

EUROPEAN POLICY FOR QUALITY AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS APPLIED IN ROMANIA FOR DAIRY PRODUCTS

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The EU plays a major role in enhancing high quality attributes and in sustaining this wide range of cultures and culinary traditions. The EU safeguards food quality in many ways, for example via measures to guarantee food safety and hygiene, clear labelling rules, regulations on animal and plant health and animal welfare, control of pesticide residues and additives in food and via nutritional information.

Our country manifests a low interest for Traditional Specialty Guaranteed, Protected Geographical Indications and Protected Designation of Origin illustrated by the lack of dairy products registrant for this kind of label. Although in 2007 were almost 600 local traditional dairy products listed by our Agriculture Minister.

Key words: traditional products, label, agriculture policy

A study in the cheese sector concluded that cheese with designated status could claim a 30 % price premium over competing products (cf. Secodip 2002 data). Parmigiano Reggiano cheese and essential oils protected by GIs have also benefited from considerable price advantages. Studies also indicate that the added value is distributed along the food chain, allowing producers and local processors to gain as well as retailers and other downstream players.²⁴⁶

The impact of EU's quality products designation is also upon the development of the rural region. Several studies have shown that they have an important role to play in the regeneration of the countryside since they ensure that agri-foodstuffs are produced in a way that conserves local plant varieties, rewards local people, supports rural diversity and social cohesion⁶, and promotes new job opportunities in production, processing and other related services. The needs of today's population are met, while natural resources and traditional skills are safeguarded for generations to come.

Quality labels offer an excellent marketing message about high value-added products. The schemes enable farmers and producers to inform consumers about specific characteristics and origins of their products, irrespective of the number of intermediaries (distributors, wholesalers, retailers etc.) in the supply chain.²⁴⁷

The registration procedure can be stopped at the second step, when the product specification is sent only to the national authority and not transmitted to the European Commission. Particular for Romania is this situation when our producers obtain the certificate for traditional products offered by the National Authority MADR – Agricultural Minister and Rural Development.

In the table below, we can identify from the agricultural foodstuff, the dairy products as first classed in the category of traditional products applicants in number of 641 in 2007.²⁴⁸

Numbers of attested traditional products from different agriculture products

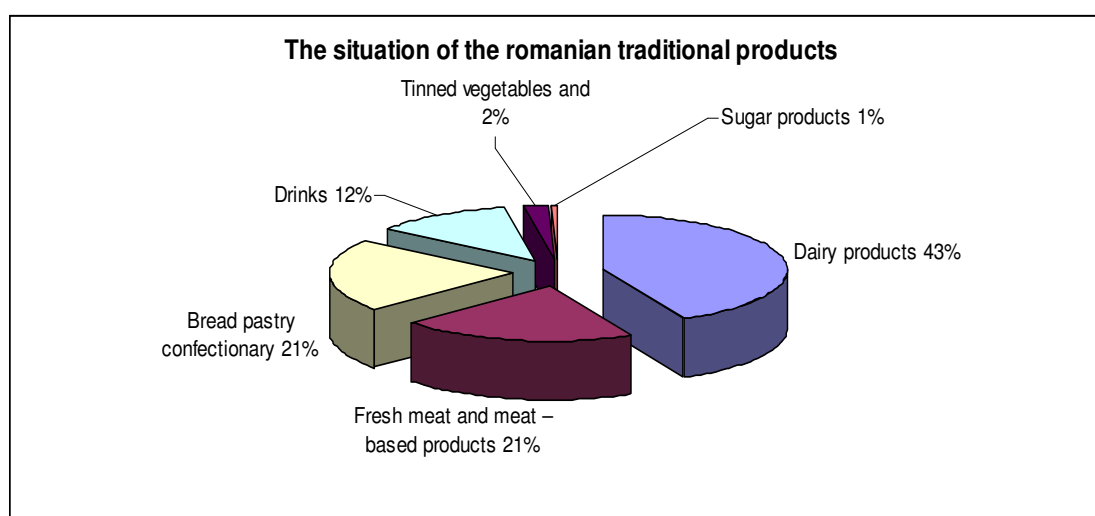
Table nr. 4

Type of products – category	Numbers of attested traditional products
Dairy products	641
Fresh meat and meat – based products	317
Bread pastry confectionary	318
Drinks	186
Tinned vegetables and	31
Sugar products	10

Source: MADR – Situation of the romanian traditional products, 2007

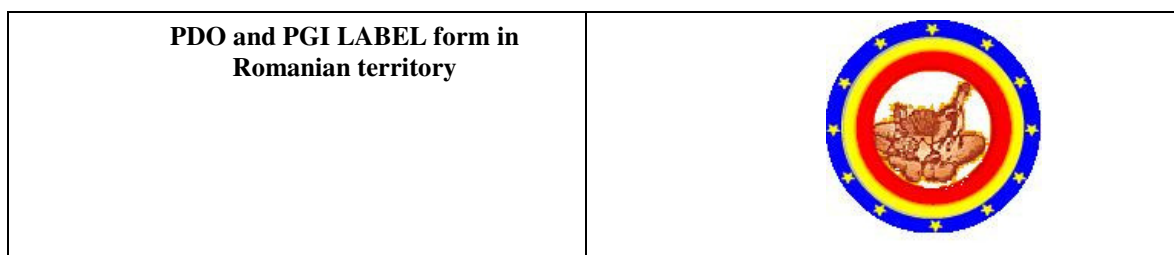
Figure

nr. 5



Source: MADR – Situation of the romanian traditional products, 2007

The number of the Romanian applicants at the European Commission, in order to obtain a PDO, PGI or TSG label for agriculture products – dairy products are limited. In the publication in the Official Journal of the European Communities, were are mention al the producers registered, our country in not mention. An explication for this absence consists in the difficulty way of obtaining this kind of label, our lack of specialization upon dairy products. Starting with 2008 the PDO and PGI product protected under our national territory has a now form of labeling as the figure below, shows:



Source: MADR – Situation of the romanian traditional products, 2007

Situation of traditional products registered in difference countryside

Table nr. 6

Countryside	Number of traditioanal products
Arges	138
Covasna	40
Suceava	28
Sibiu	25
Alba	20
Cluj	20
Maramures	16
Salaj	15
Botosani	13
Neamt	12
Braila	10
Iasi	10
Mures	10

Soure: create by the authors from the database www.madr.ro

From this table we observe the particularity met in countryside Arges, where were 138 registration for traditional products. An explication for this huge number compared to the second classed Covasna where are only 40 registration, has a support on the great number of small producer²⁴⁹. Most of them are not commercial society but authorized physical person or familial association, therein each of these applied for traditional products. Some of these gain a huge fame through the own particularity, such as taste, form, color as example Nasal, Manasturd, Tarnava Cheese.

Conclusion

The EU plays a major role in enhancing high quality attributes and in sustaining this wide range of cultures and culinary traditions. The EU safeguards food quality in many ways, for example via measures to guarantee food safety and hygiene, clear labelling rules, regulations on animal and plant health and animal welfare, control of pesticide residues and additives in food and via nutritional information.

The main *benefits* for consumers are:

- The main message from the label – it indicates a quality product
- Choice from the enormous range of great European foods thanks to user-friendly labeling Information on the origin of the product and its characteristics (ingredients etc.) and traditional production methods
- Guarantees that products are the genuine article not copies or imitation products
- Confidence that the food has been produced in line with the detailed specification
- Consumers can identify and buy products from their own or other specific regions if they choose
- Overall information that consumers need to be able to decide whether designated high quality products provide good value for money.

France, Italy, Spain and Greece applied most for the Protected Designation of Origin and Protected Geographical Indication label for dairy products. Romania has no traditional dairy product registered by European Commission, to our national authority been listed around 600 dairy products.

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