	Geographical Indication Product Database - Step 1- **Fin Gras du Mézenc - France**	**SOURCE :** **Author : Maud Hirczak** **Institution : Institut de Géographie Alpine** **Date : 25/08/2006**

DESCRIPTION :

1. **NAME OF PRODUCT :** ***Fin Gras du Mézenc***

2. **COUNTRY AND REGION IN THE COUNTRY:** FRANCE - massif of Mézenc (located in limit of two regions: Rhône-Alpes and Auvergne)

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

"Fin Gras" (Fine Fat) is a marbled (means fine points of intramuscular fats) meat of beef whose characteristics are related to a long and progressive winter fattening thanks to hay produced on high plateau of Mézenc ("fine fat" means an optimum of beef fattening). Meat has a colour from pure red to purple red and gustative characteristics as flesh tenderness and a pronounced taste. The PDO request was approved in spring 2006 (decree will be published on autumn 2006).

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

Beef are born and bred in the massif of Mézenc, in an area of production limited to nearly 30 communes. Four bovine species are used to this production ("Aubrac", "Charolaise", "Liousine" and "salers") but generally crossing. "Fin fat" are the descendants of "Easter beef", fattened since the 18th century on this territory a whole winter to be eaten in spring. They are in pasture during summer, and then, at the latest in November, bovines return to the cowshed where they are fed with hay (given as much as they want) during at least 110 days. The stockbreeders give only the best hay, which is selected another time by animals according to their own taste. These two selections are made in order to have an optimal food. The fete of "Fin Fat" and of Mézenc on June celebrates the exit of the animals of the cowshed, and so the end of the fattening time. At their exit, there are heifers of more than 24 months and beef of more than 30 months which will be bought by butchers.

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

The plateau of Mézenc is located to an altitude of more than 1 100 metres and climate is very hard on winter (cold, snow and "burle", a typical wind full of snow). Soils are volcanic and hay is the only cultivation on the massif.
The specificity of production is based on two traditional know-hows. First, hay is very rich and specific because more than 100 varieties of flowers are present (and especially "Cistre", an emblematical one). Secondly, it's the care of animals, because fattening is the main phase of production and producers have to look continuously after animals while observing and touching them.

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

It's a seasonal product resulting from the winter flattening, and consequently, only marketed from February to June. Approximately 430 animals are approved by year, and it represents 130 tons produced. A network of breeders-butchers-restorers is developed: nearly 100 breeders and 71 points of sale. The market is local and today more regional (Auvergne and Rhone-Alpes).

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

Breeders hope for new PDO can increase production and more valorise it. At the exit of cowshed, the average age of animals is from 36 to 38 months, the average weight of the carcass is 360 kg. In 2003, prices selling average was approximately 4,03 euros carcass for "Fin Fat" animals. Reputation of this product is important but the recent PDO will certainly increase it.

8. **APPLICANT / HOLDER (IF ANY) :**

Association « Association du Fin Gras du Mézenc », which regroups all participants of the stream.

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

This case shows how a PDO can concern not only one product but also all the local economy. The Association wants this product to be a "locomotive" for local development on a fragile territory (poor economy, demographic drop…) in order to keep an active rural activity. This revival operation can be successful because of a high identity and the will of ethic and sustainable development.

CATEGORY :

☑ **Origin Product** ☐ **GI product** ☐ **Recognized GI**