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MONOGRAPH REVIEW

FOOD VALUE CHAIN: SERBIA'S ACHIEVEMENTS IN ADDING VALUE TO AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD PRODUCTS

(Lanac vrednosti hrane: dostignuća Srbije u dodavanju vrednosti poljoprivredno prehrambenim proizvodima)

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Monograph published by the Institute of Agricultural Economics (IAE), Belgrade, Serbia, 2023. (128 pages)

The monograph *“Food Value Chain: Serbia's Achievements in Adding Value to Agricultural and Food Products”*, authored by Vesna Paraušić, Ph.D. was published in 2023. by the Institute of Agricultural Economics in Belgrade. In this monograph, author highlights an important and complex issue of Serbian agriculture - insufficient attention paid by agricultural producers to processing and adding value to agricultural products, i.e. improving the quality of agricultural products, while respecting environmental, quality and food safety standards. The reasons for this situation can be partly found in the unfavorable age structure of Serbia's rural population, where the most inhabitants are in their seventies. This limits the introduction of innovation and creativity in production, resulting in reliance on traditional but unprofitable methods. While there are exceptions to this practice, they should be more widespread. Addressing this issue is the primary goal of research presented in mentioned monograph, which the author explains in a concise and clear manner.

Monograph is divided into three thematic sections. The first chapter presents the concept of value chains and supply chains in the food sector. It particularly emphasizes the experiences of the European Union, where, as the author notes, sustainability and fairness are key priorities. Improving farmers' positions in the product value chain is one of the strategic goals of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) for the 2023-2027. period. To achieve this, the CAP emphasizes the need to increase market transparency, encourage various forms of farmer cooperation, promote their participation in quality schemes supported by the CAP, and foster local markets and short supply chains.

In the second chapter, the author examines international experiences in adding value to agricultural and food products. This section also includes excerpts from key policy and regulatory documents. The author states that *“in general, in*

all countries, both developed and less developed, the importance and role of short food supply chains (SFCs) and locally produced food are increasing." The reasons for this trend are numerous, with the most significant being rising consumer demand for high-quality, safe, and healthy food of known origin, as well as the desire for direct communication with producers. Further analyzes highlight both the positive (higher income, increased competitiveness, better market position) and negative aspects (additional costs, lack of time, required knowledge, and market access) of the value-adding process in agricultural and food products.

The third chapter presents Serbia's achievements in adding value to agricultural and food products. The author states that *"the value chain and supply chain of agricultural and food products in Serbia can, in short, be described as inefficient, unorganized, and fragmented, with a small number of products undergoing value-adding processes."* Author provides a detailed overview of current methods for adding value to agricultural and food products, their prevalence, the regulatory framework, and challenges in implementation. The author concludes that Serbia has made *"some progress in adding value to agricultural and food products"*, but also notes that these processes *"involve a small number of farmers and products, resulting in relatively modest overall outcomes in this sector"*. From the above mentioned, it is clear that this monograph provides an objective and detailed analysis of the value-added agriculture in Serbia.

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