



## OPINION

From: **Prof. Dr. Kamen Dimitrov Petrov from the University of National and World Economy, Sofia, habilitated in the scientific specialty with code 05.03.02 National Economy (Goeconomics and Regional Development), in the professional field 3.7. Administration and Management (Goeconomics and Regional Demography)**

**Subject:** Dissertation for awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the scientific specialty "Organization and Management"

Author of the dissertation: **Yordan Ivanov Penchev**

Topic of the dissertation: **"Management of supply chains of agricultural products".**

Scientific supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Teodora Stoeva

I participate in the composition of the scientific jury, in accordance with Order No. PD 16-518 /22.04.2025 of the Rector of the Agricultural University - Plovdiv.

**1. Information about the dissertation candidate.** The dissertation candidate Yordan Ivanov Penchev studied under the doctoral program "Organization and Management" at the Department of "Management and Marketing" at the Agricultural University - Plovdiv. He graduated from the Agricultural University of Plovdiv with a degree in "Regional Development Management". During the regular term of the doctoral studies, he took all his doctoral exams and made the relevant publications necessary to show his scientific and research drive on the problems of the dissertation.

### **2. General characteristics of the presented dissertation work**

It is important to mention that the problems caused by the supply of agricultural products in recent years have necessitated the need to comment on the problems of agriculture within its difficulties or lack of support. The dissertation work is relevant and important for adequate investment policy in agriculture and its effective implementation are of key importance for achieving the target investment results and the role between producer and trader, which also reflects on the agricultural development of entire regions. The increasing integration of Bulgarian agriculture into world markets has created significant trade opportunities, but has also increased the risks associated with market imperfections and price volatility.

The dissertation presented by the doctoral student consists of an introduction, an exposition and a conclusion in three sections, a conclusion, and a list of references – a total of 134 standard typewritten pages, a list of references and abbreviations used. The development is of sufficient volume for scientific research, ensuring the necessary satisfaction and completeness of the problems set for discussion. The work is balanced in structural terms, with the emphasis placed on the second and third chapters. The author has made efforts to identify and study the application of specific guidelines in corporate control over supply chains and on this basis offers a theoretical model for its application.

Thus, the purpose of the dissertation research is to establish the integration of agricultural producers in the supply chains of agricultural products and its impact on the results of business activity. Based on the goal thus set, 7 seven tasks for implementation are presented. An approach is proposed that specifically frames the marketing management of the supply chains of agricultural products, leading to an improvement in the market status of agricultural producers. The object of scientific research are agricultural holdings growing fruits and

picture of the processes and the model. A criticism of the author is that each of the three chapters presented, as well as in the final part of the dissertation, should have systematized the main conclusions reached by the author within the framework of the scientific research. Nevertheless, the work is interesting and very timely in accordance with the current processes taking place in Bulgaria. The above gives me reason to conclude that the dissertation covers the minimum requirements for volume, structure and style of development of a similar nature and can be defined with a high degree of a completed scientific product of satisfactory quality.

The generalized assessment allows me to assume that the relevance and significance of the study stem from the fact that supply chains are an integral part of every economic system. Their broad applicability brings to the fore the need to study the theory of their essence, features, control and management. In the dissertation work, it is considered in two aspects - theoretical and practically applied. In a theoretical aspect, the author reflects on the lack of unity in scientific circles regarding the definition of the supply chain and management control over it. In a practical and applied aspect, the relevance of the study is determined by the many problems and challenges faced by the supply chains in the country's agriculture

**3. Evaluation of the obtained scientific and scientific-applied results.** The emphasis is on the main scientific and/or scientific-applied results achieved in the dissertation work. In the course of the study, confirmation of the set goal, task and thesis has been achieved, or in other words, there is an attempt to build a theoretical model, with practical applicability, for exercising corporate control over the supply chain process based on the three aspects of the management control system: functional, institutional and instrumental in the context of the development of the agrarian sector. The first point of view set by the author is confirmed, that there is an objective need for research into the theory dedicated to the supply chain process and the construction of a model for effective and efficient corporate management control over the supply chain process, which would imply practical applicability in the agricultural sector and assessment and analysis of processes in agriculture. In my opinion, it is clearly seen that the models and accompanying elements of the agricultural sector set the necessary integrity that a theoretical model for exercising corporate management control can be built, based on the three aspects (institutional, functional and instrumental) of the management control system in the agricultural sector. A new approach is used in examining corporate control, which in this study is considered as corporate management control. A variety of control tools are proposed, among which there is a wide range of control indicators (indicators of effectiveness and efficiency). A theoretical model with practical applicability for exercising effective and efficient corporate governance control has been defined, and its description also provides practical guidelines for its use.

#### **4. Evaluation of scientific and applied scientific contributions**

The evaluation of contributions confirms that the dissertation meets the requirements for independent scientific research work, possessing both innovation in the approach and high applicability. We must assume that the methodology used directly corresponds to the analysis that was used in the decomposition of the supply chain into processes (production, logistics, etc.) and in the division of the theoretical model for corporate control into its constituent elements. Synthesis method - is expressed in a thought process of restoring the whole (theoretical model for corporate control over the supply chain process) by combining its individual elements. Expert assessment method - is reflected in the expert examination of the studied processes in the supply chain and the use of personal professional (expert) experience in the selection of tools for control over them. Summary method, comparison method, which are used in the theoretical analysis of the term "supply chain" and in taking into account the differences in the views of different authors. The above methods can be considered sufficient and appropriate for the implementation of the goals and objectives set in the dissertation.

activity. Based on the goal thus set, 7 seven tasks for implementation are presented. An approach is proposed that specifically frames the marketing management of the supply chains of agricultural products, leading to an improvement in the market status of agricultural producers. The object of scientific research are agricultural holdings growing fruits and vegetables on the territory of Southern Bulgaria. The subject of scientific research are management activities for planning, implementation and control of the realization of agricultural production.

In the first chapter "Theoretical foundations of distribution systems" a wide range of definitions for the "supply chain" are considered, which contributes to the development of a comprehensive picture of its essence and specific features. The supply chain is also presented through the prism of a complete process (supply chain process) or a set of processes (supply, production, logistics, sales, marketing), with each of them being considered separately. A characteristic of the production structures in agriculture is made, factors influencing the type and degree of competition are considered, Supply chains of agricultural products, channels for the realization of agricultural production and methodology of the study.

Chapter two entitled "Analysis of Fruit and Vegetable Supply Chains in Bulgaria" is dedicated to the theory of management and control and its subtypes - corporate and managerial control. Given the state of production and trade in fruits and vegetables in Bulgaria, the examination of the theory of corporate and managerial control, using the methods of comparison and generalization, has outlined and synthesized the similarities and differences in the views of a number of specialists in the field. An analysis has been made, which shows that of the vegetables produced in Bulgaria, nearly 20% are sold on foreign markets. At the same time, vegetables are imported to the Bulgarian market in quantities nearly twice as large as the exported quantities. An assessment has been made of the factors determining the market status of agricultural producers in the supply chain. This part of the dissertation presents the characteristic features of the different types of management control systems in the supply chain. The author assumes that the pricing of agricultural products is highly dependent on external market conditions such as competition and costs, which suggests that agricultural producers and distributors must pay attention to market trends and cost structures in order to remain competitive. A survey and commentary on the responses were conducted, which leads the work to an enhanced ascertainment nature. Regarding interest in marketing innovations, the responses of agricultural producers prevail, for whom agriculture is an advantage in the formation of their income and it is they who are interested in new marketing approaches to managing the sale of production. When choosing a variety to grow, as well as a brand and packaging of products, the studied factor does not appear in most farms. The types of risk inherent in the supply chain are also considered. The organization of direct supply, as well as failure to meet the requirements for transportation and storage, in accordance with market requirements, are the most acute problems in the fresh fruit and vegetables category. As an important problem, farmers point to the existing infrastructure, which does not guarantee sustainable functioning of supply chains in terms of quick access to markets.

Chapter Three "Improving the Market Status of Agricultural Producers in the Supply Chain" contains the developed theoretical model for exercising effective and efficient corporate control over the supply chain process, which consists of several elements. Business formats for the sale of fruits and vegetables, a model of a supply chain for agricultural products are examined. The elements of the model are tailored to the characteristics of each of the supply chain processes and the specificity of the different types of corporate management control, each of which is presented separately. In this part of the dissertation, I can note that it is necessary for the author to supplement how the Bulgarian producer will implement his views on creating a supply chain internationally. This is a question that needs to be clarified mainly in terms of warehouse and other facilities, fruit certification, laboratory and other activities that can give a more complete

## **5. Evaluation of the publications on the dissertation**

Available are: 3 (three) publications are indicated, in which an attempt is made to clarify the specifics of the production structures in agriculture and business relations with intermediaries in the sale of production. It can be assumed that through these publications an assessment is given of the degree of dissemination of the obtained results in the scientific literature. From the provided list of publications it is seen that the dissertation candidate covers the minimum national requirements of 30 points under this criterion for acquiring the ONS "doctor" according to the prescriptions of the PPZRAS in the Republic of Bulgaria. All publications are related to the topic of the dissertation and this confirms that the results of the scientific research have publicity.

## **6. Evaluation of the abstract**

An assessment is given of the correctness and degree of reflection of the content of the dissertation in the abstract. The abstract attached to the dissertation is developed in a volume of 32 pages and is structured appropriately. It correctly reflects the content of the dissertation work, outlining the important moments of the presented work and the results achieved by the dissertation research.

## **7. Critical notes, recommendations and questions**

Without belittling the achievements of the author in the dissertation work and recognizing his right to his own interpretation of the issues under consideration, I would like to make the following collegial notes. First of all, theory and practice are clearly distinguished, but there is no significant controversy regarding their essence, a conclusion that the author himself reaches. In the second chapter, it might be useful to outline the advantages and disadvantages of each of these systems, including the inclusion of successful and unsuccessful examples from practice in the application of management control in the supply chain. In Chapter Three, it would be useful to provide more argumentation for the practical application of the model. Also, options could be considered for how the model adapts to different types of companies and industries, with a view to identifying, and hence avoiding, potential difficulties in its implementation. In this direction, I have a question: "What are the future trends in the management and control of supply chains in the context of their digital transformation?"

## **8. Conclusion**

The quantitative and qualitative assessment of the dissertation on the topic "Management of supply chains for agricultural products" gives me grounds for a positive opinion and I propose to the esteemed scientific jury to award the educational and scientific degree "doctor" to Yordan Ivanov Penchev in the field of higher education 3 "Social, legal and economic sciences", professional field of scientific degree "doctor" in the scientific specialty "Organization and management" in the Department of Management and Marketing at the Agricultural University - City of Plovdiv..

Sofia

09. 05. 2025

Signature



(Prof. Dr. Kamen Petrov)