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The typical Hungarian food products: Hungaricum

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The typical Hungarian food products : *Hungaricums*

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Abstract

The historical past of well known typically Hungarian food products (Hungaricums), the circumstances of their originating, their geographical environment, the local manufacturing culture. Particularities of processing on domestic, artisan's and factory level of these historically developed products.

The geographical, social, technological circumstances and reasons of developing and co-existence of these three levels. The presence of these three levels beside each other and their transformation into each other. An investigation of factory level processing of foods originally produced on domestic and on artisan's level, questions of technological transformation into a higher engineering degree. Influence of food specialities' processing on the development of a given region (economical, social effects).

Role of marketing special foods, characteristic for given provinces, regions in the rural development, taking into consideration the tourism and selling at the farm's door.

Role of the government, principles and instruments of exerting influence, their limits. Setting up a collective agricultural marketing organisation, its goals, its activity, its consequences. The export supporting activity of this collective marketing organisation.

Licensing of production and marketing of food products according Hungarian laws, the licensing authorities. Registration of food specialities, their differentiation (trade-mark, brand, quality sign, description of origin).

Typical possibilities of making known a special food.

Export possibilities of Hungaricums, their traditional export markets.

Typical, traditional export products from Hungary are the *Hungaricums*. Their origin dates back to several human generations, their history can not be separated from the history of certain regions, their ethnographic and cultural past. The denomination *Hungaricum* is a collective term, containing both raw and processed foods. The utmost well known *Hungaricums* are several sorts of wine (for example Old Tokay, Red Wine of Villány, Bull's Blood from Eger) ; processed meats (for example Sausages

from Csaba, Pick and Herz Salami) ; raw foods (Onion from Mako, Green Pepper from Cece) ; spice (Red Paprika from Kalocsa) ; several sorts of spirits (Apricot Brandy from Kecskemét, Plum Brandy from Szatmár).

Hungaricums are bearing the ecological, production and processing features of the region where they were originally produced, a geographical denomination belongs to their name. Some of the *Hungaricums* were originally

peasant's craft products (for example Sausages from Csaba), others were produced in small processing plants (for example Plum Spirit from Szatmár), some of them were produced originally on large scale (Pick Salami).

The peasant's craft production was turned into large scale production in the second half of the past century, when the previous manual technology due to the technical and scientific development had been transformed into large scale production preserving the original formula. In that respect the peasant's craft production can be regarded as a "pilot plant".

Processing plants were established generally in the same region, where product was originally processed, but it was not an absolute necessity. Without being produced on high scale, *Hungaricums* could not become export products of big volume and even quality. It would be worthy to analyse those technical, machine-applying, technological, technical regulation and quality control systems appearing step by step in production reflecting the process of technical development in a cultural medium preserving traditions and traditional characteristics of the product.

As the human factor of this preservation may be considered the factory worker, who in his household in the countryside produces food for his own family.

Hungaricums have no definition. In 1992 the European Union listed the criteria for designation of origin (PDO), geographical indication (PGI) and certificates of specific character, therefore Hungary – being candidate for EU membership – included in 1997-98 these regulations in her system of law and order. Taking over comprised the terms of classification, the process of application and judgement, registration, publication, establishing scientific consulting bodies.

When we return to the lack of definition of *Hungaricums* it can be stated, that they can be classified in one of the lists concerning PGI, PDO or certificate of specific character therefore there is **no need** to be defined (Rácz, 1999).

In 1998 the Euroterroirs program including member states of the European Union was transformed for Hungary under the title "Traditions, Tastes, Regions" (its Hungarian abbreviation is HIR). To be accepted for the program, traditional products characteristic for a countryside or a small region can apply, without consi-

deration to the quantity produced. The program is in favour of small regions. The product should exist for not less than two human generations, the narrower surroundings should be familiar with it, and it should be marketable. The applications describing a product on local initiatives are judged by a scientific commission appointed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FVM). The commission assesses the product from historical – ethnographical and from manufacturing – describing point of view. The list of HIRs nowadays includes about 1300 items, after the assessment made by the scientific commission it likely decreases to 300-400 items.

Table 1 : Classification of foods by branch for HIR application

Cereals and products of milling
Fruits (raw and processed)
Vegetables (raw and processed)
Meats, poultry-meat, eggs (wild animals)
Spices
Wild and collected plants
Fishing products
Processed meat
Oils and fats
Dairy products
Bakery products
Candies
Pasta
Confectionery products
Beverages (excl. wines)
Other products

To spread these products within the country a national council will be established by FVM. In this council among others the representatives of rural development, the national tourism, the rural tourism, the gastronomy will work together. The program seems to be a mean of developing small regions and in the same time preserving gastronomic traditions.

In 1998 FVM decided on establishing the trade mark "Quality Food from Hungary". The trade mark can be granted to products, one or more characteristic of which are better than the general requirements (published in Hungarian standards, EU-regulations, Codex Alimentarius Hungaricus). This trade mark certifies the quality of the product being better than the market-average, it is the symbol of its Hungarian origin, it serves both domestic and export competitiveness.

This trade mark :

- **Is suitable** to identify the Hungarian origin of the product, to maintain or to increase market share of Hungarian products ;
- **It certifies** and warrants the high quality of the product exceeding the market-average ; it shows to the consumer the Hungarian origin and the high quality in the same time as an inherent connection, that way it indicates the favourable characteristics coming from the Hungarian origin, in market competition with foreign products ;
- **It informs** consumer because it appears well visible on the package achieving an effect equivalent to the very expensive advertising campaigns, which recommend imported products ;
- **It is authentic** because expertises and periodic tests of quality control authorities make safe the authenticity of the spiritual content of the trade mark.



Figure 1 : The Hungarian quality trade mark

This trade mark meets the trend of development that producing company's trade mark (Milli milk) are pushed out by commercial trade mark (Cora milk) followed by the state quality certification, trade mark "Quality Food from Hungary".

The trade mark will be granted to about 120 food products (among them some unprocessed agricultural products : goose liver, green pepper, edible snail) until the end of 1999. The trade mark is granted (for three years) by the special commission certifying food, mandated by FVM.

The Hungarian government established beside the FVM the Agricultural Marketing Centre (AMC), an EU conform agency for collective agricultural marketing. The aim of this agency is to help Hungarian agricultural and food products to get on international markets, reinforcing their market positions and protection of internal market. It is the AMC which makes acting HIR program by its program-office, takes care of collecting traditional foods and their description meeting common criteria (historical, cultural, environmental, production conditions) submitting the descriptions to the scientific commission, publishing proceedings. It helps the activity of national council to spread these products on domestic markets (trade and catering industry). Applications to participate in HIR program can be done in product-groups in Table 1.

The task of AMC is the communication and PR activity concerning trade mark "Quality Food from Hungary". The trade mark office of AMC publishes the general requirements for certifying foods as quality foods and the professional break down of these requirements.

The processes in Hungary in the last two years – have taken over EU regulations on PDO, PGI, certificate of specific character into the Hungarian law and order ; to operate HIR program ; establishing trade mark "Quality Food from Hungary" – have made stronger the position of export product denominated *Hungaricum*s. *Hungaricum*s do not have an exclusive definition but depending on their character they meet the criteria either of PDO, PGI, or certificates of specific character and they can apply for trade mark "Quality Food from Hungary". They are included in the collective marketing program of AMC and with the help of marketing means of AMC their export competitiveness will get stronger both on traditional export markets (in the member states of EU) and on the new target-regions (Asia, Far-East, South-America).

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