

## **OPINION**

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Scientific specialties: Occupational medicine and Occupational diseases

**REGARDING : DISSERTATION FOR THE AWARD OF THE EDUCATIONAL AND SCIENTIFIC DEGREE "DOCTOR " IN THE DOCTORAL PROGRAM "HYGIENE (INCL. OCCUPATIONAL, COMMUNAL, SCHOOL, RADIATION, ETC.), PROFESSIONAL FIELD 7.1 MEDICINE, HIGHER FIELD, EDUCATION 7. HEALTH AND SPORTS**

**ON THE SUBJECT:**

**"CONTROL OF TRADE IN ORGANICALLY PRODUCED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS AND FOODS IN NORTHEASTERN BULGARIA"**

**from**

**DR ROZALINA STEFANOVA BRAYKOVA, MD**

**(doctoral student - full-time study)**

**SUPERVISOR:**

**PROF. DR. DARINA NAIDENOVA CHRISTOVA, MD, PhD**

### **General evaluation of the documents submitted for the defense:**

The set of documents (presented on an electronic medium) for the disclosure of the procedure and admission to the public defense of the dissertation work of the Ph.D. Rozalina Stefanova Braykova has been prepared and completed in accordance with the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB), the Rules for its Application, the Rules for the Development of the Academic Staff at the MU - Varna and contains all the required documents, thoroughly described and arranged.

**Instructions for writing the opinion:**

On the basis of Order No. R-109-110/07.02.2023. of the Rector of the MU - Varna, considering the report with entry No. 102-293 / 26.01.2023 by Prof. Dr. Darina Nadenova Hristova, MD, PhD - Acting Head of Department "Hygiene and Epidemiology", with a decision according to protocol No. 200/31.01.2023. of the Faculty Council and report with In. No. 104-101/02.02.2023 by Prof. Dr. Antonia Slavcheva Dimova - Yordanova, MD, PhD - Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences at the MU "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov", city of Varna, I have been selected as a member of the scientific jury in the procedure for the defense of the dissertation work of Dr. Rozalina Stefanova Braikova for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor".

**Career profile of the doctoral student:**

Dr. Rozalina Stefanova Braikova graduated from secondary education at the "Geo Milev" German language high school, Dobrich in 1980. She received his higher education in medicine in 1986. in St. Petersburg State Medical Academy - Leningrad.

Dr. Braikova's career began as a resident doctor at HEI - Dobrich/RIOKOH - Dobrich, passing successively through the leading sector and head of the "Control of food establishments and foods" department until 2007 Since 2007 until 2009 is an expert in the control of food and food facilities at RK Albena. In 2009 Dr. Braikova was appointed director of ROKOH - Dobrich/RHI - Dobrich, and since 2011 is the director of the RFSD - Dobrich. After successfully passing the competition in 2019. Dr. Braikova is already part of the academic staff of the University of Varna, as an assistant in the Department of Hygiene and Epidemiology at the Faculty of Public Health. From 2020 is a full-time doctoral student in the department. In 2003 acquired a specialty in nutrition and dietetics, and since 2010 - qualification in health management. The work experience of the doctoral student after 2019 is dedicated to scientific and teaching activities, practical and theoretical training of students from MU-Varna.

**Relevance and relevance of the dissertation topic:**

The presented dissertation is a serious scientific study on a current and extremely important problem for society - increasing the demand for healthy and biologically pure products, produced with care for public health, through environmentally friendly good agricultural practices and control of their trade. The awareness and attitudes of consumers, producers and distributors of organic food (OF), the state and opportunities

for production and market development are of extreme importance. Trust and the orientation of consumers towards these products is based on the knowledge and ideas they have about this specific method of production of OF, legally established characteristics, actions of the competent authorities on their control and public disclosure of the results. Knowing the motivation that determines or deters consumers from choosing organic food complements and enriches the profile of the organic consumer, who increasingly trusts organic production. The information showing the level of knowledge of producers and traders regarding the regulatory requirements for the trade in organic food is also valuable.

In our literature, there is not enough data on the results of checks on the use of terms and labels of organic food in the commercial network. This determines the need to provide systematized information on the official control of trade in these products. It is the process of official control of food in the commercial network on the use of terms and indications for an organic method of production, in accordance with the requirements of national and European legislation, improves the planning, execution and reporting of the results, efficiency and transparency of the procedure.

#### **General data for the dissertation:**

The dissertation is written on 251 pages, including 113 figures, 33 tables, and a bibliographic reference of 368 titles, of which 34 are in Cyrillic and 334 are in Latin. The dissertation is written in clear and comprehensible professional language and is characterized by a scientific and objective approach in the performance of tasks, in-depth analysis, precise results, good literary support, reasoned statements, logical conclusions and recommendations.

The title is worded accurately and fully corresponds to the content.

The introduction is short and well focused on the significance of the problem.

literature review is extensive, purposeful and logically constructed. The dissertation student shows that she is familiar with the modern scientific literature and this allows her to very well justify the goals and objectives of her own research.

The purpose of the dissertation is clearly defined - to investigate and analyze the activity of official control in the trade of organically produced agricultural products and foods in the Dobrich region and the Varna region, as well as to study the awareness of consumers, traders and producers about organic foods. Achieving the goal is tied to 6

specific tasks, with one task including 3 components. They are formulated clearly, in a logical sequence and specifically outline the parameters of the study.

The design and methods are correctly described and the approach to each task is shown. The author of the dissertation has chosen and applied research methodology, including analysis of what has been achieved in the subject area, determination of unsolved problems, selection of a goal and tasks to be solved, determination of the necessary apparatus for solving the problems, analysis and discussion of the obtained results and opportunities for their application. The statistical processing of the results is done with a well-chosen toolkit and enables the positivization/prominence of the essential characteristics of the investigated indicators. Variational descriptive analysis was used, and Pearson's  $\chi^2$  (Chi-square) criterion was applied to evaluate the hypotheses. The above shows the relevance and relevance of the methodology used in general and of the individual elements in particular. Therefore, I consider that the solved tasks are a natural consequence of the correctly selected scientific tools.

The results cover the main part of the dissertation work. They are well documented, detailed and well illustrated. Statistically processed information from the annual reports of RFSD -Varna and RFSD -Dobrich, concerning the official control in the trade in OF for the period 2014-2019, found that checks on the labeling of organic products prevail in relation to retail sales. The mandatory declaration of the sale of OF upon registration of the food trade sites and compliance with the requirements for online trade create conditions for a more precise determination of the objects of control, to realize its comprehensiveness and effectiveness. A large proportion of consumers define OF as foods with health benefits, natural origin and free from GMOs, heavy metals, pesticides, chemical fertilizers and antibiotics, hormones, preservatives, and dyes. They do not know the National Voluntary Ladybug sign, unlike the recognition of the biological logo. They show great trust in specialized OF stores, but when in doubt about the authenticity of the product, they know who to report to for verification. Individuals are persons with a negative attitude to OF (mint foods) and those who consume them due to modern motives. The organical user profile is defined by women. An increasing positive attitude towards organic foods is observed among them, given the assumption of the benefit of consuming these products, both for their health and for the health of all family members. One of the identified barriers to purchasing these foods

is their high cost. Producers are better informed than traders, how the origin of OF (biological certificate) is controlled and they are familiar with the requirements for labeling them. The main sources of information about OF used by the respondents (consumers, traders and manufacturers) are: internet portals, specialized sites, friends, relatives, colleagues and the shops themselves. The PhD student emphasized the need to conduct training on the regulatory requirements for organic food trade, indicated in the questionnaires by both producers and traders, regardless of their current preparedness and awareness. According to the respondents, one of the main reasons for trading in OF is related to the controlled and guaranteed food safety.

The discussion reflects the probable reasons for the particular results and the opinion of different researchers on the problem under consideration. In general, it can be said that the data are correctly interpreted in the light of the literature data on the existing scientific evidence.

### **Recommendations:**

As a result of the analyses, conclusions and conclusions, 5 very appropriate recommendations were made to various departments and institutions related to organic production. My personal recommendation to the doctoral student is to promote her scientific results in an appropriate way (round table, monograph, etc.) among colleagues and society.

### **Contributions:**

The contributions from the conducted research are presented in three groups - those of an original nature (6 items), of a theoretical-cognitive nature (6 items) and contributions of an applied nature (4 items). I believe that they are very correctly described, without unnecessary repetition of established facts, and I accept them in full. The contribution of testing and confirming a number of hypotheses among respondents (consumers and traders) of both sexes, related to: attitudes, sources of information, frequency of purchase, ways of labeling BH, is indisputable and original. assessing the level of knowledge needed to advise clients on their OF issues. Quite correctly, the doctoral student notes that ecologically motivated consumers who know the signs of organic production in case of doubt about the authenticity of OF know which competent authorities to signal for verification. They believe that OF are safe and regulated by the BFSA.

### **Evaluation of Dissertation Publications:**

An objective criterion for the significance of Dr. Braikova's dissertation work is the scientific articles published on the subject - a total of 3, of which 2 were published in magazines abroad and 1 - in a collection in Bulgaria. The author also presents evidentiary material for participation in 3 scientific forums in Bulgaria, one of which has international participation. This publication activity fully satisfies the quantitative indicators of the Regulations of the Medical University - Varna for the acquisition of the ONS "Doctor". I believe that with them the author is recognizable even among specialists in the scientific community.

### **Evaluation of the autoref:**

The abstract, as a summarized version of the dissertation work, is developed in 108 pages and gives greater publicity to the research conducted, the results obtained, the conclusions and recommendations made. It fully corresponds to the content of the dissertation, it is very well designed both textually and graphically.

### **Conclusion**

The dissertation work of **Dr. Rozalina Stefanova Braikova** on the topic "**Control of trade in organically produced agricultural products and foods in North-Eastern Bulgaria**" shows, that the doctoral student has in-depth theoretical knowledge in the relevant scientific field, has acquired the ability to independently analyze and summarize data, discuss results, draw relevant conclusions and make recommendations. She is also built, a good university teacher. Given the abilities shown by her, I accept that the dissertation work is her personal work with topical contributions and great practical significance.

On the basis of the above and bearing in mind that all the requirements for the preparation and design of this dissertation have been met at a very high level, I am pleased and convinced that I propose to the honorable Scientific Jury to award the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" to **Dr. Rozalina Stefanova Braykova**.

27.02.2023

Prepared the opinion:



/prof. Dr. Magdalena Platikanova - Ivanova, MD, PhD/