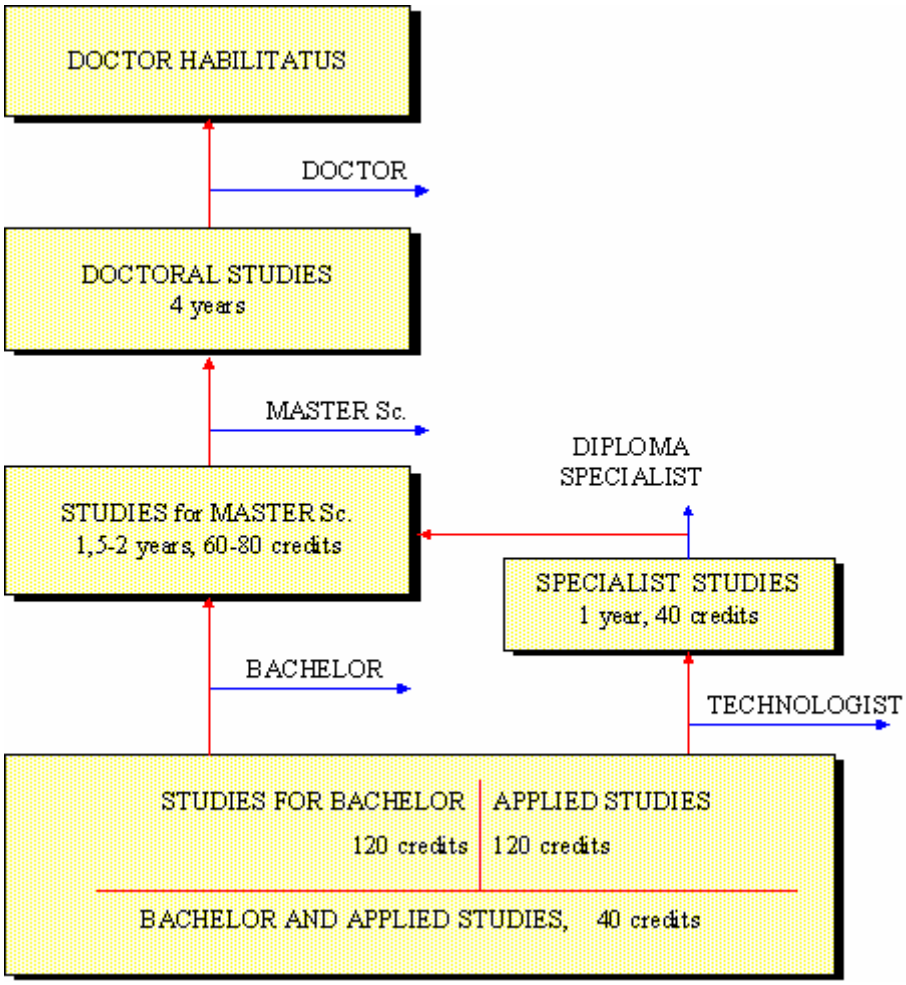
EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION SYSTEM IN LITHUANIA

Lithuanian educational system covers preschool development, general child and youth education, vocational & junior college training, higher education and adult education. Structure of studies and qualifications in Lithuanian University of Agriculture:



Lithuania, seeking to implement the „e.Europa“ action plan of Lisbon strategy, has prepared the Lithuanian Information Society Development Strategy. The implementation of this strategy will allow up to 40 % of Lithuanian citizens to use the public electronic service (e-service) by 2010, and 70 % of e-service would be presented according to the “one window” principle. The plans to transfer public services to an electronic environment are the main foundation of the modernisation of the public sector in Lithuania.

In 2002 the alliance of private enterprises “Langas i ateiti” initiated the development of public internet access in rural areas. Later the Ministry of the Interior and Information Society Development Committee joined this movement. Upon the completion of a Phare project in 2003,

300 rural internet accesses points had been installed in rural areas and, by the beginning of 2005, the total number of such points exceeded 450.

Government supports and the low price of computers allowed the information and communication technologies in households in rural area to develop rapidly as well. According to Statistics Lithuania reports the number of personal computers in households has increased particularly rapidly in the last few years. In 1996 just one per cent of households had a personal computer, while 25 % of households had one by the first quarter of 2004. At this time the percentages of households in urban areas and rural area having a personal computer were, respectively, 32 % and 11 %. The internet was used by 10.6 % of households: 7.2 % in urban areas and 3.4 % in rural area. According to household survey results in 2002, just 4.1 % of households used the internet at home, whereas by the third quarter of 2003 7.7 % of households did so. In the first quarter of 2004 the surveyed who bought or ordered goods and services for their personal needs amounted to 0.7 % or made up 2.1 % of the surveyed who were using the Internet.

This expansion of the information technology infrastructure has had a direct impact on the increase on demand for various e-services. The technical infrastructure will not stimulate the rural citizens to use the service by itself. It is necessary to spread the topical information for agriculture specialists and rural citizens and propose the service by electronic communication channels. Evidently, that the service, provided by electronic communication channels, and gained benefit from that will move agriculture subjects and rural citizens, especially local communities, positively participate in the projects of development of information infrastructure and ICT courses.

The following e-services should be available online: registration of the farm in the holding register; registration of activity in the Register of Agricultural and Rural Business; ordering of passports for cattle; registration of newly born cattle and ordering the signs of its identification; ordering of maps and application forms for direct payments; providing data necessary to get direct payments; providing data about ecological products for sale; providing data about certificated seeds for sale; getting information about the Common Agricultural Policy, direct payments, support from structural funds and rural development etc.; providing messages about newly presented information on websites.