

# **Priorities of Bulgarian Agriculture as a Factor for Competitiveness of Agri-food sector**

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# OBJECTIVE

To outline the medium-term priorities of the Bulgarian agricultural policy based on analysis of some main indicators of the potential and the level of development of Bulgarian farming, compared to the average European indexes and a SWOT analysis for identifying the most important interior (strong and weak sides) and exterior factors (possibilities and threats) of the Bulgarian agricultural development.

## ***Place of Bulgarian agriculture in the EU***

Compared to the average European level, the Bulgarian agriculture is characterized with good provision of land and labour and low capital investments. The result is extensive utilization of the production factors and output of products with a low GVA, with a low labour and land productivity level.

# ***SWOT analysis of the Bulgarian agriculture***

Strengths: Favourable soil-climatic conditions; Rural population and communities with experience and traditions in agriculture

Weaknesses: Low grade of utilization of the production factors

Opportunities: Easier access to existing and new knowledge and technologies.

Threats: Inability of Bulgarian agriculture and processing sector to adapt to the globalization processes.

## ***Priority directions of the agricultural policy***

*The aim of the agricultural policy should be the achievement of food security for the population and the increase of the welfare of farmers in the conditions of sustainable production, inter alia a competitive one, preserving the natural resources and environment.*

## ***Priority directions...***

- Overcoming the structural problems through consolidation of the land property and rationalizing of the land utilization. The advance in this field will depend on the development of the land market, the certainty of land utilization and the achievement of land development activities.

## ***Priority directions...***

- Increase of the education and qualification of the employed in agriculture. At a certain grade this activity is underesteemed. It is considered that the investment in human development for a long-term plan will be of a highest return.

## ***Priority directions...***

- Development of the system for dissemination of knowledge and advisory services. The scale of the task requires the integration of the capacity for dissemination and advisory services of the NOASA, the executive agencies, the AA and the municipality and regional centres of the MAF, as well as the NGO sector and the local social capital.
- . ESS only 15% of the respondents claimed to have got information from structures of MAF



# *Priority directions...*

- Development of the science research.  
Changes are necessary in several directions:
  - new framework of financing of the research activities, providing the necessary stability of the system and creating conditions for obtaining income from scientific products and services;
  - change of the regulatory framework, creating prerequisites for flexible organization of the research activities;
  - providing access for the research institutes to financing by the EU structure funds.

## ***Priority directions...***

- Improvement of the market access for the agricultural producers. This includes market integration, development of market infrastructure, and creation of efficient competitiveness, environment and producers cooperation.

## ***Priority directions...***

- Development of local markets and regional products. The local markets' development corresponds to the interests of the producers, preserves the production and consumption culture, established through the years, contributes to the local identity preservation and because of this must be supported by the policy.

## ***Priority directions...***

- Product development and increase of the share of high value-added products in the food processing industry.