



Geographical Indication Product Database - Step 1-

SOURCE :
Author :P. Bernardoni

Institution : SEEDEV
Partner: AGRIDEA
Date : 29.08.2006

Istarki Prsut **Raw Ham from Istria**

DESCRIPTION :

1. NAME OF PRODUCT : Istarski Prsut (Raw Ham of Istria)

2. COUNTRY AND REGION IN THE COUNTRY: Croatia, Istria county

3. TYPE OF PRODUCT : (including the possible substitutes and imitations of the product)

The Istarski Prsut is a raw ham produced in principle without its skin and with a typical flat shape. The area of production area is next to regions where other raw hams are produced, such as northern Italy, the region of Kras in Slovenia and Dalmatia. Though these hams have their own reputation and good prices on some markets, it happens that some of them are sold under the denomination Isatski Prsut. Italian hams, produced in huge quantities, are sometimes bought by Istrian processors, cut, vacuum-packed and labelled as if they had been produced in Istria. In other cases, Istrian traditional restaurants "obliged" to display Istrian dishes on their menu, but not willing to pay the price for the local products or not finding enough Istarski Prsut, serve Italian, Slovenian or Dalmatian ham.

4. DESCRIPTION OF THE PRODUCT AND ITS AREA (including its specific characteristics, conditions of production, main differences with the substitutes) :

The Istrian Prsut PGI is produced in the area corresponding to the administrative boundaries of the Croatian County of Istria, which covers most of the Istrian Peninsula that also includes Italian and Slovenian territories. One of the specific patterns of this ham is its flat shape obtained by compression under stones, after a period of 10 days during which they lost part of the water content. The other characteristic that differentiates the Istarski Prsut of other hams is the absence of smoking process. Unlike these aspects, other characteristics do not meet a full consensus among producers or experts. Three aspects have been subject of discussion or dispute: (i) with or without the bone, (ii) with or without the skin and fat, (iii) with or without the hoof. It seems now accepted that the ham can be prepared with or without bone. This decision might also be explained by the requirements of certain market segments such as restaurants who often do not like to struggle with a knife and losing part of the ham because the last pieces cannot decently be served on a plate. Concerning the other aspects, the Istarski Prsut Association decided that the ham without the skin and the fat is what makes the Istarski Prsut different of all other raw hams; and that the ham with hoof was such a marginal practice, that it could not be taken into consideration. However, oppositions are coming from some processors arguing that there are traditional sub-regional practices. In the north the ham would have been traditionally produced with the skin taking advantage of the north wind "Bora" to dry the ham. In other remote Istrian regions, the hoof seems to be part of the "local folklore".

5. LINK WITH THE GEOGRAPHICAL AREA (tradition, know how, reputation, soil, climate, etc.):

The Istrian Prsut is well-known in all Croatia and has a solid reputation also among some gourmet circles in Italy. It is considered as a ham with much rustic character compared to its Italian cousins such as Parma or San Daniele. Generally speaking, the know-how regarding the processing is recognised. However, some of the processors have started their activity after the collapse of the Yugoslavian agro-industrial system, relying on state agro-kombinats that encompassed primary production and transformation. Some of the processors were employees of those structures and start their own production, sometimes in their backyard, learning by-doing. This could explain some discrepancies in the quality of Istarski Prsut on the market.

Beyond the issue related to the processing traditional know-how, the Istrian Prsut chain faces another major problem related to the supply of raw material. Of course, very few hams are still produced with pigs eating oak nuts of Istrian forests, but the real problem is the very low number of pigs raised in Istria proper. The total amount of pigs slaughtered every year raised in Istria is assessed at 4,000 heads. To fill the gap, processors purchase pigs from Italy, Slavonia (eastern Croatia) or even Hungary. This of course discredits the PDO and should be addressed on the long-term. The intention of the Istarski Prsut Association is to find solutions to this problem by boosting the swine production in Istria. However the envisaged solution would rely on the implantation of big industrial pig farms (>500 but ideally 5,000) that the processors could contract.



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6. PRODUCTION SYSTEM / SUPPLY CHAIN (some data about the number of producers, processors, market structure..) :

There are no exact data regarding the current yearly production. However, it seems that the current processing capacity assessed at 50,000 hams is very much underused. The two major processors (semi-industrial) are likely to produce half of the total amount of the total volume. Some ten processors are part of the Association and few additional are still free-riders.

The Istarki Prsut is mostly sold in Istrian region, on the Dalmatian coast and Islands taking advantage of the tourism market, and in Zagreb where the purchase power is higher than in the rest of the country. Small processors focus more on Istrian niches market such as gastronomic shops and restaurant while the two big processors sell their products outside the region to supermarket chains and shop in Zagreb.

Istrian pork specialties include also other typical products such as pancetta, coppa, spalletta, lombolla, coteghino. The Association intend to also protect those protect in a near future.

7. MARKET AND REPUTATION (size, price premium, attractiveness, growth) :

The Istarski Prsut ranks in the high quality products in Croatia, but faces also the competition of other hams such as the Dalmatian and Drnski Prsut. The Drnski Prsut seems to have better price and seems highly considered by the consumers. However due to his rarity the Istarski Prsut still find buyers without difficulties.

7. APPLICANT / HOLDER (If ANY) :

THE HOLDER IS THE ISTARSKI PRSUT ASSOCIATION THAT GATHERS EIGHT (10) PROCESSORS (AUTHORISED USERS) BUT WILL MOST LIKELY ACCEPT NEW MEMBERS.

NOTE ON THE INSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Food Act (OJ 117/03, 128/03, 48/04) and implementing regulation based on it provide the framework for ensuring food safety and quality. The purpose of this Act is to protect interest of consumers on safety and quality of food harmonized with EU legislation. Previous to this law, GIs were regulated by an old law which had many incompatible aspects with the EU regulations. However, though the adoption of this law in 1991 Croatia did not recognise the GIs registered during the Yugoslav period. This had the advantage to clarify the situation and avoid a double-standards system.

The Food Act prescribed general principles relating to the hygiene and safety of food and feed, obligations of the food business operators regarding setting up and implementation of self-control system, general principles on food quality, obtaining the registration of geographical indications and designation of origin and the traditional reputation of the food. Regarding GIs, this Act covers very general aspects, the definition of the PGI and PDO, in line with EU legislation, and the measures in case of illegal use of protected names.

An Act on Geographical Indications and Designation of Origin of Products and Services, in force since 01.01.2004, regulate the GIs for the *non-food products*. The competent authority is the State Intellectual Property Office (SIPO).

The Ordinance on Designation of Origin and Geographical Indication of Foodstuffs adopted in 2005 regulates the GIs for foodstuff. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water management is competent for application of this law. In fine, the wines are protected by the Provision for Wine.

This Ordinance foresees a transitional period for the producers authorized users comply with the new requirements and re-submit the their application to receive the authorization to use the PGI or the PDO. One of the key changes is the obligation for the applicant or the holder of a PGI/PDO to be an association of producers.

This period means also the full transfer of competence form the SIPO to the Ministry of Agriculture. It is worth to mention that all the files related to theses designation and indications have not been transferred to the Ministry of



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Agriculture, who is not able to provide third parties with the code of practices of each product.

The GI registered under the old legislation are:

1. *Cetinski sir – cheese (2003) PDO*
2. *Drniski prsut - meat product (2003) PDO*
3. *Paski baskotin – biscuits (2003) PDO*
4. *Paski sir – cheese (2003) PGI*
5. *Istarski prsut – meat product (2002) PDO*
6. *Stara slavonska sljivovica /Slavonak - alcohol drink (1999) PGI*
7. *Slavonaski domaci kulen/kulin - meat product (1993) PGI*
8. *Dingac – wine (1993) PGI*

RELEVANCE : Why is this case important for research in general and for SINER-GI in particular ?

Similarly than for other products in Croatia, the recent reforms of the framework regulating GIs creates new dynamic and generate questions regarding the management of GIs; and oblige producers / processor to take strategic decisions. In the case of Istarski Prsut, the management of the PDO in term of definition of the product, quality control, traceability, area of raw material production are as many issues to be dealt with in the short- and mid-term. The orientations taken will certainly have significant impacts on the future of the product and on the economic development of the area, generating new opportunities for Istrian agriculture.

In addition, the co-existence of other specialities and the project of the Istarski Prsut Association of protecting them offers further research topics such as PDO/PGI or other type of protection / promotion instruments.

CATEGORY :

☐ Origin Product

☐ GI product

☒ Recognized GI