

MONOGRAPH REVIEW

AGRO-ECONOMY: A SHORT HISTORY (*Agroekonomija: Kratka istorija*)

Zoran M. Njegovan, Ph.D., Full Professor (in retirement)

Monograph published by the Institute of Agricultural Economics (IAE), Belgrade, Serbia, 2023. (501 pages)

The monograph “Agro-economy: A short history” has been written by the Prof. Dr. Zoran M. Njegovan, while it was published in 2023. Within the publication, on 501 pages author has been presented the historical aspect of the development of agro-economy as a separate scientific discipline. This is a second monograph written by the Prof. Dr. Zoran Njegovan, a distinguished university professor and scientists (Faculty of Agriculture, University in Novi Sad), oriented to the observed topic. In previous monograph “Agri-culture: A short history”, which was published in 2018., author has also, on over 500 pages, presented the development of this existential economic activity, coming from its emerging, as the author states in “ancient times”, up to the characteristics and challenges of contemporary global agriculture. In both capital publications, on over 1,000 pages, the author deals with and presents a historical period of thousands of years, but also very complex topics, in a concise and comprehensible manner. It is clear that this is the characteristic of only authors who knows the subject matter extremely well, while they have rich experience.

The monograph “Agro-economy: A short history” contains three thematic units. In the first one, the importance and emerging of agro-economy as a scientific discipline is presented. In the second one is discussed about the differentiation of agro-economy, while in the third and most extensive part of the book, the detailed development of agro-economic thought and concept in Europe, the United States of America and Serbia has been presented. As was stated in the monograph reviews “in line to used methodological framework, the monograph contains two streams that are mutual intertwine and summarized: theoretical and historiographical aspect”.

The author of the monograph states that the “roots” of agro-economic thought are settled in the 17th and 18th century, while pointing to the inextricable connection between the development of agro-economy with the development of economy, primarily political economy. Author has also warning that the emergence of certain scientific discipline must not and cannot be strictly linked to specific

historical moment. As he underlines “it is always a process that takes a wider or narrower period of time for civilizational socio-economic preparation”. Furthermore, in the first thematic unit, he considers the social economy of agriculture, the business economics in agriculture, as well as the development of the agrarian policy.

Within the differentiation of agro-economy, author states that “Agrarian marketing” and “Cooperation in agriculture” were singled out first. He explains mentioned sequence in agro-economic history as a consequence of “the need to solve the problems of marketing agricultural and food products, in the conditions of the existence of large commodity producers on the one hand, and small, mostly family – small scale commodity farms, on the other side”. After that, there comes to separation of “Rural Sociology” and “Agrarian Advisory Work”, while so soon development of “Agrarian (Economic) Geography” and “Agrarian (Economic) History”.

As part of the analysis of the development of agro-economic thought, the author in detail, systematically, but very concisely follows its historical link in France, Great Britain, Germany, Russia, or the United States of America, as well as in Serbia. One of the book reviewers, Prof. Dr. Radovan Pejanović points out that “an impressive list of literature references and sources” was used in this historical presentation, what “turns to the conclusion that author has covered the researched topic, both historically, scientifically and professionally”.

Within the analysis of the development of agro-economic thought in Serbia, the author deals with the period of the Serbian enlightenment, the period of emerging and development of agro-economics and agro-economic thought, as well as the historical school and civic thought, or the emergence of cooperatives and the cooperative movement. Also, in this part of book, author analyzes agro-economics in Serbia between the two world wars, while listing the main representatives of agro-economic thought in Serbia after the II WW. By his own confession, although the author was guided by a “rational-speculative approach” in the book, when evaluating the contributions of certain agro-economists, he “could not avoid a kind of subjectivity”. That’s exactly why reviewer Prof. Dr. Drago Cvijanović points out that this monograph is unique, considering that “the author have not avoided to give his personal touch to the studied and presented material”.

According to reviewer Dr. Radomir Popović, “in contemporary scientific production in Serbia, there are extremely few synthesized historical reviews such as this one turned to the development of agro-economy, written by Zoran

Njegovan, primarily due to the used approach and wideness of scientific scope”, which includes “the period from the emergence of agro-economy as a scientific discipline, until the end of the 20th century”.

Finally, it is important to say that the publisher of this monograph is the Institute for Agricultural Economics in Belgrade, while the co-publishers are the Economics Institute in Belgrade and the Center for Agrarian History in Novi Sad, three highly reputable scientific institutions in whose history the author Prof. Dr. Zoran M. Njegovan has been recorded his work, scientific and teaching contribution.

Dr. Gordana Radović

Institute of Agricultural Economics (IAE), Belgrade, Serbia