

WP5 - Terrincho Cheese Case Study

0. General information

- ✓ Name of OLP
 - *Queijo Terrincho D.O.P.*



- ✓ Type of product
 - Cheese (sheep)
- ✓ Type of denomination
 - P.D.O.
- ✓ Country of origin
 - Portugal
- ✓ Area of production
 - Trás-os-Montes, north-eastern Portugal
 - 4 districts, 13 municipalities, 222 parishes, 4.600 Km²
 - 115.000 inhabitants, 27 inhab/Km²
 - 430 farms, 52.000 adult sheep



1. Definition, characteristic and legal protection

1.1. Characteristics of the OLP and its production system

The Queijo Terincho is obtained from milk produced by the local sheep breed known as "Churra da Terra Quente". Sheep breeding is quite important in some areas of Trás-os-Montes, northeastern Portugal. The first references about a classification of sheep breeds according to the type of wool produced dates back from the middle age, and the term "churra" was used in relation to those breeds which did not produce a thin wool (ANCOTEQ, 1994, citando Teixeira, 1991).

The breed "Churra da Terra Quente", popularly called "Terrincha" due to its origin from a farm with the same name, is well adapted to the local production conditions. The area is characterized by a dry climate and low hills with cereal and fallow fields, vineyards, olive and almond groves.

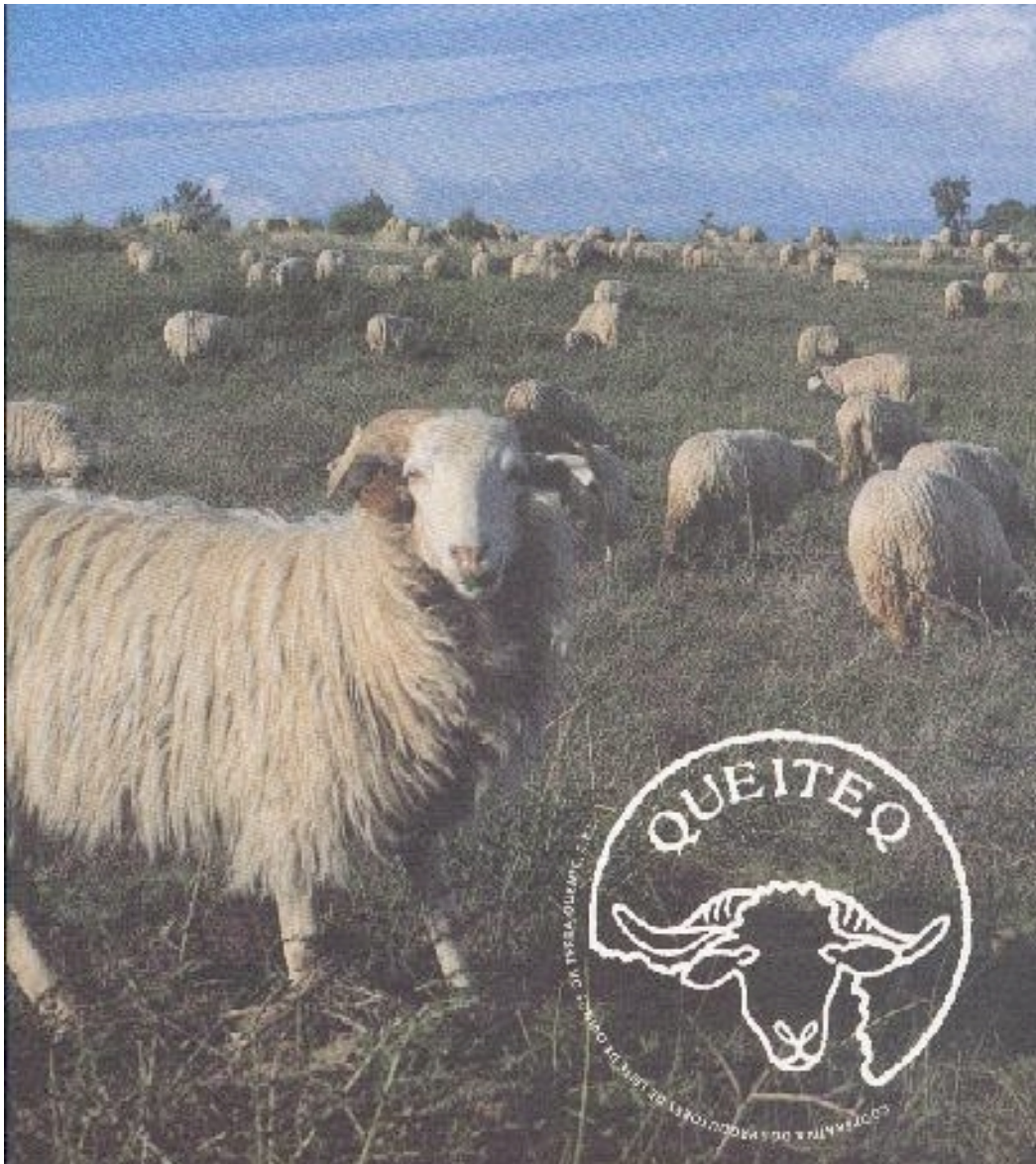
An economy based upon animal grazing became important, given the low quality of the soils and the income it provided. The rural house was traditionally used by both the family and the animals, and also included storage space for other farm products.

The sheep stay most of the time in areas close to the farmland and are fed through a variety of fodder from pastures, fallow areas, common lands, and traditional forages. The particular climate and ecological conditions, along with local management practices permit the production of milk with quite specific characteristics. This milk constitutes the raw material to make a unique sheep cheese, the Queijo TerinchoDOP.

The farms in the area are not specialised. Sheep products are integrated in a complex system with other animal (goat, beef and milk cattle, bees) and vegetable (vineyards, olives, almonds, fruits, vegetables, cereals) productions.

Initially, the cheese producers were also sheep producers. More recently, especially due to the lack of labour force, the production system evolved, becoming somehow more specialised and linked to milk processing and cheese production.

At the commercialisation level, it is worth to stress the organisation of fairs and other initiatives aiming at the promotion of local quality products (local breeds' meat, traditional sausages, olive oil, honey, fruits, wines, etc.), with considerable impact in terms of attracting visitors and stimulating the local economies.



1.2. The process of institutionalisation

The cheese with this designation (*Terrincho DOP*) started being produce only in 1994, after the approval of the EU Regulation 2081/92 and the development of certification procedures in Portugal. However, the production of sheep milk and cheese has existed for a long time in the region. Most sheep milk was exported to other regions and sold with different labels, particularly "Serra da Estrela".

The activation of the this PDO creation was initiated by the Ministry of Agriculture and was mainly a top-down process. The sheep milk producers constituted an Association in 1990, which promoted the creation of two cooperatives, one for cheese (QUEITEQ) and other for sheep meat (OVITEQ) production and marketing. These two institutions asked for the legal protection and since 1994 manage the PDOs *Queijo Terrincho* and *Borrego Terrincho*, respectively. The University of Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro was involved in the preparation of the Code of Practices. Most actors presently involved in the product chain were not involved in the institutionalisation process, as they did not exist.

Some conflict situations have emerged along the process, mainly between cheese production units of different types: the new and institutionalised units complain about the unfair competition promoted by the very small and artisanal units, which don't comply with any rules are not subject to control, producing at much lower costs.

1.3. Code of practice

Breed: "Churra da Terra Quente", a local breed popularly known as "Terrincha". Animals must be registered in the Genealogical Book.

Production system: grazing in natural pastures, shrub areas, fallow and common lands and "lameiros" (rich and irrigated natural pastures). Other vegetables products are also used as fodder, including vine, olive and almond leaves, among other. The use of concentrates is not allowed.

General characteristics of the product:

- ◆ cured cheese, semi-hard texture, humidity between 55% and 63% and grass between 45% and 65%:
- ◆ Shape: regular cylinder
- ◆ Crust: malleable consistence, well formed, smooth
- ◆ Texture: closed and uniform
- ◆ Dimension and weight: diameter with 13 to 20 cm, 3 to 6 cm height, 0,8 kg to 1,2 kg
- ◆ Maturation temperature: between 5°C and 12°C
- ◆ Relative humidity: between 80% and 85%
- ◆ Minimum time: 30 days



1.4. Certification

Relevant issue related on certification (product and process):

- ◆ The technical specifications concerning production and processing, defined in the Code of Rules, must be observed;
- ◆ Laboratory analysis;
- ◆ Tasting;
- ◆ There are sanctions for those who don't comply with the Code of Practices.

In what they differ respect other products competitors (price, ingredients...):

- ◆ The milk is produced by a local sheep breed;
- ◆ Only raw (non-pasteurised) milk is used;
- ◆ Production is interrupted in the summer period (July, August, September);
- ◆ A minimum ripening period of 30 days is required before commercialisation starts.

Bodies involved in the quality monitoring of the product:

- ◆ Cooperativa dos Produtores de Leite de Ovino da Terra Quente (QUEITEQ) (producers' cooperative and PDO management body);
- ◆ Associação Nacional dos Criadores de Ovinos da Churra da Terra Quente (ANCOTEQ) (private control and certification body);
- ◆ Tradição e Qualidade - Associação Interprofissional para os Produtos Agro-Alimentares de Trás-os-Montes (private control and certification body, operating on behalf of ANCOTEQ).

1.5. Description of legislative aspects

Laws that institute and regulate the denomination of this product:

- ◆ Reg. (CEE) 2081/92 de 14/07/92 (JOCE, N.º L208/1, 1992 e JOCE, N.º L208/9, 1992);
- ◆ Despacho Normativo n.º 293/93 de 1 de Outubro: establishes the national regulations to implement the Reg. (CEE) 2081/92 e 2082/92;
- ◆ Despacho normativo n.º 47/97: replaces the Despacho normativo n.º 293/93 de 1 de Outubro;
- ◆ Despacho 16/94 (DR, II Série, N.º 21, 26/01/94: 729): recognises, at the national level, the name Queijo Terrincho as a PDO;
- ◆ Reg. (CE) N.º 1107/96 de 12/06 (JO L 148 21/06/96) recognises, at the EU level, the name Queijo Terrincho as a PDO.

Legal institutions concerned with it:

Bodies involved in the definition of the product characteristics:

- ◆ Direcção Regional de Agricultura de Trás-os-Montes (DRATM) (Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Services);
- ◆ Cooperativa dos Produtores de Leite de Ovino da Terra Quente (QUEITEQ) (Producers' Cooperative and PDO management body);
- ◆ Associação Nacional dos Criadores de Ovinos da Churra da Terra Quente (ANCOTEQ) (Producers' Association and private control and certification body).

Bodies involved in the protection of the product:

- ◆ Direcção Geral do Desenvolvimento Rural (DGDR) (Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development Services);
- ◆ Cooperativa dos Produtores de Leite de Ovino da Terra Quente (QUEITEQ) (producers' cooperative and PDO management body).

Existence of trademarks and collective brand:

- ◆ Each producer has his own trademarks associated with the collective brand, that is owned by the producer's cooperative (QUEITEQ).

Other indications which can mislead the consumers:

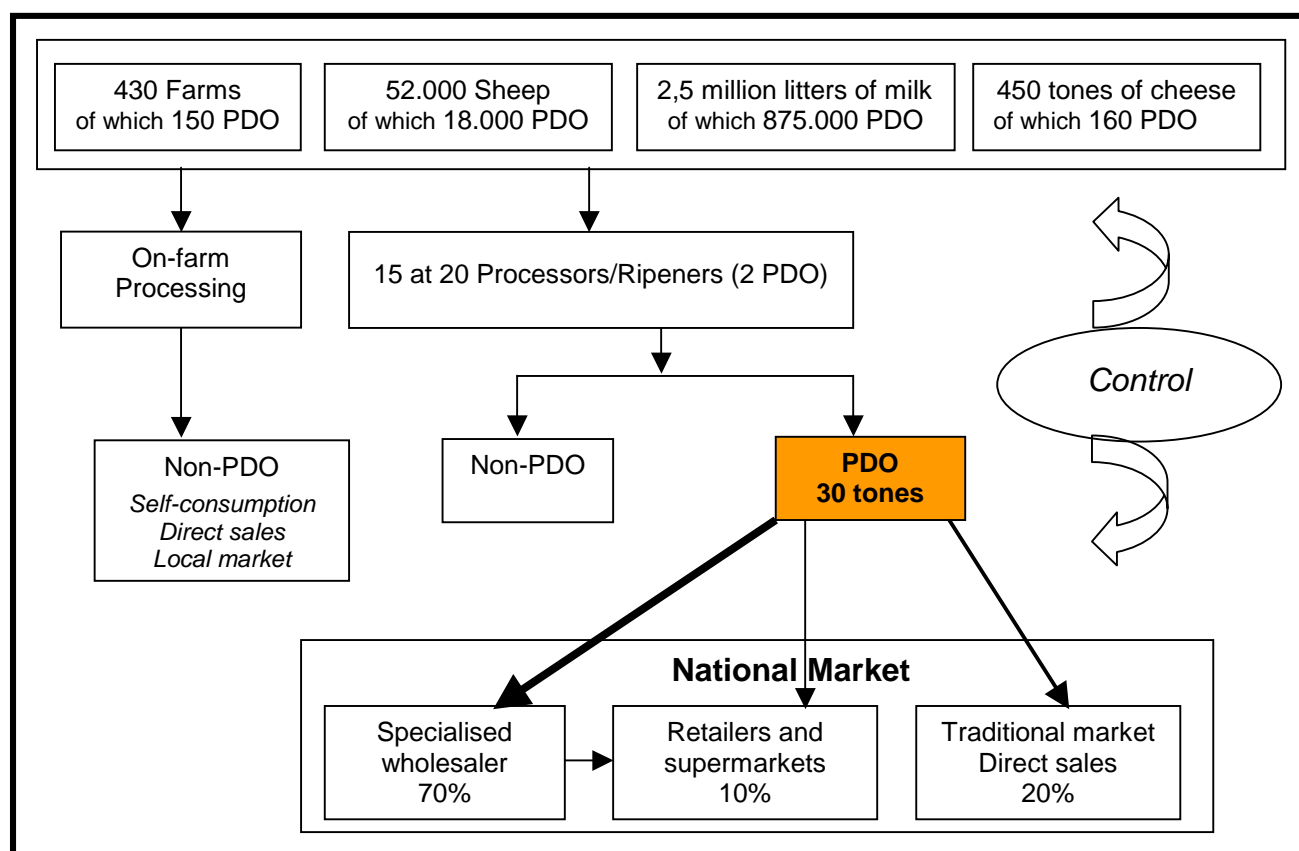
- ◆ The two producers of *Queijo Terrincho* DOP also produce a generic cheese similar to the PDO one, but without the indication *Terrincho* and, of course, the PDO mark. This cheese is sold at a lower price.

Jurisdictional cases involving or concerning quality, imitation or denominations of the product don't exist.

2. Link with production and marketing systems

2.1 Production chain aspects

The sheep cheese ("Churra" breed) supply chain in Trás-os-Montes



Sheep producers have relatively small operations, with an average number of 120 animals. There are two units producing PDO cheese: a cooperative, which processes about 150.000 liters of milk/year; and a small private artisan unit which processes about 50.000 liters/year. The remaining processing units are smaller, and correspond to milk producers – processors or simply processors.

QUEITEQ, as the producers' organism, manages the PDO, being also one of the two Queijo Terrincho DOP producers. At the same time, QUEITEQ also collects and sells "Churra" sheep milk to other processors/ripeners, given the lack of commercial capacity to sell the product. As such, the producers' organism, besides the management function related to the PDO, also intervenes in the market at two levels: as supplier of raw milk; and as competitor with the other Queijo Terrincho DOP producer.

The PDO producers are free to produce non-PDO sheep cheese similar to Queijo Terrincho DOP and both do it.

The two Queijo Terrincho DOP producers sell about 70% of their production to specialised wholesalers, as a strategy to reduce the transaction costs, taking into consideration the small scale of production. This is a common strategy in other PDO cheeses. The specialised wholesaler supplies the retailers, including large supermarket chains. The traditional market and direct sales represent about 20% of the Queijo Terrincho DOP sales. A small quantity is also sold through internet (www.ruralnet.pt).

The existence of only one private producer can be explained by the low motivation to use the PDO brand, as sheep cheese is usually sold at good price without such brand, as well as by the small size and rather artisan character of most units. It should be underlined that about 50% of the raw milk are processed at the farm and the cheese sold directly to consumers.

Quality management belonging the chain:

- ◆ Internal monitoring done by the processing units to control the quality of the raw milk and the product at the different critical stages of the process;
- ◆ External control by the private control and certification body;
- ◆ The norms HACCP and ISO 9000 are not used.

The PDO label increase the price of the Churra Cheese in about 20%, but it hadn't relevant effects in volumes. Before PDO, the marketing were only based on short circuits, because the cheese were only sold to local markets. With PDO, it was possible sale to others markets outside of production region (by a specialised wholesaler) and it was created a producer's association structure to commercialise the churra cheese (with and without PDO).

The option for sell the product with PDO label is justified by the cheese producers on the increase of production volumes that was not possible sell in local markets. The PDO label was so a strategy used to the affirmation (with a differentiated product) on other markets.

2.2. Consortia and Interprofessional bodies:

Description of origin and structure of the Interprofessional bodies involved:

These aspects were introduced in 1.2 above.

Role of Interprofessional bodies

ANCOTEQ (Producers Association, created in 1990) and Tradição & Qualidade (professional and private control and certification body, created in 1994):

- ◆ Evaluation of the farm conditions for those who want to produce Queijo Terrincho DOP;
- ◆ Periodical control of the registered farms;
- ◆ Evaluation and control of the processing units;
- ◆ Evaluation and control of the sales points.



QUEITEQ (Cooperative and transformation organism, created in 1994):

- ◆ Definition of the Code of Practices;
- ◆ Asking permit to register;
- ◆ Management of the label Queijo Terrincho DOP.

Cooperativa dos Produtores de Leite de Ovinos da Terra Quenta, C.R.L.



O Queijo da Raça Churra da Terra Quenta

Dê preferência aos produtos
REGIONAIS TRANSMONTANOS

Quinta Branca - Larinho • 5160 TORRE DE MONCORVO
Tel.: 079 - 25 80 90 • Fax: 079 - 25 80 98 • Trás-os-Montes - PORTUGAL

Issues related to the governance of the Chain:

- ◆ Deficient human resources, both in quantity and quality, in the management and control of the Queijo Terrincho DOP chain;
- ◆ Producers of raw material lack information about the Queijo Terrincho DOP;
- ◆ Lack of common strategy to control the quality of the raw material;
- ◆ Lack of common strategy for product diversification;
- ◆ Lack of common strategy to promote and distribute the Queijo Terrincho DOP;
- ◆ Management of the chain is essentially individual (non-collective) and the producer' organism does not assume a leadership role.

3. Links with rural development:

3.1. Area of production:

Characteristics of the Region (area) of production :

- ◆ 4600 Km², 115.000 inhabitants, 27 inhab/Km²;
- ◆ Farming and public services are the major sectors of activity;
- ◆ Sheep, olives and almond are the key production;
- ◆ Human desertification is a major development problem.

Relevance of the product for the Region:

The PDO contributed to the emergence of new production units (15-20 each of which processes about 150 l /day and produces 30 cheese units). This activity has promoted the creation of local employment and the local retention of added value, as well as the maintenance of sheep producers' income.

Relevance in the market:

- ◆ Cheese per capita consumption in Portugal: 10kg/year
- ◆ Production of ripened cheese in Portugal: 66.000 tones

- ◆ Production of sheep cheese in Portugal: 17.000 tones
- ◆ Production of PDO sheep cheese in Portugal: 383 tones
- ◆ Potential production of sheep cheese in Trás-os-Montes (estimated): 450 tones
- ◆ Potential production of sheep cheese in the geographic area of Queijo Terrincho DOP: 450 tones
- ◆ Present production of Queijo Terrincho DOP: 30 tones

Reputation of the product, reputation of the area and Local Development:

- ◆ The number of sheep existing in the production area (125.000 animals) represents about 38% of the total sheep in Trás-os-Montes;
- ◆ The number of local sheep or “Churras” (52.000) which supply the PDO represents 40% of the total sheep in the production area;
- ◆ The average dimension of the herd (120 animals/farm) is significantly higher than the regional one;
- ◆ This cheese is the only sheep cheese produced in the region;
- ◆ Cheese production has created employment and local added value.

3.2. Effects of the PDO (institutionalisation):

The creation of the *Queijo Terrincho DOP* is relatively new and stimulated the local economy, namely by adding value to the sheep milk produced in the area, which previously was mostly sold to cheese processors in other regions. It also created some employment, helping to maintain the population in the countryside.

The *Queijo Terrincho DOP* is today an element which contributes to create a positive image of the region, particularly as a rural area that is rich in terms of traditions, local quality products and gastronomy, with considerable effects in terms of tourist attraction.

The implementation of the PDO system implies additional costs, particularly related to certification procedures. On the other hand, the quantity of milk needed to produce the PDO cheese is limited. These two factors inhibit the participation of cheese producers in the *Terrincho* PDO initiative. At the same time, many small units sell the product easily, even without the PDO label. These aspects make the dissemination of the *Terrincho* PDO more difficult and strongly limit its impacts in the region.

3.3 Rural development tools:

It is not easy to measure the impact of the Terrincho PDO in the development of the concerned territory. Rural development requires a territorial approach and a concerted action of different instruments. The *Terrincho* PDO is one of such instruments which, articulated with others, promote development. Some actions have been launched in the area and are mentioned below.

Main actions used to develop the rural areas where the product is produced:

- Preservation of environment, cultural and historical heritage
- Modernisation of traditional farm practices (new plantations, farm mechanisation, etc.)
- Diversification of the rural economy (small agro-industries, rural tourism, organic farming, etc.)

Actions of rural development based on the OLP product:

Organisation of fairs and other events to promote local products, as well as the local cultural traditions.

Legal base for this action of Local development:

Program PAMAF (for Agricultural and Forestry Modernisation);
Program PRONORTE (for Regional Development in Northern Portugal);
EU Initiative INTERREG;
EU Initiative LEADER.

Description of the actors involved (public/private, Consortia...):

Public actors, particularly the municipalities and the Regional Agricultural Services have played a key role in the promotion of several initiatives, as they have considerable resources and influence. Besides, farmers' associations, producers' cooperatives and local development associations have also been involved, in spite of some weaknesses, namely in terms of human resources. The LEADER initiative is conducted in the area by a consortium of local institutions assuming the form of Development Association.

Problem and results of this action:

The area, today, has better trained human resources and increased institutional capacities. There is a better awareness of local resources and more capacity to create added value. The area is recognised by the quality of its products, including sheep cheese in general and the *Queijo Terrincho DOP* in particular, and the flow of tourists tends to grow. However, depopulation and ageing remain as considerable problems and challenges.

3.4 Evaluation:

The following criteria are proposed: (1) global evolution of the sector after introduction of the OLP; (2) evolution of the OLP product compared to the evolution of the product in general (*Terrincho* cheese in general); (3) investments in the product chain as result of the OLP development; (4) direct and indirect employment creation at the local level, at the chain level; (5) local retention of added value; (6) evolution of sheep farmers' income (milk producers); and (7) distribution of income among the chain agents.

4. Link with consumers and citizens:

4.1 Image of the product:

Description of promotion (advertising, packaging, use of trademark, use of Collective brand, etc):

Promotion is essentially made by the producers' management body and the individual producer through flyers, brochures and participation in regional and national fairs.

The major supermarket chains organise annually cheese fairs, and distribute brochures about the principle cheese regions in Portugal, as well as about the PDO cheeses. These fairs are becoming very popular and serve as instrument to stimulate the awareness about and consumption of quality cheeses.

The individual producer uses a trademark for a set of farm products, including his own *Queijo Terrincho DOP* and jams, and also operates a rural tourism house. He also has done an effort to innovate in terms of image and packaging, and is now selling *Queijo Terrincho DOP* in olive oil, using small glass recipients, and old *Queijo Terrincho* cured in rye grain.

Perceptions by the consumer:
No information.

Image of the product VS competitors:

The product is relatively new with the designation *Queijo Terrincho*, as it was only created in 1994. There are other well known sheep cheeses in Portugal, namely "Serra da Estrela", "Azeitão", "Niza" and "Serpa", today also sold as PDO. These are, of course, very strong competitors. In essence, the *Queijo Terrincho* is known mostly at the regional level and by well informed consumers.

4.2 Marketing differentiation:

Capability of the consumers to recognise and perceive OLP Vs non OLP:

There is no empirical information. In any case, the tipicity of PDO cheeses and particularly its differentiated taste (more intense or stronger) help the consumers to recognise the differences PDO vs non-PDO.

Competitive advantage and disadvantage of OLP against non OLP:

Similar non-PDO cheese is less expensive (about 10%) but very similar to the *Queijo Terrincho DOP*. Other non-PDO cheeses are much less expensive, about 50% or more than *Queijo Terrincho DOP*.

4.3 Strategies:

Influence of GDO on the chain

Quality strategies: "Cost leadership" against "Focalisation": low/high quality, different techniques of productions and different prices.

Strategy of diversification followed by the firm involved

Most relevant actions of marketing supporting the product:

The individual producer has a global /integrated approach to promote and sell his products, which includes a strong differentiation strategy. He is selling different types of sheep cheese (PDO and non PDO), with different prices and packaging, having as target market the high segment of the consumers. He has innovated, namely selling cheese conserved in olive oil and rye grain.

The cheese fairs organised by supermarket chains, along with local/regional fairs, are the most relevant actions of marketing supporting the product.

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Desp. 16/94. — O Regulamento (CEE) n.º 2081/92, do Conselho, de 14-7, instituiu o quadro jurídico relativo à protecção das indicações geográficas e das denominações de origem dos produtos agrícolas e dos géneros alimentícios, tendo o Desp. Norm. 293/93, de 1-10, estabelecido as regras nacionais de execução do referido Regulamento, salvaguardando, no entanto, denominações cuja protecção legal foi anteriormente concedida ou cuja existência está consagrada pelo uso.

Assim, com o objectivo de proteger a denominação de origem e de valorizar o queijo terrincho, de acordo com o disposto nos n.ºs 3 e 6 do anexo I do citado Desp. Norm. 293/93, determino o seguinte:

1 — É reconhecida como denominação de origem, a denominação tradicional e consagrada pelo uso «queijo terrincho».

2 — O uso da denominação de origem «queijo terrincho» fica reservado aos produtos que obedeçam às características fixadas nos anexos I e II do presente despacho e às restantes disposições constantes do respectivo caderno de especificações depositado no IMAIAA.

3 — O agrupamento QUEITEC — Cooperativa dos Produtores de Leite de Ovinos da Terra Quente, C. R. L., que solicitou o reconhecimento da denominação de origem nos termos do n.º 1 do anexo I do citado Desp. Norm. 293/93, deve solicitar o registo da denominação de origem no Instituto Nacional da Propriedade Industrial (INPI) em nome do IMAIAA no prazo de 10 dias úteis a contar da publicação do presente despacho, nos termos do Código da Propriedade Industrial.

4 — Só podem beneficiar do uso da denominação de origem «queijo terrincho» os produtores que:

- Sejam para o efeito, expressamente autorizados pelo agrupamento QUEITEC — Cooperativa dos Produtores de Leite de Ovinos da Terra Quente;
- Se comprometam a respeitar todas as disposições constantes do caderno de especificações;
- Se submetam ao controlo a realizar pelo organismo privado de controlo e certificação, reconhecido nos termos do anexo IV do citado Desp. Norm. 293/93.

5 — Até à realização do registo comunitário desta denominação de origem, dos rótulos dos produtos que cumpram o disposto no presente despacho pode constar a menção «Denominação de origem».

6 — Com a entrada em vigor do presente despacho, a denominação de origem referida no n.º 1 goza da protecção prevista no n.º 1 do art. 13.º do Regulamento (CEE) n.º 2081/92, do Conselho, de 14-7-92, designadamente contra a sua utilização comercial abusiva, ou qualquer outra prática susceptível de induzir o público em erro quanto à verdadeira proveniência, origem, natureza ou qualidade do produto.

6-1-94. — O Secretário de Estado dos Mercados Agrícolas e Qualidade Alimentar, *Luís António Damásio Capoulas*.

ANEXO I

Principais características do queijo terrincho

1 — Definição. — Entende-se por queijo terrincho um **queijo curado, de pasta semidura, ligeiramente untuoso e com alguns olhos, branco e uniforme**, obtido por esgotamento lento da coalhada, após a coagulação do leite cru de ovelha da raça churra da terra quente (terrinchas), estreme, por acção de coalho animal.

2 — Características. — Queijo curado, de pasta semidura, com teor de humidade de 55 % a 63 %, referido ao queijo isento de matéria gorda, e com um teor de gordura de 45 % a 65 %, referido ao resíduo seco.

2.1 — Forma — cilindro baixo (prato), regular, com algum abaulamento lateral nas faces, sem bordos definidos.

2.2 — Crosta:

2.2.1 — Consistência — maleável.

2.2.2 — Aspecto — inteira, bem formada, lisa.

2.2.3 — Cor — amarelo-palha-clara, uniforme.

2.3 — Pasta:

2.3.1 — Textura — fechada, uniforme, com zona de corte por vezes deformável.

2.3.2 — Aspecto — ligeiramente untuoso e com alguns olhos.

2.3.3 — Cor — branca e uniforme.

2.4 — Aroma e sabor — aroma e sabor característicos, suave e limpo.

2.5 — Dimensão e peso:

2.5.1 — Dimensão — diâmetro de 13 cm a 20 cm e altura de 3 cm a 6 cm.

2.5.2 — Peso — compreendido entre 0,8 kg e 1,2 kg.

3 — Maturação:

3.1 — Condições de ambiente:

Temperatura — entre 3°C e 12°C;

Humidade relativa — entre 80 % e 85 %.

3.2 — Tempo mínimo — 30 dias.

4 — Conservação:

Temperatura do produto;

Na armazenagem: entre 0°C e 5°C;

No transporte: entre 0°C e 12°C;

No retalhista: entre 0°C e 10°C.

ANEXO II

Área geográfica de produção

A área geográfica de produção (produção do leite, fabrico e maturação do queijo) está circunscrita aos concelhos de **Mogadouro, Alfândega da Fé, Moncorvo, Freixo de Espada à Cinta, Mirandela, Vila Flor, Carrizada de Ansiães, Macedo de Cavaleiros** (com excepção das freguesias de Edroso, Espadanedo, Ferreira, Murçós e Soutelo de Mourisco), **São João da Pesqueira** (com excepção das freguesias de Riodades e Paredes da Beira), **Vila Nova de Foz Côa**, e às freguesias de Rio Torto, São Pedro de Veiga de Lila, Veiga de Lila, Valpaços, Vales e Possacos, do concelho de **Valpaços**, às freguesias de Longroiva, Fonte Longa, Poço do Canto e Meda, do concelho de **Meda**, e às freguesias de Escalhão, Vilar de Amargo, Algodres e Mata de Lobos, do concelho de **Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo**.