

oriGIn Report



Highlight of the month

**oriGIn's General Assembly
Guadalajara, Mexico
29-30 September and 1 October 2011**

120 representatives of GI producers, national authorities and research institutes from some 35 countries are expected to gather in Guadalajara (Mexico), on 29-30 September and 1st October, for the 5th General Assembly of oriGIn.

On 29 September, oriGIn members will review the Association's main achievements of the last biennium as well as its accounts and will agree on the work program for the biennium 2012-2013. In order to better reflect the increased international relevance and resources of the Association, a revision of oriGIn's Statutes is also on the agenda. On 30 September, an International Conference will discuss the latest trends for the GI sector at the global level, in particular the successful management of national GI associations and the recent developments for the origin products' business in North America. Within this framework, a "GIs for consumers" event will be organised to raise public awareness about the importance of ensuring and preserving origin products, as well as to provide Mexican consumers with key information about the history and quality of a few famous GIs.

On 1st October, participants will enjoy an excursion to the heart of the Tequila GI. The trip will start with a visit to the fields of *Agave Tequilana Weber blue*, recognized by UNESCO as human heritage. The participants will also see its harvest, known as "Jima", in front of the mountain and volcano of Tequila. Later, the group will head to the town of Tequila where the production process will be demonstrated by experts. Finally, participants will enjoy the culture and cheerfulness of the "Mexican Fiesta" through music, dance and local cuisine in one of the ancient Haciendas.

The full program of the event is available at www.origin-gi.com

International Affairs

At Global Level

Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement: A long ratification process

The Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA) was opened for signature on 1st May (see oriGIn report of June). The negotiating parties - Australia, Canada, the European Union, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Singapore, Switzerland and the United States – are expected to sign and ratify it before the 1st May 2013. However, this process might take a long time. In this respect, on 22 July, the Mexican Congress had already rejected the ratification of the Agreement (see oriGIn report of July-August).

At the EU level, the Committee on International Trade of the European Parliament filed a request to its Legal Services concerning potential differences between the ACTA and existing EU legislation. The Legal Affairs Committee of the Parliament is also preparing a legal check. During the negotiation of the Agreement, the European Commission affirmed that the ACTA would be equivalent to the EU law and that the EU law would not need to be amended in order for the Agreement to enter into force. The Committees wish to make sure this evaluation is correct before authorising the ratification. These reports will have an impact in the decisions of both the Committees on International Trade and on Legal Affairs of the European Parliament concerning the ratification of ACTA.

On the other hand, in the USA, experts are also divided on whether the government can ratify the ACTA without the involvement of the Congress in the process. New Zealand should announce next steps and the calendar at the end of the month. It will probably refer the ACTA to the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee of the House of Representatives for consideration before ratifying. Finally, the ratification process seems to be ongoing in Switzerland and Japan.

California: news from the battle for the authenticity of “Kona Coffee”

In the beginning of September, the battle for the authenticity of “Kona Coffee” reached an important milestone. Safeway - a large US grocery chain which sells, among others, a product called “Select’s Whole Bean Kona Blend coffee (‘Kona Blend’), which contains only 10% of Kona Coffee - was informed that a class action will be filed in California based on the “California Consumer Legal Remedies Act”.

Californian consumers are attracted by the bold label “Kona Blend”. This labelling does not indicate that there are beans in the product which do not come from Kona in Hawaii. While consumers long thought that the coffee beans were from Kona, they recently learned that only a small percentage is indeed “original”. This omission by Safeway misleads consumers as to the true composition of the product in question. As a result, consumers paid a significantly higher price for a kind of coffee product which does not have the characteristics “claimed” by the packaging. Safeway now has the opportunity to modify the labelling in question and settle the matter or a class action will be filed at the end of September.

oriGIn and its members fully support this initiative and hope that it will result in a change of the labelling used by Safeway in order to commercialize the product at issue with the indication of the true composition of the product.

Brazil: request for the registration of a new GI

On 23 August, the Brazilian Instituto Nacional da Propriedade Industrial (INPI) received the application for a GI for the “biscoitos de São Tiago”. These products are traditional biscuits from the city of São Tiago in the Region Campo das Vertentes in Minas Gerais. The application was filed by the Associação São-Tiaguense, representing 23 producers of the biscuit.

For further information (only in Portuguese): <http://www.inpi.gov.br/noticias/biscoitos-de-sao-tiago-podem-ganhar-indicacao-geografica>

Costa Rica: Registration of the 2nd GI

On 9 September, the “Café de Costa Rica” was registered as GI by the Ministry of Agriculture of Costa Rica. It became the second GI in this country after “Banano de Costa Rica” (see oriGIn report of January 2011).

For further information (only in Spanish): <http://prensamaq.blogspot.com/search?q=Caf%C3%A9+de+Costa+Rica>

Launch of Geographical Indication Public Policy in Chile

In September, 2011, the Chilean Minister of Economics, Mr. Pablo Longueira, released the National Institute of Industrial Property’s (INAPI) plan to increase the competitiveness of traditional Chilean products from various parts of Chile. He invites producers to protect the reputation and quality of their products through various means including geographical indications, denominations of origin, collective marks, and certification marks.

Lingua vests, Curacaví candies and beer, Paine watermelon, and Azapa olives, are among the many products that could obtain protection. While denominations of origin have been used with wine products, they have not been used with other products, with the exception of Pica Lemon, the country’s only geographical indication.

The Minister of Economics is working with Institute of Agricultural Development (INDAP), the Office of Agricultural Studies and Policies (ODEPA), the Agriculture and Livestock Service (SAG), and the Council of Culture to map and identify the national products that are eligible for protection and promotion. The second stage of the process will involve giving advice to relevant communities on how to complete the requisite paperwork to submit an application for protection to the INAPI. The first goal is that at least 5 communities or associations of producers will submit applications by September 18, 2012.

More information is available at:

<http://www.economia.gob.cl/2011/09/15/ministro-de-economia-e-inapi-lanzan-plan-para-promover-la-proteccion-de-los-productos-tipicos-chilen.htm>

EU Issues

Policy Developments

GI Policy

Quality Package: oriGIn's position paper on the management of production volumes

In the framework of the discussion between the Council, the Commission, and the European Parliament, oriGIn prepared a position paper on the management of production volumes by groups in charge of PDOs and PGIs. Through this paper, oriGIn explains the current risks of crisis in the PDO-PGI sector and their main consequences, notably the quality problems, the loss of specific tastes and the irreversible closing of the small and traditional production sites which are often the more traditional ones. oriGIn illustrates this in the paper with examples of crisis and how producers managed to solve them.

The paper also explains why the products with PDO and PGI ask for the possibility to manage the growth of the volumes. The main objective is to allow groups in charge of the management of the PDO/PGI, which wish to do so, to prevent the crisis of underproduction or of overproduction. It is also an important factor of dynamism, material and immaterial investments (research and export), qualitative amelioration, growth and opening to new operators. The management also ensures a better distribution of the added value all along the supply chain and, from the point of view of consumers, does not generate any increase in price. It also attracts, in the areas producing PDO/PGI, new producers or young farmers who see a guarantee of stability in this collective management.

oriGIn's paper explains in details its proposal in the framework of the quality package: the introduction in the quality package of the possibility for those groups in charge of the management of the PDO and PGI products which wish so, to manage the growth of the volumes of production. These measures would always be voluntary. The groups in charge of the management of the PDO and PGI products would have to ask the national public authorities for the possibility to apply such measures.

oriGIn will use this position paper in its advocacy campaigns aimed at the EU institutions.

The paper is available (exclusively for oriGIn's members) at:

http://www.origin-gi.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=38&Itemid=85&lang=en

News on GI registrations

Approbation of amendments

- "Bresaola della Valtellina" (PGI) Italy – 08/09
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:231:0001:0002:EN:PDF>
- "Coppa Piacentina" (PDO) Italy – 08/09
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:231:0003:0004:EN:PDF>
- "Pimiento Asado del Bierzo" (PGI) Spain – 08/09
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:231:0005:0006:EN:PDF>

Registration request

- "Chelčicko-Lhenické Ovoce" (PGI) Czech Republic – 14/09
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2011:271:0022:0030:EN:PDF>
- "ΦΑΣΟΛΙΑ ΒΑΝΙΛΙΕΣ ΦΕΝΕΟΥ" (FASOLIA VANILIES FENEOU) (PGI) Greece – 16/09
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2011:273:0026:0030:EN:PDF>

Amendment application

- "Langres" (PDO) France – 25/08
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2011:247:0011:0019:EN:PDF>
- "Falukorv" (TSG) Sweden – 27/08
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2011:251:0006:0010:EN:PDF>