

Науковий вісник Львівського національного університету  
ветеринарної медицини та біотехнологій імені С.З. Гжицького.  
Серія: Економічні науки

Scientific Messenger of Lviv National University  
of Veterinary Medicine and Biotechnologies.  
Series: Economical Sciences

ISSN 2519-2701 print

<https://nvlvet.com.ua/index.php/economy>

doi: 10.32718/nvlvet-e9901

UDC 631.115.1

## Marketing support of competitiveness of agricultural enterprises

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### Article info

Received 18.09.2022

Received in revised form  
20.10.2022

Accepted 21.10.2022

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**Khomiuk, N., Voichuk, M., Bilous, O., & Dorosh-Kizym, M. (2022). Marketing support of competitiveness of agricultural enterprises. Scientific Messenger of Lviv National University of Veterinary Medicine and Biotechnologies. Series: Economical Sciences, 24(99), 3–9. doi: 10.32718/nvlvet-e9901**

The article examines the system of agricultural marketing with the aim of meeting the needs of consumers and achieving the competitiveness of agricultural producers in the context of determining the characteristics of agricultural activity. It is substantiated that the sustainable development of agricultural production contributes to the strengthening of the economic and social security of the state, the formation of a positive image of the country, the growth of the quality of life of the urban and rural population, the increase of export potential, the maintenance of ecological balance in rural areas, the rational use, protection and reproduction of natural resources. According to the results of the assessment of the state of agricultural production in Ukraine, a change in the assortment of agricultural products was revealed in the direction of increasing the amount of cultivation of more profitable types of crop and livestock products. It was found that agricultural products occupy a leading place in Ukrainian exports. Attention is focused on the peculiarities of agricultural production, compared to other branches of the economy, which determine the specifics of the organization of marketing at agricultural enterprises. It was revealed that marketing research in the agricultural sector is mainly carried out by intermediaries, as a result of which the largest part of the profit is concentrated in intermediary structures. The stages of the process of implementation of marketing activities at enterprises producing agricultural products are characterized. It is substantiated that for the successful conduct of competition and the introduction of niche products, it is advisable to conduct marketing research and analyze the competitiveness of agricultural enterprises in the course of financial and economic activity, which will contribute to timely decision-making regarding changes in the product range, sales markets, and the enterprise management system. It has been proven that the use of marketing tools to increase the competitiveness of agricultural enterprises is important because it will contribute to taking into account external factors of influence and internal reserves of increasing efficiency. Attention is drawn to the need to select effective methods of competition and create the basis for the identification of the enterprise, which is determined by its marketing concept.

**Key words:** marketing, agricultural marketing, agriculture, enterprise, competitiveness, rural areas.

### Introduction

In modern realities, the use of marketing tools plays an important role in ensuring the effective economic activity of agricultural enterprises and the competitiveness of agricultural products. Agricultural producers usually use only separate strategies of marketing activities, which do not give the desired economic, social and environmental effect. The effective functioning of the entire agro-industrial complex of the country depends on how thoughtfully and properly constructed the marketing system at agricultural enterprises is.

Currently, the existing political and economic situation does not allow agricultural producers to fully apply the entire marketing system. The main problem holding back the development of agricultural marketing in Ukraine is the full-scale invasion of Russia. In addition, the lack of involvement of marketing tools in the activities of agricultural producers is influenced by an underdeveloped market infrastructure, a lack of qualified personnel with experience in marketing work, and a lack of complete information about the state of domestic and foreign markets for agricultural products, a lack of material, technical and financial resources for creation and

operation marketing services at these enterprises. Therefore, there was a need to study the agricultural marketing system in the context of substantiating the promotion of goods from the producer to the consumer, determining the characteristics of agricultural activity in order to meet the needs of consumers and achieve the competitiveness of agricultural producers.

The problems of organizing the marketing system at enterprises are reflected in the studies of such scientists as O. Krasniak, S. Amons (Amons, 2020), L. Kurbatska, T. Ilchenko, I. Kadyrus, Y. Zaharchenko (Kurbatska et al., 2013), A. Sakun, I. Pantiuk (Sakun & Pantiuk, 2020), H. Kovalenko, I. Chukina (Kovalenko & Chukina, 2021), etc. Let's draw attention to the fact that despite the significant theoretical and applied achievements of scientists from the mentioned subject, the marketing support of commodity producers, taking into account the peculiarities of the organization in the agrarian sphere, needs to be researched.

*The purpose of the study* is to generalize and systematize the features of the marketing activity of agricultural enterprises, to deepen the theoretical basis of agricultural marketing, which will contribute to increasing the competitiveness of the economic activity of agricultural producers.

To achieve the goal, the following *tasks* are solved: to reveal the essence of the concept of “agromarketing”, to carry out an analysis of the volume of production of crop and livestock products in Ukraine; justify the importance of marketing support for increasing the competitiveness of agricultural enterprises.

### Research materials and methods

The fundamental principles of marketing and economic theory and the scientific works of Ukrainian and foreign specialists in the field of agricultural marketing serve as the methodological basis for the study of marketing support for the competitiveness of agricultural enterprises. In the research process, generally accepted methods in economic science were used: monographic – in the theoretical substantiation of the concepts “agricultural marketing”, “competitiveness of enterprises”; economic-statistical – when assessing the volume of agricultural production, scientific generalization – when justifying the need to involve marketing tools to increase the competitiveness of agricultural enterprises.

The data of the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, publications on marketing support in the agricultural industry, electronic resources presented on the Internet, the results of the author's own research, etc. served as the information base of the study.

### Findings and Discussion

Agricultural production is one of the most important sectors of the national economy. Its sustainable development contributes to strengthening the economic and social security of the state, increasing the quality of life of the population, increasing export potential, maintaining the ecological balance in rural areas, and rational use, protection, and reproduction of natural resources.

In today's realities, one should pay attention to the fact that the agricultural market is developing unstable because it is possible to observe significant fluctuations in prices for agricultural products. Therefore, in order to obtain maximum profits without harming the environment, it is necessary to attract highly qualified workers to the field of agriculture (Khomiuk & Karlin, 2022).

Statistical data show that agricultural production is able to satisfy the needs of consumers not only in the domestic market but also in the foreign market. Agricultural products occupy a leading place in Ukrainian exports. For example, in 2021, farmers exported grain and sunflower oil in the amount of 18.6 billion dollars. After the start of a full-scale invasion by Russian troops on February 24, the volume of agricultural exports decreased significantly. From July 1 to July 25, 2022, 1.082 million tons of grain and leguminous crops were exported, which is 40% lower compared to the same period in 2021 (AgroPolit.com, 2022).

As we can see from Table 1, during 1990–2020, there was a change in the assortment of agricultural products, which indicates an increase in the volume of cultivation in Ukraine of more profitable types of crop production, including rapeseed and sunflower. During the analyzed period, the volume of poultry farming doubled. In Ukraine, during 2014–2020, the number of enterprises engaged in agricultural activity increased by 1,324 units, while the number of farms, on the contrary, decreased by 1,233 units (Khomiuk et al., 2022).

The effective functioning of agrarian business has a significant impact on the formation of a positive image of the country, increasing the competitiveness of economic entities. In order to ensure the effective operation of agricultural enterprises in Ukrainian and foreign markets, especially taking into account the fierce competition, agricultural producers must apply a marketing approach to doing business. The application of marketing in the activities of agricultural enterprises is necessary for diagnosing the situation on the market, researching competitors, defining a market niche, and analyzing risks for functioning in a certain market. The marketing system is aimed at the orientation of production, the search for new types of products, the search, and analysis of partners, and the study of supply and demand.

In order to saturate the market with goods, it is necessary to satisfy the needs of the consumer through the improvement of the manufactured products, the improvement of their quality and competitiveness, and the expansion of the assortment. The role of marketing consists of the systematic study of the market, the identification and detection of the latest technologies and technical innovations, promoting the acceleration of their introduction into production, meeting the needs of the end consumer in order to gain market share and strengthen its position on it. According to A. Sakun and I. Pantiuk, the low level of efficiency, the lack of effective incentives in agribusiness, significant structural disparities, and the disparity of prices for agricultural products make the development of the theory and technology of agricultural marketing, ensuring the efficiency and competitiveness of products, particularly relevant (Sakun & Pantiuk, 2020).

Agricultural marketing is a management concept that ensures market orientation of the enterprise's production and sales activities, and management decisions are based not only on the producer's capabilities, but primarily on the needs of the agro-industrial market, existing and potential needs of consumers and buyers of agricultural products. The modern concept of marketing is that all activities of the enterprise are based on knowledge of consumer demand and its changes in the future. The mar-

keting system puts the production of goods in a functional dependence on demand and requires the production of goods in the assortment and quantity that the consumer needs. That is why agrarian marketing, as a set of methods for studying markets, in addition to everything else, directs its efforts to the creation of effective sales channels and comprehensive demand formation (Antoshchenko & Batyrov, 2014).

**Table 1**  
Production of agricultural products in Ukraine

Type of agricultural production	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	Basic growth rate for 2020-1990
<b>Crop production</b>								
<b>Cereal and leguminous crops, thousand tons</b>	51009	33930	24459	38016	39271	60126	64933	1,27
<b>winter cereals, incl.</b>	33560	18163	11348	19744	19899	29605	28038	0,84
<b>wheat</b>	30348	15969	9775	17683	16217	25937	24259	0,80
<b>rye</b>	1259	1207	966	1053	463	387	455	0,36
<b>barley</b>	1953	987	607	1008	3219	3281	3291	1,69
<b>spring cereals, incl.</b>	17449	15767	13111	18272	19372	30521	36895	2,11
<b>wheat</b>	26	304	422	1016	634	595	618	23,77
<b>barley</b>	7216	8646	6265	7967	5266	5007	4345	0,60
<b>oat</b>	1303	1116	881	791	459	489	510	0,39
<b>corn for grain</b>	4737	3392	3848	7167	11953	23328	30290	6,39
<b>millet</b>	338	268	426	141	117	213	256	0,76
<b>buckwheat</b>	420	341	481	275	134	128	98	0,23
<b>fig</b>	118	80	90	93	148	63	61	0,52
<b>legumes</b>	3266	1570	652	758	592	502	600	0,18
<b>Sugar beet, thousand tons</b>	44264	29650	13199	15468	13749	10331	9150	0,21
<b>Rapeseed, thousand tons</b>	130	40	132	285	1470	1738	2557	19,67
<b>Soy, thousand tons</b>	99	22	64	613	1680	393	2798	28,26
<b>Sunflower, thousand volumes</b>	2571	2860	3457	4706	6772	11181	13110	5,10
<b>Potatoes, thousand tons</b>	16732	14729	19838	19462	18705	20839	20838	1,25
<b>Vegetable crops, thousand tons</b>	6666	5880	5821	7295	8122	9214	9653	1,45
<b>Fruit and berry crops, thousand tons</b>	2902	1897	1453	1690	1747	2153	2024	0,70
<b>Livestock production</b>								
<b>Meat, thousands of tons including beef and veal, thousand tons</b>	4358	2294	1663	1597	2059	2323	2478	0,57
<b>including pork, thousand tons</b>	1986	1186	754	562	428	384	345	0,17
<b>including poultry meat, thousand tons</b>	1576	807	676	494	631	760	697	0,44
<b>Milk, million tons</b>	708	235	193	497	954	1144	1405	1,98
<b>Eggs, million pcs.</b>	24,5	17,3	12,7	13,7	11,2	10,6	9,7	0,40
<b>Wool, thousand tons</b>	16287	9404	8809	13046	17052	16783	16167	0,99
	29,8	13,9	3,4	3,2	4,2	2,3	1,6	0,05

Source: formed on the basis of statistical data (Derzhavna sluzhba statystyky Ukrainy, 2022)

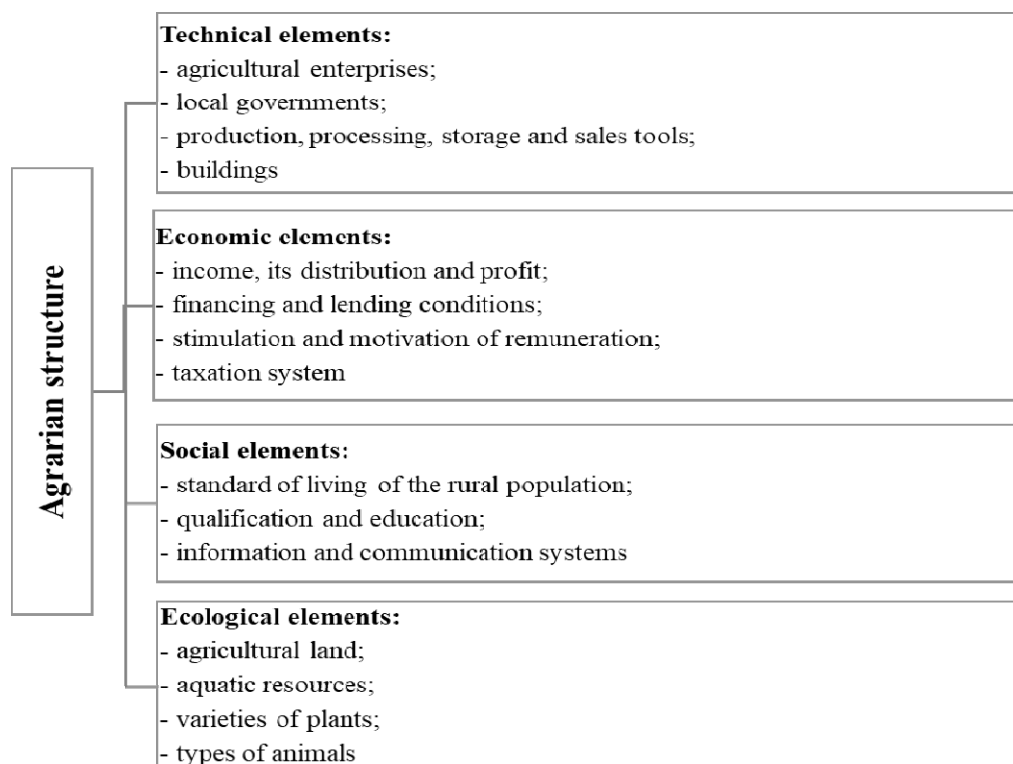
According to V. Ammons, the main role of agricultural marketing is the organization of complex activities for the manufacture and sale of agricultural products, taking into account the implementation of an innovative policy focused on the creation of products that satisfy the needs of buyers and allow the production and economic activities of enterprises to be conducted with maximum profitability (Amons, 2020).

The peculiarities of marketing in the agricultural sector are closely related to the specifics of agricultural production, which is characterized by a variety of product ranges and market participants, as well as a variety of organizational forms of management. The purpose of the operation of an agro-industrial enterprise should be combined with the performance of a set of marketing functions, the essence of which, according to V. Antoshchenkova and B. Batirov, is as follows:

- firstly, orientation to the sales market, which involves the study of its objects and subjects, that is, consumers, competitors, information about the market situation and products;
- secondly, influence on the market through its study and analysis, adaptation to market conditions;
- thirdly, the organization of the system of sales of competitive products, collection, and processing of information;

– fourth, the orientation toward achieving long-term commercial success, which assumes the subordination of short-term interests to the goals of long-term stable advantages in the market (Antoshchenkova & Batyrov, 2014).

L. Kurbatska, T. V. Ilchenko, I. Kadyrus and Yu. Zakharchenko draws attention to the fact that agricultural production is significantly different from other types of activity due to the presence of restrictions that make the so-called start-up stage of production impossible at any time. They consider the agrarian structure as a ratio of economic, social, and technical components in the field of agricultural production, which are determined by agrarian legislation, the mobility of production factors, the specifics of the industry, and the living conditions of the rural population (Kurbatska et al., 2013). We agree with the opinion of scientists, but we believe that it is advisable to add an ecological component to the agrarian structure (Fig. 1). After all, at the current stage, not only social and economic problems in rural areas are worsening, but also ecological ones, such as the unsatisfactory ecological condition of agricultural lands, extensive use of land resources, soil degradation, increasing the application of mineral fertilizers and reducing organic fertilizers, reducing the natural potential of territories (Pavlikha & Khomiuk, 2017a).



**Fig. 1.** Constituent elements of the agrarian structure

Source: formed by the authors on the basis of (Kurbatska et al., 2013) and based on own research

Among the features of agricultural marketing, which are determined by the specifics of agricultural production, it is advisable to emphasize the diversity of the assortment of agricultural products and a large number of market participants.

In addition, the products of plant and animal husbandry are essential goods. Usually, these goods have a short shelf life, so prompt delivery, safe packaging, service, and aesthetic support are necessary. Food products have not only a consumer purpose but also an aesthetic and moral one. Therefore, there is a dependence between the quality



of products and the terms and conditions of collection, storage, and transportation. It is worth paying attention to the seasonality of growing agricultural products and the significant influence of natural and climatic conditions on production results.

Another feature of agricultural marketing is that most agricultural producers work on the market of raw materials, not finished products. It should be noted that an important component of the agrosphere is industries specializing in the processing of agricultural products. The provision of food to the population, the reduction or increase of losses during transportation and storage of plant and animal products, and the production of agricultural products with a greater share of added value will allow them to be sold both on the domestic and foreign markets, depending on their activity (Khomiuik, 2019).

Although scientific and technical progress in the agricultural sector has a rapid pace of development (breeding of more advanced varieties of cultivated plants and breeds of animals), the products of the agricultural sector have a low level of diversification. After all, the products of the agricultural sector remain unchanged in terms of their consumer qualities, that is, potatoes remain the same potatoes, and it is very difficult to increase their utility for the consumer. Therefore, compared to other sectors of the economy, agricultural producers are more limited in their ability to raise the prices of their products, as, for example, mobile phone manufacturers do when they release a new model. However, after conducting marketing research, agricultural producers can diversify their activities by growing niche or organic products, which will contribute to increasing the competitiveness of agricultural enterprises.

When developing agricultural marketing tools, it is necessary to take into account the fact that in agriculture land is used both as an object of labour and as a means of production (Pavlikha & Khomiuk, 2017b). A plot of land cannot be moved in space like other means of production. Its owners or tenants may change, but not its location. Land resources, when used rationally, do not deteriorate their properties, but, on the contrary, improve them, that is, they do not wear out and cannot be amortized. It is worth paying attention to the fact that as a result of scientific and technical progress, other means of production are improved, replaced by more improved ones, and without land, any production process in agriculture becomes impossible. A unique natural feature of lands is their fertility. For example, several plots of land, the same in size, but unequal in soil composition, may yield unequal amounts of harvested agricultural products. This is caused by the different fertility of the lands. Only the presence of this property makes the soil a means of agricultural production and one of the most important productive forces.

Marketing research in the agricultural sector is mainly carried out by intermediaries. After all, they control the majority of export commodity flows, and wholesale and retail trade turnover, as a result of which most of the profit is concentrated in intermediary structures.

According to O. Krasniak and S. Amons, agro marketing is not only a system of product movement and product positioning, it is also a field diversified in terms of activity. Therefore, scientists have singled out such areas of

specialization in agricultural marketing as (Krasniak & Amons, 2020):

a) marketing of means of production for agriculture and processing industry;

b) marketing of agricultural raw materials supplied from agricultural enterprises and organizations to processing enterprises;

c) marketing of food products presented in trade to the final consumer.

Therefore, when training specialists in the field of agricultural marketing, the listed directions should be taken into account, since each of them has its own profile features and requires the development of special professional competencies from specialists in marketing enterprises.

To ensure the competitive development of agricultural enterprises, it is very important to choose an effective marketing research system. According to A. Sakun and I. Pantiuk, the process of implementing marketing activities at enterprises that produce agricultural products should cover certain stages (Sakun & Pantiuk, 2020).

In the first stage, the research on the agricultural market is carried out, and the possibilities of the enterprise for the cultivation of plant and animal products are analyzed. In addition, at the initial stage, it is also worth investigating possible ways of entering the domestic or foreign markets and the feasibility of using advertising to stimulate sales.

In the second stage of implementation of marketing activities at agricultural enterprises, the marketing management process is formed and a marketing plan is developed, which is compiled to describe the real market positions of the agricultural enterprise for the period and determines its market goals and methods of achieving them.

The third stage is characterized by increasing the amount of cultivation and improving the quality of agricultural products, taking into account changes in consumer needs.

In the fourth stage of agricultural marketing implementation, agricultural producers examine their own production capabilities and the capabilities of competitors in order to occupy a suitable niche in the market. At the same time, it is advisable to develop a strategy that would help define a market segment and occupy a profitable niche in order to be competitive. One of the promising areas of activity of agricultural enterprises is the cultivation of niche crops (Khomiuik, 2019).

It is worth paying attention to the fact that it is difficult and costly for small enterprises to grow plant or animal products in large batches and compete with large economic entities in terms of supply volumes. Therefore, they try to master little popular niches in order to be competitive and get maximum profit (Khomiuik & Pavlikha, 2020).

In the fifth stage, an in-depth analysis of market segments is carried out, on the basis of which the company's business plan is developed for market penetration and expansion of sales markets in order to meet consumer needs. A properly developed marketing policy will allow agricultural producers to earn long-term profits and occupy their niche in the market (Sakun & Pantiuk, 2020).

According to H. Kovalenko and I. Chukina, one of the most successful ways of organizing sales and supply in

agricultural enterprises is the functional type. The creation of this type of service involves the creation of special units responsible for performing certain functions. The creation of marketing departments by agricultural enterprises will be able to ensure the strengthening of competitive advantages and competitiveness in the market, appropriate positioning (Kovalenko & Chukina, 2021).

Effective marketing activities contribute to strengthening the competitive advantages of agricultural enterprises. Having analyzed the scientific literature, the following types of competitive advantages can be distinguished:

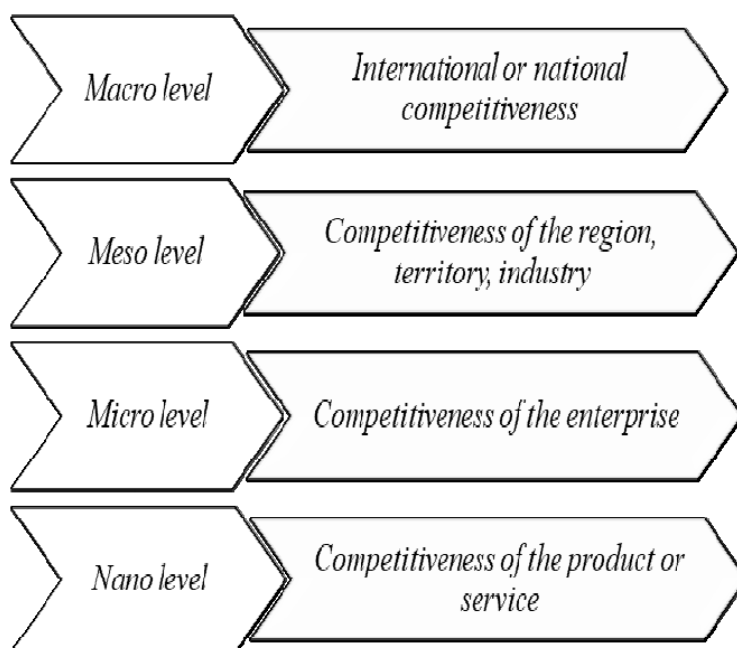
- absolute, which are associated with the availability of unique resources and production capabilities, and relative, which are due to better, compared to other regions, opportunities or conditions for the production and sale of products or the provision of services;

- quantitative (market share) and qualitative characteristics of the region's functions, goods, or services of its enterprises;

- actual (implemented) and potential (not used today).

At the same time, it is the realized competitive advantages that ensure the competitiveness of enterprises, so it is necessary to identify the mechanism of formation, support, and use of competitive advantages, which, in turn, will lead to the competitiveness of all agricultural enterprises.

It is appropriate to distinguish four levels of competitiveness formation (Fig. 2), among which the competitiveness of enterprises is considered at the micro level (Khomiuk, 2019). As can be seen, the formation of competitiveness is multi-level, therefore, to ensure the competitiveness of agricultural enterprises, it is necessary to take into account the interrelationship between all levels.



**Fig. 2.** Levels of competitiveness formation

Source: formed by the authors on the basis of (Khomiuk, 2019)

In order to successfully compete and conquer one's market "niche", it is necessary to constantly conduct marketing research and analyze the competitiveness of agrarian enterprises in the course of financial and economic activity, which will contribute to timely decision-making regarding changes in it, in particular in the product range, the need to find new sales markets, systems enterprise management. At the same time, overcoming modern problems and developing the competitiveness of agricultural enterprises in the future are possible under the conditions of the formation of an effective enterprise management system aimed at strategic development and obtaining long-term results.

The use of marketing tools to increase the competitiveness of agricultural enterprises is important because it takes into account not only external influencing factors but first of all internal reserves for improving efficiency. At the same time, it is necessary to select effective methods of competition and create a basis for the identification

of the enterprise, which is determined by its marketing concept.

### Conclusion

The activity of most enterprises of Ukraine, including business entities in the agro-industrial complex, in the conditions of a market economy, is based on obtaining profit, therefore marketing is one of the key elements in the management structure. Only by using the principles of marketing activity, do agricultural enterprises focus on the real consumer of their products and services. The concept of marketing can be applied in any agro-industrial formation, regardless of the volume and nature of product sales. It was revealed that the specificity of marketing organization at agricultural enterprises has fundamental differences from similar systems in other branches of the economy, which are caused by the peculiarities of agricultural production and the specific properties of its prod-

ucts. The presence of a time gap between the production and sale of agricultural products requires the creation of large storage and refrigeration facilities.

*Prospects for further research.* In the future, it is planned to substantiate the conceptual principles of marketing management at agricultural enterprises and to outline the ways of increasing the efficiency of the functioning of agricultural producers in order to increase the profit of agricultural formations.

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