

REVIEW



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 of production (agriculture and subsectors)

Author of the dissertation: NIKOLAY IVANOV STEFANOV - PhD student in independent training at the Department of Management and Marketing at the Agricultural University, Plovdiv

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

Reviewer: Prof. Dr. Vasko Nikolov Koprivlenski, Agricultural University - Plovdiv, Field of higher education: 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, Professional direction 3.7. Administration and Management, Scientific specialty : Organization and management of production. Appointed a member of the scientific jury by order № RD-16-133 / 24.02.2021 by the Rector of AU.

1. Brief introduction of the candidate.

Nikolay Ivanov Stefanov was born on September 13, 1983 in the city of Sofia, Republic of Bulgaria. He completed his bachelor's degree in public administration in the period 2002-2006. at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" with an emphasis on education - in Macroeconomics, Microeconomics, Law, Tax System and Policy, Statistics. For the period 2006 - 2009 he received the master's degree "Master of Finance" at the University of National and World Economy, Sofia, Bulgaria, with an emphasis in the study of Public Finance, Corporate and International Finance, Banking, Monetary Theory and Practice. For the period 2008 - 2011 he worked as a specialist in Application Software in the company "Tonegan Sofia" Ltd. From September 2011 to November 2014, he was appointed as a Public Relations Expert at the GERB political party. In 2014 - 2017 is an expert in the political cabinet of the Minister of Finance in the Ministry of Finance, and since May 2017 he has been the head of the cabinet of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Bulgaria. For the period from 2014 to 2018 he makes efforts to improve his qualification and receives certificates for computer skills, for internal auditor in the public sector, at the Ministry of Finance in the Republic of Bulgaria. He specializes in public policy at the American Republican Institute, Zadar - Croatia, Specialization in Public Relations at the Konrad Adenauer Academy, Berlin, Germany. In 2015-2016, he specialized in politics and management skills at the Bulgarian School of Politics "Dimitar Panitza", Sofia. Until now he has been Head of the Cabinet of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Bulgaria. For the period from 2014 to 2018 he makes efforts to improve his qualification and receives certificates for computer skills, for internal auditor in the public sector, at the Ministry of Finance in the Republic of Bulgaria. He specializes in public policy at the American Republican Institute, Zadar - Croatia, Specialization in Public Relations at the Konrad Adenauer Academy, Berlin, Germany. In 2015-2016, he specialized in politics and management skills at the Bulgarian School of Politics "Dimitar Panitza", Sofia. Until now he has been Head of the Cabinet of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Bulgaria. For the period from 2014 to 2018 he makes efforts to improve his qualification and receives certificates for

computer skills, for internal auditor in the public sector, at the Ministry of Finance in the Republic of Bulgaria. He specializes in public policy at the American Republican Institute, Zadar - Croatia, Specialization in Public Relations at the Konrad Adenauer Academy, Berlin, Germany. In 2015-2016, he specialized in politics and management skills at the Bulgarian School of Politics "Dimitar Panitza", Sofia. for internal auditor in the public sector, at the Ministry of Finance in the Republic of Bulgaria. He specializes in public policy at the American Republican Institute, Zadar - Croatia, Specialization in Public Relations at the Konrad Adenauer Academy, Berlin, Germany. In 2015-2016, he specialized in politics and management skills at the Bulgarian School of Politics "Dimitar Panitza", Sofia.

The computer skills of the doctoral student allow him to work with: Work programs - Microsoft Word, Power Point, Database and Photo Programs of Microsoft, Adobe Photo Shop, Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Access, Computer Operating Systems of Windows, etc.

From the brief but substantial biography it can be seen that the doctoral student Nikolay Stefanov during these years, during which he acquires practical skills and improves his theoretical training, forms a favorable combination of knowledge and experience to improve his qualifications for successful research work. .

2. Relevance of the problem.

The topic is successfully formulated, dissertable and current. In my opinion, the doctoral student Nikolay Stefanov presents a scientific work that has not only modern but also original sound, as it is developed under dynamically changing conditions for the Bulgarian economy in general and for agribusiness in particular. The author directs his research in a little studied area related to the deteriorating structure of agricultural holdings in Bulgaria, which is expressed in the presence of a large number of small farms cultivating a small part of the utilized agricultural area (UAA) and a small number of large farms cultivating a significant part of the same / UAA /. This leads to an asymmetric distribution of financial aid in favor of large farms. There is an urgent need for a change in the Common Agricultural Policy / CAP /, which will make it possible to increase the share of small farms with access to financial assistance and to ensure an increase in the number of medium-sized farms. The idea is to achieve wider access for small farms to financial and other assistance to ensure their competitive development.

By increasing the competitiveness of small farms can increase employment and achieve many side effects in rural areas of the country such as the development of related industries, expanding cross-sectoral links, increasing incomes, reducing the risk of agricultural activity, improving the skills of labor force through the acquisition of experience and knowledge, implementation of innovations in production, etc. All this reinforces the relevance of research and its importance for the theory and practice of agribusiness management and its competitiveness.

It should be emphasized that the development of the chosen topic requires in-depth theoretical training and good analytical skills. I think that when evaluating the merits of the dissertation, this fact must be taken into account, as it reinforces the diversity and complexity of the research problem.

3. Purpose, tasks, hypotheses and research methods.

The doctoral student has well formulated the title, the conceptual thesis, the subject, the object, the purpose of the dissertation.

The present study argues that: The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) creates the conditions for increasing the competitiveness of small farms.

The author aims to study, analyze and assess the impact of the CAP on the level of competitiveness of small farms and on this basis, to propose new strategic models and solutions for its increase for the conditions of Bulgaria.

In the course of the work the following more important tasks have been solved: The essence of the small agricultural holdings and their competitiveness is clarified; The essence of the CAP and its role in achieving and increasing the competitiveness of small farms has been clarified, a conceptual framework for assessing the impact of the CAP on the competitiveness of small farms has been developed, the effects of the CAP on the competitiveness of small farms have been analyzed and assessed. farms; The needs that small farms experience on the way to their competitive development in the conditions of the new CAP are analyzed.

The formulated goal and the resulting research tasks are consistently and actually fulfilled

In the process of the research the methods of are used: System analysis, Situational analysis, Comparative analysis, Diagnostic analysis, Statistical methods, Constructive method and others.

In the theoretical-methodological and methodical part of the work the author's attitude is clearly visible, which shows that the doctoral student has the necessary training and is well oriented in the considered problems.

4. Visualization and presentation of the obtained results.

The dissertation is presented in an introduction, three chapters and a conclusion and used literature, located on 166 pages. The used literature consists of 129 titles, of which 60 in Bulgarian and 69 by foreign authors. The literature review is relevant to the research problem. The study is illustrated with 22 figures, 5 diagrams and 16 tables. The text in the separate chapters and paragraphs of the dissertation are enriched with successfully developed visual tables and figures, which clarify the essence of the research. In the text and the titles of the attached figures and tables, the respective sources are correctly indicated.

Each of the parts of the dissertation is a carrier of a certain contribution to solving the general problem. The individual chapters are in a logical relationship and sequence. This construction gives a complete character to the development, allowing to cover the main issues on the topic, and the content shows that the doctoral student has a clear and accurate idea of the issues under consideration.

The study covers a 13-year period - from 2007 to 2020.

The following are used in the development: scientific publications and works of Bulgarian and foreign authors; information bulletins of international organizations - EUROSTAT; reports and bulletins of the Ministry of Agriculture of Bulgaria as well as a number of regulations. Most of the information was gathered through surveys among farmers managing small farms.

Empirical information about the research is also provided by sample surveys and in-depth interviews conducted at the enterprise level, based on questionnaires prepared by the author. The questionnaires developed by the author are presented in the appendix to the dissertation.

The specialized software product SPSS and statistical package of MS Excel were used in the processing of the empirical information.

5. Discussion of the results and used literature.

For the purposes of the study, literature of 129 titles was used, of which 60 in

Bulgarian and 69 by foreign authors. The literature review is relevant to the research problem. The author has managed to systematize existing scientific theses on the problem and to subordinate them to the goals of his own research. The study is based on rich factual material.

In the first part of the paper the author clarifies the theoretical aspects with an emphasis on conceptual framework for assessing the impact of the CAP on the competitiveness of small farms. An attempt has been made to systematize and summarize the wide variety of scientific definitions concerning the content of the concept of "small agricultural holdings" and the definition of uniform thresholds for them. Examining the scientific views on the subject, the doctoral student refracts them through the prism of his own research, striving to find common criteria with which to study and analyze them. On this basis, the indicators for determining the threshold of agricultural holdings are justified. In his research, the author focuses mainly on three of these indicators: utilized agricultural area (UAA), the amount of labor input and the economic size of the farm. This part of the paper presents the discussion of various authors on the nature of the issues under consideration, broken through the requirements of the CAP. The author's position on them is clearly declared. In practice, in this part of the development is presented and commented creatively, the whole categorical apparatus that is relevant to the research topic, namely: Competition, competitive advantages, competitiveness. System analysis was used for the study. The level of competitiveness is measured at both the macro and micro levels. A deductive approach is used to identify the patterns that occur in the studied objects in terms of their competitiveness. Due to the lack of sufficient data on the state of sectoral competitiveness, the expert assessment method and the survey method are used. An adapted methodology for assessing competitiveness has been developed. The indicators for assessing the competitiveness of small agricultural holdings are substantiated and presented. Five types of indicators have been identified to assess the implementation of the CAP. They are presented in detail in the dissertation. Regression analysis seeks answers to the following questions: What is the impact of subsidies on the competitiveness of farms ?, What is the relationship between the subsidies received and the achieved competitiveness of farms ?, Does the increase in subsidies increase the competitiveness of farms ?, What is the sensitivity of competitiveness to subsidy levels? An in-depth SWOT analysis was made to assess the factors determining the competitiveness of small farms. Five types of indicators have been identified to assess the implementation of the CAP. They are presented in detail in the dissertation. Regression analysis seeks answers to the following questions: What is the impact of subsidies on the competitiveness of farms ?, What is the relationship between the subsidies received and the achieved competitiveness of farms ?, Does the increase in subsidies increase the competitiveness of farms ?, What is the sensitivity of competitiveness to subsidy levels? An in-depth SWOT analysis was made to assess the factors determining the competitiveness of small farms. Five types of indicators have been identified to assess the implementation of the CAP. They are presented in detail in the dissertation. Regression analysis seeks answers to the following questions: What is the impact of subsidies on the competitiveness of farms ?, What is the relationship between the subsidies received and the achieved competitiveness of farms ?, Does the increase in subsidies increase the competitiveness of farms ?, What is the sensitivity of competitiveness to subsidy levels? An in-depth SWOT analysis was made to assess the factors determining the competitiveness of small farms. Regression analysis seeks answers to the following questions: What is the impact of subsidies on the competitiveness of farms ?, What is the relationship between the

subsidies received and the achieved competitiveness of farms ?, Does the increase in subsidies increase the competitiveness of farms ?, What is the sensitivity of competitiveness to subsidy levels? An in-depth SWOT analysis was made to assess the factors determining the competitiveness of small farms. Regression analysis seeks answers to the following questions: What is the impact of subsidies on the competitiveness of farms ?, What is the relationship between the subsidies received and the achieved competitiveness of farms ?, Does the increase in subsidies increase the competitiveness of farms ?, What is the sensitivity of competitiveness to subsidy levels? An in-depth SWOT analysis was made to assess the factors determining the competitiveness of small farms. What is the sensitivity of competitiveness to subsidy levels? An in-depth SWOT analysis was made to assess the factors determining the competitiveness of small farms. What is the sensitivity of competitiveness to subsidy levels? An in-depth SWOT analysis was made to assess the factors determining the competitiveness of small farms.

The applied, in Chapter One adapted methodology, serves the study well. The collected empirical information is skillfully used for the successful implementation of scientific research.

Chapter Two covers 33 pages and is entitled: "Influence of the CAP on the level of competitiveness of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs". Practically, this chapter represents the analytical part of the dissertation. She covers an extensive and in-depth study, where the accepted methodology and research methodology are strictly applied. A detailed analysis and assessment of the impact of the CAP and state support for achieving the competitiveness of the agricultural sector has been made. An analysis of the support of small farms and the contribution of the various mechanisms for their support was carried out within the CAP for the periods: 2007-2013 and 2014-2020. The impact of subsidies on the competitiveness of small farms was assessed. Using rich factual material, correct summaries and conclusions are made, which follow from the results of the analysis.

Chapter three- the constructive part of the development is a logical continuation of the research thesis embedded in the formulation of the dissertation. In neo are noutlined some basic strategic guidelines for for the development of the competitiveness of small agricultural enterprises in the conditions of the CAP. The strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the development of the competitiveness of small agricultural enterprises are revealed. The potential opportunities are substantiated and the basic needs of small agricultural holdings for the development of their competitiveness are assessed. Opportunities for development of the competitiveness of small agricultural holdings are indicated through: their restructuring, improvement of the investment policy, innovations, effective risk management and the application of the marketing approach in the management of the holdings. A definite contribution of the author in this chapter is the identification of the basic needs of small farms and the problem areas related to the subject of research.

The conclusion of the dissertation summarizes the conclusions and findings of the results of the study. They give reason to believe that the main goal and objectives have been achieved, and the thesis is confirmed. The main parts of the dissertation follow in a logical sequence. Each previous chapter serves the next, which gives the work a complete and complete character. For the purposes of the research, a rich amount of information was collected, processed and analyzed, which can serve as a database for future research in this direction. Appropriate methods and indicators for research and analysis are used, which serve the research very well and are a guarantee for the reliability of the obtained results. The conclusions and suggestions made have a strong

scientific and practical nature, with opportunities for direct application in practice.

6. Contributions to the dissertation.

I generally accept the report on the contributions to the dissertation of Nikolai Ivanov Stefanov and I count them as a personal work of the author. I will add two more to the presented contributions:

-A adapted methodology and appropriate tools for analysis and evaluation of The influence of the CAP on the competitiveness of small agricultural holdings in the Republic of Bulgaria

-The main needs of small farms for the development of their competitiveness in the conditions of the CAP have been identified.

7. Critical remarks and questions.

I have some insignificant remarks to the author, which are rather technical and recommended:

1. The conclusions in the development (pp. 118-120) are many in number (12 pieces), which at certain moments leads to unnecessary repetitions. It is recommended to reduce them to 5-6 pieces so that they reflect in a generalized form the most important moments of the specific research and to direct the attention to the solution of the problems in the constructive part of the development.

2. Scientific work could benefit from maintaining a balance between the individual chapters - the constructive third chapter could be even larger in volume than the previous chapters. This would enhance the creative nature of the development and increase the number of contributions.

3. I consider the presentation of the used literature under the line as not very appropriate. It loses the volume of the dissertation itself and is more difficult to trace the literature used throughout the work.

4. The text uses a large number of abbreviations and acronyms, which should be explained in a separate place at the beginning of the dissertation.

3. The author makes a good critical analysis and uses a rich set of literature data when discussing the individual categories, without stating his author's opinion and his own opinion. / see pp. 7 - 24 paragraphs on the size of farms in the theoretical part /.

4. Minor spelling and technical errors have been made that do not change the meaning of what has been said.

The notes and recommendations made in no way detract from the results achieved in the dissertation. They can be useful to the author in his future work.

Question: Clarify the essence of the economic categories: Effect, Efficiency, Profitability and Profitability and their relationship with the competitiveness of agricultural holdings.

8. Published articles and citations.

The research and publishing activity of Nikolay Stefanov includes a total of 3 publications in connection with the dissertation, made in 2020 and published in Journal of Bio-Based Marketing.

The presented abstract objectively reflects the structure and content of the dissertation. An inadvertent technical error was probably made here, stating that the dissertation consisted of 6 chapters instead of three, (see Abstract - p. 6)

CONCLUSION:

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

I allow myself to suggest to the Honorable Scientific Jury that it also vote in favor and award NIKOLAI IVANOV STEFANOV the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the scientific specialty "Organization and management of production (agriculture and sub-sectors).

Date: March 25, 2021.
Plovdiv

REVIEWER:
(Prof. Dr. V. Koprivlenski)

