



## OPINION

on a dissertation submitted for the award of the educational and scientific degree of **Doctor (PhD)** in:

Field of Higher Education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences,  
Professional Field 3.8 Economics,  
Scientific Specialty “Organization and Management”

**Author of the dissertation:** Dean Naskov Kurdov

full-time doctoral candidate at the Department of Management and Marketing, Agricultural University – Plovdiv

**Title of the dissertation:**

“Marketing Strategy for the Management of Honey Production and Marketing”

**Reviewer:** Prof. PhD Valentina Lyubenova Nikolova-Alexieva – University of Food Technologies – Plovdiv, member of the Scientific Jury appointed by Order of the Rector of the Agricultural University – Plovdiv: RD-16-479/02.04.2026

### 1. General Characteristics of the Dissertation and the Candidate

The dissertation submitted by Dean Naskov Kurdov addresses a significant and complex issue in the contemporary development of the agricultural sector, namely the strategic management of honey production and marketing through the application of marketing tools. The topic has been carefully selected and reflects both current scientific research in the field of agricultural marketing and the real needs of the beekeeping sector in Bulgaria.

The doctoral candidate demonstrates solid academic preparation in agricultural economics and marketing, complemented by practical experience in both agricultural activities and the technology sector. This combination of knowledge and skills is clearly reflected in the structure and argumentation of the dissertation.

### 2. Relevance and Significance of the Research Problem

The relevance of the study is undeniable. In the context of increasing competition in agricultural markets and growing requirements for quality and traceability of food products, honey production and marketing require new managerial approaches. Bulgaria has considerable potential in honey production; however, its full realization is hindered by a number of structural and market-related challenges, including fragmented production, limited market access, and insufficiently developed marketing strategies.

The dissertation directly addresses this issue by placing strategic marketing at the center of the management of beekeeping enterprises. In this way, the research possesses not only scientific merit but also clear practical significance.

### **3. Aim, Object, Subject, and Methodology of the Research**

The aim of the dissertation is clearly and logically formulated—to determine the impact of strategic marketing on the management of honey production and marketing.

The object of the research comprises agricultural holdings engaged in honey production in Southern Bulgaria, while the subject encompasses managerial activities related to planning, organization, and control of their operations.

The research tasks are well structured and logically consistent, covering theoretical clarification of strategic marketing, development of a methodological framework, empirical analysis, and the creation of a strategic model.

The methodological approach is appropriate and includes a systems approach, situational and comparative analysis, statistical methods, as well as diagnostic and prognostic analysis. The combination of different methods ensures reliable and well-founded results.

### **4. Structure and Content of the Dissertation**

The dissertation is structured in a logically consistent and well-balanced manner, fully meeting the requirements for doctoral-level research. It consists of an introduction, three main chapters, conclusion, bibliography, and appendices, with a total length of 124 pages, including 120 pages of main text. The use of 80 literature sources demonstrates a solid theoretical foundation.

In the introduction, the author justifies the choice of topic, outlines the relevance of the research problem, and clearly formulates the aim, objectives, object, and subject of the study. The introduction effectively sets the scientific framework and orientation of the research.

The first chapter is devoted to the theoretical foundations of marketing strategies in agribusiness. The author demonstrates a thorough understanding of contemporary concepts of strategic marketing, examining its essence, functions, and importance for organizational management. Particular attention is given to the specific features of agricultural marketing, arising from the biological nature of production, seasonality, dependence on natural factors, and the regulatory environment. The analysis of the honey and bee products market is detailed and reflects a solid understanding of sector-specific characteristics. The author successfully integrates classical and modern theoretical approaches while attempting to adapt them to the conditions of Bulgarian beekeeping.

The second chapter has a strong analytical and empirical orientation and represents a key component of the dissertation. It provides a comprehensive analysis of the state of honey production and marketing. The author examines market trends, identifies key challenges and opportunities, and analyzes the factors influencing production activities. Particularly valuable is the analysis of distribution channels, which reveals structural problems related to dependence on intermediaries and the limited development of direct sales. The conducted SWOT analysis further enriches the study by systematizing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing beekeeping enterprises. This chapter clearly demonstrates the author's ability to work with empirical data and derive logically sound conclusions.

The third chapter constitutes the most significant contribution of the dissertation. It presents an original marketing strategy for managing honey production and marketing. The proposed model is logically derived from the theoretical and empirical analysis. The author develops a detailed marketing mix, including product, pricing, distribution, and communication policies, while taking into account the specific characteristics of beekeeping. Particularly important is the formulation of priority strategic directions applicable in real conditions. The inclusion of risk assessment and sustainability considerations further enhances the practical value of the proposed strategy.

Overall, the structure of the dissertation is clearly organized, logically consistent, and well balanced, with each chapter fulfilling a specific role in the development of the research—from theoretical grounding, through analysis, to the creation of a practically applicable model.

## **5. Scientific and Applied Contributions**

The dissertation by Dean Naskov Kurdov contains substantial scientific and applied contributions, which can be evaluated both theoretically and practically.

The scientific contribution lies primarily in the systematization and further development of theoretical concepts related to strategic marketing in the agricultural sector, particularly in beekeeping. The author does not merely present existing theories but makes an effort to adapt them to the specific conditions of honey production. In this respect, the dissertation contributes to expanding scientific knowledge regarding the role of marketing as an integrated managerial function in agricultural enterprises.

A significant contribution is also the development of a methodological framework for studying the impact of strategic marketing on honey production and marketing. This methodology has the potential to be applied in other studies within the agricultural sector, thus enhancing its scientific value.

Particularly noteworthy is the author's development of a marketing strategy model. This model represents a comprehensive conceptual framework integrating key elements of strategic marketing, including environmental analysis, segmentation, positioning, and marketing mix. It is designed in

accordance with real conditions in beekeeping and reflects both production and market characteristics of the sector.

From an applied perspective, the dissertation has a clearly defined practical orientation. It identifies specific problems in the management of honey production and marketing, such as the lack of strategic planning, insufficient development of marketing activities, and limited diversification of distribution channels. Based on this analysis, the author formulates concrete recommendations aimed at improving management practices in beekeeping enterprises.

The proposed marketing strategy can serve as a practical tool for agricultural producers, supporting decision-making processes, optimizing resource allocation, and enhancing competitiveness. Importantly, the strategy takes into account the risks inherent in agricultural production and proposes mechanisms for their management.

In summary, the contributions of the dissertation are clearly identified, well substantiated, and demonstrate both scientific novelty and significant practical applicability, which determines its high value as a scientific study.

## **6. Critical Remarks and Recommendations**

Despite the high quality of the dissertation, several recommendations can be made. It would be beneficial to expand the analysis by including international comparisons to provide a broader perspective on sector development. Additionally, future research could place greater emphasis on digital marketing and the role of e-commerce in honey marketing.

In some parts of the text, stylistic repetitions are observed, which could be refined through editorial improvement.

## **7. Publications and Abstract**

The doctoral candidate has presented the required scientific publications reflecting the main results of the research. The submitted abstract accurately reflects the structure and content of the dissertation.

## **8. Conclusion**

In conclusion, I consider that the dissertation submitted by Dean Naskov Kurdov represents a complete, independent, and scientifically grounded research work. It contains significant scientific and applied results and meets the requirements for awarding the educational and scientific degree of Doctor (PhD).

On this basis, I give my **POSITIVE evaluation** and recommend that the esteemed Scientific Jury award Dean Naskov Kurdov the educational and scientific degree of **Doctor (PhD)** in the scientific specialty “Organization and Management”.

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Plovdiv

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