

To the attention of prospective master's degree students at the Agricultural University of Plovdiv

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In the 2018/2019 academic year, the Agricultural University in Plovdiv is launching two new Master's degree programmes:

„Management of Plant Protection” and

„Innovative Technologies in Precision Agriculture”

Heads of the programme **„Management of Plant Protection”** are Prof. DSc Tonio Tonev and Prof. DSc Aleksi Aleksiev. The professional qualification of the graduates of the programme is **Agronomist in Plant Protection**;

the modes of study are full-time and part-time. The duration of the programme is 2 semesters for both modes of study and it is intended **only for students who have obtained a Bachelor's degree in „Plant Protection“**).

The Master's degree programme „**Management of Plant Protection**“ is predominantly technologically oriented and aims to meet the interest in additional qualification of **specialists with educational qualification degree “Bachelor” in the specialty „Plant Protection”**. Graduates of the programme will obtain the educational qualification degree „Master“, with the qualification **Manager in the field of Plant Protection**.

The Master's degree programme is based on the latest trends in agricultural economics, management and marketing of agribusiness and, in particular, in the integrated management of plant protection.

The programme covers modern intensive and integrated farming systems that ensure effective and safe protection of agricultural crops from diseases, pests and weeds, in maximum harmony with the requirements and opportunities for environmental protection. The main emphasis in the agronomic part of the training in the Master's programme „**Management of Plant Protection**“ **is placed on practical training (over 120 hours in total), under field conditions**, through in-depth study of phytosanitary monitoring and expertise, separately for field crops, vegetable crops and perennial crops, in the three main plant protection disciplines – phytopathology, entomology and herbology.

The offered elective courses will provide an opportunity to deepen knowledge of the legal foundations of plant protection, entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector, forms of health and social insurance, insurance, economic and mathematical modelling in the agricultural sector, etc.

Upon completion of this Master's degree programme, students will acquire broader and deeper knowledge of planning and organising the work process within a given system; the leadership, direction, control of the organisation and overall management of agribusiness; the successful integrated management of human, financial, technological and natural resources in plant protection practice.

The lecturers will make efforts to train the Master's students in practical skills for expert assessment of the phytosanitary status of agroecosystems and for making appropriate managerial decisions for the implementation of plant protection measures. Our efforts will be directed towards integrating the known methods and means of control of diseases, pests and weeds in agricultural crops and the development of plant protection strategies and systems. In the course of training, students will acquire theoretical and practical skills for collecting, processing and analysing biological information required for effective plant protection, as well as for the use of information systems in the management of plant protection.

Head of the programme „**Innovative Technologies in Precision Agriculture**” is Prof. DSc Tonio Tonev.

Professional qualification: Agronomist in Precision Agriculture.

Modes of study: full-time and part-time; **Duration of the programme** 3 semesters for both modes of study.

The Master’s degree programme „**Innovative Technologies in Precision Agriculture**“ is intended **only for specialists with educational qualification degree “Bachelor” in the professional fields „Agronomy” and „Plant Protection”**. Upon completion of this Master’s degree programme, students will expand and enrich their knowledge primarily in the field of precision intensive conventional agriculture in all its aspects, and will acquire new knowledge and skills in innovations **related to:** the digital foundations of precision agriculture; soil tillage; forecasting systems in agriculture and integrated management of plant protection; reclamation technologies for the management of soil fertility; innovative technological complexes of machinery for soil tillage, harvesting and plant protection equipment in precision agriculture; information and communication technologies in precision agriculture; innovations in seed production; innovative technologies for the development of new plant forms; study of non-infectious diseases (abiotic stress) and their control under conditions of precision agriculture; study and control of the microbiological aspects of soil fertility under conditions of precision agriculture; study of organic farming systems, integrated and organic production as alternatives; economics of innovations and innovative technologies and their assessment under conditions of precision agriculture; agricultural policy and international trade in crop production. Graduates of the Master’s programme „**Innovative Technologies in Precision Agriculture**“ will acquire the qualification **Agronomist – Master in Precision Agriculture**, with specialised and in-depth knowledge and skills in expertise and comprehensive management of agricultural production and implementation of innovations in precision agriculture.

Our objectives are to train specialists with developed skills for: planning and organising the work process in a given system – leadership, direction, control of the organisation and overall management of agribusiness under conditions of precision agriculture; acquiring theoretical and practical skills for collecting, processing and analysing biological information necessary for the main agrotechnical practices under conditions of precision agriculture (soil tillage, mineral fertilisation, sowing, plant protection practices, harvesting); assessment of the phytosanitary status of agroecosystems and making appropriate managerial decisions for conducting plant protection measures under conditions of precision agriculture; successful integrated management of human, financial, technological and natural resources under conditions of precision agriculture; integration of known methods and means with innovative ones under conditions of precision agriculture; advanced application of computer technologies under conditions of precision agriculture. Within the total number of hours of this Master’s degree programme, more than **100 hours** of field classes (exercises and field practice) are envisaged.

The graduation format for both Master's degree programmes is either a written state examination or defence of a Master's thesis.

The lecturers in all disciplines in both Master's degree programmes are selected from among the most prominent and practice-oriented academic staff of the Agricultural University in Plovdiv.

In both Master's degree programmes, within the maximum permitted by the latest amendments to the Higher Education Act, guest lecturers will also be invited from among the most successful and distinguished specialists in the respective field of agribusiness in Bulgaria.

Part of the educational process – the practical classes and exercises, in addition to the experimental fields of the Agricultural University, will also be conducted through off-site training in the production fields of leading and innovative farmers or in the facilities and experimental fields of leading companies from the agricultural sector in Bulgaria. The head of the Master's degree programmes – Prof. DSc Tonio Tonev, and leading members of his teams will use their full potential of professional contacts and links with agribusiness in order to make the training in these two Master's degree programmes as non-standard, attractive, interesting and useful for students as possible!

In the event of a successful start, next year these two programmes will have the opportunity, naturally with a longer duration, to be launched also for Master's degree applicants who have completed a Bachelor's degree in other professional fields and areas of higher education (DPN/DOVO)

The submission of documents for the Master's degree programmes at the Agricultural University will take place in the period from 17 September to 5 October 2018.

Detailed administrative information regarding the Master's degree programmes can be obtained from:

The Centre for Master's and Doctoral Students at the Agricultural University **tel. 032 654278;**

The Academic Affairs Office of AU **tel. 032 654310** and **032 654250** and from

The website of the Agricultural University: **www.au-plovdiv.bg**

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