
Problems of the Stable Development of Astrakhan Region

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In the market economy, one of the most important things to consider is how to balance relations between ecology and economy. In other words, how can we save natural resources for future generation? This is an urgent issue here nowadays, in Astrakhan. Depending upon the scale of mass production, the quantity, and quality index of natural resources reflects economical and ecological relations.

The Astrakhan regions share of the gross natural product of the Russian Federation is about 0.4%. 0.7% of the Russian population lives in the Astrakhan region. For the last five years the gross regional product of the Astrakhan region has been increased up to 21.5 billion rubles in 2000. Generally, this is because of the oil industry. Oil companies reaped 3488000 tons of oil and 9785 cubic meters of the national gas last year. The life style in Astrakhan has been changed dramatically because of above-mentioned activities. The level of air pollution has increased greatly. About 79.1% of the all pollution is attributed to a company named "Astrakhangazprom" (2).

The second reason of the mass environmental pollution is reservoirs. There is a central water system that serves factories and the general population. This system takes water from reservoirs, cleans it, and recirculates it. Each person in Astrakhan uses about 270 liters of fresh water daily. Over-expenditure of water takes place because of the inefficient technical equipment of water system and unreasonable water usage of population. Moreover, Up to 1 billion cubic meters of water is used for agricultural needs annually.

The next, negative factor of economic activity is the heavy metal pollutants. Machine-making companies, metalworking, and the transportation industry (30%) oil

production (more 10%) are creating most of them.

Changes, that took place at the region's environment department, are the reasons of changing natural resources' indexes.

Humanity is a part of nature. Not all the changes that are taking place are because of economic activity that effects people's lives. Fewer people were born and more died in the last years. It has been recorded that the growth of the lung's diseases has increased (6.9%), While, at the same time, agricultural indexes have reduced the production level of fish, meat, and milk.

But reducing production levels does not necessarily mean something positive for the environment. Lowering the level of food, the production of textiles, and reducing the agricultural industries will become a reason of discharging people (in industry 42%). This resulted in the increasing level of suicide, criminality, etc.

Reducing level of the economic growth in some branches of the regional economy has led to the lowering of investments of capital assets and payment for natural pollution. Asset value decreased at 31.5% for the last two years.

Based upon all these facts it is possible to make the following conclusion: Government is trying to control the level of environmental pollution, but if the efforts are made at regional level, some problems will persist.

There is a borderline between ecological and economic activities and they appear to have no connections. Using natural resources the same way as people do now by having all the technical progress, knowledge, etc, it is possible to make the process irreversible. It is easy to use natural resources for economic progress, but it is hard to help nature to recover and it takes a long time.

Dynamics indexes of nature conservancy in Astrakhan region in 1999-2000					
No	INDEXES	MESURMENT	1999	2000	2000 % to 1999
1	Asset value	Million rubles	1200	822	68,5
2	Costs for nature conservancy, includes:	thousand	618,5	372,0	60
	Present costs	rubles	271,4	343,2	126,4
	Costs for repair of equipment	thousand rubles	377,1	28,8	7,6
3	Investments for nature conservancy, includes:	million rubles	80,3	223,3	2,8 times
	- air	million rubles	7,4	127,9	17,3 times
	- reproduce of fish	million rubles	24,6	41,7	169,5
4	-Enterprises' payments for pollution of	million rubles	92,9	13,8	14,8
	-Air, includes	million rubles	31,5	7,8	24,8
	Over economically permissive	%	4	9,6	+5,6
	-Water, includes	million rubles	4,6	1,5	32,6
	Over economically permissive	%	15,9	118,3	+2,4
	-Storage waste products, includes	million rubles	56,8	4,5	7,9
	Over economically permissive	%	5,8	28,1	+22,3
5	Collecting money for nature recover, includes	%	100	100	-
	-enterprises	%	29,8	71,3	+41,5
	-federal budget	%	44,3	26,1	-18,2
	-regional and local budgets	%	20,1	2,5	-17,6
	-ecological funds	%	0,05	0,8	+0,75

Sometimes goals of economy and ecology are not the same. There are some scientific ways of dealing with utilization of natural resources. They can be totally different from each other (1).

Some economists believe that people should take from nature as much as they can in order to maximize the profit and should not consider the consequences. As a result, there are no more indexes that show environment pollution in different types of balances and no more natural limitation for economic growth. Such an approach is common for countries with a low level of economic and social prosperity.

Other countries believe that people should care about nature, trying to minimize the usage of natural resources. They want to close the factories that pollute air, water, and do not consider the consequences of this act as well, as they may cause to increase the amount of jobless people, decrease taxes into the budgets, etc. This way of thinking is common place for highly developed countries.

The last point of view is a moderate one. They care about rational use in order to save the natural resources considering ecological factors when government wants to calculate the gross national product. This approach is the most suitable for Russia.

The special type of accounts offered a solution to this problem in the national accounting system (NAS). USA and Western Europe are now working on that direction (3, 5) was offered to classified ecological accounts this way:

- Accounts for resume natural resources (animals, plants, etc.);
- Accounts for not resume natural resources (oil, gas);
- Accounts for cycle system (air, water).

Each account is two-sided: a debit side and credit one that show available resources and process of using them. The basic idea is that these accounts provide appropriate management information about natural resources and the level of environmental pollution (3, 4).

Unfortunately, it is not common to use such type of accounts in Russia. It could be explained by the lack of attention to ecological problems.

Ecological and economical accounting systems that are considered in literature are a combination of statistics and ecology. At the same time, it should be clear that ecological accounting system have its own research object. Dealing with such information and system makes it possible to react to any alteration in a natural condition in time. That is why the principal of an ecological accounting system may be the same as bookkeeping system. Not only enterprises can use it, but regional and federal governments may use it as well. These accounts might be not only first order, but also the second and third. It depends upon the system and information.

Government should charge enterprises for using natural resources directly and apply applicable market prices. Ecological auditing and environmental monitoring can be included in the ecological accounting system.

The most effective results of working such a system can be achieved if it is used in regions, and with the control systems of such activities.

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