

## The advances and difficulties of the certification of Corsican farm food products : Some lessons drawn from involved approaches.

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### Summary:

Corsica offers a wide variety of well-known agricultural products which, according to professional opinion, would benefit enormously from the support of a policy of quality certification linked to geographical origin. Corsican producers fail to take advantage of existing regulations (both national and European) and, generally speaking, seem content to ignore them. This weakens the position of the minority in their attempts to gain recognition. In order to clarify this anomaly, an explanation is necessary.

An evaluation of regional policy over the question of the certification of leading Corsican products is fairly straight forward. In certain cases (i.e the Corsican Brocciu or clementines) due to the inadequacy of the initial strategies embarked upon by the producers representatives, objectives did not succeed. But these strategies motivated the redefinition of marketing policies which they can attain a successful issue today. In other instances, new possibilities emerged. This is the case in the wine sector production, in which an active policy of product definition has been launched. Similar steps are being taken in the dealing sectors with the production of Corsican honey, which obtained a Controlled Designation of Origin in January 1998. Other livestock productions (pork cured products, beef meat, other cheeses) are analysed by founding upon the lessons drawn from these approaches.

Actually, what is being proposed is a notion of «local heritage product». In other words, an elucidation modalities of control for a common good. This identification could stimulate a more dynamic tendency of «doing it alone ». In Corsica today, the individual approach is still remunerative. This, however, is short-term thinking. If the practices continues, it will be suicidal for the collective future of the agricultural economy of the island.

**Key words :** Corsica - Regional development - Agricultural products regulation - Certification approaches - Patrimonial products

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## Les avancées et les difficultés de la certification des produits agro-alimentaires de Corse : Quelques enseignements des démarches engagées.

### Résumé :

La Corse dispose de produits agricoles à forte notoriété qu'une politique volontariste de certification de qualité, liée à leur origine géographique, pourrait permettre, de l'avis unanime des responsables administratifs et professionnels, de mieux définir et de mieux valoriser. Or, les producteurs insulaires mobilisent peu l'appareil réglementaire (national ou communautaire) à leur disposition et semblent se satisfaire de cette situation. Quelques éléments d'explication sont proposés qui peuvent éclairer le *statu quo* actuel alors que, par ailleurs, fleurit la revendication identitaire.

La chronique de la politique régionale de certification des principaux produits insulaires est rapidement présentée. Elle fait ressortir, dans certains cas comme le Brocciu corse ou la clémentine, l'inadéquation des solutions initialement retenues par les représentants des producteurs en regard des objectifs ou des enjeux ; elles ont ainsi motivé des démarches de redéfinition qui semblent, aujourd'hui, devoir aboutir. Dans d'autres cas, comme pour le secteur viticole, qui s'est lancé dans une politique active de différenciation des produits et de restructuration du vignoble, ou le miel de Corse, qui a obtenu une Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée en janvier 1998, se dessinent de nouvelles possibilités. Les situations d'autres productions de l'élevage (charcuteries, viande bovine, autres fromages) sont examinées à travers les enseignements de ces démarches.

Nous proposons la notion de produit patrimonial, impliquant une explicitation des définitions globalement intégrées dans la rente culturelle collective et sa traduction en modalités de contrôle pour un bien commun. A l'analyse des expériences présentées, elle semble pertinente pour re-dynamiser les filières en organisant les producteurs insulaires et ainsi inverser la dérive constatée de pratiques individuelles, rémunératrices à court terme, mais suicidaires pour l'avenir collectif de l'économie agricole de l'île.

**Mots-clés :** Corse - Développement régional - Réglementation produits agricoles - Démarches de certification - Produits patrimoniaux.

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## INTRODUCTION

Usually, in areas with important difficulties, the production of so-called "products of quality" or local products is presented as a means to make profitable farms with a weak level of work productivity. Indeed, it seems like a means to maintain them more easily outside of an intolerable competition with intensive productive areas.

The laws and regulations concerning the certification of products with an official quality designation, which means all the procedures and methods aiming to define and to protect them from counterfeiting and try to valorise their links with their region of origin. This refers to a level of "quality", that means a set of characteristics, that, more or less clearly, is linked to where they are developed. They thus valorise local breeds able to provide original raw material, production systems and traditional know-how. They can constitute, according to many analysts, as many assets for the differentiation of a product and, for the development of activities bound to it.

We decided to approach development like a process of solidarity between the economic actors. Our contribution, as scientists, aims to increase the capacity of the concerned actors, to control the production systems and the marketing, in respect with environmental cultural and heritage values. We assume that quality, is looked upon as an agreement between actors, that could become a motor for the organisation of the producers and allow a processes of solidarity on which sustainable development can lean. Under these conditions, certification would allow to join « protection of the products and the confirmation of farm activities » through the origin of raw materials and the valorisation of the regional technical culture. It would then become a real lever for local development.

The analysis of the Corsican situation seems exemplary to us, it emphasises the stakes in development that the certification of the products can rise. Corsica has of course very well known traditional products in all the sectors of insular farming economy. They are often products of great originality: The island is, for example, the only French region producer of citrus fruits and avocado ; it is one of the rare regions where breeding is based on dairy ovine, on « half free pig » , etc... Everything seems to be united to make a region regrouping lots of products that benefit of legal protections.

In fact only a small part of these products are labelled and the certification, to which systematically the official speeches refer to, is on the contrary rarely implemented. One observes here the total absence of the definition of the « traditional » product, of their production regulations all well as all the means of control likely to guarantee the «authenticity» affirmed to the consumer. Whereas some producers seem to adapt very well, or even to profit of this situation, one can wonder that in doing this, they are not putting the fragile farming economy in danger. What will become the different sectors concerned, under such conditions ?

The present contribution proposes to present the report of certification procedures involved in some of these sectors and the great diversity of situations that one encounters according to the products. Some explanations will be given, before suggesting solutions to get over this contradictory situation.

## I - A GREAT DIVERSITY OF SITUATIONS

First of all, when a project aims to mobilise the legal regulations, actually, one can generally identify the needs in the certification procedures:

- First, the indispensable supports, which are an inter professional structure that unite the principal interested parties, precise terms of reference that applies to all concerned operators and controls that guarantee the seriousness of the procedure and at the same time the respect of this code of rules,
- on the other hand, a process to develop, generally in three main stages : a set of initiatives to assume, to succeed to internal negotiations and an external acknowledgement to be obtained.

On this basis the report of the regional certification policy can be analysed quickly through the most significant insular products.

## I .1 - Strategies of exclusive rights that showed their limits

A first type of strategy was put forward by certain responsible professionals who rather consisted in protecting themselves in the name of " the exclusive rights " or by putting " barriers at the entry " (PERRIER-CORNET, 1990).

### I.1.1 - The designation of origin " Corsican Brocciu: from the DO to the CDO

The Brocciu farm cheese producers, at the end of the 70s , filled up an inscription file, based on this strategy, thinking that they would have the exclusive rights to produce. It did actually succeed in the Decree of June 10, 1983 that implemented the first Designation of Origin of a breeding product in Corsica (PROST *and al.*, 1994). At the same time we notice, that this Designation was granted to a by - product from the cheese processing industry, made out of manufactured whey, whereas no cheese (allowing to obtain this whey) did not benefit of certification.

No sense of collective responsibility emerged from this strategy and on the contrary of what was expected from it, we can consider this scheme as a failure. Indeed, the definition of the product did not bring any real qualitative constraints and some dairy producers knew how to take advantage of the omissions and vagueness of the text of the decree to impose themselves better on the market where some try to supplant them.

Thereafter, a decree of December 30, 1988, is going to define products such as the Brocciu as "whey – cheese". It granted them the cheese status and obliged them to conform themselves to the Controlled Designation of Origin (CDO) of cheeses, so the farm producers that obtained the « ordinary » Designation of Origin (DO) will now have to negotiate with the dairy processors in order to set up a representative inter professional union, the only one entitled to examine an inscription form and to manage a possible CDO. Without success, all legal protection was lost for the Brocciu (de SAINTE MARIE *and al.*, 1994).

Long months are going to be necessary to forget the resentment , to learn to speak to each other and to define jointly the product to protect, its production conditions and controls to be implemented. Curiously, the setting up and the functioning of control structures are going to bring in new apprenticeships concerning the structuring of the producers individual and collective responsibilities. This investment is going to succeed, after instruction by the "Institut National des Appellations d' Origine" (INAO) to a new decree, « relative to the AOC Brocciu Corse or Brocciu », June 3<sup>rd</sup> , 1998.

In this dynamics the future of the Designation seems bound however to the real involvement of the different actors in its construction (GUERRINI and PROST, 1999). And, if the abandon of the exclusive rights strategy allowed this collective project to succeed, it has now got to function in common.

### I.1.2 - The Corsican clementine : from the leaf to the PDI

The certification of this other original Insular product is another story, but it went through the same dead end.

Representatives of Corsican citrus fruit growers militated, in the name of the sanitary protection (absence in Corsica of certain diseases with serious consequences, in fact, present in the other providing basins of the market) in mobilising the advantages of insularity, for the interdiction of importation of vegetable species on the French territory. What they did obtain by a decree of September 2, 1970 (Vogel, 1973). After that they knew what profit they could make, this banning let the only Corsican clementine appear on the market with a leaf attached to its peduncle and allowed to clearly distinguish it from the others.

This original "asset", in a marketing point of view, made producers disregard all certification and definition policy of a qualitative specificity of their product. Thus, when, under the pressure of the other European countries producers, the national phytosanitary controls disappeared from the European market (EEC Directive 93/110) the insular character of this production allowed to limit the protection of the product to the Island, the Corsican clementine lost all specificity in relation to its competitors on the continental market. Here again the exclusive rights strategy showed its limits.

Facing this new situation, and following several campaigns with little encouraging results, a joint collaboration between the professionals and their development and research partners, brought actors of the sector to take the choice of the certification. The idea was to « highlight » the leaf, to show the characteristics that the other fruit have not got. Instead of trying to align on the European standard of the main producer, Spain, it was proposed to manage the variability noted in the insular orchards (in relation to the size, the coloration or the acidity) and to valorise it on the specifics market segment (AGOSTINI *and al.*, 1996).

Together, the professionals decided to valorise the Corsican origin by the deposit of a Protected Geographical Indication demand (PGI) on a European level, coupled with a Certification of Conformity of the Product (CCP) for the « standard » product and a "Label Rouge " for the superior quality.

In concrete terms, this innovative procedure goes against the old habits, this means each actor of the sector must make efforts, and leads to the pick over of the regional harvesting to keep only the certifiable fraction. In the same way it modifies the approach that the Public Authorities could have in their support for this sector, now conditioned to the outcome of the involved procedure on the quality of the fruit.

Here again, the conception of the references and the definition of the explicit characteristics of the certifiable products, lead sometimes to difficult negotiations between the concerned partners to which it is necessary to remain attentive. It requires a great investment on behalf of the different partners, but this new dynamics has objectives that seem to be really shared.

## **I.2 - Reinforced opening dynamics**

In other sectors different strategic choices were expressed, more aggressive but, there also, sometimes imposed by events.

### **I.2.1 - The CDO in wine sector**

The history of the Corsican wines can serve as example of a " disaster scenario" for all other sectors. Turning the back to an old and strong reputation, the impacts of an uncontrolled plantation policy, negligence, such as the fraudulent methods of others, marked the present history of Corsica (testified in 1975, during the European wine crisis, by the tragic events of Aleria).

These drifts, disastrous for the image of the Corsican wines, allowed to restart viticulture on more healthier bases. Taking advantage of the possible support for the uprooting of the speculative vineyard (hyper-productive vines, destined for chaptalization) and encouragement towards a quality policy, differences were noticed between several types of insular productions.

In relation to a situation that seemed desperate, the CDO obtained some years before, (Patrimonio 1968, Ajaccio 1971, and 1972 for the others) by a small number of wine growers attached to the protection of their land, that played an important role and became a reference for the necessary restructuring of the Corsican vineyard. The European policy allowed to introduce improved grapes in table wine areas, and at the same time looking for stronger typicality in Designation areas (MERCURY, 1996).

There are two great types of products :

- the CDO (« regional » and « local ») wines, that have the monopoly of the use of the qualifying "Wine of Corsica" (for the first) and « Ajaccio » or « Patrimonio » (for second) and work on their typicality (local grape percentage, degree, yield, etc...),
- the other wines ("Vins de pays de l'Île de Beauté", wines from pure Corsican grapes ) work on another characteristic (their specificity) but are well valorised in relation to the generic products (whose volumes remain very important).

Today, the last plantations done are adult and the CDO producers should show more dynamism to commercialise a production that became too important for the only local and touristic market, that was a

long time the natural and sufficient outlet of their products. Cellars, co-operatives or private, conscious of the problems got regrouped in structures that take initiatives to valorise the range of products at their disposal outside of Corsica.

## **I.2.2 - The CDO « Honey of Corsica – Mele di Corsica »**

The procedure of the CDO “Miel de Corse” (Honey of Corsica) seems original. Even though the Latin authors often mention it, Corsican bee-keeping was actually, an annexe activity for lots of the operators in this sector until the end of the 1970 s. At this time, a remarkable co-ordination in the efforts of the training, research and development sectors brought to the emergence of young professional bee-keepers. These caused a spectacular progress in the organisation of this sector (sanitary protection, selection of the local bee, definition of products). They then played an important role and succeeded to mobilise all the sector around the definition of a regional quality policy.

The first training (validated by a Professional Farming Certificate) is set up in 1976 in the Centre of Social Promotion of Corte. From 1977 on, a Regional Group Union for the Apiarian Sanitary Protection is created that is going to try to improve the sanitation and to protect apiaries. So, to protect the island from a serious disease « considered as contagious » (the varroase), a decree of the 1<sup>st</sup> July 1982 forbids « the introduction in Corsica of queen bees, colonies and apiarian equipment from the French continent ».

At the same time, an original population of bees was identified on the island which was different from the Italian bee and the black bee from the continent (BATTESTI, 1980). Stimulated by their wish to work together, the producers, regrouped in a more general structure (« U Bugnu Corsu ») whose objective was the development and the promotion of Corsican bee-keeping, will then install several selection apiaries. As many factors that will contribute to a favourable issue for the certification of products of the sector, particularly honey, which became quickly very attractive.

Made in the beginning around the creation of a “Label Regional”, the following works, done jointly, allowed to approach easier the quality of products obtained and to finalise a tool capable to guarantee their origin (BATTESTI, 1990). These analysis methods of the pollen count of honey showed the original nature of the insular production and the analytic means to defend it. This is why, afterwards, this project turned naturally towards a request for a Controlled Designation of Origin (CDO).

In reply to the INAO commission of inquiry an important work has been done on the insular honey typicality. We note that, as in other situations for other products this request seemed inappropriate to producers, persuaded that the originality of the product was obvious. But, the comparison between the outside (of the island) reference marks, that imposes each request of Designation, shows how difficult is to approach these concepts of typicality or links with a production area that seems banal to the producers and that they have difficulties to clarify. In the precise case a range of six sorts of honeys, has been defined.

If the CDO decree was signed on the 30 January 1998, the producers are today, as in the case of the CDO Brocciu, implementing control and apprenticeship structures for the collective management of a Designation.

Inspired by this example (and witnesses of its success), a certain number of producers from other sectors will also, get organised for the protection and the promotion of their product.

## **I.3 - Joint procedures in progress**

Other procedures are, actually set up around, first of all, two great emblematic products of insular production : chestnut flour and olive oil. Which are both processed, from traditional fruit growing, in the past flourishing, that, strongly attached to traditions, by obtaining an official label of quality, these products would be today more valorised.

### **I.3.1 – Chestnut flour**

It is a product with a strong originality, often presented as the basis of the traditional food of a mountainous island where wheat growing was difficult, or even impossible. If the food habits changed, the chestnut flour today is found more attractive by the islanders through festive and convivial consumption culinary specialities or pastries of which it is the basis.

The orchard is very old and its installation was particularly developed in the XVIth century and especially in the XVIIth century by the encouraging measures of the Republic of Genoa that then occupied Corsica (Serpentini, 1999). With the downfall of the traditional agriculture and emigration, its sanitary conditions deteriorated. Added to the exploitation of tannin, the harvested surfaces are considerably reduced : from 35 000 ha distributed on practically all the insular territory, in the beginning of the century, they went down to about 2 000 ha at the end of the «80s» (Franchi, 1991).

A certain number of collective initiatives were launched from this time to stimulate this production, to group the orchards owners, to improve the sanitary state of the trees, to valorise the local species or to mechanise the harvest, including the chestnut production «for food » whose national market was showing a deficit ( de Casabianca, 1977). A SICA was set up, then a first group in 1985, but these experiences did not continue (Vincensini, 1995).

Since 1990, the Regional Group of Corsican Chestnut and Marron Producers and Processors work together, with for main objective the certification and the promotion of products, the safeguard and the regeneration of the existing orchard.

In this framework an important work was done on the characterisation of the flour and the processing technology (Franchi, 1990). In the same way, encouraging diversification tests were done on the "*marrons glacés*" manufactured from existing local varieties whose fruit could be appropriate.

This being, instead of growing new plantations which is complicated and not realistic, it was the renovation of the existing chestnut groves that prevailed. So in the framework of the Plan Contract, State - Region 1994-1999, a regional program must allow the rehabilitation of about 500 hectares of orchards. Account held of systems of production set up, the classification of these farms in « Organic Agriculture » should be enough easily got and bring a supplementary factor to the valorisation of the products.

In order to come to this, and to defend themselves against the fraudulent use of flours of other origin (particularly Italian), a request for a Controlled Designation of Origin was drawn up in July 1998, and a file was sent to the INAO in October 2000 for a CDO «Farina Castagnina Corsa - Farine de Châtaigne Corse (Corsican Chestnut Flour) ».

Besides the specificity concerning the production and the processing that are protected and that are the bases of the typicality of the Corsican chestnut flour, the advantage of this approach is to integrate the local varieties of chestnuts (in distinguishing the «principal » varieties and « secondary » varieties).

In qualifying the origin of the fruit, we could imagine that if this file is accepted, the raw material (the Corsican chestnut) will then be valorised, and that it will then impose its use for processed products other than flour. These (chestnuts, jams or purée, more lately beers, etc...) could be the subject of a request for Certification of Conformity of the Product (CCP) or "Label Rouge" whose geographical denomination could be protected by a PGI.

### **1.3.2—The Corsican olive oil**

Historically, the schema is practically the same as the chestnut one, for this other « tree of five species» (chestnut trees, olive trees, mulberry trees, fig-trees and almond-trees), as defined in the Genoa regulations, besides the grapevine that was the subject of specific provisions.

The use of wild olive trees seems more ancient. It is attested since 5 000 years (Cesari, 1999), systems then developed between oils of wild olive trees, grafts and plantations. Following the different regions of the island, one could make the parallel between that which one recovers today in the differentiation of production systems and the history of orchards (from the itinerant gathering to intensive culture) and their constitution (Casanova, 1998).

As the chestnut flour, olive oil brought to exchanges with the populations of non producing areas, particularly because until the end of the XVIIIth century, the olive groves are mainly situated in the centre - north of the island (Department of « Golo ») from a few large local varieties. This being, considering the variety of oil qualities, these were often for household or craft use, more oriented toward lighting or soap factories rather than for cooking which was more extensively based on the use of animal fat (lard).

As for the chestnut groves, the insular olive growing is going to be abandoned and collapse between the end of the XIXth and the beginning of the XXth century, collapse that increased by many fires by which whole areas will disappear. Even though « the war years brought men back to the olive groves », the 1956 frost, that entailed considerable damage in the French orchard is going to be the origin of a national plantation policy, mainly to nourish the sector « table olives » then showing a deficit (Cesari, *ibid.*). Corsica is going to profit of the occasion to do new plantations that, unfortunately, will not fill their initial objective.

« In the 1980s », a certain number of associations, will again be set up, to tempt to re launch this old activity, in renovating the olive groves to turn them toward the production of table oil. They are going to succeed, taking advantage of the flourishing image of the « Corsican Origin » and « traditional » of the manufactured products.

However, in 1998, a community regulation « relative to the commercial norms of olive oil », is going to define rules for the mention of the origin on the products label : this must refer to a geographical area whose denomination is recorded as PDO or PGI. Otherwise, only a member state can be mentioned as origin (where the extraction was done), the European Community (in case of oil blending, coming from the Member States) or a third country. This regulation forbids the use of the term « from Corsica », except on request to be able to benefit from an official label of quality.

This is why, the different existing structures, already practically federated in an Inter professional Corsican Union of Olive Growers (SIDOC), will in 1999, give it a real inter profession status capable to carry a project and to officially request a CDO. The file is therefore in progress and should succeed quite quickly. The remaining question of the typicality of the Corsican oil and its sensory profile, on which the SIDOC worked a lot, in relation to the great variety of production systems that one comes up to again today. One of the possible replies will be perhaps to define a range, as the bee-keepers did.

### **I.3.3–The free-range chicken**

In the collective procedures in realisation we must not forget the work led around the free-range chicken with an official label.

One knows the importance, in number and in volume, of the poultry production with a « Label Rouge » in France. Under these conditions, the « standard » chicken production has a mediocre economic interest, curiously if it is only for the regional market destination. This is why, entrepreneurs decided to invest in this sector, turned quickly toward the raising of a product susceptible to benefit of a « Label Rouge » for a production which was remained a home one.

There is no « industrial » breeding in Corsica, the approach of the insular market was done downstream. A slaughtering structure was first set up, that allowed to verify the interest of this market segment in order to have a certain flexibility in its supplying. The following stage was rearing chickens in Corsica, before coming to hatching of chicks on the spot. An integrated system was thus set up.

The final stage was to examine a file to obtain a « Label Rouge », which received a recent temporary confirmation, that should be confirmed after a probationary period.

We note that it is the only Corsican product to benefit from a « Label Rouge ». It can have an exemplary value to show the feasibility of this sort of procedure. We notice however that the promoters did not ask for a PGI to valorise the Corsican origin. The use of sale denominations in the Corsican language or references to the island can dispense them for the meantime because the commercial positioning wants to be solely regional. Another collective project of the same type accompanied by a PGI request (which is

always possible by the regulations), because if it was obtained, the first procedure could be in difficulty by its labelling.

Quickly resumed, an inventory for products that are the subject of joint procedures, more or less managed. Still, in certain sectors the situation is far from being as clear and is, sometimes, the beginning of open conflicts between actors of the concerned sectors.

## **I.4 - Internal tensions on the definition and the choice of labels**

It is especially in the animal products sector that we meet up to this kind of situation. The problems encountered concern the products of strong cultural contents, marked by a strong image of authenticity and historicity, that constitutes a classical reference when talking about the insular gastronomic heritage. They are the most often made by the farmer processor, generally assuring the production of the necessary raw material, processing and merchandising, mainly through direct sale. These producers are generally localised in the inside of the island, but which production areas are spread over the mountains and small hills areas.

### **I.4.1—Other cheeses**

Next to the Brocciu, the cheese insular heritage is ancient, but recovers today very different products. De Sainte Marie and Casabianca (1999) propose to distinguish «typical» products, cheeses that are descended of production systems inherited from the Mediterranean pastoral methods, presenting original features and that raise characterisation problems because of their great variety, of “derived” products. This is mostly due to milk producers who use traditional methods to finalise products that are different in using industrial procedures for their manufacture.

The lack of definition of traditional productions give free rein to an anarchical use of their denominations, or even to their diversion. Certain take advantage of the great needs during the summer period, to sell in Corsica and on the continent, products of doubtful origin and quality. These problems brought certain farms processors and industrials to protect these productions. A minimum tacit agreement was quickly set up on the need to protect the geographical origin of traditional manufacture and their denominations.

The approach of the problems is however different:

- Farm Producers generally sell on the near and regional markets. For them a home made qualification as it existed until now, is sufficient. This makes relatively passive actors in relation to the interest of the definition and the protection of their products.
- Milk producers hope to profit of the image of traditional cheeses and their Corsican origin to export, because the Corsican market is too small. The possibility to obtain official labels of acknowledgement allows to use these geographical denominations on the national market and for exportation, made these actors more involved in this problem.

In explaining this procedure, conflicts arose on the eventual official labels of quality to be promoted and every case, around the definition of their production areas, whatever the strategy retained :

- A PDO strategy for all these manufactures does not necessarily interest the industrials. Most of the dairies are located in coastal areas, thus outside of the traditional production area, and will automatically be excluded from every Designation. Except to integrate plains (in taking into consideration certain quarters used for winter pastures) in these cheese production areas, which would be contradictory with the argued points on the geographical and historical origin of the products, the denominations and « local, honest and constants uses».
- A PGI strategy « Fromage de Corse » (Cheese from Corsica), that would cover all the island and would thus take into consideration all the productions. Apart from being judged unacceptable considering the great technological differences between soft cheeses and hard cheeses and does not interest the farmers because they consider that it does not bring a sufficient protection against defrauders. Industrials would



perhaps be more favourable to this type of solution, for denominations such as « *Tome Corse* » or « *Carré Corse* », but these are already registered trademarks.

If certain projects and choices of strategies are actually in discussion, solutions of compromise are being thought over : based on the example of the wines of Corsica, with a generic CDO (« Appellation Fromage Corse » - Corsican cheese Designation) and an CDO « Villages » valorising cheeses with a strong typicality or a mixed sort with one (or two) PGI, coupled with this same CDO « Villages ».

#### **I.4.2– Cured pork products**

Pork butchery also represents for Corsican gastronomy a wide range of well-known products but relatively absent on the markets. This situation brought salters to the development of counterfeit products from carcass or pieces of meat imported from the intensive pork European market. One could imagine the stakes of a protection of the local productions allowing the different actors to coexist distinctly on the different market segments.

Unlike the cheeses, more than the problems due to the definition of the regional speciality production area, it is the use of the raw material that is involved.

The originality of Corsican cured pork products is more due to the exceptional characteristics of the raw material coming from extensive breeding, than from the development methods. Pigs are of local breed who were more or less crossed with selected races and have a slow growth : so the animals are not slaughtered before 14 months. During the summer, and the high temperatures, they are brought to the high mountains for several months in transhumance. In autumn, they eat in chestnut and oak groves where, after a few weeks of a food made up of fresh chestnuts or mast, which gives them a very full-flavoured fat.

This meat is very mature and the fats are firm and stables. It allows to have products that were a long time the basis of the rural Corsican families meat diet. They are mostly intended for drying, whether pieces of meat salted and dried (*prisuttu*, *coppa*, *lonzu*), divided products (*salamu*, fresh *ficatellu*, *salcicetta*) or fat pieces (*panzetta*, *vuletta*).

During the last thirty years, numerous were the certification projects which ambition was to protect “the Corsican pork butchery”. Apart from putting forward the use of local breed pork meat, the multiplicity of products and certain micro - regional variants, particularly in divided products, for a long time prevented the outcome of important agreements between the different actors in these sectors.

Boosted by this experience a certain number of producers decided to work on “the Corsican pork butcher products”, particularly on the pieces and, in first of all, on the most noble part, the *Prisuttu* (Corsican dry ham), in order to obtain a CDO. The meetings on the definition of the product quickly showed the importance of the genotype used, in relation with practices, the specificity of the product, to obtain the traditional shape of the product. This is how the majority of breeders processors and promoters of the project are the leaders in the implementation of a group for the recognition and the management of the Corsican porcine breed.

Another project was set up this time, for a PGI for a divided product : the *Ficatellu*. This sausage made out of liver, which is mostly roasted, represents an interesting market segment because very sought after and benefits, even outside of Corsica, of a strong reputation. This is why a certain number of craftsmen (in the salting sector) got together to define the rules susceptible to establish a certification that allows its expedition out of the island with an official label of quality. Here again, the question of the raw material used came up and this work should allow a certain moralisation on a market where reigns the biggest confusion.

It is well known, that the only insular porcine meat production cannot cover the processors needs, whether craftsmen or farmers. The certification project if it succeeds, should allow to get trustful products whose label guarantees the nature of the raw materials used. It could allow to sell products with Certification of Conformity, with a certain level of quality, respecting specific development methods, but manufactured from imported raw material, whereas nowadays some craftsmen (in the salting sector)

try to make us believe that a part of their production is made from insular carcasses. It is the same thing for the large scale processor farmers who also try to make us believe that all their *Ficatellu* (pork liver sausage) production is made from carcasses from their farms, could use imported carcasses. The main objective is to reserve this "Label Rouge" for products manufactured from local meat pork with a short manufacturing period (November to March).

It is flagrant, the stakes concerning the certification projects for these pork butchery products are important. In fact they point out the problems of market moralisation and the clarification of the producer's status.

### **I.4.3–Bovine meat**

The bovine raising is an other sector where the party is hard.

Traditionally, the consumption of meat is little present in the Corsican culinary habits. It is rather a luxury product for traditional meals, reserved for feast days or on exceptional occasions.

So, bovines were present in the traditional society and this presence was especially bound to the cereal culture or the viticulture activities. Subsistence economy allowed the constitution of a bovine livestock, supplier of labour cattle. Sometimes, the nursing cows were milked, but only the good milkers. Animals in surplus were slaughtered as soon as the feeding conditions would allow it (from natural grazing) when animals were sufficiently fattened. This gave a product, the "*manzu*", not too young (because of its slow growth), nor too old (for a tender flesh). Today this product can still be found, mainly sold by the rural butchers, but descended from production systems that radically developed.

The "*manzu*" is a young bovine with slow growth that does not reach an appropriate weight for its slaughtering but late. Grazing veal, bred up free in the "*maquis*", whose weight can vary from 140 to 200 kg. at 10 or 12 months. This small size and its slow growth, associated to a great precocity in the development of its body, bringing to its meat the tenderness of young meat and the flavour of a meat already mature (Trift, 1999).

This production, based on long fattening cycles, of very different animals considering the multiplicity of the badly managed crossings between numerous races imported, is still quite marginal and is actually the object of no specialisation. In mountainous areas it is considered as an additional source of income, of extensive sort, that colonises vast spaces and use the best the available natural resources. It is mostly for these reasons, linked to the production systems, that its products are generally considered as specific and of good quality.

We can speak then of « Corsican veal ». For as much, no certification policy was initiated in this way. On the contrary, they want to try to canalise the potential of specificity of this production, that continue in certain mountainous areas, by breeders of the plains that, them, use imported specialised breeds and in intensified breeding systems. Thus, the modernisation efforts of some, seems to increase the marginalization of others, with certainly the loss of a great specificity potential. In fact, the "*manzu*", the most typical product, is today especially sold to the population came from Maghreb and living in Corsica, by underground commercial channels.

The other meats, grazing veal, colour rose, have special labels because several groups decided to create their own commercial brand. They are proposed in supermarkets and hypermarkets.

In the meantime the professionals seem to be content with this sort of differentiation using the Corsican language for its sale names, that refers to the origin of products. No strategy around an official label of quality as can exist elsewhere, «Veau de l'Aveyron" (Veal from the Aveyron) with a "Label Rouge I" and PGI or « Taureau de Camargue » (Taureau of Camargue) with a PDO, is not considered by them.

Apart from the fact that this type of procedure could involve the fragile balances that exist in this sector, the lack of structures such as legal slaughterhouses or squaring yards is surely an important obstacle for its development.

After this quick summary, we are wondering why we notice this diversity in situations and more generally this weak use of the advantages that a certified product can represent whereas many favourable factors for the implementation of the Official Label of Quality seem to be united. The answers to these questions can be sought for in the insular farming economy, the others certainly have more socio - cultural origins.

## **II-SOME EXPLANATIONS**

### **II.1 - Renowned products, but suicidal methods :**

#### **II.1.1 - Products of great renown**

Holiday brochures and exotic "literature" settled the renown of the Corsican products (dry pork butchery, meats, wines and cheeses) and reinforced a cultural heritage based on the raw materials descended of original local breeds and traditional processing methods.

Their brand image is still very vivacious and leans on this cultural heritage. It is strengthened by the present general consumers mythology through two set ideas : those of the farm or craft products, pledges of nature and health, and the local products, typical, traditional and authentic.

Add to that the unintentional consequences of those in charge of the Corsican touristic promotion or its agricultural development : by dint of affirming that Corsica offers quality products, this regional marketing allowed to anchor insidiously the idea that any of these were of « quality » from the moment it had the label "Corsican".

#### **II.1.2 - A seasonal and captive market**

Production constraints (mountain, island, Mediterranean climate) in Corsican agriculture, that could upset its development, curiously came out as assets for development of the other great vector of the contemporary insular economy : tourism. And the integration, or at least the link, of these two great economic sectors, could succeed around the regional farm food products.

At the end the XIXth century and the beginning of the XXth century, tourism in Corsica was mainly wintry and aristocratic, therefore favourable for discovery and consumption of farm products and, curiously, for breeding at their ideal period. Indeed, it generally concerns products eaten in winter and spring. Travellers accounts on these periods are full of anecdotes on this subject.

At the time "between the two wars", with its social laws, summer tourism appears, first visited by the middle classes before the "50's", are going to see the advent of an increasing mass tourism (RENUCCI, 1974).

The Corsican economy became thus greatly dependent of a summer market that increases, during three months of the year, with several hundreds of thousands of consumers. The regional product demand is very high out of the production season for a majority of products, with an offer that is therefore structurally staggered (VALLERAND, 1985). Thus, this seasonal seller's market became, unfortunately, the scene of multiple abuse of some operators that wanted to reach in three months time their yearly income !

#### **II.1.3 - A mining economy**

The present general situation of the sectors, particularly in breeding, is profitable to bad habits : we notice a strong breeding dispersion that, generally, manages the whole process of «production -

processing – commercialisation » only on the farms. These "sector - men" are therefore in situations that push them to individual solutions (CASABIANCA *and al.*, 1994).

The desertifying of mountainous and hilly areas encourages an extensive drift of pork butchery or dairy breeding towards mining activities (non renewal of the exploited resources). This development is often accompanied by a slipping of the breeding activity downstream, and processing (more remunerative in increase in value), particularly by the importation of raw material. Far from reinforcing the renown of the products this cultural income (rent) drift puts the future of the sectors in great danger by encouraging a progressive depletion of the reputation (VALLERAND *and al.*, 1992).

The eastern plain of the island had a divergent history, with the introduction of an intensive agriculture type and some co-operatives. We could have thought that a stimulation of farming professionals, already noticed in new situations, allowing to locate and to strengthen the strong points coming from these drifts. In fact the example of wine and clementine show some heavy tendencies similar to those of the hilly and mountainous areas.

To this individual logic, is added an over type of collective suicide : not enough structuring investments (such as slaughterhouses in conformity with the European norms), not (or little) of young farmers establishment. To the technical culture that is not capable to conceive its development, to be alive. This open out on a culture «blocked» in its technical representations without any apparent changes for decades, and only knew sporadically how to seize the new prototypes of technical progress, but without knowing how to choose or conceive among the innovations, those that could reinforce the originality by increasing the management.

After realising that these elements could not encourage the emergence of a collective desire to reinforce the renown of this product, especially if these methods are today strongly remunerative.

## II.2 - An implicit refusal of the laws device

If our analysis is based on these phenomenon and their explanatory factors, by avoiding judgements of moral order. There seems to be an important contradiction between the official speeches and the methods that more often develop when the laws and regulations are not respected.

### II.2.1 - State of no - right and *statu quo*

In fact, no one seems to want to mobilise the regulations concerning the certification of products to try to overcome this type of situation. Well often, representatives of the state administration remain on a prudent reserve and tempt to be flexible on the application of laws and regulations. They do not want to upset the fragile balances that are synonymous of social peace in a region politically "unsteady".

When the situation is examined sector by sector, we notice the existence of a majority of operators that adapted themselves to the lack of rules, as well as the small producers off norms, that stay aside of the formal markets, just as the small industrials that do not wish anybody to mind their business.

Under these conditions, those that declare that they wish a protection label or that work on the implementation of a certification policy are, most of the time a minority, and always considered as bothers.

### II.2.2 - Unsuitable Regulations and derogation

As soon as a procedure is sufficiently advanced, before evoking the new implications that it could imply for producers, for most of the operators concerned this procedure makes it difficult to be respectful of the basic authorised norms concerning the production, the processing or the commercialisation of the given products.

Generally, one doesn't explain it as a refusal on behalf of producers, but to conform themselves is presented as to endanger the Corsican product originality. The common right would not be adapted to the full and whole expression of the originality. Some even see the confirmation of the particularity of the Corsican product.

As in other sectors common right is refused therefore in the name of the Corsican specificity and comes to derogation demands to remain legally off norms without worrying of the perverse effects of such strategic choices (CASABIANCA, 1989).

### **II.2.3 - Claiming and identity**

However, in the speech, the justification of certification requests seems obvious, even though we avoid counting on a real file that it will yet be necessary all the same to set up when the time comes. Then the discussions turn for the worse : " Give us official labels !". Claiming thus became reflex with an issue of identity while artificially exacerbating the particularism of all local production.

On the other hand, among the obstacles in the progress of the files, information concerning the methods, the peoples status or the existing alliances for example in such or such sector must remain in obscurity, to break this community image that allows silence and insinuation. To display differences in ways of living and points of view, would end up dislocating the illusion of the very present social cohesion in all minds.

## **II.3 - Violence made to social device**

### **III.3.1–Certification and unequal differentiation**

Under these conditions, a protective and certification procedure becomes a violence made to this artificial cohesion. All certification policy while cultivating differentiation, becomes unequal and therefore contradictory with a policy necessarily unanimous to appear unitary. We notice there one of the main reasons of the implicit refusal of the certification by a certain category of actors.

So, not to turn permanently toward the inside of the Corsican society, inequality takes two more aspects :

- the denunciation of the State and the Right that attacks our identity and against which we are therefore in "self-defence",

- the "last warning" threat that dispenses to treat a question on the whole, which justifies the recourse to violence.

### **III.3.2–Culture of the difference**

In fact, the culture of « difference » and « conflict », basis of this unitary society, is deeply contradictory with the necessary culture of these compromises, essential to all certification policy. Especially if one specifies that these compromises must invest « shady areas » mentioned above, with the risk of being not efficient.

In such conditions, if some take advantage of a certain growth, one can wonder if it would not lead to a one and same direction : against economy and against development.

## III - FOR THE CONCEPT OF A LOCAL HERITAGE PRODUCT

The experiences mentioned show, that the recognition of a local product does not lean on an intrinsic identity. If, on the other hand, we take the local product as part of a heritage, we can come over this paradoxical situation, dangerous for the future of these sectors.

### III.1–To distinguish specific products and typical products

Indeed, all productions have not got the same report with the traditions and thus cannot expose an historicity of their difference. Considering the present options we can distinguish:

- the typical products (option type PDO) valorising an origin, linked to a manifest tradition, such as wines, cheeses, honey, pork butchery products, etc ... Their protection allows and valorises a certain diversity, under the condition to define it.

- the specific products (option type "Label Rouge" PGI) valorising a source, linked to a production discipline procedure such as the clementine, certain cheeses, bovine meat, ... Their protection aims to impose a difference in relation to a standard on segmented markets.

It is also advisable to choose the protective method according to production characteristics and not only easy considerations or rapidity of the file instruction.

To distinguish does not mean to oppose, but tempted to clarify a part of the confusions that is met in this type of situations, whereas these seem kept by some and used as different blockage justification that we have just mentioned. Especially when this lack of certification seems to satisfy certain actors of these sectors, even, in term this strategic choice can endanger the future of the entire sector.

### III. 2 - Regional products and heritage

To go farther, we are going to approach these products as parts of a heritage. A heritage can be considered as an indivisible joint property, of a community, that is living, that takes care of itself, that hands down. In this sense every community is thus brought to clarify and, to oblige its members, by a real use of compromise, to come to an agreement on a common good, that means what joins them together and what they decide to hand down to the future generations.

This work of the society on itself is not spontaneous and is not done without harsh negotiations, but it is not a question of blocking things or to let them drift. Several obstacles, identified above, can however be overcome.

- Every explanation of a heritage, every definition of a product that is part of it, confers a status that allows it, to fight efficiently against myths linked to the product that maintains a lack of reaction while imposing a persisting pseudo identity model.

- While detaching the product from the producers person, this explanation will in fact, impose identical constraints to all producers, there, where before each one could do what he wanted. Differentiation is not made anymore on the producer's characteristics, but on those of the product.

- It can allow reasoned developments that are neither drifts nor repudiations. Particularly technological questions that cannot stay without reply.

- It allows a more realistic management of the changes of the use of a product, that positions them thus on more segmented market. In particular, it alone can justify the passage of the farm product to the gastronomic product.

### III.3 - More questions on the explanations

Certification procedures, in such an optics, is not an obligation. Indeed, to keep heritage, living and transferable it must first of all acquire a status of common property. The constitution process of the common property results mainly in the most possible pertinent explanation - and therefore not necessarily the most complete - which makes sense to the entitled beneficiary.

The case studies led in Corsica show globally the same phenomena than those observed by certain authors on the other region's heritage products (BERARD and MARCHENAY, 1994) : the difficulties and tensions that appear during the certification procedures are powerful tell-tale signs of the multiple stakes. On one hand, to come to arrangements, by apprenticeship management between the actors, areas that were left completely aside which interests the differences of representation of the products and the way to clarify them. On the other hand, the sustaining compatibility of the representations leans on the organisation of an agreement based on the verification methods of the decided criteria that itself leans on tests where each one takes his responsibilities. It is a sort of co ordination between actors (BOLTANSKI and THEVENOT, 1991) that are subject to important changes during the certification procedures.

However, whether it is the rationality of the concerned actors or their relational capacity, the confrontation to the pre-established outside reference marks - what must be included in every file to be receivable in time - at least where each State is concerned, and the European Union authorities, questions, the complicated and developing relationship between " legitimate " and " legal " (USUNIER and VERNA, 1994). The explanation could probably locate, in the localised systems of production, elements considered as completely legitimate by the local actors, and yet illegal for the control administrations.

Finally, explaining means to designate the non-conform or non receivable products - as well as the interested producers - under the nose of the public opinion. Violence, linked to this designation that's expression remains incidental of cultures and periods, is probably only the counterpart necessary of the clarification. Doesn't it represent a reserve of energy that becomes available to stimulate producers, of sectors and all regions ?

These few questions around an explanation, to the temporary formulations, forms the plan of the research works in progress and descended of the present analysis.

## CONCLUSION

The only logical organisation around the certification, if it is displayed unanimously by the professional representatives and the administrative decision-makers are not, we noticed it, is not in practice. Everything is going on as if the claiming of certification could be taken for the real certification, with the implicit agreement that would be sufficient to serve as protective system and regulations on local and national markets.

This sort of unanimity around tacit rules on the fringe of law and regulations respect, is not only specific to the Corsican productions ; the same situation is found in other regions concerning certain certifications, sometimes prestigious, that belong to powerful groups of pressure.

As we showed, to stop this type of policy always looks like a sort of violence towards the social unit done on these basis and the scientist implied cannot allow to play the role of "the one by that violence arrives" thus to be isolated and therefore inefficient.

It can, on the other hand, find the strong arguments and allies ready to defend them among actors of the sector, if others of these actors, by their methods, endanger the future of the joint property - whereas no body, fundamentally can divert it to personal or corporatist ends.

Three important measurements on development seems directly implied in this concept of heritage:

- a qualitative dimension.

Far from the ideal conception of growth, productivity and the conquest of market shares in competition, this means creating a timeless difference and reaches an outside acknowledgement. Indeed, if it is first of all a local procedure, validation can not, it is done by a global recognition out of the region of origin.

This means a second important detachment, the one that separates the product from its roots and that allows it to travel (LE TABLIER and DELFOSSE, 1995).

- a collective dimension.

The cohesion of the community leaves place to voluntary solidarity that sometimes lean on difficult choices. Such decisions come out on differentiations, bearers of symbolic violence, where every producer, because he is Corsican (we noticed it above) will not necessarily grant this attribute to its products and *vice versa*.

- a temporal dimension.

The procedures in question take into account the process period, stages to lead, thresholds to pass, moments of crisis to surmount. To transfer a heritage means to project it in a future that has to be built.

In this way, the regional product approach like the heritage products could help to stimulate situations that could seem blocked until then, to reverse drifts and to allow the implementation of a real certification policy.

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