

# Global Retail Brands



## Vertex Best of Show

The Danger of Vendor Allowances | Managing Private Labels  
Driving Impulse Purchases



## Protection of Food Specialties: The Different European Approach

It is well known that the system chosen by Europe to protect its most significant and valuable food specialties is based on protection of Geographical Indications (GIs): that is, every quality production, which complies with given criteria such as strict quality standards, territorial manufacturing and a longstanding tradition is recorded as a PDO (Protected Denomination of Origin) or a PGI (Protected Geographical Indication).

Such a protection is given not to a single brand, but to the product itself (Parmigiano Reggiano, Prosciutto di Parma, Aceto Balsamico di Modena or Camembert), and it protects all manufacturers of that given product.

Protection is very broad, and it shields from imitations, counterfeiting and evocation: this means, as an example, that in Europe no producer can manufacture a cheese called 'Parmesan' since it reminds 'Parmigiano Reggiano' in the consumers' mind.

As a reward for such a protection, manufacturers have to maintain and certify their products to stay within high quality standards, sourcing ingredients in restricted areas, using traditional manufacturing systems, and submitting all their production to very strict checks by Control Authorities: a costly system, aimed to guarantee that GIs always guarantee a superior quality.

All GI products must carry the words 'DOP' (PDO) or 'IGP' (PGI) on their packaging, and more and more of them are also carrying the flashy European logos (yellow/red for PDOs, yellow/blue for PGIs, shown above), so now consumers can more easily identify them on shelves.



POMODORINO DEL PIENNOLO DEL VESUVIO DOP  
AZIENDA CASA BARONE (2 CONFEZIONI)

offered to GIs: try to imagine what kind of strong protection is enjoyed by some famous names, such as 'Coke' or 'Philadelphia' (this last by the way being a cheese spread with no actual ties with the town in Pennsylvania), while only a few attempts to protect denominations



Such a difference between the European and US systems creates a different treatment of products: what in Europe is considered a counterfeit, and insofar banned from commerce, in the US is legitimately on market, so some great confusion might arise. In the example made before, a cheese called 'Parmesan' is in fact present on the shelves of many US stores, and consumers can buy it, making reference to Parmigiano Reggiano in their mind. Many of them might not even know that the product in their hands is not the original one, however they for sure would taste a huge difference in a comparative tasting.



### TTIP Treaties

#### between the US and European Governments >>

These differences among legal systems have been noted, and a brisk political discussion is under course, in the so-called TTIP treaties between the US and European governments: nevertheless, it is my opinion that US Supermarkets should be increasingly aware of the superior quality offered by GIs products: they are multi-certified, and their quality is assured by the system, not only by manufacturers.

There is a positive trend toward private labels, and within private labels there are some emerging trends toward a quality segmentation: buyers should know that focusing on PDOs and PGIs products will surely increase the quality of their overall offer, and the image of their own brand. **GRB**



Cesare Mazzetti is the President of Fondazione Qualivita, an Italian Foundation which has been established to sustain, support and distribute information about the GI product. Every year, the Qualivita Atlas of Italian Food Specialties reports about the status of all the Italian GIs (both in wine and food sectors), which are over 700.

Qualivita supports the GIs system at a political level, taking part in discussions in the highest Italian and EU meeting rooms

