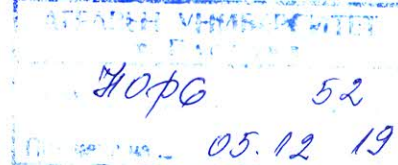


## REVIEW



### on dissertation for obtaining the Educational and Scientific Degree 'Doctor' in:

Field of Higher Education: 3. Social, Business and Legal Sciences

Professional Area: 3.8. Economics

Scientific Specialty: 'Organization and Management'

Author of the dissertation: Valentina Panteva Agapieva-Aliosman, PhD student in the department: Management and Marketing at the Agricultural University – Plovdiv, Bulgaria

Dissertation topic: ORGANIZATIONAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS OF ORGANIC FARMING IN BULGARIA

Reviewer: Prof. Dimitar Ivanov Kostov, DSc, from VUSI – Plovdiv, in Higher Education: 3. Social, Business and Legal Sciences, Professional field – 3.8. Economics, Science – Organization and Management; Appointed a member of the Scientific Jury with Order No. RD -16-1283 of 20.11.2019 by the Rector of the Agricultural University.

#### 1. Brief introduction of the applicant:

Valentina Panteva Agapieva-Aliosman was born on February 23, 1982. In 2013 she received her master's degree in English Philology from the University of Plovdiv. She has specializations in Sittingbourne and Trinity College, London, United Kingdom. She works for a private company in Sittingbourne, United Kingdom.

#### 2. Relevance of the studied problem:

The dissertation presented deals with one of the most important problems of Bulgarian agriculture at this stage – Organic production of agricultural products.

Bulgaria is a country with high agricultural traditions. The wide variety of agricultural products requires a new attitude towards their production. It is necessary to develop a comprehensive system related to the sustainability of the agro-eco-system, both biodiversity and environmentally friendly production of agricultural food. This activity is related not only to protecting the health and life of humans, but also to protecting the environment and nature in general.

These requirements of the World organizations for the protection of humanity and nature show great challenges for Bulgarian agriculture.

This shows that the problem under consideration in the thesis is not only relevant to our agriculture but also to the world agriculture.

Any such development is a particle in the agro-ecosystems chain and needs to be given serious attention and properly evaluated.

The relevance of the problem is compounded by the fact that our literature and practice lack sufficient in-depth research and applications in manufacturing.

### **3. Purpose, tasks, hypotheses and methods of research**

#### **Purpose:**

The dissertation purpose is precise, concise and clearly worded. It corresponds both to the title of the scientific work and to the rationale presented in the introduction to the relevance and relevance of the topic being researched. From this, it is clear that the problem at hand is important and relevant.

#### **Tasks:**

The tasks are in optimal number. They are well worded and targeted right to solve the goal.

It is absolutely logical to begin by clarifying theoretical questions of a methodological and methodological nature.

I will add here that solving the problems of organic and eco-production is not only closely interconnected, but first and foremost stems from the efficiency of that production. Organic Farming requires a lot of costs. They need to be justified and justified. Organic production itself is largely related to this.

I consider that the second and third tasks complement and address the issues of analysis, both of the organizational and economic issues of organic production and of its effectiveness.

In this connection, I can point out that the author has made a very good and very thorough analysis of the problem, namely these two properly formulated tasks.

The fourth task is clearly and specifically defined for the design part of the development and enables the author to propose variant solutions at all levels dealing with Organic Farming.

#### **Object of the study:**

Here I will note that it was quite correctly selected for the District of Plovdiv object. The main part of the production, as well as its species diversity, is concentrated in the District of Plovdiv.

#### **Subject of the study:**

The subject of the dissertation is precisely defined in the title of the scientific work.

#### **Author's research thesis:**

The topic of the dissertation is such that it is sufficient to indicate a specific research thesis. It addresses specific problems with accurate expression.

Regarding the research thesis, more details are provided in the strategic guidelines.

#### **Methods of the study:**

For the full study, the author uses all the traditional methods and adds someone who is specific to this scientific research.



A large body of empirical information was used to conduct the study and to produce a good result. The author makes a personal contribution to collecting the information through contact with the object (more precisely, the production).

#### **4. Visualization and presentation of the results obtained**

The dissertation is very well illustrated, both in appearance and content. It is made according to the requirements and presented in a readable form.

The author made a Declaration of Originality and Assurance of the material used, whether empirical or literary. This fully complies with the requirements of Art. 27, Para 2. of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria.

It makes a good impression that the author has made and applied a list of abbreviations used, which enables the reader to use the material without difficulty.

The structure of the dissertation is in the classic style of presentation. The introduction is short and clear. It includes both the purpose, tasks, rationale, and general development issues.

The first chapter is the theoretical, methodological and methodological part of the study. The other two chapters (2 and 3) are the analytical part. As I pointed out, in evaluating the tasks, it is precisely the connection between the 2nd and 3rd tasks that allows the presentation of the analysis to be included in two separate chapters.

In the fourth chapter is the project part with the main contributions of the author, i.e. with personal contributions to originality.

The conclusion is optimal in volume. The dissertation has a total volume of 220 pages, 12 tables and 28 figures.

The individual parts of the dissertation work are in optimal proportion. The material is well illustrated with tables and figures that allow it to be taken visually and mentally easily and well. The annexes are also well structured and presented.

#### **5. Discussion of the results and the literature used**

In developing the individual questions in the dissertation, information from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry, and many other international and Bulgarian organizations related to agriculture was used. Data from the primary reporting of the studied objects were used. The study period covers the years 2009-2019. This is a long enough period to cover important and significant changes in agriculture.

The main subject of the study includes 73 farms for organic production. The author of the dissertation covered the widest possible variety of agricultural production. This enabled her to highlight the most important factors influencing and shaping the economic efficiency of production.

The empirical information was collected and analysed by conducting direct interviews with the author. This makes it possible to consider it as reliable as possible.

The theoretical part provides an overview of many literature sources that are directly related to the issues of the agro-ecosystem. Such are the publications of authors cited under No. 38, 52, 58, 60, 136, 138 and 142.

With regard to the organizational and economic features of organic farming, the author not only summarizes a number of perceptions of our and foreign authors, but also points out his views. It determines the size of the farms, the type of organic production, the specificity of the labour intensity, their specialization and their forms of management. These issues have been summarized on the basis of more than twenty publications.

Based on a summary of the theoretical findings of these authors, the author of the dissertation considers that farm management is a complex, dynamic and complex approach and therefore the individual parameters must be constantly disclosed and corrected.

The author considers that there should be state intervention in the certification of agricultural production as organic production. In this respect, she also expresses a personal opinion on which bodies should carry out this certification.

In the theoretical part, the author discusses in detail the European legislation regarding the control and certification of Organic Farming. A number of EU Regulations and certain EU Member States have been analysed and cited.

The Bulgarian regulatory framework in the field of organic agriculture is also considered in great detail. In the course of the study, the author finds that an update to Ordinance No. 1 on the rules relating to organic farming is available.

The author expresses her opinion on the necessary changes and in the European legislation in several Regulations.

The theoretical part discusses, and analyses information related to maintaining the information database.

In connection with the periodization of organic farming, the author considers it necessary to trace the onset of this type of farming globally. This is done by the author in great detail and in depth.

The author outlines very skilfully and competently the stages of the development of organic agriculture in Bulgaria on the basis of criteria that are applied in the Common Agricultural Policy of the European Union. It defines the periodization in three stages: 1993-2000; 2000-2007 and after 2007.

According to an author's study, the number of organic farms in Bulgaria varies depending on the factors affecting the holding in question. The study shows a rapid growth rate of organic farms.

Much attention is also paid to the issues related to organic farming in the world and its impact in Bulgaria.

There are five basic and important conclusions to Chapter One. The author points out that there is a lack of adequate and timely official information to be used by bio producers. I am sure this conclusion is also an important contribution to the research.

The in-depth literature review reveals significant gaps in organic research in Bulgaria. I think this is also a copyright contribution to the scientific work.

The actual analysis of the problem is made in Chapter Two. The research methodology is also included here.



The methodology first sets out the criteria used to measure the effectiveness of organic farming. Secondly, attention is paid to the types of economic analysis.

Both the types of analysis and the indicators for determining the financial position are determined correctly and in the normal sequence.

In this context, an own study on the number of organic farms by city has been made. This section presents the results of author's own studies.

The conclusions to Chapter Two are consistent with the analysis made. They are related to the state of the farms and the financial problems they have.

Chapter three deals with the analysis of cost-effectiveness indicators. The first indicator used for the analysis in this part of the thesis is the average yield. This indicator is the most important in organic farming because it is formed on the basis of used or unused fertilizers and preparations. This affects the revenue per unit area and the formation of other indicators. For organic farming, the yield per unit area is significantly lower, which results in much lower production efficiency. In this case, the realization of the production is much more difficult because it is also much more expensive.

The second indicator used for this analysis is the amount of production costs. In this part of the study, the author has done extensive research and specified which factors have the most significant impact on production costs, allowing farmers to decide how much to invest or not to make. Also, based on this analysis, the author indicates to farmers how much to borrow in order to put in additional production costs.

In chapter three, an analysis and evaluation of the production realization is made. This indicator determines the future of bio-production in agriculture. This part of the analysis also identifies the channels of organic production.

This part of the research also focuses on labour productivity. This indicator is directly related to the efficiency of organic production in agriculture.

As a conclusion to chapter three, the author identifies the existence of many organizational and economic problems.

The project part of the dissertation is included in Chapter Four. Here are the prerequisites for the development of Bulgarian organic farming. The organizational and managerial strategies for the development and enhancement of the economic efficiency of organic farming in Bulgaria are indicated. To this end, models from other countries – Spain, Germany, Poland – are presented.

In this part the author makes very important suggestions that would help for the development of organic farming in Bulgaria. Guidelines are provided for training manufacturers to use consulting services.

The guidelines and recommendations outline the main strategies in the short and medium and long term. Research priorities are also proposed in the medium and long term. At the end of this part, the vision for the future development of Bulgarian organic farming is suggested.

The conclusion is very well formed and in nine recommendations the main directions of the development of organic farming in Bulgaria are given.

## 6. Contributions to the dissertation

I accept the submitted reference for the contributions of the dissertation.

### A. Scientific Contributions

I group them as follows:

- 1) For the first time a model of organic farming periodization in Bulgaria is presented
- 2) The methodological process of the analysis of the economic indicators of organic production farms has been developed
- 3) The relationship between the eco-biosystem and agriculture is indicated
- 4) Factors influencing the state of organic farming in Bulgaria have been identified

### B. Scientific and applied Contributions

- 1) A detailed analysis of the state of organic farming in Bulgaria has been made
- 2) The general socio-economic status of organic farming in the District of Plovdiv has been studied
- 3) Strategic models for the development of organic farming in Bulgaria have been developed
- 4) The market segment of Bulgarian organic products is highlighted
- 5) The innovative methods and practices in organic farming in Bulgaria are outlined
- 6) The empirical analysis made can be successful in the practice of organic farming in Bulgaria

## 7. Critical notes and questions

### A. Questions:

1. Why accept the notion of 'sections of analysis' rather than 'types of analysis' (p. 66, para. 1.2)?
2. Why is Scheme 1 – Organic Management of Organic Farming of MAFF of Bulgaria set out in the Annex and not in the text?
3. Why are Tables 1 and 2 for the strengths and weaknesses of organic farming in Bulgaria also in the Annexes and not in the text? They do not have a title (general) as an annex but have been added to Annex 1. Similar to the status of 3 to 9.

### B. Critical notes:

1. I do not find that the obsolete machinery fleet is a major factor in the state of organic production in Bulgarian organic farming. I think bioproduction is most closely linked to fertilization and plant protection.

## 8. Published articles and citations

The articles published are much more than necessary (by regulation). They have been published in various academic publications.

The abstract presented objectively reflects the content of the dissertation.

The dissertation submitted for defence is a fully completed scientific study with considerable value for science and practice.

The author of the dissertation is a distinguished specialist in the agricultural field, who speaks several languages and has several specializations, which proves that she can be both a good specialist and a good academic scientist.

**Conclusion:**

On the basis of the various methods of research that were learned and applied by the PhD student, the correctly performed experiments, the summaries made and the conclusions drawn, I believe that the presented dissertation meets the requirements 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 dare to suggest that the venerable Scientific Jury also vote positively and to AWARD Valentina Agapieva-Alosman the Educational and Scientific Degree 'DOCTOR' in Scientific Specialty: 'Organization and Management'.

Reviewer: .....  
/Prof. D. Kostov, DSc/