



Geographical Indication Product Database - Step 1-

SOURCE :

**Author :Rémy
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Institution : SEEDEV

Partner: AGRIDEA

Date : 31.08.2006

Fruska Gorski Bermet – Bermet from Fruska Gora

DESCRIPTION :

1. NAME OF PRODUCT : Fruska Gorski Bermet (Bermet from Fruska Gora)

2. COUNTRY AND REGION IN THE COUNTRY: Serbia, Vojvodina, Srem region

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

The bermet is not a wine but vermouth produced in the small mountain of Fruska Gora in Vojvodina. Fruska Gora is the holly mountain of Serbia and hosted about 80 orthodox monasteries which found there a refuge when the Ottoman empire occupied Central and South Serbia. As a matter of fact the bermet was first produced by these monasteries and it was maybe at this time a way to conserve the wine. The wine makers started to produce bermet out of the monasteries in the 19 century. During the first part of the 20 century bermet from Fruska Gora became quite famous and was exported up to New York (bottles of bermet were found in the wreck of Titanic). The production collapsed after the second World War and started again only very recently to be developed. The name bermet is most certainly a deformation of the name vermouth. In Serbia the name bermet is used only in Fruska Gora region but it could used also in Croatia (to be checked and also since when are they using it)

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

The traditional bermet was made out of red wine, a local variety called Portugezer which almost disappeared. It is now produced with other red varieties (merlot...) but also, recently, with white varieties, Fruska Gora being more and more well known for the white wines (italianski rizling, reinski rizling...) rather than for the red wines. The producers are reluctant to give their recipe and it seems in fact that there is no standard recipe; every body is creating his own recipe. However two types of bermet can be distinguished:

- A so called “normal” bermet: the taste is bitter and medicinal. It is made exclusively with local varieties of herbs which are macerating in the wine (19 sorts of herbs according to the Kis family, the most famous producers in the area)
- A sweet bermet: it includes also orange peel, certainly vanilla and cinamon ...

The bermet is produced mainly in the municipality of Sremski Karlovci and for a small quantity in the neighbour municipality of Irig. It has no equivalent in Serbia but maybe in Croatia, although it has to be verified.

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

As already mentioned, the bermet refers to an old tradition, specific to Fruska Gora region. However the production almost disappeared in the seventies/eighties and only a very few families continued to produce small quantities, mainly for self consumption. I do believe that most of the current producers started only recently (5 years ago) to produce bermet and to sell it. It is interesting to note that in fact all the wine production collapsed in the seventies, when a state kombinat, NAVIP, took the control on the wine production of the area. Producers stopped to make wine and sold directly the grapes to the kombinat. NAVIP was producing low quality table wines and in a few decades the region lost its know-how, its reputation and its commercial network. Fruska Gora is engaged now in a rehabilitation phase and the renaissance of bermet is part of this process.

The traditional varieties, such as the *portugezer*, almost disappeared, replaced by merlot, cabernet, etc. But a recent trend in Serbia is the revalorisation of the traditional varieties and it seems that the wine institute of Sremski Karlovci as well as some producers themselves are working on this issue.



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

27 producers, all of them members of the newly established Bermet Producers Association, are identified and it seems to be more or less the total number of producers. The production is still very low, certainly not more than 50 to 60 000 bottles in 2005. All this producers are also wine makers, the bermet representing not more than 10% of their total income. But the demand is increasing rapidly (starting from almost zero), which is due to two main factors:

- The new wine shops in Belgrade (*Oenoteka*) started an intensive promotion of Bermet. They are only four or five in the city but their impact is wide and deep: they are organising events, tasting, promotion campaign... The media are covering these events and the supermarkets and wine wholesalers are following the trend. As a matter of fact, the bermet, its history, the tradition, the myth (the monasteries, the Titanic) is a very good opportunity and visibility for these *oenoteka*. Almost forgotten five years ago, Bermet is now advertised in Belgrade airport.
- Bermet became also a main component of the strategy of the producers themselves. However its worth to notice that they are more interested in promoting the wines than the bermet which will certainly remain a niche product (even if the production should be doubled or tripled in the coming years). They are using the visibility of Bermet, hoping that it will help promoting the name and the wines of the region.

Bermet is not exported (as it was a century ago) but it seems that the national market is by far big enough to allow a significant increase of the production.

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


The reputation of bermet in Serbia is still low and not every body knows what it is. But due to a dynamic marketing this reputation is growing extremely rapidly. However it is too early to estimate the real potential of the product.

A bottle of Bermet is sold 6 to 7 euros.

8. APPLICANT / HOLDER (IF ANY) :

The registration process of the bermet as a PDO was recently initiated by the wine makers themselves, who created in June 2006 an association gathering most of, if not all, the bermet producers. This initiative is highly supported by the Ministry of agriculture. The wine institutes of Sremski Karlovci and Novi sad are participating in elaborating the code of rules. Bermet could become the first product registered under the new Serbian law on GI (2006).

Bermet is not a geographical indication but a traditional name and the Serbian law on GI (2006) authorises the registration of a traditional name as a PDO. The objective of the association is therefore to register as a PDO the appellation "Bermet" rather than the appellation "Bermet from Kruska Gora".

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

The registration of the bermet from Fruska Gora could be in Serbia a kind of “pilot” registration and even a model: the initiative comes from a group of producers (absolutely representative), the conflicts are solved through the negotiations, the Ministry is supporting the process, external experts (wine institutes) are helping the producers without to impose their own point of view, the registration could have a quick impact on the economic development of the region (wine production, tourism). Such perfection is not so common in the Balkans.

CATEGORY :

☐ Origin Product

☒ GI product

☐ Recognized GI