

Newsletter MQP

Technical consultative seminar “Mountain food products in Europe: What assets and what strategies?”

12-13 February 2004

The project on Mountain Quality Food Products, organised its first technical and consultative seminar in Turin the 12 and 13 February 2004.

This 2 day-event, hosted by the Province of Turin, assembled **70 invited experts** in the field of quality products and mountain development **from 12 European countries**.

This seminar marked a crucial step in the project, as it provided

necessary elements to develop concrete and relevant proposals at European level.

The first results of the project, coming from one year of field studies were presented to this audience and validated.

The seminar then stimulated external input through consultation at a technical level with other professionals to meet the two main objectives of the project, which are:

1/ to establish a Web based strategic information system

on quality mountain food products to be a valuable tool for professionals, working in the mountain areas of Europe;

2/ to put forward strategic proposals for the development of mountain food products at a European level to the professionals responsible for policy, and its implementation, at European, regional and local levels. This should include the development of a European charter for mountain products.

Results of the seminar and consultation stage:

see page 2

Summary:

Reminder of Turin seminar and its objectives

The final conference in Cordoba

Characterisation and strategies of mountain products

What about European strategies

Information system of mountain products on Internet

The FAO study

Last news

International Conference 24-26 June 2004 - Cordoba (Andalusia – Spain)

The international conference untitled “**Develop – Promote – Cooperate – What new European tools for mountain products?**” is organised in partnership with the Junta de Andalusia and the Deputation de Cordoba.

The conference is the last consultation stage within the framework of the project and follows the preparatory

consultative seminar held on the 12 and 13 February 2004 in Turin.

During this International Conference, the results of the study developed in 10 mountain areas in Europe will be presented, focussing on aspects of the characterisation of mountain products, the existing strategies and the various regional, national and European

systems implemented for their development.

In addition to launching the **Strategic Information System on mountain products (on Internet)** and reflections on the progress of such a Web site, the conference will provide an exceptional opportunity to debate on proposals for **recommendations at European level** at the level of communication, promotion and adding value to mountain products in Europe.



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What about characterisation of mountain products and what strategies?

The Turin seminar wished to tackle the characterisation and strategy description of mountain products, based on the study undertaken in the field. These topics were developed in the first 2 workshops.

In this context, characterisation of mountain quality products provides a first parameter in order to identify priorities and objectives for future actions.

In accordance with the analysis of the steering committee of the project, the

discussion underlined the importance of the distinction between two different types of mountain products: the "unique" that you cannot find elsewhere (niche products) and other that can be distinguished by their strong links with mountain territories, but that can be found elsewhere. Those two types meet various local strategies but have a role in mountain environment, landscape, local activity and also benefit from the favourable factors of mountains.

Quality perception is changing amongst consumers but also at policy level (i.e. The CAP

reform). Therefore the quality of mountain products must respond to current consumer's expectations and be able to evaluate?????. Links with the territory are also an important factor to develop and promote, as was underlined by the study results. Food production that would take no advantage and benefit from mountain environment (i.e. HORS SOL) must be avoided.

Control is also a crucial aspect of guarantee either to consumers and producers, but the extra costs must be covered by a premium price otherwise, alternatives will have to be bought.

What about European strategies?

In order to express relevant and coherent proposals for mountains and their food products for an open consultation in June (in Cordoba), two workshops from Turin seminar tackled this topic on a technical level.

From the guideline in the form of "options", advantages and disadvantages of each option were discussed.

Advocating doing nothing and taking no position was definitely eliminated. For many reasons, something must be done. The three other options are:

1/ legislative: to develop mountain products through their legislative protection and by providing them with a specific status in policy instruments at the European level;

2/ collective promotion and exchanges: to facilitate the development of mountain products through commercial

and marketing strategies coordinated at the European level;

3/ support to rural sustainable development, by encouragement through specific measures, designed at the European level.

As a result, none of these three options were preferred and the two workshops agreed that the best recommendation should be to propose a relevant mix of them.

For more information on reports and interventions referring to Turin seminar:

www.euromontana.org/Turin1-en.htm

The web based Strategic Information System on mountain products

The Web site, operational since the end of the project, will not only display the results of the programme (European and national regulations, key factors for success, description of products ...) but also relevant information, contacts, useful links ...

As a priority, the general pages of the web site should be

designed in all the languages of the project, and the results from deeper research in the database will be at least in English and more when available.

The Web site will be developed to provide 'tool box' of key information to professionals, policy makers, development agencies and researchers

aimed at giving answers to pragmatic questions.

It is intended that this Web site should become a support for cooperation and experience exchanges on mountain products all over Europe.



Bertil Sylvander, Head of research – INRA, National Agricultural Research Institute - France



Interventions of Teresio Delfino, Vice Minister – Italian Ministry for Agriculture policy and Marie-lise Molinier, Head of unit on quality designations and organic production – French ministry of Agriculture. Session chaired by Marco Bellion, Assessor for Mountain and Agriculture in the Province of Turin



Jan Douwe van der Ploeg, Head of Rural Sociology it – Wageningen University - Netherlands



Alexia Baldascini, Lead consultant, Mountain Group in the Forest Resources Division, Forestry Department of FAO



Visit of the initiative of "Paniere" from the Province of Turin and meeting with some of its representatives.

FAO study on mountain products and activities

The pre-study of 6 months regarding "Promoting and Protecting Local Products as a Means for sustainable Development in Mountain Regions", has been developed under the technical responsibility of the International Year of Mountains Coordination

Unit, which is housed in the Forest Conservation, Research and Education Service (FORC) of FAO Forest Department.

Euromontana is the European partner of this study that brings together Institutes from the 5 continents.

The workshop meeting in Chambéry (France), held at the end of February reported the results of the study and identified key follow-up actions and resource possibilities. A longer-term project proposal should emerge by beginning of 2005.

Coming events :

- ✓ Project "Mountain debate 2004" coordinated by the Agency for development and Coordination in the Aoste Valley (Italy). 1st workshop: 23 April 2004 – 2nd workshop on mountain products: 7 may 2004 and the final conference: 4 June 2004
- ✓ Final conference of the Euromontana project (see first page) 24-26 June 2004 in Cordoba – Andalusia – Spain.
- ✓ Joint conference between Caseus Montanus and Euromontana - 28 and 29 October 2004 in Appenzell – Switzerland
- ✓ The IVth European Mountain Convention of Euromontana – the 25 and 26 November 2004 in Rodez – France -

Project partners

