



MARKETING APPROACHES



Marketing strategies for mountain products

Marketing is essential for mountain producers to be competitive. The use of designations of origin, geographical indications and traditional terms can contribute to transmit the mountain dimension to the consumer. Especially, the **adoption of the new optional quality term “mountain product” in July 2014**, is a great instrument for mountain producers to have an **added value** in their products that could attract consumers.



Relations between brands should be analysed to find the “best-fitting” mix together with the different **aspects of a product that have a real impact on the consumer**. The selected strategy will depend on the target groups and structure of the offer. At the same time, the differences between short and long supply chains should be taken into account.



Policy instruments

We can find several opportunities to improve the attractiveness of mountain products, such as:

- The optional quality term “mountain product” (Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012), can be a good marketing instrument, especially for mountain producers without other brand or label in their products.
- Inside the CAP (Common Agricultural Policy), the EAFRD measures (Reg. N°1307/2013) can support the marketing of mountain products through the quality schemes for agricultural products (Article 16), supporting the setting up producers groups (Article 27) and investments (Article 45).
- CMO (Common Market Organisation) of the CAP measures for promotion of wine can also be useful for mountain wine producers.

Mountain supply chains competitiveness is handicapped by higher production costs and lower labour productivity. Developing great marketing strategies and showing the added value of mountain products to the consumers can result in a higher price and consumer acceptance, helping to overcome the higher costs they face.



“Mountain Origin” Label

Context

In a highly regulated sector and given that when it comes to pork production European regulations on PGIs restrict mentions of the region (80% of manufactured products) in which the animal was raised as part of the official quality sign, the sustainability of pig farming in mountainous regions (around €100 million) necessitates the development of added value to at least partially compensate for the additional production costs and therefore the reduced profitability of livestock breeding.

Through the valuable French “mountain” label, initially introduced under French regulations in 1986 and then again in 2000, economic stakeholders in the sector intended to simultaneously protect their interests, to stand out from the competition and to come together to work towards the common objective of maintaining the dynamic economic fabric of the mountainous region through the promotion of a wide range of high-quality mountain products.



The project

Since 2000 the Association Porc Montagne (APM) has had an inter-trade label known as “Mountain Pork” linked to a Product Conformity Certificate Programme. From 2008 to 2012, APM has pilot a research and development (R&D) programme on mountain products. One of the significant results of this R&D programme is the creation of a new collective label (“Origine Montagne”/“Mountain Origin”) which aims to better promote the approximately 300 000 pigs bred in mountainous regions (40% of the total). This label is based on a usage regulation and an inter-trade charter with the aim of promoting the positive values of the mountain and the mountain pork sector: respect for human beings, the land and the products.

The project brings together economic stakeholders who have signed the charter (farmers, breeding associations, abattoirs, butchers and meat processors). A quality gains list will ensure that for each piece of meat which becomes a mountain product, the farmers and the abattoir will each receive a financial incentive. The meat processors will be responsible for marketing the product in order to maximise sales.

The results

In 2014, the project brought together 100 farmers, 3 abattoirs and 7 salting or packaging companies.

In 2014 the total turnover is expected to exceed €2 million. Growth is expected to be significant.

The R&D programme has also made the following possible:

- to evaluate the additional production costs in mountainous regions;
- to identify traditional recipes for cured products;
- to develop a number of recipes using mountain pork;
- to create a charter for livestock and processing buildings in mountainous regions;
- to define the necessary technical conditions to comply with the quality required in accordance with the values and criteria of the “Mountain Origin” label ;
- to define the marketing mix for the “Mountain Origin” label;
- to create commercial promotion and marketing material for the shop;
- to initiate a collective commercial dynamic.

Pastoralism-mountain products



Context

The Norwegian Transhumance and Pastoralist Association, (Norsk Seterkultur) is an Organisation for active mountain farmers and others involved in Norwegian mountain farm culture. It has about 500 members.

The purpose is to ensure long term preservation of the transhumance and pastoralist culture through active use of the mountain farms in line with traditional as well as modern principles.

It defines transhumance and pastoralist culture as the nature, culture and industry that are and have been used for farming purposes.

Innovative points

The use of an increasing market for mountain products combined with the documentation of the special qualities of milk-products from the mountain areas – to make more sustainable activity based on culture heritage in the valuable, but also vulnerable mountain areas.

Project

The Norwegian Transhumance and Pastoralist Association (Norsk Seterkultur) is the only national organisation for transhumance in Norway. Many farmers have found that there is an increasing market for mountain products. This is because it is a national trend for experiences from the mountain areas. It is now also documented that these products have special qualities that make them even more attractive. Simultaneously it has become more fake products from the mountain areas which are “surfing” this market. For the serious producers this is negative because the consumers do not get the products they expect and also can result in doubt about the credibility of the mountain products.

Therefore The Norwegian Transhumance and Pastoralist Association (Norsk Seterkultur) has now started the process of branding the real mountain products with a special brand based on tradition.

Results

They have:

- Established documentation for special qualities of dairy-products from mountain areas that can separate the real products from the fake.
- Established a board for the project and have established the first criteria for branding.
- Received encouragement to “go” from the organisation MATMERK who will lead them in the process.



Food & Biodiversity - development & research



A new CAP
Mountains of
opportunities

Context

The Forum, chaired by Angus McFadyen is an Industry Group set up in 1999 to raise awareness of agricultural issues, promote the development of agriculture and crofting whilst encouraging and facilitating co-operation between land-based agencies. Its vision is to see sustainable and prosperous farming and crofting enterprises benefiting communities across the Argyll Area (Scotland).

The main aims of the project were to:

- 1) Undertake research to explore how best to make the links for consumers between quality food and drink and the environment it is nurtured in; and,
- 2) create information and advice for producers on the success of different approaches to marketing biodiversity and environmental stewardship credentials of quality food and drink products.

Project

Objectives were achieved by commissioning marketing experts to develop a number of marketing approaches connecting a premium food and drink product with stewardship of the environment and biodiversity benefits. They worked with five producers (Robins Herbs, Winston Churchill Venison, Barbreck Farms, Argyll Hill Lamb Ltd and Cultural Identity of Meat on Islay) and analysed the extent to which consumers respond favourably to each approach and the extent to which this equates with sales success.

Results

Thanks to the cooperation a report on the findings of the research will be produced with the benefits of the project. A section is dedicated to the Argyll and Isles website to list the products and explain the project, approach and awareness raised of what Forum does and ensure information is freely available. Farmers will be able to access the website and get informed about the latest news on projects Forum and the partners are taking forward.

Lessons learnt

The project improved cooperation between land-based agencies, local authorities and local farmers and gave the possibility to have a common platform for discussion and sharing information.



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