



Geographical Indication Product Database - Step 1-

Paski Sir (Cheese of the Pag Island)

SOURCE :
Author :P. Bernardoni

Institution : SEEDEV
Partner: AGRIDEA
Date : 30.08.2006

DESCRIPTION :

1. NAME OF PRODUCT : *Paski Sir (Cheese of Pag Island)*

2. COUNTRY AND REGION IN THE COUNTRY: Croatia, Island of Pag

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

Traditionally, the Paski Sir is a cheese made out sheep milk. By its shape and taste, it can be assimilated to the family of Pecorino cheese made in various regions of Italy. It is not rare to have Sardinian or Roman pecorino sold under the appellation Paski Sir. Apparently, one of the producers using the PGI is using some cow milk. The PGI specifies the milk must be pasteurised, but most of the small-scale units (at farm level) produce raw milk cheese.

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

The Paski Sir weights about two (2) kilograms and the rind has a golden colour. Inside, the interior of the cheese is slightly yellow, shows small holes and has a more or less grained texture depending of the age and. In principle, it is ripened between 6 (young) and 12 months (old), but some producers have extra-old cheese (18 months) that develops a very piquant taste. The old cheese becomes very dry and salty and can be used as a condiment on some dishes.

The Island offers very specific conditions in term of soils and climate. The island belongs to the large karst area which stretches from Italy to Albania. The pastures, which occupy most of the Island area, are made of very rocky land, where the grass gets drier and rarer along the year.

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

Nobody in Croatia questions the tradition and the reputation related to the Paski Sir. The product is well-known and is the result of a collective tradition embodied by the facts that more than 200 producers are still producing “homemade” Paski Sir. The specific cheese properties are to be explained by the aridity of the climate, the salt contents of the grass pastured by the ewes, and the sea salt used for the salt baths comes from the Island. The breed of sheep present on Pag Island is the local sheep of Pag (Paska Ovca in Croatian or Paga-Selve in Italian) most likely the indigenous breed Pramenka with influence of Merino Negretti and Bergamo.

Traditionally, the poor productivity of the karst rocky pasture has forced the sheep breeders to import most of the hay for the winter period. This practice is not linked to a sudden increase of cheese production but has just been part of the historical exchanges of goods between the Island and other Croatian regions. In addition, as the cheese production is seasonal (March – August) the “continental” origin of the winter fodder does not influence the final product.

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

Four dairies are producing the PGI Paski Sir that is then sold in the whole country in supermarkets and retail shops. These dairies have sometimes their own sheep but purchase additional milk from sheep breeders whom with they have contractual arrangements. In the last 5 years, the price of ewe milk was increased by 10 percent. This increased is linked by higher quality requirements especially in term of milk hygiene.

Additional 200 farmers are producing cheese for their own consumption and direct selling to the tourists, local restaurants or some traders. The number of sheep on the island is estimated at 40,000 heads, and each of them produces yearly about 150 litres which allows the production of 25 kilograms of cheese. The overall cheese production can be assessed at circa 1000 tons.

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

The Paski Sir has a strong reputation in Croatia and is considered by many as the best cheese of the country. In Zagreb for instance, the Paski Sir is 20 to 30 percent more expensive than any other cheese. Since 2000, the re-development of the tourism activity offers an outlet opportunity with interesting prices to the producers. The dairies see in the PGI or PDO a good marketing asset for the EU market.

7. APPLICANT / HOLDER (If ANY) :

PASKI SIRANA D.O.O., SIRENA - MALA SIRANA d.o.o. Kolan and two other private dairies



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HOWEVER, ACCORDING TO THE NEW LAW, THE AUTHORISED USER MUST BE AN ASSOCIATION OF PRODUCERS.

This means that during a transition phase that is supposed to last until the 31 December 2006 (this timeframe will certainly be extended), the producers must create an association which will be the new holder. This implies that the four dairies must gather and mobilise the most serious producers among the small-scale ones and convince them to form the “Paski Sir association”. This association will have to re-submit an application to the Ministry of Agriculture. According to the interviewed producers, the association could take the opportunity to submit a an application for a PDO instead of the PGI. One of the foreseen points of discussion will certainly be the use of raw instead of pasteurised milk.

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 authorised users comply with the new requirements and re-submit the their application to receive the authorisation to use the PGI or the PDO. One of the key changes is the obligation for the submisioner 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 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*

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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 ?

The current reforms of the Croatian GI system in and the effort to have the legal framework in line with the EU legislation. The current reform impacts significantly the producers who have to get organised in “inter-profession” and make important decisions regarding the use of raw or pasteurised milk for instance (see point 7).

The raw milk option would require improvement of the milk quality supplied by the breeders to the dairies, that might be difficult to reach in a short-term. In the other hand, the pasteurised milk could exclude a large number small-scale producer relying on this product for their living.

Overall, the Paski Sir and the Croatian cases show clear interrelation between, on the one hand, legal framework and its reform, and on the other rural development.

CATEGORY :

☐ Origin Product

☒ GI product

☐ Recognized GI