

“The role of Extension services in supporting Ukrainian farmers to enter the EU market of organic goods”

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Nowadays, organic agriculture across the globe is developing in a fast manner due to the growing environmental issues, scarce resources, and diminishing health benefits of food. Ukraine is not an exception in this trend, where the organic market for the last 5- 6 years has grown 5-fold and where more and more land is dedicated to organic agriculture each year. However, the current demand for organic products in the domestic market of Ukraine is weak, contrary to the European one, which is why Ukrainian organic agricultural producers focus on export.

This work examines the export of Ukrainian organic products as a subject of the provision of advisory services by extension organizations. The main purpose of this research is to find out how the advisory services influence the ability of Ukrainian farmers to export their organic products to the European Union.

The practical research identified the kinds of advisory services provided by extension organizations to organic farmers. Was examined if the advisory organizations provided farmers export support.

As a research tool was chosen qualitative method, based on the interviews. Semi-structured interview guides with open-ended questions were used in this work. The interviews with 20 organic farmers were conducted. Then the data from the interviews were transcribed, coded, and arranged based on research objectives and research questions.

The research findings showed that most of the farmers used the advisory services provided by the certification organization, which was related to organic farming and obtaining certificates. The advisory organizations provided export-related support to farmers, however, that is not sufficient to influence their ability to export.

To enable farmers to engage in export activities, they should have enough capacity to overcome their main issues and be supported by the government financially to help them to be protected against a big variety of risks they might face on their way to export. Building the proper infrastructure supporting export activities and forming an effective government mechanism for agriculture knowledge dissemination and support

of organic farmers might help in improving the current situation. It is recommended to conduct future research with a bigger number of randomly chosen organic farmers across the whole country.

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