

# From Localized Products to Geographical Indications

Awareness and Action

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ISBN 978-2-9528725-1-5

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## PREFACE

Localized agricultural products and foodstuffs stand at the crossroads of multiple converging interests that attract an ever-wider audience. The challenge lies in distinguishing between the images, expectations and hopes aroused by those products and the realities they represent today. Do they occupy a place apart in the promotion of local territories and, if so, why?

For much more than a decade now, there has been increasing research into origin-based products in France and Europe, supported by the regulations adopted in 1992 to protect geographical indications within the European Union. This has created a vibrant research trend in disciplinary fields as varied as economics, sociology, geography, agronomy, technology and law. The most widely explored topics are:

- the role of localized production in the definition of territory, in local development and tourism and in the economic issues related to quality and protection;
- the different conventions arising from local production;
- the links between quality, origin, territory and competitiveness;
- the interactions between stakeholders, the markets in question and the economic organization of local industries and supply chains.

There is however very little information on what localized products mean in concrete terms: how they are made; the knowledge and skills they employ; their place in local society and the food habits on which they depend. The regulations protecting origin-based products raise complex questions regarding notions of tradition, place, origin, reputation or customs. Common sense may tell us what these terms imply; but since they have never had the benefit of a formal definition, it is not always obvious to producers how the regulations should be applied.

The present book aims to make stakeholders in rural development and product promotion aware of the specific nature of localized products. Their typicity comes from the manner in which they are rooted

in a particular locality and therefore culture. Historical depth, skills, knowledge, food habits and heritage are potential levers for their promotion. A more thorough knowledge of all of these factors is essential to understand the complexity of this issue in the field and provide the actors concerned with the tools they need for the job. This book reviews the situation in France though without suggesting that it is a model to follow by other countries. It identifies the keys to understanding these products and adopting a more appropriate approach to value adding initiatives. In becoming more alert to the difficulties likely to arise along the way, they will know what to watch out for and what pitfalls to avoid.

This book is one of the outcomes of research carried out within the framework of a project co-ordinated by the French National Institute for Agricultural Research (INRA), titled 'Pour et Sur le Développement Régional' ('For and About Regional Development'). In the Rhône-Alpes region, the project was titled 'Territoires, acteurs et agricultures' ('Territories, Actors and Agriculture'). The aim was to undertake research and improvement activities in association with stakeholders in development.

The Extrapro Project forms part of the PROMSTAP/INTERREG 3C European programme, which aims to add value to research findings. Key deliverables include the translation of this book and its distribution to research colleagues in other European countries.

## INTRODUCTION

France is home to a wide variety of localized products. All of them are much sought-after these days when emphasis on local origin can help to boost profitability, particularly now that there are regulations in place to protect and promote geographical origin. The debate concerning the promotion of localized products raises highly complex and economically-charged issues. Considering the context, it seems sensible to highlight a few points of reference that can help clarify, protect and give value to this particular group of products.

There is not a country in the world where geographical origin is not linked to products. It is universal practice to name a product after the place where it originated – the geographical name of the place where it was made. The protection of origin is a principle that has been adopted at international level, but its application still raises many questions.

The first part of this book gives a broad definition of localized products based on certain relevant criteria. Further, it treats the protection mechanisms already in place. The second part tackles questions of terroir, historical depth, traditions and local skills and gives examples of recent value-adding initiatives. The concluding part repositions geographical indications within an international context.





## Localized food products: a big family

The sheer variety of localized products has been demonstrated by numerous field studies, inventories and monographs. These origin-based products span the entire spectrum of the agrifood sector, from plant to animal-based foods – fruit, vegetables, meat, poultry and fish – to processed foods such as charcuterie, cheese, bakery products, oils, fermented beverages. The manner in which they relate to local society adds further diversity, since not all of them occupy the same place within a social group. Some are emblematic of rich cultural foundations. French cheeses such as *Comté* and *Abondance*, for example, bring to mind specific cheese-making practices and a particular agro-pastoral system built on livestock farming and the social organization required by a given natural environment. *Charolais* beef defines the landscape and economy of an entire region. Much appreciated for its flavour, the meat relies on a form of animal husbandry that combines subtle grazing management with skilful selection, fattening and growth-monitoring. Other products have a more tenuous link with society. For instance, the only distinguishing feature of rapeseed oil from the Ardèche is that the seeds are roasted before pressing. This nevertheless produces an oil with a very particular taste that is virtually unique to the Ardèche region.

The same variability applies to the volume, scale and area of production. Marketing methods and distribution networks range from direct sales to supermarkets.

How are we to make sense of this variety? All localized products are founded on a lowest common denominator – historical depth and shared know-how – that defines origin in basic terms and allows us



Two Bresse products in the making (2002): *faiselle* production (*fromage blanc*) at the Foissiat cooperative butter dairy, and *galette à la crème* (creamy griddle cakes) from Saint-Etienne-du-Bois.

**Other emerging farming systems  
that may connect with  
local production**

*Organic farming: the production of food and agricultural commodities in accordance with certain rules aimed at protecting the environment and human health.*

*Fair Trade: the practice of working with disadvantaged producers and encouraging sustainable development through favourable commercial deals. Labels such as 'Max Havelaar' carry the Fair Trade Mark: an independent consumer label guaranteeing that the product has been produced in accordance with minimum fair-trade standards.*

*CSA (Community Supported Agriculture): also based on ethical consumption, CSA is a partnership of mutual commitment between a farm and a community of supporters based on direct sales from the farm.*

to think of these products as a family. Polymorphism apart, all local food production systems maintain a particular relationship with space. Their place within a given community derives from historical precedent and collective practices. This is the common thread that links them in place and time. Their collective dimension makes them a part of local culture and helps to distinguish provenance<sup>(1)</sup> (meaning to 'issue from a place') from origin (meaning 'to be from a place'). Historical precedents give a place meaning and lead to a shift in status. The time-span in question may range from several centuries to just a few decades, but there is a definite sense of historical precedence. That, linked to the collective memory that has been

handed down through generations, is what gives a place depth. Thus to answer our original question, in order to understand the diversity of localized products we need to look at the cultural criteria that link a place with a particular history and social group.

This approach allows us to distinguish between different kinds of products, concentrating first on those that make sense at a local level, particularly those which are usually called 'produits de terroir'. This somewhat muddling expression, now widely used in France, refers to products from a given place but makes no distinction between origin and provenance. Equally confusing, free-range products usually count as terroir products even though their only distinguishing feature is farm-scale production based on farm-grown raw materials. Whether they also qualify as localized products depends on whether or not they relate to the local culture (rather than just to the land). Farm-produced *foie*



1 – The Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property of March 20, 1883 mentions the word 'source'.

Locality features widely in advertising today.

*gras* from Normandy is a free-range product whereas Périgord *foie gras* forms part of a localized production system.

Collective skills is the most useful parameter to explain the nature of this kind of relationship, working better than historical belonging. The *Bleu de Bresse* trademark for instance already enjoys a certain historical precedence because the cheese has been manufactured in the Ain for the past 60 years. Shared local skills, however, have nothing to do with it. The cheese was invented after the war by a particularly dynamic and ingenious cooperative man-



The salt marshes of Guérande, 1987. Under EU regulations, salt is now eligible for registration as a Geographical Indication.

ager. The same may be said of all hand-crafted cakes and sweets – hence our preference for the term ‘localized products’ instead of ‘terroir products’.



Saint-Roch-sur-Egrenne, department of the Orne, Normandy, 1985. Meadow orchards and local varieties are the mainstay of Normandy cider and perry production. The Domfront area, famous for its pear orchards, is the home of *Domfront Perry* and *Calvados*, both Protected Designations of Origin (PDO).



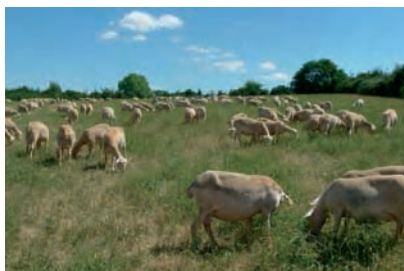
## The protection of origin

The protection mechanisms put in place at European level have drawn even greater attention to localized products by projecting them into the world of commerce. The creation of a legal framework makes it possible to establish and protect the relationship between a product and a place by reserving the use of a particular name. This forces us to look more closely at some of the notions arising from the cultural context, particularly since the protective measures in question – from delimitation of geographical area to the drawing-up of specifications<sup>(2)</sup> – are by nature exclusive.

### France: leading the way

French legislation has for many years endorsed the use of a geographical name to identify products whose characteristics are connected with a particular locality and know-how, and to prevent their imitation. This legislation is founded on the concept of the protection of origin that was born out of the crises that rocked the French wine trade in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. From these painful beginnings came the Appellation of controlled origin<sup>(3)</sup> system we know today.

The appellation of origin concept emerged with the law of 1919 that established GIs (Geographical Indications) as collective intellectual property and granted legal recognition to unions for the protection of appellations of origin ('Syndicats de défense de l'appellation'). The law however fell short of a legal definition. Formal recognition of appellations of controlled origin only came in 1935 with the passing of a new decree law that established a national committee for wine-growing AOCs (that in 1947 would become the Institut National des Appellations d'Origine, or INAO). From that point forward, AOC registration was subject to the committee's approval, based on a formal application defining the wine-growing area in question. The AOC structure and rule system were later extended under the law of 2 July 1990 to include the entire agrifood sector.



Sheep grazing on the Causse de Nissac in the Aveyron. Roquefort cheese, made from sheep's milk, was the first-ever French product to obtain AOC status, in 1925.

2 – 'Specifications' and 'code of practices' are often used interchangeably.

3 – Appellation d'origine contrôlée (AOC) in French.

### The European Regulations of 1992 and 2006

- Regulation (EEC) No 2081/92 of 14 July 1992 on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs (modified in 2003).
- Regulation (EEC) No 2082/92 of 14 July 1992 on certificates of specific character for agricultural products and foodstuffs.

Both of the above were replaced by Regulation (EEC) No 510/2006 of 20 March 2006 on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs; and by Regulation (EEC) No 509/2006 of 20 March 2006 on agricultural products and foodstuffs as traditional specialties guaranteed.

## Community legislation

The advent of the single European market loosened national boundaries and created opportunities for cross-border trade, making it more difficult to protect product names from misuse. It also called into question the future of 'quality products' in general and most especially those specific to particular countries. This was the background to two regulations issued by the European Council of Ministers on 14 July 1992 and replaced on 20 March 2006: one regarding the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin; and the other regarding certificates of specific character for agricultural products and foodstuffs.

Registration as a Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) or a Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) provides protection based on the

relationship between the product and its place of origin. Both of them mean *'the name of a region, a specific place or, in some exceptional cases, a country, used to describe an agricultural product or a foodstuff, originating in that region, specific place or country'*.

A PDO (closely related to an AOC) designates a product whose quality or characteristics *'are essentially or exclusively due to a particular geographical environment with its inherent natural and human factors and the production, processing and preparation of which take place in the defined geographical area'*. A PGI designates a product possessing *'a specific quality, reputation or other characteristics attributable to that geographical origin, and the production and/or processing and/or preparation of which take place in the defined geographical area'*.<sup>(4)</sup>

The philosophy behind PDO regulation is to protect, by means of a name, a unique product that cannot be reproduced in any other place. Production must be wholly confined to a specific geographical area and the product's characteristics must be demonstrably connected with and influenced by that area. A PGI also protects a

name but focuses mainly on a product's reputation, historical links with a given place and particular characteristics and qualities. The product need



PDO products are now available in Europe, such as this olive oil from Toledo, in Spain.

4 – Council regulation (EC) No 510/2006 of 20 March 2006 on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs.

not be wholly manufactured within a specific geographical area: raw materials, in particular, may come from elsewhere.

Registration under the Traditional Speciality Guaranteed (TSG) scheme – which replaced the certificates of specific character – protects tradition rather than origin. 'Specific character' is defined as: *'the characteristic or set of characteristics which distinguishes an agricultural product or a foodstuff clearly from other similar products or foodstuffs of the same category'*. 'Traditional' means *'proven usage on the Community market for a time period showing transmission between generations; this time period should be the one generally ascribed to one human generation, at least 25 years'*. In order to appear in the register of the Traditional Specialities Guaranteed recognised throughout the European Community, *'an agricultural product or foodstuff shall either be produced using traditional raw materials or be characterised by a traditional composition or a mode of production and/or processing reflecting a traditional type of production and/or processing'*.<sup>(5)</sup>

Producers applying for PDO or PGI registration must submit product specifications to include the following: definition of the geographical area in question; proof that the product originates from that area; information justifying the link between the product and its geographical environment or geographical origin. Product specifications provided with TSG applications must include criteria on which the product's traditional character may be assessed. Application for registration in any of the above categories is entirely voluntary.



### Label Rouge and Product Conformity Certificates

*The French 'Label Rouge' certified collective mark was created within the framework of the Loi d'Orientation Agricole (Agricultural Orientation Law) of 5 August 1960. It guarantees that a product conforms with certain qualities and characteristics that are specified in advance, and that it is of superior quality.*

*The Product Conformity Certificate, introduced in 1990, guarantees that a foodstuff conforms with certain specific characteristics or previously established rules relating to its production, processing and packaging.*

*Applying for registration under either scheme is voluntary but both costly and complex. Under the Law of Agricultural Orientation of 5 January 2006, the Product Conformity Certificate was replaced by Product Certification, a quality label that is no longer under state control but that nevertheless remains a state responsibility.*

## French implementation of Community legislation

The French policy for the identification and certification of the quality of agricultural products and foodstuffs has been developed over several decades. It relies on three principal mechanisms: the Appellation of controlled origin (AOC) labelling system for the protection of origin-

5 – Council regulation (EC) No 509/2006 of 20 March 2006 on agricultural products and foodstuffs as traditional specialities guaranteed.



### French implementation of European Regulation pre-2006

*French rules protecting agricultural products and foodstuffs connected with a given place or traditional production methods were set out in the French law of application of 3 January 1994 which was designed to implement European legislation on the basis of the quality marks already in place. PGI and TSG registration were dependent on the prior granting of Label Rouge status or Product Conformity Certification. The awarding of labels and the accrediting of the certification bodies responsible for monitoring specification conformity were subject to consultations with the 'Commission Nationale des Labels et des Certifications' (National Commission for Labels and Certification, or CNLC). Initially the CNLC was also responsible for reviewing product specifications submitted with PGI and TSG applications. The decree of 28 August 2000 then broadened the INAO's remit to include the assessment of PGI applications. These became subject to review by the fourth National Committee of the INAO while the CNLC retained its prerogatives with respect to the approval of applications for Label Rouge and Product Conformity Certification. European PDOs (Protected Designations of Origin) were given the same status as 'Appellations d'origine contrôlée' (AOCs) and governed by the same set of rules. The system was jointly supervised by the INAO, as a public authority, and the French Consumer Fraud Office ('Direction Générale de la Concurrence, de la Consommation et de la Répression des Fraudes' or DGCCRF). The new agricultural orientation law led to a significant change in this respect and it remains to be seen whether minor production sectors and small producers will be able to afford the costs of external inspections.*

linked products; the Label Rouge scheme; and more recently, Product Conformity Certification. The principles for the implementation of European legislation were set out in the French law of 3 January 1994 that aimed to take account of the different labelling systems already in place.

Certain aspects of these provisions were then significantly modified by the Agricultural Orientation Law of 5 January 2006. The INAO was put in charge of managing all French labels relating to the origin or quality of agricultural products and processed foods. The acronym 'INAO' was retained but the organization was renamed 'Institut National de l'Origine et de la Qualité': National Institute for Origin and Quality. PGI registration no longer depended on Label Rouge approval or Product Conformity Certification. A revised monitoring system was put in place for all origin-linked quality products, including PDOs, which are now under the supervision of INAO-approved, producer-independent organizations. Lastly, French associations for the protection of quality ('Groupements de Qualité' and 'Syndicats de Défense') were restructured as 'Organismes de Défense et de Gestion' (ODGs - organizations for defence and product management). For PDO and PGI registration, details of delimitation of geographical area and product specifications are still submitted by producers and assessed by the INAO. The aims of this new policy together with the modes of legal enforcement and details of the labels concerned (origin-linked quality labels, value-adding

statements ['mentions valorisantes'] and product certification) are explained in French rulings number 2006-1547 of 7 December 2006 and number 2007-30 of 5 January 2007, relating to the promotion of agricultural, forest and marine products and foodstuffs.<sup>(6)</sup>

6 – For updated information, consult in particular: <[www.agriculture.gouv.fr](http://www.agriculture.gouv.fr)>, <[www.legifrance.gouv.fr](http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr)>, <[www.inao.gouv.fr](http://www.inao.gouv.fr)> (accessed February 2008).

## Relationship to a place and a terroir

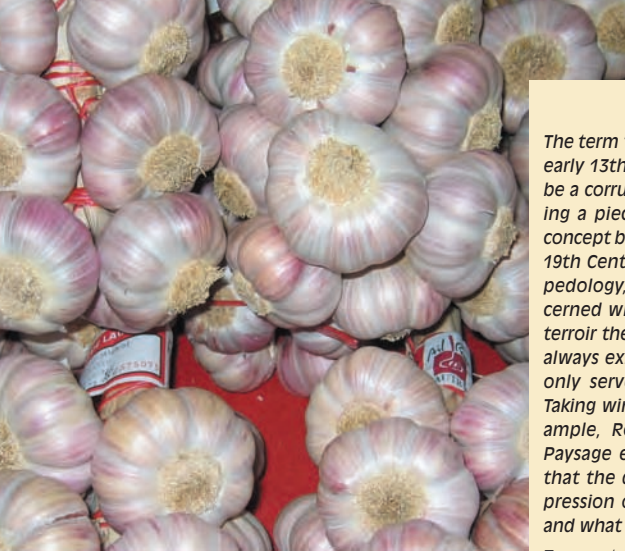
The decision to forbid the use of a name outside a defined and delimited geographical area can have serious consequences – particularly since it depends on concepts that are far from obvious, such as terroir, reputation or particular quality. Traditional Speciality Guaranteed, on the other hand, has nothing to do with place.

### Protected Designation of Origin

Some places are physically predisposed to the types of production that develop there. The natural environment alone, however, cannot account for what makes these products special. To make sense of their relationship with place, we need to look at the human activities expressed through particular skills, social patterns, practices and perceptions. The French AOC system is inextricably linked with the terroir. Based on wine, the concept of terroir focused on the environmental characteristics (soil, climate, aspect) that were expressed through local know-how and evolved from the wine-growing principles of the INAO (Institut National des Appellations d'Origine).

As the INAO gradually extended its remit to include the agrifood sector as a whole, it also broadened its approach, so arriving at the definition of terroir we find today: *'A geographical area with defined boundaries where a human community generates and accumulates along its*





Lautrec garlic, packed in strings or plaits (known locally as *manouilles*) is a PGI since 1996.

*history a collective production knowledge based on a system of interactions between bio-physical and human factors. The combination of techniques involved in production reveals originality, confers typicity, and leads to a reputation for a good originating from this geographical area'.<sup>(7)</sup>*

Because of their powerful links with the physical environment, those PDOs most consistent with INAO philosophy may be compared to 'system products' meaning products that embody a breed or local variety, landscape and specific practices.<sup>(8)</sup> Together these express a powerful sense of consistency and are often related to the maintenance of biodiversity and sustainable development.

## Protected Geographical Indication

PGIs on the other hand come close to our definition of localized products, without taking into account the effect of natural factors. Their relation to place is simply linked to historical belonging and shared practices, two parameters more precise than those somewhat nebulous con-

### Terroir

*The term 'terroir' first appeared in the early 13th Century and is thought to be a corruption of territorium, meaning a piece of land or territory. The concept became more scientific in the 19th Century with the emergence of pedology, a scientific discipline concerned with the role of the soil. The terroir then was a given factor: it had always existed, pre-dating man, who only served to reveal its potential. Taking winegrowing terroirs as an example, Roger Dion in his book *Le Paysage et la Vigne* (1990) observed that the quality of a wine is the expression of a particular social milieu and what he called human will.*

*To quote the expression used by Georges Bertrand (1975) in his *L'Histoire Ecologique de la France Rurale*: there is a 'subtle dialectic between the ecological complex and the historical-economic complex' that comes from the constant interaction between the agrosystem, production and human effort. The terroir concept is in fact polysemous: it has multiple meanings depending on what it refers to. If it embraces the human dimension, it connects with temporal density and gives new meaning to the relationship with place.*

*The word itself does not exist as such in other European languages. The Italians refer to 'prodotti tipici' ('typical products') or simply 'nostri' ('ours', from our land), while the Spanish speak of 'productos de la tierra'.*

7 – Casablanca, Sylvander, Noël, Béranger, Coulon, Roncin, 2005, *Terroir et typicité: deux concepts-clés des Appellations d'Origine Contrôlée. Essai de définitions scientifiques et opérationnelles*, p.8.

8 – See Gauttier, INAO, 2006, *Appellations d'Origine Contrôlée et Paysages*.

cepts of quality, reputation or any other characteristic to which they may ultimately refer. Natural factors, though often taken into account, should be largely irrelevant.

The definitions of PDOs and PGIs demonstrate the difficulty of dissociating tradition from origin – which also explains why the existence of the Traditional Speciality Guaranteed system is not a great success.

## Traditional Speciality Guaranteed

This system is designed to protect a traditional composition or mode of production at EU level, independent of origin. However, the infrequency of such registrations throughout the EU shows the inherent difficulty with this approach. Tradition may only really be detached from origin when considering particular farming practises, such as those used in the production of naturally suckled veal, salt-meadow lamb or *Bouchot* mussels. But first, there needs to be agreement at EU level on what practices to specify – not an easy task to judge from the brief attempt to obtain TSG registration for salt-meadow lamb raised in variety of Member States.

Otherwise, TSG designation relates more to the protection of tradition so as to maintain a minimum of its contents altogether in the face of product trivialisation. As such, it is primarily intended for generic forms of origin-based products. *Mozzarella* cheese, for instance, is protected by a PDO for *Mozzarella di Bufala* and a TSG for generic mozzarella. Since the practices entailed are already covered by food-processing standards, defining product specifications is much easier than for salt-meadow lamb.

At a glance most of the products registered as TSGs<sup>(9)</sup> correspond more closely to PGIs, being largely inseparable from local culture and fairly typical of their roots. They nevertheless perform less convincingly as economic levers than either PDOs or PGIs that will both tend to play a role in local development precisely because they are locally rooted.

There is also the question of local food habits and just how useful it is to provide European-wide protection for products that only appeal to local customers. *Karjalanpiirakka*<sup>(10)</sup> and Finish *Kalakukko*<sup>(11)</sup> are good examples. All of this suggests that TSG designation is often misunderstood – at least in France – by those few producers who do apply for it in the hope of protecting small-scale, traditional production industries.

9 – See for instance: <[http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/qual/en/1bbb1\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/qual/en/1bbb1_en.htm)> (accessed February 2008).

10 – Small, open, flat pasty, comprising a thin crust and a filling. The filling is usually a purée of barley or rice or mashed potato. Instead of these, cooked mashed vegetables (e.g. swede, carrot, turnip or stewed cabbage or mushrooms) may also be used <[http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/qual/en/1211\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/qual/en/1211_en.htm)> (accessed February 2008).

11 – Round or oval bread-based dish consisting of an outer crust surrounding a filling of small whole fish such as perch, whitefish, roach or smelt. <[http://ec.europa.eu/comm/agriculture/qual/en/1209\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/comm/agriculture/qual/en/1209_en.htm)> (accessed February 2008).



## Historical roots

History is a major distinguishing factor in a product's relationship with a given place. This raises a number of questions to do with the time-span covered by history and the respective roles of oral and written records in documenting the registration process – bearing in mind that history and reputation are two different things. We must also consider the written sources documenting that time-span.

### Defining historical depth

EU legislators state that a human generation, at least 25 years, is the minimum required to establish roots in time. However, all of the major upheavals in agriculture that led to dramatic changes in farming occurred in the 1950s – which is more than 30 years ago.

Time-span is not something that can be decreed. It has meaning. It forms part of a product's local history and differs accordingly. The chestnut groves of the Ardèche, for instance, have been rooted in the local culture for centuries. The same can be said of fish-farming in the Dombes region where the presence of fish ponds is attested since medieval times in a variety of business negotiations that were widely documented over the centuries. Carp breeding was first described in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century and later in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century by pamphleteers who revelled in the controversy surrounding carp farming systems. Commercial orchards, on the other hand, are a more recent addition to the local landscape, since most of them were planted in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, in the wake of the disastrous phylloxera epidemic that virtually wiped out the French wine-growing industry. This is the case for cherry orchards around Bessenay, west of Lyon, or the Eyrieux peach trees in the Ardèche region, which became very famous in the first part of the XX<sup>e</sup> century.

Historical depth can vary significantly without becoming an essentially qualifying factor: it is not what determines the degree of recognition afforded to localized products, nor is it sufficient unto itself. Typicity does not follow automatically from provenance. Likewise, local and traditional status are not established *de facto* by the passage of time and the existence of a documented history.

A product's historical depth is often seen as an abstract entity that may, where necessary, be detached from contemporary reality. In fact, historical rooting entails an identification of the skills and practices that have been developed and transmitted by successive generations. Historical depth must be linked to the collective know-how that has been passed

down to the present generation– bearing in mind that the transmission of know-how does not rule out evolution. Otherwise, history threatens to serve as a means of justifying would-be heritage products on the basis of a place's reputation – not on the specific qualities of the product concerned. Location within a historic territory area, for instance, does not entitle PDOs or PGIs to extend their boundaries unless justified by specific, up-to-date product know-how. In the event of a rupture between place and know-how, each case should be carefully considered on its merits.

## History and reputation: two quite different dimensions

A strictly historical approach may be at odds with anecdotal evidence in support of reputation. Note that the EU itself deliberately plays on the ambiguity of the French word 'histoire', meaning 'story' or 'history'. Slogans such as *'If your product has a story to tell, it's up to you to tell it'*, or *'You can always tell a product with a story'* featured in EU communications on protective legislation and were repeated throughout the Union in 1997.<sup>(12)</sup> Hard factual evidence is definitely required but there is also a story to tell, one that may be a mixture of legends and folklore.

The role of history here is to help win renown for a product that may have developed through a process of trial and error and makeshift adaptation – humble beginnings for a product seeking more elevated status.

Winning renown is a complex process in which chance, folklore and famous people of every description all play their part. Many of these products have been made since 'ancient times' or 'time immemorial', others are steeped in legend, the result of a happy accident. Take *Roquefort* cheese, for instance. Story has it that a shepherd once left his cave in a hurry, leaving behind a hunk



Brie – a timeless cheese...

of bread and a piece of cheese. By the time he returned a few days later, the cheese had turned blue but tasted delicious !

The development of historical fiction raises questions about mankind's relationship with the past and the part it plays in society today. Such mechanisms relate to heritage and how society builds a sense of heritage. Cheese, as a distinctive marker of French identity, is an ideal source of story-telling material.

12 – Four page document with colour photographs, published in 1997 by the European Commission.

Renown is a polymorphous concept that is not easy to define. For some, it means the same as reputation; for others, it has a related but distinct meaning. The food-processing industry marketing is a case in point. Always an active exponent of value-adding through market segmentation, the food processing sector uses analytical methods to bring out the accepted character of a product by defining its reknown as either 'spontaneous', 'implied' or 'supported'. Product reputation, on the other hand, is directly related to what this accepted character implies. The aim is to find out not only whether a product is well known, but also why and how. Such niceties may well leave you a touch sceptical but they nonetheless form part of strategically targeted market research. PGI applicants often use studies of reknown in support of their product's alleged reputation. These days, products can become renowned virtually overnight thanks to targeted advertising campaigns that create an illusion of strong cultural roots. A good example is *Aoste* ham, *Aoste* being in fact just a trademark.

Renown and reputation are linked to commercial recognition. The market forces at work in towns and cities will tend to highlight certain products but overlook others – which will remain unknown but continue to exist nonetheless. The relationship between town and country is a particularly important factor when considering the question of renown and status. Products manufactured in scattered villages and hamlets are often named after the place where they are marketed (for instance, the nearest town). Examples are *Bayonne* ham and *Bleu de Sassenage* cheese.

## Following the tracks

History – as a discipline – cannot always account for the historical depth of these products because the sources on which that research depends were sometimes subject to the food preferences of the trend-setters of the time. Which means, of course, that many of these products will have received little or no mention in the literature. However delicious a particular cheese or ham, it will remain anonymous if consumption remains confined to the tight-knit community that produces it. Another problem is that many localized products were originally produced for domestic consumption within the context of subsistence. All of this explains why few records have been put down in writing over the centuries, and why those that do exist tend to be somewhat unreliable as a means of improving our understanding of these products and clarifying their historical authenticity. Written records may help to place localized products in a context that makes it easier to understand the place they occupy but cannot always be trusted to shed light on the product itself. In some cases too, the information contained in these ancient records should be viewed with caution since it may be presented out of context in order to substantiate claims of product anteriority.



Bearing in mind these difficulties, oral history may serve not only to fill in the gaps but also to provide much of the basic data. An absence of written records does not necessarily imply that a product has no historical roots. Where no written records exist (as is often the case with charcuterie) interviews with elderly people can give us the facts behind a product, from how it was made to the place it occupied within society and its economic development. The time span in question is the recent past, going back a hundred years or so. When essential information actually depends on oral accounts, several interviews should be conducted and the accounts compared to make sure they tally. The interviewees should be members of the community from different walks of life: what a cheese refiner has to say will not be the same as the account of a farmer-producer.

## Sources

Local food production systems left few records – partly because many of them were originally part of subsistence agriculture. Some sources, however, can be invaluable for research. The problem is finding them and determining which period is most likely to yield documented information on the facts behind localized products: medieval, modern or contemporary.

The late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> Century saw a burgeoning interest in agriculture among the leisured classes, especially the landowning nobility, and this resulted in a wealth of relevant data. Of particular interest are various works by an increasing number of learned societies that relied on the testimony of local experts. Other sources of information range from administrative and technical reports to agricultural journals, treaties and statistics.

Food and gastronomic history can also help to shed light on these products. Our sources in this case may be categorized according to how useful they are as a means of locating production and linking it with a particular place or date of first known mention. The possibilities range from administrative documents (surveys, censuses, statistics, decrees, legal cases, regional commodity prices), travel logs and food guides to directories of regional specialities and motoring



and touring guides, the most famous being the *Guide Bleu* – which took over from the *Guide Joanne* in 1910 – followed by the *Guide Michelin*, first published in 1911.

Local archives, especially on agriculture, should also be routinely consulted, even though their relevance does vary depending on the agricultural sector in question. Other essential sources are reviews of local agriculture and departmental statistics published under the authority of 19<sup>th</sup> Century prefects. Equally important are linguistics atlases of France: maps showing the names of certain everyday items of rural life – that may include localized products – written in the vernacular. Often accompanied by detailed notes, linguistic atlases can help to clarify the area covered by a product name and the production methods and modes of consumption that applied there.

The sources used should be cross-referenced with local economic data from recent history. Take Bresse butter, for instance. By the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Bresse was famous for its butter production but it is not mentioned by name in any of the surveys of milk, butter and cheese production conducted at the time – at national and departmental level – simply because butter-producing dairies only officially came into being in the 1930s.

The search for documented evidence is no easy task, particularly since each product has its own specific history. What matters is that the information obtained should be put in context.



## Tradition, knowledge and skills

Shared knowledge is another distinctive characteristic of local production. It may relate to a particular breeding or growing practice, special curdling or refining techniques, or indeed any production method or mode of consumption that helps to define a product and root it in local culture.

### **Ethnology: understanding what gives meaning to a place**

*The aim of ethnology is to detect, highlight, study and clarify the distinctive characteristics of societies in particular, and more broadly, the diversities in culture and social organisation. The emphasis in research is on understanding local experience, based on field-observation methods and ethnographic surveys. Ethnography denotes the detailed descriptive analysis of societies, drawing on the accounts of informants.*

*Our focus within this vast field of research is on local production systems: the methods, skills and practices they bring into play, with particular emphasis on the place they occupy in local society and the food practices that support that place. Our approach relies heavily on material culture, based on the detailed observation and analysis of factual evidence, activities, practices and artefacts.*

*Ethnobiological methods are also used to explore the relationships maintained between a particular social group and local natural resources, within a given locality. Ethnobiology is the branch of ethnology that specialises in the interdisciplinary study of such factors as 'living' resource management and its implications for localized products: the importance of varieties, breeds, skills, knowledge and the cross-related problem of landscape and production.*

The question is how to identify and position local know-how within the framework of protective policy initiatives. Local practices are faced with scientific and technical knowledge as well as tradition and modes of transmission that account for many of the variations encountered at local level. Codifying these practices is not easy – witness how hard it is to identify the range of knowledge, skills and definitions required in the drawing up of product specifications.



Prize-winning poultry: 'Grand Prix d'Honneur' batch of capons at the 2002 Bourg-en-Bresse (Ain) 'Glorieuse', one of several regional gourmet poultry competitions that celebrate excellence in poultry production.

The way a product is made reflects a fund of knowledge of varying complexity, some of which – particular skills, for instance – are of pivotal importance in defining the characteristics that make that product special. Unlike purely technological production, the manufacturing process does not actually depend on any of that knowledge but its absence may result in loss of product specificity. *Rosette de Lyon* saucisson, for instance, is still normally packed in a natural gut casing because producers know that the sausage would not be the same without it. Preparing the casing is a time-consuming process. However, the thickness of natural gut has an effect on the curing which helps to bring out the unique taste of this charcuterie – much to the delight of connoisseurs.



Freshly churned butter at the Etrez-Beaupont dairy cooperative, Bresse, Ain (2004).



The 2006 Charolais cattle show, Romenay, Saône-et-Loire. The degree of fat cover is assessed by palpating one particular part of the animal's body.

Bresse butter is another good example of a product that relies on shared cultural experience – witness the care with which it is made. One of its defining features is that, unlike industrially made butter, it is exclusively produced from cream that has been biologically matured beforehand in order to bring out its aromas. The cream is then rapidly transformed into butter, taking care to minimise handling so as to conserve all of its quality.

## Drawing up a code of practices: selection at the cost of diversity ?

Variants are a defining feature of local production systems and may occur from place to place within a production area, but never within the same place. *Saucisson de couenne* (rind sausage) could be a good example. Produced and eaten throughout greater South East France, it belongs to a family of saucisson that requires cooking and, as the name 'couenne' suggests, it contains pork rind. How much it contains varies from place to place. There are in fact nearly a dozen of known variants, each one confined to a particular place and corresponding to a specific composition that may or may not be associated with a particular designation.

Another reason for local variants is the oral transmission of skills, leaving room for all manner of variants, adaptations and interpretations that license a degree of differentiation from the model.

Taking this diversity into account becomes an issue when deciding what practices, manufacturing methods or ingredients to select within the framework of protective legislation. Take *Chevrotin* cheese, for instance. The *Chevrotin* designation covers all traditional goats' cheeses that are exclusively or principally produced in the departments of Savoie and Haute-Savoie, irrespective of whether they are made to the same principles as *Reblochon*, *Tomme* or *Vacherin*. Goat farming was for many years seen as the poor relation of mainstream farming. As a result, the *Chevrotin* designation has become an umbrella term which in practice embraces different realities and denotes a range of cheeses with quite distinct characteristics.

Cheese-making practice throughout these two departments varies from one mountain range to another. The Aravis Mountains are the cradle of *Reblochon* cheese and the same principals are used to make *Chevrotin* – sometimes known as *Reblochon de Chèvre* (goats' cheese *Reblochon*). The Chablais Mountains, home of *Abondance* cheese, make a version of *Chevrotin* that is slightly larger than *Reblochon* but based on similar methods and using high-pasture milk. In the Bauges Mountains, *Chevrotin* generally refers to a cheese with a grey rind, made according to a standard process similar to *Tomme* cheese. Matured in the same cellars, the *Chevrotin* becomes covered in a furry mould called *Mucor* (known locally as 'poil de chat' meaning 'cat's fur'.) This is also the home of a *Vacherin*-like *Chevrotin* with that creamy, sometimes runny consistency typical of cheese made from high-pasture milk. Traditionally made in cloth-lined wooden strap, this type of *Chevrotin* is still produced today but on a very limited scale.

The most structured *Chevrotin* production system is in the Aravis Mountains where producers were also the first to apply for PDO designation, granted in 2002 and originally based on *Chevrotin des Aravis*. Producers in the neighbouring massifs applied for inclusion in the PDO on the basis that local production and usage of the name *Chevrotin* in the Chablais, Mont-Blanc and Bauges Mountains were sanctioned by time and practice. The problem was choosing what name to register. In the end, it was decided to make *Chevrotin* a generic appellation, founded on cheese-making practices in the Aravis Mountains.



*Gratarn d'Arèches* cheese, a close relative of *Chevrotin*, one of many goat's cheeses from the Northern Alps.



Given how much that name encompasses, the authorities might have decided to distinguish grey-rind from white-rind *Chevrotin*, with registration reserved for the latter, allowing for differences in ripening techniques. Likewise, they might have included larger cheeses (up to 500 or 600 grams) instead of setting a limit of 250 or 350 grams. This might have led to more open-ended specifications – but the picture painted would have been a more faithful reflection of field experience.

In an attempt to reduce the variety of products covered by the *Chevrotin* appellation, grey-rind *Chevrotin* now comes under the separate *Tommes de Chèvre* designation. However, the cornucopia of local methods used to produce ‘white rind’ have been reduced to a relatively standard (or at the very least ‘homogenized’) production process that does not always correspond to what happens on site. For some producers in the Mont-Blanc Massif and especially in the Bauges Mountains, this means changing working practices or losing the right to use the name *Chevrotin*.

Giving an accurate description of the methods used to obtain processed products or foodstuffs does invariably imply choices. However, setting aside the problem of allowing for variants, the choices that have to be made must take into account the evolution of techniques and skills, as well as product composition.

## The status of knowledge

Vernacular skills and knowledge have developed through experience and observation. They co-exist alongside scientific and technical knowledge that infiltrates them to a greater or lesser degree depending on the

particular sector of activity. That coexistence remains untroubled until issues emerge that draw them into a confrontation with scientific knowledge. Witness what happens when protective mechanisms are introduced. In our bookish culture, empirical knowledge handed down from peer to peer is in practice regarded as inferior to knowledge that comes from written sources.

Products qualifying for protection become part of a



The vineyards surrounding the town of Moissac: golden clusters of *Chasselas de Moissac* grapes are testament to the exceptional efforts of local growers (known here as ‘Chasselatiers’ after the name of the *Chasselas* variety).



### The carp of the Dombes

*Fish-farming in the many ponds of the Dombes region dates back to medieval times when the draconian rules on food consumption made fishing a priority. Mainly based on carp, the local fish farming today relies on an extensive pond production system that alternates wet fish-farming periods with dry periods of cereal cropping. This type of crop rotation leads to complex farming techniques that encourage biodiversity, favouring a wide variety of flora and fauna, including plankton and soil and aquatic micro-organisms. Farm pond production systems differ according to the system of land tenure or ownership, the pattern of land use (which is highly varied), the operating principles in question and the impact of hunting activities. The landscape here is unique, changing in appearance as ponds give way to crops in the dry season. PGI status is currently being sought for Dombes carp and pike.*



The Dombes pond production system alternates wet periods and fish-farming with dry periods and cereal cropping. Fishing in the Chaffange pond in Saint-André-le-Bouchoux, 1984, and oat cropping in the Renolly pond in Saint-Paul-de-Varax, Ain (2005).

logical system of support and inspection. Traditional skills and practices are frequently monitored and analysed by technicians with no other frame of reference except their own, using a zero-defects approach that puts sanitary conditions first. Take the case of *Abondance* cheese from the Haute Savoie department. That distinctive touch of bitterness that comes from

the method of draining does not feature among the cheese's specific characteristics: the technician in charge explained that it was due to faulty production. There is also the case of fish-farming in the Dombes region, a system commonly likened to fish-gathering and viewed as unreliable despite the fact that it relies on extensive but well-controlled pond management. To use the term 'fish-gathering' in this context is plainly derogatory since it implies an absence of rational management and competence in fish farming.



Local knowledge has been largely ignored in the product developments undertaken by agriculture professionals. *Pélarçon* goat cheese, for instance, from the Cévennes region, was traditionally made with a specific rennet curd (*caillé doux*). As the area fell into decline in the 1960s, it also became home to disaffected urbanites who learned the acid curd technique, more familiar to teachers in cheese schools, and taught in training courses run by agricultural technicians. All of which explains why this technique now accounts for the bulk of output and is the only practice sanctioned within the framework of the PDO application – even though a very small percentage of producers continue to use the traditional process for making ‘soft cheese’.

The food-processing industry in general is eager to exploit the benefits of geographical indication. This situation tends to trivialize modes of production. Craftsmen and small producers may have trouble getting their voices heard, most especially in sectors where industrial versions of their products are also looking for PGI – salted meat, for instance. Approved practices tend to favour the production methods of the largest units, making it often difficult for smaller ones to respect the technical constraints and afford the costs arising from inspections.

## **Tradition in relation with a reference model**

The characterisation of local know-how and skills and their relationship with scientific and technological knowledge raises the issue of tradition. Just how far can usage and its attendant production parameters develop? Which factors represent the solid core of a tradition that must be left untouched if it is to survive at all? The very meaning of the word tradition seems so obvious that no one dares to define it, but what exactly does it refer to ?

Contrary to our cultural perspective, tradition is not just a relic of the past that has survived to the present nor is it the living legacy of (generally) bygone times. It is in fact how people in the present see what has gone before, an interpretation of the past based on strictly contemporary criteria. It is not the past that produces the present but the present that shapes its past<sup>(13)</sup> – the selective interpretation of the past based on culturally significant criteria. To put this into perspective, we need to look at the evolution of usage and the act of transmission.

Transmission – considered here from the point of view of learning – can occur through actors who occupy a specific place within a given local

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13 – This Mossi proverb would appear to be saying much the same thing: ‘When memory goes gathering dead wood, it brings back the firewood it wants’ (Zonabend, 1980, *La mémoire longue*, p.5).

community or family. Knowledge may also be transmitted by other routes which vary, depending on the evolution of rural communities. This is particularly true in underprivileged areas where the land is often reduced to desert and communities are most susceptible to settlement by incomers unfamiliar with local cultural technology. In the event, tradition may be reinterpreted to such a point that some techniques, despite their significance, are lost for good.

Usage and tradition alike are partly dependent on the knowledge that a community decides to pass on. Locally appropriate usage – or the rules established by custom – is a combination of ancient legal principles

blended with current practice and action plans. As such, it is a key factor in understanding how local production systems become positioned in time.

The introduction of soya in poultry diets in Bresse (Ain) led to a row between the Ancients and the Moderns that rumbled on for years. Those in favour were mainly slaughtermen but also some breeders who argued against the traditional, low protein diet, claiming that the new diet would reduce production costs and improve breeding. For others, it would lead to changes in the quality of marbling and a loss of reputation of the PDO. Tempers ran high for several years until the issue was decided once for all and new provisions were written into the internal regulations of the Bresse appellation.

Given that a product's code of practices requires a detailed description of how it is made, every organization for defence and product management ('Organisme de Défense et de Gestion', ODG) faces similar problems when drawing up or modifying specifications. The choices to be made will vary from product-to-product depending on the place the product occupies, its importance as an identity-defining dimension and its expected role. All of these issues are particularly incisive today – a continuing debate for people who possess knowledge that has been passed down, reinterpreted and modified over the generations, knowledge that has come to represent a form of collective intellectual property.



PDO Salers free-range, raw milk cheese is made from milk curdled in a wooden tub known as a 'gerle'. Production is seasonal (April-November). Aurillac region, Cantal (2006).



Bresse chickens being coop-fattened for slaughter in Saint-Denis-les-Bourg, Ain (2005).

Protecting local knowledge and skills that form part of a changing local culture requires the selection of a reference model together with criteria that must be formalised if the product is to be what it should be. The question is, what exactly should it be and according to what technical conditions and historical background? Various contemporary preoccupations affect products whose contexts of production and consumption have changed significantly.

Taste and the development of taste, for instance, may be linked to the storage conditions required for deferred consumption. Some fifty years ago, *Picodon* cheese was only eaten fresh (after roughly 12 days' ripening) in late spring when milk was plentiful. The bulk of production was dried then stored in the cellar for up to several months until needed when it would be washed in water that sometimes contained vinegar or alcohol. This 'restarted' the cheese, giving it a more supple consistency and that sharp ('piquant') taste to which it owes its name. Described in PDO specifications as the 'Dieulefit' method – after the town in the Drôme – this tradition now only survives among a handful of producers. It is one of various observed vestigial practices that have an effect on the range of tastes that are recognized and expected by local consumers. Taking those practices into account is essential for the preservation of locally specific features, tastes and textures that remain highly sought-after at local level.

The notion of tradition is implicit in PDO and PGI status but explicitly referred to by TSG. Tradition is definitely related to transmission but it has to be set within a meaningful historical context, not simply stated in peremptory fashion.

## **Plant varieties and animal breeds**

All value-adding initiatives that relate to local animal and plant resources must clearly identify the genetic material in question. The options will vary depending on the type of product (plant- or animal-based) and the objective sought (PDO, PGI or other form of value-adding). The problem is reconciling the idea of local plant and animal breeds – when these are acknowledged as essential aspects of specific local character – with the realities of present-day agriculture.

Traditional arable farming systems were based on the cultivation of one or several given plant populations that were rarely fixed. There is a two-fold distinction here: varietal diversity on the one hand and, on the other hand, variations within one and the same variety that have produced distinctive populations. In principle, this seems incompatible with current plant and seed regulations that limit heterogeneity and even variability.

In France, for vegetable varieties and widely cultivated field crops, the only seeds and plants allowed for marketing<sup>(14)</sup> are those registered in the *French Official Catalogue of Plant Species and Varieties*. Successful applications must meet DUS requirements (distinction, uniformity and stability) and are assessed and tested over a period of 1-2 years. Any cultivated variety registered on the list is thus genetically fixed.

Seeds and plants of registered varieties are also controlled by the 'Service Officiel de Contrôle et de Certification' (SOC). This is the French government office responsible for verifying the varietal conformity, homogeneity, germination capacity and sanitary status of marketed seeds.

These measures, though appropriate for the regulation of recent new varieties, do raise problems when dealing with local varieties that may be 'too' heterogeneous and susceptible to within-group variation. The very criteria used in DUS evaluation force us to look more closely at the identifying characteristics of the local plant varieties or populations used in the production of quality or origin-labelled goods. Precise mention of plant varieties or populations in product specifications can lead to a form of impoverishment in relation to the reference model. On the other hand, only an idealist could hope to conserve everything. Some compromise has to be found that allows the biocultural features of these plants to be taken into account.

How should these questions be tackled in practice, bearing in mind that every application is quite different? By maintaining a pool of local genetic resources and using selected



The rich varietal diversity of beans. Gérard Brossette Collection, Genay, Rhône, 2006.



Illustration of the *Reinette Cusset*, a 19th Century apple variety found by M. Cusset in the hills around Lyon. Taken from the *Flore et Pomone Lyonnaise* by NC Seringe, 1847, Lyon, Rhône Horticultural Society.

14 – Marketing, according to decree no 81-605 refers to 'the sale, reserving for sale, offer of sale and any and all assignment, supply and transfer, in view of the commercial use of seeds or plants, irrespective of remuneration'.



Two vegetables that are emblematic of their region: cardoons from the Lyon region and PDO Paimpol beans (*Coco de Paimpol*) from Brittany.

cultivars from the existing population? Or by leaving the producers themselves in charge of mass selection, allowing a range of variation – subject to suitable sanitary precautions – within genetic boundaries yet to be established ?

There are various parameters to be considered. The knowledge needed for seed multiplication and selection will be quite different depending on whether the plant is allogamous or autogamous<sup>(15)</sup> and whether it reproduces sexually (via seed) or by vegetative propagation (via tuber, stolon, bulbil, graft, cutting).

Take the case of certain PDO vegetable varieties. Plantings are approved by decrees, then implemented by technical regulations which provide for the use of commercially available varieties that the *French Official Catalogue* names as close approximations to the local types. In the case of Paimpol beans (*Coco de Paimpol*, granted PDO status in 1998) and Espelette peppers (a PDO since 2000), the varieties registered are stable, pure-line varieties. For sweet Cévennes onions (2003), the varieties registered are homogeneous plant populations typical of the local genetic pool (round varieties). The regulations nevertheless allow plants grown from local seed varieties, provided they correspond to the type description. The seeds of green du Puy lentils (1996) must belong to the *Anicia* family descended from a local type, *Lens esculenta puyensis*, and be derived from certified seeds. For all of these productions, the rules allow for the possibility of using farm-grown seeds.

These conditions may work for species that reproduce through sexual multiplication but they cannot be applied to those that reproduce by vegetative propagation, such as potatoes, garlic and strawberries. For various reasons to do with the mode of reproduction, these plants must be regularly renewed and depend on specialised multiplication techniques that aim to minimise the risk of disease. This explains why producers of PDO potatoes from the Ile de Ré (1998) and Roussillon 'primeur' (early sea-

15 – Autogamy: self-fertilization (in which the uniting gametes are mainly derived from the same individual). Allogamy: cross-fertilization (in which the uniting gametes are mainly derived from different individuals).

son) potatoes (2006) use the certified plant varieties registered in the *French Official Catalogue*.

The situation regarding fruits tends to differ depending on the produce in question. For instance, PDOs Grenoble walnuts (1938) and Périgord walnuts (2002) depend on three and four varieties respectively: the *Franquette*, *Mayette* and *Parisienne*; and the *Marbot*, *Franquette*, *Corne* and *Grandjean*. PDOs *Chasselas de Moissac* grapes (1971) and *Muscat du Ventoux* grapes (1997) must be exclusively grown from two wide-spread French varieties: the *Chasselas B* and the *Muscat de Hambourg* respectively. PDO Limousin apples (2005) are cultivated in orchards planted with *Golden Delicious* or mutants of *Golden Delicious*. *Solliès* figs (a PDO since 2006) are exclusively grown from the *Bourjassotte Noire* variety in pedestrian orchards of goblet-shaped trees. Back in 1945, however, the *Bourjassotte Noire* was just one of roughly ten or so local varieties inventoried in the Solliès-Pont region. The orchard has thus become 'monovarietal' since PDO registration. This decision taken by producers is based on the *Bourjassotte Noire*'s superior productivity, taste, storage and transport properties.



Walnut orchard in Royans region, Isère, 2006.

France, like other southern European countries, boasts a range of PDO olive-based products<sup>(16)</sup> whose organoleptic properties are determined by specific varietal characteristics. Dozens of traditional varieties are maintained and developed on a continuous basis. The same principles apply in the Normandy cider orchards, home of PDO *Domfront* perry (2002). The production conditions there are exemplary: local varieties grown in traditional meadow orchards by tall-growing fruit trees and a unique landscape.

Until 31 December 2006, French PGI registration was dependent on Label Rouge approval or Product Conformity Certification, and this established the use of prescribed, distinct varieties that were sufficiently homo-

16 – PDO olive oil production: *Aix-en-Provence*, *Corsica*, *Nyons*, the *Baux de Provence Valley*, *Nice*, *Nîmes*, *Haute Provence*, *Provence*. PDO olive production: *Nyons*, the *Baux de Provence Valley broken olives*, the *Baux de Provence Valley black olives*, *Nîmes* and *Nice*. *Nîmes olive paste*.

geneous and stable. Some seeds may be certified: *Tarbais* beans are grown from the *Alaric* variety, a pure French stock derived from locally selected plants.

The question of plant varieties and seeds is pivotal to vegetable production in geographical indications and has never been more topical than it is today. The following points deserve particular attention: the strict identification and description of varietal types, their diversity<sup>17</sup> and local

### Protecting local resources and landscapes in the chestnut groves of the Ardèche

*For centuries, local lifestyle in the Ardèche revolved around chestnut production. Managing the chestnut groves taught men how to identify, select and eventually graft an impressive number of varieties whose size, shape and organoleptic qualities varied from place to place in accordance with local Ardèche customs. Combale chestnuts from the north were traditionally eaten boiled with every meal, in place of bread. Pourette chestnuts from the south of the department were widely grown and served as a staple food.*

*Chestnut production grew to be the defining factor in community life and cultural heritage. The sheer extent and density of the Ardèche chestnut groves shaped the landscape, testifying to a culture, civilization and local production system that were inseparable from this particular terroir. As chestnut production went into decline, attention turned to new, hybrid varieties that met the requirements of various technical and sales criteria. Such innovation did however imply a radical change in traditional tree husbandry – from agroforestry to an intensive system – that met with stiff opposition from many growers. The alternative was to apply for PDO registration as a way to protect as a unit the chestnut groves, local varieties, methods of tree husbandry as well as the landscape.*

*The Châtaigne d'Ardèche PDO dates from June 2006. It covers 19 main varieties out of 65 registered species, all of them exclusively local, and necessarily takes into account the knowledge linked to their maintenance. The use of hybrids is forbidden, with only traditional methods of tree husbandry being authorised. These include low-density plantings (at least 100 square metres per tree); the regular maintenance of trees and ground cover to include the planting of blueberry bushes and/or meadows within the chestnut groves; the forbidding of fertilisers or chemical improvers; limited yields of up 100 kg per tree. The landscape is unique of its type – a cultural fingerprint rich with a range of fauna and flora found only in the large chestnut trees for which this region is renowned.*



A chestnut grove in the Ardèche region

17 – Through dynamic local plant populations that are maintained by farmers and rural communities or by technical means.

growing methods; the link between the preservation of varietal diversity and the selection and maintenance of varieties, and the multiplication and production of seeds and plants; the methods used to preserve plant material and to maintain reference collections; the sanitary status and germination capacity of batches of seeds and plants. All of these requirements must be addressed if the resources in question are to occupy their rightful place within the framework of a policy of conservation and perpetuation that avoids derivatives and approximations.

Turning now to animal breeds: the increasing importance of local breeds is particularly evident in cheese-producing PDOs. Some already specify particular breeds in their production conditions. Examples are *Salers* cattle (*Tradition Salers*); *Tarine* and *Abondance* cattle (*Beaufort*, *Abondance*, *Reblochon*); *Montbéliarde* and *Simmental Française* cattle (*Comté*, *Mont D'Or*, *Bleu de Gex*); *Normande* cattle (*Neufchâtel*, *Livarot*).<sup>18</sup> Other PDOs do not specify the breed as such, although the question is very much on the agenda: *Vosgienne* (*Munster*) and *Normande* cattle (*Pont-l'Évêque* and *Camembert*).

All of these breeds exist in sufficiently large populations to ensure their survival. Elsewhere however, small scale populations of local breeds facing extinction have been reintroduced or revived. For instance, *Villard-de-Lans* cattle (*Bleu du Vercors-Sassenage*) and *Aubrac* dairy cattle



PDO *Maine-Anjou* cattle are renowned for the quality of their meat.

<sup>18</sup> – From January 2017 onwards, *Livarot* cheese will be exclusively made with the milk obtained from *Normande* cattle (French decree of 30 March 2007). According to the decree of May 2006, *Neufchâtel* cheese will be made with milk obtained from at least 20% of *Normande* cattle on January 2011, 40% on January 2015 and 60% on January 2019.



(*Laguiole*). Reviving these breeds does inevitably make the limits of reconstruction difficult to define.

In other PDOs, the local breed is an integral element of production: *Maine-Anjou* cattle (now *Rouge des Prés*, formerly *Maine-Anjou*, renamed to comply with regulations); *Camargue* beef (*Raço di Biou*, fighting bulls or a crossbreed); *Barèges-Gavarnie* sheep (*Barégoise* breed); *Bresse* poultry (*Gauloise* or *Bresse* white-plumed fowl).<sup>(19)</sup>

PGI designation for its part is a potential tool for the preservation of local breeds, to be considered on a case by case basis.<sup>(20)</sup>

The protection of geographical origin can encourage active consideration of cultural biodiversity and sometimes revive it, even if that is not its stated goal. It entails a way of thinking that must reject the idea of reducing upstream resources, leaving room for an albeit difficult compromise between the maintenance of specific, recognized characteristics and present-day constraints related to the renewal, spread and supervision of living resources. For that to be in any way possible, consideration must be given to all of those factors that help to make products special – biological characteristics and also local knowledge and skills – and must therefore be preserved *in situ*.

## Food habits

Consumer habits form part of the cultural dimension of origin-based products. The preparation and cooking of food and what we associate

with certain foods are all to do with local trends in consumption. Consumers outside a given locality may never have heard of the local speciality, let alone know how to prepare it. Indeed, without detailed instructions, they may not be able to appreciate it at all.

*Châtaignons* for instance, smoke-dried chestnuts from the Ardèche, are notoriously hard – as any tourist who has tried to serve them with the aperitif knows to their cost. They have to be soaked overnight and are



*Châtaignons*: small dried chestnuts from the Ardèche, traditionally made into a soup known locally as *cousina*.

19 – See also: Lambert-Derkimba, Casabianca, Verrier, 2006, *L'inscription du type génétique dans les règlements techniques des produits animaux sous AOC: conséquences pour les races animales*.

20 – Note, for instance, that various breeds of cattle enjoy Label Rouge status for premium quality meat: *Charolais*, *Aubrac*, *Belle bleue*, *Blonde d'Aquitaine*, *Limousine*, *Gasconne*, *Parthenaise*.

usually made into a kind of creamy soup known as *cousina*. Likewise, *Ramequin du Bugey* cheese (Ain department) is uneatable unless thinly sliced, liquefied in water and made into a variety of cheese fondue.

Some foods have particular associations. In the Ardèche, for instance, drained *fromage frais* is made into a 'salad' then served with a dressing based on mustard, vinegar and especially, grilled rapeseed oil. The combination is so popular that no village festival is complete without *Tomme de salade* (Tomme-cheese salad) sandwiches. Localized products may also be associated with particular recipes – such as *Poulet à la crème*, a creamy chicken dish emblematic of the Bresse region.

The context of local consumption is shaped by a variety of factors, including consumer familiarity with product characteristics, ways of preparation or links with occasions and cultural values.



Val d'Abondance 2005: in Haute-Savoie, all salted meat is smoked – whether at home (as above) or by craftsmen (below).



*Ramequin du Bugey* cheese, from the region around Saint-Rambert-en-Bugey (Ain), is used to make a variety of cheese fondue.



Moulin Taron, Chaussin, Jura, 2003: roasted cornflour porridge, known locally as *les gaudes* was once the staple diet of the Bresse region.



## Reserving the use of a name and the 'Montagne' designation

The protection of geographical origins implies the reservation of a particular name. The question is, what name? The same designation can denote different products depending on the region in question. More generally, local communities rarely state the origins of products with which they are familiar.

Locally rooted products are so much a part of local living that they are known by generic names. They only acquire a geographical distinction when they are recognised and marketed outside the local area of production and consumption. Products that were once locally referred to by their generic name – tomme, cheese or butter – are now *Tomme 'de Savoie'* (Tomme cheese), *Bleu 'de Sassenage'* or *Bleu 'de Gex'* (cheese) or *Beurre 'de Bresse'* (butter).

A name can testify to a product's local history or in some cases – as with charcuterie and cheese – denote the place where that product was marketed: *Fourme de Montbrison* (Haute-Loire), *Bleu de Gex* (Ain). Take *Rosette* saucisson for instance: in the places that make it, it is simply known as *Rosette*. Former professionals in the meat-curing trade claim that the suffix 'de Lyon' dates from the boom in rosette sales in the 1950s and was first added by producers in Saint-Symphorien-sur-Coise, in the Rhône department.



*Saucisson de Lyon* (left) and *Rosette de Lyon* (right): two quite different charcuterie products despite their similar appearance.

The existence of product variants is another factor that has an effect on naming at local level. *Murson* sausage, for instance, is known by a variety of names depending on the micro-region of production and the ingredients it contains: *Andouille*, *Saucisson de couenne*, *Gueuse*, *Murçon* or *Saucisse de couenne*. The same product may be known by different names and the same name may apply to different products.

Bearing all of this in mind, the product/name relationship raises a number of issues that are critical to our understanding of the product itself. Note too that names that lose their original meaning may well lead to the disappearance of small-volume, specific products – *Saucisson de Lyon* may well become a case in point. As described and sold in Lyon, this is a fine-ground saucisson containing cubes of lard. Virtually unheard of in the rest of France, it is only available from gourmet grocery stores. Elsewhere, *Saucisson de Lyon* or *Saucisson Lyonnais* denotes a boiling sausage, another well-known and widely available localized product from Rhône-Alpes Region.

The French designation 'Montagne' (Mountain), despite its more promising image, is just as ambiguous as 'terroir' or 'provenance'. The term itself and all specific references to mountainous areas were originally protected under articles 33 and 34 of the 'Loi Montagne' of 1985.<sup>(21)</sup> The case was then referred to the Court of European Justice which on 7 May 1997 ruled that the 'Montagne' appellation was contrary to Community law. The judges held that French legislation which granted appellation status to products exclusively made from raw materials of mountainous origin was a potential barrier to trade and as such discriminated against imported goods from other Member States.

The term 'Montagne' was then approved as a 'value-adding statement' by the Agricultural Orientation Law of 2006 and the conditions covering its use were set out in the final draft of French Decree No 2007-30 of 5 January 2007. For French products applying for 'Montagne' registration: *'the geographical areas of all the processes connected with the production, rearing, fattening and slaughtering, and the preparation, manufacture, refining and packaging of foodstuffs other than wines, and of unprocessed, agricultural non-foodstuffs using the Montagne designation, together with the provenance of raw materials used in the feeding of animals or the manufacture of commodities and products, shall be a French mountainous area as specified in the criteria set out in articles 3 and 4 of Law no 85-30 of 9 January 1985 on the development and protection of mountains'*.<sup>(22)</sup>

21 – Law of 9 January 1985 on the development and protection of mountains.

22 – French decree No 2007-30 of 5 January 2007 relating to the development of agricultural, forestry, food and marine products.

For many producers applying for protection under the 'Montagne' designation, the above definition only serves to confuse the issue even further. Here again however, it all depends on how that designation is used as a tool for value-adding: as an aid to regional development, or as a means of acquiring kudos, free-of-charge from an existing image.



Impressive mountain imagery... High pasturelands near the Col du Pré, Boudin, Arêches, Savoie, 2005.



## Informal ways of adding value to place

Informal ways of adding value to place are those that fall outside the scope of official procedures (including inspection systems). But once again, the meaning attached to that place can be ambiguous.

### Case study of an alternative promotional project geared to small-scale, local production systems

Many small-scale production systems may not depend on natural factors but are nevertheless inseparable from the place where they originate. Can we come up with simpler ways of adding value in such cases? Ways that take account of cultural uniqueness while also guaranteeing that the systems in question are typical of their kind?

Such were the aims of a value-adding programme undertaken in parts of Bresse, the Revermont area and the Saône Valley, focusing on foodstuffs in the bakery, charcuterie and dairy sectors.<sup>(23)</sup> In several stages, the project was conducted in close collaboration with the professional tradespeople concerned. Products were selected on the basis of preliminary surveys, followed by documentary research, meetings and individual interviews. Discussions with union members and local representatives from the different craft sectors explored the need for basic protective mechanisms more relevant to the



Montrevel, Ain, 2004: Local butcher who took part in the 'Artisans d'ici' campaign.



Leaflet included in promotional literature.

23 – Bérard, Marchenay, Balvet, 2001, *Caractérisation et mise en valeur de quelques produits locaux de la Bresse, du Revermont et du Val de Saône.*



type of product in question, bearing in mind the identity and economic issues facing rural communities.

The outcome of these discussions was a framework document to be signed by all those professional tradespeople interested in joining the initiative. The document gives a brief description of ingredients and how they are prepared, also indicating the key points stressed by each sector as a whole (bakery, charcuterie or dairy) and the common information that all craftsmen judge necessary to explain their products. That said, each craftsman retains a certain freedom in terms of production, as is to be expected of craft-based production.

**A basketful of goods:  
a conceptual approach  
to enhancing the value of place  
and patrimony**

*The concept of a 'basket of territorialized goods and services' dates from 2001, brainchild of A. Mollard and B. Pecqueur as part of a research project on regional development titled 'Pour et sur le Développement Régional' ('For and about regional development'). It relies on an analysis of what happens when a locally-rooted product meets a demand for quality products. The conceptual model may be defined in terms of three components:*

- a group of goods and complementary services that are reinforced at the local market level;
- a combination of privately or publicly-owned goods that help to enhance the image and quality reputation of a given territory;
- well-coordinated interaction between the producers of the basketful of goods (the club) aimed at internalising the income from that territorial quality.

*The relevance of the model and the methodology used to link different products and services were tested in Bresse, in a case study based on a dual methodology combining economics and anthropology. It assumed that the drive towards territorial construction by local actors relies on the harnessing of heritage resources.*

*(Bérard, Hirczak, Marchenay, Mollard, Pecqueur, 2006).*

Marketing specialists were called in to help develop an appropriate communication campaign. Titled 'Artisans d'ici, spécialités de chez nous' ('Local specialities by local craftsmen'), the campaign is supported by a range of promotional literature including a brochure describing the products covered, and two matching leaflets. One, based on the brochure content and available from all scheme members, gives a product overview. The second lists the names, addresses and specialities of participating producers. All of these documents have been approved by the professional tradespeople concerned and copies lodged with the departmental Fraud Office (DCCRF).

Initiatives like these that are turned towards tourism (whether local or not) help to raise awareness of local specialities, and also give local actors a fair opportunity to make the most of a cultural added-value that they have done much to create. The consensus seems to be that minimum codification of practices are enough to keep producers in line while allowing individual craftsmen a freedom of interpretation that encourages preferences and secures a clientele. Rules and procedures are jointly agreed by

all parties and enforced by the DDCCRF. This approach goes beyond the simple enhancement of product status. It also allows craftsmen in an increasingly fragile rural environment to reinforce their own role and status, to position themselves more effectively in relation to tourism and to develop a local micro-economic sector based on a network of actors. In particular – and this is an important point – this type of approach is transferable. The campaign title, 'Local specialities by local craftsmen' was specifically selected for its versatility. Originally designed as a tool for rural development – first used in the Ain – the scheme could be used anywhere in France or Europe, in line with the 'Leader' EU Community initiative for the development of disadvantaged rural areas.

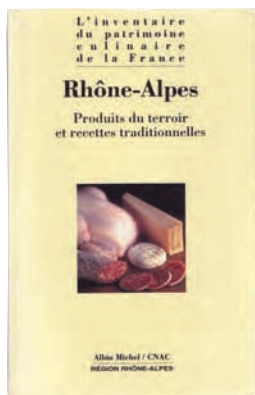
## Inventories and collective trademarks

In addition to formal procedures for the protection of geographical indications, various other initiatives also help to add value to localized products. Part of coordinated (but basically unofficial) campaigns, they reflect the efforts of stakeholders from all walks of life but mainly the public sector (Ministries of Agriculture and Fisheries, Culture and Communication, Ecology and Sustainable Development, and Tourism).

One such initiative is the *Inventaire du Patrimoine Culinaire de la France* (inventory of French culinary heritage) launched by the National Culinary Arts Council (CNAC) in 1990. Jointly commissioned by the Ministries of Agriculture and Culture, the inventory covered the full spectrum of food-processing activities that were linked to a given locality, terroir or traditional practices, also recording the skills and know-how that related to those activities. Its aims were both cultural and economic, leaving scope for value-adding initiatives at local level on a case by case basis. Bearing in mind the experience gained from studying the different regions, what we get is a broad picture that captures the variety of localized products throughout France.

The inventory is in 22 volumes, published from 1992-2003. It represents a compilation of data from virtually every administrative region and department in metropolitan and overseas France,<sup>(24)</sup> comprising more than 2,500 documented entries based on field interviews – particularly with producers and food processors – and research spanning a wide range of literature sources. Each entry gives a product description plus details of historical background, consumer habits, skills and production status. There are twelve sectors in all: dairy products, meat, fish (and fish products), vegetables, fruit, flour, cereals (and their derivatives), charcuterie, patisserie, bakery products, confectionery, beverages and spirits, herbs,

24 – The only areas not inventoried to date are the Auvergne and Centre regions and the Ile de la Réunion.



The Inventory of culinary heritage in the Rhône-Alpes Region covers no less than 200 products, with cheese and charcuterie being especially well represented.

condiments and assorted specialities. A region by region account of the findings, published by the eminent publisher Albin Michel, tends to put the project on a more formal footing.<sup>(25)</sup>

What the inventory shows is that food and consumer habits in France remain highly varied. Building greater awareness of local heritage can provide the starting point for new initiatives aimed at reviving traditional products and making them profitable. A combination of factors such as historical depth, location, reputation and know-how serves to distinguish typically regional products, with reference to modern interest in the identification of such food resources. Inclusion in the inventory could make it easier to apply for geographical indication status. On a more modest and sometimes very local scale, product enhancement can

#### The Slow Food movement

*The Slow Food movement, founded in 1980, is an outstanding example of value-adding at the local and global level. The movement champions hedonism through a variety of initiatives based on wine, food and tourism that aim to emphasize the vital link between taste and food culture. One such initiative is the 'Salone del Gusto', a food trade fair held in Turin every two years and featuring small-scale, speciality producers from all over the world. First staged in 1996, the exhibition*



The 'Salone del gusto', Turin (2002): an international meeting place for producers and consumers of origin-based products.

*offers a striking demonstration of the richness and diversity of local gastronomic culture, showcasing the full range of Slow Food activities. The 'Salone del Gusto' provided the framework for the 'Ark of Taste' international campaign, an inventory project that aims to catalogue little-known or fast-disappearing local products and bring them back into commercial circulation. In 2003, Slow Food also founded the University of Gastronomic Sciences, whose main objective is to bridge the gap between food-related skills and practices and gastronomy. Present in 80 countries, Slow Food has a 1,500-strong membership in France alone, divided into some 20 local groups called 'conviviums'. In 2003, Slow Food held its first food trade fair in France: 'Aux Origines du Goût', an exhibition modelled on the 'Salone del Gusto' and held on alternate years in Montpellier.*

25 – Bérard, Froc, Hyman, Hyman, Marchenay, 1992-2003, *L'inventaire du patrimoine culinaire de la France* (21 published volumes).

**There are collective trademarks and there are collective trademarks...**

*A trademark is said to be collective when it can be used by third parties in accordance with the rules established by the trademark holder.*

*There are several collective trademarks covering local products. Most of these, however, make no attempt to distinguish between origin-based products – those that are specific to a place – and products that are simply named after a place. The result is that consumers are misled, undermining the initiative in general – which is regrettable since collective trademarks that play on local consistency have their place in a value-adding process.*

be achieved through a wide variety of stakeholders, whether at individual (craftsmen, farmers, tourist agents) or corporate level (regional parks, municipalities, regional departments).

Another good example of this process at work is the identification of 'notable taste sites' ('Sites Remarquables du Goût'). To qualify for selection, the sites must be home to products that contribute to the country's culinary heritage. Other criteria include

specific know-how, exceptional architecture, historical interest, and landscape. All of the sites are open to the public and are

members of the 'Association des Sites Remarquables du Goût' founded in 1996. In 2001 the name 'Site Remarquable du Goût' was registered as a trademark with the French Institute of Intellectual Property. So far, 71 sites have been admitted as fully-fledged members of the association. Membership must be validated by an approvals committee that is looking for outstanding examples of harmony between food and local heritage in a bid to link each site with local groups of actors and stakeholders.



**Terroirs and Cultures**

*The 'Terroirs et Cultures' Association was founded in 2003 for the purpose of furthering the recognition and development of terroirs all over the world. It brings together people from very different walks of life and pursues the following objectives:*

- to encourage debate on the concept of terroir and highlight the rich variety of terroirs worldwide, with emphasis on their essential contribution to local cultural heritage;
- to educate the public – through official sources or training courses – on the value and special nature of terroirs ;
- to enforce respect for terroirs and their environments in terms of regional planning and methods of production, food processing and marketing;
- to safeguard the survival of terroirs through the promotion of local culture and knowledge and the rural values and food habits associated with individual terroirs worldwide.

The words 'Parc Naturel Régional' (Regional Nature Park) followed by the name of a given park became the registered trademark of Natural Parks of France in 1997. Owned by the French Ministry for the Environment, the trademark is reserved exclusively for use by French Parks subject to the following rules: *'the trademark shall be used by the park to identify its events, products and services. The trademark is also authorised for display on products, services and events according to specified criteria relating to the park's economic activity and goals in terms of heritage protection and enhancement, public information and reception facilities. [...] To qualify for the right to use the trademark, a product or service shall reflect the four core values associated with Parks, namely: regional, natural and genuine character and a craft-based approach. The Trademark heightens the holder's awareness of and commitment to Park objectives in terms of these values, focusing in particular on the protection and enhancement of the quality of the landscape and biodiversity, and the promotion of natural resources and local know-how'*.<sup>(26)</sup> Now widely used, the trademark nevertheless raises certain questions, especially with regard to the guarantees provided by inspection procedures.

26 – Fédération des parcs naturels régionaux de France, 1977, *Règlement général de la marque 'Parc naturel régional'* (Terms and conditions applying to use of the trademark 'Parc Naturel Régional').

## International issues

### International issues surrounding geographical indications

PDO and PGI designations both come under the umbrella of Geographical Indications, in accordance with internationally recognized principles set out in the provisions of the World Trade Organization's TRIPS Agreement (Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights). Winning that recognition was not an easy task. What matters in the liberal New World setting is personal initiative. Product names that are not protected by trademarks can be copied and used with impunity. As a result, geographical names can rapidly fall into generic usage, since no law will protect them.<sup>(27)</sup>



Onion growing in Galmi, Niger (2006) is a major local production industry.

27 – See: Sylvander, 2005, *Local products: the issues facing the 21st century*.

GIs and trademarks are supposed to be complementary – not competitive. This is something that Napa Valley winegrowers in California have taken on board – witness their campaign to win recognition as a geographical indication for a range of wines that have become renowned throughout the USA.

The provisions of the TRIPS Agreement refer to Geographical Indications as: *'indications which identify a good as originating in the territory of a Member, or a region or locality in that territory, where a given quality, reputation or other characteristic of the good is essentially attributable to its geographical origin'* (Annexe 1C, Article 22). One of the major weaknesses of this Agreement is that it only really protects wines and spirits. The European Union has consistently lobbied for the same level of protection to be extended to all products as part of a legally-binding, multilateral registration system.

Then there is the onerous task of organizing and funding protection. In France and Europe, this falls to a vast institutional and technical apparatus, supported by rules and funding in accordance with public policy initiatives. Activities covered include GI administration, union involvement, scientific and technical expertise, project research and local community groups. All of these remain a largely Western prerogative – such capacities are rarely available in developing countries. The fact remains however that, even as it stands, the TRIPS Agreement is the first concrete proof of the growing international interest in origin-linked quality products.

The founding of 'Origin' ('Organisation for an International Geographical Indications Network') in 2003, further reinforced that tendency. The organisation today has grown to include 70 producer associations in more than 30 countries worldwide. It campaigns to improve the protection of GIs at international level and promote their role as instruments of sustainable development. Developing countries in particular show increasing interest in this new approach to their local resources – witness their active participation in the founding of Origin.

## **Geographical indications as means of maintaining cultural biodiversity**

Local breeds, plant varieties, landscapes and microbial ecosystems are all expressions of collective skills, practices and adaptations. These may vary with the type of production, which in turn depends on the social and environmental context. The organisation of biological diversity at various levels relies on this combination of factors and how they interact.

Biodiversity is the variety of life on Earth. Scientists commonly measure and describe this variety at the level of genes, species and ecosystems, but scientific interest in biodiversity goes far beyond describing and measuring it. As such, it is inseparable from the techniques and skills developed by the communities who create, maintain or in some cases reduce the biodiversity.

The protection of geographical origin can encourage consideration of – and sometimes revive – what we now refer to as ‘cultural biodiversity’. For that to happen, however, local knowledge and practices<sup>(28)</sup> must be taken into account alongside biological characteristics. Local skills are part of what makes localized products special, and are increasingly important when developing the binding criteria that form the basis of specifications. The chestnut groves of the Ardèche and traditional Normandy meadow orchards are good examples of the management of agro-biodiversity *in situ*.

To protect local production is to preserve local, varied ecosystems at various levels: animal breeds and plant varieties, plant associations, landscapes, microbial ecosystems and even ripening units. It also provides an official basis for the conservation of shared skills and practices – a particular advantage when one considers that most production systems with appellation of origin status rely on extensive farming systems that connect with local practices and biological diversity.

Today, that diversity is threatened by globalisation. Witness the increasingly stringent standards required as a result of international commerce created by the free-trade system. These rules were originally developed for industrial products, with little or no reference – or at best, on a case by case basis – to the particular requirements of small-scale manufacturing units or local production systems. Plainly however, the survival of such sectors depends on appropriate standards particularly in terms of sanitary requirements – that reflect the specific characteristics of such units and systems. There is no question



Wheels of *Bleu de Tergnon* cheese in a ripening cellar in the Entre Deux Eaux mountain pastures, Vanoise mountain, Savoie (2005).

28 – For more information on the link between local knowledge, geographical indications and biodiversity, cf. Bérard, Cegarra, Djama, Louafi, Marchenay, Roussel, Verdeaux (eds), 2005, *Biodiversity and Local Ecological Knowledge in France*. The book throws light on the French situation with relation to article 8(j) of the 1992 Biodiversity Convention, which takes account of local know-how, defined there as ‘the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles’.



of putting consumer health at risk but of implementing regulations on the basis of a reasoned and reasonable interpretation of the law that safeguards traditional knowledge and skills.

Failing that, some of these products will disappear altogether while others will lose their intrinsic value, with all that this implies for biodiversity.

Geographical indications, particularly Protected Designations of Origin, are instruments that allow us to take account of this combination of cultural and biological diversity – provided there is a will to do so among the actors concerned. There is an opportunity here for the agricultural profession to enter into meaningful and lasting dialogue with scientists, public authorities and other stakeholders. Such agricultural models are paradoxically innovating: they pave the way for a new form of agriculture through more environmentally friendly policies founded on respect for local resources.

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## Useful web sites

<<http://www.aoc-igp.ch>>

Swiss Association for the promotion of PDO and PGI.

<<http://www.codexalimentarius.net>>

Codex Alimentarius.

<<http://www.enitac.fr/cerpat>>

Centre de ressources des produits alimentaires de terroir (Terroir Food Products Resources Centre).

<[http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/qual/en/1bbb1\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/qual/en/1bbb1_en.htm)>

List of the Traditional Specialities Guaranteed (TSG) in Europe.

<[http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/qual/en/1bbab\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/qual/en/1bbab_en.htm)>

List of the Protected Designations of Origin (PDO) / Protected Geographical Indications (PGI) in Europe.

<[http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/foodqual/protect/firstpub/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/foodqual/protect/firstpub/index_en.htm)>

Publications of applications for registration as PDO or PGI in the Official Journal of the European Communities.

<<http://www.ethno-terroirs.cnrs.fr>>

CNRS, Ressources des terroirs – Cultures, usages, sociétés (Terroirs resources – Cultures, Customs and Societies).

<<http://www.gis-syal.agropolis.fr>>

SYAL Groupement d'intérêt scientifique 'Systèmes agroalimentaires localisés' (Local Agrifood Systems Research Group).

<<http://www.inao.gouv.fr>>

Institut national de l'origine et de la qualité (National Institute for Origin and Quality).

<<http://www.origin-food.org>>

Syner-GI Programme: Strengthening International Research on Geographical Indications: from Research Foundation to Consistent Policy.

<<http://www.origin-gi.com>>

Organisation for an International Geographical Indications Network.

<<http://www.psd-r-ra.fr> ; <[http://www.rhonealpes.inra.fr/psdr\\_en\\_rhone\\_alpes](http://www.rhonealpes.inra.fr/psdr_en_rhone_alpes)>

National programme 'For and About Regional Development' (PSDR), coordinated by INRA. Projects, activities and results for Rhône-Alpes Region.

<<http://www.sitesremarquablesdugout.com>>

Les sites remarquables du goût ('Notable taste sites') Association.

<<http://www.slowfood.com/>>

Slow Food Association.

<<http://www.terroirsetcultures.asso.fr>>

Terroirs and Cultures Association.

<<http://www.wipo.int/portal/index.html.en>>

World Intellectual Property Organization.

<<http://www.wto.org>>

World Trade Organization.

# Acknowledgements

Our warmest thanks to all those people whose input to our working group furthered and enriched the thinking that went into this book.

To Daniel Roybin and Gérard Hanus (joint coordinators of the 'Pour et Sur le Développement Régional' programme in the Rhône-Alpes Region), and Anne Carton, CRDR Director (Centre Régional de Ressources du Développement Rural).

All the members of the EXTRAPRO programme (Exploitation of traditional products), PROMSTAP/INTERREG 3C (Promoting the stable to table approach) for making it possible to translate this book.

And to all of the following:

Guy Burleraux (FDCL, Fédération des Coopératives Laitières, Savoie),

Laurent Joyet (Chambre Régionale d'Agriculture Rhône-Alpes),

Louis Le Secq (Chambre Régionale d'Agriculture Rhône-Alpes),

Guy Linden (CIRAD, Centre International de Recherche Appliquée au Développement),

Caroline Petite (Syndicat de la Tome des Bauges),

Marie Rose Narce (Conseil Régional Rhône-Alpes)

Philippe Nouvel (DRAF, Direction Régionale de l'Agriculture et de la Forêt),

Catherine Richer (INAO, Institut National de l'Origine et de la Qualité)

Olivier Beucherie (ISARA, Institut Supérieur d'Agriculture et d'Agroalimentaire Rhône-Alpes)

Richard Brand (GEVES, Groupe d'Etudes et de Contrôle des Variétés et Semences)

Sandrine Gelin (INRA, Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique)

François Roncin (INAO, Institut National de l'Origine et de la Qualité)

Jean Wohrer (GNIS, Groupement National Interprofessionnel des Semences)

Françoise Molegnana and Emmanuelle Gardère (PEACRITT)

Martin Hamer ( PROMSTAP Coordinator/GIQS)

Virginie Amilien (SIFO- National Institute for Consumer Research in Norway)

Atle Wehn Hegnes (University of Oslo)

Brien A. Meilleur (University of Washington, Seattle)

Yalita Dallot-Befio and Pascale Soares (CNRS, Ressources des terroirs)

Florence Brutton for the translation.

## Photographic credits

Unless otherwise specified below, all photography is by Ph. Marchenay and L. Bérard.

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Pays de Roquefort Tourist Office (page 13);

Syndicat de Défense et de Promotion de la Viande Bœuf de Charolles, Eléonore Sauvageot, (page 17);

Lyon Botanical Gardens (page 35, bottom);

Maison Héritier, Francheleins, Ain (page 36, top);

UPRA Rouge des Prés, Serge Fagulier (page 39);

Comité Interprofessionnel de la Châtaigne d'Ardèche - 'CICA', Rissoan (pages 38 and 40);

Delphine Balvet (page 47 top).

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As part of their work for the 'Ressources des Terroirs' team, the authors run a study and documentation centre, opened in 2000 with the cooperation of local community groups (Department of the Ain, the Urban community of Bourg-en-Bresse, and the Rhône-Alpes region). They also contribute to several national and international projects focussing on geographical indications, sustainable development and biodiversity. Laurence Bérard and Philippe Marchenay teach at the Université Lumière Lyon 2, the Université Jean Moulin Lyon 3 and the Pollenzo University of Gastronomic Science in Italy. They are also consultants to the INAO (Institut National de l'Origine et de la Qualité).

For further information and a list of publications:  
<<http://www.ethno-terroirs.cnrs.fr>>



Cloths hung out to dry in the Alpine wind – these are used in the production of *Bleu de Termignon* cheese.

Layout and printing  
Agb - 01000 Bourg-en-Bresse

Dépôt légal juin 2008





In a time of global commerce and the attendant restructuring of agriculture, localized agricultural products and foodstuffs may represent a way of reviving added value and contributing to the maintenance of employment in rural areas.

For those actors and stakeholders working towards the development of territories or supply chains, this book aims to provide the keys to understanding such products and adopting a more rational approach to value-adding initiatives.

The text looks at the situation in France and provides a methodological guide to identifying the questions, difficulties and thinking processes entailed, without ever falling into ready-made solutions. It also serves as a brief introductory work that invites the reader to explore the different aspects of the cultural dimensions of origin-based products – dimensions often evoked but rarely apprehended in the framework of a rigorous, operational approach. Or it can be both at the same time: a guide to awareness and a guide to action, highlighting what gives sense and value to these products. Tradition, shared skills, reputation, local and historical roots are decoded here in the context of a constant two-way reference between conceptual definition on the one hand and on the other hand keys for action, supported by numerous concrete cases.

*The book was conceived and produced by two researchers from the CNRS (Laurence Bérard and Philippe Marchenay) working in partnership with local actors in agricultural and rural development. It forms part of the second programme of research 'For and About Regional Development' which, in the Rhône-Alpes Region, was implemented and conducted by the French National Institute for Agricultural Research (INRA), in partnership with regional and government bodies (Rhône-Alpes Regional Council, Regional Direction of Agriculture and Forestry, Rhône-Alpes Regional Chamber of Agriculture).*

*The English translation of this document was financed by the INTERREG 3C Regional Framework Operation 'PROMSTAP: Promoting the stable-to-table approach' through the Extrapro sub-project.*

