

## COMPETITIVENESS OF DAIRY INDUSTRY ENTERPRISES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE SINGLE MARKET CONDITIONS

### **Summary**

The political changes initiated in Poland in the early nineties posed new challenges for the economy. They concerned the need for deep restructuring and modernization of the agricultural sector, as well as the need to improve socio-economic cohesion. The membership in the European Union had been the impulse to accelerate these changes and the EU accession both brought numerous benefits and required considerable efforts and adjustments. Economic integration with a global dimension became a characteristic process of our era.

Poland's entry into the structures of the European Union created opportunities for economic development and civilization advancement. Millions of consumers and thousands of enterprises found themselves in a completely new reality which posed numerous challenges for the Polish milk and dairy market.

Competitiveness, understood as the ability of business entities to gain market advantage, is an important research area, primarily from the point of view of the managers of these entities. The four freedoms guaranteed by the Single Market have led entrepreneurs to an intensified competitive struggle and have made competitiveness a necessary condition for their functioning.

This doctoral dissertation is devoted to the competitiveness of dairy industry enterprises in the context of the Single Market conditions.

The main aim of this dissertation is to present a competitiveness model of Polish dairy companies, where the competitiveness, on the one hand, is determined by the requirements of the Single Market, and, on the other, by marketing mix activities. In the utilitarian layer, the thesis aims to provide the management staff of dairy enterprises with guidelines concerning the actions which should be taken in order to increase their company's competitiveness in the conditions of the Single Market. These recommendations have been formulated on the basis of research results following the assumption that the competitiveness of an enterprise is determined by a combination of interrelated factors that create a multidimensional space and which should be treated as a set of simultaneously occurring elements that are mutually dependent and interpenetrating. The research was based on a critical analysis of Polish and foreign literature, monographic research and surveys. The results indicate that the future of the Polish dairy sector will be determined by the ability of business entities to improve their market offer and their ability to meet the changing needs of the consumer without increasing the prices of their products.

The dissertation consists of five chapters, the first of which concerns the essence of enterprise competitiveness. In this part of the dissertation, the concepts of competition, competitiveness and competitive advantage of an enterprise are explained. Also, the theoretical concepts of competition are discussed, and types of competitive advantages and competitiveness factors are presented, with particular emphasis on the dairy industry. The second chapter is devoted to the challenges of the Single Market regarding the dairy

industry. Legal aspects of the functioning of the dairy industry entities within the economic policy of the European Union are presented and mechanisms regulating the EU milk market, its potential, demand and prices as well as the characteristics of the Polish milk market in the light of the EU requirements are determined,. Research methodology is discussed in the third chapter, indicating the research objectives and area as well as research methods and tools. The characteristics of enterprises subject to the case studies and the characteristics of the research sample in the quantitative studies are also included in this chapter. The fourth chapter analyses selected market leaders of the dairy industry in Poland and in the world, chosen on the basis of the dairy Forum ranking - TOP 20. The fifth chapter presents the results of relevant research based on which assessment has been made of the competitiveness of dairy industry enterprises operating in Poland in the context of Single Market requirements. The chapter also includes the conclusions and recommendations for dairy industry enterprises.

As a result of theoretical considerations and empirical research, it has been confirmed that the requirements of the Single Market affect the competitiveness of Polish dairy enterprises, stimulating appropriate actions in the area of marketing mix.