 2019; Ivleva, Yablochkina, Kornilova, Ludvig, and Vasyakin, 2016). Thus, the greatest global challenges faced by humankind are ensuring food security and reducing the risks and threats to sustainable agricultural development around the world (Borzykh, 2019; Czyzewski, Matuszczak, and Muntean, 2019; Serova, 2017; Spicka, Hlavsa, Soukupova, and Stolbova, 2019).

Currently, the main imperatives for the sustainable development of agriculture include: a) increasing human and social capital of rural territories; b) stimulating innovation and technological modernization of the industry; c) conserving natural resources and preserving them for future generations (Caraka, Lee, Kurniawan, Herliansyah, Kaban, Nasution, Gio, Chen, Toharudin, and Pardamean, 2020; Caraka, Tahmid, Putra, Iskandar, Mauludin, Hermansah, Goldameir,

Rohayani, and Pardamean, 2018; Caraka, Bakar, Tahmid, Yasin, and Kurniawan, 2019).

Sustainable agricultural development requires innovations that increase the efficiency and competitiveness of the industry in the domestic and global markets (Sinha, 2019; Kheyfets and Chernova, 2019; Voronin, Chupina, Voronina, and Chupin, 2019; Kantemirova, Kuchieva, and Balikoev, 2016; Kharitonov, 2016a, 2016b; Adenle, Wedig, and Azadi, 2019; de Gennaro and Forleo, 2019; Nikolaeva, 2014; Markova, 2013; Brinza, Ilyichev, Ugarova, and Loginova, 2015; Fedorenko, Persteneva, Konovalova, and Tokarev, 2016). Major innovations in agriculture will lead to: an increase in crop yields and livestock productivity; the growth in labor productivity and agricultural production; saving material, labor, and financial resources (Surya, Syafri, Abubakar, Sahban, and Sakti, 2020; Ponkratov, Karaev, Silvestrov, Kuznetsov, Smirnov, and Kotova, 2019). At present, innovation is of paramount importance for the sustainable development of agriculture.

Sustainable agricultural development through innovation is among the top priorities of the Russian Federation (Osipov, Ponkratov, Karepova, Volkova, Karaev, and Kuznetsov, 2020). For instance, in August 2017, the country adopted the Federal Scientific and Technical Program for the Development of Agriculture for 2017-2025, which implies the transition of the industry to an innovative path of development, increasing export potential and reducing its dependence on imported technology.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Sustainable agriculture is an integral element of the sustainable development of the global economy (Aziz,

\*Address correspondence to this author at the Ogarev Mordovia State University, 68 Bolshevikskaya St., Saransk, 430005, Russia;  
E-mail: nadezhda\_semenova\_1980@bk.ru

Muhammad, Ghazali, Talaat, and Saputra, 2019). For the first time, the issues of sustainable development were actively discussed worldwide in the 1960-1970s when humanity faced some risks and threats: namely, the depletion of natural capital, the lack of mineral resources and energy, ecosystem degradation, lower regenerative ability of the biosphere, food crisis, and alleviated poverty (Caraka, Hafianti, Hidayati, Wilie, and Muztahid, 2019; Toharudin, Caraka, Darmawan, Iskandar, Somantri, Arnita, Soebagyo, Goldameir, and Asmawati, 2018). In 1987, the UN International Commission on Environment and Development published a report "Our Common Future." This document claimed that the equal coexistence of society and the world, in which environmental safety will be an integral part of sustainable development, is the prime goal in the development of the global economy. Sustainable development was defined as "the development that contributes to meeting the needs of the current generation without reducing the ability of future generations to satisfy their needs" (Brundtland, 1987).

In 1992, the United Nations held a conference on the environment and adopted the document "Agenda 21," which presents 27 fundamental principles of sustainable development (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 1996). In other words, the global community formed a new economic paradigm: the concept of sustainable development based on the harmonization and optimal combination of economic, social, and environmental advances, as well as consideration of the interests of present and future generations.

Currently, within the triune concept of sustainable development embracing the economic, social, and environmental components, some scientists (Goryunova, 2015; Reshetnikova, 2017) identify a fourth subsystem—the institutional one. They single out the institutional component, as there is a need for creating a regulatory framework in regard to the modern information system and other institutions that would ensure the sustainable development of countries and regions.

The concept of "sustainable development of agriculture" was first defined at a 1996 session of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). According to the FAO, sustainable development of agriculture ensures the conservation and preservation of soil fertility, the rational use and protection of water resources, and preservation and accumulation, within

reasonable limits, of plant and animal genetic potential. The main objective of sustainable agricultural development is to increase the production of high-quality and safe food and to ensure food security (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 1996). This aim can be achieved by creating and using intensive resource-saving technologies, creating favorable conditions for the development of all forms of management, increasing the income of agricultural producers and social protection of the rural population, as well as natural resource management and environmental protection (Kharitonov, 2016a, 2016b; Altukhov, 2017).

According to Askarov and Askarova (2012), agriculture is sustainable as long as the reproduction of its resource potential—the natural environment, means of production, and human resources—may continue for unlimited time. Russian academic Petrikov (2009) defines sustainable rural development as "stable development that increases the efficiency of the rural economy, the level and quality of life of the rural population, maintains ecological balance, and preserves and improves the rural landscape." Sustainable agricultural development entails maintaining an economic, social, and environmental balance that ensures the congruence of interests within the trinity of "nature – society – people" (Kazannikov, 2015).

Against this background, the main criteria for the sustainable development of agriculture are: 1) economic: the growth in food production and the economic efficiency of agricultural production; 2) social: higher level and better quality of life, as well as improved demographic and migration situation in rural areas; 3) environmental: the stability of agricultural systems, better environmental quality and conservation of natural resources; 4) institutional: legislation, regulatory, and control institutions, as well as the institutions of social and economic development.

Innovation plays a leading role among the factors of sustainable agricultural development (Nikitin and Kuzicheva, 2019; Lukhmanova, Baisholanova, Shiganbayeva, Sambetbayeva, Abenov, and Gussenov, 2019; Mazur, Barmuta, Demin, Tikhomirov, and Bykovskiy, 2016; Akhmetshin, Vasilev, Mironov, Yumashev, Puryaev, and Lvov, 2018). According to some researchers, the latest technology and innovation in agriculture reduce the complexity of production and labor costs by 47.1-87.0% (Derevyankin, 2014). At the same time, the potential for introducing innovation in

their activities is not the same for all agricultural producers (Chekunov, 2019). For instance, large agricultural holdings and agro-industrial clusters (except for organic and waste-free agriculture) have the greatest potential for introducing modern innovative technologies. Farms are most interested in organic farming technologies, loose livestock, circular agriculture, and drip irrigation (Asylbaev, Nigmatyanov, Khabirov, Sergeev, and Kurmasheva, 2020).

Innovation in agriculture has certain specifics: firstly, the introduction of innovations should provide not only economic benefits, but also maintain consumers' health; secondly, the development and implementation of innovations takes quite a long time; thirdly, the industry is influenced by the climatic conditions (Minina, 2019; Podkolzina and Pavlyuk, 2018).

In modern conditions, the innovative development of the industry involves not only the active use of the technologies created in the times of the "green revolution" (reclamation, mechanization, chemization, best advances of selective breeding, etc.), but also post-industrial agriculture technologies (for example, digitalization) (Petrikov, 2018; Aitkhozhin, Balkibayeva, Ramazanova, Yermekov, and Karsybayeva, 2019). The introduction of innovations in agriculture aimed at its sustainable development should take the following directions: a) the development of human capital; b) the development of biological resources; c) increasing the technical and technological potential (Podkolzina and Pavlyuk, 2018; Dedeева and Lapaeva, 2015).

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this study we used the following methods and tools:

1. Factor and correlation analysis, as well as analysis of variance to identify and verify the results of a regression system and to test the statistical hypotheses according to the F-test and Student's t-test.
2. The method of multicriteria integral assessment of the sustainability of agricultural development. We used two approaches as integrated assessment tools:

The first was a transformed polygon (stability radar) constructed on the basis of five local criteria: economy (17 indicators), innovation (44 indicators), social sphere (16 indicators), ecology, and institutions (15 indicators).

In this case, the stability index was calculated by the formula:

$$I_{sus1} = \frac{S_i}{S} \quad (1)$$

where  $S_i$  is the polygon area for the  $i$ -th region of the Russian Federation;

$S$  is the total area of the attribute space (the polygon of the "reference" region whose ranks have the maximum possible value).

The second is the stability index, which can be calculated by the formula:

$$I_{sus2} = \frac{x_i - x_{i \min}}{x_{i \max} - x_{i \min}} \quad (2)$$

where  $x_i$  is the value of the  $i$ -th indicator,

$x_{i \max}$  and  $x_{i \min}$  are the maximum and minimum values of the  $i$ -th indicator.

To calculate the integral index of sustainable agricultural development, we used the formula:

$$I_{sus} = \frac{I_{sus1} + I_{sus2}}{2} \quad (3)$$

3. Regression modeling of the impact of innovation on sustainable agricultural development based on the generalized least squares method.

## RESEARCH RESULTS

According to the Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation, innovation activity in agriculture has been decreasing over the past decade. For instance, in 2018, the share of innovative goods in agriculture amounted to only 1.9% of the total volume of production; the share of organizations implementing technological innovations decreased from 9.5 in 2008 to 3.1% in 2018.

To assess innovation activity in Russian agriculture, we used a recursive system of econometric equations, which take the following form:

$$\begin{cases} Y_1 = \sum_{j=1}^m a_{1j} \cdot X_j + \varepsilon_1 \\ Y_2 = b_{21} \cdot Y_1 + \sum_{j=1}^m a_{2j} \cdot X_j + \varepsilon_2 \\ Y_3 = b_{31} \cdot Y_1 + b_{32} \cdot Y_2 + \sum_{j=1}^m a_{3j} \cdot X_j + \varepsilon_3 \end{cases} \quad (4)$$

where the endogenous variables of model (1) are explained below.

$Y_1$  is the internal expenditure on research and development in agricultural organizations (RUB million),

$Y_2$  refers to the advanced production technologies used in agricultural organizations (RUB million), and

$Y_3$  is the value of the combined volume of innovative goods, work, and services in agriculture (RUB million).

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} Y_1 = -19.62273 + 0.00011X_5 + 0.00180X_8 + 0.00129X_{21} + 0.01614X_{35} + \varepsilon_1; F_1(4; 77) = 43.27; R_1^2 = 0.69 \\ \quad (4.761) \quad (4.616) \quad (4.227) \quad (9.337) \\ Y_2 = 489.77753 + 3.19469Y_1 - 0.65171X_3 + 0.00305X_6 + 0.06056X_{24} + 0.08068X_{27} + 23.95891X_{37} + \varepsilon_2; F_2(6; 75) = 24.59; R_2^2 = 0.66 \\ \quad (4.129) \quad (-2.891) \quad (3.354) \quad (3.279) \quad (2.226) \quad (3.035) \\ Y_3 = -74124.298 + 1.40529Y_1 + 12.10204Y_2 + 0.02886X_5 + 5607.44314X_{15} - 0.5570X_{26} + 4726.53916X_{39} + 4960.13594X_{43} + \varepsilon_3; F_3(7; 74) = 29.68; R_3^2 = 0.74 \\ \quad (2.149) \quad (3.712) \quad (2.829) \quad (3740) \quad (-4.181) \quad (2.904) \quad (2.095) \end{array} \right. \quad (5)$$

The regression equations of system (5) and their parameters were reliable according to the F-test and Student's t-test (significance level  $\alpha = 0.05$ ) since

$$F_i > F_{cri}, |t_{aj}| > t_{cri} \quad (6)$$

where

$$\begin{aligned} F_{cri}(0.05; 4; 77) &= 2.49; F_{cri}(0.05; 6; 75) \\ &= 2.22; F_{cri}(0.05; 7; 74) = 2.14 \end{aligned} \quad (7)$$

$$\begin{aligned} t_{cri}(0.05; 77) &= 1.991; t_{cri}(0.05; 75) \\ &= 1.992; t_{cri}(0.05; 74) = 1.993 \end{aligned} \quad (8)$$

The system of recursive equations (5) can be used to predict the innovation activity in agricultural organizations in Russia.

As part of our study, we analyzed sustainable development in agriculture in the Volga Federal District of the Russian Federation according to the calculated integral index. The calculations of the local and integral indices of sustainable agricultural development in the Volga Federal District are presented in Table 1.

Table 2 presents the interpretation of the agricultural sustainability index in the regions of the Volga Federal District of Russia.

To assess the influence of innovations on the sustainable development of agriculture in the regions of the Volga Federal District, we constructed regression (9), as follows:

Each endogenous indicator is influenced by numerous socio-economic factors  $X_j (j = 1, \dots, m)$ . The exogenous variables were represented by 44 indicators that affect the development of innovation activity and are relevant to Russia's regions. Sequential stepwise addition was used to construct multiple regression equations depending on the given factors, excluding those responsible for multicollinearity as well as factors deemed as statistically insignificant by Student's t-test.

The system of the constructed recursive equations describing the innovation activity in agricultural organizations in Russia takes the following form:

$$I_{sus} = -0.617 + 2.267 \cdot I_{RRII} + \varepsilon; F(1, 12) = 38.96; R^2 = 0.77 \quad (9) \quad (6.242)$$

where  $I_{RRII}$  is the index of Russia's Regional innovative development calculated for the regions of the Volga Federal District as an integral indicator using the above multicriteria methodology, which is based on five local criteria (Table 3 and Figure 1).

The constructed regression equation (9) was statistically significant ( $\alpha = 0.000044$ ,  $(F_{cr}(0.000044; 1; 12) = 38.78, F > F_{cr})$ ), thus confirming the high correlation of agricultural stability in the regions of the Volga Federal District ( $I_{sus}$ ) with the innovation activity of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation ( $I_{RRII}$ ) (correlation coefficient  $R=0.87$ ). Simultaneously, the regression coefficient  $\alpha_1 (= 2.267)$  was reliable according to Student's t-test ( $\alpha = 0.000044$ ). Therefore, we can draw highly reliable conclusions confirming the significance of innovation on the sustainability of agricultural development.

## DISCUSSION

Having analyzed the system of recursive equations to describe the innovation activity of agricultural organizations in the regions of the Russian Federation, we can draw the following conclusions:

- The volume of gross regional product per capita, agricultural production, investment in fixed assets of agricultural enterprises, and number of staff employed in research and development

**Table 1: Local and Integrated Indices of Agricultural Development in the Regions of the Volga Federal District**

No	Region	Local criteria					$I_{sus1}$	$I_{sus2}$	$I_{sus} = \frac{I_{sus1} + I_{sus2}}{2}$	Rank
		Economy	Innovation	Social sphere	Ecology	Institutions				
1	Republic of Tatarstan	0.552	0.537	0.838	0.218	0.870	0.470	1.000	0.735	1
2	Nizhny Novgorod Region	0.434	0.496	0.375	0.212	0.687	0.272	0.445	0.358	4
3	Samara Region	0.478	0.417	0.460	0.267	0.661	0.296	0.502	0.399	2
4	Republic of Bashkortostan	0.411	0.412	0.551	0.285	0.586	0.282	0.473	0.378	3
5	Perm Region	0.380	0.397	0.322	0.571	0.484	0.271	0.417	0.344	5
6	The Republic of Mordovia	0.319	0.385	0.195	0.515	0.444	0.196	0.213	0.205	8
7	Ulyanovsk Region	0.332	0.385	0.255	0.235	0.467	0.162	0.093	0.127	11
8	Penza Region	0.375	0.382	0.369	0.212	0.431	0.181	0.156	0.168	10
9	Chuvash Republic	0.367	0.375	0.257	0.383	0.409	0.188	0.171	0.180	9
10	Saratov Region	0.407	0.357	0.275	0.325	0.481	0.201	0.209	0.205	7
11	Mari El Republic	0.388	0.328	0.178	0.309	0.402	0.153	0.050	0.102	13
12	Udmurt Republic	0.378	0.320	0.151	0.358	0.423	0.157	0.066	0.112	12
13	Kirov Region	0.313	0.317	0.141	0.627	0.467	0.197	0.217	0.207	6
14	Orenburg Region	0.368	0.289	0.212	0.257	0.402	0.139	0.000	0.070	14

**Table 2: The Interpretation of the Values of the Agricultural Sustainability Index in the Regions of the Volga Federal District of the Russian Federation**

Sustainability area	Index interval boundaries	Degree of system sustainability	Regions
1	$0.7 < I_{sus} \leq 1$	Highly sustainable development	Republic of Tatarstan
2	$0.5 < I_{sus} \leq 0.7$	Sustainable development	
	$0.3 < I_{sus} \leq 0.5$	Development close to sustainable	Nizhny Novgorod Region Samara Region Republic of Bashkortostan Perm Region
3	$0.1 < I_{sus} \leq 0.3$	Development with some features of unsustainability	The Republic of Mordovia Ulyanovsk Region Penza Region Chuvash Republic Saratov Region Mari El Republic Udmurt Republic Kirov Region
	$0.01 < I_{sus} \leq 0.01$	Unsustainable development	Orenburg Region

**Table 3: The Influence of Innovations on the Sustainable Development of Agriculture in the Regions of the Volga Federal District**

Region	Russia's Regional innovation index $I_{RRI}$		Index of socio-economic conditions of innovation		Index of scientific and technical potential		Innovation index		Index of export activity		Index of the quality of innovation policy	
	Index	Rank	Index	Rank	Index	Rank	Index	Rank	Index	Rank	Index	Rank
Republic of Tatarstan	0.537	2	0.523	2	0.475	13	0.570	1	0.461	9	0.642	1
Nizhny Novgorod Region	0.496	5	0.397	34	0.56	4	0.470	8	0.533	3	0.557	6
Samara Region	0.417	11	0.490	5	0.383	37	0.268	39	0.375	25	0.518	10
Republic of Bashkortostan	0.412	13	0.427	17	0.486	12	0.286	36	0.372	26	0.46	15
Perm Region	0.397	17	0.384	45	0.420	20	0.334	23	0.398	21	0.447	17
The Republic of Mordovia	0.385	22	0.324	70	0.341	58	0.500	5	0.191	65	0.539	8
Ulyanovsk Region	0.385	20	0.334	68	0.594	2	0.241	42	0.313	39	0.422	20
Penza Region	0.382	23	0.377	48	0.354	51	0.481	6	0.247	53	0.423	19
Chuvash Republic	0.375	24	0.377	49	0.35	52	0.544	2	0.156	71	0.399	24
Saratov Region	0.357	32	0.406	25	0.384	36	0.223	48	0.314	38	0.419	21
Mari El Republic	0.328	46	0.390	42	0.460	15	0.288	35	0.241	55	0.211	64
Udmurt Republic	0.320	52	0.374	50	0.328	65	0.292	32	0.199	64	0.351	35
Kirov Region	0.317	54	0.314	76	0.387	35	0.301	31	0.327	35	0.256	55
Orenburg Region	0.289	63	0.364	53	0.309	73	0.239	45	0.363	30	0.164	74

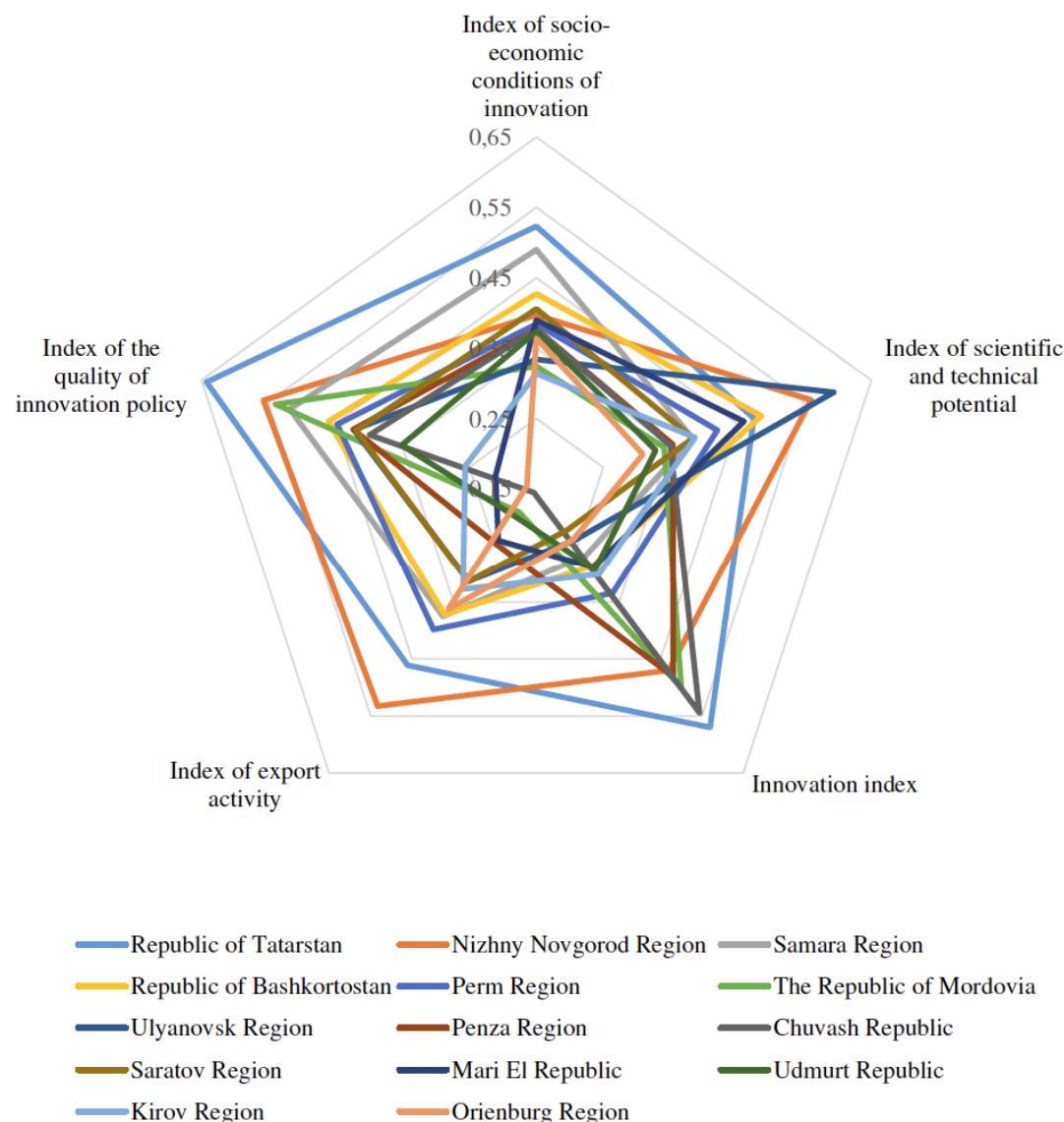
have a significant impact on the growth of research and development in the regions and agricultural organizations.

- The use of advanced production technologies in agricultural organizations depends on the level of research and development costs, number of innovative production technologies developed, investment in fixed assets, and retail and wholesale turnovers.
- The production of innovative goods, work, and services in agriculture depends on the costs of research and development, advanced production technologies used in agricultural organizations, volume of gross regional product per capita, innovation activity of agricultural organizations, development of wholesale trade, use of special software for scientific research, and number of

higher education institutions and scientific organizations.

The calculated indices of the sustainability of agricultural development in the regions of the Volga Federal District of the Russian Federation indicate the following:

- In terms of the local criterion of "Economy," the Republic of Tatarstan was the only region to demonstrate sustainable development. The development was close to sustainable for all the other regions of the Russian Federation.
- In terms of the local criterion "Innovation," the Republic of Tatarstan was the only region to demonstrate sustainable development; all other constituent entities of the Russian Federation, with the exception of the Orenburg



**Figure 1:** The ranking of the regions of the Volga Federal District by Russia's Regional Innovation Index in 2018.

Region, exhibited development that was close to sustainable.

- In terms of the local criterion "Social sphere," high sustainability was observed in the Republic of Tatarstan. The Republic of Bashkortostan showed sustainable development, while the Nizhny Novgorod, Samara, Penza, and Perm Regions demonstrated development that was close to sustainable. Unsustainable development was a characteristic of the Republics of Mordovia, Mari El, Chuvash, and Udmurt as well as the Ulyanovsk, Saratov, Kirov, and Orenburg Regions.
- In terms of the local criterion "Ecology," the Kirov and Perm Regions as well as the Republic of

Mordovia showed sustainable development. The Republics of Chuvash, Mari El, and Udmurt as well as the Saratov Region exhibited development that was close to sustainable. All the other constituent entities of the Russian Federation showed unsustainable development.

- In terms of the local criterion "Institutions," practically all regions of the Volga Federal District showed sustainable or close to sustainable agricultural development.

The constructed regression equation could assess the influences of innovations on the sustainable development of agriculture in the regions of the Volga Federal District. The results confirmed a high correlation ( $R = 0.87$ ).

## CONCLUSION

Agriculture is one of the key sectors of the Russian economy. The sustainable development of this industry is the most important strategic priority of Russia's socio-economic policy. Simultaneously, the country cannot ensure sustainable development of its industry without promoting innovation. The active introduction of innovation helps increase the efficiency and competitiveness of agriculture in the domestic and global markets. Successful innovative development of the industry requires comprehensive measures aimed at stimulating the supply of innovations and increasing the demand for innovative products, services, and technologies.

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