

GI EXPECTATIONS IN THE HUNGARIAN FRUIT INDUSTRY THE CASE OF TWO HUNGARIAN CHERRIES

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In the agrifood policy of the European Union (EU), Geographical Indications (GI) are considered as one of the most important quality indicators. The European system consists of two parallel classifications: Protected Designations of Origin (PDO) and Protected Geographical Indications (PGI). The main beneficiaries of the system are the Mediterranean countries of the EU, both in terms of number of registered products and their economic importance.

On the other hand, Central and Eastern European countries have remarkable lag. In Hungary, most of the GI products have very limited economic value and though the products usually have wide reputation, they are modest in nature and confined to the domestic market.

Soon two Hungarian cherries will be registered in the EU GI system, one PDO (Szomolya cherry) and one PGI (Nagykörű cherry). The aim of the paper is to analyse the expectations of the Hungarian cherry industry regarding the GI recognition. In order to have an ex-ante examination of the research question, 22 semi-structured interviews were conducted with all the stakeholders (producers, GI consortiums, policy makers and other related experts).

Results suggest that the possible success of these products stands on the strong cooperation among the producers (contrary to other Hungarian GI products) and the high level of domestic reputation. In short term, a more stable market share; while on long term increasing prices and export possibilities are expected. However, it also became clear that the benefits of the GI recognition can only be expected if additional improvements in infrastructure (e.g. storing and processing capacities) and in marketing (e.g. using the PDO/PGI label) are also carried out.