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Research evidence on protected food names

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Evidence from the ‘GI policy after Brexit’ project funded by ESRC

Stephen Roper and Akunna Oledinma

GIs in the UK – a top level assessment

- GIs for food and drink have been given little priority in the UK generally. A more strategic approach has been adopted recently in Wales with an increasing number of GIs
- This lack of policy focus has four main implications:
    1. There are relatively few (90) GIs in the UK. In fact, fewer than Greece which has around a population 10.8 per cent of the UK.
    2. GIs in the UK tend to be PGIs rather than the more demanding PDOs which are more common in other countries. PGIs tend to have lower price premia for producers and fewer local benefits as supply chains are not localised
    3. Unlike other countries there is no clear over-arching policy rationale for intervention in GIs in the UK. Are these around food heritage or culture? Local development? Nutrition? Environment?
    4. This lack of clear purpose in the UK means that there is little public (local or national) support to develop GIs. This is not the case elsewhere.

Making the most of ‘taking back control’

- Leaving the EU means that for the first time the UK has full control over its GI policy (at least for domestic sales) and this presents a range of policy options
- We are working with a food historian who thinks there may be scope for 2-300 additional GIs across the UK. Some of these are agricultural products, some are factory-produced products. Many are still produced others are currently lost.
- A cheese industry insider we talked to suggested there might be the potential for 15-20 more heritage cheese GIs in England. This is only those which are currently being produced. There are other lost products.
- So there is huge scope to develop policy and change the UK food economy

Reviewing international policies suggests…

- We reviewed the international policy experience of developing GIs. Many countries have been very active in this policy space to support smaller producers and drive change in their food economy

- Policy varies but key elements are:
  - A clear rationale for developing GIs. These vary markedly: sustaining small producers (Morocco, Mongolia); supporting traditional production (Taiwan); supporting 'heritage' (China); encouraging food innovation (Vietnam); food culture and tourism (Italy) etc.
  - A facilitating framework for developing GIs. Often this involves local agencies or local authorities as well as national regulators. We currently have little activity in this space.
  - Active promotion and support policies. GIs can benefit local tourism and rural development but here promotion is patchy. Taiwan organises food competitions a bit like the Cornish Pasty Festival.

Supporting the development of new GIs

- Many UK GIs have limited economic or social benefits
- In some cases this is because there was no clear commercial rationale
- In other cases the wording of the GI and/or the product specification is either too general or too specific to allow producers to benefit
- Getting the development process right is key – facilitation is helpful, early buyer engagement is important, and wider context is important such as any tourism gains etc.
- Local agencies have a key role to play here but this is going to require public support to allow longer term interactions

Ideation	Socialisation	Legitimation	Codification	Exploitation
Evaluate market opportunities and key stakeholders	Build coalition of producers, buyers and other stakeholders	Establish and agree the locality to which GI relates, product history and description	Apply and register the GI to obtain formal legal status	Maximise value from the GI through collaborative promotion etc.

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Our next steps …

- We are currently working with a food historian to compile a list of potential GI products for England (on-going)
- Over the next 4-5 months we propose to examine the level of interest among producers in developing GIs and can report back on this later in the year
- We will begin to work with producers/buyers of potential GI products in England to work towards GI status and explore potential local benefits for tourism etc.
- Working with Matt and Barbara, NICRE hope to extend this work across the whole of the UK with partners in Wales, Scotland and NI but this depends on grant funding
- And, if we have time we might venture on the Herefordshire Cider Circuit!

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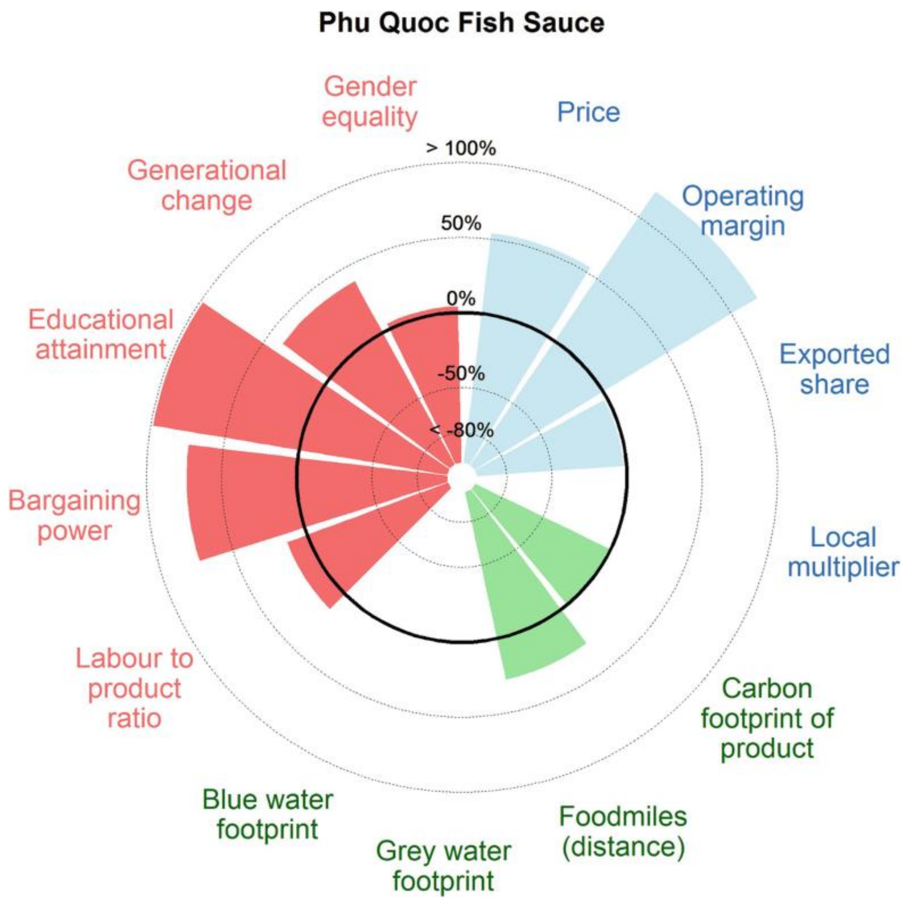
Evidence from the EU Strength2Food project: good news, bad news, and lessons for the UK

Matthew Gorton and Barbara Tocco

Good news

- PDO/PGI products, compared to comparative non-protected equivalents, generate higher margins for producers and better paying jobs and have higher local economic multiplier effects.
- Can work well in a variety of different markets (including Thailand and Vietnam). Potential as a development strategy.
- PDO/PGI products achieve higher unit values in international trade and can help capture high quality markets, forcing rivals into price based, commodity end of the market.
- Prices of PDO/PGI products appear more stable with some evidence of greater bargaining power in agri-food chains.



Bad news

- While some more recently registered products (concentrated in Central and Eastern Europe) are working well, many have failed to achieve expectations.
- Some PDO/PGI products, based on traditional methods, generate environmental benefits compared to non-protected alternatives. However, for many products the carbon and water footprints are similar. Sustainability concerns not traditionally considered in PDO/PGI registrations.
- Generally, European consumers' recognition of PDO and PGI labels remains low. Consequently, many products rely on their own prestige rather than PDO/PGI label for consumer appeal. Obtaining PDO/PGI status is often not a "game changer" for the commercial appeal of the product.

Lessons for UK PFN policy

- Avoid a “numbers game” approach of trying to register as many products as possible. Codes of Practice should be linked closely to the exploitation of what is commercially valuable. Registration should be a business / marketing process not just a bureaucratic one. Avoid a “top down” Ministry led approach.

- Italy - PDO/PGI products seen as “strategic assets” which help promote Italian food and drink exports and boost willingness to pay for quality food. Recognition of collective / public value of protected food names rather than focus just on individual benefits at producer level.

- Level of positive externalities depends on: features specified in the Code of Practice, the commercial and economic strategies adopted, governance and coordination among supply chain actors, and the social and environmental features of food system.

Thank you

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