



SCIENTIFIC OPINION

on dissertation for obtaining the **Doctorate Degree** 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 doctoral 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: Prof. Dr. Nelly Andreeva Bencheva, Agricultural University, 3. Social, Business and Legal Sciences; professional direction 3.7 Administration and management, scientific specialty Organization and management of production, 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 relevance of the dissertation submitted for opinion could be determined in relation to several major aspects of public, economic and scientific interest.

First of all, there is a growing demand for organic foods produced to a high standard of origin and quality control.

Secondly, it is the growing consumption of organic products in EU countries, the second largest global organic market after the US. Thirdly, it is the fast-growing sector of organic production in Bulgaria and the emerging organizational and economic problems that need in-depth research and guidance for future development.

The dissertation examines and offers practically significant directions and recommendations for the future solving of the identified problems and increasing the economic efficiency of the organic production of agricultural production in the conditions of globalization, dynamic and constantly changing social, economic and market environment. Determining the directions for the development of organic agriculture, depending on its specific features and advantages, is related to the need for permanent management of organizational and economic problems by using the available resources to achieve sustainable development.

2. Purpose, tasks, hypotheses and methods of research

The aim of the dissertation work related to a comprehensive study of the organizational and economic problems of organic farming in Bulgaria and to discover the ways and opportunities for improving its management has been successfully defended. To achieve it, the following research tasks have been solved: clarification of the theoretical, methodological and methodological issues of economic efficiency arising from the specific features of organic farming; identification of existing organizational and economic problems in the production of organic agricultural products; analysis of the level and dynamics of the economic efficiency of organic farming and revealing the strength and direction of influence of the factors that determine them; opening up opportunities for increasing the economic efficiency of organic production.

As a theoretical and methodological basis for the development of the problems in the dissertation are the basic principles and normative base of sustainable and efficient organic agriculture. In the course of the study various statistical and economic methods were applied to study the economic efficiency of organic agricultural production such as: comparative method, methods of analysis and synthesis, monographic method, method of statistical groupings, balance method, method for establishing the complex influence of several factors, SWOT-analysis, TOWS-analysis; questionnaire survey to obtain direct information, economic and index factorial analysis methods, trend-based forecasting method, Case Study Approach, calculation and constructive method, peer review study, snapshot method, statistical methods Chi-square, T-test, F-test, Correlation and ANOVA, grouping method, descriptive method, etc. The interview method was used for the survey.

The research is based on the collection of secondary information from various sources and the Internet. The review of the specialized literature also includes numerous publications by Bulgarian and foreign authors. Also, information gathered from participation in a number of national and international scientific conferences, seminars and workshops held at home and abroad. The analysed literature also covers a wide range of sources such as - normative acts, reports of state agencies and institutions, reports, publications and opinions of non-governmental organizations, articles and press comments, etc. All this ensures that the research is successful and that the results are achieved.

3. Visualization and presentation of the results obtained

The dissertation contains an introduction, four chapters, a conclusion, used literature and appendices. They are presented in sufficient volume as tables and figures that clearly and accurately illustrate and support the results, conclusions and summaries achieved.

4. Discussion of the results and the references

The dissertation presents clearly and clearly the concrete results of the research done. The main data and information used in the process of analysing and evaluating the feasibility of the approaches developed, the statistical and economic methods are presented in annexes.

The dissertation is completed, meets the requirements for combining theory, practical research and the resulting conclusions.

The Doctoral student demonstrates the ability to systematize, analyse and summarize empirical data for the purpose of her research. The theoretical summaries made as well as the results of the practical research are the result of a thorough study of the scientific literature and our own empirical studies, which unequivocally prove the originality and the critical statements of the doctoral student.

My overall impression and professional opinion is that the thesis is positive. On the one hand, the doctoral student analyses and evaluates the organizational and economic problems of organic farming. On the other hand, she offers an interdisciplinary approach, specific solutions and guidelines for improving and making organic production a preferred system of land use in rural areas across the country.

5. Contributions to the Dissertation

I would summarize the mentioned contribution points in the reference to the abstract of the dissertation in the following way:

Scientific contributions

- A thorough theoretical and empirical analysis of the state and development of organic farming worldwide and in Bulgaria has been made.
- Specific methodological process and methodology for evaluation and analysis of economic indicators have been developed and implemented, in accordance with the objectives of the organic farm research.
- Factors influencing the status and development of organic farming have been identified and evaluated. A number of specific organizational-economic problems have been identified that accompany and hinder the development of organic production in Bulgaria.
- A comprehensive assessment of the economic performance indicators in organic farms has been made.

Scientific and applied contributions

- Organizational and managerial, strategic guidelines and recommendations for solving a number of established organizational and economic challenges in organic agriculture in Bulgaria have been formulated and proposed.
- Specific ways to increase the profitability and competitiveness of organic production are outlined.
- Innovative methods and environmentally friendly production practices for integration in organic farming are mentioned, which are a prerequisite for the sustainable development of rural areas.

6. Critical notes and matters

I have no significant critical comments on my thesis. I can point out that in some places the wording and the findings need more clarity and concreteness.

However, this note does not in any way diminish the merits and results achieved in the dissertation.

7. Published articles and citations

Attached is a list of nine scientific publications in connection with the research done within the framework of the thesis work, which present the results achieved at international scientific forums in Bulgaria and abroad.

The abstract presented objectively reflects the structure and content of the dissertation.

CONCLUSION:

On the basis of the various methods of research learned and applied by the doctoral candidate, the correctly performed experiments, the summaries made and the conclusions drawn, I believe that the dissertation submitted 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: 27.11.2017
Plovdiv, Bulgaria

SCIENTIFIC OPINION BY: 
(Prof. Dr. Nelly Bencheva)