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“Filling gaps and removing traps
for sustainable resource management”

Overcoming Gaps in Education for Sustainable Development of Agriculture: Synergy between University Education and Agribusiness in Ukraine

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Abstract

Nowadays agricultural sector is considered as one of the most perspective and most profitable sectors of the economy of Ukraine and the world. During the active automation and informatisation of agribusiness, adaptation of agricultural technology to new seasonal and weather conditions, the lack of professional staff becomes particularly dangerous. It causes not only additional losses in production chain, but also slows down its sustainable development and the introduction of new technologies. There are many reasons for this situation: poor quality of education, lack of teachers who understand the latest trends and developments in agriculture and can bring them to the students, and, moreover, problems in organising high-quality practices using the latest machines and technologies. The new challenges of the future require of the participants in the educational process to move on to active cooperation, implementation of joint projects with business partners in order to obtain the synergy effect of combining efforts. This is exactly the direction of the international project Erasmus + KA2 TOPAS: from theoretically-oriented to practical training in agriculture. The main task of this project is to facilitate the transition from theoretically oriented education in agricultural studies to a practically oriented education, with the corresponding content of curricula, and with an increased cooperation with agrarian business. A survey was conducted amongst agribusiness representatives to assess needed training knowledge and skills to increase students' employability. The raw data was analysed to revise and improve curricula with using formal or non-formal education methods. Benefits for agribusiness are - the creation of a single European agricultural system of business analysis, and access to an international analytical database for assessing the potential opportunities for sustainable development of production areas. The project also envisages the development of an interdisciplinary and open platform for all users with a view to promote cooperation between agribusiness and universities, expanding cooperation with agrarian groups, and introducing innovations in practical training and teaching. Within the framework of the project a special database will be created that will be useful both for the educational and research process, and for those who make decisions for the development of the agrarian sector.

Keywords: Agrarian management, agribusiness, ERASMUS+ TOPAS, higher education, sustainable development, synergy effect