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# Methodological Approaches to the Formation of Optimal Systems for Promotion of Agricultural Food Products to Foreign Markets in the Conditions of Digitalization of the Economy

#### Introduction

The problem of promoting (selling) goods to foreign markets is given a lot of attention by scientists and practitioners from different countries. Among foreign researchers are F. Bortolotti, P. Drakker, A. Deyan, A. Troadek, L. Troadek, M. Hesselink, who linked the effectiveness of sales with the chosen policy of promoting products to the market; G. D. Bolt, A. Marshall, K. M. Schmitthoff, who established the essence of the category "sales" from the point of view of the theory of marginal utility; J. Bowersox, M. Christopher, Ch. Futvell, S. Lofberg, who developed methodological approaches to assessing the efficiency of product supply based on logistics; G. Assel E. Coughlan, F. Kotler, T. Levit, J. O'Shaughnessy, J. Sachs, L. V. Shtern, A. I. El-Ansari, E. T. Koflan, A. Weissman, D. Westwood, who formulated the category "sales" as a marketing function and revealed the influence of certain organizational and economic factors on the choice of channels product promotion.

Many problems of the development of sales relations abroad are reflected in the studies of Russian scientists, including G. G. Abramishvili, D. I. Barkan, E. P. Golubkov, S. V. Kiselev, V. A. Klyukach, V. I. Nazarenko, V. M. Purlik, E. V. Serova and others. This made it possible to significantly develop the theoretical basis of marketing activities, substantiate its importance in creating an effective agro-industrial production (conceptual provisions of sales policy, types and directions of commodity circulation, economic methods of regulating trade activities, etc.).

Various aspects of the formation of a system of sales and promotion of goods on the market are also contained in the works of Belarusian scientists. In agrarian economic science, these questions have been and are being investigated by M. S. Baigot A. E. Daineko, N. V. Kireyenka and others. However, the authors pay attention only to certain forms of building sales abroad, for example, commercial activity in the world market through a trade and intermediary link, without considering the concept of a commodity distribution network complex.

The article considers methodological approaches to the formation of systems for the promotion of agri-food products to foreign markets, based on the models of the agro-industrial complex organization entering foreign markets. Their advantages and disadvantages are substantiated according to the criteria: "volume

of financial costs", "degree of control". Marketing and logistics promotion systems based on sales integration and cooperation presented. In the context of the digitalization of the economy, models of commercial intermediation in world agricultural practice have been substantiated and principles have been developed for the formation of optimal systems for the promotion of agri-food products to foreign markets.

#### Materials and methods

The research methodology includes the following positions:

- 1) the purpose of the article is to substantiate methodological approaches to the formation of optimal systems for the promotion of agri-food products to foreign markets in the context of the digitalization of the economy;
  - 2) research objectives:
- to substantiate the methodological approaches to the formation of promotion systems based on the models of the agro-industrial complex organization entering foreign markets;
- to highlight their positive sides and shortcomings when implemented in practice according to the criteria: "volume of financial costs", "degree of control":
- analyze marketing and logistics promotion systems based on sales integration and cooperation;
- to substantiate the stages of evolution of models of commercial intermediation in the world agricultural practice;
- to develop principles for the formation of optimal systems for the promotion of agri-food products to foreign markets;
- 3) the theoretical basis of the study is the fundamental development of domestic and foreign scientists to improve the efficiency of agro-industrial production, develop a system for promoting agricultural raw materials, products and food, the use of marketing tools in the agro-industrial complex. Monographic, comparative-comparative and abstract-logical research methods were used.

### **Results**

The study of scientific works of domestic and foreign authors made it possible to single out the following methodological approaches to the formation of systems for the promotion of agri-food products, based on models of the exit of the agro-industrial complex organization to foreign markets:

- 1) export;
- 2) cooperative;
- 3) hierarchical.

The export model (the main and most common form) allows entities to avoid large amounts of financial costs for the creation of production facilities in another country. However, its main disadvantages include the following: 1) it is quite vulnerable to changes in the external environment (especially to political and economic situations); 2) may turn out to be economically unprofitable if in other countries it is possible to produce goods at significantly lower costs; 3) when implementing it, the organization may face rather high costs of transporting its goods to another country, as well as high customs duties.

The cooperative model makes it possible to reduce the risks from many tariff and non-tariff barriers to the export model of the agro-industrial complex entities entering the external market. In this context, joint business activity is understood as an association with foreign companies for the purpose of producing or marketing goods. This form of cooperation, in contrast to export, presupposes that the company has a foreign partner, as well as certain production facilities are created abroad.

However, the cooperative model has the following disadvantages:

- does not allow organizations of the agro-industrial complex to fully control the production and sale of its goods in the foreign market;
- the licensor sells a license to manufacture his unique product. It is important for the licensor to control the quality of his goods, but the licensing model deprives him of this opportunity. As a result of the licensor's activities, the quality of the product may decrease, which will affect the company's reputation and jeopardize its further development in the market;
- there is a risk of infringement of intellectual property rights, the risk that the licensor will become its competitor by misappropriating technology.

The hierarchical form is based on a direct investment strategy and provides the agro-industrial complex with the deepest penetration into foreign markets. The production of the product is located abroad, however, unlike the cooperative form, it provides the subject with full control over the activities of a new enterprise in another country. However, this approach can only be used by large organizations, since its implementation requires large financial resources.

To implement this model, much more financial resources are required compared to other models of entering foreign markets. Careful preparation is also required, since all the risks associated with its implementation and the further functioning of the new enterprise lie entirely with the company itself. Along with this, when setting up a subsidiary in another country, the firm also needs to know the specifics of local regulation, legislation, investment climate and business environment. Cultural factors play an important role in entering foreign markets, therefore, company management (especially employees working on the project site) needs to communicate effectively with local staff.

In addition to this, we have compared the identified methodological approaches to the formation of a promotion policy based on an assessment of financial resources and the degree of control necessary to implement the strategy of models for an entity's entry into foreign markets.

Thus, the export model is the simplest one, for the implementation of which minimal investment is required. However, the organization has practically no control over the sale of its goods abroad. The next stage of internationalization is the cooperative form, which provides broad control and requires a large amount of financial costs. The highest degree of an entity's penetration into the foreign market is a hierarchical form, the implementation of which is based on large investments and full control over the activities of its foreign enterprise.

In practice, countries use integrated systems for promoting agricultural products to the domestic and foreign markets, which are characterized by a variety of organizational, structural and organizational and technological approaches to their creation and functioning. The most common are marketing and logistics distribution networks based on various types of sales integration and cooperation:

- 1) vertical distribution channels for food products include a manufacturer, one or more wholesalers, and retail intermediaries;
- 2) participants in horizontal systems carry out joint purchases of goods, cooperation on assortment (cross-delivery), location, risk protection (payment for security services), advertising, etc.;
- 3) multichannel networks include direct deliveries (zero-level channels), own distribution networks (regional, international), all types of intermediaries (wholesale, retail, agents, dealers, distributors).

Considering the variety of forms of intersectoral interaction and economic relations in the agro-industrial complex in foreign countries, distinguish the following groups of marketing cooperation:

- 1) a system of vertical integration in the form of industrial and commercial corporations that occupy a dominant position in the food markets. Received preferential development in the agro-industrial complex of the USA and Great Britain;
- 2) a cooperative approach, which is the main one in the organization of agro-industrial production (Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland);
- 3) cooperative and corporate structures in combination with state methods of regulating the food market (France, Japan, etc.).

The experience of developed countries shows that modern marketing and logistics management of flow processes can save up to 15-20% of the total costs of production and delivery of goods to consumers, and also leads to a reduction in: transport costs — by 7-20%; the cost of loading and unloading operations, storage of material resources and finished products — 15-30%.

In addition, the turnover of material resources is accelerated by 20-40%, and stocks are reduced by 50-100% [60]. Due to logistics in the EU countries, 20-25% of GDP is formed, in the member states of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) -10-12% of GDP (transport sector -7-8% of GDP). At the same time, the share of logistics costs in the final cost of products in the EAEU countries averages 20-25%, and in some cases reaches 35%. The global average is 11%, China 14, EU 11, US and Canada 10%.

The practice of foreign countries shows that the higher the level of development of agricultural and food production and the more complex the structure of economic ties in the agricultural business, the more significant is the role of commercial intermediation. The study of various methodological approaches to the formation of these models in the field of agro-industrial complex allowed us to identify several stages of their development in foreign countries (Table 1).

 $\begin{tabular}{ll} Table 1 \\ \hline Evolution of development of models of commercial intermediation \\ \hline in world agricultural practice \\ \hline \end{tabular}$ 

Stage (period)	The essence of the model of commercial intermediation in the agro-industrial complex
1	2
Stage I (1950s)	1) Trade in food and related goods was carried out by a significant number of small shops in private ownership, as well as by large trade organizations of a universal type, which were located in megacities; 2) the supply was provided by small wholesalers; 3) the development of the system of wholesale marketing of agricultural products was based on taking into account the needs of wholesale and retail buyers
Stage II (early 1960s)	1) The development of a network of small stores belonged to large trading companies that united a financial partner, industrialist or wholesaler; 2) the emergence of a new type of networks was based on a voluntary agreement; 3) the first self-service supermarkets appeared on the outskirts of cities; 4) the increase in the competitiveness of the wholesale system was due to the development of warehouse infrastructure and the provision of high-quality service
Stage III (mid 1960s)	1) Large trade and procurement bases were created, the management of which was based on the use of computer technologies; 2) large supermarkets were opened, functioning as branches in various regions; 3) hypermarkets (stores with an area of over 3,000 m²) appeared, combining the functions of wholesale and retail trade

1	2
Stage IV (early 1970s)	1) The number of supermarket associations as the main link in the whole-sale trade has increased; 2) centralized purchases were supplemented by automated control systems at all stages of commodity circulation; 3) associations of large, medium and small entrepreneurs were created, operating in the field of wholesale and retail trade in agricultural products
Stage V (second half of the 1970s)	1) Processes of interpenetration and absorption of trade organizations developed; 2) the horizontal merger of business in the agricultural sector prevailed, that is, the combination of two companies offering agricultural products, which provided increased development opportunities and reduced competition
Stage VI (from the early 1980s to the beginning of the 21st century)	1) Discount stores are widespread, offering a limited selection of goods at low prices; 2) introduced automated databases for the processing of goods and improving the level of service at wholesalers; 3) the practice of creating their own food industry in trade organizations was spreading; 4) corporate trading networks were actively developing on the basis of a single trade mark; 5) distributors provided customers with a wide range of different services: product labeling, lending, assistance in organizing inventory, information services, financial support for advertising campaigns, etc.
Stage VII (from the beginning of the 21st century to the present)	1) Vertical integration is becoming widespread, with the help of which commodity producers try to control their market share by acquiring intermediary companies; 2) the chain trading companies include distribution centers that do not carry out independent procurement activities, but ensure the formation of a universal trade assortment for the uninterrupted supply of supermarkets; 3) distribution centers are created as independent wholesale companies; 4) networks of stores and warehouses using cash and carry technology and wholesale and retail structures for trade in specific groups of goods are expanding; 5) purchasing centers are being created under associations of retail trade organizations, consumer cooperatives, large independent supermarkets and hypermarkets; 6) electronic commerce, electronic trading platforms, Internet resources are developing

In recent years, the share of wholesale trade in the sale of goods in developed countries has increased from 25% to 40–45%. At the same time, if in England about 25% of retail turnover passes through wholesale intermediary links, then in the USA (due to the large territory) this figure is about 50%. Since the beginning of the 21st century, with the development of information technologies and Internet resources, electronic commerce tools began to be actively used: "business buyer", or B2C (relationship between a seller and a buyer using an electronic store); Business-to-business, or B2B. New principles of agricultural business in the digital economy are presented in Table 2.

 $\begin{tabular}{ll} \it Table 2 \\ \it New principles for the formation of models of agricultural business \\ \it in the digital economy \\ \end{tabular}$ 

Agricultural business model	Principles of model formation
Agrarian economy (market = agricultural products, food)	<ul> <li>The determining factor is agricultural and food production;</li> <li>barrier — physical distribution (sale of agricultural products and food, storage, transportation);</li> <li>barrier — lack of investment in the agro-industrial complex;</li> <li>innovative ideas are kept secret;</li> <li>economic relations are determined by the human qualities of the parties to the contract</li> </ul>
	- Determining factors — knowledge and attitudes; - electronic distribution — a new barrier; - investment is a common commodity; - innovative ideas become public knowledge; - economic relations can be established in an electronic (virtual) environment
Digital economy (market space = electronic commerce)	Benefits of running an agricultural business using e-commerce channels:  — development of new export markets at the lowest cost;  — a clear targeting filter, offering a product to your target audience;  — the ability to send goods from anywhere in the world through logistics channels;  — convenient collection of analytical information about consumers;  — expanding the audience — the product is available to all consumers;  — on-line monitoring of changes in demand and consumer attitude to the product

In accordance with the proposed principles, the advantages of running an agricultural business using e-commerce channels are:

- 1) developing new export markets at the lowest cost;
- 2) a clear targeting filter, offering a product to your target audience;
- 3) the ability to send goods from anywhere in the world through logistics channels:
  - 4) convenient collection of analytical information about consumers;
  - 5) expanding the audience the product is available to all consumers;
- 6) on-line monitoring of changes in demand and consumer attitudes towards the product.

The most relevant approaches to the formation of agricultural distribution networks at the present stage is the use of electronic trading platforms (marketplaces). The analysis showed that there are a significant number of them in the world, but the most famous are:

1) Alibaba.com is the largest B2B marketplace, targeting not only China, but the whole world, allowing importers and exporters to exchange business information, wholesale goods using company profiles and product listings, and offer integrated software business management software.

Business forms:

- the site is an online showcase where the buyer and the seller find each other. Communication and fixing of the transaction is carried out in any convenient format;
- Alibaba.com does not regulate the method of payment and delivery of goods, allowing the seller to be flexible, and does not take additional commissions for transactions. Has its own electronic payment system Alipay;
- the main clients of the site are manufactures, trade organizations or intermediaries making large purchases.

Competitive advantages are the ability to use various sales channels for products, each of which reaches its own audience of buyers and has unique advantages:

- classic search engine. The buyer, by keywords, selects the offers he needs;
- exchange of public inquiries. Through this service, buyers place a public application, and suppliers select requests of interest and send offers;
- contextual advertising to attract buyers who send search queries to Google, Yandex, YouTube, Yahoo, Facebook;
  - only legal entities can register as a seller on the site;
- 2) eBay.com is one of the largest and most popular online marketplaces in the world. eBay was originally an auction site, but now more than 80% of the items listed in the eBay catalog are sold at a fixed price.

**Business forms:** 

C2C/B2C- own store or a single presentation of goods; auctions (an ad form where the user who made the highest bid becomes the buyer of the product).

Features of doing business:

- the site provides for the use of tools to increase sales: a) placing a standard ad; b) additional ad parameters; c) advertisements; d) fees for additional services;
- the seller may be charged fees for additional services: postal labels printed on eBay; refunds paid by eBay to the customer, or fees associated with eBay programs in which you participate. Depending on the amount paid and at eBay's discretion, these fees may be billed to the seller and paid using an automatic payment method (if you have configured one);
- Belarusian companies can only use a private account registered to an individual. The system of the international platform does not allow registering a Belarusian legal entity for foreign export trade. To start selling overseas, you need to register a private account to create an eBay account and link your PayPal account for individuals to it. In this case, the prices of goods will be indicated in foreign currency;
- 3) Amazon is one of the largest and most popular online marketplaces in the world. Has a global English-language platform and regional sites in local languages. Amazon service covers 34 product categories, incl. e-books, consumer electronics, toys, sporting goods, household goods, food, etc. The organization has branches outside the United States: Brazil, Canada, Great Britain, Germany, Japan, France, Italy, Spain, India and China. Since 2012, Amazon has been offering warehouse space for sellers. There is a possibility of temporary freezing of the account.

**Business forms:** 

C2C/B2C — there are two options for doing business on Amazon:

- sell your goods using the Amazon FBA (Fulfillment By Amazon) program, trading through Amazon warehouses;
  - do everything yourself (MF Seller), trade from the seller's warehouse. Features of doing business:

FBA allows you to automate your business as much as possible and takes on most of the work:

- a) the seller creates a product page with its description (it will start broadcasting on the site only when the product is in the Amazon warehouse);
- b) the seller provides a number of necessary preparatory steps to send the goods to the Amazon warehouse in accordance with all the requirements;
- c) the goods arrive at the warehouse, they are unpacked and accepted for storage;
  - d) the product page becomes visible to potential buyers on Amazon;

- e) the "Prime" mark appears on the product page, which increases its attractiveness to the buyer;
  - f) the buyer orders the product on Amazon;
  - g) warehouse workers send the purchased goods to the buyer;
  - h) the buyer receives the product in two days.

The FBM program provides for more independent work. First of all, it is necessary to post information about the product on the Amazon website, the page immediately becomes active. After receiving the order from the buyer, it is necessary to pack and send the goods. This scheme assumes independent planning of sending the goods and delivery — the seller himself chooses the courier service or post office, is responsible for all stages of interaction with the buyer;

4) Indiamart.com — B2C and B2B platform was founded in 1996 in the Indian city of Noida. 2.2 million suppliers registered on the website and approximately 2.6 million buyers from 200 countries of the world.

The form of doing business is an advertising catalog of goods.

Features of doing business: opening a basic account and listing products on the site are free of charge. There is also a paid membership — Mini Dynamic Catalog (\$762 per year) and Maximiser (\$915 per year, includes a website with a personalized domain, adding up to 400 products, a site control panel, promotion on IndiaMART, TrustSEAL);

5) Tradekey.com — the company was founded in 2005 in the city of Riyadh (Saudi Arabia). The global B2B platform also deals with digital marketing and industrial exhibitions. Customers are mainly from the USA, Europe and the Middle East.

The form of doing business is an advertising catalog of goods.

Features of doing business:

Membership types — Silver key (\$550 per year), Goldkey Basic (1,200), Goldkey Advanced (1,599) and Goldkey Plus (3,500), includes the provision of premium product placement in the segment of interest to the buyer; priority listing; services that combine customer requests and supplier capabilities; high quality inquiries; 24/7 advertising around the world; unique logo for each supplier.

A system of bonus points is used on the site. They accumulate depending on the number of supply requests: the more deals, the more bonuses. The number of bonuses affects customer confidence. When you buy the most expensive account, three thousand bonuses will be automatically credited to your account (from ordinary suppliers -200-300);

6) Epinduo is the largest platform for the sale of Russian food products in China, which includes a network of retail stores and electronic trading platforms. Epinduo translated from Chinese means "many Russian goods";

7) The Velikaya wholesale and retail marketplace is a project of the Victoria group of companies (http://foodmarkets.ru/firms/topic/61039), which is the leader in the wholesale grocery market.

Victoria is the largest distributor, importer and manufacturer of food products. The company cooperates with food brands: Parmalat, Pechagin, Yug Rusi, NMZhK, Pikanta, SOVOK, Cargill Russia, KZhK, Mistral, 5 Morey, MZhK, Bunge, etc. It has its own outlets in the largest markets and agricultural clusters of Moscow: Velozavodsky market, Bukhta shopping center, FOOD CITY ORPTs;

8) Sima Land is the largest wholesale company in Russia, established in 2001, which sells more than 600,000 different food products, goods for home, work and leisure. Major customers: small and large wholesalers, retail chains and simple retail customers. Large online store + hypermarket.

Thus, the achievement of the set goals regarding the effective promotion of domestic products to foreign markets largely depends on the level of organization of the TPN and the establishment of more acceptable forms of foreign trade operations. This means that the production of products from the very beginning is guided by specific sales areas, the most favorable conditions. Therefore, the development of a promotion policy is aimed at determining the optimal directions and means necessary to ensure the highest efficiency of the process of selling goods. This presupposes a reasonable choice of organizational forms of TPN subjects, focused on achieving the intended final results.

#### Discussion

In this section, we present a critical analysis of the results obtained. So, adhering to the export model, F. Bortolotti identifies the following main forms of promoting goods abroad [1, p. 260–265]: 1) sale to exporters in the country where the manufacturer is located (for further resale); 2) direct sales to foreign customers: a) at fairs, exhibitions, b) a foreign buyer with his own distribution network or who wants to include the manufacturer's product in his own assortment and sell it under his own brand; 3) using the services of intermediaries selling competing products, as well as agents and distributors, dealerships and marketing joint ventures; 4) selling through a distribution system that takes control of the local retailer's network: franchising. At the same time, the author does not single out clear criteria that would serve as the basis for such a division of TPN subjects abroad. However, in our opinion, such an approach can be carried out based on factors such as the manufacturer's ability to pursue its own sales policy, as well as create an actual permanent presence abroad.

According to I. V. Vorobyova, K. Pezoldat, S. F. Sutyrin, depending on the distribution of financial resources, cooperative forms are expediently divided

into: 1) forms without capital transfer (licensing, franchising, etc.); 2) forms with capital transfer (joint venture) [9]. In turn, K. M. Schmittgoff offers the following forms [7, p. 131]: a) the conclusion of an agreement on exclusive marketing, license or franchise agreement with a foreign importer; b) appointing his representative as the exclusive agent abroad or offering his foreign clients to use the services of a commission firm; c) creation of your own marketing organization (with or without legal entity rights) in another country by establishing a branch or branch or investment (purchase of a foreign enterprise with business operations in the desired country or established sales market); d) opening a joint venture with a firm abroad in various ways.

The criteria for such a division follow from a detailed description of each subject, where the main aspect is proximity to the final consumer (buyer). In the first case, the manufacturer does not enter into a relationship with a foreign consumer, in the second, as a rule, he works with a foreign buyer (often on his own behalf through an agent). In the third form, having established a branch or branch in another country, the manufacturer, bypassing intermediaries, establishes sales relations with the consumer directly (creates his own marketing organization). At the same time, according to K. M. Schmitgoff, the construction of a TPN by means of creating a joint venture stands out separately [7, p. 131].

According to D. I. Barkan [2], A. Daineko, D. Beresnev [3], V. Gusakov [4], N. V. Kireyenka [5], S. V. Kiselev [6], E. V. Serova [8] the hierarchical model of the agro-industrial complex organizations entering foreign markets can be implemented by using the following strategies and forms:

- 1) buy, take over an existing business, forms takeover (acquisition), merger;
- 2) build a new company "from scratch", forms creation of a subsidiary, strategic alliances.

### Conclusion

At the present stage of the world economy, in which the degree of trade and economic relations within the framework of integration processes, the development of information and communication technologies, transport routes is at a high level, the national borders of countries are becoming conditional, a single global market is being formed. The accelerating process of internationalization of business entities leads to the fact that the problem of developing a strategy for promoting products to foreign target markets is becoming more and more urgent. It is the entry of a subject to the external market that is a natural reaction to market conditions, as well as a means of adapting to a changing external environment and ensuring long-term competitive advantages in the global economy.

It has been established that in modern conditions of global competition, the sources of increasing the efficiency and further development of the export of the agro-industrial complex are not goods, markets or sales channels taken separately, but specific combinations of "product — sales channel — target market segment". The study of world experience made it possible to substantiate methodological approaches to the formation of systems for the promotion of agri-food products to foreign markets, based on models of the exit of the agro-industrial complex organization to foreign markets (export, cooperative, hierarchical), as well as to systematize the main types of marketing and logistics systems based on various types of marketing integration and cooperation. In addition, the stages of development of models of commercial intermediation in world practice are highlighted, as well as new principles for the formation of models of agricultural business in the digital economy, which made it possible to substantiate the competitive advantages of e-commerce channels and the most common electronic trading platforms (marketplaces).

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