



SCIENTIFIC OPINION

on a dissertation for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in: field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.8. Economics, scientific specialty: Organization and management (agriculture and sub-sectors).

Author of the dissertation: Nikolay Ivanov Stefanov - PhD student in self-study at the Department of Management and Marketing at the Agricultural University of Plovdiv

Topic of the dissertation: "Impact of the CAP on the competitiveness of small farms"

Reviewer: Prof. Asen Ivanov Konarev, DcS, University of Food Technology - Plovdiv, field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.8. Economics, scientific specialty "Organization and Management (by industry)", appointed a member of the scientific jury by order № RD-16-123 from 24.02.2021 by the Rector of AU - Plovdiv.

1. Relevance of the problem

The impact of the CAP on competitiveness is a problem of growing relevance and significance in the context of the pandemic of Covid-19, the growing stratification and impoverishment of the majority of workers in the agricultural sector. N. Stefanov well argues this significance and relevance by emphasizing:

- the dual structure of the sector;
- the large number of small farms;
- the importance of these farms in providing employment in rural areas;
- the role of the social buffer of small farms in times of crisis;
- the drastic dominance of large farms in the absorption of financial assistance through the CAP;
- the growing need to increase the share of small farms with access to financial assistance;
- the increase in the number of medium-sized enterprises;
- the multilateral effect of the change in the CAP on income, risk, qualifications, innovation and other components of competitiveness.

2. Purpose, tasks, hypotheses and research methods

I believe that the purpose of the dissertation is well formulated and properly decomposed into five main tasks.

The subject and object of the study are accurately presented.

The thesis of the dissertation is convincingly related to the factor strength of the CAP and the expected impact on the competitiveness of small farms.

The research tools include a systematic approach and a set of methods. I believe that in parallel with the systematic approach, a constructive approach has been used, as far as it can be implemented in practice through a large number of methods.

Generally I evaluate the used approaches and methods as appropriate and sufficient for the formation of tools for achieving the goal and solving the tasks of the dissertation.

3. Visualization and presentation of the obtained results

In my opinion, the dissertation is well illustrated:

- 16 tables;
- 22 figures;
- 5 schemes.

All tables, figures and diagrams are well formed and numbered, and the source is understandable: author's product or borrowing from used literature.

Despite its limited volume, the abstract is also very well illustrated.

4. Discussion of the results and used literature

I believe that the dissertation has an optimal volume - 166 pages, including the literature used and one presented application - a questionnaire. In structural terms it is well formed in three chapters (six chapters incorrectly mentioned in the abstract).

In the first chapter, relatively thoroughly, the theoretical foundations of the research are studied and presented, as N. Stefanov consistently presents:

- the concept of small farms;
- competition, competitive advantage and competitiveness;
- the role of the CAP in developing competitiveness;
- the methodological approach to assessing this impact.

The second chapter is devoted to the study of the impact of the CAP on the competitiveness of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The analytical division of this influence into two main periods makes a good impression: 2007-2013 and 2014-2020. The obtained results are well illustrated and presented with arguments.

In the third chapter, based on conducted SWOT analysis identifies the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the development of small

farms. On this basis, a focus analysis defined the development potential of these farms, identifying five strengths and five weaknesses. An interesting approach to SOR analysis is applied here, which is not mentioned, as the combinations of "strengths - opportunities and threats" are ranked in order of importance. In the same way, the doctoral student ranked the weaknesses.

The effective nature of the dissertation is emphasized by the identified basic needs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the development of their competitiveness.

The conclusion summarizes the main results of the study, emphasizing the importance of the CAP on the development of the competitiveness of small farms, as well as their basic needs.

The literature used is presented in 129 literature sources, 60 of which are in Cyrillic and the rest in Latin. The literature is well arranged. There are many sources from recent years, which shows that N. Stefanov has studied the current state of the problem. I am left with the impression that doctoral students make extensive use of the research of their supervisors and faculty members, but do not reflect it so widely in the literature.

5. Contributions to the dissertation

I accept the report on the contributions of the dissertation, and I am inclined to distinguish them as follows:

- Scientific contributions:
 - the clarified nature of small farms;
 - the clarified nature of the competitiveness of these holdings.
- Scientific and applied contributions:
 - the established influence of the CAP on the profitability and competitiveness of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
 - the identified needs of small farms under the CAP.

I believe that the contributions are the result of the development of the dissertation and are the personal work of Nikolay Stefanov.

6. Critical remarks and questions

I have no serious critical remarks on the dissertation, except for some minor omissions.

I have the following questions for the doctoral student:

1. What is the balance between the pursuit of subsidies and the pursuit of business efficiency for small and large farm owners?

2. What are the more important side effects in rural areas than increasing the competitiveness of small farms?

7. Published articles and citations

A list of 3 publications on the dissertation is presented, which in quantity meet the requirements of the Regulations of the Agricultural University - Plovdiv. They were published in 2020. All three publications are independent.

No reference to citations is provided.

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

Conclusion

Based of the different research methods learned and applied by the doctoral student, the correctly performed experiments, the summaries and conclusions made, I believe that the presented dissertation meets the requirements of ZRASRB and the Rules of the Agrarian University for its application, which gives me reason to evaluate it POSITIVE.

I allow myself to propose to the esteemed scientific jury also to vote positively and to award Nikolay Ivanov Stefanov the educational and scientific degree of Doctor in "Organization and Management of Production".

Date: 01.04.2021

City of Plovdiv

Prepared the opinion:
/prof. A. Konarev/