

OPINION

by Prof. Vasil Stoimenov Nikolov
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scientific specialty “Breeding of farm animals, biology and biotechnology of reproduction”,
Professional field 6.3. “Animal breeding”

On a competition for the academic position of “Associate Professor”
in the area of higher education 6. “Agricultural sciences and veterinary medicine”, professional
field 6.3 “Animal breeding”, scientific specialty “Sericulture”, announced in the State Gazette,
issue 30/04.04.2023, and in accordance with Order No. RD 16-650/01.06.2023 of the Rector of the
Agricultural University – Plovdiv

Candidate: Chief Assist. Prof. Dr. Krasimira Lyubenova Avramova
from Agricultural University – Plovdiv

Chief Assist. Prof. Dr. Krasimira Avramova was born on October 29, 1983, in Dupnitsa. She obtained a Bachelor’s degree in “Agronomy(General agronomy)” in 2006 and a Master’s degree in “Sustainable Land Management” in 2007 from the Agricultural University - Plovdiv. In 2008, she enrolled in a regular doctoral program in the field of “Animal Breeding Sciences” at the same university, specializing in “Sericulture”. In 2012, she defended doctoral dissertation “Opportunities for Year-round Supply of Silkworm Seeds from the Mulberry Silkworm Bombyx mori L.” and earned an educational and scientific degree of “Doctor”. She has additional qualifications in “Professional Pedagogy” (2005) and “Organic Farming” (2012) from the Agricultural University - Plovdiv, as well as “Hunting Management” from the University of Forestry - Sofia (2014). She specialized in “Sericulture” in Padova, Italy (2009). Since 2011, she has been a lecturer at the Department of Animal Breeding Sciences at the Agricultural University - Plovdiv, holding the academic positions of Assistant (2011) and Chief Assistant (2013) consecutively. She has served as the director of the “Educational-Information Center” at the Agricultural University - Plovdiv and is a member of the University’s Quality Commission.

Scientific works

For the purposes of the present opinion, 26 scientific publications included in the list of abstracts of scientific works with which Chief Assist. Prof. Dr. Krasimira Avramova participates in the current competition, as well as a book based on her dissertation, were evaluated. The presented publications are not related to the dissertation work or the publications based on which she obtained her educational and scientific degree of “Doctor”.

All 26 scientific publications are within the designated field of study. Sixteen of the articles have been published in journals that are referenced and indexed in globally renowned scientific databases, namely: Agricultural Sciences of the Agricultural University - Plovdiv (3), Scientific Works of the Agricultural University (1), Animal Sciences (3), Journal of Mountain Agriculture on the Balkans (2), Journal of BioScience and Biotechnology (1), Scientific Papers, Series D Animal

Sciences (3), and Acta Zoologica Bulgarica (2) and Bulgarian Journal of Agricultural Science (1), which have SJR rankings. 10 scientific works have been published in conference proceedings. Dr. Krasimira Avramova is the sole author of four publications, the first author of six, the second author of five, and the third or subsequent author in the remaining 11. All articles authored solely by Dr. Krasimira Avramova and four articles where she is the first author, have been published in journals referenced in globally renowned databases.

Teaching activity

Dr. Krasimira Avramova has 11 years and 9 months of teaching experience. She has delivered lectures and exercises on the subject of "Sericulture" to students in the Bachelor's and Master's degree programs from various specialties at the Agricultural University - Plovdiv. She has also taught courses on "Reproductive Biotechnology in Sericulture" in the Master's degree program for students specializing in Animal breeding. Additionally, she teaches courses on "Rabbit Breeding", "Wildlife Management", "Hunting Tourism" and "Hunting Tourism and Hunting Farms". Her teaching workload over the past 5 years has averaged 636 hours per year (compared to the norm of 360 hours), including 222 hours of lectures.

Chief Assist. Prof. Dr. Krasimira Avramova is a co-author of the "Exercise Manual for Sericulture" and the author of 10 educational programs, 4 of which are in the field of competition. She has supervised 23 graduates, 20 of whom were in the Master's degree program.

In terms of educational work and development of elements to improve the quality of the educational process, Chief Assist. Prof. Dr. Krasimira Avramova has been involved in projects such as: "Vocational Training and Skills Acquisition" under the Rural Development Program for the period 2014-2020; "Establishment of a Training Center for Practical Training of Students in the Professional Directions of Crop Science and Plant Protection at the Agricultural University - Plovdiv" under the Operational Program "Regions in Growth" (2014-2020); "Introduction of Electronic Forms for Distance Learning at the Agricultural University - Plovdiv"; "Student Internships"; "Support for the Development of PhD Students in the Scientific Field of Agricultural Sciences and Related Scientific Specialties under the Operational Program "Human Resources Development"; and "Building Key Competences and Folkhighschool Pedagogy in XXI Europe".

Research activity

In the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor, Chief Assist. Prof. Dr. Krasimira Avramova participated with the following:

1. *Habilitation work* - **10 articles** published in journals referenced and indexed in globally renowned scientific databases, earning a total of **168.8 points**. This fulfills the formal requirements of "**Group B**" stated in the Appendix to Article 1a(1) of the Regulations for the Application of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (PPZRAASRB), for Field 6: Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine. The articles were not thematically selected, although it is evident from the next group that there was the opportunity to do so.

2. "**Group G**" includes a book based on a dissertation and **16 publications**, 6 of which were published in referenced journals indexed in globally renowned databases. The total number of points obtained is **217.47**, surpassing the required 200.

The presented works under items 1 and 2 are entirely within the field of the scientific specialty for which the competition is held. The main part of the developments is related to: - genetic (I-No. 2, 4; III-3, 4 from the list of abstracts) and phenotypic (I-No. 1, II-5, 6; III-1, 6, 10) characteristics of new breeds and hybrids of the silkworm, including their testing under different cultivation regimes (I-7, 8, 9, 10); - study of the possibilities for using artificial food in the cultivation of the silkworm (I-No. 6; II-No. 1); - certain ecological aspects such as the influence of heavy metals (I-No. 5; III-5, 8) and insecticides on the larvae (I-No. 3); - cultivation (II-9) and content of nutritional and bioactive components in the leaves of different blueberry varieties (II-No. 3, 4) and others (II-2; III-2, 7).

The developments have been widely presented to the scientific community through participation in 6 international conferences, where 6 reports and 5 posters were presented, as well as 4 national conferences with 3 reports and one poster.

Citation

Eleven citations of the candidate's works were submitted for participation in the competition, earning 75 points, with a minimum requirement of 50 points. All citations are from journals recognized in the Google Scholar platform. Two of the citations are from *Ciencia Rural* journal with an Impact Factor of 0.525 (2017) and SJR 0.337 Q2 (2017), and *Bulgarian Journal of Agricultural Science* with an SJR of 0.248 Q3 (2020). The citations are mainly by foreign authors, with only one citation from a Bulgarian author.

Scientific projects

Dr. Krasimira Avramova has indicated participation in **2 scientific projects**, one of which is funded under the European Union's Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, "Horizon Europe".

Critical remarks and recommendations

1. For participation in the competition, Dr. Krasimira Avramova has submitted 3 lists of scientific publications that are not corresponding to each other. There are technical errors in numbering, point calculation, etc.

2. The lists of scientific works contain 4 articles with an impact factor, while 3 are indicated in the impact factor report. In the latest report for the *Bulgarian Journal of Agricultural Science*, the SJR for 2022 is 0.216. For the publication in *Acta Zoologica Bulgarica* from 2015, the SRJ is for 2015, but it is indicated as for 2012.

3. "Indicator 6" of "Group G" provides an opportunity for the participants in competitions to present a "Published book based on a defended dissertation work...". Although there are no explicit requirements for such publications, in my opinion, the books should be "**based on**" the dissertation work, rather than simply printing the dissertation work itself or its abbreviated version.

4. The translation of the abstracts into Bulgarian requires substantial corrections before being published on the University's website.

5. The presented "Report on scientific contributions" does not provide information about the candidate's scientific activity contributions. The contributions are specified in the "Habilitation

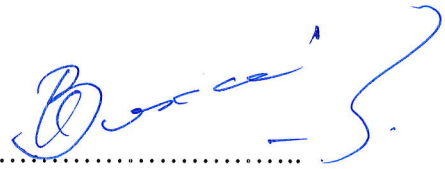
Report” under item 12 of the “Notes” from the Regulations on the Procedure for the Evaluation of Academic Staff Members, which I requested since it was not included in the document package.

6. Although there is no explicit requirement, I believe that the articles presented as habilitation work should be in a similar field. This would allow candidates to meet the requirements of item 12 of the “Notes” from the Regulations on the Procedure for the Evaluation of Academic Staff Members when preparing the “Habilitation Report”, to indicate the positioning of the researched scientific problems among the studies of other researchers in this field, the stand of the conducted research, and the candidate’s personal contribution to them, which is not reflected in this case.

6. Conclusion

Chief Assist. Prof. Dr. Krasimira Avramova meets the requirements of Article 24 (1) of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for the Application of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, and the Rules of the Agricultural University for its implementation, for the appointment to the academic position of “Associate Professor”. I evaluate POSITIVELY her overall activity and propose to the esteemed Scientific Jury to also vote positively, and the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Agronomy at the Agricultural University - Plovdiv to elect **Chief Assist. Prof. Dr. Krasimira Lyubenova Avramova** as an **Associate Professor** in the field of higher education: 6. “Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine”, professional field 6.3 “Stock-breeding”, scientific specialty “Sericulture”.

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PREPARED
THE OPINION: 
(Prof. Dr. Vasil Nikolov)