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*Project co-financed by the
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6th framework programme
for Research and
Technological Development*



FOOD QUALITY AND SAFETY

More information

Duration : 3 years
(February 2007 – January
2010)

Partners: 10 partners from
6 countries (Austria,
Scotland, France, Norway,
Romania, Slovenia)

Overall coordinator:
Euromontana

Scientific coordinator:
ENITA Clermont

EuroMARC

European Mountain Agrofood Products, Retailing and Consumers

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY - FEBRUARY 2008

The main objectives of the Euro-MARC project are to assess the perception and interest of European consumers and retailers in mountain quality-food products in order to find ways for adding value to mountain food products as a prerequisite for the survival and the management of rural and cultural mountain diversity.

Project description

EuroMARC is a three year project (February 2007 – January 2010) that involves 10 partners from 6 different countries.

The project is divided into two phases: the first phase of two years is dedicated to research activities. The second phase, with the production of guidelines, will be oriented toward the translation of the research results into end-users oriented terms.

EuroMARC will provide a representative overview of the different perceptions of

consumers towards mountain food products, on the one hand, and associated retailing practices, on the other hand. The project will also analyze the actions of producers, farmers and policy makers with respect to these products. The innovative input of EuroMARC lies in the integration of distinctive approaches, including: consumer science; economic analysis; rural sociology; and policy science. The main objective is **to promote mountain agrofood products as a lever for sustainable development** that ensures economic

activity in mountain areas, consistent with a 'vibrant' countryside and rich environments.

To achieve this aim, partners of EuroMARC will undertake consumer-oriented surveys, analyses of distribution channels, interviews with food supply chain actors, and field studies of local initiatives with regard to mountain food products and rural development in selected European mountain ranges (the Highlands, Alps, Scandinavia, Massif Central and Carpathians).

Objectives

The general objective of Euro-MARC is **to find ways for adding value to mountain food products** as a prerequisite for the survival and the management of rural and cultural mountain diversity. The main aim of the project is to **measure the real and actual interest of the European consumers in mountain quality-food products.** A second important issue of the

project is to **streamline the supply chain of mountain quality-food products** in order to identify the possible ways for a fair share of added value among the actors.

The project will also **explore original ways to strengthen rural development** in these specific fragile areas by implementing a win / win strategy, integrating safe

and qualitative mountain food products produced by local producers and enabling, at the same time, the maintenance of a living countryside and healthy environment.

These objectives will be achieved by means of the clear and well identified results of the scientific work packages listed as follows:

The 10 partners of the project:



Euromontana



ENITA Clermont, France
Ecole Nationale
d'Ingénieurs des
Travaux agricoles



UIBK - Austria
Innsbruck University



SAC, UK
Scottish Agricultural
College



UM FK, Slovenia
Faculty of Agriculture of Maribor



ÖIR, Austria
Austrian Institute for
Regional Studies and
Spatial Planning



SIFO, Norway
National institute for Consumer
Research



Perth College, UK



ICDM, Romania Institute
of research and
Development for
Mountanology



ISARA- Lyon, France

- **WP1** will measure the European consumers' interest, perception and expectations towards quality-food products coming from mountain areas.

- **WP2** will identify the retailers' interest and practices towards mountain quality-food products.

- **WP3** will analyse attitude and strategies of supply chain actors towards mountain quality-food products.

- **WP4** will identify factors for success or failure in local initiatives devoted to marketing of mountain quality-food products.

- **WP5** will consist in screening the EU or national policies dealing with regional and rural development, and more specifically with mountain areas development.

Expected results, intentions for use and impact

The outputs of this project will refine the conditions for successfully applying the European Charter of Mountain Quality Food Products, particularly for:

- **Businesses and producers.** (practical guidelines for development, promotion, and communication). The project is expected to provide information, in-depth analysis, tools and guidelines aiming at improving the marketing of

the mountain quality-food products in Europe. It will also contribute to deepen scientific basis for a legitimate and Europe-wide-accepted definition of mountain food products and an improvement of marketing patterns used by the mountain food's supply chains actors working.

- **Policy makers** (recommendations relating to a labelling policy in Europe). At the European level, EuroMARC

will provide some elements for their overall current reflection on quality products policies. At regional and local scale, EuroMARC will bring information on the key factors that influence all stages of the mountain agro-foods process from production to retailing in LEADER-type actions and on the policies having an impact on the production and the purchase of local products

Work Performed

EuroMARC is a **socio-economic sciences-oriented project**. This applied research focuses on five areas: consumers (WP1), retailers (WP2), supply chains (WP3), local initiative (WP4) and policies (WP5).

For the three first areas, major part of the first year of the project has been dedicated to i) an extensive review of the literature, ii) setting up of the research methodology, iii) implementation of the protocols for field studies.

WP1 – Consumers perception of mountain

quality food products
In addition to the literature review, the questionnaire for the consumer surveys has been built on the results of focus groups. The focus groups have been held in the 6 countries, in order to get the vocabulary used by the consumers with respect to food and drink products, and particularly products from mountain area.

The results of the 21 focus groups (184 persons have participated) have been used to prepare a survey questionnaire and a set of cards for a conjoint analysis. The conjoint analysis will be used to measure consumers'

preferences concerning four attributes: price, presence of a quality label, brand, origin. The survey will collect the answers of about 300 respondents in each studied country.

WP2 – retailing of mountain quality-food products

The data from the literature review done for WP2 has also been completed by a market review done in the six countries.

The data have been used to design three questionnaires/grids. The first one is a grid for a shelves survey. The partners

have already started to survey the mountain food products available in markets, shops, supermarkets and to collect information on how the products are displayed in the shop. 90 shelves will be surveyed in each country.

The first results of the survey have been used to prepare a retailer survey. Retailers will be either interviewed (20 face-to-face interviews per country) to obtain detailed information on their perception and strategies toward mountain food products, or surveyed through a postal survey (90 per country).

WP3 – supply chain actors’ strategy towards mountain quality food products

For WP3, the supply chain of two types of products will be studied in each country. The products have been classified in 4 categories: water, fruits/vegetables,

milk/dairy products, fish/meat. For each country, between 2 and 6 specific products will be studied (28 products in total).

During the first period, the products have been selected and the teams had to provide some information on their provenance, the marketing strategies used, the development of the product. For each product, between 2 to 5 stakeholders of the supply chain will be interviewed. Specific interview grids depending on the place of the interviewee in the supply chain have been prepared. The interviews will be passed to the field during the second period of the project.

WP4 – local initiatives case studies

The research on local initiatives (WP4) will focus on LEADER-like initiatives: some countries of the consortium have started to

implement the LEADER programme for only a very short time due to their recent accession to EU (Romania, Slovenia) or do not have the LEADER programme at all (Norway). However, in those countries, local initiatives with similar characteristics can be found.

The first phase of that WP has therefore consisted in analyzing the LEADER programme to define what its specificities are and what local initiatives could be considered as LEADER-like.

The next stage of the work is to identify in each country two initiatives on the development on a local product with if possible one being a LEADER-type initiatives (test case), and one not being LEADER-like (control case). For each case study, between 2 and 5 persons will be interviewed, according to grids prepared for each

type of interviewee.

WP5 – Mountain policy framework

WP5 consists in an analysis of the political framework in which local products can develop. Critical policies have been found mainly through a web-search and completed by the partners. The analysis of the policies is currently being done. Key-interviewees, playing a role either in the process of making the policies or in their implementation have also been identified, at all levels (from European level to local level). About 25 persons in total will be interviewed.

The data obtained from WP1 to 5 will be analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively through WP6. In consequence, a special care has been brought to the need of obtaining quantitative data from each of the WP1 to 5.

Achievements during the first period

The first period of the project has been dedicated mainly at delineating the theoretical and methodological framework used to implement the field studies planned for the research activities.

The information collected through the focus groups and the market surveys will be analysed during the second period.

The literature reviews conducted for WP1, 2 and 3

have shown that very little material is available on Mountain quality-food product marketing. The literature is rich when organic products, or PGO/PDI are concerned but hardly any material could

be found specifically on mountain food products.

That observation allows us to expect that several interesting publication will be produced during the process of the project.

Results and dissemination of knowledge

Information on the project is available on the website: www.mountainproducts-europe.org.

The project is expected to

result in several publications during the next period. Their references will be added on the website. Some focus groups’ results have already been analysed

in submitted articles and conference communications. A **public conference** will take place to announce and discuss the first results of

the project on **the 6th of November 2008**, in Brussels. More information will be available on the website and disseminated by all the partners.