



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 of production (Agriculture and sub-sectors)*".

Author of the dissertation: DRAGAN METODIA MILADINOSKI, PhD student in self-study form at the Department of Management and Marketing in the Agricultural University, Plovdiv

Topic of the dissertation: "MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMPETITIVENESS OF AGRICULTURAL ENTERPRISES IN THE REPUBLIC OF NORTHERN MACEDONIA"

Reviewer: PROF. VALENTINA LYUBENOVA NIKOLOVA-ALEXIEVA, PhD, University of Food Technologies - Plovdiv, field of higher education 3. *Social, economic and legal sciences*, professional field 3.8 *Economy*, scientific specialty "*Economics and Management*", appointed as a member of the scientific jury by order № RD-16-481 / 05.05. of the Rector of Agricultural University.

1. Relevance of the problem.

In the Republic of Northern Macedonia there are important prerequisites for the development of agriculture, which generates about 20% of the country's Gross Domestic Product and has a high potential to become one of the competitive sectors of the economy. The need to formulate an adequate management strategy in the conditions of permanent political and economic crises, in order to increase the innovation and adaptability of agricultural enterprises and to achieve competitive advantages, largely determines the relevance of doctoral dissertation.

In this regard, it can be concluded that the topic of the dissertation was successfully chosen. It is *extremely up-to-date, dissertable and has great practical significance*.

2. Purpose, tasks, hypotheses and research methods.

The topicality and significance of the researched issues are successfully argued in the **introduction** of the dissertation. The research **thesis is formulated**, according to which the competitiveness of agricultural enterprises depends on the type of organizational form chosen for the development of the business model. It is proven in the course of research.

The **goal** and the **4 working tasks** related to its achievement are correctly defined, as well as the **subject and object** of development.

The methodological tools are appropriately selected in accordance with the set **goals and objectives**. The main methodological approach in the research is **systematic approach**. Two other approaches are used to assess the competitiveness of an agricultural enterprise. The first approach is based on the *Neoclassical theory of enterprise*.

It considers the competitiveness of the agricultural enterprise as a result of the use of the main factors of production - land, labor, capital and entrepreneurship, without taking into account the imperfections of the institutional environment. The second approach is based on *Institutional Theory*. This approach assesses the competitiveness of agricultural enterprises, taking into account the level of transaction costs in their organization and management. The dissertation is developed using: scientific publications and works of Bulgarian and foreign authors; newsletters of international organizations; reports and bulletins of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food; data from the National Statistical Institute, as well as a number of regulations.

Empirical information about the research is also provided by sample surveys conducted at the level of agricultural enterprises on the basis of questionnaires prepared by the author. The sample includes 69 agricultural enterprises with arable land of 16,445 hectares, which represents about 8.5% of the arable land in the Republic of Northern Macedonia.

The use of quantitative and qualitative methods and sample surveys makes an excellent impression.

3. Visualization and presentation of the obtained results.

The presented dissertation is **125 pages long**. Structurally, the dissertation includes ***an introduction, three chapters and a conclusion***.

The results of the study are presented and illustrated with **10 figures, 5 tables and 1 appendix**.

The structure of the dissertation *research is logically constructed and corresponds to the set goal and tasks*. The paper contains concrete results and empirical evidence that objectively reflects the real achievements of the research.

4. Discussion of the results and used literature.

The dissertation analyzes the current scientific achievements in the field of management and analysis of the competitiveness of agriculture. The bibliographic reference includes ***a total of 142 publications in English, of which 75 are by Bulgarian authors and researchers***.

These literature sources are relevant and directly related to the topic of the dissertation. The systematizations and summaries made show in-depth and conscientious work with the literature, skills for application of analytical and deductive techniques for processing a significant amount of information with various research methods.

In the dissertation, the doctoral student clarifies the key concepts of research - enterprise, management and competitiveness. The level of competitiveness of agricultural enterprises in the sector is analyzed, which is considered as a function of the choice of organizational form for business development. Based on the SWOT analysis, opportunities and challenges for agricultural enterprises in the Republic of Northern Macedonia have been identified, direct and indirect factors influencing their management have been identified and recommendations have been made for choosing adequate strategies to increase their competitiveness.

5. Contributions to the dissertation.

Contributions can be divided into **scientific and scientific-applied ones**.

The **scientific contributions** can include the enrichment of knowledge in the field of agricultural management, in particular the development of its competitiveness, based on a critical analysis of theoretical and methodological statements in the field.

The **scientific-applied ones** include:

- analysis of the level of competitiveness of agricultural enterprises;
- a conceptual framework for assessing the competitiveness of agricultural enterprises has been developed;
- a financial model has been proposed to improve the competitiveness of agricultural enterprises

I accept the contributions as real, reliable and proven in the course of the dissertation research.

6. Critical remarks and questions.

The presented dissertation is a complete, completed research, with *indisputable contributions and qualities*, to which I have no serious critical remarks, but I allow myself to give some recommendations:

- The dissertation research could be successful if the analytical part systematizes the world trends in the development of agriculture, to make a benchmarking, so as to use the good practices for its development in the Republic of Northern Macedonia.
- It is recommended that each chapter ends with conclusions that clearly show the implementation of the goal and related tasks.

• Questions:

1. What are the specific competitive advantages of the agricultural enterprises of the Republic of Northern Macedonia, compared to the neighboring Balkan countries and the countries of the European Union?
2. What are the challenges of the development of genetics, artificial intelligence, robotics, 3D printing, nanotechnology, biotechnology, digitalization and how do they affect the development of the competitiveness of agricultural enterprises in the Republic of Northern Macedonia?

7. Published articles and citations.

Five scientific publications on the topic of the dissertation are presented. Two of them are co-authored and three are independent.

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

CONCLUSION:

Given the merits of the dissertation, the relevance and complexity of the researched problems, the need to find effective solutions to them in practice, the good theoretical level of the researched and analyzed problems, it can be summarized that the presented dissertation meets the normative criteria for awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" / ZRAS, art. 6, para 2 and para 3 and the Regulations of the Agrarian University for its application /.

The results of the study dedicated to "MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMPETITIVENESS OF AGRICULTURAL ENTERPRISES IN THE REPUBLIC OF NORTHERN MACEDONIA" provide sufficient grounds for a HIGH EVALUATION of scientific potential and research opportunities activity of the doctoral student.

All this allows me to confidently vote in favor of awarding **DRAGAN METODIA MILADINOSKI** the scientific and educational degree "Doctor" in professional field 3.8. Economics, scientific specialty "Organization and management of production (Agriculture and sub-sectors)".

Date: 03.06. 2022
Plovdiv

PRODUCED BY:.....

(Prof. Valentina Nikolova-Alexieva, PhD)