Certification systems

Private and national systems for certifying the quality of agricultural products and foods ensure that the product has the characteristics and has been produced in accordance with the production method defined in the specification.

These systems cover a wide range of measures applied at different stages of the food supply chain. They can operate at business-to-business level or at business-to-consumer level. Some of them use logos, but many do not, especially at business-to-business level.

In the EU, private certification systems for agricultural products and foods cover compulsory production standards as well as requirements concerning environmental protection, animal welfare, organoleptic characteristics, fair trade and so on.

The systems are also managed by a variety of different bodies: farmers, public authorities, non-governmental organisations, interest groups or retailers.

The Commission is planning to draw up guidelines in order to harmonise these systems and ensure that consumers are not misled.

For more information on the European Union's quality policy: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/quality/index_en.htm

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Newsletter

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European Commission
Agriculture and Rural Development

PDO AND PGI AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS: A 14.2 billion euro turnover for over 800 products

In 2007 PDO and PGI agricultural products had an estimated wholesale value of 14.2 billion euros. This is the result of a study carried out by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development.

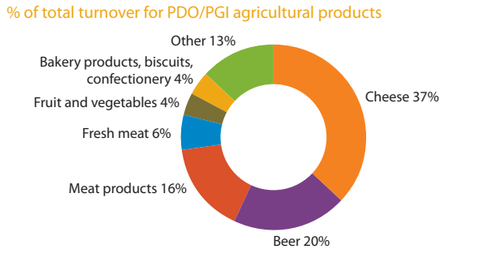
The study, carried out in 2008, concerns the 820 products listed in the European Register of protected designations of origin and protected geographical indications at that time (excluding wines and spirits but including beer).

It shows that the turnover of these PDO and PGI products rose steadily between 2005 and 2007, although there was no increase for PDOs in 2006.

In addition, it is estimated that part of the production of 30% of PDO and PGI is exported outside the European Union, to the tune of 700 millions euros. The study shows a rise in PDO and PGI exports, both in volume (+ 9% between 2005 and 2007) and value (+ 17% in the same period).

From cheese to seafood…

Cheese accounts for a third of total PDO/PGI turnover: 8% of the cheese produced in the EU (i.e. 3 to 4 % of world production) is protected. Names entered in the register include Grana Padano, Comté, Queso Manchego and Feta.



Almost 5% of the beer consumed in Europe is PGI beer (Münchener Bier, Českobudějovické Pivo, etc.).

The main meat products are dry, salted products such as Prosciutto di S. Daniele and Schwarzwälder Schinken.

Fresh meats are in fourth position: the most important products (in terms of turnover) are Scotch Beef, Welsh Lamb, Ternera de Galicia and some types of French poultry.

Fruit and vegetables: the protected products are local specialities, often of long-standing fame, linked to the production area by natural factors. However, they come fifth because of their low unit value.

Most of the bakery products and confectionery entered in the register are PGI, mainly German cakes and pastries.

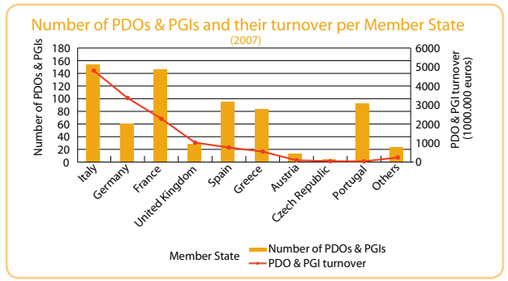
Fish: there are only nine names entered in the register and their unit value varies considerably. The best known is Scottish Farmed Salmon.

…in 18 European countries

The main countries in terms of value of PDO/PGI production are Italy (33% of the total), Germany (25%), France (17%) and the United Kingdom (8%). Next come Spain with 833 million euros (6%), Greece with 606 million euros (4%) and Austria with 123 million euros (1%).

However, the number of names a country has in the register does not correlate with turnover. Portugal, for example, has many names in the register, mainly fruit and vegetables, but the products are of low economic value. The United Kingdom, on the other hand, has a very high turnover of PDO/PGI products, because of its meat and fish.

Most of the protected products from countries that joined the European Union in 2004 or later were registered after 2007. The figures therefore include only a small part of the turnover for these products. In 2008, however, 28 geographical indications had been registered for these countries.



What are PDOs, PGIs and TSGs?

The European Union has three systems for promoting and protecting the names of quality agricultural products and foods:

- **PDO (Protected Designation of Origin):** the name of a product that is produced, processed and prepared in a defined geographical area using recognised know-how.
- **PGI (Protected Geographical Indication):** used to denote agricultural products and foods closely linked to a geographical area, where they are produced and/or processed and/or prepared.
- **TSG (Traditional Speciality Guaranteed):** emphasises a product's traditional composition or traditional mode of production.

These systems encourage the diversification of agricultural production, protect the product names from misuse and imitation and help consumers by providing information on the specific characteristics of the products:

The list of registered names (over 870 at the end of 2009) can be found on the DOOR database: *http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/quality/database/index_en.htm*

For more information on PDO, PGI and TSG: *http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/quality/schemes/index_en.htm*

Organic farming

Organic farming is an **agricultural production method** which offers the consumer authentic food that tastes good, while respecting the natural life cycles of plants and animals.

It is based on a number of principles and practices designed to minimise our impact on the environment, by working the land in the most natural way possible.

It is also part of a more extensive **supply chain** that includes food processing, distribution, the retail trade and consumers.

When you buy organic apples in the supermarket or you choose a wine made from organic grapes in a restaurant, you can be sure that they have been produced in accordance with strict rules, in particular as regards environmental protection.

For more information on organic farming: www.organic-farming.eu

Marketing standards

European marketing standards replace the different national standards. They encourage farmers to place products of a given quality on the market, in line with consumer requirements, and allow the prices of products of equivalent quality to be compared. They are compulsory for most agricultural products and they lay down product definitions and categories, minimum required characteristics and certain labelling requirements.

These provisions ensure minimum quality standards for the consumer and facilitate the operation of the internal market and international trade.