



**PhD in Management  
and Business Administration**

## **COLLECTION OF THESES**

to the Ph.D. dissertation entitled  
**Social capital and collective agricultural marketing  
in food industry  
by Anikó Tóth**

**Subject leader:**

**Dr. Csaba Forgács**

Associate Professor, Deputy Head of Department

Budapest, 2009

**Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural  
Development**

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## ***I. RESEARCH BACKGROUND; REASONS FOR THE SUBJECT***

In food industry and agriculture, bottom-to-top initiatives, programmes implemented and operated through individual communities that join forces are increasingly coming to the front. The actors of the economy recognise more and more that they can less and less expect the state to solve their problems under the frameworks of market economy. The state's role so falling out is taken over by the market; under changed circumstances, however, in order to ensure more efficient enforcement of interests and successful operation, it is indispensable for actors in the food industry sector to get themselves organised and take action collectively.

Our research has focused on the analysis of collective agricultural marketing (CAM) in Hungary. We have approached the topic in terms of sectoral players' collaboration, willingness to cooperate; so, it has been through social capital that we have endeavoured to identify the areas that impede the development of collective agricultural marketing and might constitute breakthrough points in the future.

Social capital is a system of relations between individuals that advance more efficient operation of society and economy (Coleman [1988], Putnam [1993]). For the successful operation of market economy, in addition to private property, the market, properly operating institutes, certain roles assumed by the state, there is an absolute need for social capital (Fukuyama [1995]).

Under the frameworks of Collegium Budapest professor János Kornai and Susan Rose-Ackerman carried out an extensive research in 2001 primarily aimed at approaching trust and honesty to specify what impact they produce on the operation of the democratic state and the market. The three key areas of the research were inter-company relations; building of a state that deserves trust

and the strategy of reinforcing trust. Regarding inter-company relations it has been established that trust of excessive extent might limit competition; that is, there is a switching relation between trust and competition. The same way, reputation, selection based on various memberships might also limit competition since the stronger the net of trust is, the more difficult it is to enter. Regarding the strategy of reinforcing trust, Kornai identified two paths:— legislation, lawmaking and institute development tasks; and the improvement of human factors. Kornai asserts that the loss of firm moral basis arising from the post-socialist transformation is the condition where a lot of people still have the old moral principles, while others are influenced simultaneously by both old and new norms, which actually exclude one another. In making the mental transition in thinking more than a merely passive process, education, learning have the greatest part.

The financial muscle and ability to enforce interests of multinational commercial networks present in food industry often exceed the dimensions and financial opportunities of even processors that are considered large-size entities. The unbalanced situation is well demonstrated, for example, by the cost-benefit distribution of the actors of the poultry sector. While poultry-breeders "share" approx. 63-68%, processing industry 20-27%, and retail trade only 10% of the total cost of the sales chain, poultry-breeders enjoy merely 3% of the total benefit produced, compared to the approx. 50% share of retail trade (Juhász, Kürthy [2008]). Based on that, it can be also stated that sector players need to find a sales channel where transaction costs are not too high and that provides them with a higher level of organised conditions. Self-organisation and enforcement of interests are conducive to long-term development projects. (Fertő, Szabó [2004])

Through collective agricultural marketing it is possible to find the sales channels that help to improve the efficiency of sector players' activity.

Collective agricultural marketing can be interpreted as one of the types of marketing based cooperation. In cooperation, companies undertake specific tasks/subtasks collectively—separated from their own independent company marketing but supplementing them.

”All of the producers of a product, product line or of the sectors take part in collective marketing; accordingly, it can be developed through ”coercive partnership”. (Lehota, Tomcsányi [1994]) The ”coercive” form of partnership is ensured also by law in countries where this kind of activity has been performed for several years.

In addition to collective marketing actions, CAM can be interpreted as a kind of incentive. Pursuant to GATT-WTO Agreements, the so-called Green Box Support may be granted, in accordance with European Union rules, as a national support. It is a non-refundable incentive which represents partial or, in certain cases, full funding of participation in CAM actions.

The research was justified, on the one hand, by the need to survey trust between food industry actors, the ability to join forces; and, on the other hand, to investigate the opportunities of developing CAM, especially to collect information on the opinion of the entities concerned.

The objective of the research has been to survey the relation between food industry actors, level of trust, and to gather information on experience gained so far on collective agricultural marketing activity as well as to explore openness to changes in CAM necessary in the future. In terms of the relation between CAM and social capital, we have examined to what extent trust and joining forces produce impact on participation in CAM actions and the future development of CAM activity.

In view of the fact that following initial dynamic development CAM activity has shown a tendency of regression for years, based on the responses of food industry actors we have tried to identify the reasons for that and outline

opportunities for solution in the future. Seeing CAM activities performed, sectoral collective marketing efforts made in other EU countries, it has been interesting to examine why this activity does not develop on the merits in Hungary, to what extent the trends of further development are promoted by the entities concerned and how the agricultural government helps the achievement of CAM objectives as efficiently as possible. The new aspect of the research is, on the one hand, to examine *to what extent the level of trust* of sector players *influence* efforts to join forces, collective action which is indispensable for improvement; how much they are able to represent their interests collectively. On the other hand, the analysis of the field in terms of these aspects is new in its nature because we have simultaneously surveyed the opinion of directly affected **food industry enterprises**, and **producer organisations** (POs) that have obtained experience in enforcing interests, cooperation as well as **producers' interest representations, professional associations** indirectly related to CAM activity.

The relation between social capital and CAM is interesting also because the activity cannot be efficient unless sectoral players organically take part, in addition to financing, in creating strategy, planning, implementing and evaluating actions, in line with collective interests. Without them efficient utilisation of collective agricultural marketing cannot be ensured.

## ***II. METHOD APPLIED***

### ***II.1 Research concept***

From among the types of social capital, bridging social capital (e.g., cooperation between sectoral players) and linking social capital (relation; willingness to cooperate; trust between the organisation embodying the CAM activity and the sectoral players) have been analysed.

We have examined the level food industry players are organised, their relation with various professional, interest representation organizations. This subject is of paramount importance because sectoral players should recognise the necessity of joining forces. Alone they re not able to compete with cutting-edge uniform European market; they must learn how to produce, process and bring products to the market in accordance with the unwritten rules of cooperation. In addition to horizontal cooperation, efforts should be made to build vertical relations and make them institutionalised. Following marketing approach, strategic thinking, new markets need to be obtained and traditional markets should be developed. The examination of bridging social capital has been extended to cover the investigation of trust of sectoral players shown towards each other, their willingness to make sacrifices in collective actions, evaluating the success of the work carried out by interest representations and readiness to take part in improving interest representation activity; willingness to join forces, take action necessary for achieving common market objectives, frequency of own, independent initiatives, and their success.

With respect to linking social capital we have investigated the level of awareness of, satisfaction with the current domestic practice of CAM, the possible trends of changing the existing practice, sectoral players' willingness and ability to make sacrifices in this respect.

With regard to collective agricultural marketing and social capital we have tried to survey to what extent the actors in food industry have understood the core of CAM support and how much they are willing to contribute to developing the activity by adding their own force.

We have approached the relation between social capital and collective agricultural marketing through the operation of social capital, which is carried out through mechanisms based on the network of social relations (Putnam [2000], Flap [2002]):

- Flow of information;
  - between the organisation that performs CAM activity and enterprises that take part in the programmes,
  - between entities taking part in CAM activity.
- reciprocity/mutual norm of assistance;
  - examination of the form of contributing to collective actions,
  - adjudging others' contribution.
- collective development and competitiveness;
  - evaluating the level the food industry sector is organised,
  - evaluating the output of the CAM support.
- collective action and social cooperation;
  - intention to take part in collective actions.
- collective/community awareness, trust and solidarity;
  - the level of trust of sectoral players,
  - recognising the fact that they can benefit also individually from collective objectives.

## ***II.2 Collecting and processing data***

For developing the sample the research was based on we have collected data from organisations operating in three fields: *food industry companies, producer organisations and professional organisations, associations, interest representation bodies.*

The list of profit-oriented business organisations was compiled on the grounds of the document entitled "Who is Who in Hungarian Food Industry" published in 2004. The original database consists of the names of 466 firms. The companies included in the database were short listed in terms of several attributes. As for technical reasons it was impossible to address questions to all of the companies, we have selected 300 names by random choice based sample-taking method in the Excel program. The distribution of the narrowed database produced through selection split per employee headcount represented the distribution of the original database split per headcount; so, in this respect it was possible to maintain the original proportions.

In the research, owing to the nature of the subject, it was reasonable to contact new kind of agricultural organisations, POs, Purchasing and Marketing Organisations (PMOs) too. At the time of making the research, approx. 100 such kind of producers' organisations operated in Hungary (including preliminary and final recognitions). For the research, we have selected 40 of the latter, keeping the regional proportions of the original list, using the method of random choice based sample-taking.

The list of professional organisations, sectoral interest representations, associations was compiled on the grounds of the databases of ministries. The list of organisations consisted of a total of 87 names. The rate of county and national organisations in the list was close to balanced. In this group, we have decided to contact the full scope of the entities. The objective of putting questions to county organisations has been to enable us to examine lower levels

of decision-making too; since county organisations have more extensive knowledge of local conditions, are able to collect in-depth information on problems, have better opportunities to recognise difficulties, conflicts directly and become familiar with the day-to-day operation of locally existing companies. All this means that they have several pieces of direct information and thereby they are able to help the research more efficiently.

Out of the group involved in the examination, the questionnaire developed was sent to a total of 427 addresses. They included *300 food industry companies, 40 POs and PMOs and 87 interest representation organisations.*

*108* of the questionnaires sent out *have been returned*; the rate of receipt was 25.3%. Approx. 86% of the questionnaires can be identified; 14% of them representing the rest of them do not specify the name of the sender; therefore, it is not known which company's representative has replied to the questions. From among identifiable questionnaires 58 have been returned by food industry enterprises, 12 from POs and PMOs and 23 from various interest representation organisations. Approx. 84% of the respondents include males; 60% of them are aged 45-59; 90% of them have higher education qualifications; close to 72% of them are senior executives; 60% of them have fulfilled their present sphere of work for more than 10 years.

In the dissertation, the data of the questionnaires received have been processed. We have examined responses of specific groups separately for each question. The dissertation includes the results calculated from all of the data; findings for specific groups are shown only where they represent different values from the aggregate results. In view of the fact that the number of questionnaires received from PO's and professional organisations is low, it has been hard to draw clear conclusions from them. Wherever deviation from the average is significant, it will be reasonable to carry out further researches to explore the reasons for differences later on.

In processing data, in addition to basic statistics made on specific variables, we have used *cross-table analyses*,  $\chi^2$  test and *variance analysis* to carry out primary investigation of relations between variables. To supplement and confirm relationships explored in this respect, we have carried out *probit analysis* as multi-facet investigation. Consequently, in addition to two-factor analyses, it has been possible to explore relations of various kinds. We demonstrate the methods in tables, graphs. For the investigations, we have used version 10.0 of the SPSS program; and by selecting responses to open questions from them we have compiled key groups for evaluation. The key variables of the investigations are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive statistical table on key variables

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation
Membership	100	0,00	1,00	0,86	0,3487
Level of being organised	107	1,00	3,00	1,7500	0,4380
High level of trust	103	1,00	5,00	3,0874	1,0765
Trust; giving help	105	1,00	5,00	2,9333	1,0121
Precaution	102	1,00	5,00	3,7451	1,0688
Lack of trust	102	1,00	5,00	2,5490	1,1572
Frequency of enforcing interests	108	1,00	5,00	3,1389	0,9712
Participation in common programmes	107	1,00	5,00	3,7682	0,9324
In-time contribution to collective actions	95	1,00	2,00	1,0105	0,1026
In-cash contribution to collective actions	89	1,00	2,00	1,2360	0,4270
Necessity to reinforce efforts in collective actions	106	0,00	1,00	0,9811	0,1367
CAM knowledge	107	1,00	4,00	2,9252	0,8655
Willingness to take part in CAM	107	1,00	3,00	1,9299	0,3142
Satisfaction with CAM	73	1,00	5,00	2,9041	0,8525
Willingness to contribute to common financial fund	95	0,00	1,00	0,7684	0,4241
Number of employees	108	1,00	6,00	4,1759	1,9034
Turnover	108	1,00	6,00	4,1019	1,8186

### **III. RESULTS**

#### **III.1 Participation in common programmes trust and enforcement of interests**

Regarding the interrelation between the above factors, we have assumed that participation in common programmes depends on the level of trust between sectoral players (Trust). We have assumed that the frequency of enforcing interests through taking collective action (Int/freq) and the necessity to reinforce efforts to take collective actions (C/actions) also influence participation in common actions. We have involved one attribute of the size of the responding companies in the examination, the number of their employees (Emp) as an economic index. Based on that we have set up the following estimate for explaining willingness to participate in common programmes.

$$P(\text{Participation})=f(\text{Membership, Org/level, Trust, Int/freq, C/actions, Emp})$$

In our examination, willingness to participate in common programmes has been the dependent variable.

The value of Membership is 1 or 0 depending on whether the respondent is a member of any interest representation organisation or not.

The values of Org/level can be 1, 2, 3 depending on whether the respondent considers the players of the sector poorly, acceptably or well organised.

The value of Trust shows the level of agreeing with one statement of the questionnaire: Most of the respondents are ready to help, join forces if it is necessary. Its value is 1 if the respondent fully disagrees with the statement; 2 if it both agrees and disagrees with it, and 3 if it fully agrees with it.

The values of Int/freq express how often taking collective actions in the sector will bring results in interest representation. This value is 1 if taking collective actions brings no results at all; 2 if it is rarely successful; and 3 if collaboration is often or always successful.

Regarding the number of employees (Emp) we have formed six groups. Its value is 1 if the number of employees is between 1-10; 2 if it is between 11-50; and 3 if the company has 51-100 employees; 4 if it is between 101-500; 5 if more than 501 persons are employed. Value 6 is indicated when we have found no data available.

To confirm our two-factor calculations, using the probit method we have obtained the results shown in Table 2.

*Table 2: Explanation for willingness to take part in common programmes*

Name of variable	Sign.
Membership	0.752***
Level of being organised	0.218
Trust	0.043
Int/freq	0.423***
C/action	0.963***
Emp	0.111*
Number of responses	92
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.0959
McKelvey & Zavoina's R <sup>2</sup>	0.259
Approximate likelihood-ratio test of equality of coefficients across response categories:	
chi <sup>2</sup> (18)	19.76
Prob > chi <sup>2</sup>	0.3465

It is clear that there is a significant relationship between participation in common programmes and the frequency of enforcing interests through taking collective action. As new information, it is possible to establish that membership in interest representation organisations and the necessity to reinforce efforts to take collective actions are also determining in explaining participation in common programmes. The respondents who believe that interests can be enforced more frequently through taking collective action, and who deem that it is necessary to reinforce sectoral collective actions, take part

in sectoral programmes more frequently too. Respondents who employ several employees are also more frequent participants in common programmes.

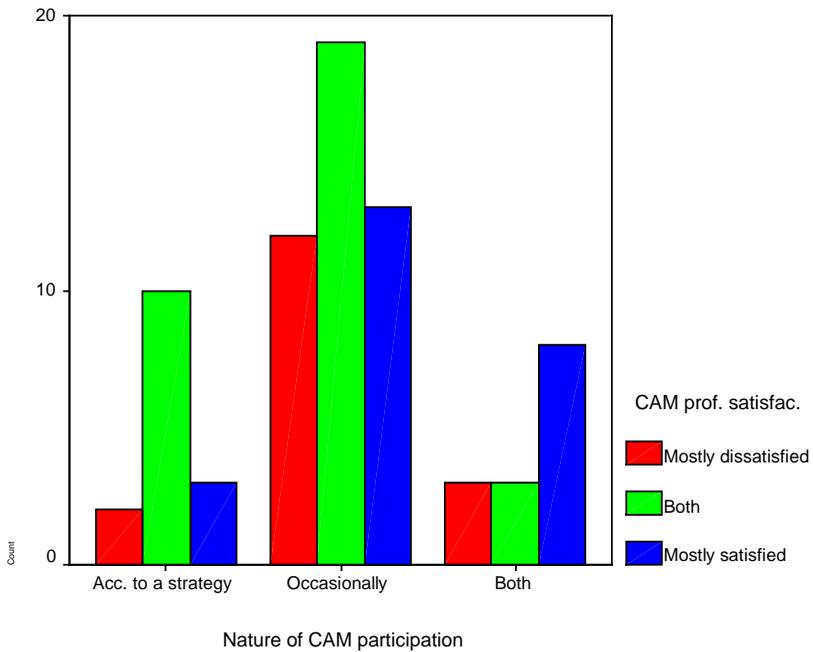
Both through two-factor analyses and the above probit method it has been proved that *trust between food industry actors does not influence participation in common sectoral programmes*. In making decision on participation other factors influence participation (costs, current situation, corporate objectives, etc.); trust regarding sectoral players is not determining. Consequently, a higher level of trust does not go hand in hand with more frequent participation in common programmes. *There is, however, a significant relationship between participation in programmes and the frequency of efficient enforcement of interests that can be achieved through taking collective action*; that is, those who think that enforcement of interests will be successful more frequently through taking collective action will take part in common programmes more often.

### III.2 The nature of participation in CAM programmes and satisfaction

Regarding CAM participation and satisfaction with CAM actions, we have assumed that those who have already taken part in CAM programmes and have been satisfied with the actions will handle CAM support on a strategic level.

The findings of our investigation are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Relationship between professional satisfaction with CAM activity and the nature of CAM activity



The number of satisfied entities is the lowest in the event of strategic level participation. The number of those satisfied and dissatisfied is the highest in the event of occasional participation. The  $\chi^2$  test carried out has confirmed the data of the figure; based on the significance level produced (0.10) it can be unambiguously stated that *the nature of CAM participation, the use of support*

*does not depend on satisfaction experienced regarding former participations. Consequently, in the decision-making bunch it is not direct experience that plays the key part; and in this respect the element of corporate strategy is missing from making decision on participation.*

In view of the fact that sectoral players take part in common programmes occasionally, they will probably decide on participation in programmes under the influence of their current financial standing and other circumstances.

Food industry participants take part in CAM programmes mostly occasionally; participation is not influenced by experience obtained in and satisfaction with former collective agricultural marketing actions.

### ***III.3 Participation in CAM programmes; trust, level of being organised; and economic attributes of enterprises***

Our hypothesis formulated in advance claimed that given a higher level of trust economic actors would be more willing to take part in CAM programmes, and participation would be influenced by the level the sector was organised as well as the economic attributes of specific participants (e.g., turnover) too.

To confirm our assumption, we estimated the following probit model to explain why respondents join to CAM (CAM part.) programmes;

$$F(\text{CAM part.})=f(\text{Membership, Org/level, Trust, Int/freq, Turnover, Food/ind., Prof/org})$$

We employed two dummy variables to control the affiliation of respondents: food industry companies (Food/ind) and professional organization (Prof/org).

In terms of turnover we distinguished 6 groups. We formulated 4 groups when the turnover is under 3 billion HUF. Group 5 and 6 is formulated when its extent was above 3 billion HUF or when no data was available.

The findings of the investigation are contained in Table 3.

*Table 3: Factors explaining participation in CAM programmes*

Name of variable	Sign/lev
Membership	0.853**
Org/level	-0.226
Trust	0.214
Int/freq	0.004
Turnover	0.097
Food/ind	1.142**
Prof/org	1.200**
_cons	-1.872*
Number of responses	80.000
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.1164

*It is clear that trust and the level the sector is organised do not explain participation in CAM programmes at all; consequently, the factors are*

*independent of each other. Presumably, the level of trust between actors has not yet reached the "threshold" where its extent would have a determining part in participation in CAM programmes.*

Contrary to our expectations, the table also reveals that *the rate of the turnover of individual enterprises does not play a part in making decisions on CAM programmes either.* This is interesting also because the primary criticism against CAM activity conveyed by the media has been claiming that there is no sufficient state support available, and shortage of companies' own resources does not allow financing possible own funds for participating in programmes.

It is apparent that there is a significant relationship between membership in interest representation organisations and participation in CAM actions; therefore, those who are members of any organisation will take part in CAM programmes to a greater extent. There is a significant relationship between KAM participation and food industrial companies and professional organisations as well. This relationship proves that the companies really use CAM support and take part in CAM actions.

### ***III.4 Contribution to CAM actions; trust and level of being organised***

Our hypothesis set before examining relationships between factors claimed that making sacrifices necessary for taking CAM actions depended on trust between sectoral players and the level of being organised. Given a higher level of trust and higher level of being organised, they would be willing to undertake financial burdens for the sake of taking CAM action.

Using cross-table analyses and the chi<sup>2</sup> method it has been possible to confirm that *trust does not influence making sacrifices in CAM* —irrespective of knowledge of the outcome of the action—it does not play any part in making decisions.

We estimate the following probit model to explain the respondents' willingness to pay for CAM programmes (CAM contr).

$$\text{Prob}(\text{CAM contr})=f(\text{Membership, Org/level, Ttrust, Int/freq, Turnover, Food/ind, Professional org.})$$

The results shown in Table 4 provide further information on the nature of relationships between factors.

*Table 4: Factors explaining undertaking financial burdens*

Name of variable	Sign/lev
Membership	0.694*
Org/level	-0.335
Trust	0.162
Int/freq	-0.062
Turnover	0.480*
Food/ind	1.988*
Prof/org	-1.160**
_cons	-2.303
Number of responses	81
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.2398

*It is clear that the relationship between the level of being organised and undertaking financial burdens in CAM actions is opposing; that is, it is not true that with a higher level of being organised entities would be more willing to undertake financial burdens. The relationship, therefore, does exist but its direction is just contrary to our expectations.*

It can be also established that there is a *positive* relationship between undertaking financial burdens and Membership in interest representation organisations as well as the size of the enterprise (Turnover). Food industry enterprises (Food/ind) are more willing to contribute to taking collective actions than professional organisations; what is more, regarding professional organisations a negative correlation can be identified. This can be explained by the fact that in these organisations no sales revenue is generated; usually they maintain themselves from state funds and/or membership fees. On the other hand, based on practice followed so far it can be stated that several CAM actions have already been implemented which the professional organisation concerned have contributed to with a significant amount (e.g., collective meat programmes; vegetable/fruit programmes).

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## **V. LIST OF PUBLICATIONS**

### **V.1. Articles (in Hungarian)**

- Anikó Tóth: Társadalmi tőke és a közösségi agrármarketing az élelmiszergazdaságban I. rész (Social capital and collective agricultural marketing in food industry Part I.) (Gazdálkodás, 2007. 51. évf. 2. pp. 38-47.)
- Anikó Tóth: Társadalmi tőke és a közösségi agrármarketing az élelmiszergazdaságban II. rész – Társadalmi tőke az élelmiszergazdaságban: bizalom, szervezettség és összefogás (Social capital and collective agricultural marketing in food industry Part II.: trust, organisational level, collectivity) (Gazdálkodás, 2007. 51. évf. 6. pp. 37-44.)

### **V. 2 Lectures held at conferences (in English)**

- Anikó Tóth, Csaba Forgács: Are food industry companies interested in co-financing collective agricultural marketing? IAMO FORUM 2008: Agri-Food Business: Global Challenges – Innovative Solutions, 25–27 June 2008, Halle (Saale) – Germany. Conference proceedings under publication
- Anikó Tóth, Csaba Forgács: Willingness of food industry companies in co-financing collective agricultural marketing actions, MACE 2009 Conference “Multi-Level Processes of Integration and Disintegration” to be held from January 14 – 15, 2009 in Berlin (Germany)
- Anikó Tóth, Csaba Forgács, Imre Fertő: Willingness to co-financing Collective Agricultural Marketing in Hungary, IAAE 2009, The XXVII. International Conference of Agricultural Economists, Beijing. China. Submitted

### ***V. 3 Poster lectures (in English)***

- Anikó Tóth, Csaba Forgács: Willingness of food industry companies in co-financing collective agricultural marketing actions. XII: Congress of the European Association of Agricultural Economists (EAAE) on “People, Food and Environments: Global Trends and European Strategies, 26th-29th August, 2008, Gent – Bruxelles