# Challenges and Opportunities for GI Markets

**SINER-GI**

**University of Parma 21-22 June 2005**

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# Introduction

- Differentiated products of the GI variety must take into account fundamental changes in:

- - producer x consumer/citizen representation
- - hegemonic actors in food system
- - regulation and role of the State
- - markets under the impact of globalisation

# Producer x Consumer/Citizen Representation

- Consumer “interests” now paramount and strongly represented by increasingly transnational NGOs
- Primacy of food safety encourages reconnection of product to conditions of production (traceability), but also imposes new minimum standards even on artisan products (HACCP, ISO)
- While questions of time and changes in family reinforce “practicity”, quality in agriculture strongly associated with organic and sustainable production
- Global agendas reinforce social criteria (Social Responsibility, Fair Trade)
- Countryside as object of consumption with GI products as one component (from product to service)

# Hegemonic Actors in Food System

- Increasingly globalised retail and food services (home delivery, eating chains, restaurants) now dominant actors
- Reorganise supply circuits on a global scale and impose private minimum standards (EUREPGAP, ETI) more stringent than public regulation
- Global sourcing narrows gap between domestic and global standards and offers direct access to global markets
- Own brands move into high quality products and retail adopts personalised “source of origin” marketing

# Regulation and Role of the State

- GIs have relied on strong presence of State, inexistent in many countries
- General shift from product to process standards
- Hybrid private/public standards establish new minimum quality thresholds – HACCP, ISOs
- Special quality standards primarily private – IFOAM, FLO, Slow Food - with or without public ratification
- Sustainable certificates (increasing convergence of organic, social and environmental criteria) primarily joint ventures between private sector and NGOs (FSC,MSC)

# Markets under the Impact of Globalisation

- Globalisation under the threat of food panics and based on a model of outsourcing gives increasing priority to traceability systems
- Quality now associated with processes as much as products
- Retail increasingly displacing specialised traders with global intra-firm sourcing (greater access but also competition for quality products on a global scale)
- Renewed scale pressures for GI products

# Implications for GI Markets

- Overall trends favourable to products where quality is clearly defined at the source and in terms of its specific processes
- Concerns with sustainability similarly favourable to territorially anchored products
- Artisan products, however, not immune to pressures from minimum (HACCP, ISO) and special quality (organics) standards – 20% premium for organic parmesan cheese
- Globalisation under retail dominance increases pressures for scale and also imposes greater selectivity
- GI model still almost exclusively European. In addition to global recognition should actively promote institutional conditions for GI markets in a non-European context