

AGRICULTURE

Extending the Summer for Northerners

So far, 3373.7 tons of vegetables and fruit have been shipped from Dushanbe and Leninabad airports in Tadzhikistan to the Far North and Far East. These are the so-called planned transports. Added to them are over 540 tons of vitamin rich produce that were shipped to Moscow and other cities by scheduled air liners. The result is equal to last year's, even though this year's deliveries of vegetables and fruit were less regular. The reasons are both objective and subjective. I asked S. Chuchelov, Deputy Chief of Operations at the airport, to comment on the situation.

The unpredictable spring weather severely affected the shipments of vitamin-rich produce. The late frost caused serious damage to blossoming apricot orchards and vineyards. All this had a delaying effect on the schedules for transportation of vegetables and fruit, a fact that we reported on time to the airline owners (East Siberian and Yakut administrations). In spite of this, the corrected schedule for the arrival of aircraft was frequently not adhered to.

The result? Highly perishable loads would arrive at the airport and "languish" under the hot sun for two days or even longer. Naturally, the quality of the produce would deteriorate considerably. The senders would get nervous and we would make hundreds of calls to find out where the long overdue aircraft was ... Then the answer would come: it will not arrive because of engine trouble. The cucumbers and tomatoes that no longer appeared marketable would then be sent by us to a commercial network. The people there, of course, would refuse to accept the rotting merchandise. An absolute disgrace, that's all you can say.