

INFORMATION AND MARKETING SUPPORT OF PRODUCERS OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS IN THE «GREEN BASKET» OF THE WTO

Abstract The main purpose of the article is to reveal the essence and necessity of applying information and marketing support to agricultural producers as a green basket measure in the WTO system that does not distort trade. The study identified trends and developmental features of modern marketing systems and the promotion of agricultural raw materials and products abroad. The main measures of state support for producers of agricultural products in Belarus are identified, which are included in the measures of the «yellow basket» and «green basket». The directions of the implementation of information and marketing support for the agricultural industry for 2016–2018 are substantiated, providing for increasing the efficiency of the functioning of the industry and ensuring competitive production of agricultural products, raw materials and food. Mechanisms are proposed to expand measures of information and marketing support for agricultural producers in Belarus, taking into account international rules and requirements.

Keywords: information and marketing support, manufacturer, agricultural products, World Trade Organization.

JEL-code: F13, F18, Q10, Q17.

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Introduction

Since 2016, the Republic of Belarus has stepped up the negotiation process for joining the World Trade Organization (WTO)¹. At present, the country remains the only one among the member states of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) that does not have preferential advantages in world trade related to WTO membership, but is forced to work according to the rules and requirements of this organization. Negotiations are held in four key areas²:

- 1) bringing the national legislation of the Republic of Belarus in line with multilateral WTO agreements;
- 2) access to the market for goods;

¹ 1993 – the Republic of Belarus submitted an application for accession to the WTO; 1997–2005 – negotiation process; 2006–2015 – work in an informal mode; 2016 – now – intensification of negotiations.

² <http://mfa.gov.by/export/wto/accession/>.

3) access to the market for services;

4) state support for agriculture.

Within the framework of the WTO, agriculture is one of the key sectors and is determined by the Agreement on Agriculture¹. The document is the main one in the sphere of regulation of the world agri-food trade, covers the issues of production and foreign trade in agricultural products², and is also based on three main conceptual provisions: expanding access to the internal markets of WTO members; reduced domestic support for agriculture in the participating countries; increased export competition and reduced export subsidies by members of the organization.

Information and marketing support refers to the green box measures, since budget financing is carried out through government programs that do not entail price support and do not refuse direct distorting effects on trade. In accordance with paragraph 2 (f) of annex II, this group includes marketing information, advice and promotion of specific products, but excludes expenses for non-specific purposes that sellers can use to lower prices or provide direct economic benefits to customers³.

For Belarus, the practical implementation of a marketing approach to agricultural support is of extreme importance, as it will allow the application of the rules and principles of the WTO without violating the country's obligations to this international organization. In this aspect, the theoretical, methodological and practical experience gained by the WTO members and set forth in the article is of interest to the republic. An integrated approach to observing and implementing the identified trends will allow us to develop a system of measures to improve the efficiency of domestic agriculture and ensure the competitiveness of agricultural products in the domestic and foreign market.

Main part

Marketing development in the agricultural sector of foreign countries

The term «marketing» appeared in the economic literature at the turn of the XIX – XX centuries. It comes from the English words «market» (market) and «ing» (action) and literally means activity related to the market. However, according to many foreign and Belarusian scientists, the essence of this concept is much wider. It is considered as entrepreneurial, commercial or managerial activity; social process; integrated system approach; a system of events and a set of technical techniques; type of human activity; set of organizational, technical, financial and commercial functions; the process of regulating demand depending on supply, etc. [Anderson, Coughlan, 1987; Bowersox, Morash, 1989; Larson, Rogers, 1989; Michael, 1990; Sheth, Sisodia, 2002; Akulich, 2009; Golubkov, 2007; Dichtl, Hershgen, 1995; Durovich, 1997; Kireyenka, 2015; Klyukach, Loginov, 2010; Kotler, Keller, 2014; Tsyppkin, Pakulin, 1996].

Among agricultural scientists, there is also no consensus on views on marketing. This area of knowledge, both from a theoretical and from a practical

¹ Signed in 1994 (Marrakesh), entered into force in 1995.

² Article 2 and Appendix I of the WTO Agreement on Agriculture (excluding fish and fish products, forest products and products made from fibers, and including cotton, linen, silk, leather and skins).

³ WTO Agriculture Agreement (Agreement on Agriculture) [Electronic resource]. – Access mode: <http://www.vavt.ru/wto/wto/AgricultureAgreement>. – Access date: 09.01.2019.

and practice, the concepts are used: agricultural marketing, agromarketing, agribusiness marketing, food marketing. So, in 1955 R.L. Kolz introduced the category of «agricultural marketing», which is identified with the category of «food marketing» and is defined as «the totality of all types of activities included in the process of promoting food products and services, starting from agricultural production and until they are in the hands of consumers» [Colz, 2000, p19]. The key point in this definition is that: 1) marketing is not limited to non-agricultural activities; 2) it begins with a decision on the production of agricultural products on the farm.

R.E. Branson and D.G. Norvel defined agromarketing as activities related to agricultural production and food, seeds, harvesting, processing and delivery to the final consumer, including analysis of consumer needs, motivation, shopping and consumer behavior. In 1957, J.N. Davis and R.A. Golberg introduced the concept of «agribusiness marketing», which meant the implementation of marketing operations from the first buyer to the final consumer [Tsypkin, Pakulin, 1996]. A team of scientists under the direction of V.A. Klyukach justified marketing for agricultural production as a system of organizational, technical, financial and commercial functions of the enterprise aimed at the most complete satisfaction of consumer demand for agricultural products and food [Klyukach, Loginov, 2010]. In turn, Yu.A. Tsypkin reflected the most important aspects of agromarketing through the form of focused creative activity in anticipating the satisfaction of consumer demand for goods, services, ideas related to agricultural production [Tsypkin, Pakulin, 1996].

Revealing the specifics of marketing in the agricultural sector, Belarusian scientists connect it with natural and economic processes, the mismatch of the working period and the production period, the seasonality of production and the receipt of products, the role and importance of agriculture in the formation of food resources, the variety of organizational forms of management, foreign economic relations and international marketing, as well as the participation of state's authorities in the development of agriculture and industry. At the same time, the concept of «agromarketing» is considered as two main areas of activity related to: production, movement, storage, processing and transfer of raw materials and finished products as they move from the producer to the consumer; exchange and pricing processes in the market system [Akulich, 2009; Gusakov, Daineko, Baygot, Kireyenka, 2000; Durovich, 1997; Ilina, 2012; Kireyenka, 2015].

Currently, the development of marketing in the agricultural sector of foreign countries is based on a systematic approach, which involves the examination of the subject of research in the form of a hierarchy of four levels. So, marketing as a *philosophy of modern agricultural business* is a way of thinking, the basis of which is the demand for agricultural products and food. Any decisions made at all levels, based on the systematization of the market and its elements, the priority of the interests of the buyer, flexible adaptability to market requirements, etc., are subject to his satisfaction.

Another common approach to marketing is its disclosure as an *important part of the management system of an agricultural organization*. Changes in the management structure during the first half of the 20th century significantly influenced the formation of managerial marketing concepts. Igor Ansoff noted that in the management system, the dominance of marketing over production often reduced the effectiveness of the latter. As a compensation, the category «general marketing concept» appeared, which made it possible to balance the resulting imbalances [Ansoff, 1999].

M. Porter, the concepts of *competitive strategy* and *competitive advantage* became popular. In the theory and practice of marketing, there is a clear shift in emphasis from consumers towards focusing on competitors [Porter, 2005].

Understanding of marketing as a *method of searching for managerial decisions* also went through several stages of development. As noted by F. Kotler and K. Keller, research should be considered as a focused process, including determining the problem and setting goals, developing a plan for collecting information and its implementation, collecting and analyzing data, and also interpreting the results [Kotler, Keller, 2014, p112]. In this context, information and marketing support for agricultural producers is due to the need to identify internal and external problems and business opportunities, reduce risks in making managerial decisions and ensure the efficient functioning of the business entity in the market.

Our studies have shown that the basis of the agrarian policy of economically developed countries is the state regulation of the sale of agricultural raw materials and products, including a list of key areas specifically designed to regulate agro-marketing. In this aspect, we studied the experience of various WTO members in the use of marketing services and the promotion of agricultural products on the market.

1. *Maintaining public systems of price market information*, the purpose of which is to analyze and forecast the state of the market for agricultural products and food, material and technical resources and services for the development and adoption of motivated decisions by agro-industrial complex management bodies and market entities on the development of agricultural production, sales of products and food. Their activities also include conducting marketing research, examinations, substantiating prices and terms of transactions, providing analytical reports on individual customer requests, which allows performing a number of important functions [Batabyal, Kourtit, Nijkamp, 2018; Gusakov, Baygot, 2007; Dyumulen, 2012]:

- facilitating market operations and maintaining competitive markets – the system reduces the cost of all market participants to search for information, facilitates the access of small enterprises to it, thus contributing to the growth of their competitiveness compared to large companies;

- restriction of unfair market practices, which may arise as a result of greater awareness of some market participants compared to others;

- increasing the economic efficiency of the activities of market participants arising under the influence of more complete information about market conditions and leading to a reduction in marketing costs for the search for optimal distribution channels for products.

2. *Sales promotion of agricultural products*. There are currently 13 programs in the United States. For their practical implementation in a number of industries, special associations of manufacturers have been created, which have the authority to develop and support the work of researching and promoting their products manufactured in the industry. Annually, industry councils develop market development programs, which should be supported by two-thirds of the manufacturers included in the council and approved by the Minister of Agriculture [Kireyenka, 2015; Serova, Karlova, 2019; Shevlyagina, 2007].

The programs are financed by the special tax «assessment of sales promotion» (assessment payments), which is charged automatically upon the sale of each unit of production, including import deliveries. The current procedure provides for the possibility of returning the funds made in such a way

...who are unhappy with the progress of the programs. In addition to the size and procedure for collecting funds, the legislation defines the mechanism for the movement of these funds, the procedure and directions for their expenditure.

When selling goods, manufacturers pay a sales promotion fee, which then goes to the account of the Council, a special administrative superstructure created to coordinate sales promotion programs. Funds are accumulated in a special fund and spent on programs. Responsible for coordinating sales promotion programs is the Agricultural Marketing Service of US Department of Agriculture.

There are similar programs in the European Union (EU). So, in 2015–2017, the European Commission funded 20 programs aimed at promoting the marketing of European agricultural products in the EU and other countries of the world (North America, Russia, China, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, India, Latin America, Norway, Azerbaijan, Belarus and Turkey). The programs cover high-quality agricultural products (products with protected appellations of origin, geographical names, as well as traditional delicacies with a guarantee of origin), organic products, fresh vegetables and fruits, wine, milk and dairy products, flowers, processed vegetables and fruits, processed products cereals and rice, egg labeling and various combined categories. The total budget for three years amounted to 46.5 million euros. The EU finances up to 50.0% of the program cost (up to 60.0% in programs related to increased consumption of fruits and vegetables by children, as well as responsible drinking and the harm of excessive alcohol consumption), the remainder comes from professional and / or intersectoral organizations, and in some cases also from interested member-states.

3. *Monitoring the implementation of programs of federal sales markets* is an established procedure for the sale of a certain type of agricultural and food products, in accordance with which producers can independently regulate certain aspects of sales (production) in the domestic and foreign markets. The mechanism is based on the idea of self-regulation within individual sectors, the supply of agricultural products to the market, which appeared back in the 30s of the twentieth century, when prices were extremely low. Currently, the state is the main guarantor of the effective operation of these programs, carrying out the functions of regulation and control through the Ministry of Agriculture [Shevlyagina, 2008].

Our studies have allowed us to substantiate the advantages and disadvantages of the mechanism of federal sales markets. Among the positive aspects there is a contribution to the stabilization of prices for the products they control, high requirements for standardization and quality of packaging and containers, which ensures a reduction in implementation costs. The existing system of special fees for the financing of applied research in the field of production and marketing of products also positively affects the growth of their effectiveness. However, the main drawback is the opportunity provided by law to limit supply to the market, which can be used to artificially raise prices.

In general, this mechanism cannot be a substitute for existing price and income support programs for major crops. So, in the structure of expenditures of the US federal budget allocated to agriculture, the main are two programs: income stabilization (they account for about 60% of budget expenditures under the item «Agriculture»); agricultural research and service science. Subsidies in the EU countries have reached 45–50% of the value of farmers' marketable products, in Japan and Finland – 70%. In the USA, 30% more is invested

in agricultural development per unit of output than in other industries. In addition to the price mechanism, the EU's common rules for organizing and regulating agricultural raw materials and food markets include control over the provision of budgetary subsidies (national aspect), as well as European measures aimed at ensuring producers' incomes, maintaining retail prices at a certain level, which allows unifying competition conditions both in the field of production and in the field of marketing. The main aspiration of the supranational bodies of the EU is to search for means and methods in the field of support for the manufacturer, which would provide him with approximately equal positions in each country. A common European agricultural policy is aimed at clearly organizing sales markets, maintaining farm incomes, helping to sell surplus products, and solving a number of other problems.

A certain impact on the marketing sector of the agro-industrial complex also has¹:

food aid programs. In accordance with paragraph 4 of Annex II of the WTO Agreement on Agriculture, «the right to receive food assistance is associated with clearly defined criteria related to the goals of providing food. Such assistance is provided in the form of direct food supplies to interested parties or the provision of funds that allow eligible food recipients to purchase food at market or subsidized prices. Government purchases of food are carried out at current market prices, and financing and management are transparent»;

information and consulting services, the purpose of which is to timely convey to farmers the quality information necessary for making management decisions. In the USA and EU countries, the consulting services market provides 4–5% of GNP and 3–4 million jobs. In the 90s XX century the income of consulting firms in the EU amounted to \$ 6 billion, the United States – \$ 20 billion. At the same time, the scope of consulting companies is estimated by the number of consultants per 1000 inhabitants. In Japan, this figure is 0.4, the United States 0.2, the EU countries 0.08, and developing countries 0.004.

Directions of development of marketing and information and marketing support for the agro-industrial complex of the Republic of Belarus

The agricultural sector of the Republic of Belarus occupies a special place in the national economy of the country. This is due to the production of food as the basis of human life and the reproduction of labor, the production of raw materials for many types of non-productive consumer goods and industrial products. The main types of commodity products of Belarusian agriculture are milk, cattle and poultry meat, grain, potatoes, sugar beets and flax raw materials. The level of agricultural development largely determines the level of economic and food security of the state.

The volume of the gross domestic product of the Republic of Belarus for 2018 amounted to 121,568.3 million rubles and compared with 2016, it increased by 28.0%, from 2017 – by 14.9% (table 1). The volume of gross value added of agriculture, forestry and fisheries in 2018 compared to 2016 increased by 18.9%, and by 2017 decreased by 2.8%. At the same time, agricultural output by farms of all categories is growing. In 2018, this indicator amounted to 18 843 million rubles, which is 21.5% more than in 2016 and 4.4% in 2017. The share of agriculture in GDP for the period under review varied from 6, 9% (2016) to 7.6% (2017). By the end of 2018, it amounted to 6.4%.

¹ WTO Agriculture Agreement (Agreement on Agriculture) [Electronic resource]. – Access mode: <http://www.vavt.ru/wto/wto/AgricultureAgreement>. – Access date: 09/01/2019.

**The share of agriculture in the structure of GDP
of the Republic of Belarus, 2016–2018¹**

Indicators	2016	2017	2018	2017 to 2016, %	2018 to 2017, %
Gross domestic product at current prices, million BYN	94 949,0	105 748,2	121 568,3	111,3	114,9
from it the gross value added of agriculture ² , million BYN	6 547,0	8 000,7	7 783,1	122,2	97,2
Agricultural products in farms of all categories at current prices, million BYN	15 502	18 043	18 843	116,4	104,4
in comparable prices, in % to the previous year	103,3	104,2	96,7	0,9 p. p.	-7,5 p. p.
Share of agriculture in GDP, %	6,9	7,6	6,4	0,7 p. p.	-1,2 p. p.

An important place in the development of agriculture is held by state support. Currently, the mechanism for its provision is fixed in the Decree of the President of the Republic of Belarus No. 347 «On State Agrarian Policy»³, the State Program for the Development of Agricultural Business in the Republic of Belarus for 2016–2020, and the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union⁴.

In 2018, about 1.5 billion rubles were allocated for direct budget subsidies to agriculture and fisheries. However, consolidated budget expenditures are declining over the years. So, if in 2015 the amount of direct budget subsidies exceeded the equivalent of US \$ 110 per hectare of agricultural land, then already in 2018 it fell below 85 (table 2).

The largest part of support for the Belarusian agro-industrial complex is provided through yellow box measures (85–88%)⁵ and 12–15% goes to green box measures⁶. In the structure of direct budget support, the largest share is occupied by: compensation for losses from banks on the issue of soft loans – 46%; reduction of the cost of capital costs – 20%; price increases – 14%; reduction in the cost of working capital – 12%; other measures – 8%. In the total volume of yellow basket measures, 98.0% are product-specific measures. In the structure of support measures for the green box, the largest share falls on the cost of training personnel (42%); infrastructure related services (25%); payments under environmental programs (16%); research (8%) [Kireyenka, Kazakevich, 2018].

¹ Source: Agriculture of the Republic of Belarus: stat. Sat / Nat. stat. Committee Resp. Belarus. – Minsk, 2019. – P. 14.

² Gross value added by type of economic activity «Agriculture, forestry and fisheries»

³ Presidential Decree of the Republic of Belarus dated July 17, 2014, № 347.

⁴ Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union of the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation of May 29, 2014 [Electronic resource]. – Access mode: http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_163855. – Date of access: 08.07.2014.

⁵ They include all types of direct support provided at the level of a specific product, as well as support not related to a specific product.

⁶ Support is provided through government programs funded from the state budget (including lost profits by the state), and not by transferring funds from consumers; does not result in producer price support.

**Consolidated budget expenditures on agriculture,
fisheries of the Republic of Belarus, 2016–2018¹**

Indicators	2016	2017	2018	2017 to 2016, %	2018 to 2017, %
Consolidated budget expenditures for agriculture, fisheries, million BYN	2 002,1	1 541,2	1 483,7	76,9	96,3
Consolidated budget expenditures for agriculture, fisheries, million \$	1 006,8	797,8	728,5	79,2	91,3
Subsidies per hectare of agricultural land, \$	113,1	89,6	81,9	70,4	91,4

The implementation of various marketing approaches in Belarus began in the 90s of the twentieth century. To date, an appropriate regulatory framework has been created – the enactment of the laws of the Republic of Belarus: «On the trademark and service marks»², «On advertising»³, «On commodity exchanges»⁴ and others. Certain attempts are also being made to introduce marketing into the agricultural management system. Information and marketing support is provided on the Internet and international information and trade networks, the portal Export.by has been created. The institutional basis of the agricultural export support system is formed by export support institutions, an interdepartmental council on foreign trade policy, intergovernmental commissions, business cooperation councils with foreign countries, and the Meat and Dairy Company.

Based on this, the relevant directions for expanding the green box measures are information and marketing support for agricultural producers. In this context, it is necessary:

- formation of a unified information and consulting system, including determining the status of a consultant, justifying the mechanism for the development of paid services, the interaction of services and centers of agricultural consulting with government bodies of the agro-industrial complex, developing a comprehensive methodology for assessing the effectiveness of their functioning;
- organization of a system of domestic food assistance to the population as a form of support for sustainable agricultural development. In the Republic of Belarus, programs can be developed and implemented using two main approaches – government procurement of food for free meals (in schools, kindergartens, hospitals, free social catering points, etc.) and preferential purchase of food by the population (using food cards, for which funds from the budget will be transferred monthly, and they can be paid only in certain stores and for a certain period of time);
- subsidizing consulting and product promotion services. In this context, it is advisable to establish a scientific advisory center under the Ministry of Agriculture and Food of the Republic of Belarus (for example, the United States operates the Agricultural Marketing Service and the Agricultural Service of

¹ Source: Agriculture of the Republic of Belarus: stat. Sat / Nat. stat. Committee Resp. Belarus. – Minsk, 2019. – P. 16.

² Law the Republic of Belarus dated February 5, 1993, No. 2181-XII (last edited on January 5, 2016, No. 352-3).

³ Law the Republic of Belarus dated May 10, 2007, No. 225-3 (last edition of July 17, 2017, No. 52-3).

⁴ Law the Republic of Belarus dated January 5, 2009, No. 10-3 (last edition of July 8, 2015, No. 284-3).

Foreign Countries; Canada – the National Council for Agricultural Products; the United Kingdom – the Food Council coordinating sales). The goal of the center will be to promote the formation of a competitive agro-industrial complex in the framework of effective promotion of agricultural products and food from producers to consumers; main features will include:

1. Analytical studies of domestic and foreign markets; agricultural and food products; exporting countries and importing countries for the main types of agricultural products; price monitoring.

2. Management of commodity (product) programs (ten products in accordance with the Doctrine of National Food Security of the Republic of Belarus until 2030¹).

3. Development of regulatory documents aimed at the prevention of unfair actions in the field of agricultural marketing.

4. Supervision of compliance with marketing agreements, regulations, research program management.

5. Development and management of programs to promote domestic sales and stimulate the export of agricultural products

Thus, the proposed set of directions for expanding information and marketing support provides for the formation of a program management system to promote domestic sales and stimulate the export of agricultural products, the implementation of which is aimed at ensuring the stable functioning of food markets.

Conclusion

It has been established that trends and developmental features of modern marketing systems for agricultural raw materials and products abroad are based on: 1) adaptation of the agricultural sector to changing market conditions, new technologies, state regulation and other factors; 2) the development of vertical integration, combining various marketing and logistics functions within the same company; 3) changes in the structure of the flow of agricultural products and food products through sales channels, expansion of direct trade relations of farmers with large wholesalers; 4) the functioning of information services and consumer movements, which have a strong influence on the activities of producers. As practice shows, with the development of international trade in the WTO, the share of support measures that do not distort trade is growing (in the European Union, USA, China and Canada, the proportion of such measures exceeds 80%).

The set of identified organizational and economic directions for the development of the system of marketing and sales of agricultural products in foreign countries creates an opportunity for Belarus to improve the system of promoting products on the market. The effectiveness of information and marketing support for the agro-industrial complex depends on a complex of factors, including the development of applied agro-marketing, the expansion of the market infrastructure for the provision of consulting, information and marketing services, the training of qualified personnel, the formation of comprehensive and complete information about the state of food and agricultural markets, and others.

In Belarus, the main emphasis should be placed on the formation of a unified information and consulting system, the creation of a system of domestic

¹ Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus of December 15, 2017, No. 962.

food assistance to the population, and the subsidization of advisory and promotional services. The novelty lies in expanding the lines of state support for agriculture through the introduction of marketing measures that do not refuse a direct distorting effect on domestic and foreign trade, as well as the development of a program management system to promote domestic sales and stimulate the export of agricultural products.

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ИНФОРМАЦИОННО-МАРКЕТИНГОВАЯ ПОДДЕРЖКА ПРОИЗВОДИТЕЛЕЙ ПРОДУКЦИИ АПК В «ЗЕЛЕННОЙ КОРЗИНЕ» ВТО

Аннотация. Основная цель статьи раскрыть сущность и необходимость применения информационно-маркетинговой поддержки производителей продукции АПК как меры «зеленой корзины» в системе ВТО, не оказывающей искажающего воздействия на торговлю. В ходе исследования выявлены тенденции и особенности развития современных систем маркетинга и продвижения сельскохозяйственного сырья и продукции за рубежом. Определены основные меры государственной поддержки производителей продукции АПК Беларуси, входящие в меры «желтой корзины» и «зеленой корзины». Рассмотрены направления реализации информационно-маркетинговой поддержки аграрной отрасли за 2016–2018 годы, предусматривающие повышение эффективности функционирования отрасли и обеспечение конкурентоспособного производства сельскохозяйственной продукции, сырья и продовольствия. Предложены механизмы расширения мер информационно-маркетинговой поддержки производителей продукции АПК Беларуси с учетом международных правил и требований.

Ключевые слова: информационно-маркетинговая поддержка, производитель, продукция АПК, Всемирная торговая организация.

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