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PROMOTION OF TRADITIONAL REGIONAL AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD PRODUCTS: A FURTHER STEP TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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I. SUMMARY

1. Subsequent to the 24th session of the FAO Regional Conference for Europe, this paper aims to examine the scope of regional traditional products and the ways that these products can contribute to sustainable rural development. In Europe, consumer demand for traditional agricultural and food products has increased and created the potential for development of niche markets. Promotion of these products is a recent phenomenon; however, they are increasingly recognized, with supportive public and private policies.

2. In addition to generic requirements applying to all products, appropriate legislation is required to define the necessary criteria and conditions to be met by traditional products in order to protect consumers as well as producers from unscrupulous competitors. As with the European Union Traditional Specialities Guaranteed, the Protected Designation of Origin and the Protected Geographical Indication, relevant regulations can have different combined justifications, not only on economic and trade grounds, but also in relation to rural development policies, biodiversity and tradition preservation and promotion.

3. Traditional products are, in their areas of origin, integrated into regional diets resulting from a complex, historical evolution reflecting the interaction between humans and their milieu. There is still a lack of knowledge regarding the nutrient and bioactive composition of traditional products and their effects on human health. As regards socio-economic aspects, traditional products are generally associated with an extensive system of production and handicraft processing implying a high rate of employment, and they can achieve good added-value with little investment in promotion. Being an effective basis for territorial management of resources, they can also strengthen other activities, especially in the tourism sector. Traditional products generally involve work undertaken by women and they can contribute to promote gender equity. Finally, traditional production systems are intrinsically linked to biodiversity and culture, with possible effects on conserving indigenous races or breeds, specific knowledge and distinctive landscapes.

4. European countries have a rich diversity of such products. A gradation may be observed between West European countries where officially recognized traditional products can be numerous, the Central European countries, where there is a new demand for quality food in the urban areas, and Central Asian countries, where traditional local production often retains its role in the supply of food for local, isolated populations. Formerly considered as surviving archaisms, traditional products can be considered as assets corresponding to new demands from consumers and contributing to rural sustainable development.

5. The Conference may wish to consider recommendations regarding the role of these products in FAO programmes and projects, the development of knowledge on nutritional and socio-economic impacts, the preservation of their potential and the enhancement of stakeholders' and consumers' awareness.

II. INTRODUCTION

6. At the 24th Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Europe, held in Montpellier in 2004, the issue of food safety and quality was discussed. The Conference agreed that food quality was not limited to food safety, but included nutritional and added-value characteristics such as forms of production (oriented to environmental protection, animal welfare and biodiversity) and production areas (designation of origin). The Conference agreed that traditional products and designation of origin, carefully controlled, could help sustain employment in rural areas and contribute to rural development in both developed and developing countries. It was requested that "FAO assistance in this field should focus on the fundamental need to assess the food

composition, including the content of traditional foods for achieving food quality and nutritional balance and avoiding nutrition-related diseases (obesity, overweight, malnutrition)”.

7. Building upon the 2004 discussion, this paper addresses the issues of traditional regional agricultural and food products, taking into account, in particular, their role in promoting sustainable agricultural and rural development.

III. DEFINITION, CONSUMER DEMAND AND MARKET FORCES

A. DEFINITION OF TRADITIONAL AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD PRODUCTS

8. Traditional agricultural and food products represent an expression of culture and lifestyle resulting from the local climatic, agricultural and economic conditions that determine production and processing practices. As a consequence, the traditional nature of a product is based on a collective heritage and is linked to a specific territory although it is transmitted by the migration of individuals or populations. Rural areas can, therefore, offer a diversity of traditional regional agricultural and food products reflecting the human interaction with the environment over a long period of time.

9. Traditional agricultural and food products present characteristics that distinguish them from similar and generic products, either in terms of composition (raw material and primary products -species and/or variety- and their combination) or production and processing methods. As regards processed food products, these methods can give birth to specific culinary traditions.

Box 1: Examples of different types of traditional agricultural and food products

- **Traditional primary products:** Green Lentils from Le Puy - Protected Denomination of Origin (PDO) (France); Kalocsa Paprika, Appellation of Origin, registered under the Lisbon System (Hungary); Lapin Puikula PDO, Lapland potato, (Finland).
- **Traditional food based on traditional processing methods:** all regional cheeses; Parma ham PDO (Italy); Steirisches Kürbiskernöl PDO (Austria); Kajmak clotted cream (Balkans and Central Asia).
- **Traditional dishes/recipes:** cheese fondue (Alps); menu of Saint-Martin (various dishes made from pork, Jura, Switzerland); Pilav (various recipes in many countries, mostly based on rice – Central Asia)

Some relevant links:

Steirisches Kürbiskernöl (Austria): <http://www.steirisches-kuerbiskernoel-gga.ar>

Green Lentils from Le Puy: <http://www.lalentillevertedupuy.com>

Lapin Puikula Lapland potato, (Finland): <http://www.maaseutukeskus.fi/lappi/puikula/english.html>

Kajmak clotted cream (Balkans and Central Asia): <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kajmak>

Kalocsa Paprika (Hungary): <http://www.origin-food.org/2005/upload/SIN%20-%20case%20presentations%20-%20Paprika.pdf>

Pilav (various recipes in many countries, mostly based on rice - Central Asia):

<http://uzbekistan.progetti.informest.it/english/cucina.HTM>

10. In the context of this paper, the word “traditional” refers to the time when European populations used simple and time-honoured approaches to food production, before the introduction of technological innovations that substantially altered food production processes. In this regard, World War II is generally regarded as the starting point for large-scale food production in Europe, as defined by the European Food Information Resource Network (Trichopoulos, A. et al, 2007). It should be noted that traditions can evolve through generations, integrating necessary or useful innovations such as preservation techniques, as long as they maintain a meaningful traditional feature (Lenclud, 1987).

B. CONSUMER DEMAND

11. In Europe, consumer demand for traditional agricultural and food products has played an important part in the renewed interest of local farmers and distributors in these products. In general, the demand for these products increases with economic improvements in societies, urbanization and the degree of integration in the global market. Indeed, traditional regional agricultural and food products are often seen as a response to environmental concerns generated by globalization (transport of products over long distances) and to retailers' driving the supply of food. In the case of transition economies, it can be a response to the rapid and sometimes uncontrolled modernization process, which commonly includes an increase in importation of processed foods marketed by multinational firms.

12. In this context, traditional products are seen as a counter force to modern anxiety (globalization and rapid changes), attracting an increasing number of consumers who are looking for roots, familiarity, continuance in places, identity and tradition (Wilson & Fearn, 2000). Some consumers may prefer local or national products if they perceive them to be of better quality; they want to support the local or national economy; or they are proud of their cultural identity. Finally, the organoleptic characteristics of these products make them attractive, especially for connoisseurs.

C. MARKET CHALLENGES AND DRIVERS FOR TRADITIONAL PRODUCTS

13. Although large-scale markets still represent the mainstream, the increasing consumer demand for traditional agricultural and food products creates the potential for development of niche markets.

Box 2: French market trends

Importance of "gourmet products" (defined in this context as convivial, authentic, cultural and tasty products and so covering traditional products) in the whole agro-food market:

Type of market	Turnover (billions €)	Distribution %	Annual growth rate %
Large retailers	94	75	0-1
Healthy foods	6	5	15-25
Gourmet products	25	20	5-10
Total	125	100	1-2

Source: Rastoin (2004)

14. The demand for traditional products has created branding incentives. In this regard, big retailers are largely using references to terroir, tradition, regional features, and even creating their own specific umbrella trademark in order to market products. A diversity of associated claims, such as "natural", "old", "farmhouse", "original", "rustic", "classic", etc. are used and this can be confusing for consumers (Consumers International, 2004).

15. The specific features of traditional products and the importance of their preservation are recent concerns but increasingly recognized, in particular as regards their marketing potential¹. Better knowledge about traditional products (inventory, types of producers and methods of production) is important in guiding public policies. Some FAO projects related to traditional products contribute by collecting information and experiences with this in view.

¹ Cf. The project Truefood (<http://www.truefood.eu>) which aims to "introduce suitable innovations into traditional food industry to maintain and increase the competitiveness of the industry in an increasingly global European market place".

Box 3: FAO project on food quality linked to geographical origin

Launched in 2007, the overall objective of the project GCP/INT/022/FRA is to assist member countries to develop specific quality linked to the geographical origin policies that are adapted to their economic, social and cultural contexts. The aim is to contribute to rural development and respond to consumer demand, through the valorization and preservation of local resources. In order to collect information on member countries' experiences, regional seminars, expert meetings and networking activities are being implemented. Case studies analyse assets and constraints and success or failure factors. Supportive tools are being developed.

16. Other drivers for the development of such products are linked to the supportive policies that promote regional traditional products. Indeed, these products can serve as a focus for action for rural development and diversity preservation within agricultural and rural development policies because of their link to rural territories, which can prevent outmigration and firm relocation. These products can play a role in promoting collective action for local management of human and physical resources.

17. Private initiatives in support of the preservation and development of traditional agricultural and food products have been identified in several European countries. These initiatives have gained increasing recognition among consumers as well as among local/regional development officials.

Box 4: Example of collective private initiatives

Slow Food Ark of Taste and Presidia: associating retailers and restaurants

Slow Food (SF) was created as an association in Italy in 1989, to counteract the disappearance of local food traditions. Nowadays, it is present in many countries, including developing nations. SF established several tools to reach its aims, among which the Ark of Taste and the Presidia. The Ark of Taste, created in 1996, is an inventory of food products that are in danger of disappearing. It includes over 500 products or domestic biological resources. This database is used for information and promotion activities, and as a reservoir of potential Presidia. The Presidia are small-scale projects (more than 270 worldwide) connecting local and external actors in order to support the producers of an endangered product. The projects assist producers to coordinate, establish common rules of production, facilitate access to niche markets and promote the products through fairs, restaurants, etc.

<http://www.slowfoodfoundation.org/eng/presidi/lista.lasso>

Chablais Gourmands: combining traditional products and tourism

This project gathers food producers and winemakers (about 50), restaurants and retailers from the Swiss and French areas of the historical region of Chablais. The project is based on voluntary regulation and quality control. It was initially supported by the European Community Initiative Programme INTERREG (established in 1990 with the aim of promoting development of European Union regions through cross-border cooperation) and the regional authorities. The goals are to establish a network of professionals to provide a reference database of producers, and to promote regional artisanal products mostly through direct marketing. For example, the project favours collaboration between restaurants and local suppliers of traditional products. The main tools are a website, a printed brochure which is widely disseminated, especially in tourist offices, and collective participation at fairs and other public events.

<http://www.chablais-gourmands.com>

IV. REGULATORY ASPECTS

18. As defined in the 2004 Conference paper, "Specific quality" is a voluntary approach to differentiate products based on specific characteristics; in contrast to generic quality which represents the basic requirement a product has to meet to be put on a market, in particular with regard to the food safety requirement. Appropriate legislation is then required to define the necessary criteria and conditions to be met by traditional agricultural and food products in order to be considered as being of specific quality. The aim is to protect consumers as well as producers from unscrupulous, non-conforming competitors.

19. Traditional products can be regulated through a variety of legal frameworks, such as consumer protection, competition laws or intellectual property, either by general or product-specific legislation. Different legal frameworks will put various degrees of emphasis on public policy objectives, such as human health, consumer protection and fair competition. The following sections provide a brief overview of three regulatory areas for traditional products, namely food safety, intellectual property and quality schemes.

A. FOOD SAFETY STANDARDS

20. National food quality and safety regulations apply to all agricultural and food products distributed within a country's borders. At the international level, Codex Alimentarius standards, guidelines and related texts developed by the Codex Alimentarius Commission constitute a reference point in international food trade. In this framework, quality criteria or claims for specific foods such as "traditional foods" are in addition to the general or specific provisions. This also applies to labelling requirements. As an example, the general labelling requirements are always necessary for basic consumer information, whereas specific labelling is required to inform the consumer on the specific conditions of production, for instance in the case of organic labelling.

21. International standards setting, by Codex and other bodies, should not marginalize traditional local products; rather it should contribute to increasing awareness of them worldwide, while guaranteeing the minimum quality and safety to protect the consumer. International standardization and promotion of traditional regional products are not mutually exclusive. For instance, international standards labelling provisions require that the country of origin of the food must be declared if its omission would mislead or deceive the consumer. This would allow for co-existence of standardized food products and their local versions that would meet additional quality features.

22. At national or regional levels, regulations may exist that recognize the need for flexibility so that foods with traditional characteristics can continue to be produced, providing possible granted derogation for traditional products (see examples of EU regulation and Italy in Box 5).

Box 5: Legal derogation allowing the maintenance of traditional methods in the EU

The European Commission has adopted a set of food safety regulations including certain provisions which may be problematic for traditional products. As the preservation of these products is also part of the EU policies, the Commission adopted Article 7 of the EC Regulation 2074/2005 which provides a procedure allowing Member States to exercise flexibility by granting derogation so as to allow food business operators to continue to apply existing traditional practices. Concerned products must be historically recognized as traditional and protected as traditional food products through a European national, regional or local regulation. The derogation may concern the materials used in the processing units (wooden doors, natural grounds, etc.) or those used as processing tools or for packaging. The general aim is to preserve the traditional environment which is necessary to meet the specific organoleptic features (microbiological flora, in particular) of the product. In this case, derogations can be obtained through the submission of the technical justifications and prior approval by the national food safety authority. Each exemption is formalized in a legal text, and the Commission is informed. The derogation may also relate to the traditional processing methods which are not listed in the descriptive Annex III of the EC Regulation 853/2004. In this case, the submission (technical file) must be approved by the Commission and by all Member States. For all cases, the technical file must include a complete description of the process and indication of measures that would ensure the safety of the products concerned.

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2005:338:0027:0059:EN:PDF>

More information can be found in the document (in French) available at [http://rhone-alpes.synagri.com/synagri/pj.nsf/TECHPJPARGLEF/04433/\\$File/Fiche%20paquet%20hygiène%20V%20fi nale-30-10-07.pdf?OpenElement](http://rhone-alpes.synagri.com/synagri/pj.nsf/TECHPJPARGLEF/04433/$File/Fiche%20paquet%20hygiène%20V%20fi nale-30-10-07.pdf?OpenElement)

In Italy, Article 8 of the Italian Legislative Decree 173/98 concerns the protection of traditional food and agricultural products that are products “with methods of processing, conservation and ageing that have been established in time”. It is based on special regional lists produced by Regions and Autonomous Provinces, defining a set of exemptions to the material implementation regarding the hygiene of the product as soon as the food safety requirements are met (as an example, when the use of wooden tools should not be systematically forbidden, as it is not necessary to comply with the hygienic requirements).

Decreto Legislativo 30 Aprile 1998, n.130; decreto Ministero Agricoltura 8 Settembre 1999, n.350) – <http://www.politicheagricole.it/ProdottiTradizionali/ricerca/htm>

23. It is important to note that specific quality schemes can help small producers comply more rapidly with food safety requirements through the collective endeavours (and often advisory support) of concerned producers. This point is particularly important for informal and direct sellers to reach the formal and indirect market, and thus for transition economies. In a number of cases, the recognition and protection of a product require some enhancement of the food safety aspects while preserving traditional specificities. This combination is not always easy to achieve, particularly for animal food products, and it deserves special attention through specific research and product development programmes.

Box 6: Quality procedure for Livno cheese from Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Livanjski sir (Livno cheese), a cheese made from sheep’s milk, has a good reputation in the domestic market and the markets of neighbouring countries. However, the original product is threatened by copies made from cow’s milk. Defining and protecting the characteristics and the designation of the product would favour the preservation of the very particular landscape of the Livanjsko Polje (which requires a higher altitude level of pasture in order to maintain grasslands) and allow small-scale farms and dairies to compete in their markets and benefit from the existing market opportunities. The Livno cheese qualification process was initiated in 2005 with the project “Flavours of Herzegovina” to support producers in upgrading their processing facilities to match food safety and milk hygiene standards. The current cooperation for implementing a protected geographical denomination is carried out by Cincar, an association of sheep breeders and cheese producers and supported by an Italian Non-Governmental Organization (UCODEP). The involvement of the national food safety agency in this project ensures proper consideration of food safety issues associated with the use of unpasteurized milk.

Source: FAO-Agridea-Seedeve case study, Bernardoni et al. (2008).

B. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

24. At the international level, the geographical indication (GI) refers to the geographical dimension of a traditional product and it allows for the recognition and the protection of the product’s reputation as a category of intellectual property rights. According to the World Trade Organization’s (WTO) Agreement on trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights (TRIPS), GIs are “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” (Art. 22.1).

25. Intellectual property right is also considered as a relevant legal framework to protect traditional knowledge under the World Intellectual Property Organization’s (WIPO) Intergovernmental Committee on Traditional Knowledge, Folklore and Genetic Resources. The provisions include, as policy objectives, the prevention of use by unauthorized parties, the conservation of traditional knowledge with the promotion of the related community’s development and the trade legitimacy.

26. The EU legislation refers to traditions in two regulations. Although the EC Regulation on Traditional Specialities Guaranteed (TSG) (EC Regulation No 509/06, Art. 2, al. 1, let. b) requires no specific geographical origin, it uses “traditional” as a criteria applying to agro-food products, meaning “*proven usage on the Community market for a time period showing transmission between generations*”. The European Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) and the Protected

Geographical Indication (PGI) (EC Regulation No 510/2006 of 20 March 2006) correspond to a sui generis system for Geographical Indications as defined by the TRIPS Agreement, which includes traditional and regional dimensions of products (e.g. requirements of Art.4 al.2 let. E on “authentic and unvarying local methods”).

27. The relevant regulations can have different combined justifications, not only on economic and trade grounds, but also in relation to rural development policies, biodiversity and tradition preservation and promotion.

Box 7: Policy justifications – the case of European PDOs and PGIs

The main justifications for public policies or collective private initiatives in support of the development of traditional products are listed below:

- need for regulating trade and competition: usurpation (fraud) of geographical indications by outsiders, generally large-scale producers benefiting from lower costs of production; delimitation of the area of production and definition of the products through officially recognized codes of practices;
- regulation of the production volumes in order to stabilize markets and avoid competition based merely on production costs, which affects the quality and traditional nature of foods;
- rural development: maintaining people and activities in less favoured areas; addressing difficulties in trading of traditional products due to the distribution of production among numerous small-scale actors; the remoteness of the areas concerned; the lack of a standard quality for the products, etc.; PDOs and PGIs represent valuable tools to protect the reputations of traditional products thanks to the collective dimension of know-how and the territorial links which are among the requirements for their registration;
- preservation of the national and regional identity heritage (cf. Austrian register for traditional foods as traditional knowledge), including the products themselves but also know-how, plant varieties and animal breeds, biotopes and landscapes;
- assurance of food safety and minimum quality requirements.

Source: Sylvander, Allaire et al. (2006), p.47

28. Another intellectual property right tool within the European Region is relevant. The Austrian register for traditional products is an instrument that has the objective of recording the Austrian traditional foods in an official register administered by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management. It has been recognized by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) for protection of traditional knowledge. This provides a protection through official and coherent disclosure. Similarly, the law in Italy (Art. 8 of the Legislative Decree 173/98) includes the establishment and updating of a national database of traditional products not registered in the EU system. The Bavarian database of traditional products and recipes follows the same principle. All the existing initiatives may contribute to the establishment of international standards for the protection of traditional knowledge attached to agri–food products.

29. Finally, intellectual property right can be used to protect collective and certification/guarantee trademarks which are specifically devoted to traditional products, either from public or private initiatives, in particular as an umbrella for all traditional products of a designated region. Some examples are given in Box 8.

Box 8: Examples of public certification/guarantee trademarks

The Hungarian trademark *HÍR* (Traditions – Flavours – Regions) owned by the public-funded Agricultural Marketing Centre (although it has not been used yet), or the Norwegian trademark *Spesialitet Norge* (Norwegian Speciality) owned by Matmerk (Norwegian Agricultural Quality System and Food Branding Foundation), or the trademark *Paniere dei Prodotti tipici* from the Italian Province of Turin are examples of public trademarks. Commonly, traditional products benefit from trademarks open to all the products of a designated region, being traditional or innovative, national or regional. Examples are *Growing Green in Latvia*, *Bienvenue en Gourmandie* in Normandy (France), *Spécialité du Canton du Jura* in Switzerland.

Sources:

<http://kslmatmerk.no/merkeordningene/spesialitet>

<http://www.provincia.torino.it/agrimont/sapori/paniere/>

<http://www.ggl.lv/>

<http://www.gourmandie.fr/>

<http://www.terroir-jura.ch/>

C. OTHER QUALITY SCHEMES

30. Regulation of traditional products can emerge from other specific regulatory qualifications. Indeed, traditional products can also be organic, farm-made, mountain² or natural parks products³. The different sets of requirements generally converge as there is obviously coherence among these qualities:

- Traditional methods and resources are often similar to organic principles;
- Household and on-farm food processing are generally a reservoir of traditions;
- Traditional products could survive more easily in remote and less developed areas, such as mountains because of difficulties of agricultural modernization – an obstacle can become an asset;
- Traditional products are a precious way for natural parks to maintain traditional landscapes and human-influenced biodiversity, and a valuable resource for attracting tourism.

31. Synergies between different quality schemes can lower the costs of implementation, particularly those related to controls and certification. Since organic production systems have been established in many transition economies (due to the high demand from Western European countries), these systems may be used to support tradition-related quality schemes.

V. SPECIFIC FEATURES

A. NUTRITION AND HEALTH ISSUES

32. Current public interest in nutrition and healthy eating has contributed to the increased demand for traditional products, with a consequent increased interest among food manufacturers.

33. Traditional products are, in their areas of origin, integrated into regional diets resulting from a complex, historical evolution reflecting the interaction between humans and their milieu. The products embody the knowledge and experience of past generations who optimized the local resources and ingredients to make palatable and healthy food (Trichopoulou, A. et al., 2007). Indeed, some nutritionally interesting elements may result from the complex local combination of climate and soils, pasture composition, methods of processing, etc. (example of pistachio nuts, Bellomo & Fallico, 2007). On the other hand, some of the processed traditional foods result from

² See as an example, French regulation (Law on Mountains of 9 January 1985, modified by Law of 9 July 1999) and the European Charter for Mountain Quality Food Products (<http://www.mountainproducts-europe.org/sites/euromontana/>).

³ Cf. the example of the French natural parks trademark for traditional products: <http://www.parcs-naturels-regionaux.fr/fr/approfondir/faq.asp?lang=en&p=1&th=4>

a concentration of nutritive elements that was formerly a necessity for conservation. This could be considered as problematic nowadays in a context of excess calorie consumption. From the perspectives of balance of diet and diversity of nutrients, there is still a lack of knowledge regarding the nutrient and bioactive composition of traditional products and there is a need for more precise study of their effects on human health.

34. Priorities for nutritional epidemiology include documentation and monitoring of dietary habits in the context of planning national food, nutrition and agriculture policies, as well as documentation of dietary habits and identification of specific nutrients and dietary patterns that may have effects on people's health. The systematic determination of the macro- and micro- nutrient composition and bioactive components of traditional products is essential in order to elucidate their role in traditional foods and dietary patterns. Data on the health-promoting effects of such foods must be included in national and/or European regional food composition databases and tables. This information is necessary in order to accurately estimate dietary intakes of individuals and populations, as well as for food trade and product labelling.

B. SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASPECTS: CONTRIBUTION TO SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Adding value and local employment in small businesses

35. The estimation of the economic importance of traditional foods in trade and labour provision can be partially assessed through the analysis of the economic information on PDOs and PGIs, which constitute a well-defined and legally recognized sub-category.

Box 9: Some figures for PDOs or PGIs

- According to EC published data: Italian "Toscana" olive oil has sold at a premium of 20% since it was registered as a GI in 1998. Eighty-five percent (85%) of French wine exports use GIs. Eighty percent (80%) of EU exported spirits use GIs. GIs provide the livelihood for 138 000 farms in France and employment for 300 000 Italian individuals.

http://ec.europa.eu/trade/issues/sectoral/intell_property/argu_en.htm

- EU consumers highly appreciate GIs as demonstrated by a 1999 consumer survey which indicated that 40% of consumers are willing to pay a 10% premium price for origin-guaranteed products.

<http://agreste.agriculture.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/signes2006T8.pdf>

- In 2004 the French products registered as PDOs or PGIs according to European legislation accounted for almost €2.8 billion of first step commercial value (French AOC [French Appellation System for wine] wines represent €8.6 billion).

<http://agreste.agriculture.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/primeur182.pdf>

36. Local employment provided by small food businesses contributes to maintaining economic activities and populations in rural areas, especially in less-favoured, remote zones. The specific qualities of traditional products are generally associated with an extensive system of production and handicraft processing. This implies a higher rate of employment than in intensive and industrialized systems dedicated to commodities or innovative products. This situation relates not only to the number of jobs linked to traditional products but also to the type of jobs, according to skills, variety, social recognition, etc. Employment turnover is particularly high in the food industry, because of the exacting conditions and repetitiveness of physical movements, whereas jobs associated with traditional products, even in small factories, can be more sustainable.

37. In areas where mechanization is difficult or costly, such as mountainous areas, traditional production methods are the only way to maintain activities and some employment. Production and supply costs of traditional products are generally higher than those of competitive industrial products; that is why their specific quality should be recognized and the consumer should be informed about their characteristics. Information on quality needs to be correctly shared throughout the market (individual consumer's knowledge, official quality labels and regulations

on claims). Traditional products can obtain a good added-value with little investment in promotion/marketing and there is no need to create new products, and promotion is generally collective. Finally, considering the different cost structures, traditional products may not be more expensive for consumers than innovative industrial products which require high research and development (R&D) and advertising investments to enter markets.

Social aspects and territorial dynamism

38. Apart from the activities directly associated with the supply-chains of traditional products (trade, preservation, packaging, controls), traditional products can strengthen other activities, especially in the tourism and gastronomy sectors. Tourism activities are generally a powerful incentive for the development of traditional products, and traditional products are also an important element for the development of tourism. This trend is illustrated by the number of museums, tourism development projects, activities proposed to tourists which are focused on local traditional products. The stable trend of tourist interest in local food culture is apparent based on the abundant offer of thematic routes, museums, visits of farms or factories, etc., in almost any region. The development of local culinary heritage is especially an asset for regions which are not endowed with mass-tourism assets (snow, sea and sun).

39. Collective rights over the know-how, the resources, the designation associated with a traditional product justify the collective management of the scheme system. This can offer an effective basis for territorial governance and can allow the public authorities to delegate some tasks of management (controls, quantities, sustainable use of resources, etc.). In return, the collective management is a key factor for the success of the promotion, ensuring better marketing, uniform process procedures and recognition, and an efficient auto-control/certification process.

40. As a basis for a territorial quality strategy, stakeholders are not limited to the supply-chain operators but they cover a large network including other economic activities and cultural values (Tregear et al., 2007). Coordination of small-scale actors (horizontal and vertical relations along the supply-chain) of a traditional product both strengthens the local organizations and allows local actors to compete with integrated firms, thus realizing another model of reduction of the transaction costs rather than the mere vertical integration, and opportunity for public-private sector collaboration.

41. Traditional agricultural and food products and systems are also linked to gender issues. Their production involves work undertaken by women, often in the processing stage or at the point of sale (in particular in the direct sales to final consumers). As a consequence, promotion, production and trade of these products are ways of giving positive social and economic recognition to the work of women, providing an opportunity to involve them in the creation of added-value on the farm or the small factory.

42. Another important social aspect is the way in which the promotion and adding value to traditional products increases self-esteem among local actors when they become aware of the value of their products and traditions or associated lifestyle, especially in remote and less favoured areas and thus it alleviates exclusion.

Links to biodiversity, environmental and cultural issues

Environment and biodiversity

43. By definition, traditional products rely on local resources and raw materials and are therefore sustainable as these practices ensure the continuity of the terroir through collective management of resources; use of locally specific biological resources; diversity of production, etc. Awareness of this special relationship to the terroir can support the resistance to an evolution towards specialization and economic rationalization which can endanger the traditional practices, in particular through the product's specification referring to sustainable methods preserving the natural resources.

44. An important issue is the conservation and sustainable use of traditional species and/or varieties and breeds that represent genetic resources. In the context of current changes, this is particularly relevant in relation to climate change. Indeed, the North/South gradient in traditional European products and dietary patterns is mostly a reflection of differences in climatic as well as agricultural and economic conditions.

45. Another dimension of biodiversity relates to the diversity of varieties within an area and can be addressed through requirements on extensive practices. In some economically successful cases, in order to prevent the trend towards a monoculture system encouraged through economic incentives, convergence with organic production methods is a way to maintain environmental benefits.

46. Recognition and protection of traditional products can contribute to preservation of both breed/variety biodiversity and their varied combinations in a geographic area. Indeed, specific local variety or breed often corresponds to raw material or ingredients for traditional products, while traditional practices reflect the equilibrium between humans and nature, leading to the conservation of highly diverse ecosystems (Kiene, 2006).

Box 10: Examples of biological resources preservation

Many of the traditional products which are registered as GIs have gained prestige and are based, according to their mandatory code of practice, on the milk of local breeds (as is the case for Livno cheese in Bosnia and Herzegovina), or on local plant varieties, (as for Tetovo Beans in TFYR of Macedonia) (Bernardoni et al., 2008). The recognition of such traditional products as GIs may have played a crucial role in the preservation of biological resources which had almost disappeared: Rheintaler Ribelmals PDO (Switzerland) for a maize variety; Single Gloucester PDO cheese (UK) or Laguiole cheese for cow breeds; Schwäbisch Hällisches Landschwein PGI (Germany) for a pig breed.

Sources:

Rheintaler Ribalmals: <http://www.ribelmals.ch/>; this example is analysed by Larson (2007), pp. 33-34

Single Gloucester: http://www.defra.gov.uk/foodrin/foodname/pfn/products/registered/single_g.htm

Laguiole cheese <http://www.patrimoine>

[biologique.midipyrenees.fr/fiche.asp?FK_cat_animal=2&page=4Laguiole](http://www.patrimoine.biologique.midipyrenees.fr/fiche.asp?FK_cat_animal=2&page=4Laguiole)

Schwäbisch Hällisches Landschwein:

<http://www.besh.de/html/produkte/schweingga.htm>

Natural and cultural heritage

47. At the end of the 1980s, the limitations related to the modernization of agriculture became apparent in Western Europe, as revealed by concerns about authenticity, diversity, environment and rural development. At the same time, it became obvious that in most regions, the traditional systems of production, know-how, and landscapes were disappearing and, as a consequence, the traditional products which derived from them were at risk of being lost. This acknowledgement favoured the introduction of culinary heritage and traditional products in the trend of “patrimonialization” which developed, for example, through different inventories.

Box 11: Inventories in Europe

Inventories were made in many Western European countries under the EU-funded programme Euroterroirs (1993-97). Similar public-supported projects were launched in countries which were not members of the EU when the Euroterroirs programme began, or are still not members (e.g. Hungary, the Baltic countries, and Belarus, Switzerland). These programmes generally benefited from scientific support, and are used as a basis for the development of tools, being focused on the products (applications such as PDO, PGI or TSG, collective trademarks, general promotion, etc.) or on related tourism activities (e.g. European network of culinary heritage regions, Austrian project Genuss Region Österreich).

Sources:

<http://www.kertnet.hu/HungarianHorticulture/gb/21fr.htm>
<http://www.bsrinterreg3a.net/templates/detail.php?id=100508>
<http://www.patrimoineculinaire.ch>
<http://www.culinary-heritage.com/>
<http://www.genuss-region.at/index-genuss-region>

48. At the international level, the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) project, aims at establishing the basis for international recognition, conservation and adaptive management of traditional agricultural systems and their associated landscapes, biodiversity, knowledge systems and cultures throughout the world. FAO launched the initiative in 2002 supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and in close collaboration with different international and national institutions such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Heritage. The GIAHS includes a number of sites within Europe (see Box 12).

Box 12: European sites within the FAO GIAHS

Agricultural Heritage Systems, rich in agricultural biodiversity, associating wildlife and being important resources of indigenous knowledge and culture, can be found all over the world. A network between agricultural heritage systems is being built worldwide, intending to ultimately encompass 100 to 150 Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems internationally. In Europe, GIAHS are:

- Lemon Gardens (Southern Italy)
- Traditional Agro-Ecosystems in the Carpathians (Slovakia)
- Mobile Pastoral Systems (Romania)
- Traditional Reindeer Herding in the Arctic Region (Siberia –Russia)

<http://www.fao.org/sd/giahs/europe.asp>

49. Traditional products, especially when they benefit from a collective structure of management, constitute an incentive for a more sustainable management of landscapes. Positive effects on the landscape can be a consequence both of the application of the related provisions in the code of practice, and the collective actions for the landscape within the territorial project (INRA [French National Institute for Agricultural Research], 2006).

VI. THE SITUATION IN EUROPE

50. Traditional products are the result of the local cultural and natural specificities. European countries have a rich diversity of such products, reinforced by the different socio-economic situations and regulatory frameworks. Nevertheless, some general trends can be distinguished by areas: West, North and South Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

51. As a general rule, the less a society remains traditional, the more it recognizes the value of traditional elements, including traditional foods. In other words, agricultural modernization and the development of the agri-food processing industry are usually associated with the loss of traditional products (their number as well as volumes produced).

52. The potential, market and policies related to traditional products are different as they depend on the geographical situation of the region or country as well as historical evolution. Social concerns may therefore vary from a desire for diversity, taste, tradition and roots expressed by rich consumers of North-West European countries to a need for food security and food safety by poor consumers of Central Asian countries. Such different needs can also be seen at different levels of society in a given country.

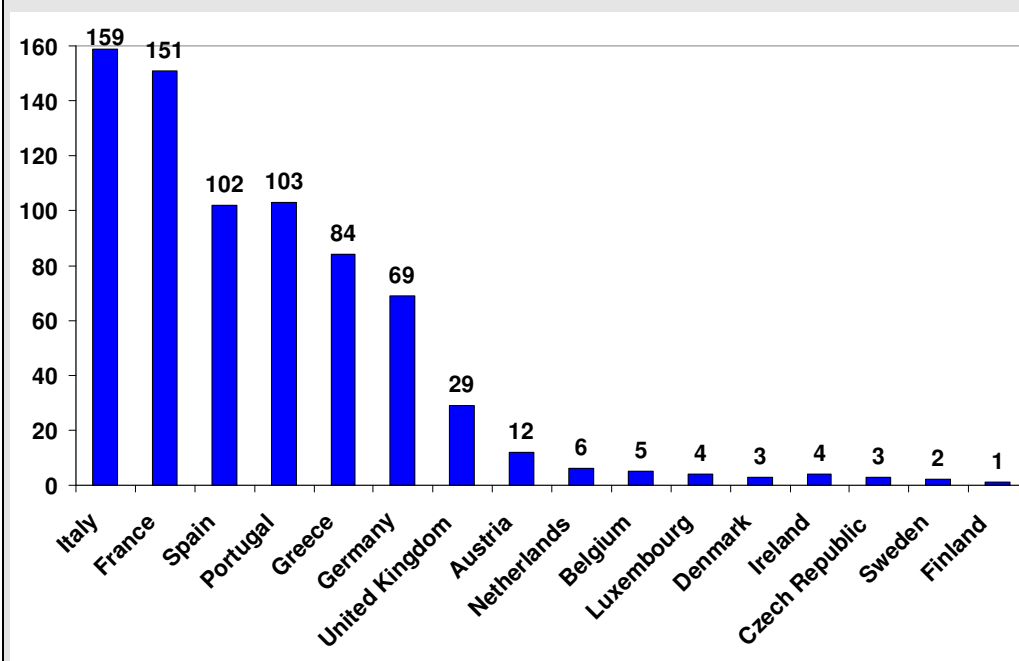
53. To simplify, a gradation may be observed between North-West European countries where a few traditional products are promoted as such and South-East European countries where recognized traditional products are numerous (see figures in the box below). The same can be said in relation to the implementation of the EU system for PDOs, PGIs and TSGs, which initially corresponded to a system pre-existing in South European countries, and was adopted by North European countries, then by new EU Members and is now foreseen by candidate countries.

A. WESTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

54. As mentioned previously, Western European countries benefit from a regulatory framework that supports the recognition and protection of traditional products either through TSGs, PDOs or PGIs and the number of registrations provides an indication of the importance of these products.

Box 13: Number of registered protected designations of origin (PDOs) and protected geographical indications (PGIs) in Europe (October 2007)

As of October 2007, 439 PDOs and 323 PGIs (wines and spirits excluded) were registered within the European Union. Distribution varies among the Member Countries. For example, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia altogether have 6 registered PDOs or PGIs, whereas Portugal has 105 PDOs and PGIs. The graph below illustrates this distribution:



Source:

EC presentation to the FAO-Ministry of Agriculture of Morocco, Regional Seminar on Food Quality Linked to Geographical Origin in the Mediterranean, Casablanca, 8-9 November 2007, in French:

<http://www.mp-discussion.org/casa/>

B. CENTRAL EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

55. In Central Eastern European countries, following the major policy changes and restructuring of farming and processing activities, a new demand for quality and artisanal food increased in urban areas. In many regions, there are still many farms producing traditional products for home consumption or for very limited markets although their number is expected to decrease quite rapidly due to agricultural modernization and migration to urban centres.

56. Urban demand creates incentives to preserve traditional products; but preferences for western products can be a threat. Indeed, it must be noted that with regard to consumer demand, some consumers may wish to escape from the traditional diet and products (especially if these were associated with food shortages, lack of choice, poor quality, etc.) and prefer imported industrial food (associated with modernity, economic development, “Western” way of life, etc.), or imported de luxe traditional products.

57. The changes in agriculture and the food sector are far more rapid than they were in Western European countries during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. This is also due to the fact that the rapid transition is not only from the past to post-modernity but often from collective state structures to private ones. Within the modernization of the entire agricultural sector, the challenges relate also to the development of local quality products both for national markets and Western European ones.

58. Countries that have recently become members of the EU or that have this prospect in the near future, are preparing their integration with policies regarding traditional products; the main features are the pre-implementation of the EU framework for PDOs, PGIs and TSGs. A number of development projects now aim at keeping this potential of value available for small producers. In this field, a registration as a GI or a collective trademark are generally favourable frameworks to support small producers for accessing markets, complying with food safety requirements, and securing added-value attached to the product’s specificities (Bernardoni et al., 2008).

Box 14: Slovenian system of protection and certification

A cooperation programme was implemented by AFNOR (French Agency for Standardization) and INAO (French Institute for Designations of Origin) in Slovenia (2001-03), in order to implement a system of protection and certification for Slovenian traditional food products. The main goals were: i) to present various options and propose a solution for an institutional framework to manage the related field; ii) to involve all the relevant public and private actors; iii) to provide a technical information reference available for all actors concerned. This programme resulted in 13 applications for PDOs, PGIs or TSGs being transmitted to the European Commission.

As an example of a recognized traditional product in Slovenia, and one that has some impact on the market, it has been noted that the registration of the Slovenian dried sausage Zgornjesavinjski želodec as a GI* contributed to the development of the market demand even faster than the producers could develop the supply.

Source: Slokan & Udovč (2005)

*It was in the Slovenian legal framework previous to membership of the EU; this product is not yet registered as a PGI in the EU system

59. Traditional products may be recognized as an asset even in contexts characterized by political instability, poverty, basic needs in infrastructures, state-driven farming activities, etc. For instance, the very special method of wine-making in Georgia (Marani type, with underground clay jars) can not only be preserved from disappearing, but can also be valued through a link with rural tourism.

C. CENTRAL ASIAN COUNTRIES

60. In Central Asian countries, household food production is very important with numerous small-scale farmers, and with urban domestic markets being relatively small. Maintaining the share of local traditional products in the domestic markets is a challenge since they have to compete with imported food on the grounds of their specific, culturally accepted characteristics. Traditional local production often retains its role in supply of food for local, isolated populations.

61. Moreover, promotion of traditional products could contribute to developing the potential for exporting high value-added products. For instance, the development of certified organic production can be integrated with the marketing of traditional products.

62. At present, due to competing priorities, attention in these countries is globally focused on food safety and food security, and traditional products may not receive the necessary priority in development programmes. Therefore, there is a need to strike a balance between food safety requirements and traditional features which guarantee the specificity of these products and preserve their potential for (future) market opportunities. These opportunities, and the related challenges, can be illustrated by the caviar production in the Caspian Sea, which benefited from a worldwide reputation whereas the local resources were seriously endangered⁴.

63. In conclusion, it can be stated that over the last twenty years, traditional products in Europe that were formerly considered as surviving archaisms in countries where the agriculture and agro-food sectors were modernized early, are now considered as assets corresponding to new demands from consumers. This attitude should guide those countries where the potential of traditional products is not obvious at present because of more urgent needs and profound socio-economic changes, but which could be interesting to develop as soon as domestic urbanization and agro-food industrialization, and export market opportunities, open new perspectives for these products.

VII. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. CONCLUSIONS

64. Provided that linkages to specific “terroir” are maintained through appropriate regulatory frameworks and/or voluntary practices, traditional agricultural and food products have a potential for generating regular income as well as contributing to the preservation of regional landscapes, biological diversity, know-how and cultural identity. These products can play a key role in achieving food and nutrition security and combating poverty, especially in Europe's 'transition' countries.

65. Traditional regional products can be seen as a dimension of sustainable local development, supported within a systems approach. Promoting traditional products in a country should be part of a wider agricultural and food policy framework that embraces other important issues. From the consumer perspective, traditional products provide broader choices, recognizing that not all consumers can afford to buy these products.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

66. In order to support this contribution to sustainable and rural development, the Conference may wish to consider the following recommendations.

⁴ FAO leads a project on sustainable management of the resources: “Capacity-building for the recovery and management of the sturgeon fisheries of the Caspian Sea” (2006-09), TCP/INT/3101.

Recommendations to FAO

Traditional products in development programmes

67. FAO programmes and projects should incorporate support for, and preservation of traditional products:

- Activities directly related to traditional products should be included in projects as contributions to broad objectives related to food security and rural poverty, such as: sustainable development, promotion of gender equity, preservation of the environment and biodiversity, marketing agricultural and food products including fish and forestry, enhancement of seeds, protection of mountain areas and remarkable landscapes, etc.
- Specific programmes should be promoted in order to assist member countries in the implementation of policies in support of traditional products.

Nutritional knowledge on traditional products

68. FAO could assist in enhancing nutritional knowledge and diffusing information by:

- Elaborating and gathering data on the nutrient content of traditional products and their relationship to human health through the International Network of Food Data Systems Secretariat and the Cross-cutting Initiative on Biodiversity for Food and Nutrition;
- Promoting balanced regional diets which integrate traditional products as tasty and culturally meaningful foods;
- Integrating information and knowledge about traditional foods and eating patterns into food and nutrition education curricula in schools, including practical garden-based learning activities (viz. FAO school garden initiative), as well as community education programmes and those directed at the general public.

Potential and socio-economic impacts of traditional products

69. FAO should assist in raising awareness about the importance of traditional products and their role in agriculture and rural development and diversity preservation, particularly in Central and Eastern European countries.

70. FAO should enhance the generation, collection and sharing of information and knowledge regarding the status and the socio-economic impact of traditional products in the European Region.

Recommendations to public authorities

Preservation of the potential of traditional products

71. European countries, in particular Eastern and Central Asian countries, should consider the potential of traditional products from the perspective of accessing new markets and adding value in internal and export markets. Governments should take measures to prevent the disappearance of these valuable products:

- Implement scientific inventory, registration and protection of traditional products taking into consideration issues of intellectual property rights;
- Support for assessment and enhancement of the food safety aspects while preserving traditional specificities in order to access formal markets through specific research and product development programmes;
- Provide support and technical assistance to groups of small producers and rural communities, to enhance marketing, preserve traditions and diversity and improve people's livelihoods.

Enhancing stakeholders' and consumers' knowledge of traditional products

72. Since traditional products are related to culture and territory, awareness and knowledge are required to facilitate appreciation and prevent confusion as regards labelling. Therefore, education and information are needed. This can be oriented towards the following audiences:

- Consumers in general (e.g. labels, websites providing extensive information on each product, general information campaigns, enforcement against fraud);
- Children, as part of general nutrition education and in relation to diversity, taste and culture;
- Production and market stakeholders, both at the local level to support the transmission of the tradition and to reinforce pride in traditional products as well as for export markets; involving the stakeholders in participative frameworks.

Protection of traditional products

73. The main options that can be implemented to enhance the protection of producers and consumers regarding the authentic characteristics of traditional products through specific regulations include the following:

- Support the registration of traditional products with a dedicated system linked to geographical indication (this would require the establishment of a specific legal framework where it does not yet exist);
- Elaborate, update, publish national inventories of traditional products with official recognition, including a database for collective local intellectual property rights;
- Examine the possibilities for protecting consumers against misleading or confusing claims regarding the traditional nature of foods, such as “original”, “old times”, “authentic”.

Recommendations to other stakeholders

74. Producers of traditional products should be aware that their traditional products and practices are valuable. Aspects of the methods that have been viewed as constraints may become opportunities: so-called archaic systems of production are often related to the specific characteristics and uniqueness of the product and they can become marketing advantages for consumers seeking authenticity. Producers should analyse the potential of their products with traditional characteristics collectively, strengthening their local organizations to promote and preserve these specificities and their associated human and natural resources.

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Useful relevant links:

European Food Information Resource Network, referring to the European Network of Excellence on Food Composition Databank systems : www.eufir.net

Truefood project : <http://www.truefood.eu>

FAO webpage on the programme for food quality linked to geographical origin: www.foodquality-origin.org

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Slow Food Ark of Taste and Presidia : <http://www.slowfoodfoundation.org/eng/presidi/lista.lasso>

Chablais Gourmands: <http://www.chablais-gourmands.com>

Some types of traditional agricultural and food products:

- Steirisches Kürbiskernöl (Austria): <http://www.steirisches-kuerbiskernoel-gga.ar>
- Green Lentils from Le Puy: <http://www.lalentillevertedupuy.com>
- Lapin Puikula Lapland potato (Finland): <http://www.maaseutukeskus.fi/lappi/puikula/english.html>
- Kajmak clotted cream (Balkans and Central Asia): <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kajmak>
- Kalocsa Paprika (Hungary): <http://www.origin-food.org/2005/upload/SIN%20-%20case%20presentations%20-%20Paprika.pdf>
- Pilav (various recipes in many countries, mostly based on rice - Central Asia): <http://uzbekistan.progetti.informest.it/english/cucina.HTM>

EC Regulation 2074/2005 on food safety regulations:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2005:338:0027:0059:EN:PDF>

More information on operators process for derogation can be found in the document (in French) available at:

[http://rhone-alpes.synagri.com/synagri/pj.nsf/TECHPJPARCLEF/04433/\\$File/Fiche%20paquet%20hygiène%20V%20finale-30-10-07.pdf?OpenElement](http://rhone-alpes.synagri.com/synagri/pj.nsf/TECHPJPARCLEF/04433/$File/Fiche%20paquet%20hygiène%20V%20finale-30-10-07.pdf?OpenElement)

Council Regulation No 509/06 on Traditional Guaranteed Specialities:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:093:0001:0011:EN:PDF>

Council Regulation (EC) No 510/2006 of 20 March 2006, on Designation of Origin (PDO) and the Protected Geographical Indication (PGI):

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:093:0012:0025:EN:PDF>

Austrian traditional foods register administered by the Ministry of Agriculture:

<http://traditionelleswissen.lebensministerium.at/>

Italian national database of traditional products (Art. 8 of the Legislative decree 173/98):

<http://www.politicheagricole.it/ProdottiQualita/ProdottiTradizionali/ricerca.htm>

Bavarian database of traditional products and recipes:

http://www.food-from-bavaria.de/en/reg_spez/

Euromontana, European Charter for Mountain Quality Food Products:

<http://www.mountainproducts-europe.org/sites/euromontana/>

French natural parks trademark for traditional products:

<http://www.parcs-naturels-regionaux.fr/fr/approfondir/faq.asp?lang=en&p=1&th=4>

Examples of public certification/guarantee trademarks:

- The Hungarian trademark HÍR (Traditions – Flavours – Regions) owned by the public-funded Agricultural Marketing Centre (not been used until now);
- The Norwegian trademark Spesialitet Norge (Norwegian Speciality) owned by Matmerk (Norwegian Agricultural Quality System and Food Branding Foundation):
<http://kslmatmerk.no/merkeordningene/spesialitet>
- The trademark Paniere dei Prodotti tipici from the Italian Province of Turin:
<http://www.provincia.torino.it/agrimont/sapori/paniere/>
- Growing Green in Latvia: <http://www.ggl.lv/>
- Bienvenue en Gourmandie in Normandy (France): <http://www.gourmandie.fr/>
- Spécialité du Canton du Jura in Switzerland: <http://www.terroir-jura.ch/>

Figures for PDOs or PGIs:

http://ec.europa.eu/trade/issues/sectoral/intell_property/argu_en.htm

<http://agreste.agriculture.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/signes2006T8.pdf>

<http://agreste.agriculture.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/primeur182.pdf>

Examples of biological resources preservation:

- Laguiole cheese: http://www.patrimoine-biologique.midipyrenees.fr/fiche.asp?FK_cat_animal=2&page=4Laguiole
- Rheintaler Ribelmais PDO (Switzerland) for a maize variety: <http://www.ribelmais.ch/>
- Single Gloucester PDO cheese (UK) for a cow breed:
http://www.defra.gov.uk/foodrin/foodname/pfn/products/registered/single_g.htm
- Schwäbisch Hällisches Landschwein PGI (Germany) for a pig breed:
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Rural tourism in Georgia: <http://www.ruraltourism.ge/index.php?lang=en>

International Network of Food Data Systems: <http://www.fao.org/infoods>

Cross-cutting Initiative on Biodiversity for Food and Nutrition:

<http://www.cbd.int/agro/food-nutrition/partners.shtml>