



# New touristic experiences in the productive areas of PDO / PGI of rural Tuscany

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**Abstract** – This note describes the value of PDO PGI - excluding wine - for the touristic visits at the farms producing these products. The aim is to highlight the potential tourist attraction that the appellations of origin and geographical indications recognized by EU Regulation / 1151/2012 can express for the Tuscany region. Opening up to tourism and promoting the meeting with the farmers can promote the knowledge of the characteristics of the products, the territory that originates them, the methods of production, the agronomic and transformation practices. PDO and PGI Productions have strong relations to the territories of production; in Tuscany these areas offer the consumer many other elements of interest. These rural areas are full of churches, museums, archaeological sites, landscapes, parks, local and national historic sites, artistic expressions of the past and the present; you can learn about local customs, cuisine, festivals, historical evocations, and many other interesting activities.

This requires that the farm, whose productions are quality certified, must open up to the consumer-tourist in a relationship of acceptance and mutual trust thus promoting knowledge about agricultural products. When defining this path of behaviour, the protection consortia play an important role in promoting collective and in guaranteeing the quality of the touristic offer that its members may undertake in respect of the same guiding principles of PDO and PGI. Since the opening of farms at the visits supplies important information on the products, the consortia could exert a moral suasion action to ensure that these contents are agreed upon by the farmers ?? and respect the protecting disciplinary.

**Keywords** – PDO, PGI, Tourism.

## INTRODUCTION

Multifunctionality in agriculture is pursued by the policies of the European Union and of the Region of Tuscany like integration of income for the farmer. In the territories where there is a strong tourist vocation, a growing number of farms have started the tourist accommodation activity from several decades.

The farm has undertaken the development of new multifunctional activities such as: educational visits, hunting, agro-camping, rural kindergartens and other activities of less economic value.

Multifunctionality has also contaminated non-agricultural businesses, like the industrial archeology, the museums of industrial products, guided tours of the production process, participation of consumers at product tests, etc. .

Consumers expressed a general interest in the production areas especially in those that generate products with a high value. A case in point is wine; wine tourism is interested not only in products but

also in the place of production and in the production process. Wine cellars already offer visits inside the productive place, hosting concerts, art exhibitions, in addition to more traditional activities such as wine tastings and presentations of the production process.

In this note we examine forms of multifunctionality in I farms producing PDO and PGI products - with the exception of wine. Our thesis is that their production processes have value even from a touristic point of view, and that farms opening for touristic visit its can create should create internal paths to show their places and methods of production.

In Tuscany, with the exception of wines that deserve special attention, there are 28 agricultural products that have received a protected designation of origin or a protected geographical indication. So the areas covered by PDO and PGI represent a large part of rural Tuscany and this is a specific factor of identity. Farms producing DOP and IGP products are an authentic expression of Tuscany. Their role as agricultural producers puts them in the best condition to choose to enter the market of the tourism business. These farms may have the opportunity to become a productive touristic destination where the production process can be known through a guided tour – possibly including an active form of participation to the process itself.

## SCOPE

Products with a legally protected name by EU regulations are certainly more typical excellences of agriculture. Forms of protection of these productions are geared towards ensuring the quality for the consumer and the real origin of the products. This is a form of protection that goes from the territory in which these productions are grown, to the consumers who may recognize the greater value of the products.

It is plausible to argue that a protected product incorporates in itself a small share of the capital of the territory: the artistic, historical and cultural quality of the territory are present in it. Tuscan companies are strongly oriented to food production and are credited in the production system as a high-quality businesses. They can be considered, by virtue of their productions, intimately connected with



the culture of the place (*anima loci*). These farms and their products contribute to creating the identity of the site and in turn characterizes places and productions.

We can assume that the bond between PDO/PGI and territory is a circular flow generating a potentially virtuous cycle of mutual enrichment of value.

The tourismification process, as it was called in some studies, was born in places of industrial archaeology and in museums of historical productions and has regarded also handicraft productions of high artistic quality; in agriculture this process has mainly concerned wine cellars and olive oil mills. But, this process of transformation of "alive" places of production in attractive places for tourists is in its expansion phase. The desire for knowledge of other products besides wine and oil has been expressed by tourists and can find an answer in the visits of other farms especially those involved in PDO or PGI productions.

This path of development of rural areas - peripheral from the point of view of tourism, but not marginal in agricultural production - has some weaknesses at the organizational level. First of all, farms must mature awareness of their tourism potential with respect to the products with designation of origin; then it has to develop a tourism product centred on agriculture and, not least, it has to build a network with the other farms sharing the touristic offer. In fact the touristic offer must be identified and supported by a collective promotion action.

These requirements, along with an unclear definition of the touristic product, greatly affect so farms' marketing strategies and their ability to develop a new multi-functionality oriented to capture the greater added value incorporated in quality productions.

The literature identifies several motivations for this form of tourism: from the educational one directed to the visit of a farm, to the consumer who wants to know how a product is made, or the consumer who desires to participate in some production stage in order to deepen get acquainted with the times and methods of production. The tourist wants to increase her/his power to recognize and appreciate a product for its effective value, she/he wants to know the area where the product is made.

#### VISIT LIVE PDO / PGI FARMS: A TOURISM PRODUCT?

Tuscany has a strong regional branding known all over the world. On such a branding a tourism like Living Farm Tourism can be build. The variety of protected origin productions can develop a touristic offer that is differentiated by area and by product. Some food protected names of Tuscany are well known all over the world. This knowledge does not have a structured response in terms of tourism. –

Recall that we don't de la with wine production here because there exists a vast literature dedicated to the eno-tourism. Instead, the system of farms engaged in the production of the other excellent products has not developed any touristic proposal exploiting the protected designations of origin, except in some rare individual case.

The PDO / PGI can be used to catch the attention of the consumer, transforming the consumption of the product in a quality touristic attraction for the area.

When a person consumes a protected product far away from the production site, she/he takes part in a sensory experience that can translate into an interest in the place of production and generate a visit to the farm, a trip to production site, and perhaps the desire to know the communities that live in those areas, or the history, the production technologies, the distinctive characteristics of the product. And conversely, a deeper understanding of the context of production can explain to the consumer the value embedded in the protected name and making her/him willing to pay more than what she/he would pay for a competitor substitute product.

#### UNIQUENESS, CRITICAL ISSUES, PROBLEMS

A visit to a farm is an experience that possesses unique traits in the tourist offer. The main one is the authenticity of the experience. Note that such uniqueness belongs to the farm rather than to the product or to the geographic area.<sup>1</sup>

In summary, the organization of the visit of a agricultural enterprise must take into account the following strategic points:

WELCOME	PRESENTATION	VISIT	ACCESSORY	GOODBYE
Consider the language and the demands advanced by the visitor	History of PDO/PGI and of the farm	Product knowledge and tasting with sensory analysis	Presentation and development of games	Evaluation questionnaire
Present the different options for the visit	Presentation of the brand and of the specific products of the farm	Itinerary in the site of production	Small gifts	Informal assessment experience
Listen to the requests of the visitor	Presentation of the area and of things to see	Guided visit to production plants	Product selling	Short presentation of the social value of PDO / PGI and of the farm activity
Agree on what you will do: places, times and costs	Distribution of a brochure on the territory	Demonstrations and comparisons with different types of farm productions	Business information on availability of the product in the place of residence of the tourist	Presenting the activities of the farm at the different times of the years and their availability for tourists' participation
Ask permission to record			Introduction to point	Signing of the visitors

1 For a more detailed analysis of the reasons to visit and agricultural business, and on the advantages for the farms refer to Luca Savoja (2011 op. cit.).



WELCOME	PRESENTATIO N	VISIT	ACCESSORY	GOODBYE
images of the visit			direct sales	book
Provide protecting devices for the visit and give instruction for the use of videos, cameras, etc. Custo			Customer membership	

Activation of company visits must find a solution to the following problems:

RISK FACTORS	ADOPTABLE SOLUTION	PRESENCE OF RISK
INJURIES	VISITOR PATHS CONSTRAINED	ALWAYS
Hygiene and health	Provision of wear appropriate protective garments	Some areas of the company
Contamination (active / passive)	Preparation of sections of itineraries with suitable protection	Some areas of the company
Industrial spying	Exclusion from the guided tour of some of processing phases	Some processing phases
Thefts (active / passive)	Pathways well defined and devoid of possibility of theft; avoid big groups	Some processing phases
Insurance	Exact identification of the visitor; liberating at the beginning and at the end of the visit	Always
Allergies or Hyper-sensitivity to	Prior information	Always

In particular, the activity of sightseeing on the farm requires an insurance cover for potential risks present in the course of the visit.

Main organizational problems in the management of company visits:

Absence of a single point of contact to request the visit at farm
Response time to the request for visit
Low available time from the farm to carry out the visit
Management of visitors under the age of 18 years
Problematic cases to manage risks, like the overtime
Difficulty to accept big groups
Difficulty to accept individual visits
Availability of vehicles suitable for transporting visitors
Farm environments: accessibility at visit

### CLOSING REMARKS

The consortia or associations of PDO / PGI for the protection and promotion can play an important role in accompanying the development of the tourism product. In fact, they can drive their associated farms, to live in this path "Sightseeing Farms PDO / PGI". These consortia are carrying out the promotion of the product, the production environment, the traditions, the skills and knowledge; these values are already present in the member farms. The same

information can be more easily transmitted to the consumer / tourist during a visit in farm.

The consortia of protection of 28 products DOP and IGP Tuscan could develop a joint communication campaign on farm visits associated at the consumption of the product, at know the farm and his territory.

Consortia or associations could define the minimum requirements for the farm that wants to participate in such a path, and to consumers-tourists , today unprepared who decide to visit the farm.

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