



SCIENTIFIC OPINION

on dissertation for obtaining the Educational and Scientific Degree '**Doctor**' in Higher Education: 3. Social, Business and Legal Sciences, Professional Field: 3.8 Economics, Scientific Specialty: 'Production Organization and Management'

Author of the dissertation:

Valentina Panteva Agapieva-Aliosman,
part-time PhD student at the Department of Management and Marketing at the Agricultural University, Plovdiv

Doctoral Thesis topic:

'Organizational and Economic Problems of Organic Farming in Bulgaria'

Reviewer: Assoc. Prof. Snejinka **Konstantinova** Stoyanova, PhD, University of Food Technology – Plovdiv, 3. Social, Business and Legal Sciences; professional direction 3.8 Economics, Scientific Specialty 'Economics and Management', appointed as a member of the scientific jury by order No. RD-16-1283 / 20.11.2019 from the Rector of the Agricultural University, Plovdiv

1. The relevance of the topic under consideration

The topic of the dissertation is up-to-date and well defined. Current trends in organic farming, food and nutritional innovation are linked exclusively to environmental and financial motives. The relevance and relevance of the topic is mainly related to the nature of organic farming, as a kind of production system that is maintained mainly by the quality of life and ecosystems, the quality of food and their nutritional values and human health. It relies on ecological processes, biodiversity and cycles adapted to local conditions. In this sense, organic farming blends well with national traditions, innovations and science, fostering good relationships in business partnerships.

2. Purpose, tasks, hypotheses and methods of research

The main goal of the Doctoral student is a comprehensive study of the organizational and economic problems of organic farming in Bulgaria, outlining specific paths and opportunities for improving the established management model.

In pursuit of this goal, the doctoral student sets himself the following tasks: 1) Clarification of the theoretical and methodological issues of economic efficiency arising from the specific features of organic farming; 2) Identification of the existing organizational and economic problems in the organic production; 3) Analysis of the level and dynamics of the economic efficiency of organic farming and revealing the power and direction of influence of the factors that determine them; 4) Opening opportunities for increasing the economic efficiency of organic production of agricultural produce.

The methods of analysis and evaluation of its economic efficiency selected and applied in the dissertation include statistical methods for quantitative and qualitative analysis, such as: comparative method, method of statistical groupings, method of induction and deduction, methods of correlation and variance analysis, etc.

3. Visualization and presentation of the results obtained

The dissertation consists of 220 pages and consists of a title page, a list of abbreviations used, an introduction, four chapters, a conclusion, used literature and five annexes. The results of the dissertation are well illustrated, the volume of applications is 24 pages and include 11 snapshots, questionnaire, 1 chart and 36 tables.

4. Discussion of the results and the references

The analysis in the dissertation covers the state and the main production factors of the biological farms studied, as exemplified by the District of Plovdiv. A methodology for researching and analysing the economic efficiency of organic farming has been successfully implemented, with efficiency being considered as the main economic criterion for measuring economic development. The choice of the system of indicators applied is influenced by the specificity of organic production. There are two main indicators, namely: cost effectiveness ratio and revenue efficiency ratio. Labour productivity was taken as a summary indicator.

In the dissertation, the general financial indicators are also applied: profit, cost and quality of production. Profitability is considered as one of the main indicators of the efficiency of farm production and is defined as the ratio between the financial result and the costs (or resources spent to obtain it). The essential role of the efficiency of the investment and the innovation activity in two aspects – as absolute and comparative efficiency in terms of time factor – has been established.

The analysis of the economic efficiency indicators of the farms studied includes: the level and dynamics of the average yields; amount of production costs; production output and total revenue; analysis and estimation of the total production costs; value of total production per unit area; Labour productivity; prime cost of organic production; gross profit per acre of land; profitability of organic production, etc.

The analysis of the collected empirical information on the main factors influencing the organization and management of the studied organic farms shows the uneven distribution of organic farms in the Plovdiv District, with the largest relative share being the municipalities of Kaloyanovo, Hissarya, Parvomay and Karlovo.

Each of the individual chapters of the dissertation includes accurate and realistic conclusions from the studies and analyses carried out. Specific recommendations have been made to pursue a fairer and more effective state policy in the sector.

The bibliographic reference includes 308 sources, as follows: 143 in Cyrillic, 85 in Latin and 80 online sources.

5. Contributions to the Dissertation

The following contributions can be outlined in the dissertation presented:

Scientific Contributions

- A systematic theoretical and comparative empirical analysis of the state and development of organic farming in Bulgaria has been carried out;
- A model of periodization of organic farming is presented;
- A methodology for evaluation and analysis of economic indicators of organic farms has been developed;

- The general socio-economic status of organic production on the territory of Plovdiv District was studied;
- Factors affecting the state and development of organic farming are revealed.

Scientific and Applied Contributions

- Strategies for the development of the individual organic farm have been developed;
- The market segment of Bulgarian organic products is highlighted.
- It is suggested to improve the subsidy policy in our country;
- Innovative methods and environmentally friendly production practices for integration in organic farming for sustainable rural development are presented;
- The results of the empirical analysis lead to decision making for the potential expansion of organic agriculture in Bulgaria.

6. Critical notes and questions

I have no critical comments on the dissertation.

I have a question for the PhD student:

What are the global trends that will influence the development of organic farming over the next ten years?

7. Published articles and citations

Nine publications are presented, of which five are co-authored and four are self-published. The abstract reflects objectively the structure and content of the dissertation.

CONCLUSION

In support of the above, I consider that Valentina Panteva Agapieva-Aliosman has developed her doctoral thesis at the required scientific level. Various research analyses and extensive scientific tools have been adopted and applied.

Based on the dissertation research and its scientific contributions, I think that the dissertation work meets the requirements of the Application of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, and the Rules of the Agricultural University for its application, which gives me a reason to rate it **POSITIVE**.

I allow myself to propose to the venerable Scientific Jury also to vote positively and to award to Valentina Panteva Agapieva-Aliosman the Educational and Scientific Degree ‘**Doctor**’ in the Scientific Specialty: ‘Production Organization and Management’.

Date: 04.12.2019
Plovdiv, Bulgaria

SCIENTIFIC OPINION BY:
(Assoc. Prof. Sn. **Konstantinova**, PhD)