

## REVIEW



on the dissertation for 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: Dean Naskov Kurdov, full-time doctoral student at the Department of "Management and Marketing", at the Agricultural University of Plovdiv

Topic of the dissertation: "Marketing strategy for managing the production and sale of honey"

Reviewer: Prof. Dr. Ivanka Milkova Kostova - Plovdiv University "Paisiy Hilendarski", Plovdiv, 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.8. Economics, scientific specialty: economics and management, appointed as a member of the scientific jury by order No. RD – 16-479 of 02.04.2026 by the Rector of the Agricultural University.

### 1. Brief presentation of the candidate

Dean Naskov Kurdov was born on 27.04.1991. In 2010, he graduated from the "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov" high school in Haskovo with studies in English and German. In 2020, he obtained a bachelor's degree from the Agricultural University - Plovdiv. In 2021 - a master's degree from the same university.

The doctoral student Dean Naskov Kurdov studied in a doctoral program at the Department of "Management and Marketing" at the Agricultural University, Plovdiv in the scientific specialty Organization and Management (agriculture and sub-sectors), according to the Order of the Rector of the Agricultural University. The training was carried out in a full-time form of preparation.

From 2011 to 2017, he worked as a customs broker. From 2015 to 2025, he was engaged in the production and trade of bee products, from 2022 to 2025 as a software engineer, and from 2025 to the present as an engineer manager.

### 2. Relevance of the problem

Dynamic structural changes are taking place in Bulgarian agriculture, accelerated mainly under the influence of the Common Agricultural Policy /CAP/ of the EU. In honey production, 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 a competitive product on the market. Bulgarian agricultural honey producers operate in a highly competitive environment and face numerous market problems, the solution of which will determine their opportunities for establishing themselves on the market.

The relevance and significance of the topic are well presented in the introduction to the dissertation.

### **3. Purpose, tasks, hypotheses and research methods**

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

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

1. To clarify the place and importance of the marketing approach in the management of business organizations.
2. To clarify the essence of strategic marketing and justify its importance for the management of honey production and sales.
3. To develop a methodology for studying the influence of strategic marketing on honey production and sales.
4. To determine the factors determining the production activity of the studied objects and its results.
5. To make recommendations for improving the management of agricultural holdings based on strategic marketing.
6. To develop a model of a marketing strategy for honey production and sales.

I believe that the purpose and tasks of the development are well formulated.

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

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

Main research thesis: Strategic marketing in modern market conditions affects the organization and production of honey for the establishment of agricultural holdings engaged in the production and sale of honey.

Leading subtheses 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.
- There is a market potential for offering Bulgarian honey on the national market.
- The implementation of strategic marketing to improve the financial results and market positions of honey producers requires structuring of activities.

When conducting the study, the systematic approach, retrospective analysis, situational analysis, comparative analysis, statistical methods, diagnostic analysis, prognostic analysis, etc. were applied.

#### **4. Visualization and presentation of the obtained results**

The dissertation is a coherent, logical study, which consists of 124 pages of main text, successfully supported by graphic, tabular and appropriately processed empirical material. The dissertation is distinguished by a balanced and classical structure, consisting of an introduction, three chapters, conclusion, list of used literature. The development is clearly illustrated by means of tables and figures.

The dissertation contains theoretical, methodological, methodological and applied aspects, positioned in separate chapters of the development.

In chapter one: Theoretical foundations of marketing strategies in agribusiness, the following are described: The essence and characteristics of the marketing strategy, the features of marketing in agricultural production, the main models for managing the production and sale of products in the agricultural sector, the specifics of the honey and bee products market, the methodology of the study.

At the end of the first chapter, several fundamental conclusions are formulated, which outline the framework for the development of the analytical and applied parts of the dissertation. They summarize the key theoretical statements, identify the specific characteristics of agricultural marketing and outline the factors determining the competitiveness of beekeeping farms in the modern economic environment.

In the second chapter, an in-depth analysis of the state of honey production and sales is made: a review of the market environment is carried out: trends, challenges and opportunities; Analysis of honey production processes (internal factors); Analysis of honey sales and distribution channels; SWOT analysis of existing honey marketing practices.

In the third chapter, a marketing strategy for managing honey production and sales is developed: A marketing mix for honey has been developed; Priority strategic directions; Risk assessment and sustainability of the strategy.

The proposed marketing strategy is a practical tool for beekeeping farms, which can be adapted to different scales and regional characteristics.

## **5. Discussion of the results and used literature**

I find the structuring and content of the study logical and consistent. I believe that the presentation, constructed in this way, meets the basic qualitative requirements for its evaluation: originality of the study, a high degree of penetration into the depth and essence of the problem, methodological solidity and stylistic skill of the author to achieve the goal of the study by applying appropriate analytical tools and means of expression. I believe that the doctoral student clearly and reasonedly achieves his main research goal and solves the set research tasks.

On the basis of the completed goal and tasks, the doctoral student also proves his research thesis. With regard to the achieved scientific and scientific-applied results, it can be summarized that there is a peculiar, original research approach, chosen by the doctoral student and successfully applied to achieve real results in writing the dissertation work. Evidence for the presence of these results, in addition to the overall structure of the dissertation, is summarized and synthesized in the conclusion.

The literature used is included in a list of 80 titles, 30 in Bulgarian and 50 in English, which testifies to the doctoral student's awareness of the research on the specific problem under discussion by both Bulgarian and foreign authors. The literary sources are analyzed and summarized in the manner necessary for a dissertation study.

## **6. Contributions of the dissertation work**

Scientific and scientific-applied contributions

The dissertation work proposed for evaluation has evidence of scientific-applied results, presented as solutions to the researched problems. The scientific and

scientific-applied contributions presented in the abstract correspond to the actual contributions in the dissertation. The main scientific merits of the dissertation work can be outlined in the following directions:

1. A comprehensive methodology has been developed for establishing the influence of the marketing strategy on the production and trade 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 for managing information flows for the needs of strategic analysis.
4. A model for formulating, implementing and controlling a marketing strategy has been developed and applied in a specific beekeeping farm.

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

I recommend that the author publish more articles in refereed scientific journals on the issues studied in the dissertation, in order to more widely popularize the results of the scientific work among the scientific community.

## **8. Published articles and citations**

The presented list of publications - 3 independent scientific articles related to the topic of the dissertation work, is evidence that some important parts of the work have become public knowledge and have received scientific evaluation.

The main aspects discussed in the dissertation work find their place in the presented abstract. The abstract is 36 pages long. Its content corresponds to the main work, presenting a research problem in a synthesized form.

## **CONCLUSION:**

The dissertation work contains scientific, scientifically applied and applied results that represent an original contribution to science and meet all the requirements of the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (AADRB), the Regulations for the Implementation of the AADRB and the relevant Regulations of the Academy. The presented materials and dissertation results fully comply with the specific requirements of the Faculty of Economics, adopted in connection with the Regulations of the Academy for the Implementation of the AADRB.

The dissertation shows that the dissertation candidate Dean Naskov Kurdov possesses in-depth theoretical knowledge and professional skills in the scientific specialty, demonstrating qualities and skills for conducting research with obtaining original and significant scientific contributions.

Due to the above, I confidently give my POSITIVE assessment of the conducted research, presented by the above-reviewed dissertation, abstract, achieved results and contributions, and I propose to the esteemed scientific jury to award the scientific degree "doctor" to Dean Naskov Kurdov in the field of higher education: 3.0. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field: 3.8 Economics, scientific specialty: Organization and management (agriculture and sub-sectors)

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Подписите в този документ са заличени

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