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# Basis of the quality of typical Mediterranean animal products

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# APPLICATION OF THE REGULATIONS 2081 AND 2082/92 IN PORTUGAL, THEIR IMPORTANCE IN THE ORGANIZATION AND VALUATION OF THE PORTUGUESE TRADITIONAL PRODUCTS

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In Portugal, like in other Mediterranean Countries, there is a group of food products which constitutes a main cultural heritage of this country due to their tradition, age, quality and importance concerning to consumption habits.

For that reason, it is important not only to keep that heritage but also transmit it to future generations, and take advantage of the huge possibilities of some products to allow the developing of underprivileged regions where most of them come from.

The quality features of the traditional products are due on the one hand, to the geographical origin, being these features influenced by the climate, soils and local vegetation, and on the other hand, to the producers' common local practices. In other cases quality depends on specific production methods real secrets transmitted through generations which determine the features of traditional products.

From all these products, the ones of animal origin are stood out, such as cheeses, smoke cured products and sausages, hams and fresh meat of bovine, goat and lambs of local breeds. These products are considered as real delicious foods, due to their flavours, aromas and unquestionable quality.

To preserve these products in the future, in Portugal, the Regulations (CEE) 2081/92 have been very important. These Regulations are related respectively to the Guarantee of Origins Protection (DOP), Geographical indications (IGP), and to the Guaranteed Traditional Specialities (ETG). These Regulations, apart from preventing the fraudulent use of these products names; they also make possible the Production Organisation of these products and an improvement, already evident, as regard with commercialisation and marketing of all these products.

The Normative 293/93 established the application rules of these Regulations in Portugal, being nowadays the General Directorate of Rural Development, of the Agriculture Ministry, Rural and fishing Development, the Organisation responsible for the administration and supervision of the established system. Within this Institution there are two main groups with perfectly defined areas, which are : the Producers Association (AP) and the Private Organisation of Control and Certification (OPC).

The producers Associations have the following tasks:

- To elaborate two notebooks of specifications, starting in this way the process of recognition of the products such as DOP, IGP, or ETG;
- to propose a private organisation of control and certification (OPC);
- to promote and spread the product commercially;
- to commercialise, if the associated producers wished, the products to gather offer and improve the commercial distribution efficiency;
- to be alert to the market detecting and denouncing all the frauds or situation of unfair competition;
- to fine all those producers breaking the production rules defined in the specifications notebook;

- finally, it is important to remark that having ordered the defence of the products to the producers, a great effort among them was achieved, and this contributed, a great deal, to the success of this system in Portugal.

The Private Organisation of Control and Certification (OPC) is appointed by the AP, to guarantee the fulfilment of the production regulations and ensure the quality of the products for which they were protected. therefore, the OPC controls all the production stages, from the origin of the first goods to the final product and, if everything is all right, this organisation certifies the products with a certification mark in the products.

To be able to do these tasks the OPC, appointed by the A.P. has to be recognised by the Public Administration, this only will take place if the OPC previously demonstrates objectivity, independence of the A.P., technical and human competence to carry out its tasks, impartiality as regard with the products, and manufactures. Finally this organisation has to demonstrate full rigor in the controls carried out.

Annually, these Organisations must present, to the General Directorate of Rural Development, a report of activities, describing the control measures carried out, the number of controlled producers, the prices applied to those producers the quantities of certified products, among other pieces of information.

It is necessary to remark that the work of the OPC is to verify the production conditions and guarantee that the product offered the consumers is the genuine one. These controls are independent of those carried out by the official authorities, being protected products or not. These products, apart from the legal regulations, they obey as well to the specific production rules appeared in the specification notebook. This verification consists of verifying the sanitary conditions of the product as well as all the production and commercialisation process.

In Portugal there are already 61 protected products registered by the E.C. with guarantee of origin or Geographical Indications, from which 29 are animal origin products, as it can be checked in the annexed list. This list isn't still closed, since there are a lot of products, over all sausages and smoke-cured ones, some cheeses and carcasses as well as vegetable products which are being recognised at the moment.

The European campaign for the promotion of the concepts such as: Guarantee of Origin, Geographical Indication and Guaranteed Traditional speciality together with consumers and producers who will take part in this system soon, will contribute to a greater introduction of these products in the market of the European products of quality. The Producers' Associations, much better organised these days, and alert to the market opportunity will take advantage of this communitarian initiative developing parallel actions of promotion to increase the knowledge of their products and the consumers.

Great advances have been made in this field, but not everything is controlled yet, there are some falsifications of the products, specially in cheeses; Most of the shopkeepers don't know these regulations and they use some registered names erroneously defrauding in that way the consumers. Who at same time are not informed enough and they don't know for example that they can call for the presence of the certification mark of the protected product he wishes to buy. The General Directorate of the Rural Development is aware of these problems and looks, their solution through contacts with other organisation of the Public Administration, Shopkeepers Professional Associations, Social means of Communication and, obviously, the Producers Associations.

The greatest professionalization already shown by the Producers Associations of the Protected products, together with the creation of the "Associação Portuguesa dos Queijos Tradicionais" will provide interesting experiences and a faster evolution. Greater negotiation with other members and from different distribution sources, the introduction of

marked products which still haven't been elaborated, among other elements, etc; will surely contribute to this sector expansion.

## **Annex**

### **Portuguese products of animal origin registered by TAE E.C.**

#### *Lambs*

- Borrego da Beira - IGP
- Borrego de Montemor-o-NOvo – IGP
- Borrego Terrincho – DOP
- Borrego Serra da Estrela – DOP
- Cordeiro Bragançano – DOP

#### *Kids goats*

- Cabrito Transmontano – DOP
- Cabrito do Barroso –IGP
- Cabrito das terras Altas do Minho – IGP
- Cabrito da Beira – IGP
- Cabrito da Gralheira – IGP

#### *Bovine meats*

- Carnalentejana – DOP
- Carne Mertolenga – DOP
- Carne Maronesa – DOP
- Carne Marinhosa – DOP
- Carne Arouquesa – DOP
- Carne Barrosã – DOP
- Carne Mirandesa – DOP
- Vitela de Lafões – IGP

#### *Pig Hams*

- Presunto do Barroso – IGP

#### *Honeys*

- Mel da Serra da Lousã –DOP
- Mel do Barroso – DOP
- Mel do Parque do Montesinho . DOP
- Mel do Ribatejo Norte (Serra d'Aire, Albufeira de Castelo de Bode, Barrio e Alto Nabão) –DOP

- Mel das Terras Altas do Minho –DOP
- Mel da Terra Quente – DOP
- Mel do Alentejo – DOP
- Mel dos Açores – DOP

#### *Cheeses*

- Queijo de Nisa – DOP
- Queijo Serra da Estrela – DOP
- Queijo da Beira Baixa (de Castelo Branco, Amarelo da B. Baixa e Picante da B. Baixa) – DOP
- Queijo de Azeitão- DOP
- Queijo Terrincho – DOP Queijo Rabaçal – DOP
- Queijo de Cabra Transmontano – DOP
- Queijo de Évora – DOP
- Queijo Serpa – DOP
- Queijo S. Jorge - DOP