Achieving Regional Competitiveness via Export Opportunities and Quality Systems of Serbian Agri-Food Clusters

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This particular scientific research paper collected and presented information on the export opportunities of agricultural and food products and analyzed the performance of some clusters and associations within the industry and their branches, which operate in the territory of the Republic of Serbia and its region. As part of this scientific research paper, producers were examined via descriptive analysis in detail within the clusters in the agricultural and food production, their problems, and business opportunities they encounter in the domestic and foreign markets. Quality management systems ISO (hereafter, Quality System—QS) and the manner in which they connect all of these food items of the food industry were also examined via the descriptive analysis in this paper. A case study analysis (hereafter, case-analysis) was carried on the two clusters, the association and on their survival in the domestic market. Since until now clusters Pecos, Sombor’s Farmsteads and the Serbian Association of growers and winemakers have not been analyzed in this manner. The work on the processing of data about them, their establishment, strategies, plans and objectives, was a real challenge. The organization, operations, plans, opportunities, objectives, and obstacles of all three participants in this case analysis were examined using organizational maps, SWOT analysis, and their future plans. This paper aimed to review few relevant economical segments, each with its strengths and weaknesses, and rather than splitting them to fit into analytical categories, it sought to retain focus on entire segments. Therefore the paper is divided in economical instead of analytical categories. Of course, some of these segments clearly fall into one of the categories inside SWOT analyses. Their case analysis managed to make a good cross-section of agricultural production and food industry through its branches within which these clusters operate. These branches are baking, wine, organic food production, dairy industry, and ethnic tourism. In the continuation, the influence of the state on the development of these clusters was examined. In that way is illustrated how it is when a state with its diverse roles, tries to help the cluster development of agri-food industry in practice, and what is there to do. In this way a complete picture of the clusters in the agriculture and food industry was gained, which as an important branch of agriculture plays an important role in the present and future development of the Serbian transition economy.

Keywords: agribusiness, agri-food sector/industry, case-analysis, competitiveness, economic clusters, macro and micro levels, quality system (QS)