

REVIEW



on a dissertation thesis for obtaining the educational and scientific degree “**Doctor**” in: field of higher education 3.0 „Social, business and legal sciences“, professional field 3.8 „Economic“, scientific specialty: „Organization and management of production“

Author of the dissertation thesis:

DEAN NASKOV KURDOV, a PhD student at the Department of Management and Marketing in the Agricultural University, city of Plovdiv.

Dissertation topic: “**Marketing strategy for managing the production and sale of honey**”

Reviewer:

Associate professor Dr. Teodora Orfeeva Parisheva-Stoeva, 3.0. “Social, business and legal sciences”, 3.7 “Administration and Management”, “Organization and management of production”, appointed as a member of the scientific jury by order № РД-16-479 /02.04.2026 of the Rector of the Agricultural University.

1. Brief introduction of the candidate

DEAN NASKOV KURDOV was born on 27 April, 1991. During the period 2015-2020 he was graduated with a bachelor’s degree in “Agricultural economics” at the Agricultural University – Plovdiv.

During the period 2020–2021 he has a master’s degree in “Agricultural marketing” at the Agricultural University – Plovdiv.

2. Relevance of the issue.

The dissertation thesis presented for review provides a current scientific study related to the establishment of the influence of the strategic marketing in the management of the production and sale of honey. In the production of honey, Bulgaria has competitive advantages that must be utilized in order for our country to establish itself as a net exporter and for Bulgarian honey to be competitive product on the market. Bulgarian agricultural producers of honey work in a highly competitive environment and face numerous market problems, the solution of which will determine their opportunities for establishing themselves on the market.

3. Purpose, tasks, hypotheses and methods of research

The purpose of the dissertation thesis is to establish the influence of strategic marketing in the management of the production and sale of honey.

In order to achieve the set goal, the following tasks have been solved:

1. The essence of strategic marketing and its importance for the management of honey production and sales has been clarified.

2. A methodology has been developed for studying the influence of strategic marketing on honey production and sales.

3. The factors influencing the production activity of the studied sites and its results have been determined.

4. Recommendations have been made for improving the management of agricultural holdings based on strategic marketing.

5. A model of a marketing strategy for the production and sale of honey has been developed.

The main research thesis is that in modern market conditions, strategic marketing has an impact on the organization and production of honey for the consolidation of agricultural holdings engaged in the production and sale of honey.

Leading sub-theses in the study are:

- Strategic marketing is a management process. The implementation of this process requires taking into account the behavior of all market entities.

- The implementation of management activities is determined to the greatest extent by the organizational form of the agricultural holding.

- The income of honey producers is determined to the highest extent by the demand for production.

The object of the scientific research are agricultural holdings producing honey in Southern Bulgaria.

The subject of the scientific research are the management activities in planning, implementation and control of the economic activity of agricultural holdings.

4. Visualization and presentation of the results obtained

The dissertation thesis presented for review consists of an introduction, an exposition in three sections, a conclusion, and a list of references – a total of 124 standard typewritten pages. In accordance with the main tasks set in the research, the exposition in the dissertation work is developed according to the following structure: introduction, chapter one “Theoretical foundations of marketing strategies in agribusiness”, chapter two “Analysis of the state of honey production and sales”, chapter three “Development of a marketing strategy for managing honey production and sales”, conclusion, references and appendices.

5. Discussion of the results and bibliography

This dissertation aims to explore the theoretical, analytical and applied aspects of marketing strategy in the management of honey production and sales, covering the key characteristics of the beekeeping sector in Bulgaria, its economic trends, organizational features and strategic perspectives.

The first chapter examines the theoretical and methodological foundations of strategic marketing, defining its essence, goals, functions and applicability in the

agricultural sector. Strategic marketing in beekeeping should be considered not only as a tool for market implementation, but also as an integrated management concept that encompasses the processes of planning, segmentation, positioning, product differentiation and building long-term competitive advantages.

In the second chapter, a thorough organizational and economic analysis of the state of the beekeeping sector in Bulgaria is carried out. The analysis included the structure of farms, regional differences, yield dynamics, production costs, profitability of different sales models and the characteristics of consumer demand. The results of two surveys are included, which outline the real problems and attitudes of producers regarding the production and marketing of honey. It was found that the key challenges include high cost, dependence on intermediaries, seasonal instability, lack of brand identity, low level of digitalization and limited added value.

In the third chapter, an integrated marketing strategy for the production and sale of honey is developed. The strategy includes the formulation of strategic, tactical and operational objectives; segmentation and positioning models; product, pricing, distribution and communication strategies; as well as mechanisms for implementation, risk management and monitoring. Specific solutions are proposed for optimizing the production process, developing premium and regional product lines, expanding sales channels, digital positioning and building brand identity. The presented strategic framework shows how beekeeping can achieve higher efficiency, greater sustainability and better market realization through an integrated marketing approach.

The main conclusions that emerge from the conducted research are the following:

1. Beekeeping in Bulgaria has significant development potential, but this potential is partially realized due to structural, organizational and marketing deficits.
2. Honey production is biologically and climatically dependent, which makes strategic planning a necessary condition for sustainable development.
3. The most significant opportunities for increasing profitability are associated with adding value through varietal honey, organic certification, premium products and direct sales.
4. The marketing strategy should be integrated with the production logic, linking the quality, origin and authenticity of the product with a clear market positioning.
5. Digitalization is becoming a key factor in reaching new customers, building trust and expanding market presence.
6. For beekeeping farms, the most sustainable model is to combine several sales channels, reducing dependence on resellers.
7. Cooperation and vertical integration could lead to lower costs, better organization and a stronger market presence.

The proposed marketing strategy is a practical tool for beekeeping farms that can be adapted to different scales and regional specificities. It provides a systematic

approach to solving production and market challenges, combining the scientific principles of strategic marketing with the concrete realities of the Bulgarian beekeeping sector.

6. Dissertation Contributions:

The dissertation thesis "Marketing Strategy for Managing the Production and Sales of Honey" contains the following significant contributing ideas and solutions:

1. A comprehensive methodology has been developed to establish the influence of the marketing strategy on the production and sale of honey.
2. The existing marketing strategies and approaches in theory and practice have been adapted and successfully applied in the study of a specific agricultural sector, honey production.
3. Proposals have been made to improve the information and documentary basis in the management of information flows for the needs of strategic analysis.
4. A model for the formulation, implementation and control of a marketing strategy has been developed and applied.

7. Critical comments and questions

I have no critical comments to the dissertation work of the PhD student.

8. Published articles and references

DEAN NASKOV KURDOV is an author of three /3/ articles:

1. Kurdov, D., Marketing management of production. Theoretical aspects and determinants Journal of Bio-based Marketing. 2025, № 2
2. Kurdov, D., Market factors for beekeeping development. Journal of Bio-based Marketing. 2026, № 1
3. Kurdov, D., Management model for developing a marketing strategy. Journal of Bio-based Marketing. 2026, № 1

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

CONCLUSION:

I think that the presented dissertation thesis meets the requirements of the Act on Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, and the Regulations of the Agricultural University regarding its implementation and I therefore confidently give it a **POSITIVE** assessment.

I venture to suggest to the Honorable scientific jury to give their positive vote as well and to award to **DEAN NASKOV KURDOV** the educational and scientific degree "DOCTOR" in „Organization and management of production“.

Date: 17/04/2026

city of Plovdiv

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