



REVIEW

On a dissertation thesis for the educational and science degree of **Doctor** in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economic, and Legal Sciences, professional field 3.8. Economics, the scientific specialty Organization and management of production (agriculture and sub-sectors)

Author of the dissertation: Yordan Ivanov Penchev

Full-time PhD student at the Department of Management and Marketing, Agricultural University, Plovdiv

Dissertation Topic: Management of supply chains for agricultural products

Reviewer: Prof. Dr. Nikolay Ivanov Tsonkov, University of National and World Economy; field of higher education 3. Social, Economic, and Legal Sciences, Professional field 3.7. Administration and Management, scientific specialty Administration and Management (Regional Business and Utilities)

Appointed as a member of the scientific jury by Order No. RD-16-518/22.04.2025 of the Rector of the Agricultural Academy - Plovdiv.

1. Brief introduction of the candidate.

Doctoral student Yordan Penchev has completed his higher education in Plovdiv at the Agricultural University. In 2020, he obtained a Bachelor's degree in Regional Development Management, and in 2021, he became a Master's in Agricultural Marketing. In 2020, the PhD student also obtained a second Master's degree with a specialisation in "Regional Security" from Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". Professionally, since 2014, Mr. Yordan Penchev has been working as a firefighter in the system of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Plovdiv Department.

2. Relevance of the problem.

Climate change, digitalisation, globalisation factors, and many others are impacting the agricultural market and making it necessary to adapt and transform. These processes are linked to new requirements that the modern agricultural market must meet, including taking account of social differences, meeting the needs of all social groups, maintaining the quality of agricultural products, and distributing more products produced through organic farming in the context of sustainable development and a circular economy. All this makes the topic chosen by the PhD student particularly relevant and contemporary. Evidence of this is also the development of a new Agri-Food Chain Management Act, the main objective of which is a fairer distribution of

added value between actors in agricultural supply chains.

Last but not least, the researched problem is very topical because the integration of Bulgarian agriculture into the world markets is increasing. And this creates significant trade opportunities, but also increases the risks associated with market imperfections and price volatility. To counteract these negative effects, the author attempts to analyse the related issues in this area to strengthen the position of farmers in the agricultural supply chain. The topic is therefore of a highly applied scientific nature.

3. Aim, objectives, hypotheses, and research methods.

The research methodology is well defined, contemporary, and fully corresponds to the title, statement, and results achieved in the dissertation. Doctoral student Penchev applied in his research the following methods: system analysis, case study analysis, comparative analysis, mathematical models, sociological survey, and statistical methods for processing the obtained empirical information.

The main objective, **"to identify the integration of farmers in agricultural supply chains and its impact on business performance"**, has been largely met. To fulfill the main objective, the author has defined 7 (seven) research tasks.

The author proves the formulated research hypothesis, namely that **"marketing management of agricultural supply chains leads to improved market status of farmers"**. The formulated sub-hypotheses (3 items) are also proven to a great extent.

In conclusion, it can be concluded that the main objective is met and the research hypothesis and auxiliary sub-hypotheses are proven.

4. Illustration and presentation of the results.

Within the research, the author uses graphical and tabular methods to present the analyzed information and the results of the analysis. In this sense, doctoral student Yordan Penchev illustrates and presents appropriately the research results obtained in the course of the study, as evidenced by the list of all figures and tables (13 tables and 26 figures). Of course, it can be recommended to the author to extend the illustration of the analysis and the results obtained.

The conclusion fully reflects the analyses carried out in the submission. The author presents the main factors on which the market for agricultural products and the supply chain for this type of goods depend. To these, PhD student Penchev points out - price and bargaining power, quality and standards, market access, marketing and branding, market trends and requirements, capital and financing, innovation and research, legislation and regulations, competition and the value chain, demand and consumer preferences. All these elements influence the state of the agricultural supply chain, and the author gives suggestions for improving them.

5. Discussion of results and literature used.

The dissertation consists of 134 pages, of which 126 pages are an introduction, 13 tables, and 26 figures. The thesis is structured into an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, and references used. 45 literature sources are used. It is noteworthy that doctoral student Yordan Penchev freely uses the scientific terminology in the research area. This is also evidenced by the excellent knowledge of the theoretical and practical

experience in the researched area demonstrated by doctoral student Penchev, which is evidenced by the list of used literature containing 45 sources. Of course, I believe that the author should have used a larger volume of scientific literature on the problem under study.

The results outline the opportunities and challenges for the development and better functioning and management of the agricultural supply chain in Bulgaria. The results obtained from the study are well argued, and we find their presentation in a synthesized form in the conclusion, which reflects the overall content of the dissertation.

6. Contributions of the dissertation.

PhD student Yordan Penchev achieved undeniable results from his research in the dissertation, which enriches the science and offers practical solutions about the digitalization of the wine sector in Bulgaria. I accept the proposed contributions. They can be grouped as follows:

Scientific contributions

1. The specificity of production structures in agriculture and business relations with intermediaries in the realization of production is clarified.
2. The mechanism of action of supply chains of agricultural products is clarified.
3. A methodology has been developed to study agricultural supply chains.

Scientific and applied contributions

4. The factors determining the market status of farmers in the supply chain are identified, and recommendations for their improvement are given.
5. The potential for shortening farmers' supply chains is identified, and a model for agricultural supply chain management is proposed.

7. Critical comments and questions.

There are no substantive criticisms of the Ph. However, I would like to make some recommendations to Mr. Penchev. In continuing scientific work in this field, I recommend that the author use a larger volume of scientific literature. I also believe that the author has not sufficiently justified the relevance and importance of the topic chosen for research. Also impressive is the smaller size of the dissertation, which has a sufficient amount of data on which the doctoral student can build and develop their analyses and theses. Of course, these weaknesses do not diminish the significant scientific results achieved in the dissertation.

8. Published articles and citations.

Three (3) publications were submitted for review:

1. **Penchev, Y.**, Distribution management of agricultural production. Economics and management of agriculture. 2022, № 2
2. **Penchev, Y.**, Profile of farmers in shortening supply chains. Journal of Bio-based Marketing. 2025, № 1
3. **Penchev, Y.**, Functioning of agricultural supply chains. Journal of Bio-based Marketing. 2025, № 1

The presented publications fully reflect the content and the main results achieved by the research in the thesis. I appreciate the three publications.

The presented abstract objectively reflects the structure and content of the thesis. I accept the abstract of the dissertation submitted for review.

CONCLUSIONS:

Based on the different research methods learned and applied by the PhD student, the correctly derived experiments, the generalizations and conclusions drawn, I consider that the presented dissertation meets the requirements of the Academic Staff Development Act, and Agricultural University Regulations for its application, which gives me reason to evaluate it as **POSITIVE**.

I take the liberty of proposing that the distinguished Scientific Jury also vote in the affirmative and award Mr. Yordan Ivanov Penchev the educational and scientific degree "**Doctor**" in the scientific specialty Organization and Management of Production (Agriculture and sub-sectors) in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic, and legal sciences, professional field 3.8. Economics.

Date: 02.05. 2025.
Plovdiv

RESPONSE:

(Prof. Dr. Nikolay Tsonkov)

