

REPUBLIC OF CROATIA
KRIŽEVCI UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

Timon Fabijanec, student

**MARKETING ACTIVITIES OF THE ASSOCIATION
EKOPLOD**

Final paper

Križevci 2024.

REPUBLIC OF CROATIA
KRIŽEVCI UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

Undergraduate professional study of agriculture

Timon Fabijanec, student

**MARKETING ACTIVITIES OF THE ASSOCIATION
EKOPLOD**

Final paper

Committee for the defense and evaluation of the final thesis:

1. Ph.D. Ivka Kvaternjak, prof.struč.stud. - President
2. Ph.D. Silvije Jerčinović, prof. struč. stud. – mentor and member
3. Milan Suša, mag.ing.agr. - member

Sadržaj

1. INTRODUCTION	5
2. LITERATURE REVIEW	7
3. MATERIALS AND METHODS	13
4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	15
4.1. Association Ekoplod	15
4.2. Analysis of the structure of ecological production of members of the Association Ekoplod	22
4.3. Survey of members of the Association Ekoplod	27
5. CONCLUSION	33
6. LITERATURE	35
7. INCLOSURES	38
Statement of Academic Integrity	40

ABSTRACT

Agricultural associations as non-profit organizations are very important for the development and sustainability of small and medium-sized family farms, and the most important advantages of the association are the representation of farmers' interests, connection and exchange of experience, joint appearances on the market, strengthening the negotiating position, etc. Therefore, the work follows marketing ecological activities of the Association of Ecological Producers and Consumers Ekoplod. The paper aims to analyze the structure of ecological production, its market potential and current marketing activities used by members of the analyzed Association to identify potentially new and innovative marketing tools. To achieve the stated goal, a survey of Association members was conducted on existing marketing activities and the possibilities of applying new innovative marketing techniques and tools in managing the elements of the marketing mix.

The Association Ekoplod has existed since 2012 and currently has 28 members who cultivate a total of 201.4 ha of organic agricultural land. Most of the marketing activities took place in the first two years of the Association's existence, and in the last two years, attempts have been made to revitalize these activities similarly. Given that the Association is a non-profit organization and marketing activities require more financial resources than the membership fees themselves, the Association has established cooperation with the Križevci University of Applied Sciences, applies more often to local and regional projects and collaborates on an international project where the website will project to be promoted by members of the Association Ekoplod. Survey research indicates that while members possess various marketing tools for selling their products individually, there is a strong desire for unity. This unity is sought not only in the pursuit of shared educational and legislative goals but also in the collaborative distribution of a broader range of ecological products.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the Republic of Croatia, small family farms predominate, which are not competitive on the market due to their produced quantities and production technology and are mostly not visible on the market because they do not have the possibility of financing marketing activities. One of the solutions to the mentioned problem is the association of farmers, especially small and medium-sized family farms through associations, producer organizations, clusters or cooperatives. However, Croatian farmers are still skeptical of any form of association and often this resistance can be observed towards cooperatives, especially among older farmers. Therefore, the primary goal of an association is to enhance the competitiveness of small family farms. Joining an association provides agricultural producers with greater bargaining power, particularly when dealing with retail chains. Additionally, it facilitates more effective market performance through the use of shared marketing tools.

Regarding the EU and its green policies, ecological agricultural production is becoming increasingly important. This type of production can adapt to climate changes quickly, and there is an aspiration for at least 25% of agricultural land to be under ecological cultivation by 2030. On the other hand, the demand for organic products is constantly growing because consumer awareness of a healthy lifestyle is increasing, so there is great potential for further growth of organic agriculture in Croatia and the visibility of organic agricultural producers and their products on the market.

Hence, the subject of research in this paper is the Association of Ecological Agricultural Producers and Consumers Ekoplod. The goal is to analyze the structure of organic production, its market potential and current marketing activities used by members of the Association Ekoplod to identify potentially new and innovative marketing tools. To achieve the stated goal, the author did a professional internship in the mentioned Association, where very valuable conversations were held with the president of the Association and individual members and he was provided with all the necessary information and documentation to describe the activities of the Association since its foundation. The web application TRACES was also used to determine the structure of ecological production of the members of the Association. In addition, a survey of members of the Association Ekoplod was carried out on existing marketing activities and the possibilities of applying new innovative marketing techniques and tools in managing the elements of the marketing mix.

According to the Law on Associations (Official Gazette 74/14), an association is any form of free and voluntary association of several physical or legal persons that, in order to protect their livelihoods or advocate for the protection of human rights and freedoms, the protection of the environment and nature and sustainable development, and for humanitarian, social, cultural, educational, scientific, sports, health, technical, informational, professional or other beliefs and goals that do not conflict with the Constitution and the law, and without the intention of gaining profit or other economically estimable benefits, are subject to the rules governing structure and operation of that form of association. The key from this definition is that the association is a non-profit organization, so the foundations of marketing of non-profit organizations are applied to their activities.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to the Annual Report on the State of Agriculture of the Ministry of Agriculture (2023), there are slightly more than 170,000 farms in Croatia, of which about 70% of farmers use less than 5 ha. The current ownership structure of agricultural holdings is unfavorable, often leading to low productivity, high production costs, and restricted market access. One solution to these issues is forming associations. According to the definition of the Croatian encyclopedia¹, an agricultural association is any permanent voluntary form of Association of Croatian farmers-farmers for the protection and promotion of common interests and goals, without the intention of gaining profit. To improve their economy and rationalize the procurement of raw materials and machines, as well as more successful processing and sale of their products, they establish cooperatives or producer organizations, economic institutions based on reciprocity.

Kostanjski (2023) points out that although the association of farmers is not adequately accepted in Croatia, without association it is neither realistic nor possible to achieve long-term viability and sustainable development of the agricultural and food sector. There is a significant resistance to cooperative associations rooted in historical factors from the socialist era. This distrust among farmers regarding such associations has been documented by various authors who explore this topic. For example, Broz and Švaljeg (2019) point out that since the 1990s in Croatia, cooperative entrepreneurship has been stigmatized as a way of carrying out activities inherent in the socialist social order. However, the authors emphasize that this image of cooperatives as a socialist relic was created during the economic transformation of Croatia, in the interest of those who, in the unsettled circumstances of transition and war, wanted to get hold of cooperative property that was not subject to conversion and privatization, so it could come to hands of private owners after bankruptcy and liquidation of cooperatives. Nedanov et al. (2012) explain that after the liquidation, the assets of the cooperatives would belong to the state, and after that, these assets were often favorably sold to different interest groups.

Due to the large number of small and medium-sized farms in Croatia, many authors emphasize the importance of farmers' associations and see numerous advantages for farmers in any form of association (Hadelan, 2019):

¹ <https://www.enciklopedija.hr/clanak/poljoprivredne-udruge>

- They realize the advantages of economies of scale,
- They reduce production and market risks,
- Enable savings due to sharing common machines and equipment,
- They ensure the quantities of products that can be found on the shelves of retail chains,
- They create conditions for processing activities with an increase in added value,
- They gain better negotiating positions.

Očić (2024) points out that the associated producers achieve benefits in production and the market, i.e. that they become more competitive, have easier access to the market with a better negotiating position, easier access to information with the possibility of using common mechanization within the machine rings, obtaining larger rebates by jointly purchasing raw materials, the possibility of joint acquisition and use of expensive agricultural equipment, storage and processing capacities, etc.

The food market, that is, the agricultural food complex, represents a complex environment that is influenced by numerous industrial, technological, economic, social and political factors. The availability of food, the types of products on offer as well as the methods of delivering food to consumers depend on them (Ziemiańczyk and Krakowiak-Bal, 2018). On the other hand, consumers of agricultural food products demand more and more information not only about the availability of products, but also about the method of cultivation, marketing, distribution, transport and processing (Ahumada and Villalobos, 2009). Jerčinović (2019) emphasizes that in Croatia there is market inferiority or the inability of a large number of small agricultural and food producers to compete in the well-established and organized food market that takes place within conventional distribution chains and a market that functions according to the economy of volume. He also points out that small food producers regularly encounter difficulties in the implementation of marketing strategies or individual particular marketing operational activities and that the main challenge that small food producers face is first and foremost marketing management.

Considering the frequent problem of lack of formal marketing knowledge or practical skills of farmers related to marketing (Jerčinović, 2019), low level of possession and application of information technologies (Turkalj, 2012) and low interest and knowledge about digital

marketing, agricultural marketing and agricultural applications (Bojkić et al., 2016) one of the solutions is in association. As this paper investigates the marketing activities of an agricultural association, and the associations belong to non-profit organizations, it is important to investigate terms related to marketing with an emphasis on the marketing of non-profit organizations.

The term non-profit organization does not necessarily mean that the observed organization does not make a profit, they can also make a certain profit, but if they make it, they do not invest it in increasing capital again, but in different charitable goals (Pavičić, 2003) or - for work and improvement their organizations (Meler, 2003). However, for a non-profit organization to operate successfully, it is very important to carry out marketing, Pavičić (2001) points out that marketing affects the quality of the achievement of the organization's goals and the activities of the organization, so it has a positive impact on solving the problems that caused the non-profit organization to be founded.

The most commonly used definition of marketing accepted by the American Marketing Association (AMA) says that marketing is the process of planning and carrying out the creation of ideas, products and services, their pricing, promotion and distribution to carry out an exchange that satisfies the goals of individuals and organizations. According to the Croatian encyclopedia², marketing concept and/or business philosophy is a specific way of thinking and acting on which the company's business policy is based, i.e. a specific way of approaching the design, operationalization and realization of the company's business. A company that embraces marketing as a philosophy focuses on consumers, continuously researching their needs and desires, while designing programs and plans to satisfy them. The supply chain of agricultural products has become an important issue since the public is increasingly aware and concerned about the availability and safety of food consumed (Handayati et al., 2015). Given that we live in a world of rapid changes, and global competition in which consumer expectations are constantly increasing, in such an environment, those business entities that can better identify the problems, desires and needs of consumers and, accordingly, find better ways to solve them, succeed in such an environment (Kljako, 2019). Consumers choose products or services that they can economically afford, and by researching the consumer market, consumer possibilities can be predicted and consumer preferences determined. However, consumers are not all the same thanks to their widely differentiated needs and motives, that is, they are very

heterogeneous groups (Meler, 2002). Therefore, the same author suggests that the so-called segmented approach in meeting their needs, that is, a relatively large number of diverse consumers should be divided into smaller, homogeneous units, according to which the economic entity will act with mutually different marketing programs. According to the definition, market segmentation is the process of dividing consumers into groups that share similar needs and desires (Marjanović and Pervan, 2020, according to Kotler and Keller, 2006).

According to the Regulation on criteria, standards and procedures for financing and contracting programs and projects of interest for the common good implemented by associations (Official Gazette 26/2015) as a form of non-profit organizations can receive money from public sources for:

- Implementation of programs and projects that serve to fulfill the goals and priorities of the association according to its strategic plans and documents
- Implementation of national, regional and local programs that meet specific public needs through special laws
- Exercising the public authority entrusted to them by a special law
- Implementation of social services
- Co-financing of part of the projects that are financed with funds from the European Union or with foreign funds, and which the association, as the beneficiary of such projects, is obliged to finance on its own
- Institutional and organizational development
- Employment and employment projects
- Donations, sponsorships and some other purposes.

The application of marketing in non-profit organizations can be useful in many ways, but five basic reasons for marketing can be singled out, which makes it possible (Uremović, 2024):

- Identifying all participants in the operation of the organization and determining their needs,
- More successful meeting of the identified needs of the participants,
- Better provision of resources for operations and financial stability,
- Lowering operating costs,

- Designing the organization's communication program with the environment.

Non-profit organizations that utilize marketing consistently achieve better results with their target groups than those that do not use marketing or only use it occasionally. Marketing to non-profit organizations can offer new opportunities to improve the level of user satisfaction, participate in the attraction of resources to non-profit organizations, define their characteristic peculiarities, and minimize the use of marketing resources (Štimac and Cah, 2012). Pavičić (2001) points out that the marketing organizational culture of non-profit organizations represents the organizational culture that most effectively shapes the behavior that is needed to create superior value for users and, therefore, for continuous superior action.

Some research shows that promotion is an extremely important part of the marketing of non-profit organizations because it increases the opportunities for non-profit organizations to acquire new partners, attract donors or users and sends a certain message that has social importance (Mlinarić, 2022). According to the Croatian encyclopedia³, promotion is a marketing activity aimed at communicating with the market and the public to increase the number of consumers of a product or service or to increase public acceptance of an idea or project. Its task is to create awareness of the existence of a certain product or service on the market, to arouse interest in a certain product or service, to provide additional information, to develop the preferences of consumers or buyers towards certain products or services and to foster a positive image of a company, organization or country.

The potential for the work of non-profit organizations in the agricultural sector is great and it is important to invest in their work because the abilities, skills and knowledge that are returned by investing in one's ideas and possibilities are irreplaceable (Uremović, 2024). To realize the aforementioned potential, i.e. to strengthen competitiveness and innovation in agriculture and aquaculture, according to the National Development Strategy of the Republic of Croatia until 2030⁴, stronger horizontal coordination among producers will be encouraged in the form of organization in producer organizations and other forms of association, while at the same time improving cooperation agricultural and food producers with partners in production, processing and distribution, with an emphasis on the development of quality products and modern marketing. According to the aforementioned strategy, as the priority of policy implementation in the area of strengthening competitiveness and innovation, it is proposed to encourage the

³ <https://www.enciklopedija.hr/clanak/promocija>

⁴ [Načrt NRS 2030 i Dodaci-12112020.pdf \(gov.hr\)](#)

organization and association of agricultural producers into producer organizations and other forms of association and to facilitate the access of producers to strategic market segments. Accordingly, the Ministry of Agriculture, in addition to annual national tenders for agricultural associations, proposed several interventions such as:

- 77.02 Cooperation - Support for information and promotion activities carried out by groups of producers on the internal market
- 77.03 Cooperation – Support for EIP operational groups
- 77.04 Cooperation – Support for short supply chains and local markets
- 77.05 Cooperation - support for the establishment and operation of producer organizations
- 77.06 Cooperation – Support for the LEADER approach

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

To conduct a literature review, the scientific works of authors who have explored the issues faced by small and medium-sized farms in Croatia were analyzed. The focus was on the benefits of agricultural producer associations and marketing strategies, particularly those relevant to non-profit organizations. Additionally, the interventions implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries were examined, aimed at promoting the organization and collaboration among agricultural producers.

During the professional internship that the author did in the Association Ekoplod, interviews were held with the president of the Association and individual members, and all the Association's documentation was made available to him, the analysis of which is the basis for the first results of the research on the past activities of the Association Ekoplod, which are presented chronologically since the foundation of the Association in 2012. year to date.

To determine the structure of the ecological production of the Association's members as a market potential of ecological products, the data obtained on the TRACES web application of the European Commission, where there are receipts (certificates) of all ecological subjects from Croatia, EU member states and third countries, were analyzed. From the mentioned application for each member, a certificate obtained for the current year was downloaded, which shows the areas used in organic production, the products and the control body responsible for issuing the certificate. The above data are tabulated in absolute and relative values (percentages).

To assess the previous marketing activities of the Association members and explore the potential for implementing new innovative marketing tools through Association Ekoplod, a survey was conducted. A survey is a name for a set of procedures by which statements of people are collected and analyzed to find out data about their behavior or their attitudes, opinions, preferences, interests and so forth and for statistics, public opinion polls, the market or as a basis for the needs of medical, sociological or other research.⁵

The survey was conducted on a sample of 20 members of the Association. It was designed in several phases, which were agreed upon with the mentor and the president of the Association Ekoplod, to use the research results as best as possible to improve the further work of the Association in terms of marketing. After defining the final version of the survey with the mentor at the University and with the President of the Association, he sent the survey to all members

⁵ <https://www.enciklopedija.hr/clanak/anketa>

by e-mail. They were asked to answer the questions within ten days to have time to study all the questions and the author of the paper was at their disposal for any possible ambiguities from the survey. Given that there are also older respondents in the Association, they could answer the survey by phone. The response after the first survey was negative and not a single answer was received. Then a schedule was made for calling all 28 members of the Association, and the telephone numbers of the members were obtained from the internal documentation of the Association. In the second phase of trying to obtain data from the survey, it was agreed with the members individually how and when it is convenient for whom to conduct the survey. Half of the respondents decided to fill out the survey on their own and answer all the questions, while most of the older farmers asked to be visited so that they could fill out the survey together with the author. A schedule was made for visiting the older members of the Association in the area of Koprivničko-križevačka County. The survey questionnaire can be found in attachment 1 and consists of four parts:

- Creating a producer profile
- Previous marketing activities of the manufacturer
- Stories about producers
- Proposals for the future work of the Association

Data collection from the survey lasted from March 1, 2024. until 10.5.2024. This was followed by an analysis of the data obtained from the survey, which were presented in a table in absolute values.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the research will present basic data about the analyzed Association, the structure of the members' organic production and the supervisory bodies that control their organic production to determine the market potential of the Association's members. Afterward, a survey will be presented to determine the current marketing activities and the intentions for future marketing-related activities of the members of the Association Ekoplod.

4.1. Association Ekoplod

The Association Ekoplod was founded on March 23, 2012. and registered in the Register of Associations on May 24, 2012. Today it has a total of 28 members. In the register of Associations, the name Association of Ecological Agricultural Producers and Consumers Ekoplod is registered and the abbreviated name Association Ekoplod, which is most often used, will be used as such in the rest of this work for simplicity. The headquarters of the Association is at Svilaraska 6 in Koprivnica. The Association operates primarily in the area of Koprivničko-križevačka County, but members can be natural and legal persons residing in other counties. There are no employees in the Association and it is represented by the president of the Association, who is elected from among the regular members of the Association. Membership is divided into three groups: regular membership (ecological agricultural producer), supporting membership (a natural person who supports the goals and principles of the Association's work) and honorary membership (a person who contributes to the achievement of the Association's goals with his work and commitment or materially).

The President of the Association serves a term lasting four years. Interestingly, the Association has two secretaries, an administrative and a professional secretary. The board of directors is the highest management body and consists of three members: the president, the deputy president and the professional secretary.

Other formalities, as well as the goals of the activities, can be read in the Statute of the Association, that achieve the following goals. The aim and purpose of the Association is:

- promotion of ecological agricultural production and ecological producers,
- strengthening the position, protecting the interests and promoting the dignity of ecological agricultural producers,
- education of ecological agricultural producers,

- education of consumers of ecological products,
- work on raising awareness and consumer interest in ecological agricultural production and products, healthy lifestyle and healthy diet, promotion of sustainable development and promotion of nature and environment protection.

Activities that achieve the stated goals:

- organization of professional lectures on the topic of ecological production,
- production of various promotional publications, printing of catalogs of ecological agricultural producers,
- promotion of ecological agricultural production in the media,
- the organization of events aimed at promoting ecological agricultural products,
- participation in domestic and international gatherings, seminars, etc. related to the goals and activities of the Association,
- cooperation with county, state and other public institutions and services, primarily with the Public Agricultural Advisory Service and with similar institutions in the country,
- issuing appropriate publications following the Law.

According to the internal documentation, it is evident that the Association was most active after its establishment when 16 organic agricultural producers joined the Association. Already at the founding assembly, the question of the Association's logo was raised and proposals were made to promote the Association through a website. Suggestions were also made to promote the Association at events in the Koprivničko-križevačka County, such as Lawn Days, Business Fair in Križevci, Fruit Days and Vegetable Days. An interesting proposal is to organize Open Days at one of the ecological producers to promote organic production. In the following, the basic activities of the Association Ekoplod will be presented chronologically, which can be seen from the minutes of the regular annual assemblies and the Association's Facebook page, which was active until 2014.

2013

At the first annual assembly, it is evident that the members of the Association had their first public presentation at the Lawn Days in Koprivnica, then at the Vegetable Day, where two members of the Association presented their products, and at the Trade Fair in Križevci, where

one member participated and made a public presentation work of the Association. The Facebook page of the Association is also open. For the Association to function as well as possible, requests were sent to all municipal and city councils in the Koprivničko-križevačka County to collect donations for the further activities of the Association. In addition, the Association also applied to the county competition for Associations from the civil sector and financial resources were approved for the organization of the Association's Open Day, which was organized in July 2013 in Koprivnički Bregi (picture 1).

*Udruga ekoloških poljoprivrednih
proizvođača i potrošača
Ekoplod
Koprivnica, Svilaraska 6*

*Poziva Vas na
Dan otvorenih vrata Udruge
Ekoplod*

Gdje?

*U Koprivničkim Bragima kod Vatrogasnog
doma – ul. Kralja Tomislava 6b*

Kada?

13.07.2013. u 10⁰⁰ sati

Program:

- 10⁰⁰ do 11³⁰ Predstavljanje proizvođača udruge
Ekoplod uz mogućnost kupnje
ekoloških proizvoda*
- 11³⁰ do 12³⁰ Organizirani posjet ekološkom
poljoprivrednom gospodarstvu
Ervić, M. Gupca 60A
Koprivnički Dregi*

*Uz ugodno druženje, upoznavanje ekoloških
poljoprivrednih proizvođača s područja Koprivničko
križevačke županije, moći ćete kušati specijalitete
pripremljene od Vedrana Beg – sudionika kulinarskog
showa MasterChef Hrvatska.*



Informacije: 098/9074012 ili 091/4882778



Picture 1 Invitation to the Open Days of the Association Ekoplod

Source: archive of the Association Ekoplod

At the first Open Day, seven ecological producers from the area of Koprivničko-križevačka County exhibited. The exhibitors offered the attendees organic vegetables, fruits, juices, pumpkin oil, spreads and numerous other products. Afterward, all visitors visited an organic farm. The mentioned activity was accompanied by local media, a TV report on the television station Heart TV and an article was published on the website of the Counseling Service.⁶

in 2014

Open days of the Association Ekoplod were held in Kloštar Podravski, where 15 members presented their products and farms to the visitors of the event after which they toured an ecological farm. In addition, in 2014, the members of the Association performed at the fairs of eco products in Čazma and at the Onion Day in Čazma. Training sessions were held for members of the Association and familiarization with the new legal provisions.

A proposal was made to organize an eco-products fair at the county level, which is preceded by contacting the county representatives regarding the co-financing of the event and the creation of a catalog of ecological producers of Koprivničko-križevačka County.

2015

Through the minutes of the regular assembly, no joint activities of the members of the Association were read.

2016

The members discussed and initiated a stronger connection with the newly founded Alliance of Associations of Ecological Producers.

in 2017

The Association applied to the competition of the city of Koprivnica, where funds were obtained for organizing a study trip and a visit to ecological producers in the area of Zadar County. The activity of the Association in the Association of Associations of Organic Producers in the promotion of organic production was highlighted.

2018

Through the minutes of the regular assembly, no joint activities of the members of the Association were read, but the members of the Association intensively exchange experiences

⁶ <https://www.savjetodavna.hr/2013/07/16/odrzan-dan-otvorenih-vrata-udruge-ekoplod/>

related to obligations and increasing administrative burdens that are imposed due to EU regulations.

in 2019

The Association applied to the competition of Koprivničko-križevačka County, where funds were obtained for organizing a study trip and a visit to ecological producers in the area of Istria County.

2020 - 2021

Due to the COVID pandemic, the activity of the Association was reduced, and the work of the Association stood out most through the work of the Croatian Federation of Associations of Organic Producers (HSEP), in which members of the Association Ekoplod were also involved. Through HSEP, a meeting was organized at the Ministry of Agriculture where the action plan for ecological agriculture from 2023 to 2030 was discussed. In addition, one of the members of the Association Ekoplod joined the management structures of the Croatian Chamber of Agriculture (HPK), so that the members of the Association are regularly informed via e-mails on the work of HSEP, HPK, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Agency for Payments in Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development.

Members of the Association also initiated some measures that were adopted at the county level, such as introducing subsidies for organic producers in the amount of 50% of the costs of control and certification in organic production.

From the minutes of the assembly of the Association, there is a proposal to renew the Facebook page with regular updates in the upcoming period.

in 2022

The Association applied to the competition of the City of Koprivnica, where funds were obtained for organizing a study trip and a visit to ecological producers in the area of Sisačko-moslavačka County.

in 2023

The Association submitted the project to the tender of the Ministry of Agriculture. However, the project did not pass, but it is ready to be submitted for the next project.

The Association's current president was invited to be one of the panelists at the Eco Festival in Križevci as part of the SOFI project implemented by the Križevci University of Applied Sciences. The project also featured a tour of two ecological farms owned by Association members, allowing all members to participate in the tour. The members of the Association were allowed to promote themselves through the project's website and the Križevci University of Applied Sciences proposed to conclude a contract for the professional practice of students.

in 2024

A contract was signed with Križevci University of Applied Sciences for professional practice at the Association Ekoplod, with the author of this paper being the first student to complete an internship there. The student did a survey and participated in all activities of the Association from March to June 2024 and all the collected data, as well as this final paper, will be used for the further work of the Association. In particular, the data collected from the first part of the survey will be used to promote the members of the Association on the website of the SOFI project.

The Association applied to the competition of the city of Koprivnica, where funds were obtained for organizing a study trip and a visit to ecological producers in the area of Zagreb County.

It has been proposed that the Association reach an agreement with agricultural pharmacies for discounted purchases of necessary products. However, before doing this, it is essential to assess the types and quantities of raw materials used by the Association members.

A chronological review of the Association's internal documentation reveals that it was most active in terms of marketing during its first two years. During this time, Open Days were organized to promote ecological producers, showcasing their products and allowing visits to their farms. That event was also promoted and there was an active Facebook page. There were excellent ideas that were tried to be revitalized in the last two years through project applications and in some other ways because the financial resources from the membership fees are not enough to realize the planned activities. Through 12 years of existence, it is evident that some members are very active at the national level and represent the interests of the members of the Association in the Ministry of Agriculture through the Association of Associations of Organic Producers and the Croatian Chamber of Agriculture. Recently, members of the Association have been applying for tenders at the local and regional levels to observe good practices in organic production and processing, as well as to exchange experiences with organic farmers in

other counties. However, of the several study trips mentioned, none has been publicly announced or promoted in any way. Therefore, it is a great idea that the Association connected with the Križevci University of Applied Sciences and enabled the arrival of students for professional practice who can contribute their ideas to future marketing activities, especially through social networks in the sense of revitalizing the Facebook page that was active until the end of 2014.

4.2. Analysis of the structure of ecological production of members of the Association Ekoplod

To gain insight into the structure of ecological production of members of the Association Ekoplod, the European Commission's TRACES database was contacted. According to the data of the European Commission⁷, the mentioned database is mandatory for all ecological producers and it is especially important for ecological products that are imported into the EU as a corresponding electronic confirmation to the inspection.⁸ In EU countries, certificates are issued by control institutions appointed by the national authorities of those countries, and in all other countries, certificates are issued by control institutions designated by the EU. As certificates from all organic producers of the Association Ekoplod were found in the TRACES application, the analysis of these data was started.

In Croatia, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries is the central competent authority for agriculture, so it is also responsible for the authorization of control bodies for conducting expert supervision, control and issuing certificates in organic agricultural production. At least once a year, every organic agricultural holding undergoes ecological supervision by control bodies, where it is determined whether the holding adheres to the norms and principles of organic agricultural production, which are defined by the applicable law and ordinance. If all conditions are met, the control body issues a certificate to the farm after the inspection, which contains basic information about the farm, the type or range of organic products, the area under organic production and the period for which the certificate was issued (validity period). According to data from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, there are currently

⁷ https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/farming/organic-farming/trade_hr

⁸ In order for an imported product to be sold as organic, it must meet the same standards as products produced in the European Union. Therefore, all importers who want to put an ecological product on the market must follow certain procedures, according to the country of origin of that product.

fifteen control bodies in Croatia (table 1), with a note that two control bodies have been abolished.

Of the fifteen control bodies mentioned, the members of the Association Ekoplod use the services of six of them to monitor their ecological agricultural production: Bio Garantie, Biotechnicon enterprise center, Bioter, Hrvatske šume, Eurotalus and Zadruga Agribiocert. The majority of members use the services of monitoring organic production of the control body Bioter d.o.o. probably since it is the only control body located in Koprivničko-križevačka County.

The code number of the control body is assigned to the control body by the Ministry of Agriculture, which consists of the following (OG 11/2020):

- HR – code of the Republic of Croatia,
- ECO – a term that establishes a connection with an ecological production process,
- "00" – two-digit reference number.

From the reference number, it can be concluded the dynamics of the registration of control bodies in Croatia, i.e. that Bioinspekt d.o.o. is the first control body that is registered for monitoring organic agricultural production in Croatia.

Table 1 List of authorized control bodies and use of services of control bodies by members of the Association Ekoplod

Control body	Code number	Address	Members of the Association Ekoplod who use the services
BIOINSPEKT d.o.o	HR-EKO-01	Đakovština 2, Osijek	0
ZADRUGA AGRIBIOCERT	HR-EKO-03	Janka Polića Kamova 57, Rijeka	3
BIOTECHNICON d.o.o.	HR-EKO-04	Hrvatskih iseljenika 30, Split	1
HRVATSKE ŠUME d.o.o.	HR-EKO-05	Ulica kneza Branimira 1, Zagreb	2

TRGO-INVEST d.o.o.	HR-EKO-06	Dragutina Rakovca 74, Bukovlje	0
BIO GARANTIE d.o.o.	HR-EKO-07	Ivana Mažuranića 2, Čakovec	6
BUREAU VERITAS d.o.o.	HR-EKO-08	Linhartova 49a, Ljubljana	0
EUROTALUS d.o.o.	HR-EKO-09	Franje Hermana 16 H, Zagreb	2
EKO RAZVOJ d.o.o.	HR-EKO-10	Vilajska ulica 19, Osijek	0
BIOTER d.o.o.	HR-EKO-12	Križevačka ulica 30, Koprivnica	14
MAREKO d.o.o.	HR-EKO-13	Stjepana Grubera 18, Županja	0
PROMO EKO d.o.o.	HR-EKO-14	Vij. I. Meštrovića 50, Osijek	0
EKOPLANT j.d.o.o.	HR-EKO-15	Jove Jovanovića Zmaja 43, Gaboš	0
PLANTADIS j.d.o.o.	HR-EKO-16	Galijska ulica 4, Veliko Polje- Zagreb	0
ALGO EKO d.o.o.	HR-EKO-17	Petra Preradovića 1, Bjelovar	0

Source: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, <https://poljoprivreda.gov.hr/istaknute-teme/poljoprivreda-173/poljoprivreda-175/ekoloska/popis-ovlastenih-kontrolnih-tijela/3671>

As for the structure of agricultural production, there are no members in the Association engaged in ecological animal husbandry, but only plant production. Table 2 indicates that producers primarily cultivate medicinal, spice, and ornamental plants. They also engage in mixed plantations of fruit species, with the most frequently reported combinations being hazelnuts, almonds, walnuts, plums, apricots, cherries, and many other types of fruit. In this way, monoculture is prevented and some other advantages can be highlighted, especially in ecological production, such as increased biodiversity in the orchard, reduction of pests and diseases, the variety of fruit trees provides better economic stability and so forth. According to the size of the agricultural areas used in organic production by the members of the Association Ekoplod, the cultivation of walnuts and hazelnuts as fruits, chamomile as medicinal plants, alfalfa as fodder crops, soybeans as field crops and vegetables in general are individually reported. All other vegetable crops are grown in areas smaller than 4.5 ha and one can see the variety of crops that are grown and represent a great market potential, primarily in the area of Koprivničko-križevačka County, considering that all members are from that area. In total, the members of the Association in organic production have a total of 201.4 ha of agricultural land,

of which the most are permanent plantations (114.0 ha), followed by arable land and gardens (81.9 ha) and the least permanent lawns (5.52), which can see from the table in attachment 2.

Table 2 Production structure of members of the Association Ekoplod

Type of production	(ha)
Medicinal, spicy, ornamental plants	59,99
Mixed plantation of fruit species	47,31
Walnut	26,80
Alfalfa	10,64
Chamomile	8,26
Soy	8,26
Hazelnut	6,70
Vegetables	4,93
Grasses and grass-like pastures	4,50
Hazelnut	3,66
Buckwheat	2,52
Dog rose	2,35
Rye	2,28
Spelt	1,98
Sweet chestnut	1,96
Sour Cherry	1,88
Meadows	1,02
English rye	0,74
Oats	0,71
Chokeberry	0,69
Plum	0,61
Siberian blueberry – Haskap	0,47
Lupine	0,38
Cherry	0,38
Wheat	0,36
Almond	0,27
Pear	0,25
Peach	0,22
Apple	0,19
Blueberry	0,16
Apricot	0,15
Kale, roses	0,10
Mountain ash	0,09
Mulberry	0,08
Quince	0,08
Red currant	0,06

Persimmon	0,06
Medlar	0,06
Fig	0,06
American blueberry	0,05
Blackberry	0,05
A noble vine	0,04
Josta	0,02
Jujube	0,02
TOTAL (ha)	201,39

Source: TRACES

The market potential can also be discussed from the aspect of total ecological areas and the total number of ecological producers in Koprivničko-križevačka County (table 3). There are a total of 170 ecological producers in the county. Out of these, 28 are Association Ekoplod members, representing 16.5% of the total. This relatively small share indicates a need to focus on increasing membership soon. However, if you look at the total ecological agricultural area in the Koprivničko-križevačka County, which is a total of 749 ha, it is evident that the members of the Association Ekoplod cultivate more than one quarter, or 26.9%, so it can be concluded that producers who have larger agricultural areas. Namely, the average size of organic producers of Association members is 7.2 ha, while the average size of organic producers in Koprivnica County is 4.4 ha (if the area and the number of organic producers who are members of the Association are reduced, the average size of other organic producers is even smaller, about 3.9 ha). Despite the abovementioned points, there is a growing market demand for ecological products. As the variety and quantity of these products increase, the Association should aim to attract more ecological producers to join its ranks. However, the author believes that this will be influenced by the implementation of various activities that must be accompanied by marketing through various marketing tools.

Table 3 Comparison of some parameters between organic producers of the Association Ekoplod and Koprivničko-križevačka County

	Association Ekoplod	Koprivničko-križevačka County	%
Ecological producers	28	170	16,5
Ecological areas (ha)	201,39	749	26,9
Average size by manufacturer (ha/producer)	7,2	4,4 (3,9)	-

Source: table 2, Ministry of Agriculture, Directorate for Professional Support for Agricultural Development

4.3. Survey of members of the Association Ekoplod

20 organic producers responded to the survey. It has already been mentioned that respondents under the age of 40 answered the survey independently electronically, while older respondents were asked to fill out the survey with the author on their farm, which has advantages in the sense that the author learned from the conversation and tour of the farm additional information and was able to take photos for further promotion of Association members through the website of the SOFI project in which the Association is involved.

After the survey was conducted among all members, the results were sent to the president of the Association for possible publication on the future website of the SOFI⁹ project. The SOFI project investigates the impact of local agriculture on climate change and biological diversity in the project areas, so the project managers proposed to present the ecological agricultural producers of Koprivničko-križevačka County on the website. At the time of writing the final paper, the website is being updated to better highlight the ecological producers from the county, i.e. the Association Ekoplod and it is assumed that all data will be entered by the end of the year. The president of the Association received assistance for future activities related to entering member information on the Association's website, particularly aimed at older farmers who often have limited computer skills.

The first part of the survey was creating a profile of the manufacturer. Here, respondents were asked to enter the name of the farm, the name and surname of the owner, the address of the farm and the type of production the farm is engaged in. These data are primarily used for registration on the aforementioned website and are personal data of each business, so they have not been analyzed in detail due to the protection of the respondents' data. In this part of the survey, eco-certificates were extracted for each member of the Association, whose data were analyzed in subsection 4.2.

The data from the second part of the survey are mostly related to the previous marketing activities of the members of the Association, which are shown in Table 4. From the analysis of the obtained data, it can be determined that the main distribution channel is the direct sale of products at the doorstep, then sales through the cooperative or some other entities and the Internet sale. Also, one respondent uses door-to-door delivery as a distribution channel, sales exclusively at the local level to friends and acquaintances, sales of the entire nature to one

⁹ <https://sofi4agri.com/grupe/>

person or business entity and sales to restaurants and cafes. It can be seen that only two respondents use online sales of their products, which in the future could be a common distribution channel for all organic producers of the Association Ekoplod. Therefore, it is excellent that there are already producers in the Association who deal with this distribution channel due to the exchange of experience between members and help related to the creation of a joint application for sales where consumers will have a diverse range of ecological products in one place. It was surprising that five of the respondents do not sell their products. This is mainly because they are young fruit tree plantations that have yet to produce a crop. One respondent mentioned that there are currently no sales because each brandy is archived and aged for ten years. Most respondents still have a relatively small amount of products and already have well-established distribution channels where sales are made to the same customers, so it is very important to maintain the quality of existing and possible new products. Most of them rely on "word of mouth" communication, although they may refer to it by different names. As shown in Table 4, this includes "face-to-face" interactions where friends and neighbors share positive stories about a quality product with each other. Given that farmers often say that they have neither money nor time for marketing, this research result is expected because this form of marketing is free and represents a word-of-mouth recommendation of agricultural ecological products by a satisfied consumer to other potential buyers. According to one survey, 84% of consumers partially or fully trust customer recommendations and the effectiveness of marketing messages is 54% higher than traditional advertising methods.¹⁰ Moreover, the research highlights that 43% of consumers are influenced to make a purchase based on recommendations from friends and acquaintances on social networks. Therefore, it would be an excellent opportunity to revitalize the existing Facebook page of the Association Ekoplod and use it for joint promotion of the ecological products offered by its members. In a conversation with ecological producers of the Association Ekoplod, the author learns how long it takes for their product to become recognizable - they pointed out that it only takes a few weeks at the level of their municipality. One member, who sells his products in prestigious restaurants, noted that it took approximately two years for his product to gain recognition in that market. This observation aligns with research conducted by Renko and Brečić (2016), which found that it takes an average of 22.6 months to introduce a new product in the US market, 19.1 months in Japan and 23.4 months in Europe. Some members sell their products to restaurants and cafes on the Adriatic coast and they say that a quality product always gets good customers.

¹⁰ <https://marketingfancier.com/marketing-od-usta-do-usta-vaznost-preporuka/>

None of the respondents do consumer segmentation, which is not surprising since they are smaller producers of ecological products. When it comes to recognizing competition on the market, half of the respondents are aware that there is competition and half of them think that there is no competition. When we take half of the respondents who said that they are aware that they have competition, five of them claim that they do not follow their work and generally point out that "there is competition, but I don't worry because I believe in my quality". Only five of them use the entrepreneurial method of creative thinking, which is an innovative imitation where they follow the work of competitors with critical analysis and modification. The final question in this section of the survey pertains to customer care after a purchase. Most of the 11 respondents actively engage with consumers post-purchase by soliciting feedback on their satisfaction with the product. This feedback allows them to implement a "best cost" strategy, which involves enhancing the product's features to ensure customer satisfaction and provide greater value. One of the interviewees points out, *"I am looking for feedback." I want to fix things that consumers suggest to me.*" Four respondents take care of consumers by maintaining contact with consumers after the purchase and thus can inform their customers about novelties or similar by message or call. Nine respondents do not take care of consumers after purchase.

Table 4. Marketing activities of the members of the Association Ekoplod

Basic Question	Sub-question	Number of answers
Distribution channels	Home threshold	7
	No sales	5
	Delivery	1
	Selling locally, to friends	1
	Sale to one person	1
	Sales to restaurants, cafes	1
	Sale through a cooperative or group	2
	Internet sales	2
Communication with customers and how you reach them	Recommendation through a friend	7
	Eye to eye	3
	Telephone	2
	I don't reach customers	5
	Only neighbors and fellow citizens	3
Consumer segmentation	Yes	0
	No	20
Competition	I have	5
	I have, but I don't follow their work	5
	I don't have any	10

Care for consumers after purchase	Yes, I am looking for feedback	7
	Yes, I keep in touch	4
	No	9

Source: conducted survey

Table 5 shows the results of the third part of the survey "Producer Stories", which gives answers as to how, why and with what ambitions the members of the Association Ekoplod approach organic farming. Half of the respondents point to an ecological and healthy lifestyle as the main motive for engaging in organic farming. Five respondents have a similar motive, but their primary concern is nature conservation. Three respondents pointed out that they entered organic farming solely for the sake of greater incentives compared to conventional production, so one of the respondents stated that *"the family property was small and the production of arable crops was unprofitable. High subsidies in organic production were crucial for registration in the register of subjects in organic production"*. Two respondents did not point out any motive for engaging in that part of agriculture.

Concerning processing techniques and methods, most respondents—15 in total—reported using the mowing method (including mulching and flaxing). Four respondents indicated they use fertilization, while one employs undermining. Additionally, numerous other processing techniques and methods emerged in the research, providing interesting data for analyzing the efforts of economies to address climate change. Nine interviewees have a business motto that guides them, representing a figurative idea or a catchphrase for their business practices. Some of them are very creative and interesting and some are already known through some songs or commercials, but they will surely help when promoting the economy:

- "Buckwheat, millet, rye and spelt, eat it and you will be healthy and alive"
- "Family journey towards ecological inspiration. A family together - a happy family!"
- "Persistence in ecological production"
- "Never give up"
- "If you don't start, you won't arrive"
- "Endure as long as it lasts"
- "Work as much as you can and at the same time enjoy both the work and the fruits of your work!"
- "Blue & healthy" (blueberry production)
- "Family together".

13 respondents have plans for the future in terms of increasing ecological agricultural areas or purchasing machinery, increasing the range of ecological products through primary production and processing, improving production, increasing parterre relationships with other ecological producers or increasing through non-agricultural activities:

- "They have big plans, only the sky is their limit! One more year to grow, in a year or two to start processing, and maybe venture into the tourism business as well".

- "The plans are to develop business partnerships and sales channels with other organic producers, especially producers of the Association Ekoplod so that we can jointly expand the market and highlight the quality and value of organic products."

-

Seven of them have no plans for the future, that is, no ambitions to expand and increase their business (mostly older farmers).

Table 5. Stories about producers

Basic question	Sub-question	Number of answers
The basic motive for engaging in ecological agriculture	Ecological and healthy lifestyle	10
	Incentives	3
	Because of nature conservation	5
	There is no motive	2
What organic farming methods or techniques do you use in your cultivation	Fertilization	4
	Mowing	15
	Subversion	1
Business motto	There is	9
	There is none	11
Plans for the future	There is	13
	There is none	7

Source: Conducted survey

The last chapter of the survey was designed so that the members of the Association give feedback for the further work of the Association, and they are presented in Table 6. Through the first question, it is evident that the majority of members see the Association Ekoplod in a positive atmosphere and emphasize:

- "I think that the Association is going in the right direction and that we are growing and developing awareness of the importance of ecological production.

- "I see the Association Ekoplod as an active Association of producers, with diverse ecological products that they jointly promote and sell in one place".

- "I currently see the future in the work of the Association".
- "I see it as an active Association of producers with diverse ecological products."
- "Communication has been excellent lately. We meet more and get to know each other. Mutual visits have begun."
-

It is important to emphasize that no respondents reacted negatively to this question and five of them have no opinion about the future work of the Association (mostly these are the same respondents who answered that they have no plans for the future of their economy).

Most respondents believe that the Association Ekoplod could help in the marketing and distribution of ecological products in the following ways:

- "The problem is that we don't often have time for advertising, and every advertisement on the side is welcome."
- "Joint Association of producers and joint exit to the market and various (eco)manifestations, which would reduce exhibition costs".
- "Perhaps it would be good to agree with the market on a specific day for organic sales, but I think that for that, it is a prerequisite that organic producers have a sufficient and stable supply".
- "Joint collection of products for larger customers." More members, more diverse offer. With a wider range of products, the Association could more easily access tenders for sales".
- "Exchange of experiences and contacts with other Associations and their experiences".
- "I hope that the Association will sign up for some projects that will make it easier, i.e. to design marketing solutions through a joint logo, a website where sales could also be done, to promote ourselves as ecological producers so that consumers can find us on the market..."
- "One person must be involved in this issue, but for the Association to be able to ensure the distribution of products, it would be preferable to change its organizational form to a cooperative or producer organization.
-

Most of the members of the Association believe that the model of joint entry to the market would be the best option for all members of the Association in terms of marketing because it gives them strength when negotiating with customers, as well as the breadth of the range of

different products in response to consumer demand. However, they are aware that this might be too much of a commitment for a non-profit organization, or a person who would manage all of the above and that in this endeavor the members of the Association should think about some form of for-profit Association. Five respondents believe that it would not be feasible to go to the market together. However, they suggest that the members could assist one another by collaborating on an advertisement, coordinating a specific day for eco-friendly sales with the market, exchanging contact information, and exclusively promoting through the Association's presentation. Four members have not expressed an opinion on how the Association Ekoplod could assist with marketing activities because they are unfamiliar with the model for mutual support. It is important to note that none of the respondents answered negatively to this question; rather, they believe the Association could be beneficial in this area.

Table 6. Questions for the future work of the Association Ekoplod

Basic question	Sub-question	Number of answers
How do you see the Association Ekoplod in the future?	Positively	15
	Negative	-
	I don't have an opinion	5
Do you think that the Association Ekoplod could help in the marketing and distribution of ecological products?	Yes	16
	No	-
	I don't have an opinion	4
How could you help each other?	Joint market entry	11
	Other	5
	I don't have an opinion	4

Source: conducted survey

This chapter provides insight into the operations of a highly ambitious and united association in Koprivničko-križevačka County. As one survey participant noted, "The only limit is the sky," indicating the Association's aspirations for the future and present.

5. CONCLUSION

Agricultural associations play a crucial role in addressing social interests and enhancing economic positions. Through these associations, farmers can pursue common goals without prioritizing profit. However, for the promotion of common interests and goals, financial resources from membership fees are not always sufficient, so non-profit associations try to raise the necessary financial resources in different ways to achieve the goals. The paper analyzes the association of organic producers and consumers Ekoplod with an emphasis on marketing activities and the research results show the following:

- Today, the Association has 28 members, which is 16.5% of the total number of ecological producers in Koprivničko-križevačka County. However, they cultivate 26.9% of the total organic agricultural land in the county, so the conclusion is that larger organic producers are united in the Association Ekoplod with an average size of 7.2 ha/farm.
- Most members plan to expand in the future in terms of increasing ecological agricultural areas or purchasing machinery, increasing the range of ecological products through primary production or processing, improving production, increasing parterre relations with other ecological producers or increasing through non-agricultural activities.
- The Association was founded in 2012, and was most active in the first two years of operation, when members promoted their ecological productions on Open Door Days.
- The Association had an active Facebook page until 2014.
- In the last five years, the Association has become active in terms of applying for projects at the national, regional and local level and individual members of the Association have become active members in organizations at the national level. Changes in the legislative framework and measures for agriculture are also being actively initiated.
- In the last two years, the Association has been participating in the project through participation in panel discussions, through inspecting their products and visiting their farms. By the end of the year, all members will be able to promote themselves on the project's website "under the hood" of the Association of Ecological Producers of Koprivničko-križevačka County. Also, a cooperation agreement was concluded with the Križevci University of Applied Sciences so that students could do professional practice in the Association, so this research was done within that framework.
- As the main motive for engaging in ecological agriculture, most members of the Association emphasize an ecological and healthy way of life and the preservation of nature.
- Most of the members of the Association have a relatively small quantity and assortment of products for sale, which they sell mostly through direct door-to-door sales, and as communication with customers they mostly use free promotion of satisfied consumers "by word of mouth". Only two members of the Association use online sales of their products, which in the future could be a common distribution channel for all organic producers of the Association Ekoplod.

- None of the surveyed members of the Association does consumer segmentation, but most of them care for consumers after the purchase by asking for feedback on product satisfaction or maintaining contact with consumers through messages or calls. Most of the members of the Association emphasize an interesting business motto, which could certainly be used in the future promotion of the members of the Association.

- Most respondents believe that the Association Ekoplod could help in the marketing and distribution of ecological products by jointly promoting and selling products on the market. They are aware of the fact that marketing activities are individually expensive, so it seems to them that in this way they would share the costs and increase the range of products. However, knowing that there are very demanding activities hidden there for which someone should be paid, they believe that for joint sales they should be organized in some profitable form such as a cooperative. Therefore, there remains an opportunity to revitalize the existing Facebook page for the time being or to promote the members of the Association on the website of the project in which the Association Ekoplod is involved, but there is a fear that the promotion will last as long as the project.

Based on the aforementioned research results, it can be concluded that the Association Ekoplod constantly communicates with its members through various interest and educational activities, but there are no constant marketing activities and tools that would make them closer to consumers. As a non-profit organization, the Association Ekoplod has been carrying out various activities for the last two years in order to improve visibility on the market. The survey additionally confirms the enthusiasm and desire for joint work of the members of the Association Ekoplod in terms of marketing.

6. LITERATURE

1. Ahumada, O., i Villalobos, J.R. (2009). Application of planning models in the agri-food supply chain: A review. *European Journal of Operational Research* 196(1): 1-20.
2. Bojkić, V., Vrbančić, M., Žibrin, D. i Čut, M. (2016). Digital Marketing in Agricultural Sector, *ENTRENOVA - ENTerprise REsearch InNOVAtion*, 2 (1), 419-424.
3. Broz, T., Švaljegl, S. (2019): Mikrokozmos zadružnog gospodarstva: gdje i kako posluju hrvatske zadruge?, *Sociologija i prostor*, 57 (2 (214)), 107-138

4. Handayati, Y., Simatupang, T.M. i Perdana, T. (2015). Agri-food supply chain coordination: the state-of-the-art and recent developments. *Logistics Research*, 8(5)
5. Hrvatska enciklopedija, mrežno izdanje. Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 2013. – 2024.
6. Jerčinović, S. (2019). Utjecaj pojedinih čimbenika instrumenta marketinga na uspješnost subjekta lokalnog tržišta hrane u Koprivničko-križevačkoj županiji. *Podravina*, 18 (35), 217-225.
7. Kljako, A. (2019). Menadžment odnosa sa potrošačima, *LOGOS*, Godina IV./br.3, 21-26
8. Kostanjki, L. (2023). Proizvođačke organizacije kao oblik udruživanja poljoprivrednih proizvođača, završni rad, Veleučilište u Križevcima, Križevci
9. Marjanović, B i Pervan, R. (2020). Postupak i značaj segmentacije tržišta na primjeru tržišta nekretnina, *Zbornik radova Veleučilišta u Šibeniku*, 14 (1-2), 35-43.
10. Meler, M. (2002) *Marketing*, dotiskano izdanje, Osijek, Sveučilište Josipa Jurja Strossmayera u Osijeku, Ekonomski fakultet u Osijeku
11. Meler, M. (2003): *Neprofitni marketing*, Ekonomski fakultet u Osijeku, Osijek
12. Ministarstvo poljoprivrede (2023): *Godišnje izvješće o stanju poljoprivrede u 2022. godini*, Ministarstvo poljoprivrede, Uprava za poljoprivrednu politiku, EU i međunarodnu suradnju, Zagreb
13. Mlinarić, M. (2022): *Marketing neprofitnih organizacija na primjeru Udruge „Bolje sutra“*, završni rad, Sveučilište Sjever, Koprivnica
14. Nedanov, A.; Franić, R. i Gugić, J. (2012). Analiza zadružnog zakonodavstva Republike Hrvatske, u: Pospišil, M. (Ur.). *Zbornik radova s 47. Hrvatskog i 7. Međunarodnog Simpozija Agronoma*. Zagreb: Agronomski fakultet: 212-216.
15. Pavičić, J. (2003.): *Strategija marketinga neprofitnih organizacija*. Masmedia d.o.o.,
16. *Pravilnik o kontrolnom sustavu ekološke poljoprivrede*, NN 11/2020
17. Renko, N., Brečić, R. (2016), *Marketing malih i srednjih poduzeća*, Zagreb, Školska knjiga, str. 2 -7.
18. Štimac, H., Cah, M. (2012). Utjecaj okruženja na marketinško pozicioniranje SOS Dječjeg sela Hrvatska, *Ekonomski vjesnik*, XXV(1), str. 193-203
19. Turkalj, D. (2012.): *Marketing agrosubjekata u informatičkom okruženju*, *oljoprivreda*, 18 (1), 74-75
20. *Uredba o kriterijima, mjerilima i postupcima financiranja i ugovaranja programa i projekata od interesa za opće dobro koje provode udruge* (NN 26/2015)

21. Uremović, I. (2024): Primjena marketinga u neprofitnim organizacijama, završni rad, Sveučilište Josipa Jurja Strossmayera u Osijeku, Fakultet agrobiotehničkih znanosti Osijek
22. Zakon o udrugama (NN 74/14)
23. Ziemiańczyk, U. i Krakowiak-Bal, A. (2018). Factors influencing food supply chains in the context of existing food quality schemes. *Infrastructure and ecology of rural areas*, 4(1), 1111-1122

Internet sources

1. American marketing Association <https://www.ama.org/the-definition-of-marketing-what-is-marketing/>
2. Certifikat ekološkog proizvođača, <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/tracesnt/directory/publication/organic-operator/index>
3. Europska komisija – trgovina ekološkim proizvodima https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/farming/organic-farming/trade_hr
4. Hadelan, L. (2019): Prednosti poslovnog povezivanja poljoprivrednika, *Gospodarski list*, <https://gospodarski.hr/rubrike/agroekonomika/prednosti-poslovnog-povezivanja-poljoprivrednika/>
5. Nacionalna razvojna strategija Republike Hrvatske do 2030. godine, [Nacrt NRS 2030 i Dodaci-12112020.pdf \(gov.hr\)](#)
6. Očić, V (2024): Udruženi proizvođači ostvaruju benefite u proizvodnji i tržištu, *Gospodarski list*, <https://gospodarski.hr/rubrike/ostalo/udruzeni-proizvodaci-ostvaruju-benefite-u-proizvodnji-i-trzistu>
7. Popis ovlaštenih kontrolnih tijela <https://poljoprivreda.gov.hr/istaknute teme/poljoprivreda-173/poljoprivreda-175/ekoloska/popis-ovlastenih-kontrolnih-tijela/3671>
8. Projekt SOFI, <https://sofi4agri.com/grupe/>

7. INCLOSURES

INCLOSURE 1 – Poll

PRODUCER PROFILE CREATION:

Name of OPG:

Type of production that OPG deals with:

Owner of OPG:

Address of OPG:

Control body and certificate (attach a scanned image):

CURRENT MARKETING ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCT PRESENTATION:

Present your products for sale. *This may include product descriptions, photos, pricing, availability, and delivery or pickup information.*

What are all the distribution channels? (where you sell your products - directly, indirectly, Internet...)

How do you communicate with customers and through which channels do you reach them?

Do you do consumer segmentation? (gender, age, ability to pay)

Do you have competition? If so, are you studying their strategy?

Worried about consumers after purchase? If so, how?

STORIES ABOUT PRODUCERS:

Some interesting stories about you that you would bring closer to consumers. These stories can include information about how you got started in organic farming, your values and goals, and the challenges you face.

The basic motive for practicing organic farming (how did you start practicing organic farming, what prompted you to take this path?)

What organic farming methods or techniques do you use in your cultivation? How do you apply them in practice?

Business motto:

Plans for the future:

Desirable: Pictures of PRODUCTS, FAMILIES AT OPG, OPG,

QUESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE WORK OF THE ASSOCIATION EKOPLOD:

1. How do you see the Association Ekoplod in the future
2. Do you think that the Association Ekoplod could help in the distribution and marketing of ecological products
3. How?


Inclosure 2

Table 7 Structure of ecological areas of members of the Association Ekoplod and ecological producers in Koprivničko-križevačka County

	Association Ekoplod	Koprivničko-križevačka County	%
Arable fields and gardens	81,87	345	23,7
Permanent lawns	5,52	22	25,1
Permanent plantations	114	382	29,8
TOTAL	201,39	749	26,9

Source : table 2, Ministry of Agriculture, Directorate for Professional Support for Agricultural Development

Statement of Academic Integrity

 VELEUČILIŠTE U KRIŽEVcima
KRIŽEVCI UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES
48260 KRIŽEVCI, Mislava Demerca 1, HRVATSKA / CROATIA
• Tel +385 (0)48 279 182, 681 597, 279 216, 617 958 • E-mail: uprava@vguk.hr

IZJAVA STUDENTA O AKADEMSKOJ ČESTITOSTI

Ja, TIMON FABIJANEC, OIB 20928996144
rođen/a 12.4.2002. u KOPRIVNICI pod punom
odgovornošću svojim potpisom potvrđujem da sam samostalno izradio/la završni rad
pod naslovom:
MARKETINŠKE AKTIVNOSTI UDRUGE EKOPLOD

- da je rad napisan u skladu s Uputama za pisanje završnog rada Veleučilišta u Križevcima
- da je rad napisan u duhu hrvatskog jezika i gramatički ispravan
- da je ovo moj autorski rad (niti jedan dio nije nastao kopiranjem ili plagiranjem tuđeg sadržaja)
- da su svi korišteni literaturni izvori odgovarajuće citirani i navedeni u popisu literature
- da je sažetak na engleskom jeziku gramatički ispravan (diplomski studiji)
- da je elektronička verzija ovog rada identična tiskanoj koju su odobrili mentor i članovi Povjerenstva

U slučaju da se u bilo kojem trenutku dokaže suprotno, spreman/na sam snositi posljedice uključivo i poništenje javne isprave stečene na temelju ovoga rada.

U Križevcima, 2.9.2024.

Potpis studenta/studentice
