SINER-GI project
Montpellier Plenary meeting
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Case presentations
Beaufort
Julien Frayssignes – ENSA Toulouse
1. General informations

- Cooked pressed cheese made with cow’s milk.
- Produced in Beaufortain, Tarentaise and Maurienne valleys (Savoie, Alps).
- Regulated by decree of 4th of April 1968.
- 4412 tons produced in 2005 (+ 49 % since 1991).
Area of production
Production of Beaufort

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of product</th>
<th>Production (2005, in tons)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emmental</td>
<td>246 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comté (PDO)</td>
<td>51 000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beaufort (PDO)</td>
<td>4 000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>11 000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total cooked pressed cheese</td>
<td>312 000</td>
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CNIEL, 2005
2. A specific history

- A productive system based on collective pastures born in the Middle Age

- 1950: development of hydroelectric dams and winter tourism strong rural exodus

- Beaufort supply chain: a development strategy counter to French agriculture (high quality, high prices)

- A strong technological effort in order to control the product (partnership with INRA and local institutions)

- A product saved from disappearance, an activity maintained in a mountain region
A rigorous code of practice

- Raw milk
- Tarine and Abondance breeds only
- 5 000 kilos per year per cow in lactation
- Ensilage prohibited, additional feeding limited
- 5 months maturing

- Term "summer" applied to the milk productions from June to October, including milk from the mountain pastures.

- Term "chalet d'alpage" applied to summer productions, produced according to traditional methods, in mountain chalets above an altitude of 1500 metres, using the milk production from a single herd of cows in chalets.
3. Socio-economic analysis

- 650 milk producers
- 7 cooperatives (75% of production) and 2 private firms
- 29 individual dairymen and 6 pastoral groups

- 85% of Beaufort sold to regional and national wholesalers, who work with supermarkets.
- 15% of Beaufort sold locally in cooperative shops.
3. Socio-economic analysis (2)

- Average production per farms: 100,000 litres (France: 198,000)
- Some cooperatives have less than 10 producers

- The best paid milk in France (550 euros for 1,000 litres)
- An upmarket product (« Prince of Gruyères »)

- About 1,000 jobs depending on Beaufort operation and cheese dairies.
Main stakes

- Decrease of consumption due to high prices
- Stocks of cheese in caves (diversification ? sale of milk ?)
- Arrival of Lactalis group in the supply chain: disruption of the organisation ?
- Relationships with supermarket
- Intensification of the links with tourism (local sale, relationships with ski resorts...)
4. Conclusion: the price of quality

- A good example of a rigorous code of practice
- A success story in terms of added value and rural development (preservation of activity)

- A trajectory that contains weaknesses:
  - High costs of production in a difficult context (price of milk decreasing)
  - Small size of firms: strong restructuring

« One path of (fragile) success, but not the only one »