

**(*Sechium edule* (Jacq.) Sw.),
(*Momordica charantia* L.) (Cucumis metuliferus
E. Mey ex Naudin)**

1, 2, 2,
, 3, 3*,
,
1, " . . . "
2, 1000 ,
3 " . . . " , 1000 ,
" . . . "
" , 1000 ,

**Some Quality Properties of Tropical Cucurbits Chayote
(*Sechium edule* (Jacq.) Sw.), Bitter Melon (*Momordica
charantia* L.) and Kiwano (*Cucumis metuliferus* E. Mey)
Produced in the Temperate Climate Conditions
of North Macedonia**

Trajche Dimitrovski¹, Danica Andreevska², Dobro Andov²,
Natasha Gjorgovska³, Vesna Levkov^{3*}

¹Institute of Agriculture, "S . Cyril and Methodius" University in Skopje, 1000 Skopje,
Republic of North Macedonia

²Field Crops Department, Institute of Agriculture, "S . Cyril and Methodius" University
in Skopje, 1000 Skopje, Republic of North Macedonia

³Institute of Animal Science, "S . Cyril and Methodius" University in Skopje, 1000
Skopje, Republic of North Macedonia

*E-mail: levkovv@yahoo.com

Original scientific paper

SUMMARY

(*Cucurbitaceae*)

- The tropical crops chayote, bitter melon and kiwano (*Cucurbitaceae*) were cultivated under the temperate continental sub-Mediterranean climate of Kochani region, North Macedonia. The fresh fruits were tested for their physicochemical characteristics (water content, total dry

INTRODUCTION

Sw.),
Mey)
charantia L.)

(*Sechium edule* (Jacq.
Cucumis metuliferus E.
Momordica

Cucurbitaceae (

(Newstrom, 1990; Newstrom, 1991).

(Kirkbride, 1993).

(Lim, 2012).

(Schaefer and Renner, 2010).

(Chomicki et al., 2019).

(Wannang et al.,
2007; Kubola and Siriamornpun, 2008;
Joseph and Jini, 2013; Anyanwu et al.,
2014; Jia et al., 2017; Mzena et al., 2018;
Parra et al., 2018; Riviello-Flores et al.
2018; Vieira et al., 2019).

(2008).

90-

20-

(

)

Chayote (*Sechium edule* (Jacq.)
Sw.), kiwano (*Cucumis metuliferus* E.
Mey) and bitter melon (*Momordica
charantia* L.) are crops of tropical origin
belonging to the botanical family
Cucurbitaceae (cucurbits or gourd family)
predominantly grown in the tropics and
subtropics. The chayote (mirliton squash)
originates from Mexico and Central
America. It is most popular in Latin
America and grown in the tropical and
subtropical regions (Newstrom, 1990;
Newstrom, 1991). The kiwano (horned
melon) naturally occurs thru Africa (sub-
Saharan regions) and Southwest Asia
(Yemen) (Kirkbride, 1993). It is
commercially grown in Kenya, New
Zealand, France and Israel (Lim, 2012).
The bitter melon (bitter gourd or balsam
pear) originates from Africa (Schaefer and
Renner, 2010). Its domestication is
unclear (Africa or India) and today is most
extensively used in Asian cuisines
(Chomicki et al., 2019).

Recently, these crops are gaining
more attention due to their reported
nutritional and bio-functional properties
(Wannang et al., 2007; Kubola and
Siriamornpun, 2008; Joseph and Jini,
2013; Anyanwu et al., 2014; Jia et al.,
2017; Mzena et al., 2018; Parra et al.,
2018; Riviello-Flores et al. 2018; Vieira et
al., 2019).

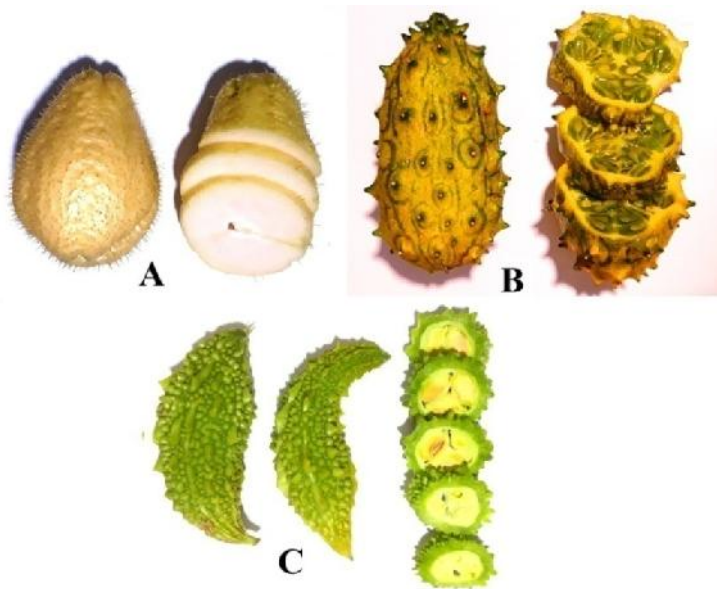
In North Macedonia, these three
crops are not well known, and are not
commonly cultivated as a commercial
crop or a garden plant. Their cultivation is
isolated and local, on a small scale by
certain individuals/ farmers for the local
market. None of the three species is listed
in the National variety list published by the
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water
Economy of the Republic of North
Macedonia (2008). The chayote was
introduced in the region at the end of the
1990's decade, when it was randomly
grown as a garden (backyard) specimen
(author's notation), while the kiwano and

(),
 , -
 .
 ,
 ,
)
 ,
 .
 : (*Sechium edule* (Jacq.
 Sw.), (*Cucumis metuliferus* E.
 Mey) (*Momordica*
charantia L.) 1.
 -
 .
 , (),
 .
 2019
 ,
 -
 -
 (Filipovski at al., 1996)
 BSk (, ,)
 -
 -
 (1980–2016 .) 1-km (Beck
 et al., 2018).
 ()
).

bitter melon are know from the past
 several years, with some on-line popular
 reports. Since little to no scientific
 information on these new exotic species
 cultivated in North Macedonia is available,
 a study was conducted in order to
 investigate the food safety
 (microbiological quality) and
 physicochemical characteristics of these
 cucurbits produced in the climatic
 conditions of North Macedonia.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The materials used for this study
 were fruits of the three cucurbit species:
 chayote (*Sechium edule* (Jacq.) Sw.),
 kiwano (*Cucumis metuliferus* E. Mey) and
 bitter melon (*Momordica charantia* L.)
 shown on Figure 1. The physicochemical
 and microbiological analyses of chayote
 and kiwano were performed on ripen
 fruits. Because the bitter melon is used as
 a vegetable while still green (unripe), the
 analyses in this species were performed
 on unripe fruits. The fruits of the three
 species were grown on a private property
 during the vegetative season of 2019
 located in the region of Kochani, which
 belongs to the temperate continental sub-
 Mediterranean climate belt (Filipovski at
 al., 1996) or BSk (steppe, arid, cold)
 climate according to the new global maps
 of the Köppen-Geiger climate classification
 for the present-day (1980–2016) at 1-km
 resolution (Beck et al., 2018). No
 pesticides (fungicides and insecticides)
 were applied during the cultivation.



.1.

Fig. 1. Fruits of the examined tropical cucurbit species

A- (*Sechium edule* (Jacq.) Sw.), B- (*Cucumis metuliferus* E. Mey) C- (*Momordica charantia* L.)

A- chayote (*Sechium edule* (Jacq.) Sw.), B- kiwano (*Cucumis metuliferus* E. Mey) and C- bitter melon (*Momordica charantia* L.)

Physicochemical analyses

The following physicochemical properties were investigated: water content, total dry content, total soluble solids and pH. The water content and total dry content in each species were determined by drying 5 fruit samples from different fruits in air-oven at 105 °C to constant weight and were expressed as % of the fresh fruit weight.

The total soluble solids and pH were determined in 5 liquid samples in each species, prepared from different fruits processed on a blender, after which the samples were strained and the liquid (fruit juice) collected.

The total soluble solids (TSS) are an important quality parameter used to indicate sweetness of fresh and processed horticultural food products, in laboratories for research and by industry to determine marketing standards (Magwazaa and Opara, 2015).

and Opara, 2015). TSS % Brix, (Kruss). p pH (Testo).	(Magwazaa	The TSS in this study was measured in %Brix using digital refractometer (Kruss). The pH was determined using digital pH-measuring instrument (Testo).
		<i>Microbiological analyses</i> The fruits used for microbiological analyses were harvested and taken to the laboratory, where they were washed with tap water and afterward washed twice with distilled water. No surface disinfection was performed.
	(15).	The analyses were performed on five samples of each of the three species (15 in total). Each of the five samples of chayote, bitter gourd and kiwano were prepared from different fruit. The fruits were cut in small species and measured under sterile conditions. 25 g of each sample was put in a 225 ml sterile buffered peptone solution and homogenized in a stomacher (Interscience, model BagMixer). The subsequent dilutions were made by using the sterile buffered peptone solution. The total number of aerobic mesophilic bacteria was detected using the plate count agar (PCA) after 24 hours incubation at 37 °C. Enterobacteria and <i>Escherichia coli</i> were detected using selective chromogenic medium for direct enumeration of <i>Enterrobacteriaceae</i> and <i>E. coli</i> (REBBECA agar) after incubation at 37 °C for 24 hours. <i>Salmonella</i> screening was performed using highly selective chromogenic medium for <i>Salmonella</i> detection (24 hours at 37 °C). The presence of <i>Listeria monocitogenes</i> was examined by using ALOA- selective chorogenic medium (agar) for <i>Listeria</i> according to Ottaviani and Agosti (24 hours at 37 °C). Yeasts and molds were detected and enumerated by using yeast extract glucose chloramphenicol (YCG) plate after 3-5 days of incubation at 25 °C. All media used were ready-to-use plates (BioMérieux). An overview of the media
. 25 g 225 ml BagMixer).	(Interscience,	
24 Enterobacteria	(PCA) 37° <i>Escherichia coli</i>	
<i>Enterrobacteriaceae</i> (REBBECA) 37°	<i>E. coli</i> 24	
(24 37°). <i>Listeria monocitogenes</i>		
() ALOA Ottaviani Agosti (24 37°C).	<i>Listeria</i>	
(YCG) 3-5	25° (BioMérieux).	

1.

used for detection and enumeration of the studied microorganisms is presented in Table 1.

1.

Table 1. Overview of the mediums used for detection of the specific microorganisms

Parameter	Medium	Method of detection	Presumptive positive result
Total plate count	PCA	Non selective medium which enables bacterial growth	Growth of bacterial colony forming units
Enterobacteria	REBECCA	REBECCA REBECCA EB supplement	/Pink to red colonies
<i>Escherichia coli</i>	REBECCA	-D- - D-glucuronidase activity	/Blue colonies with or without blue halo
<i>Salmonella</i> spp.	Salmonella chromogenic agar	8- C8-esterase activity	Pale pink to mauve colonies
<i>Listeria monocytogenes</i>	ALOA	- / -glucosidase and phosphatidylinositol-specific phospholipase C activity	Blue to blue-green colonies with halo
/Molds	YGC agar	(Selective medium for fungi (yeasts and molds)	Growth of mold colony forming units
/Yeast	YGC agar	(Selective medium for fungi (yeasts and molds)	Growth of yeast colony forming units

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

2
 (94,76%),
 (5,24%)
 TSS (2,10% Brix).
 (88,67%),
 (11,33%)
 (6,45)
 TSS (4,07% Brix)
 pH (4,47)).

Some physicochemical properties of the examined crops are shown on Table 2. The chayote had the highest water content (94.76%), the lowest total dry content (5.24%) and the lowest TSS (2.10%Brix). The lowest water content (88.67%), the highest total dry content (11.33%) and the highest pH value (6.45) were found in bitter melon, while the kiwano contained the highest TSS (4.07% Brix) and lowest pH value (4.47).

While the water content and the pH of chayote produced in the conditions of North Macedonia were similar to the reports from other regions, the total soluble solids obtained in our conditions

(Ekanayake et al., 2007; Mishra and Das, 2015; Oloan and Jose, 2017).

(var. *albus spinosum*).

(TSS pH) Souza et al. (2006) Antunes et al. (2014).

Benzioni et al. (1993) 4,06 4,89, TSS 4,02% 6,19%

Bharati et al. (2018) TSS 3,64 5,58 ° Brix

(3,77% Brix) Mallikarjunarao et al. (2018) - 2.27 °Brix 4.75°Brix

3.54°Brix, Kumari et al. (2018) - 4.450% 6.100%.

Aminah and Anna (2011).

were lower (Ekanayake et al., 2007; Mishra and Das, 2015; Oloan and Jose, 2017). Still, it should be noted that most of the reports on chayote do not involve the variety tested in this study - the yellow spiny chayote (var. *albus spinosum*).

The physicochemical properties of kiwano (TSS and pH) were similar to those reported by Souza et al. (2006) and Antunes et al. (2014). Similarly, according to Benzioni et al. (1993) the pH in kiwano ranged from 4.06 to 4.89, while the TSS ranged from 4.02% in mature green fruits to 6.19% in mature yellow-orange fruits.

According to Bharati et al. (2018) the TSS in bitter melon ranged from 3.64 to 5.58°Brix depending on the foliar feeding. In this study, TSS in bitter melon (3.77%Brix) was in the range reported by Mallikarjunarao et al. (2018) – 2.27° Brix to 4.75°Brix with a mean of 3.54°Brix, but lower compared to the results by Kumari et al. (2018) - 4.450% to 6.100%. The pH of bitter melon in this study was higher in comparison to Aminah and Anna (2011).

2.

(TDC),

(TSS) pH

Table 2. Physicochemical properties of the examined fruits: water content, TDC (total dry content), TSS (total soluble solids) and pH value

	Water content (%)	TDC (%)	TSS (%Brix)	pH
/Chayote	94.76±0.32	5.24±0.32	2.10±0.44	6.40±0.06
/Bitter melon	88.67±1.55	11.33±1.55	3.77±0.38	6.45±0.13
/Kiwano	91.98±0.49	8.02±0.49	4.07±1.00	4.47±0.20

Escherichia coli, *Salmonella* spp. *Listeria monocytogenes*

3.

The results of the microbiological analysis are presented at Table 3. *Escherichia coli*, *Salmonella* spp. and *Listeria monocytogenes* were not detected in any of the examined fruits. According to the Rulebook for specific food safety requirements regarding the microbiological criteria (Official gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia, 2008), no *Salmonella* spp. and *Listeria monocytogenes* should be found in fresh

(, 2008), *Salmonella* spp. *Listeria monocytogenes*

1000 cfu/g (*E. coli* 100).

Clostridium perfringens -

Enterobacteriaceae (*E. coli* *Salmonella*),

(),

2008). Enterobacteriaceae,

, Enterobacteriaceae

Enterobacteriaceae
2 5- - 10 cfu/g
15 cfu/g (

).

(84 cfu/g).

(3626 cfu/g),

(3084 cfu/g), (2766 cfu/g)
(318 cfu/g)

(100 cfu/g) (40 cfu/g)

(16 cfu/g).

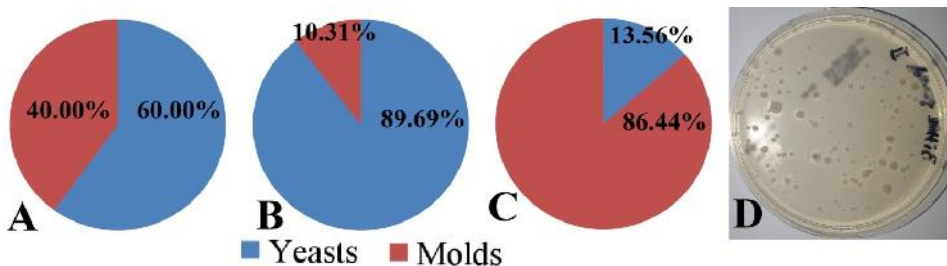
fruits and vegetables placed on the market. The limits for *E. coli* are set at 100 to 1000 cfu/g (examined in the process of production). The other two criteria with defined limits at the production stage are coagulase positive staphylococci and *Clostridium perfringens* - these two criteria were not evaluated in this study.

So far, no limits are set for the Enterobacteriaceae (excluding *E. coli* and *Salmonella*), the total number of aerobic mesophilic bacteria and fungi (yeasts and molds) present in fresh fruit (Official gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia, 2008).

The non-coli Enterobacteriaceae in the species examined in this trial were low. In chayote Enterobacteriaceae were not detected, while in kiwano and bitter melon Enterobacteriaceae were detected in 2 out of the 5 samples - 10 cfu/g in kiwano and 15 cfu/g in bitter melon (average of the two positive results in each species).

The lowest number of aerobic mesophilic bacteria was found in bitter melon (84 cfu/g). The kiwano fruits, where the highest average number of aerobic mesophilic bacteria was found (3626 cfu/g), also had the highest difference within individual replications and the highest standard deviation.

Regarding the fungal content, the highest average values for the total fungal count (yeast and molds - 3084 cfu/g), yeasts (2766 cfu/g) and molds (318 cfu/g) were detected in bitter melon. The lowest total fungal count (100 cfu/g) and molds (40 cfu/g) were found in chayote, while the kiwano fruit contained the lowest yeasts number (16 cfu/g).



2.

(%): A- , B- , C- , D-

Fig. 2. The content of yeast and molds in the fungal flora of the examined fruits (%): A- chayote, B- bitter melon, C- kiwano, D- growth of fungi (yeasts and molds) on selective media

CONCLUSIONS

The current study demonstrates the potential for cultivation of the tropical cucurbit species chayote (*Sechium edule* (Jacq.) Sw.), kiwano (*Cucumis metuliferus* E. Mey) and bitter melon (*Momordica charantia* L.) under the temperate climate conditions of North Macedonia. The fruits produced in this study showed satisfactory results concerning the microbiological quality of the final product ready for consumption. Regarding the physicochemical properties, the kiwano and bitter melon had similar quality as compared to the crop produced in other countries, while the chayote had a somewhat inferior content of total soluble solids. Further studies should be performed in order to investigate the suitability of the different climate-vegetation-soil regions of North Macedonia for the cultivation of these tropical/ subtropical crops, and to evaluate and determine the most suitable production techniques in each species in relation to fruit yield and quality.

/ REFERENCES

1. Aminah, A. and P.K. Anna, 2011. Influence of Ripening Stages on Physicochemical Characteristics and Antioxidant Properties of Bitter Gourd (*Momordica charantia*). *International Food Research Journal*, 18, 895-900.
2. Anyanwu, A. A., N. S. Jimam, D.A. Dangiwa, N.N. Wannang and K.D. Falang, 2014. Protective Effects of Alkaloids of *Cucumis metuliferus* Isolated from the

- Fruit Pulp on Some Vital Organs. *The Journal of Phytopharmacology*, 3, 259-263.
3. **Antunes, G., A.P.S. Ferreira, M. Puiatti, P.R. Cecon and G.C.C Silva**, 2014. Produtividade e qualidade de frutos de pepino africano em resposta à adubação nitrogenada. *Revista Ceres*, 61, 141-146. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1590/S0034-737X2014000100019>
 4. **Beck, H.E., N.E Zimmermann, T.R McVicar, N. Vergopolan, A. Berg and E.F. Wood**, 2018. Present and Future Köppen-Geiger Climate Classification Maps at 1-km Resolution. *Scientific data*, 5, 180-214. doi:10.1038/sdata.2018.214
 5. **Benzioni, A., S. Mendlinger, M. Ventura and S. Huyskens**, 1993. Germination, Fruit Development, Yield, and Postharvest Characteristics of *Cucumis metuliferus*. In: *New Crops*, Janick J. and Simon J. E. (eds.), Wiley, New York. pp. 553-557.
 6. **Bharati, D.K., R.B.Verma, V.K. Singh, R. Kumar, S. Sinha and S.K. Sinha**, 2018. Response of Bitter Gourd (*Momordica charantia* L.) to Foliar Feeding of Micronutrient on the Growth, Yield and Quality. *International Journal of Current Microbiology and Applied Sciences*, 7, 2341-2346. <https://doi.org/10.20546/ijcmas.2018.702.284>
 7. **Chomicki, G., H. Schaefer and S.S. Renner**, 2019. Origin and Domestication of Cucurbitaceae Crops: Insights from Phylogenies, Genomics And Archaeology. *New Phytologist*, 226, 1240-1255 doi:10.1111/nph.16015
 8. **Ekanayake, S., H.A.C.G.K Jayarathne and C.K. Ranawana**, 2007. A Study of Physicochemical Properties and Quality Aspects of Slow and Rapid Frozen Chowchow (*Sechium edule*). *Annals of Sri Lanka Department of Agriculture*, 9, 19-26.
 9. **Filipovski, Gj., R. Rizovski and P. Ristevski**, 1996. The Characteristics of Climate-vegetation-soil Zones (Regions) in Republic of Macedonia. *Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Skopje, Republic of Macedonia*, 77 (Mk).
 10. **Jeddi, M. Z , M. Yunesian, M.E. Gorji, N. Noori, M.R. Pourmand and G.R.J Khaniki**, 2014. Microbial Evaluation of Fresh, Minimally-processed Vegetables and Bagged Sprouts from Chain Supermarkets. *Journal of Health, Population and Nutrition*, 32, 391-399.
 11. **Jia, S., M. Shen, F. Zhang and J. Xie**, 2017. Recent Advances in *Momordica charantia*: Functional Components and Biological Activities. *International journal of molecular sciences*, 18, 2555. doi:10.3390/ijms18122555
 12. **Joseph, B. and D. Jini**, 2013. Antidiabetic Effects of *Momordica charantia* (Bitter Melon) and Its Medicinal Potency. *Asian Pacific Journal of Tropical Disease*, 3, 93-102. doi:10.1016/S2222-1808(13)60052-3
 13. **Kirkbride, J. H., Jr.**, 1993. Biosystematic Monograph of the Genus *Cucumis* (Cucurbitaceae): Botanical Identification of Cucumbers and Melons. Parkway Publishers, Boone, North Carolina, USA.
 14. **Kubola, J. and S. Siriamornpun**, 2008. Phenolic Contents and Antioxidant Activities of Bitter Gourd (*Momordica charantia* L.) Leaf, Stem and Fruit Fraction Extracts in vitro. *Food Chemistry*, 110, 881-890. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodchem.2008.02.076>
 15. **Kumari, P., R.B. Verma, N. Rani, A.K. Singh and A. Kumari**, 2018. Diversity in Phytochemical Composition of Bitter Gourd (*Momordica charantia* L.) Genotypes Based on Principal Component Analysis. *International Journal of Chemical Studies*; Special Issue 4, 36-42.
 16. **Lim, T.K.**, 2012. *Cucumis Metuliferus*. In: *Edible Medicinal And Non-Medicinal Plants Vol. 2*, pp. 235-238. Springer, Dordrecht.
 17. **Magwazaa, L. S. and U.L. Opara**, 2015. Analytical Methods for Determination of Sugars and Sweetness of Horticultural Products-A review. *Scientia Horticulturae*, 184, 179-192.
 18. **Mallikarjunarao, K., A.K. Das, A. Nandi, B. Baisakh, G.S. Sahu and P.**

- Tripathy**, 2018. Evaluation of Parents and Hybrids for Yield and Quality Characters in Bitter Gourd (*Momordica charantia* L.). *International Journal of Current Microbiology and Applied Sciences*, 7, 1082-1092. <https://doi.org/10.20546/ijcmas.2018.708.123>
19. Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy of the Republic of North Macedonia, 2008. National Variety List of Republic of Macedonia. Retrieved from <http://arhiva.mzsv.gov.mk/files/Sortna%20Lista%202008.pdf>
20. **Mishra, L. K. and P. Das**, 2015. Nutritional Evaluation of Squash (*Sechium edule*) Germplasms Collected from Garo Hills of Meghalaya – North East India. *International Journal of Agriculture, Environment and Biotechnology*, 8, 971-975. DOI: 10.5958/2230-732X.2015.00111.4
21. **Mzena, T., H. Swai and H., M. Chacha**, 2018. Antimalarial Activity of *Cucumis metuliferus* and *Lippia kituiensis* against *Plasmodium berghei* Infection in Mice. *Research and reports in tropical medicine*, 9, 81-88. doi:10.2147/RRTM.S150091
22. **Newstrom, L. E.**, 1990. Origin and Evolution of Chayote, *Sechium edule*. In: *Biology and Utilization of the Cucurbitaceae* (Bates, D. M., Robinson, R. W., Jeffrey C. eds.). Comstock Publishing Associates, a division of Cornell University Press Itaka and London. pp 141-149.
23. **Newstrom, L. E.**, 1991. Evidence for the Origin of Chayote, *Sechium edule* (Cucurbitaceae). *Economic Botany*, 45, 410-428. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02887082>
24. Official gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia No.78, 2008. Rulebook on the special requirements for food safety in terms of microbiological criteria (Mk).
25. **Oloan, R. M. and D.C. Jose**, 2017. Survey, Germplasm Collection, Characterization and Evaluation of Chayote (*Sechium edule*) Strains in the Highlands. *E-Journal*, Department of Agriculture, Bureau of plant industry, Philippines. [http://bpi.da.gov.ph/bpi/images/Picture/CHAYOTE%202011%20\(1\).pdf](http://bpi.da.gov.ph/bpi/images/Picture/CHAYOTE%202011%20(1).pdf)
26. **Parra, J., P. Hernández, F. Ocampo-Maroto, V. Álvarez-Valverde, Y. Carvajal-Miranda, G. Rodríguez-Rodríguez and C. Herrera**, 2018. Phytochemical Characterization and Antioxidant Profile of *Sechium edule* (Jacq) Swartz (Cucurbitaceae) Varieties Grown in Costa Rica. *Journal of Pharmacy & Pharmacognosy Research*, 6, 448-457.
27. **Riviello-Flores, M. de la Luz, L. Arévalo-Galarza, J. Cadena-Iñiguez. R. Marcos Soto-Hernández, L.del Mar Ruiz-Posadas and F.C. Gómez-Merino**, 2018. Nutraceutical Characteristics of the Extracts and Juice of Chayote (*Sechium edule* (Jacq.) Sw.) Fruits. *Beverages*, 4(2), 37. <https://doi.org/10.3390/beverages4020037>
28. **Schaefer H. and S.S. Renner**, 2010. A Three-genome Phylogeny of Momordica (Cucurbitaceae) Suggests Seven Returns from Dioecy to Monoecy and Recent Longdistance Dispersal to Asia. *Molecular Phylogenetics and Evolution* 54, 553-560. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ympev.2009.08.006>
29. **Souza, A. D., P.M. Pinto, A.C. Borkoski, F.L. Mezzacapa, F. D'Andrea, L.P.M. Sacchetto Júnior and M. Biato**, 2006. Caracterização de frutos de *Cucumis metuliferus* na Serra da Cantareira, São Paulo. Thesis, 5, 147-160.
30. **Tournas, V.H.**, 2005. Moulds and Yeasts in Fresh and Minimally Processed Vegetables, and Sprouts. *International Journal of Food Microbiology*, 99, 71-77. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijfoodmicro.2004.08.009>
31. **Vieira, E.F., O. Pinho, I.M.P.L.V.O. Ferreira and C. Delerue-Matos**, 2019. Chayote (*Sechium edule*): A review of Nutritional Composition, Bioactivities and Potential Applications. *Food Chemistry*, 275, 557-568. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodchem.2018.09.146>
32. **Wannang, N. N., N.S. Jimam, S. Omale, M.L.P Dapar, S.S Gyang and J.C. Aguiyi**, 2007. Effects of *Cucumis metuliferus* (Cucurbitaceae) Fruits on Enzymes and Hematological Parameters in Albino Rats. *African Journal of Biotechnology*, 6, 2515-2518.

- 21,04 m, - 12,82 m	Orestes 17,95 m.	and diameter - 21.04 cm, and for the variety Orestes is - 12.82 cm and 17.95 cm respectively.
m.	5-6	It has been found that substrate does not affect the size of blossoms. In all variants, its value is 5-6 cm.
Paris.	Jó Föld Orestes	The type of substrate influences the duration of buttonization and flowering. Initially budding in late August and flowering in mid-September was established in the control substrate and the Jó Föld substrate in the Paris variety. In the Orestes variety, this was only observed with the Jó Föld substrate.
Jó Föld.	Fioriplus-20	In the Fioriplus-20 and Fioriplus-50 substrates, budding for both varieties and cv. Orestes control began in late October.
Fioriplus-50	Orestes	
Guinea,	: <i>Impatiens-New</i>	Key words: Impatiens-New Guinea, substrates, biometric indices, budding, flowering

INTRODUCTION

Potted flower crops have higher requirements for soil conditions than flower species grown outdoors. The reason for this is that their root system develops in a small volume of soil, wherefore it must be well aerated and rich in nutrients.

Soil mixtures have a key role in the production of potted plants. Soil and peat are the most widely used substrates for container production of annual and perennial ornamental plants (Tariq et al., 2012, Nencheva and Atanassova 2018).

However, the use of garden soil alone is not a good choice for container plants, because the frequent watering required of them will cause most of the soil to compact into a solid mass (Tariq et al., 2012).

Peat is the most widely used material in soil mixtures for growing potted plants (Marfa et al., 2002, Ribeiro et al., 2007). The advantages of quality peat

(Tariq et al., 2012; Nencheva and Atanassova, 2018).

(Tariq et al., 2012).

(Marfa et al., 2002; Ribeiro et

al., 2007).

: ,
60%
30% (Ayan, 1998)

(Tariq et al., 2012).

:
(Treder, 2008).

4 .

(Verdonck et al., 1982).

(Ribeiro et al., 2007).

(Abad et al., 2001; Guerin et al., 2001; Hicklenton et al., 2001; Garcia Gomez et al., 2002; Younis et al., 2007).

4 :

Impatiens New Guinea

- are: sterility, organic matter content, water retention about 60% and aeration capacity about 30% (Ayan, 1998).

- On the other hand, the use of peat only as a growing medium is limited due to the difficulty of finding quality peat and its high price. (Tariq et al. 2012).

- For the successful cultivation of ornamental potted species develop soil substrates containing a variety of components: turf soil, leaflet, peat, coir, river sand, perlite, etc. (Treder, 2008).

- When using coconut fiber, it is especially important that they have gone through a composting process lasting about 4 months. Thus, phytotoxic compounds in fresh material are eliminated (Verdonck et al., 1982).

- Many types of organic and mineral substrates are available on the market, which differ in mechanical and chemical composition. The main component in the substrates is peat, which is further enriched with added waste products from the food industry or agriculture (Ribeiro et al., 2007).

- In recent years, researchers are interested in reducing the use of peat as a component in the production of container plants (Abad et al., 2001; Guerin et al., 2001; Hicklenton et al., 2001; Garcia Gomez et al., 2002, Younis et al., 2007).

- The choice of a suitable substrate is of great importance for the successful cultivation of potted flower crops. For proper growth, the environment must perform 4 functions: maintaining moisture; provide nutrients; allow the exchange of gases to and from the roots; and provides plant maintenance.

- *Impatiens New Guinea* is a container plant with a long flowering

70-
New Guinea

New Guinea

()
and Cox, 1992).

Impatiens-New Guinea.

Impatiens

-

(Judd

period. *Impatiens* has become an important greenhouse pot crop since its commercial introduction in the early 1970s. Many producers of New Guinea hybrid *impatiens* have experienced poor growth of rooted cuttings soon after planting. The plants appear normal but their development is very slow.

In these cases, poor growth cannot be explained by the development of pathogens or by unusual environmental conditions, but moderate to high electrical conductivity (EU) of the soil substrate is observed Judd, & Cox (1992).

The aim of the study was to investigate the influence of different soil substrates on the growth and development of *Impatiens-New Guinea*.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The research was conducted at the Institute of Ornamental and Medicinal Plants - Sofia. A pots experience was made in greenhouse conditions to study the influence of various soil substrates on the growth and development of *Impatiens-New Guinea*

The substrates used have the following characteristics:

Soil Mixture - Control - substrate prepared from peat-soil-perlite in a ratio of 2:1:0.5. Peat has technical characteristics: electrical conductivity 1.6-1.9 mS/cm, humidity up to 65%, humidifiers 0.1 l/m³, PG MIX – 1 kg/m³ fraction 0-20 mm, pH 5.5-6.2. The soil is alluvial-meadow with humus content 1.9% and pH-6.5 from the area of IOMP - Sofia.

Soil Mixture Jó Föld - substrate specializing in balcony flowers. Its composition includes: Baltic peat, coconut fiber, volcanic stone, mineral fertilizers with regulated soluble nutrients "Basacote Plus - Marathon from COMPO. The salt content varies from 0.3-3 g/l, pH 5.5-6.5.

Impatiens- New Guinea.

:
-

2:1:0,5.

1,6-1,9 mS/ m,
65%, 0,1 l/m³, PG MIX -
1kg/m³ 0-20 mm, 5,5-6,2.
1,9% -6,5

Jó Föld -

"Basacote Plus - Marathon
COMPO.

0,3-3 g/l, 5,5-6,5.

Fioriplus-20 –
 :
 40mS/m (+/-25%),
 80%
) - 90-95%, (- 5-10%,
 - 20%,
 (CaCO₃) - 3-5 kg/m³,
 60-70%, 5,5-6,5.

Fioriplus-50 –
 :
 40mS/m (+/-25%),
 80%
) 90-95%, - 5-10%,
 -50%,
 (CaCO₃) - 3-5 kg/m³, - 60-70%,
 5,5,6,5.

4
 10 :
 () -
 (Jó Föld)
 III (Fioriplus-20)
 V (Fioriplus- 50)

Impatiens-
 New Guinea – Paris ()
 Orestes ().
 15 m (1,5 l).

Masterblend 20-20-20.
Impatiens
 20

t- GraphPad Prism.
 <0.05 (*), <0.01 (**), <0.0001
 (***), ,

Soil Mixture Fioriplus-20 -
 universal substrate, with technical
 characteristics: Electrical conductivity
 40mS / m (+/- 25%), organic matter - 80%
 dry weight, peat mixture (light and black
 peat) - 90-95%, perlite - 5-10%, coconut
 fiber - 20%, Calcium carbonate (CaCO₃) -
 3-5 kg/m³, humidity - 60-70%, pH 5.5-6.5.

Soil Mixture Fioriplus-50 -
 universal substrate, with technical
 characteristics: Electrical conductivity
 40mS/m (+/- 25%), organic matter - 80%
 dry weight, peat mixture (light and black
 peat) 90-95%, perlite - 5-10%, coconut
 fiber-50%, Calcium carbonate (CaCO₃) -
 3-5 kg/m³, humidity - 60-70%, pH 5.5-6.5.

The experiment was conducted in
 greenhouse conditions in 4 variants and
 each variant is in 10 repetitions:
 Variant (control) - K
 Variant II (Jó Föld)
 Variant II (Fioriplus-20)
 Variant V (Fioriplus- 50)

Impatiens-New Guinea seedlings
 were used - Paris variety (red) and
 Orestes variety (white). The plants were
 planted singly in pots with a diameter of ø -
 15 cm (contents 1.5 l).

One month after planting, the plants
 were fertilized once with Masterblend 20-
 20-20 complex fertilizer.

To study the influence of different
 soil mixtures on the development of
Impatiens, readings were made every 20
 days on the height and diameter of the
 plant and the size of the flower.

The health status of the plants for
 the occurrence of phytotoxicity and the
 occurrence of phenophases was monitored.

Data were processed statistically
 and presented as an average value SE.
 They were analyzed for significance by
 means of t-test of GraphPad Prism
 software. The significant differences
 between the control and variants were
 presented as *(P<0.05), ** (P<0.01), ***
 (P<0.0001) and the non-significant – ns.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The obtained results show that the substrate of the Hungarian company Jó Föld turned out to be the best of both testedimpatiences for the tested substrates (Tables 1 and 2).

In the substrates Fioriplus-20 and Fioriplus-50, weaker growth was observed than in the Control substrate, and this tendency is more pronounced in the Paris variety (Table 1).

The development ofimpatience is characterized by an increase in the diameter of the plants, which is determined by the formation of multiple branches (Table 2).

The reported total growth of plants for the variety Paris is height - 11.29 cm and diameter - 21.04 cm, and for the variety Orestes is - 12.82 cm and 17.95 cm, respectively

(1 2).

Fioriplus-50

Paris (1).

(2).

11,29 cm

Orestes

17,95 cm.

Jó Föld

Fioriplus-20

Paris

- 21,04 cm,

- 12,82 cm

1.

Impatiens-New Guinea (cm)

Table 1. Plant height of *Impatiens-New Guinea* (cm)

Variants	1 ⁻ 1st reporting (17.07.2019)	2 ⁻ 2nd reading (2.08.2019)		3 ⁻ 3rd reading (20.08.2019)		4 ⁻ 4th reporting (5.09.2019 .)		Total growth cm
	Initial height cm	height cm	growth cm	height cm	growth cm	height cm	growth cm	
PARIS								
- Control (K)	6,19 ±0,13	7,86 ±0,21	1,67	12,29±0,35	4,43	16,40±0,4	4,12	10,21
- Jó Föld	6,31 ±0,16 ns	7,42±0,2 ns	1,11	12,9±0,26 ns	5,48	17,6 ±0,48 ns	4,70	11,29
- Fioriplus 20	6,29 ±0,28 ns	6,73±0,26 **	0,44	9,82±0,31 ***	3,09	13,8±0,35 ***	3,98	7,51
V – Fioriplus50	6,25 ±0,24 ns	7,07±0,27 *	0,82	7,87±0,27 ***	0,80	13,4 ±0,48 ***	5,53	7,15
ORESTES								
- Control ()	6,71±0,08	7,36±0,32	0,65	12,64±0,27	5,93	16,2±0,48	3,56	9,49
- Jó Föld	5,88±0,26 **	7,65±0,28 ns	1,77	14,99±0,32 **	9,11	18,7±0,65 **	3,71	12,82
- Fioriplus 20	6,57±0,2 ns	7,18±0,2 ns	0,61	9,5±0,36 ***	2,32	15,9±0,48 ns	6,4	9,33
V – Fioriplus 50	5,8±0,18 ***	6,44±0,2 *	0,64	8,83±0,23 ***	2,39	14,3±0,3 **	5,47	8,5

2.

Impatiens-New Guinea (cm)Table 2. Plant diameter of *Impatiens-New Guinea* (cm)

Variants	1 st reporting (17.07.2019)	2 nd reading (2.08.2019)		3 rd reading (20.08.2019)		4 th reporting (5.09.2019 .)		Total growth cm
	Initial diameter cm	diameter cm	growth cm	diameter cm	growth cm	diameter cm	growth cm	
PARIS								
- Control (K)	12,42 ±0,24	14,96 ±0,4	2,54	21,07±0,82	6,11	27±0,81	5,93	14,58
- Jó Föld	11,16±0,4 *	14,54±0,4 ns	3,38	25,05±0,59 **	10,51	32,2±1,1 **	7,15	21,04
- Fioriplus20	11,12 ±0,35 **	13,06±0,3 **	1,94	13,74±0,5 ***	0,68	19,5±0,5 ***	5,76	8,38
V – Fioriplus50	12,17±0,35 **	13,9±0,3 *	1,73	14,24±0,3 ***	0,34	18,1±1,1 ***	3,86	5,93
ORESTES								
- Control ()	10,91±0,3	13,5±0,5	2,59	18,61±0,65	5,11	23,6±0,7	0,32	8,02
- Jó Föld	10,35±0,18 ns	14,24±0,3 ns	3,89	21,55±0,8 *	7,31	28,3±0,7 ***	6,75	17,95
- Fioriplus20	10,53±0,3 ns	12,12±0,36 *	1,59	13,14±0,3 ***	1,02	22,1±0,5 ns	8,96	11,57
V – Fioriplus50	10,43±0,4 ns	11,91±0,37 *	1,48	12,33±0,3 ***	0,42	21,3±0,7 *	8,97	10,87

Judd and Cox (1992)

(EC)

<1,5 dS • m-1

Zawadzka et al. (2013)

Pelargonium.

Awang et al. (2010)

Celosia cristata.

5-6 cm.

(1).

According to Judd and Cox (1992) the level of electrical conductivity (EC) of the soil substrate affects plant development. They found that EU <1.5 dS • m-1 gave the best growth of impatiens.

Zawadzka et al (2013) observed that the presence of coconut fibers in the soil substrate affects the growth and size of flowers in pelargonium. Similar results were reported by Awang et al (2010) in *Celosia cristata*.

In our study it was found that the substrate does not affect the size of the flowers and in all variants it ranges between 5-6 cm.

The type of substrate in this experiment affects the time of budding and flowering, which prove to be a specific varietal trait for impatiens (Figure 1).



1. *Impatiens-New Guinea*

Fig. 1. Influence of different substrates on the development of *Impatiens-New Guinea*

Paris.	Jó Föld	Orestes
Jó Föld.		(
-)
Fioriplus-20	Fioriplus-50	
Orestes.		
<i>Impatiens-New Guinea</i>		
	Jó Föld.	
Paris	Orestes.	<i>Impatiens</i>
		-
Fioriplus-20	Fioriplus-50	

Initial budding in late August and flowering in mid-September was found in the control substrate and the substrate Jó Föld in the variety Paris. In the Orestes variety, this was observed only in the Jó Föld substrate

Later budding (end of October) was reported for the substrates Fioriplus-20 and Fioriplus-50 for both varieties of impatiens and for the control of the variety Orestes.

CONCLUSIONS

The experiment shows that the choice of substrate for *Impatiens-New Guinea* is of great importance for the growth and development of the culture, as well as for the stimulation of earlier flowering.

The substrate of the Hungarian company Jó Föld turned out to be the most suitable. It reported the largest increase in the formation of the plant tuft both in height and width for both tested varieties *Impatiens* - Paris and Orestes. The plants are viable and bloom a month earlier than the other two tested substrates Fioriplus-20 and Fioriplus-50.

/ REFERENCES

1. **Abad, M., P. Noguera and S. Bures**, 2001. National Inventory of Organic Wastes for Use as growing Media for Ornamental Potted Plant Production: Case Study in Spain. *Bioresource Technology*, 77: 197-200.
2. **Ayan, S.**, 1998. Turba karakteristikleri ve islah çali malari. DOA Dergisi, Orman Bakanlığı Yayın No. 076, DOA Yayın No. 7, Sayı. 4, s.131-150, Tarsus.
3. **Awang, Y., A.S. Shaharom, R.B. Mohamad and A. Selamat**, 2010. Growth Dynamics of *Celosia cristata* Grown in Coco Peat, Burnt Rice Hull and Kenaf Core Fiber Mixtures. *Am J Agric Biol Sci*, 5:70-76.
4. **Garcia-Gomez, A., M.P. Bernal and A. Roig**, 2002. Growth of Ornamental Plants in Two Composts Prepared from Agroindustrial Wastes. *Bioresource Technology* 83: 81-87.
5. **Guerin, V., F. Lemaire, O. Marfa, R. Caceres and F. Giuffrida**, 2001. Growth of *Viburnum tinus* in Peat-based and Peat-substitute Growing Media. *Scientia Horticulturae*, 89: 129-142.
6. **Hicklenton, P.R., V. Rodd and P.R. Warman**, 2001. The Effectiveness and Consistency of Source Separated Municipal Solid Waste and Bark Composts as Components of Container Growing Media. *Scientia Horticulturae*, 91: 365-378.
7. **Judd, L. K. and D. A. Cox**, 1992. Growth of New Guinea Impatiens Inhibited by High Growth-medium Electrical Conductivity. *HortScience*, 27(11), 1193-1194.
8. **Marfa, O., F. Lemarie, R. Caceres, Giuffrida F. and V. Guerin**, 2002. Relationships between Growing Media Fertility Percolate Composition and Fertigation Strategy in Peat-substitute. *Scientia Horticulturae* ,94: 309-321.
9. **Nencheva, D. and B. Atanassova**, 2018. Influence of Substrate on the Quality of Pot Chrysanthemum CV. Branbeach white. Scientific researches of the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria-Plovdiv, series B. *Natural Sciences and the Humanities*, Vol. VIII, 18.
10. **Ribeiro, H.M., A.M. Romero, H. Pereira, P. Borges, F. Cabral and E. Vaconcelos**, 2007. Evaluation of a Compost Obtained from Forestry Wastes and Solid Phase of Pig Slurry as a Substrate for Seedlings Production. *Bioresource Technology*, 98: 3294-3297.
11. **Tariq, U., S. U. Rehman, M. A. Khan, A. Younis, M. Yaseen and M. Ahsan**, 2012. Agricultural and municipal waste as potting media components for the growth and flowering of *Dahlia hortensis* 'Figaro'. *Turkish Journal of Botany*, 36(4), 378-385.
12. **Treder, J.**, 2008. The Effects of Copeat and Fertilization on the Growth and Flowering of Oriental Lily 'Star Gazer'. *Journal of Fruit and Ornamental Plant Research*, 16, 361-370.
13. **Verdonck, O., D. De Vleeschauwer and R. Penninck**, 1982. Cocofibre Dust, a New Growing Medium for Plants in the Tropics. *Nutrient Film Technique and Substrates*, XXI IHC 133, 215-220.
14. **Younis, A., M. Ahmad, A. Riaz and M. A. Khan**, 2007. Effect of Different Potting Media on Growth and Flowering of *Dahlia coccinia* cv. Mignon. In: Europe-Asia Symposium on Quality Management in Postharvest Systems-Eurasia, 2007 804, pp. 191-196.
15. **Zawadziska, A., P. urawik, P. Salachna and A. Dobrowolska**, 2013. Controlling the Growth and Flowering of Seed-propagated Geranium (*Pelargonium x hortorum* LH Bailey) Cultivated in Two Organic Media. *Electronic Journal of Polish Agricultural Universities*, 16(4), 1-10.

“ ”, 7017 ,

Marketing Strategies and Policies of the Agricultural Sector

Lyubomir Lyubenov

University of Ruse "Angel Kanchev", 7017 Ruse, Bulgaria
-mail: LLyubenov@uni-ruse.bg

Original scientific paper

SUMMARY

- Marketing strategies integrate the activities of researching, creating, maintaining and delivering value to the customer. As a business philosophy, all policies are subordinated to them. By proving long-term competitive advantages they increase customers' loyalty and their lifelong values.

(- Classic marketing policies (product, distribution, communication, pricing) must be modified and supplemented with other policies - integration, technology, position, etc., according to the specifics of the target markets and the objective changes in the business environment.

- Agricultural policies treat marketing primarily as a function, not as an agribusiness philosophy. Most of their tools do not aim at the agricultural markets and they are mainly functional and tactical features in terms of marketing. As a result of objectively occurring changes in all life spheres and technologies, respectively in marketing strategies, there are tendencies to digitalizing of their policies.

- **Key words:** business philosophy, tools, digitalization

INTRODUCTION

- The strategy is a general program (road map) for the development of the economy, regarding the means (resources, tools, etc.) for achieving the long-term goals. All business strategies are market-oriented, i.e. their long-term goals are market-based, which meant that the marketing strategies are the center of the business strategies.

- The policy is the main guideline which includes set of principles, rules and procedures that farms use while they make their own decisions - tactical and strategic. It can concern the economy as a whole and as its individual parts, functions, etc. The strategies can be element of policies, and vice versa - policies can be an element of strategies. At some point they are interconnected and interchangeable.

- The main part of the income of agricultural holdings comes from the markets, and another part from the subsidies. State agricultural policies are protectionist and perceived as a philosophy of agribusiness, but they change under the pressure of globalization and free international trade. Farms are strengthening their market orientation and respectively the marketing as their business philosophy. Marketing strategies are the main tool for achieving the competitiveness and profitability of agribusiness, and the various marketing, agricultural and others policies which have mainly tactical in nature.

- The aim of the research is to study the strategies and policies of agribusiness, in the context of the marketing as business philosophy. According to the main goal, the tasks include analysis of the marketing strategies and tactical tools for their implementation.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

- The marketing is not still an established philosophy of the Bulgarian agribusiness, and the marketing strategies in this context, as main tool of achieving long-term competitiveness and profitability of its industries, find insignificant application. There are not many researches on this problem, and its importance for the economic practice of the Bulgarian agribusiness is huge. The research methods include the complex combination of induction, deduction, grouping, comparison, analysis, synthesis, abstraction, concretization, analogy, modeling, formalization, observation, experimental, mathematical, graphical.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

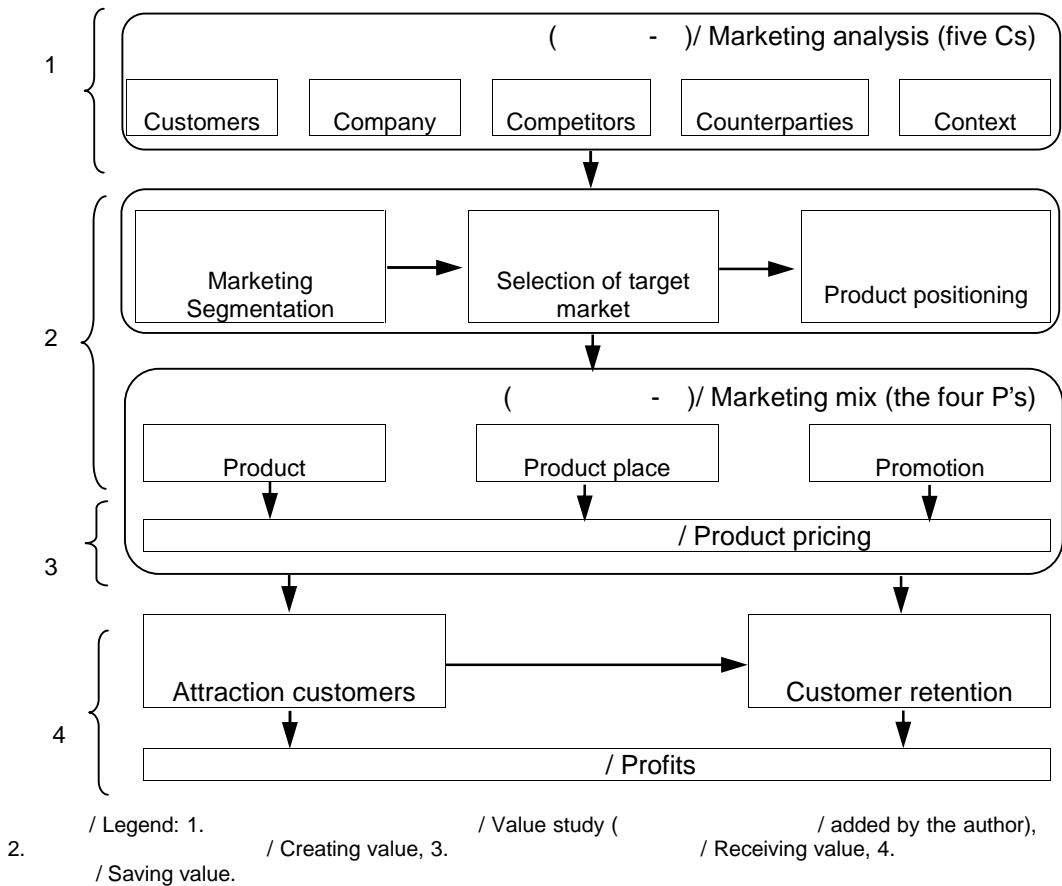
- According to the set goal, the research is focused on the analysis of the tasks with the help of which it will be achieved. Accordingly, the study is structured in several parts - the first one concerns marketing strategies, the second one policies of a tactical nature, through which they will be implemented, and the third their digitalization.

Marketing strategy

- The marketing strategy consists of conceptual frameworks that organizes marketing intentions, providing structure for understanding and analyzing marketing problems and solutions - Figure 1 (Alvin et al., 2008).

- The core of the marketing strategy is market segmentation and the choice of target markets, positioning and marketing policies - product, distribution, communication and pricing. Taking into consideration the broad treatment of marketing, as a philosophy and function of business, strategy, tactics, etc., we will analyze mainly its role as a philosophy of business, when it is leading and all other policies (instruments) have tactical feature.

Many government policies and businesses, however, treat marketing primarily as a function of the business - typical examples are the agricultural policies.



1.
Fig. 1. Diagram of the marketing process

Markets are constantly changing, as are the elements of the business environment (consumers, firms, associates, technology, etc.), which affects the value and introduces significant changes in marketing strategies (Kotler et al., 2003). They are gaining more and more influence over the development of all businesses because they integrate research, creation and delivery of value to customers.

- They form distribution channels according to his preferences. They provide value to farms by forming competitive and profitable prices for their products.

- They provide a profit on the lifetime value of long-term customers by providing more long-term value.

- Any economy that competes in today's customer-driven and technology-driven markets needs to rethink its marketing strategy. It needs to allow continuous creation and provide exceptional value to the customer in the market. This defines the marketing strategy as a leader in the designing and implementing of any business strategy.

- The marketing strategy combines the work of creating and delivering value to the customer, which is why it has a fundamental impact on any business.

- It reveals opportunities for adding new value, effectively creating more promising proposals with new value and using its own agricultural markets, distribution and more. Infrastructure for efficient delivery of new value proposals.

- Marketing strategies provide farms with long-term competitive advantages because they allow cost reduction and product differentiation.

- They can be used to reduce costs with appropriate integration, concentration, specialization and technologies - conventional, biological and others. Innovative products with high added value can be formed, which allow the achievement of differentiation of the target markets according to specific criteria for the consumers - quality, price, etc.

- Marketing strategies allow farms to focus on specific market segments (target markets) where they can achieve long-

(,)

- term competitive advantages by simultaneously reducing costs and differentiating.

()

Marketing policy (tools)

The marketing strategies of the farms are realized tactically through certain marketing tools. The most famous marketing tool is the classic one - also known as the 4Ps from the English words for product, price, place and promotion.

product (), price (),
place () promotion ()

It was developed for industrial products more than half a century ago, when the marketing environment was different from today and there were no Internet and online markets. In addition, it is very difficult to present comprehensively and fully the rich and multifaceted material and spiritual essence of agricultural products.

4

On the other hand, the classic 4Ps toolkit is the basis on which any marketing strategy is based. Therefore, it needs to be modified and supplemented with other tools.

4

The classic marketing toolkit 4Ps is the starting point of marketing policies, because the first marketing policy is the product, and all the others are its derivatives - distribution, communication, pricing and others.

(,)

Product policy covers issues of branding, packaging, innovation and more. The distribution policy is related to the development of the distribution channels and marketing logistics. Communication policy concerns the use of various means of communication (public relations, advertising, sales promotion, personal sales, direct marketing) in order to penetrate and preserve markets. These policies need to ensure competitiveness, and the pricing policy needs also to ensure profitability.

4

The classic 4Ps marketing tools need to be adapted according to the

(productivity and quality),

(Karakasheva and Markova, 2005),

4I (Investigation – Information – Innovation – Integration – performance – , 4 (process – , personality – , positioning –), 4R (Relationships – , Retention – , Referrals – , Recovery –).

(Physical evidence)

specific markets in which the products will be sold. In organizational markets, the promotion tool has an insignificant impact, which is why it can be replaced by productivity and quality, as they allow farms to achieve a larger market share and become more profitable and competitive.

Promotion has an important role for the consumer markets of all products, as a result of which it should be used primarily on them, paying attention to their specific properties.

In tourism the staff has an important role, in biological, conventional and others products - processes, and for new products innovations.

Various tools have proven to be non-traditional elements of marketing tools (Karakasheva and Markova, 2005), as one of the most established and with the greatest possibility of application in the agricultural sector are 4Is (Investigation, Information, Integration, Innovation), 4Ps (Process, Performance, Personality, Positioning), 4Rs (Relationships, Retention, Referrals, Recovery). According to the specifics of the business environment, the products (storage, tangibility, added value, etc.) can be used, etc. marketing tools - Physical evidence, etc.

The 4Is Marketing Toolkit covers investigation, information, integration and innovation. Without these tools, no modern economy and enterprise can achieve competitiveness and profitability, not only in the online but also in offline the markets.

Today, every business, including agriculture, could not survive if it does not study the markets and does not have up-to-date and adequate information about

the markets, the business environment and development trends.

- Integration policy is needed to achieve concentration and cost-effective production and sales. Innovation policy needs to form high value-added regional products that are recognizable and competitive in the markets.

The ability of farms to systematically provide a certain quantity and quality of products are the main means of gaining stable and profitable market positions.

- 4
- This necessitates the use of new 4Ps marketing tools, including processes, execution, individuality and positioning. Processes are a sequence of activities that provide technology, and they guarantee a certain quantity and quality of products. Implementation requires ensuring the desired and promised quality of customers. Individuality allows differentiating regional products from competitors on the basis of region, technology and more. The products that are positioned in the minds of customers are differentiated and recognizable from competitors.

- 4R,
- The establishment of the products on the regional, national and international markets requires the building of lasting relationships with the customers. This can be done through 4Rs-type marketing policies which emphasize on customer relationships and retention, as well as sending clear messages to society and customers and recovery, i.e. rediscovering lost customers.

- Every business without customers is doomed to failure, so you have to fight for their preservation. Therefore, farms would find it difficult to survive without clear messages to customers, without building relationships with them and without

- rebuilding lost customers. These policies, in turn, are related to communications, integration and much more.

- The integration policy is multifaceted and covers not only the organizational and consumer markets, but also entire industries - food and processing industry, trade and others.

- For example, in the beekeeping sector, not only integration with the crop production and tourism is needed, but also with business and end customers, because local markets and short supply chains for regional bee products and high value-added services are being formed.

- Innovation policy is also multifaceted and complex, as it requires the integration of farms with industry and services in order to create new products and their high value-added mixes that are cost-effective, differentiated and competitive in regional, national and global markets.

Agricultural policies

- Historically and globally, the agricultural sector is characterized by the highest degree of state intervention due to many imperfections in agricultural markets and agricultural production - deficits, overproductions, uneven distribution of resources and income, monopolies and others. Agricultural policy is trying to address these weaknesses and create conditions for more efficient use of limited resources and stabilization of agricultural markets and farmers' incomes. In the stage we are at the moment, decisions in the field of national agricultural policies have not only national and regional significance, but also international, as a result of which a number of the above-mentioned problems of the global agricultural markets are formed, which are markets for billions comparable to oil. and energy.

(Lyubenov, 2013).

0,5

7,7

2014-2020

60%

38%,

15%

(Lyubenov and Lyubenova, 2017).

10-16

2020),²

- Agricultural policy covers set of guiding principles, mechanisms and ways of action to regulate relations in agriculture. It is applied by an individual state or economic communities, through state, governmental or community institutions and regulatory framework.
- The EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) aims to increase farmers' incomes from the community through common market organization, subsidies for agricultural production, import and export licenses, a common customs tariff and more. It aims to provide quality food to consumers at reasonable prices, preserve the European heritage in rural areas and protect the environment (Lyubenov, 2013). It covers over 0.5 billion consumers and regulates some of the largest agricultural markets in the world.
- The EU CAP has two poles - the first is direct payments and market support, and the second is rural development. Bulgaria has a financial resource of 7.7 billion euros for the period 2014-2020. Over 60% of these funds are for the first pole, and for the second about 38%, with the possibility of up to 15% of market support funds to be transferred to the second pole (Lyubenov and Lyubenova, 2017). The main part of the funds under the first pole is spent on direct payments per hectare, which are of a revolving nature, and the absorption of funds under the second pole requires the development of projects.
- Rural development is implemented through a program (Capital 10-16 January 2020),² which includes various measures for innovation, small farms, quality schemes, short supply chains, producer organizations, diversification and more.
- Market support is based on a common market organization, which includes an internal part, an external part and general provisions for emergency

(, , . . .) , , . . .)

;

2014-2020

4.

/

9.

16.

(16.1, 16.2 16.4),

measures. The internal part is for market interventions, market rules and producer organizations. The external part concerns trade with third countries (import and export certificates, import duties, management of tariff quotas, export refunds, etc.) and competition and state aid rules.

- The general provisions for emergency measures concern the prevention of market disturbances caused by price volatility or other events; support in case of animal diseases and loss of confidence;
- measures on concerted practices in difficult periods of market imbalances, as well as the use of a reserve in case of crises in the agricultural sector.

- The provisions on producer organizations, associations of producer organizations and inter-branch organizations have been extended to all sectors for 2014-2020. They are financed from the budget of the second pole.

- In certain cases, recognized producer organizations, their associations and recognized inter-branch organizations may obtain permission from the European Commission for temporary measures to stabilize the markets - withdrawal of products from the market or storage by private operators. In the case of support through intervention in the pricing policy, only the intervention prices are preserved and in general the intervention is significantly limited. The EU CAP is gradually reducing the range of direct market intervention instruments.

Some of the measures under the second pole include activities related to the marketing of agricultural products. Measure 4. Investments in tangible assets with sub-measure 4.2 Investments in processing/marketing of agricultural products. Measure 9. Establishment of producer groups and organizations. Measure 16. Cooperation with three sub-measures (16.1, 16.2 and 16.4), which

19.3	19.4),	19. (19.1, 19.2,	<p>cover a European partnership for innovation, development of new products, practices, processes, technologies and short supply chains and local markets. Measure 19. LEADER with four sub-measures (19.1, 19.2, 19.3 and 19.4), which includes preparatory activities, community-led local development strategies, cooperation of local action groups, running costs and promotion of the community local development strategy.</p>
		4.2	<p>Sub-measure 4.2 Investments in processing/marketing of agricultural products which covers the processing, storage, transport, production of new and quality products, incl. and related to short supply chains, the implementation of good manufacturing practices, quality management systems and preparation for certification, achieving compliance with EU standards, bearing the costs of trademark registration.</p>
		9.	<p>Measure 9. Establishment of producer groups and organizations requires a business plan in which one or more of the following activities must be planned - adaptation of production to market requirements, joint sales on the market, establishment of common rules for production information, skills for economic and commercial activity.</p>
		16.1	<p>Sub-measure 16.1 Support for the formation and functioning of operational groups within the European Innovation Partnership is for innovative projects related to the production, processing and/or marketing of agricultural products.</p>
		16.2	<p>Sub-measure 16.2 Support for pilot projects and for the development of new products, practices, processes and technologies, concerns newly established clusters in which independent enterprises are grouped, including newly established small, medium and large enterprises, as well as advisory bodies and/or research organizations.</p>

16.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sub-measure 16.4 Support for horizontal and vertical cooperation between the actors in the supply chain is for the formation of associations for short supply chains and associations for local markets.
19.	<p>Measure 19. LEADER is for community-led local development. Its sub-measures are for the formation and establishment of public-private partnerships, trainings for local stakeholders, site studies and consultation with the local community in connection with the preparation of the strategy.</p> <p>Establishment of Local Initiative Groups (LIGs), preparation and implementation of activities for internal territorial and transnational cooperation of LIGs - between territories in two or more Member States or with territories in third countries. Ongoing costs for LIG management in the implementation of the community-led local development strategy related to monitoring and evaluation, as well as its promotion to support the exchange of information between stakeholders.</p> <p>The considered measures encourage the cooperation and integration of the small beekeeping and other farms in the agricultural and food chain.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage the organization of the food chain, improve their competitiveness as primary producers through better integration into the agricultural and food chain through safety and quality schemes, innovation and added value to agricultural products, promotion of local markets and short supply chains, groups and producer organizations. - The EU CAP also provides opportunities for better information provision of farms, financing of large-scale communication campaigns, price interventions, reducing the volatility of agricultural markets, diversification of farms.

The rest of the RDP measures are aimed at supporting small farms, subsidizing the production of conventional and organic agricultural products, protecting the environment and biological resources of economic importance, improving energy efficiency, developing rural tourism and crafts, improving infrastructure and living conditions in rural areas, increasing farm incomes, etc.

Although they cover diverse sectors and have economic, social, environmental and other effects, they are not targeted at specific agricultural markets and therefore have a weak and indirect relationship to the marketing of agricultural products. Some of the measures require the development of a business plan, but not marketing strategies.

Despite the strategic importance of the agricultural sector for each country and also for human existence, in the last three decades Bulgaria has not pursued an active agrarian policy, but only follows various models imposed from outside and tied to certain reforms and funding. Upon our entering to the EU, the model of the common agricultural policy of the EU was copied, it is developed for the conditions of traditional European family farming, which is very different from the structure of our agriculture. All this has led to uneven development of the agricultural sector in Bulgaria and forms severe imbalances - a boom in the development of grain production and a catastrophic state of certain sectors of animal husbandry, production of vegetables, fruits, depopulation of rural areas and others.

Although the main part of farmers' incomes comes from agricultural markets, most of them are focusing on absorbing more subsidies rather than better market sales.

One of the reasons for this is that the

- main part of agricultural holdings are micro, i.e. much weaker than processing and trading companies, which is why they cannot achieve profitability and competitiveness in sales.

Another reason is that, conceptually, the EU CAP and national agricultural policies treat marketing primarily as a function and not as an agribusiness philosophy.

- Their objectives are numerous, diverse and predominantly non-market, and the instruments used are aimed at covering many sectors.

Digitalization of the policies (tools)

The rapid development of the digital technologies in the new millennium is dynamizing the development of online markets. It requires the construction of a new digital infrastructure (software and hardware) for information transfer, payments, collection, systematization and analysis of Big Data. Accordingly, measure 7. Basic services and renewal of villages in rural areas under the RDP 2014-2020 provides investment opportunities under sub-measure 7.3.

- Creation, improvement and expansion of broadband infrastructure. It allows, on the one hand, municipalities in rural areas to digitize some of their services, and on the other hand, it provides such opportunities to the farms themselves. Access to markets and opportunities for more cost-effective sales is improving.

Despite the blurring trends between offline and online markets, the latter require new marketing tools. The Internet and digital technologies have made marketing even faster and more focused.

- PR has become more diverse and offers more publicity through the Internet. As a result of digital transformations, communication policy and its main tools

Synergy – , System –).

(Solution),

?

„click“.

(Access),

(Value),

(Education),

(Scope)

(Synergy)

The focus should be on the Solution, instead of the product. In the first place is the consumer along with his needs and requirements, not the product.

What matters to consumers is whether the product offers a solution to their problems.

Therefore, when developing a new product, the first question that needs to be answered is what are the needs and problems of consumers and how to meet them? If a solution is found, consumers will be satisfied.

Regardless of their location, consumers can reach their products with a single click. Location no longer matters, but the Access they have. It is not just about an online store, but about communication and feedback channels through which the user can contact directly and build trust.

An emphasis is on Value instead of price. When a product has high value for consumers, they tend to pay a much higher price for it.

The traditional marketing mix relies on price, not value, although the latter is its basis. In highly competitive online markets, price is simply a formal measure, and is far from sufficient.

Through various communication channels - website, blog, social networks, etc., companies receive information about their users, and vice versa. Consumers are informed about everything that happens with the product - updates, innovations, new models, etc., as a result of which they build trust with the brand. The focus should be on Education, instead of promotion.

The Scope determines the main strategic issues for the web presence and the strategic role of the site, the scope of online markets, the behaviour of potential customers. Synergy provides integration of Internet activities with marketing

(System)

(Site)

(Product)
(Place)

(Promotion)

(Price),

activities, integration of the site with external media, partners, etc., in a comprehensive marketing strategy.

The system includes communication technologies, hardware, software, network infrastructure, site administration, payment system, web traffic monitoring and brand presence. The synergy between all elements and the integration of business processes, technologies and media into an overall marketing strategy is key to achieving competitiveness.

The Website can be a corporate website, an Internet store, an online platform aggregating services or goods, as well as a standalone mobile application for services. The site is a global ambassador of goods and services in the online space. It fits very well into the classic 4P marketing tools.

The Product can be the website, and the Place corresponds to the well-established links and partner networks, where the website connects the products and services offered in it, with an additional audience. The website communicates globally, presenting prices and promoting promotions to customers, allowing price comparisons, interactive and personalized communication.

CONCLUSIONS

As a result of the study of marketing strategies and policies of the agricultural sector, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- marketing strategies are holistic because they integrate the activities of researching, creating, maintaining and delivering value to the customer, incl. and individual benefits. As a business philosophy, all policies are subordinated to them. They allow cost-effective and long-lasting accommodation in the markets because they increase customers, loyalty and their lifetime value.

- 4I (Investigation, Information, Integration, Innovation), 4P (process, performance, personality, positioning), 4R (Relationships, Retention, Referrals, Recovery)

- agrarian policies pursue numerous, diverse and largely non-market goals, which give rise to many targeted conflicts. They treat marketing primarily as a function, not as an agribusiness philosophy. Therefore, some of their tools are mainly functional and tactical in terms of marketing agro products. Most of the instruments are not aimed at agricultural markets, which is why they have a weak and indirect relationship to the marketing strategies of specific sectors.
- as a result of technological transformations, the tools of the classic marketing mix 4P become more innovative, more dynamic, more diverse and accelerated, less expensive, more personalized and targeted, more precise, respectively and more effective. The Internet is accelerating and expanding the scope of traditional 4P marketing tools. There are tendencies to digitize the policies (tools) of marketing strategies.
- online markets require the use of new marketing tools such as SAVE (Solution, Access, Value, Education), 4S (Scope, Site, Synergy, System) and others. It provides synergy and integration of all business processes with customers. Digital tools are more interactive, more personalized, more targeted, more accurate, more economical, more measurable, i.e. more efficient and more promising.

SAVE (Solution, Access, Value, Education), 4S (Scope, Site, Synergy, System)

- They provide farms with long-term competitive advantages.
- • the classic marketing toolkit 4P should be modified and supplemented with other tools such as 4I (Investigation, Information, Integration, Innovation), 4P (process, performance, personality, positioning), 4R (Relationships, Retention, Referrals, Recovery) and others, according to the specifics of the target markets and the objectively occurring changes in the business environment.
- • agrarian policies pursue numerous, diverse and largely non-market goals, which give rise to many targeted conflicts. They treat marketing primarily as a function, not as an agribusiness philosophy. Therefore, some of their tools are mainly functional and tactical in terms of marketing agro products. Most of the instruments are not aimed at agricultural markets, which is why they have a weak and indirect relationship to the marketing strategies of specific sectors.
- • as a result of technological transformations, the tools of the classic marketing mix 4P become more innovative, more dynamic, more diverse and accelerated, less expensive, more personalized and targeted, more precise, respectively and more effective. The Internet is accelerating and expanding the scope of traditional 4P marketing tools. There are tendencies to digitize the policies (tools) of marketing strategies.
- • online markets require the use of new marketing tools such as SAVE (Solution, Access, Value, Education), 4S (Scope, Site, Synergy, System) and others. It provides synergy and integration of all business processes with customers. Digital tools are more interactive, more personalized, more targeted, more accurate, more economical, more measurable, i.e. more efficient and more promising.

