

## ITALY

### Agri-food chain integration & quality

#### Location

Northern Veneto

#### Programming period

2014 – 2020

#### Priority

P3 - Food chain & risk management

#### Measure

M03 – Quality schemes

#### Funding

RDP budget 470 000 (EUR)

#### Project duration

2016 to 2018

#### Project promoter

Consorzio Tutela Formaggio Piave

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Communications campaign implemented by a producer group to increase the profile of a PDO certified cheese beyond its region of production.

### Summary

A small producer group, which was established to safeguard and promote the Piave PDO cheese produced in the mountain areas of Northern Veneto, used CAP funding to design and implement an integrated communications campaign at regional, national and European level.



### Project Results

The project activities resulted in an 8% increase in sales in Italy for the 2019–2020 period, despite the severe disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ CAP support was crucial for enabling the promotion of a small PDO brand outside of its production area.
- ❑ The project has acted as a springboard for further promotional activities and collaborations.



## Context

The “Consorzio per la tutela del formaggio Piave DOP” producer group was set up in 2010 in the province of Belluno, Northern Veneto, to protect the Piave PDO cheese and to preserve its original method of production, using local cow milk and yeast. The group represents around 180 small and medium farms that operate in predominantly mountainous areas, sometimes at an altitude of more than 1 000 metres above sea level, where the average production costs can be three times higher than those operating in the lowlands of Veneto. With little recognition of Piave PDO cheese outside of its production area, the producer group decided to partner with two cooperatives of local farmers and breeders in order to ensure a wider production base and launch a joint communications campaign beyond the province.

## Objectives

The aim of the project was to promote Piave PDO cheese across multiple channels outside of its production area and increase its share in the market.

## Activities

Activities in the Veneto region:

- Participated in well-known food fairs and events, e.g. ‘Caseus Veneti’, ‘Wefood’, ‘Formaggi in Villa’.
- Organised a series of short promotional campaigns targeted at large and medium-size retail chains (including the set-up of big cheese-shaped advertising balloons).
- Organised meetings with retailers and other commercial operators at cheese production plants.
- Produced promotional gadgets such as bags, cheese cutters, etc.
- Prepared and delivered a promotional campaign on regional radio and TV channels.

Nationwide activities:

- Participated in national food fairs, including ‘Cibus’, ‘Milano golosa’, ‘Roma golosa’.
- Organised promotional campaigns at branches of the ‘Eataly’ chain of restaurants.

- Organised a joint presentation of Piave PDO cheese alongside PDO mozzarella cheese at the Caserta Reggia palace in the Campania region.
- Prepared and delivered a 14-day promotional campaign on a national radio station, with 12 advertisements broadcasted daily.
- Distributed promotional gadgets at various events.

Activities in Europe:

- Participated in national food fairs and short promotional campaigns in Austria, UK, Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Poland, and Sweden.

The promotional activities at events in Veneto and Italy lasted approx. 850 days, connecting with some 300 000 visitors. Representatives of 14 major Italian retail groups were involved in three days of workshops at a cheese production plant, which allowed them to become more familiar with the origin and quality of the milk, as well as the hygiene features of the production process.

## Main results

Having an in-person presence at big retail centres proved to be the most effective initiative for promoting the cheese among customers. In overall terms, these activities resulted in an 8% increase of sales generated across Italy, which has greatly improved the income of the local milk producers. There are also some indications that the promotional campaign has contributed to a growing interest for food-related tourism in the area. This result was achieved despite the COVID-19 outbreak and its subsequent impact.

## Key lessons

CAP support was crucial for enabling the promotion of a small PDO like the Piave cheese outside of its production area and especially abroad. After the implementation of these promotional activities, the producer organisation could engage in other complementary activities, including revamping the product’s packaging; establishing connections with retailers in the USA; and collaborating with a national park in the region to link the cheese production with the overall identity of the territory where it is produced.

## Additional sources of information

[www.lattebusche.com/](http://www.lattebusche.com/)