

PDO, PGI & TSG: Keeping it Original

In the last issue of The Organic Standard (Issue 167/2016), Organic Services GmbH looked at how agricultural products and foodstuffs can protect their uniqueness through geographic indication ('Geographic Indication: Getting Back to the Source'). Just as a quick refresher, the three different schemes are the Protected Designation of Origin (PDO), Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) and Traditional Speciality Guaranteed (TSG). Codified in Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012, these schemes can also be

applied to products produced outside the EU.

The three schemes each have their own requirements and seals. But how do these requirements translate into the real-world? Let's look at a few examples.

In the case of Stilton cheese PDO, only milk from cows kept in the English counties of Leicestershire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire can be used to make Stilton cheese; however, when there is a shortage of available milk from the three counties designated in the product specification, then there is an exception which allows the milk to come from specific, neighbouring counties also listed in the specification. The product specification states that "the traceability system in place proves the milk comes from farms in the designated area...only". When the milk is delivered to one of the seven dairies licensed to produce Stilton cheese PDO, the farm from which it came is recorded. Using address data, the farm is verified as falling within the boundaries of the designated counties. In instances where milk is purchased from non-contracted farms, the consignment notes are used to establish traceability based on the delivery vehicle's route and the postcode of the farm. With a backward-tracing record system in place, the product specification states



that the produced cheese can be traced back to the farm from which the milk came (Stilton Cheese Product Specification; Stilton Cheesemakers' Association).

Hessischer Handkäse or Hessischer Handkäs is protected as a PGI, meaning that "[at] least one of the stages of production, processing or preparation takes place in the area". In this case, only the production of the cheese occurs in the geographical area, which is the German state of Hesse. The milk used to make the cheese does not have to come from Hesse, in stark contrast to the requirements of a PDO, in which the product must be produced, processed and prepared in the designated area (Official Journal of the European Union C 320/47; European Commission).

In comparison to the PDO and PGI schemes, which have specific requirements for the origin of the agricultural product or foodstuff, the TSG scheme is focused on the 'traditional character' (European Commission). This translates to an emphasis on the production process and not necessarily on a specific

news shorts...

ORGANIC EQUALS CONVENTIONAL AGRICULTURE IN THE TROPICS

A 10-year study in Thika and Chuka, Kenya, carried out by the Swiss Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL), has shown clearly that organic agriculture not only generates comparable yields, but also produces more income for farmers than conventional methods. With input costs lower for organic agriculture and higher prices on the markets, incomes for organic farmers start to be higher after five years and reach a 53% higher benefit in the sixth year, with better soil fertility in organic farming. ■
Source: www.fibl.org

"the traceability system in place proves the milk comes from farms in the designated area...only". ■

news shorts...

PRE-ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE CORE ORGANIC 2016

The pre-announcement of the CORE Organic 2016 call is now available. CORE Organic will publish the final call for trans-national research proposals in organic food and farming systems at the beginning of December 2016, including guidance for the applicants and national rules and priorities.

Funding will be available for the following topics:

Topic 1: Ecological support in specialised and intensive plant production systems

Topic 2: Eco-efficient production and use of animal feed at local level

Topic 3: Appropriate and robust livestock systems: cattle, pigs, poultry

Topic 4: Organic food processing concepts and technologies for ensuring food quality, sustainability and consumer confidence. ■

More information at: <http://coreorganicplus.org>



Source: Boerderijzuivel

designated geographical area. In the example of Boerenkaas TSG, the emphasis is on how the cheese is made. The cheese is “made on the farm from raw milk from cattle, goats, sheep or buffalo”. However, at least 50% of the milk used to make the cheese must come from the farm’s own livestock, and the maximum 50% that can come from an external source cannot come from “more than two other dairy farms” (Official Journal of the European Union L 274/19).

The different geographical indication schemes require a degree of flexibility in the maintenance of their record-keeping systems. In the case of the Stilton PDO, there are strict requirements to be maintained for tracing the origin of the milk used to make the cheese; whereas, the Hessischer Handkäse / Hessischer Handkäs PGI and Boerenkaas TSG place different requirements on the milk used to make these cheeses, but not on the geographical origin of the milk.

Either way, adequate record-

keeping can be a challenge. Supply chain integrity solutions can prove to be a helpful resource in managing a geographical indication’s traceability system to ensure that it fulfils the requirements.

Ultimately, the real challenge of such a system is ensuring that consumers understand the differences between this food and conventional food. The seals signify different certification schemes, but do consumers understand what they mean? The idea is not to question these schemes, but to ask: how can the meaning behind these seals be transferred to consumers? With the ‘Enjoy, it’s from Europe’ promotion policy, it seems that the EU is making efforts to help consumers understand. ■

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