**QUALITY MANAGEMENT AS A DIRECTION TO IMPROVE PRODUCT COMPETITIVENESS ON THE REGIONAL FOOD MARKET**

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*The successful functioning of the quality management systems in the enterprises of the processing industries of agro – industrial complex requires the adoption of the philosophy of ISO 9000. One of the ways to maintain high product quality is traceability. To secure the safety of food trade it is necessary to introduce a system of fair practices in the regional food market. Qualitative ability, that is the ability of the subject to ensure a high quality of goods or services, is the main indicator for the creation of the Ranking of the Agricultural Raw Materials Suppliers, that is necessary to be created on the basis of the quality assessment of raw materials to deliver.*

***Quality, products, competitiveness, food market, processing industries of agro – industrial complex, traceability, qualitative ability, a system of fair practices, HACCP, SAP, ISO 9000 standards.***

The main problem for each enterprise is to produce the products of such quality level that would ensure its high competitiveness at the market and meet the requirements of the consumer as well as would guarantee rapid selling of the said product and provide means for the successful functioning and further development of the enterprise.

Quality management in agro – industrial complex and at its enterprises requires the implementation of the integrated quality management systems. The successful functioning of the quality management systems in the enterprises of the processing industries of agro – industrial complex requires the adoption of the philosophy of ISO 9000.

The competitiveness potential of the enterprises of the processing industries of agro – industrial complex in the European Union is determined on the basis of the analysis of 22 competition tools. To our mind, the most important of them are quality and its management, processing depth, the obtaining of the specific market segments, new technologies and processes, low cost of a product unit, good image of the enterprise, developments of product improvement and innovation, brand, a range of the pre-sale services provided and the variety of assortment.

The main directions in which changes are necessary to be done are, first of all, the improvement of the quality of production processes and final products, the improvement of the agricultural production efficiency as well as promotion of biological, technological, organizational and economic progress taking into account environmental protection. All the agricultural products must be subject to the system of the quality management of products, which should be controlled by the independent institutions such as reference - laboratories.

One of the ways to maintain high product quality is traceability, that is the possibility to trace the background and use or location of the product using fixed identifying information or the ability to obtain information about the history of the product, including information on the origin of the raw product or elements used in its manufacture.

To function successfully and safely the enterprises of the processing industries of agro – industrial complex should pay special attention to the quality of the raw materials supplied to them and the quality of the final product they supply to the customers. So, the use of SAP would be optimal in such a situation as this system contains all the information about the products and their movement. In case of problems with the quality of the final product, it is possible to track backwards the movement sequence of the production and supply as well as suppliers, identifying thereby the source of the problem.

To secure the safety of food trade it is necessary to introduce a system of fair practices in the regional food market. That is, from the producer to the consumer. The system should include quality management and its guarantee by all the entities functioning on the market of agricultural production. It includes as essential elements of quality management (e.g. HACCP) and voluntary ones.

Quality assurance systems are part of the quality management system and are focused on providing confidence that quality requirements will be met. The coverage of the systematic approach of the whole food chain requires creation of a system of Agriculture Good Practice (AGP), which together with the other systems, based on mutual relations, should form a system group of Agro – Industrial Complex Good Practice (AICGD).

While improving quality control within the quality management system, the processing industry enterprises fully realize the importance of qualitative ability of a supplier. We suggest understand qualitative ability as the ability of the subject to ensure a high quality of goods or services.

Qualitative ability is the main indicator for the creation of the Ranking of the Agricultural Raw Materials Suppliers, that is necessary to be created on the basis of the quality assessment of raw materials to deliver.

One of the basic principles of quality assurance systems is the continuous improvement of production processes, facilitated by improving the control and prevention. The modern concepts of business management fully recognize the importance of quality issues in competition in the markets of food and services. In order to do that the enterprises should introduce modern quality management systems, the systems of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) and quality assurance systems (GHP, GMP, QACP, GLP), which act on the basis of Codex Alimentarius, the rules of which are mandatory.

European integration increases the chances of those enterprises to improve their competitiveness and the competitiveness of products they produce applying compulsory and voluntary quality management systems. Quality management in the enterprises of agro-industrial complex implies continuous improvement of production capacity, technological processes and organizational structures. And as a result, the role of such businesses in the food market is very important because they form the value chain of food products, which is based on ISO and HACCP standards by influencing the quality of raw materials, which supplies the provider. The research has shown that obtaining long competitive advantage depends on the strengthening effect of the application of quality management systems.