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LONG-RANGE DIRECTIONS FOR STRENGTHENING THE COMPETITIVENESS OF CONFECTIONERY ENTERPRISES IN UKRAINE

Abstract. The article defines the essence of the competitiveness of food products from the point of view of both the manufacturer and the consumer, and also focuses on the main factors influencing the competitiveness of products. The level of perception of food products by consumers is analyzed and the main groups of domestic products by the level of competitiveness are distinguished - a group of competitive products, a group of products of long-range competitiveness and a group of products with a low prospect of competitiveness.

The domestic market of confectionery products was investigated by volume of production and consumption, and the main factors of demand reduction were revealed. The structure of export of confectionery products by commodity groups is considered and the share of export regions is determined.

The rating has been analyzed and the position of the leading Ukrainian confectionery enterprises on the world market is determined, the consumer preferences and main factors of influence when consumers make a purchase decision are outlined.

The growth factors of the world market of confectionery products, which are rather closely interconnected and cause each other, and new trends of the world market that need to be taken into account by domestic enterprises are determined.

The internal market of confectionery products and factors hindering its development are analyzed.

It is grounded that an effective system of distribution in the aspect of developing new formats and expanding the network of

branded stores will promote the increase of the competitiveness of domestic products on the domestic market.

The directions of the state policy concerning protection of interests of domestic commodity producers for improving the competitiveness of manufactured products are determined.

Key words: *competitiveness of products, confectionery enterprises, competitive potential, market of food products, consumer value, level of incomes, quality, price.*

The effectiveness of enterprises in the market environment is largely determined by the validity and timeliness of the decision to create and offer consumers new products. At the same time, operating in a highly competitive market, manufacturing enterprises are continuously struggling to increase the competitiveness of manufactured products with the goal of increasing the market share and obtaining additional profit.

Traditionally, the competitiveness of food products is understood as a set of their characteristics, consumer and value, which provide better satisfaction of the specific needs of consumers at a certain time in a particular market in comparison with analogues[2, c.111]. In this case, competitiveness should be considered from different points of view.

From the consumer's point of view, the product has the highest competitive potential, if it provides the maximum beneficial effect in relation to the price due to consumer characteristics. From the manufacturer's point of view, products that are recognized by consumers are more competitive and at the same time more effective for the commodity producer than similar products[1, c.24].

In this regard, the competitiveness of products should express the interests of not only the consumer, but also the commodity producer. The results of numerous studies on the market of food products make it possible to conclude that the manufacturing of high added value products is one of the key conditions for the company's success on the market. With the help of a product that has market novelty, you can create a new market, outstrip competitors, increase your income. An enterprise can provide a certain difference

from others only if it creates a greater or comparable value to competitors for consumers at a lower cost.

It should be noted that in the conditions of European integration, the state is also interested in increasing the competitive potential of domestic products. Only competitive products can provide replacement of imported food on the domestic market and will allow to win stable positions on the foreign market[3, c.10].

The competitiveness of food products is a multi-faceted concept that characterizes its ability to compete on domestic and foreign markets and is measured by the presence degree of domestic products on them. Two of the main interconnected factors that determine competitiveness are the cost of production and sales prices, which are largely determined by the quality of agricultural raw materials and food[6, c.4].

However, it should be noted that in highly developed countries, among the factors of competitiveness of food products, the price is not dominant. The main attention is paid to quality, and in the case of food - the leading position is the nutritional value. In Ukraine, as before, competitiveness is related both to quality and to price. The main consumers of innovative products, which have higher qualitative characteristics, and tend to be more expensive, are consumers who put quality first.

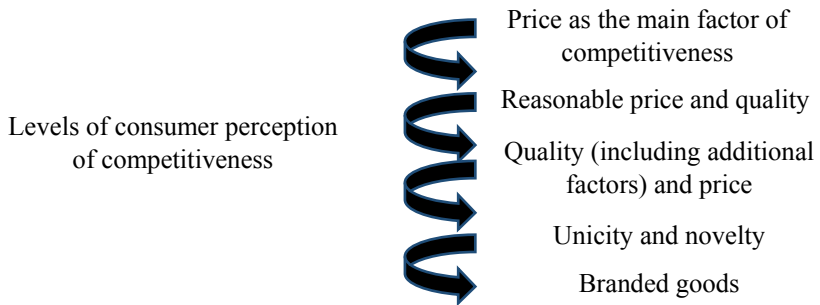


Fig. 1. Levels of consumers' perception of food products competitiveness

Levels of consumers' perception of food products competitiveness are shown on Fig. 1

Consequently, the competitiveness of products is a multifaceted concept. It determines the proportionality of the product characteristics to the market conditions, and, in particular, the specific demands of consumers, both in terms of their qualitative parameters, and in economic, commercial and other conditions of its implementation.

The results of the authors' own research provide the basis for determining three groups of domestic products by the level of competitiveness:

- a group of competitive products is vegetable oil (sunflower, rapeseed, soya), confectionery, beer, liquor, products of the flour-grinding industry, bakery products;

- a group of promising competitiveness products - meat and meat products, milk and dairy products, vegetables, eggs, potatoes, honey;

- a group of products with a low prospect of competitiveness - sugar, fruits, grapes, fish and fish products.

As can be seen from this grouping, confectionery is a competitive product, which in the future is characterized by the maintenance and strengthening of existing positions at the expense of production intensification, but the general trends in the development of the industry due to the economic and political situation in the country compel enterprises to review developed strategies to strengthen the competitive positions of manufactured goods.

Like most domestic markets, the Ukrainian confectionery market has lost much of its consumption in recent years. According to the company MRC Brand, in 2016 the production of confectionery products in all product groups decreased compared to 2015: products containing cocoa - by 10.7%, sugar confectionery, including white chocolate - by 3.2%, sweet biscuits, wafers - by 0,8%[4, c.43]. Groups where the low and middle price segments are sufficiently developed lost less than others in the volumes of production. In conditions of social and economic instability in the country, the price factor goes first among all the criteria for choosing goods by end users.

Among the negative factors that led to the narrowing of the market, the main ones are: significant part of the country loss, decrease in purchasing power of the population, currency risks in the

procurement of ingredients and raw materials, increase energy costs. The increased operating costs of manufacturing and trading enterprises leads to an increase in retail prices, which, given the low purchasing power of the population, leads to a decline in the sales of confectionery products, especially in medium-high and premium price segments. The largest share in such price segments have chocolate products.

The decline in production is due to both hryvnia devaluation and the closure of the Russian market. This is accompanied by a blockade by the Russian Federation of Ukrainian transit of confectionery products to the countries of Transcaucasia, Central Asia and China.

But not the last role in this belongs to the political events of the last few years, as a result of which two powerful producers – KONTI and AVK- had to give up some of their assets in the area of the anti-terrorist operation.

The decline in production was reflected in the world ranking of Ukrainian confectionery companies. So, Roshen, AVK and KONTI have lost several positions in the ranking of the world's most powerful sweeteners in the world of Global Top 100 Candy Companies - 2017.

‘Candy Industry’ is an American industry publication, founded in 1944, which annually publishes the top 100 global top-level confectionery companies Global Top 100. It is based on annual sales revenue data, the number of employees, the range and production assets of companies. So, according to a rating published on the site of the edition of ‘Candy Industry’ Roshen company dropped in 2017 on 2 positions - to the 24th place. Its revenues remained unchanged compared with the 2016 rating (\$ 800 million). The company owns eight factories, the staff is estimated about 10 thousand[5, c.7].

The company KONTI has fallen on 5 positions, to the 43 place in the rating. Its revenues decreased by 1% compared to the 2016 year data, to \$ 469 million. According to the publication, the company owns five factories, and 3.79 thousand people are employed.

AVK in the ranking occupies the 67th position, dropped by 5 positions compared to 2016. According to ‘Candy Industry’,

AVK's revenue is \$ 275 million, the company owns three plants, the total number of employees - 3.5 thousand people.

Regarding the domestic market, the vacant space on the shelves of supermarkets immediately were occupied by more successful competitors. In particular, Nestle's chocolate sales in Ukraine grew by 16.4% (to UAH 615.3 million) and flour products - by 54% (to UAH 337.5 million), although confectionery products are not the main company's specialization . At the same time, the net profit of another transnational player - Mondelis Ukraine (formerly Kraft Foods Ukraine) has decreased in the similar situation.

Kharkiv Corporation Biskvit-Shokolad managed to increase production by 7% and shipping of export over 30% of all manufactured products, and increased domestic sales by 18%.

The Roshen corporation feels the most confident on the Ukrainian confectionery market, although it has not even succeeded in avoiding the negative effects of the crisis. In particular, one of the production sites of the company in Vinnitsa uses only one-third of its capacities, and the other one - 50%.

Roshen for this period seeks to balance all production capacities and adapt to new business conditions. However, even in such a situation Roshen does not stop investing in its development. Until 2020 the corporation plans to build and run biscuit factory in Boryspil (Kyiv region). The new assets will cost approximately UAH 2.8 billion and its production capacity will be 20 thousand tons[4, c.43].

The results of consumer surveys in the 19 product categories of the Nielsen company confirm that the price is the most important factor in making purchasing decisions[5, c.8]. As for confectionery products for Ukrainian consumers, the taste of a product is also an important criterion. Therefore, those brand owners who now replace expensive imported ingredients in the foods' recipe retain the organoleptic quality characteristics of products and can hold the loyalty of end users.

Answering to the question of Nielsen company «Do you usually buy confectionery of local or international producers?», 53% of respondents preferred the candy/chocolate and 63% - cookies from domestic producers(Fig. 2). The reason for such habits in 60% of cases was a favorable price for consumers.

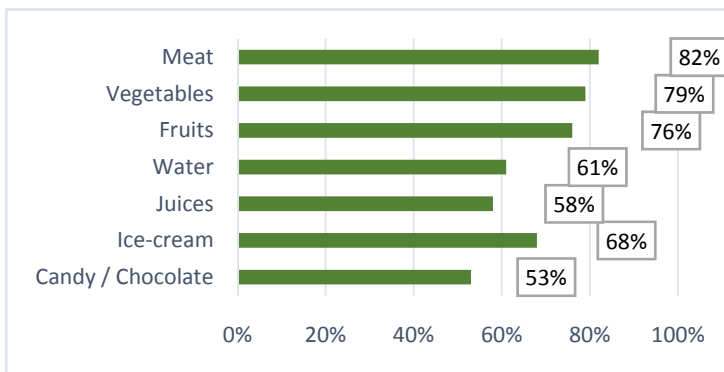


Fig. 2 The comparison of consumer benefits from purchasing domestic products

Thus, it is precisely the income level of the population that holds back the tendency of products premiumization. According to Nielsen in Ukraine only 15% of confectionery consumers are willing to buy sweets in the premium segment and 10% - cookies/crackers/biscuits[5, c.8].

The leaders of the domestic confectionery market have all the means necessary to organize the export of their products: modern capacities, advanced technology, certification required. Until recently, the share of exports in the total volume of sales of domestic enterprises was quite significant. However, with the loss of the Russian market and the logistical difficulties of transit supplies to Asia, this share declined.

Consider the structure of the export of confectionery products in three main commodity groups: sweet wares, including white chocolate; chocolate and other ready-to-eat foods containing cocoa; flour products, such as gingerbreads/sweet cookies/wafers. Due to the specificity of the grouping of goods of the State Customs Service of Ukraine, some confectionery products will not appear in this structure of exports, as they are included in other commodity groups. According to the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, in 2016 about 177 thousand tons of confectionery products were exported in total in the three commodity groups mentioned above. Among them,

the largest volumes of exports belong to the group of sugar products, including white chocolate - 71.1 thousand tons. Export of chocolate and other ready-made food products containing cocoa was about 53.3 thousand tons, and gingerbreads/sweet dry cookies/waffles– 52.6 thousand tons (Figure 3)

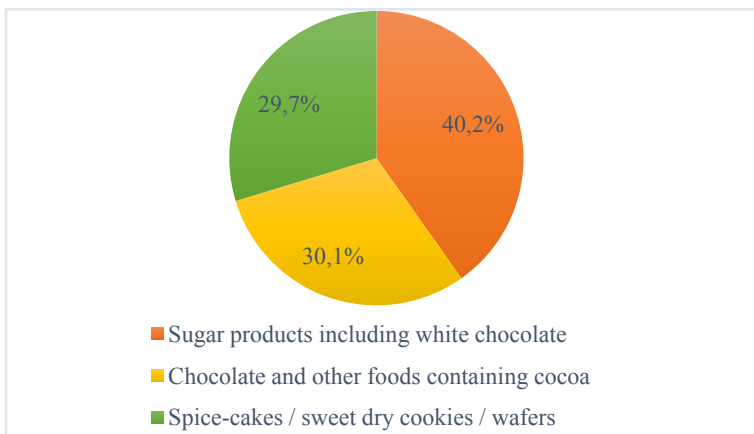


Fig. 3 The structure of confectionery products export by product groups, 2016

In the structure of the regions share of domestic confectionery products export in three main product groups the largest volumes are among the of the markets of CIS countries - a total of 96.2 thousand tons. The European market is on second place - 37.2 thousand tons. Asian countries imported from our country in 2016 about 23.8 thousand tons of the indicated products (Fig. 4).

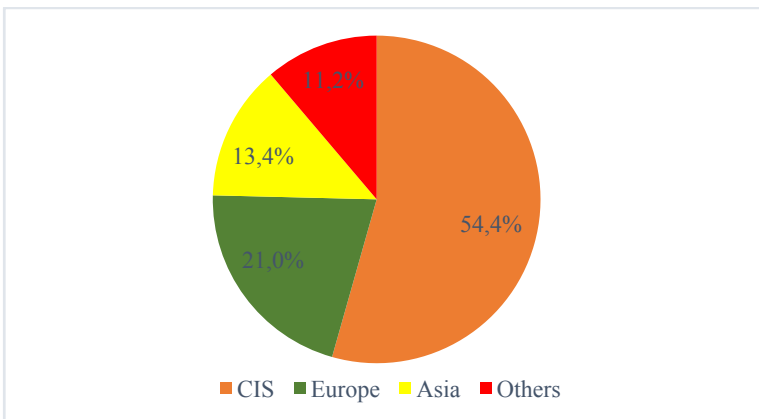


Fig. 4. Share of export regions, 2016

At the present time, among the largest consumer countries of confectionery products, the following can be distinguished: the CIS - the countries of Central and Western Asia: Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, and others; Europe - the Baltic States, Poland, Bulgaria, Germany, Spain and others; Southeast Asia - Iran, Afghanistan, Mongolia, China and others. In addition, a certain percentage is export to Africa, the Middle East, America.

According to Global Industry Analysts Inc. The global confectionery market should reach \$ 226.8 billion by 2020. According to NOVONOUS research, in the period from 2016-2020, the global confectionery market will grow at an average annual rate of 3.8%. It is expected that the segment of chocolate confectionery products will grow by an average of 3.69% per year, sugar and chewing gum - by 3.72% and 4.39% respectively[4, c. 43]. International analytical companies divide the confectionery market for these three segments (Figure 5).

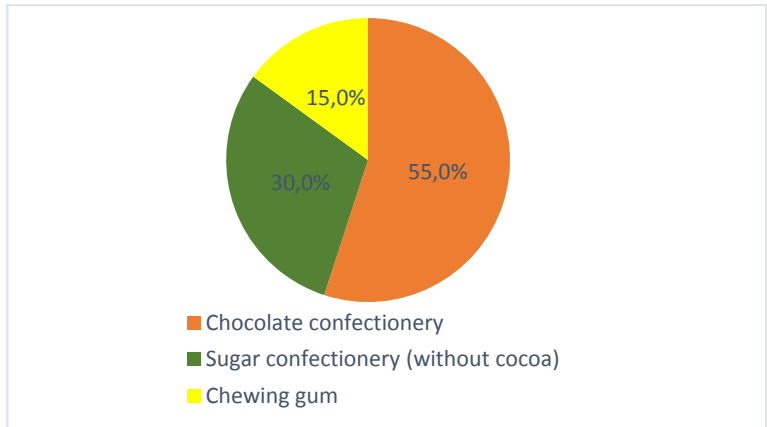


Fig. 5 The ratio of confectionery market segments shares

The largest consumption in this region is marked by markets in Germany and Italy. The European market is the most powerful sector of the world market for confectionery.

The Asia Pacific region is the fastest growing segment with an average rate of 6.6% by 2016. Such high growth rates are due to the popularity of international brands in Asian countries, as well as - the increased demand for easy-to-use food products among the growing middle class with a high level of revenue.

Analysts of PRNewswire distinguish the following factors of growth of the world market of confectionery products:

- constant innovations of brand owners;
- availability of a wide assortment of products;
- high rates of urbanization;
- the growth of the number of working women;
- the effect of the global trend of healthy eating;
- strong marketing strategies of companies;
- growth of incomes in developing countries[5, c.7].

All these market drivers are closely interconnected and conditional to each other. For example, the trend of healthy eating, which effect is particularly pronounced on the markets of developed countries, forms demand for functional confectionery products, low-fat products (low-calorie products), products in which instead of

sugar substitutes are used. Also, this trend stimulates the development of a rather independent and presently actively growing segment of organic confectionery products.

The demographic trend of growing urbanization and employment of women directly influences the variants of portions of confectionery products. Thus, the growing popularity is characterized by one-shot packaging, designed for convenient individual consumption. Most confectionery products in this package are positioned as convenient for consumption "on the go" and addressed to children of the senior school age, young people, consumers, who lead an active way of life.

Brand owners, in line with demand, and in some cases - forming it by implementing active marketing strategy, offer an assortment of innovations, both in the formulation of products and in consumer packaging. However, although most trends are global in nature, each regional market is characterized by demand patterns that are shaped by the influence of local culture and consumption traditions. For example, today on the Chinese market chocolate vegetables are becoming popular. But, for example, such confectionery may taste for Ukrainians too exotic to form even a niche product. Therefore, when choosing the sale and development strategy for foreign markets Ukrainian confectionery companies should rely on the analysis of global trends, as well as take into account the specifics of the regional market for the confectionery consumption.

Against the backdrop of the development of such a situation, it should be noted that the means of strengthening the competitiveness of Ukrainian confectionery products, which will be used by domestic enterprises, will in the long run be diametrically opposed, depending on the market orientation.

For the development of competitive products on foreign markets Ukrainian producers need to take into account the new trends of the world market of confectionery, which develop in accordance with the benefits of consumers, and timely predict those trends that will generate future demand. Over the next few years, the main trends of the world market of confectionery products according to Innova Market Insights are as follows:

- introduction of a "clean" label - presupposes the absence of artificial additives and preservatives, giving preferences to dyes from natural sources and plant extracts;

- use of frozen products (in particular, frozen pastries and semi-finished products);

- Growing demand for snacks and product portions - is conditioned by the transition from a long process of cooking and eating to a simplified system of snacks. This leads to an increase in demand for products in individual packaging, an increase in the range of snacks;

- enrichment of products with vitamins, minerals, food fibers, as well as omega-3 fatty acids and proteins[4, c.44].

Consumer health and well-being that has spread throughout the world in recent years will require companies to produce sugar-free confectionery using natural sweeteners with low content of salt and fats, or completely fat free versions of their favorite foods. Also, products that contain a significant number of complex low-glycemic index carbohydrates, which are slowly digested and can be a source of energy for a long period of time, will also be popular on the world market. This trend has a positive effect on the sale of cereal-based products, including oats, as well as so-called 'old' cereals from sprouted grains.

Given the world's tendencies, domestic producers should pay attention to the production of organically pure chocolate, the cost of which will be 50-60 UAH per tile. Such products, having significant export potential in Europe, in particular in Germany, will allow the expansion of the market for organically pure confectionery products, which until now remains unsaturated.

In addition to useful properties, in the long run, they will not lose their relevance and high flavor of products that will stimulate innovative developments in the field of confectionery production. In particular, the Swiss company Barry Sallee has recently developed a new kind of chocolate made from ruby cocoa beans, which is distinguished by pink color, light cream texture and berry taste, although such chocolate contains no berries or dyes. The Barry Sallee team has been working on a new breed for 13 years, creating the fourth "ruby" variety of chocolate after white, produced in 1937[5, c.8]. Experts believe that, despite the high price, a new

kind of chocolate can significantly revitalize the chocolate market, which at present is experiencing a significant incomes decline.

Therefore, in the future, in order to increase the competitiveness of their own products on foreign markets, enterprises need to refuse the principle of 'selling what we produce' and adapt to the needs of local markets. And the very development in this direction, against the backdrop of domestic market stagnation, will open up significant opportunities for domestic enterprises. Further expansion of Ukrainian confectionersexports is possible via such destinations as the United States, Great Britain, Germany, Poland, as well as the Baltic states. Britain and Germany are the world's largest consumers of confectionery products, and Poland is the country from which the access to Europe begins for many Ukrainian food producers. In this country, a powerful Ukrainian Diaspora is concentrated in which domestic products are familiar, so it is ready to buy it, but a highly competitive market will not allow a significant increase in sales. Expansion of exports in the future may be associated with Asian countries such as China, Thailand, South Korea and Vietnam.

Another situation will be observed on the domestic market, the development of which is hampered by a significant decline in purchasing power of the population, so the price of products will continue to remain a determining factor among consumer priorities. As sales analysis shows, the retail price for a box of chocolates above 70 UAH is "forbidden". The most popular price category is 30-60 UAH per unit, and premium products are bought by domestic consumers less often. Jelly, marshmallow, marmalade, waffle and caramel sweets, as well as large economic packages are the most preferred. Among all confectionery products, for example, weight chocolate sweets are only third in terms of sales, since the price is rather high compared to other types of candy because of the cost of the basic raw materials for the production of chocolate - African cocoa beans, which are 100% imported. Consequently, in the future, the competitive advantages of products will be related to changing packaging and recipes, the expansion of the range of flour and sugary products.

Increasing the competitiveness of products in the domestic market in terms of product promotion to the end user will be greatly

facilitated by an efficiently organized distribution system in terms of developing new formats and expanding the network of branded stores. Until recently, the development of branded stores was observed only in Roshen: its network has 44 trading platforms, one third more compared to 2015. In the near future, the company intends to compete with AVK and master the Dnipro market, as well as change the format of some outlets to cafe-confectionery.

At present, Roshen's competitors in the format of "own retail network" are:

- Kharkiv factory "Biscuit-Chocolate" (five stores, two kiosks and two shops with their own names - "Vedmeduk" and "ZolotyVulyk");

- Zhytomyr factory "Zhytomyrski Lasoshchi" (12 stores);

- Poltava company "Dominic" (12 stores);

- Kremenchuk company "Lucas" (6 stores).

In 2017, AVK opened its first branded store, whose investments amounted to more than 1 million UAH. In the near future, the company plans to open another 10 branded points in the city of Dnipro. Also, it is planned to launch its own online store, the presence of which can not boast any Ukrainian confectionery manufacturer.

It should be borne in mind that the branded network is a long-term investment, because sometimes the stores have to close or be rebranded after a certain period of time. According to Roshen, one outlet will cost about 1.5 million hryvnias, but the revenue of its own network will pay off.

Consequently, having its own store will strengthen the market position of the company, increase consumer loyalty to the brand, which will enhance its competitiveness. RetailNet analysts confirm that the opening of own outlets is profitable. For example, to start a store with an area of 200 m², you need \$ 50 thousand, while the profit from such a store comes at the same time[4, c.44]. In addition, own retail can become an effective lever in negotiating the terms of work with sales networks.

The effectiveness of enterprises' efforts to increase the competitiveness of their own products directly depends on the policy of the state. Imposed in 2016 embargo on the import of Russian white chocolate, dragees, jellies, chocolates containing alcohol, as

well as biscuits, if it is wholly or partially covered with chocolate, will foster the protection of domestic commodity producers interests on the domestic market and the enhancement of the competitiveness of the manufactured products as well as imposed anti-dumping duties on imports of chocolate and other ready-made cocoa products from Russia in June 2017. The anti-dumping duty rate is 31.33% and will be valid for five years. Imports into Ukraine of the Russian chocolate and other ready-made food containing cocoa will only be allowed upon payment of an anti-dumping duty.

According to statistics, in recent years, the volume of imported chocolate from Russia to Ukraine has been reduced to a minimum, and restrictive measures will lead to further displacement of Russian products on the Ukrainian market.

Conclusions. Consequently, in addition to maintaining the positions on the domestic market and already mastered in foreign markets, most of the major domestic confectionery producers are putting their strategic goals into the development of promising markets of the EU and the countries of the Asia-Pacific region. These markets are promising given due to, firstly, the European market is the largest consumer of confectionery products with stable demand, and markets in the Asian region, especially China and India, have shown the highest growth rates of confectionery consumption over the past years. The need to take into account currently prevalent trends in world markets, with the goal of expanding sales volumes and increasing the competitiveness of their own products, will force confectionery companies to display novelties in functional, organic and healthy food products.

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Страшинська Л.

Перспективні напрями підвищення конкурентоспроможності кондитерських підприємств України

Анотація. У статті визначено сутність конкурентоспроможності продовольчих товарів з точки зору як виробника, так і споживача, а також акцентовано увагу на основних чинниках, що впливають на конкурентоспроможність продукції. Проаналізовано рівні сприйняття споживачами конкурентоспроможності продовольчої продукції та виокремлено основні групи вітчизняної продукції за рівнем конкурентоспроможності – групу конкурентоспроможної продукції, групу продукції перспективної конкурентоспроможності і групу продукції з низькою перспективою створення конкурентоспроможності.

Досліджено вітчизняний ринок кондитерських виробів за обсягами виробництва та споживання та виявлено основні чинники зниження попиту. Розглянута структура експорту кондитерських виробів за товарними групами та визначено частки регіонів експорту.

Проаналізовано рейтинг і визначено позицію провідних українських кондитерських підприємств на світовому ринку, окреслено споживчі переваги та основні фактори впливу при прийнятті споживачами рішення про купівлю.

Визначено фактори зростання світового ринку кондитерських виробів, які досить тісно пов'язані між собою і

обумовлюють один одного, та нові тренди світового ринку, які необхідно враховувати вітчизняним підприємствам.

Проаналізовано внутрішній ринок кондитерських виробів та чинники, що гальмують його розвиток.

Обґрунтовано, що підвищенню конкурентоспроможності вітчизняної продукції на внутрішньому ринку сприятиме ефективно організована система дистрибуції в аспекті освоєння нових форматів та розширення мережі фірмових магазинів.

Визначено напрями державної політики щодо захисту інтересів вітчизняних товаровиробників для підвищення конкурентоспроможності виробленої продукції.

Ключові слова: *конкурентоспроможність продукції, кондитерські підприємства, конкурентний потенціал, ринок продуктів харчування, споживча цінність, рівень доходів населення, якість, ціна.*