

STANDPOINT

On the materials for participation in the competition for the academic rank " Associate Professor ", field of higher education 6. Agricultural sciences and Veterinary medicine, professional direction 6.4. Veterinary medicine, scientific specialty "Epizootiology, infectious diseases and prevention of infectious diseases in animals", in the discipline "Immunology", announced by the University of Forestry in the State Gazette issue No. 100/16.12.2022, procedure code VM-AsP-1222-95.

Candidates for participation in the competition:

The candidate in the competition is Chief Assistant Professor Iliyan Manev Manev, DVM, Ph.D.

Standpoint author:

Professor Dimitar Savov Dimitrov, DVM, Ph.D. – retired from the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of Trakia University in Stara Zagora, higher education region 6. Agricultural sciences and Veterinary medicine, professional direction 6.4. Veterinary medicine, scientific specialty "Morphology" on a competition for the academic position "Associate Professor" in the discipline "Immunology.

The competition was announced for the needs of the Department of "Anatomy, Physiology, and Animal Breeding Sciences" in the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Forestry – Sofia to the Department of "Anatomy, Physiology, and Animal Breeding Sciences", in the field of higher education 6. Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine, professional direction 6.4. Veterinary medicine, scientific specialty: Epizootiology, infectious diseases, and prevention of infectious diseases in animals, in the discipline "Immunology" (State Gazette issue No. 100 of 16. 12. 2022, and procedure code VM-AsP-1222-95). It was created and implemented the decision of the first meeting of the Scientific Jury for this scientific competition held on March 24, 2023. As a member of the Scientific Jury, I declare that I have no common works with the candidate of the competition.

1. Brief biographical data about the candidate

Chief Assistant Professor, Ph.D., Ilian Manev Manev was born on 07.02.1983 in Sofia. In the period 2002-2008, he was a student of veterinary medicine at the University of Forestry, Sofia, and graduated with honors as a Master of Veterinary Medicine. From May 2008 to December 2013, he held the position of veterinarian, with main activities and responsibilities in the examination, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of animals for the company. The candidate's field of activities and professional responsibilities are internal medicine, cardiology and laboratory diagnostics at the "Saint Antim" Veterinary Centre Ltd., 63 "Vranya" Str., Sofia.

From December 2013 to March 2018, Ph.D. Iliyan Manev was an Assistant Professor of Pathophysiology and Immunology in the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Forestry in Sofia.

In the period 2016-2017, he was enrolled in doctoral studies in independent preparation. Chief Assistant Professor Iliyan Manev managed to successfully defend a dissertation on the topic "Studies on some factors of immunity and immunoprophylaxis in myxomatosis in rabbits" and acquired the Educational and Scientific Degree "Ph.D." in the scientific specialty "Epizootology, infectious diseases and prevention of infectious diseases in animals".

From March 2018 until now, the candidate is a Chief Assistant Professor. His main activities and responsibilities as such include conducting exercises, seminars, and lectures in the disciplines of Immunology and Pathophysiology in Bulgarian and English. Carrying out current study control and active participation in the implementation of regular, remedial, and "permanent extraordinary" exams in the cited compulsory study disciplines.

In Appendix No. 1, from the available documentation on the competition, it is clear that the candidate in the competition for Associate Professor of Immunology speaks Russian at different levels – listening at level A1, reading at level B1, participating in the conversation at level A2, while participating in the conversation, independent oral presentation, and writing are at A2 level. For English, all indicators are at level B1, only writing in English is set at level B2.

In Appendix No. 1, technical skills and competences are defined working with equipment for laboratory diagnostics, electrocardiograph, echograph, as well as working with an X-ray machine.

Chief Assistant Professor Iliyan Manev has computer skills and competencies through mastery of MS Word, MS Excel, and MS PowerPoint. Possesses a category B motor vehicle driving license.

The candidate for the academic position, through a written document, proves and defines his social skills and competencies, and his participation in the organizing committee of the International Scientific Conference "Traditions and Modernity in Veterinary Medicine".

My initial acquaintance during the first part of the first session of the Scientific Jury under the current competition, the repeated reading after they were provided in electronic format, assured me that the documents and materials submitted by the candidate for participation in the competition for occupying an academic position correspond to the Regulations for the Development of the academic staff at the University of Forestry – Sofia, therefore, as a member of the Scientific Jury, I have voted to admit the candidate to his participation in the competition, and in this opinion, I will lawfully try to evaluate him truthfully, accurately and impartially.

Based on a thorough review of the submitted documents and materials for the competition, as well as the reference declaration prepared by the candidate in the competition, I found that the minimum national requirements for occupying the academic position "Associate Professor" have been met in the field of higher education 6. Agricultural sciences and Veterinary medicine" and professional direction 6.4. Veterinary medicine, according to the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB), as well as the additional requirements of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at the University of Forestry.

2. Conformity of the applicant's submitted documents and materials with the requirements according to the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at the University of Forestry

In his application to the Mr. Rector, according to the current Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff (RDAS) at the University of Forestry, the candidate in the current competition submits all the necessary documents, including: Curriculum vitae according to the European model; Diploma for completed higher education in Educational Qualification Degree "Master" – notarized copy; Diploma for Educational and Scientific Degree "Ph.D." – notarized copy; Document for the occupied academic position; Certificate of internship in the specialty; Medical certificate; Criminal record certificate; Reference-self-assessment for the fulfillment of the minimum national requirements for the academic position "Associate Professor", according to Article 26 of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB) and Article 2a, Paragraph 1 of the Regulations on the Development of the Academic Staff (RDAS) at University of Forestry; List of publications, inventions, and other scientific and applied results; Classification of publications; Summaries of publications and works in Bulgarian and English; Citation Reference; Reference to scientific contributions; Certificate of participation in scientific conferences and symposia; Reference for the scientific, teaching and expert activity; Detailed information on the scientific, teaching and expert activities; Declaration under Art. 313 of

the Criminal Code for the credibility and originality of the information presented; Sample Information card – in Bulgarian and English; Announcement in the State Gazette, issue 100 of 16.12.2022, page 86. All documents and attachments are arranged correctly, are authentic, contain the required signatures, and stamps, and correspond to the requirements set by the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at the University of Forestry, Sofia.

In order to participate in the competition, Chief Assistant Professor Iliyan Manev Manev, Ph.D., submitted the relevant documents and evidentiary materials, from which it is clear that he fulfilled the criteria for occupying the academic position "Associated Professor" specified in the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at the University of Forestry.

3. Evaluation of the candidate's educational and teaching activities

The information provided to me in electronic form has convinced me that the candidate for the academic position has a shorter teaching career, but is full of content, a new approach, and innovation, which is why I put my high score on this evaluation criterion.

According to the documents provided to me, the academic experience of Chief Assistant Professor Ph.D. Iliyan Manev in the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Forestry is 9 years 1 month and 3 days until 16.01.2023. During this not-very long period of time, he was a co-author in the preparation of two Curriculums in the compulsory discipline "Immunology". The first of these Curriculums are for training future veterinarians in Bulgarian, and the second is intended for English-language training in the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Forestry, Sofia.

From the available documentation for the competition (Appendix № 16) it is clear that from the academic year, 2019/2020 Chief Assistant Professor Iliyan Manev has conducted a part of the lecture course on the compulsory discipline "Immunology" for the students of the specialty Veterinary Medicine, Educational Qualification Degree (EQD) "Master", full-time study.

In 3 consecutive academic years, from 2018 to 2020, he also taught a part of the lecture course on the elective discipline "Quality and safety of animal feed" to the students of the Veterinary Medicine specialty (Educational Qualification Degree, regular education).

During the 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 academic years, he also brings out a part of the lecture course on the compulsory discipline "Biochemistry" in English for students from specialty Veterinary Medicine, Educational Qualification Degree (EQD) "Master", regular education.

During the last 5 academic years, Chief Assistant Professor Iliyan Manev has conducted exercises and seminars in the following disciplines: Immunology, Pathophysiology and

Biochemistry with students from Veterinary Medicine specialty, Educational Qualification Degree "Master", regular education.

4. Evaluation of the candidate's scientific, scientific-applied, and publication activities:

4.1. Participation in scientific, scientific-applied, and educational projects

According to Appendix № 19 of the submitted documentation for the competition "Associated Professor", it is clear that the candidate is an active participant in the implementation of 1 research project (with No. NIS-B-1076/16.03.2020) to Scientific Research Centre (SRC), at the University of Forestry, Sofia, with scientific supervisor Assoc. Professor Ph.D. Veselin Kirov.

4.2. Characteristics of published scientific results

According to the electronic documents provided to me, the candidate in the announced competition for Associate Professor has 28 scientific publications in specialized scientific journals. Of these, 4 are related to the dissertation thesis of the candidate for the educational and scientific degree Ph.D.

The total number of articles and reports in the competition (24 issues) published in scientific research journals, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases with scientific information is 16. It makes a very good impression that in 15 of these scientific publications, he is the first author and only in one he is seventh. The articles in foreign journals in English are 6, and those in national journals – 16, of which 14 are in English in refereed journals.

The candidate for the announced competition has 2 publications in journals abroad that have an impact factor (IF) - in the journal *Veterinary Parasitology* with IF = 2.821 and the journal *Global Journal of Animal Scientific Research* with IF = 0.546.

There are 6 articles and reports published in non-refereed journals, but with a scientific review or in collective volumes, in 3 of which he is an independent author, and in 3 publications he is the first author.

He managed to create and publish in a licensed publishing house and with a publishing number a scientific monograph – Manev, I. (2022) *Electrocardiography of dogs with infectious and non-infectious pathology*. "Avangard Prima", Sofia, 1-150, with ISBN 978-619-239-792-0.

In 2022, he also published a book, based on a defended dissertation work for the award of the Educational and Scientific Degree "Ph.D." – Manev, I. Immunity and immunoprophylaxis in myxomatosis in rabbits, "Avangard Prima", Sofia, 1-123, with ISBN 978-619-239-791-1.

4.3. Reflection of the candidate's scientific activity in the literature (citations)

The high number of citations (18) of 10 publications of his scientific output, mostly by foreign authors in renowned foreign periodicals, with a total IF = 11.672, speaks of the importance of the research and the results reflected in them. Iliyan Manev, Ph.D., has citations of his publications in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information (Scopus or Web of Science), as well as in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals. Journal citations with IF are in journal *Microorganisms* with an IF = 4.152, in journal *Pathogens* with an IF = 0.921, in journal *Frontiers in Veterinary Science* with an IF = 0.719, and in journal *Food Control* with an IF = 6.652. In international journals without IF or SJR, the candidate in the competition has 5 citations in a scientific periodical, in journal: *Tradition and Modernity in Veterinary Medicine*. The candidate in the announced competition has 4 citations of three of his articles in foreign monographs with scientific review and 5 citations with non-refereed journals.

4.4. Contributions in the candidate's works (scientific, scientific-applied, applied)

The scientific interests of Chief Assistant Professor Iliyan Manev Manev are in various fields of medical science (infectious and non-infectious pathology, epidemiology, immunology, internal diseases, toxicology, ecotoxicology, etc.) and are both a theoretical and an applied nature. After my introduction to scientific publications, included in the documentation of the competition for Associate Professor, I would say that the scientific contributions can be grouped in the following 7 directions:

1. Infectious pathology – epidemiology of infectious and vector-borne diseases in domestic animals;
2. Immune-mediated diseases;
3. Post-vaccination immune response;
4. Electrocardiographic changes in infectious and non-infectious diseases;
5. Accumulation of lead in domestic and wild birds, object of hunting;
6. Accumulation of heavy metals in the Black Sea ecosystems and their impact on human health;

7. Biochemical indicators of blood in wild rabbits in Bulgaria.

Numerous are the contributions of Chief Assistant professor Iliyan Manev in the field of infectious pathology, including epidemiology of infectious diseases, as well as research on vector-borne diseases in domestic animals - 5 publications (with № 7.4.; № 7.6.; № 7.7.; № 8.1. and № 8.4.). In some of them (with № 8.1.), the role of feline infectious peritonitis in the development of some chronic kidney diseases was also studied. A review of the currently available data was also made, as well as the clinical experience of Chief Assistant Professor Iliyan Manev. In another publication (with № 7.4.) a review of control measures for *mycoplasma* infections in pigs was conducted. They are discussed in it and basic aspects of immunoprophylaxis, therapy and metaphylaxis of swine enzootic pneumonia. Through other 2 publications (with № 7.6. and № 7.7.) it is evident that the candidate in the competition for the academic title Associated Professor has conducted research on the spread of *anaplasmosis* among stray dogs in the Sofia region. Based on this study, he established a widespread prevalence of the antiprotozoal disease *anaplasmosis* in the studied population of dogs. In publication № 7.7. is presented the studies of the candidate in the competition in the epidemiology of some basic vector-borne diseases among stray dogs in the city of Sofia. He established the seroprevalence against the protozoa *Anaplasma phagocytophilum*/*Anaplasma platys*, *Ehrlichia canis*, *Borrelia burgdorferi* and the parasite *Dirofilaria immitis*. Chief Assistant Professor Iliyan Manev, with publication № 8.4. has contributions, related to the spread of heartworm disease, caused by *Dirofilaria immitis* among stray dogs in the region of the city of Sofia. In the same publication, Manev and his co-authors found that this nematode *Dirofilaria immitis* is relatively widespread in dogs in the study region, and the various predisposing and supporting factors for this parasitological disease are also commented.

The contributions in the field of immune-mediated diseases include:

1. Studies on factors of immunity and immunoprophylaxis in the disease *myxomatosis* in rabbits (publication № 6.). In this book, based on a defended dissertation for the award of the educational and scientific degree "Ph.D.", the main aspects of the impact of the *myxomavirus* on the immune system during illness are examined and discussed. They are considered in it and different administration schedules of monovalent and bivalent vaccines for the prevention of this disease.

2. Through publication № 8.2. a historical study was also made on the prevalence of *myxomatosis* in rabbits.

3. In publications with № 7.2. and № 7.3. are presented studies of Chief Assistant Professor Iliyan Manev on immune-mediated anemia in dogs. Some basic immune mechanisms for the destruction of erythrocytes (antibody-mediated and complement-dependent lysis) are discussed in them, as well as the main therapeutic approaches in this autoimmune process.

In the scientific direction Post-vaccination immune response, there is only 1 scientific publication (with № 7.16.) in which research is presented, regarding the serological response after vaccination of young dogs against *parvovirus-2*. A high degree of seroconversion was established after two vaccinations of the non-diseased young dogs.

Chief Assistant Professor Iliyan Manev, in 3 publications of his scientific production (with № 3.; № 7.11. and № 7.12.) presented the results of his research on the main changes in the electrocardiography of dogs with infectious and non-infectious pathology. In the monograph attached to the competition documents (with № 3), in this scientific direction, the average values of the electrocardiographic elements in the three standard leads were analyzed in common infectious diseases of a viral, bacterial and parasitic nature in dogs, as well as some basic in clinical practice non-infectious pathological processes and diseases. An analysis was performed and recommendations were made for the application of electrocardiography in the diagnostic algorithm for these diseases (publication № 3.). From other 2 publications (with № 7.11. and № 7.12.) it is evident that the candidate in the competition for Associate Professor of Immunology has conducted research related to the frequency and nature of cardiac arrhythmias in renal failure and the disease dilatation-volvulus of the stomach in dogs.

The direction "Accumulation of lead in domestic and wild birds, object of hunting" includes 2 scientific publications (№ 7.1. and № 8.3.). They contain the results of research on the residual amounts of lead in ducks (*Anas platyrhynchos*, L.) tissues after experimental exposure to lead pellets (№ 7.1.), as well as epidemiological data on lead concentration in birds subject to hunting (№ 8.3.). They also analyzed the potential risk to human health when consuming meat from such birds.

I find in 6 scientific publications (with № 7.8.; № 7.9.; № 7.13.; № 7.14.; № 8.5, and № 8.6.) the contributions of Chief Assistant Professor Iliyan Manev in the area of "Encroachment of heavy metals in the Black Sea ecosystems and their impact on human health", in which overview studies on the accumulation of some heavy metals in the ecosystems of the Black Sea are presented: sea water, sediment, algae and various types of fish (publications with № 7.8. and № 7.13.). Comparative studies on the content of heavy metals in seawater and different types of algae from the southern and northern parts of the Bulgarian Black Sea coast are also presented (publication № 8.6.). Comparative studies of the content of heavy metals in various economically significant fish species from the water area of the Bulgarian part of the Black Sea are presented (publications with № 7.13. and № 7.14.). Samples from different parts of the water area were analyzed in the period 2020-2021. On the basis of these studies, a low content of heavy metals was found in most of the examined samples (publications with № 7.13. and № 7.14.). The candidate in the competition has

conducted research in accordance with the Bulgarian and European legislation, related to the pollution of marine aquaculture with heavy metals (lead, cadmium, and mercury), which is evident from publications with № 7.9., and № 8.5. In them (№ 7.9., and № 8.5.) there are also comments on the potential risk to human health.

The contributions of Chief Assistant Professor Iliyan Manev in the direction "**Biochemical indicators of blood in wild rabbits in the Republic of Bulgaria**" are established in publication № 7.15. It presents the results of the study conducted by the candidate to determine the average values and intervals of variation of basic biochemical parameters of the blood of wild rabbits (*Lepus europaeus*, L.) from different regions of Bulgaria. This study enriches the scarce data in the scientific literature about the physiological limits of some biochemical blood indicators in this biological species. It covers all the recommended criteria of University of Forestry, he has a defended dissertation for the Educational and Scientific Degree "Ph.D.". He has scientific works in journals with and without an impact factor, horary of lecture hours, participation in scientific projects, participation in scientific conferences with international participation, etc.). He participating in the teaching of Bulgarian and foreign students in several disciplines, as well as in the large-scale university activity (Appendix № 16) is the reason why he deservedly held the academic position of "Associate Professor".

5. Evaluation of the candidate's personal contribution

The candidate in the announced competition for Associate Professor of Immunology, with his teaching and research activities at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Forestry, has made a personal contribution to the development of these institutions. It covers all the recommended criteria at University of Forestry, has defended a dissertation for conferral of the Ph.D. educational and scientific degree, publications in journals with impact factor, and without IF/SJR, has a course load from lectures horary of lecture hours, participation in scientific projects, participation in scientific conferences with international participation, etc.). Participating in the teaching of Bulgarian and foreign students in several disciplines, as well as in the large-scale university activity (Appendix № 16), is a reason for him to occupy the academic position "Associate Professor".

6. Critical notes and recommendations

Summarizing the data from the candidate's submitted materials for the competition, I find that they far exceed the recommended evaluation criteria.

7. Personal impressions

I have no personal impressions because I do not know the candidate in the competition for Associate Professor of Immunology.

8. Conclusion

My introduction to publication activity in the relatively short period of academic life of Iliyan Manev, Ph.D., gives me the reason to give it my high rating. The multiple reading of the information provided to me on the competition, the checks I made allow me to accept them as reliable and made by a hardworking colleague. According to the reference – self-assessment for meeting the minimum national requirements under Article 26 of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and Article 2a, Paragraph 1 of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of the University of Forestry, Sofia, the sum of indicators A+V+G+D of the candidate for the academic position is 697.84 points out of the required 400 points, which leads me to claim that he meets the requirements of the competition.

With inner conviction, I address the members of the respected Scientific Jury, with my proposal, the report to the respected Faculty Council of the "Faculty of Veterinary Medicine" at University of Forestry, city of Sofia, to make a decision for **the candidate in the competition to occupy the academic position of "Associated Professor"**.

Stara Zagora
March 22, 2023

Standpoint author:
(Professor Dimitar S. Dimitrov, DVM, Ph.D.)