

EFFECTS OF THE APPLICATION OF THE CAP ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF BEE FARMS AND PROFILING OF THEIR NEEDS IN THE FUTURE

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Abstract

Beekeeping in Bulgaria is one of the main (and sometimes the only) sources for income generation in mountainous areas (Koprivlenski, Dirimanova, and Agapieva, 2015). This sector also plays an important social role, creating employment conditions in regions where large-scale industrial projects have operated in the past, providing livelihoods for the local community, but they have intensively polluted the environment and consumed significant natural resources. One of the approaches for adapting the beekeeping business to changes in the business environment is to create conditions for effective management of production resources. The effectiveness of management is expressed in the use of "new" technologies to replace the current resource-intensive technological solutions applied in the beekeeping sector and related sectors.

The purpose of this article is to measure and evaluate the effects of the application of the instruments under the CAP on the development of beekeeping and, on this basis, to determine the future needs of farms in the sector. It can be summarized that the future development of beekeeping cannot take place without the active financial support of the state and the CAP. This support is necessary due to the fact that these farms are the backbone of the economic development of the mountainous regions of the country. Farmers have a strong motivation to develop their farms, which is determined by the desire to ensure a better way of life. In the present study, the realization of these opportunities is based on the strengths of bee farms. However, it is appropriate to point out that the imposition of its own brand, the conversion of production into organic are business activities that require large investments, which are accompanied by high risk. The weak influence of beekeepers on the purchase price, high production costs, determined by the rapid growth of resource prices and the reluctance to cooperate among these circles make significant organic for the future development of beekeeping.

Key words: beekeeping, CAP, competitiveness, small farms

Abstrakt

Die Imkerei in Bulgarien ist eine der wichtigsten (und manchmal die einzige) Quelle für die Einkommensgenerierung in Bergregionen (Koprivlenski, Dirimanova und Agapieva, 2015). Dieser Sektor spielt auch eine wichtige soziale Rolle, indem er Beschäftigungsbedingungen in Regionen schafft, in denen in der Vergangenheit industrielle Großprojekte betrieben wurden, die der lokalen Bevölkerung eine Lebensgrundlage boten, aber die Umwelt intensiv verschmutzt und erhebliche natürliche Ressourcen verbraucht haben. Einer der Ansätze für die Anpassung des Imkereibetriebs an die Veränderungen in der Geschäftsumgebung ist die Schaffung von Bedingungen für ein effektives Management der Produktionsressourcen. Die Effektivität des Managements drückt sich in der Anwendung "neuer" Technologien aus, die die gegenwärtigen ressourcenintensiven technologischen Lösungen ersetzen, die im Bienenzuchtsektor und verwandten Sektoren angewendet werden.

Das Ziel dieses Artikels ist es, die Auswirkungen der Anwendung der Instrumente im Rahmen der GAP auf die Entwicklung der Bienenzucht zu messen und zu bewerten und auf dieser Grundlage die zukünftigen Bedürfnisse der Betriebe in diesem Sektor zu bestimmen. Es kann zusammengefasst werden, dass die zukünftige Entwicklung der Bienenzucht ohne aktive finanzielle Unterstützung des Staates und der GAP nicht stattfinden kann. Diese Unterstützung ist notwendig, da diese Betriebe das Rückgrat der wirtschaftlichen Entwicklung in den Bergregionen des Landes sind. Die Landwirte haben eine starke Motivation, ihre Höfe zu entwickeln, die von dem Wunsch bestimmt wird, eine bessere Lebensweise zu gewährleisten. In der vorliegenden Studie wird bei der Realisierung dieser Möglichkeiten auf die Stärken der Bienenfarmen gesetzt. Es ist jedoch angebracht, darauf hinzuweisen, dass die Einführung der eigenen Marke, die Umstellung der Produktion auf biologischen Anbau Geschäftstätigkeiten sind, die große Investitionen erfordern, die mit einem hohen Risiko verbunden sind. Der schwache Einfluss der Imker auf den Einkaufspreis, die hohen Produktionskosten, die durch das rasche Wachstum der Rohstoffpreise bestimmt werden, und die geringe Bereitschaft zur Zusammenarbeit zwischen diesen Kreisen stellen einen bedeutenden Faktor für die zukünftige Entwicklung der Imkerei dar.

Schlüsselwörter: imkerei, CAP, Wettbewerbsfähigkeit, kleine Betriebe

Résumé

L'apiculture en Bulgarie est l'une des principales (et parfois la seule) sources de revenus dans les zones montagneuses (Koprivlenski, Dirimanova et Agapieva, 2015). Ce secteur joue également un rôle social important, en créant des conditions d'emploi dans des régions où des projets industriels de grande envergure ont fonctionné dans le passé, fournissant des moyens de subsistance à la communauté locale, mais ils ont pollué l'environnement de manière intensive et consommé d'importantes ressources naturelles. L'une des approches permettant d'adapter l'apiculture aux changements de l'environnement des entreprises consiste à créer les conditions d'une gestion efficace des ressources de production. L'efficacité de la gestion s'exprime par l'utilisation de "nouvelles" technologies pour remplacer les solutions technologiques actuelles à forte intensité de ressources appliquées dans le secteur de l'apiculture et les secteurs connexes.

L'objectif de cet article est de mesurer et d'évaluer les effets de l'application des instruments de la PAC sur le développement de l'apiculture et, sur cette base, de déterminer les besoins futurs des exploitations du secteur. On peut résumer que le développement futur de l'apiculture ne peut avoir lieu sans le soutien financier actif de l'État et de la PAC. Ce soutien est nécessaire en raison du fait que ces exploitations sont l'épine dorsale du développement économique des régions montagneuses du pays. Les agriculteurs ont une forte motivation pour développer leurs exploitations, qui est déterminée par le désir d'assurer un meilleur mode de vie. Dans la présente étude, la réalisation de ces opportunités est basée sur les points forts des exploitations apicoles. Toutefois, il convient de souligner que l'imposition de sa propre marque, la conversion de la production en produits biologiques sont des activités commerciales qui nécessitent de gros investissements, lesquels s'accompagnent de risques élevés. La faible influence des apiculteurs sur le prix d'achat, les coûts de production élevés, déterminés par la croissance rapide des prix des ressources et la réticence à coopérer entre ces milieux font du biologique un secteur important pour le développement futur de l'apiculture.

Mots clés: apiculture, PAC, compétitivité, petites exploitations

Introduction

Financial assistance for the adaptation of Bulgarian beekeeping to the changing business environment is provided through the use of two approaches (intervention ladder) within the CAP. The financial instruments that are set for impact aim to set a framework for the development of the sector, which will ensure the protection of the environment and increase the efficiency of the production resources invested in the sector. Beekeeping in Bulgaria is one of the main (and sometimes the only) sources for income generation in mountainous areas (Koprivlenski, Dirimanova, and Agapieva, 2015). This sector also plays an important social role, creating employment conditions in regions where large-scale industrial projects have operated in the past, providing livelihoods for the local community, but they have intensively polluted the environment and consumed significant natural resources (Borisov and Marinov, 2013). One of the approaches for adapting the beekeeping business to changes in the business environment is to create conditions for effective management of production resources. The effectiveness of management is expressed in the use of "new" technologies to replace the current resource-intensive technological solutions applied in the beekeeping sector and related sectors (Borisov, Radev and Nikolov, 2014)

The purpose of this article is to measure and evaluate the effects of the application of the instruments under the CAP on the development of beekeeping and, on this basis, to determine the future needs of farms in the sector.

In order to gather the necessary information, the focus group method is used to identify the effects as well as the needs of the bee farms operating under the conditions of the CAP (Borisov, Radev and Nikolov, 2014). Within the study, two focus groups were organized, covering 78 beekeepers in the districts - Plovdiv and Sliven (see Table 1.)

Table 1. Number of focus groups and study participants. Field research, 2019

Focus group 1 (Plovdiv)	48	14.07-17.07.2019
Focus group 2 (Sliven)	30	14.08-17.08.2019
Total	78	

Through focus groups of farmers are discussed and determine what are the effects of the application of the CAP in the industry and what needs are formed in the future development of bee farms. The register of agricultural producers was used as a source for forming the sample. Group discussions (focus groups) are used as a method in the research, which allows in-depth study of the research topic, while using the advantages of the group effect. During the discussions, through spontaneous thorough discussion of a predetermined range of issues in small groups of people, it is clearly formulated what are the strengths and weaknesses of small farms and what opportunities and threats the external environment provides for their future development. Discussions are organized and directed by the moderator.

Results

Application of the CAP in the beekeeping industry. The first CAP approach focuses on the efficient management of production resources in the sector through the implementation of a direct area payment scheme. The second approach (pillar) is the use of financial schemes to encourage investment activity in the sector, for the introduction of "new" production technologies.

The first pillar of the CAP sets out the following financial mechanisms to support the beekeeping sector: (1) Direct payments per unit area, national supplements to direct payments and specific support, and (2) Market support mechanisms. These financial mechanisms form about 30% of the CAP budget, which finances the development of agriculture and in particular the beekeeping sector. The first pillar includes all schemes for financial support of bee farms (which are tied or not tied to production) as well as measures - M10, M11, M12 and M13 of the RDP 2014-2020. There is an exceptional interest on the part of beekeepers to Measure 11 "Organic beekeeping". This measure includes two sub-measures for the distribution of financial assistance within the budget of measure 11. These are sub-measure 11. 2 Maintenance payments for organic beekeeping and sub-measure 11.1 Payments for transition to organic beekeeping. Under measure 11, the largest financial resource was utilized under sub-measure 11.1 "Payments for the passage of organic beekeeping" - BGN 1,192.2 thousand (for the period 2014-2020). This sub-measure has the largest contribution to the absorption of financial resources in the conversion of bee farms from traditional to those using organic production methods.

Market support mechanisms. The common organization of the EU's agricultural markets aims to stabilize them, ensure a better standard of living for the population employed in the agricultural sector and offer quality and safe food at affordable prices. It covers market support measures, regulatory measures related to the quality control of agricultural products, recognition of producer organizations, issuance of import and export licenses, etc. Market measures are key instruments of the CAP and play the role of a "safety net" in the face of market instability. Market instability poses a threat to the sustainable development of bee farms, which may hinder the process of introducing "new technologies" in the sector to achieve efficient management of production resources. Market support mechanisms are aimed at influencing 5 (five) strategically important agricultural sectors, such as the Beekeeping sector. The financial instrument aims to support the marketing of beekeeping products. This financial instrument finances business activities aimed at building competitive advantages of Bulgarian bee products on the international market. The main instrument for financial support of beekeeping presented as a financial mechanism for market support is the National Program for the Development of Beekeeping (NPP). This program has been prepared in cooperation with beekeeping organizations, in accordance with the requirements of EU Regulation 1308 / 2013.94. The main goal of the Program is to improve the conditions for production and trade in honey and bee products, increasing the efficiency of production, quality and competitiveness of Bulgarian bee honey and bee products, protection and sustainable development of the bee population, ensuring better employment and higher incomes of beekeepers. Financial assistance is provided for investments, costs or projects in the following areas - measures: (1) technical assistance for beekeepers and beekeepers' associations; (2) fight against varroasis; (3) measures to support laboratories performing physico-chemical analysis of honey; (4) measures to support the renewal of beehives in the Community; (5) cooperation with specialized bodies for the practical implementation of applied research programs in the field of beekeeping and bee products. the quality and competitiveness

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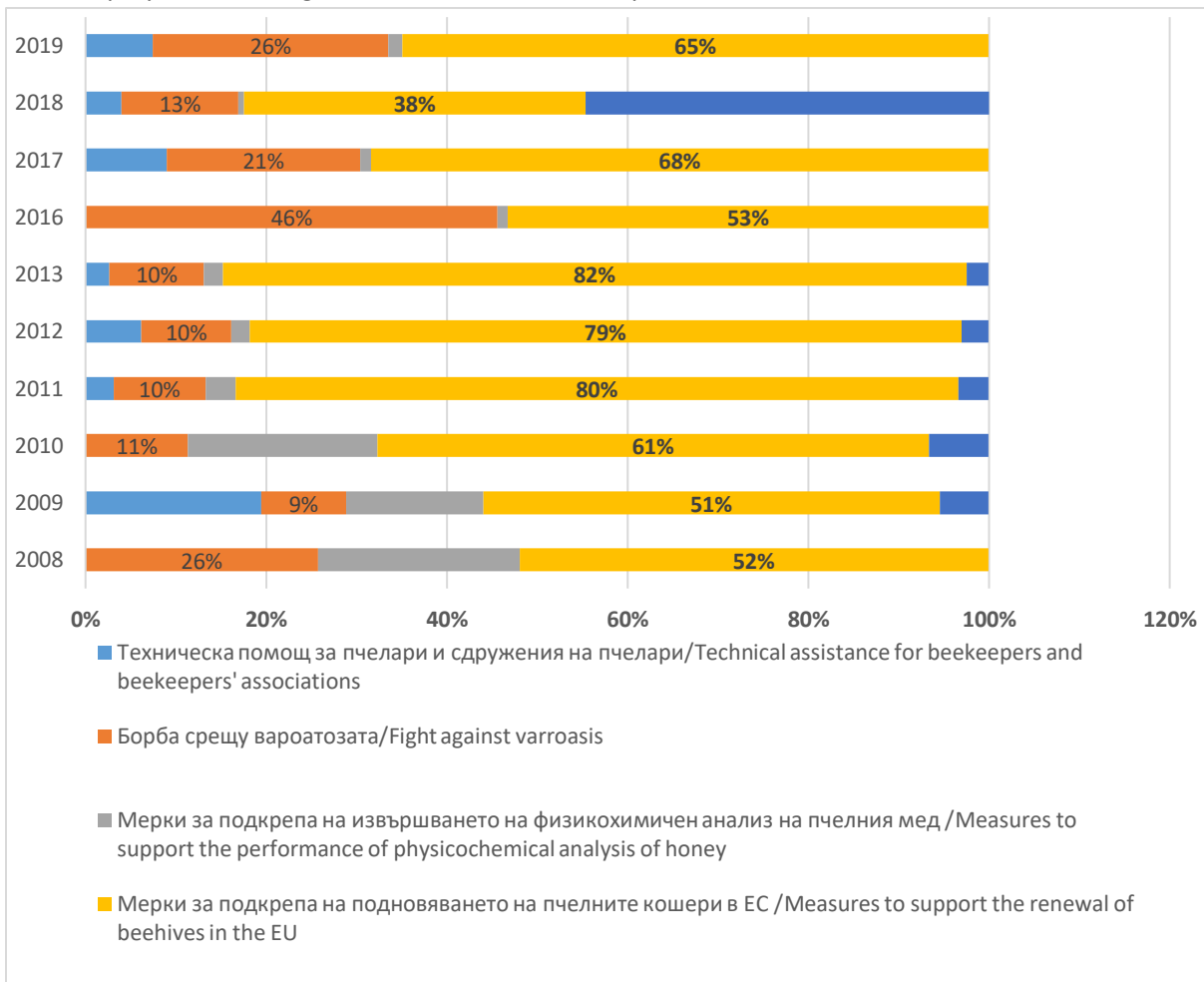


Figure 1. Structure of the financial aid within the National program for the development of beekeeping by years (in the period 2008 - 2020). Source: own calculations based on data from the published reports of the State Fund for Agriculture - 2010, 2012, 2014, 2018, 2020.

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Within the framework of the National Program for the Development of Beekeeping from 2008 to the present, a total of over BGN 52 million in financial assistance has been provided to beekeepers. Figure 1 shows the structure of financial assistance under the Program in the period 2008 - 2020. The data show that the largest share of the planned funds is directed to the construction and renovation of apiaries by subsidizing the purchase costs of new beehives. Over the years, the Program provides funds to cover investments - from 38% to 82% of the total budget of this financial instrument. A large share of financial assistance is intended to promote effective control of bee enemies such as varroasis (this share varies from 9% to 26% of the total available financial resources over the years).

Figure 2 shows information on the available and utilized financial assistance intended for the development of the sector over the years. The data show that the available financial assistance of BGN 2.37 million in 2008 increased significantly and reached a maximum of BGN 8.57 million in 2018. This proves that the country recognizes the beekeeping sector as strategically important for the development of agriculture and over the years seeks to attract more investment in the sector by increasing almost 3 times the available financial assistance. The level of absorption of financial assistance over the years also increased and from BGN 1.3 million in 2008 reached a maximum value of BGN 6.86 million in 2018. The National Program for the Development of Beekeeping over the years has become one of the most successful financial mechanisms for supporting Bulgarian agriculture, beekeeping is given as a successful example of attracting young and new entrepreneurs in the agricultural sector. However, the levels of absorption of financial assistance are not satisfactory. Figure 3 provides information on the degree of absorption of the planned financial assistance under the Program.

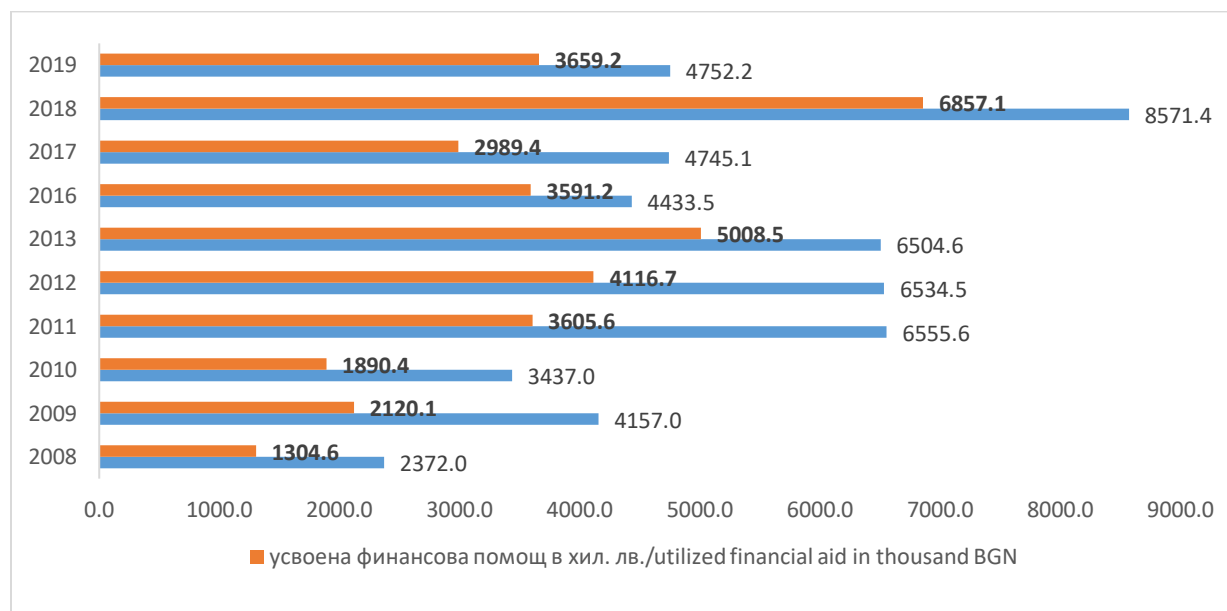


Figure 2. Available and utilized financial assistance within the National Program for the Development of Beekeeping by years (in the period 2008 - 2020). Source: own calculations based on data from the published reports of the State Agriculture Fund - 2010, 2012, 2014, 2018, 2020 and data of the Beekeeping Development Program - 2008-2010, 2011 - 2013, 2017 - 2019.

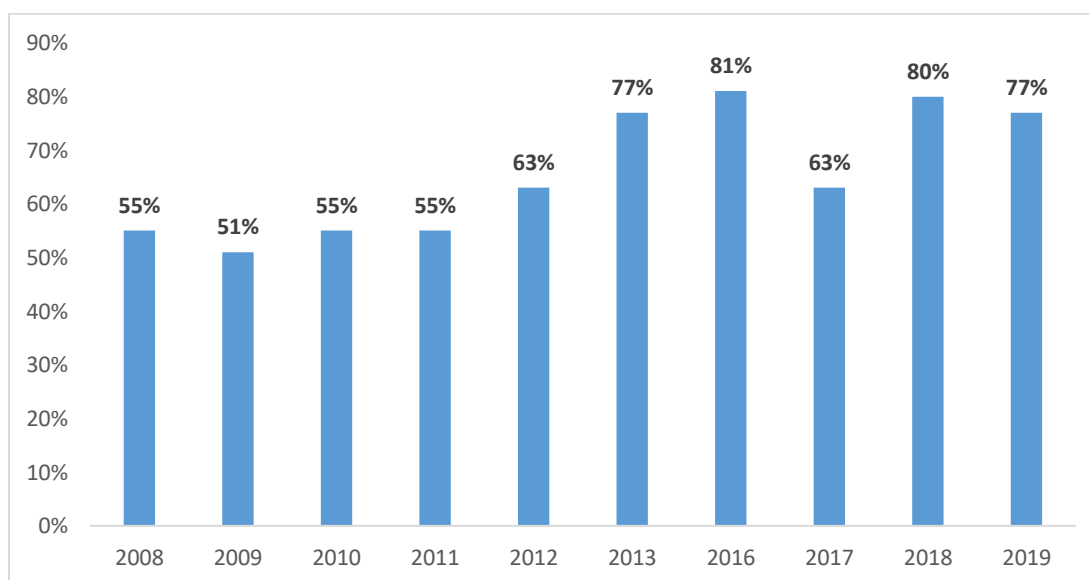


Figure 3. Level of absorption of the financial assistance provided within the National Program for the Development of Beekeeping by years (in the period 2008 - 2020). Source: own calculations based on data from the published reports of the State Agriculture Fund - 2010, 2012, 2014, 2018, 2020 and data of the Beekeeping Development Program - 2008-2010, 2011 - 2013, 2017 - 2019.

The data show that the rate of absorption of financial assistance varies from 51% in 2009 to 81% in 2016. In the period 2012-2016 The main reasons (barriers) for increasing the absorption of financial

assistance are initially the unpopularity of the Program among farmers, the low confidence in this financial instrument, and later the small amount of the advance payment as well as the impossibility of the beekeepers to secure the co-financing of their business projects.

Figure 4 shows information on the absorption of financial assistance under the individual measures of the Program.



Figure 4. Degree of absorption of the financial aid, by separate measures of the National program for the development of beekeeping (% of the total amount of the available aid on average for the period 2016-

2019). Source: own calculations based on data from the published reports of the State Fund for Agriculture - 2016-2019 and data of the Beekeeping Development Program - 2016-2019.

The measures have the highest share of utilized funds - (1) Measures to support the renewal of beehives and (2) fight against varroasis. Under these two measures, the utilized funds are 77% of their total available budget. The first measure has the most significant financial resource of the measures included in the Program - about 2/3 of its budget (see Figure 1). This measure aims to create and renovate beehives as a basis for successful business development of farms in the industry. One of the main problems in beekeeping remains the effective fight against pests and mainly with bee disease - varroasis. For prevention and treatment the measure "Fight against varroasis" is provided, which covers about 26% of the available financial resources of the Program.

It is noteworthy that no funds have been used under the measure "Cooperation with specialized bodies for the practical implementation of applied research programs in the field of beekeeping and bee products." This is the main financial instrument of the Program for Promotion of Technology Transfer and Innovation in the Beekeeping Sector.

Figure 5 shows information on the funds used for the individual activities included in the measures to support the renewal of beehives. It can be seen that mainly the financial aid under this measure has been used for the purchase of new hives in the period 2016 - 2019.

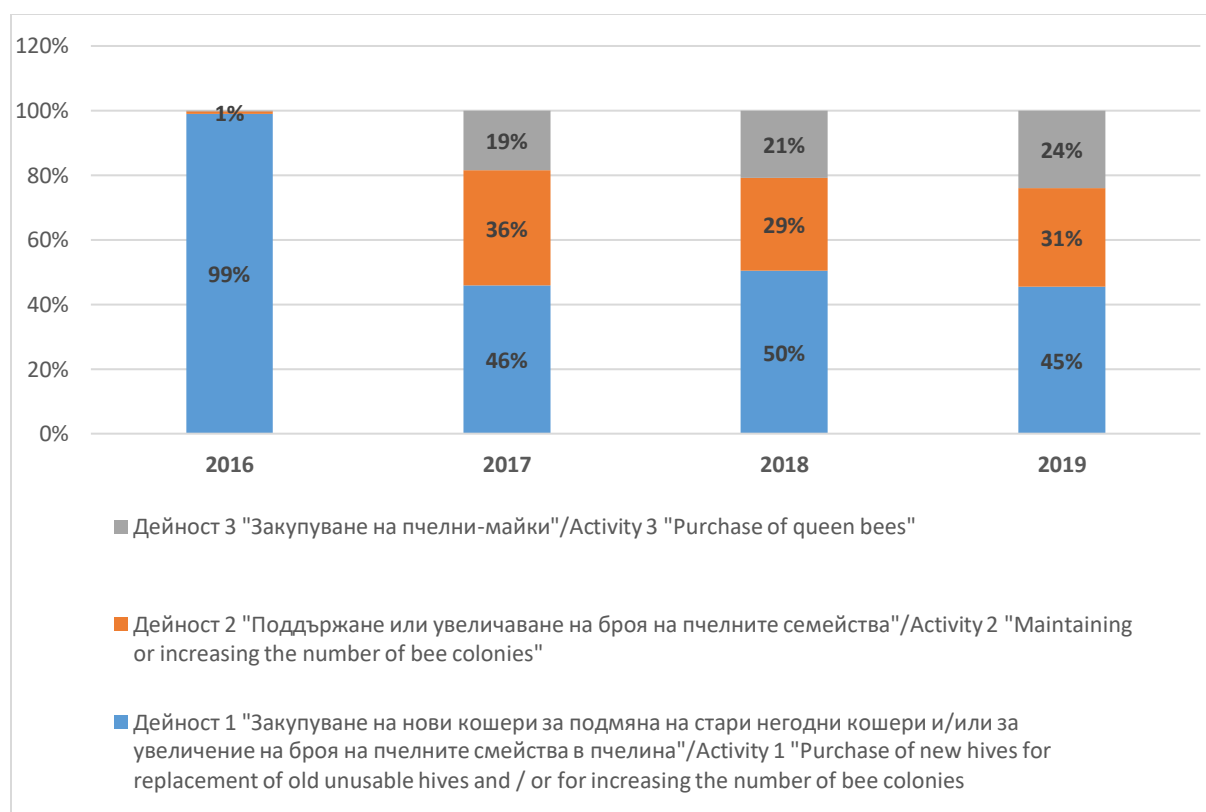


Figure 5. Level of absorption of the financial aid, by individual activities covered by the measure “Measures to support the renewal of beehives” of the National Program for the Development of Beekeeping (% of the total amount of available aid). Source: own calculations based on data from the published reports of the State Fund "Agriculture" - 2016-2019 and data of the Program for the development of beekeeping - 2016-2019.

Effects of the CAP on the competitiveness of the industry. In the current conditions of the CAP, the bee farms in our country identify the following obstacles to increase the competitiveness of the industry - organic access to certain production resources and high production costs; insufficient working capital; limited market access; competitive imports of bee products from China, as well as frequently changing regulations; the lack of sufficient experience in the management of the projects financed under the individual measures of the Program. One of the main factors for increasing competitiveness and better access to the market is the increase of the production capacity of bee farms as well as the acceleration of the process of diversification towards production and sale of bee products with higher added value.

The main limiting factor in increasing the size of the bee farm is the access to credit resources and the low market price of honey. Farmers point out that production costs have increased significantly and even with the help of individual measures that support them, they cannot achieve a satisfactory return on investment. This discourages them from investing in expanding the size of the farm. The other limiting factor is the difficult access to credit. The banking sector has high requirements for securing investment loans and thus limit farmers' access to credit. This is the other main reason why beekeeping does not invest in expanding production capacity or adding value to the honey they produce. Another critical factor for the successful development of bee farms is the low market price of honey. Beekeepers say that this market is extremely dominated by resellers, who set low levels of purchase prices, so these actors in the value chain derive higher added value without sharing the natural risk. Another factor that determines lower purchase prices is competitive imports of honey from China. The low levels of income, as well as the achievement of financial stability with exclusively own funds objectively limit the available finances of the bee farms, necessary for investments and structural development. which set low levels of purchase prices in this way, these actors in the value chain derive higher added value without sharing the natural risk. Another factor that determines lower purchase prices is competitive imports of honey from China. The low levels of income, as well as the achievement of financial stability with exclusively own funds objectively limit the available finances of the bee farms, necessary for investments and structural development. which set low levels of purchase prices in this way, these actors in the value chain derive higher added value without sharing the natural risk. Another factor that determines lower purchase prices is competitive imports of honey from China. The low levels of income, as well as the achievement of financial stability with exclusively own funds objectively limit the available finances of the bee farms, necessary for investments and structural development.

Effects of the CAP on specialization and productivity. As a result of the utilized financial aid, the bee farms for the most part have specialized in the production of honey. This is evidenced by the fact that in recent years Bulgaria is defined as a major producer and exporter of bee honey on the European market. The main product that the country imposes on the international market is polyfloral honey, which has low added value and is traded in low price segments. A limiting factor in the specialization of bee farms is access to the market. Farmers also point out that the consumption of honey in the domestic market is

very low and highly competitive in terms of price. The added value to bee products requires additional funds, which they are not able to do at this stage. The specialization is not in line with market requirements, due to ignorance of the marketing approach in beekeeping management. Farmers do not think that marketing activities are important in the overall management of the farm, but on the other hand they point out that other actors in the value chain unfairly benefit more.

The productivity of bee farms has doubled in the last 10 years (according to FAOSTAT data), thanks to intensive production factors - new hives, new technologies for raising bee colonies and the use of better veterinary practices to control the enemies of the apiaries. The main factors that limit the productivity of bee farms are - the treatment of bee pasture with harmful to the honey bee plant-protective ferns; the quality of the medicines used to treat the diseased apiaries; insufficient knowledge of good manufacturing practices. The use of plant protection products, which are poisonous to the honey bee, is a major problem that beekeepers most often encounter. This practice, which is applied by other agricultural holdings, leads to the extinction of entire colonies of bee colonies and endangers not only the productivity of the apiary, but also significantly reduces the profitability of bee farms. Most honey producers do not trust the quality of medical referrals offered by traders. The low efficiency of these preparations leads to their more frequent use, and this reflects on the production costs. Traders often cheat and refuse to issue invoices to manufacturers, who then cannot declare these costs. The majority of beekeepers point out that they need information on good production practices as well as the need for training to enhance the special skills needed to manage their farms. As a result of the conducted focus groups, the following needs can be summarized:

Innovation needs. The main needs of beekeeping in the field of innovation are: the need for up-to-date market information; providing more access to new technologies and knowledge. Beekeepers are interested in organic production. The transition from conventional to organic production is limited by the high costs of certification, the location of the farm, the costs of labeling and packaging of the bee product, which are mandatory to use in this type of production, as well as low awareness of market trends. Another limiting factor is the lack of experience and knowledge in the construction of organic production. Another need of bee farms is to innovate in the prevention of the appearance of enemies in apiaries.

- subsidizing the costs of certification of organic production in small farms;
- building a system for up-to-date market information and its popularization among honey producers as an information source;
- promoting the technological transfer from scientific organizations to bee farms, through the structures of the National Agricultural Advisory Service, which can be the link between science and industry;
- encouraging the creation of local structures between research institutes and bee farms for the creation and testing of new bee products and technologies;
- Promotion of organic production as a successful form of business in the industry;

Marketing application needs. Beekeepers practically do not perform marketing functions. This function is reduced to searching for effective ways to market the product in the shortest possible time. The reason for this is the ignorance of the marketing approach as an effective approach to farm management, as well as the inability to make marketing expenses. The main obstacles in performing the marketing functions are: the complexity of the management of the farm; the small volume of production,

which does not presuppose marketing functions, but more commercial skills in the placement of production; the lack of actually functioning agricultural markets nearby; the presence of a gray sector; impossibility to standardize the produced production.

The main measures that need to be taken to promote the marketing of bee farms are:

- promoting beekeeping cooperation in beekeeping;
- the creation of local agricultural markets;
- creation of standard contracts for the sale of bee products with mandatory elements such as delivery times, production quantities and purchase prices;
- introduction of quality standards for the produced bee products;
- introduction of short food chains and vertical integration with processing companies.

Business risk management needs. The main sources of risk for bee farms are natural disasters, unstable market prices, financial risk and theft of products. In general, honey producers do not give priority to risk management in the management of the overall activity of the farm, but take into account its importance. The use of insurance organizations in sharing these risks from agricultural activity is not a popular measure. The reasons for this are: the low trust of farmers in the activities of these organizations, the high insurance costs and the low interest of insurance organizations to impose their insurance products in the industry. In risk management, the following support actions need to be taken:

- higher levels of insurance premium subsidies;
- higher activity on the part of insurance organizations in sharing the risk in agricultural activity;
- to create mutual guarantee and insurance funds with the active participation of the state;
- promoting cooperation among farmers in the marketing of products;
- creation of joint structures among the local population for protection of bee farms;
- a clear calendar deadline for the payment of subsidies by the state (until the end of March). In this way, the farmer will better plan his financial needs during the year.

The needs of the bee farms identified above require the following important decisions to be taken by the state:

- effective state control over the activity of the suppliers of resources, providing the activity of the bee farms;
- working state guarantees for granting credit for the needs of small bee farms, as well as the creation of conditions for the establishment of mutual credit, guarantee and insurance funds;
- to have more advance payments under the individual measures of the Program and to increase the amount of these payments;
- clearer presentation of the rules for applying for the individual measures, the necessary documents and requirements to be specified in advance;
- state support for hiring additional labor on farms;

- to remove the age limit of 60, which is required if the person wants to apply for financial assistance under the individual measures;
- more flexible regulations. In the case of beekeeping, the obligatory requirement for the agricultural producer to cultivate at least 10 decare of land should be abolished;
- encouraging the establishment of local agricultural markets, where only registered agricultural producers in the region have the right to sell agricultural products;
- encouraging local processing companies as well as tourist sites to work with local raw materials produced by beekeeping;
- to increase the capacity of the National Agricultural Advisory Service with a view to promoting the transfer of knowledge from science to practice and thus increasing the innovation of beekeeping and the industry.

Conclusion

It can be summarized that the future development of beekeeping cannot take place without the active financial support of the state and the CAP. This support is necessary due to the fact that these farms are the backbone of the economic development of the mountainous regions of the country. Farmers have a strong motivation to develop their farms, which is determined by the desire to ensure a better way of life. In the present study, the realization of these opportunities is based on the strengths of bee farms. However, it is appropriate to point out that the imposition of its own brand, the conversion of production into organic are business activities that require large investments, which are accompanied by high risk. The weak influence of beekeepers on the purchase price, high production costs, determined by the rapid growth of resource prices and the reluctance to cooperate among these circles make significant organic for the future development of beekeeping. Therefore, we predict that the number of these farms will decrease in the future and it will be difficult to make decisions about their survival. One of the opportunities for development in beekeeping in the field of organic production is the so-called joint investments, which are provided for in the new program for rural development. Under this program, conditions will be created for the promotion of joint investments for the needs of bee farms, and the implementation of investment decisions does not require the prior establishment of associations and cooperatives.

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