

Perception of Slovak foodstuffs designated by protected geographical indication by Slovak consumers

SOŇA SUPEKOVÁ – MARIAN HONZA – DENISA KAČENOVÁ

Summary

Numbers of 300 men and 300 women of Slovak population were interviewed about European policy relating to protected geographical indication (PGI) designation, association of PGI to higher food quality perception and sustainability of production of such designated products in Slovak Republic. Also, knowledge about four Slovak PGI foodstuffs (Skalický trdelník, Slovenská bryndza, Slovenská parenica and Slovenský oštiepok) to be sold on the market in Slovakia has been ascertained. As found, knowledge about EU protection of foodstuffs by PDO (protected designation of origin) and PGI designations had 79% women and 66% men, 79% women and 60% men associated PDO and PGI designations to higher quality of foodstuffs, 83% women and 66% of men had an opinion that Slovak producers should continue in production of such products. In comparison to this, only 43% women and 32% men on average knew that some of Slovak foodstuffs had already been designated by PGI what was brought about probably due to the fact that all four products were registered during last two years. As also follows from the survey, women were, in general, more interested in PGI-designated foodstuffs in comparison to men.

Keywords

perception; protected geographical indication (PGI); food quality; Slovakian PGI foodstuffs

In 1992, the Council Regulation (EEC) No 2081/92 on protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs were entered into force to stimulate diversification of agricultural and food production, to achieve a better balance between supply and demand on the markets, as well as to stimulate a rural economy mainly in less favoured or remote areas by improving incomes of farmers and retaining a rural population in these areas [1]. After fourteen years, the regulation was replaced by Regulation (EC) No 510/2006, which improved some aspects of characterization and protection of agricultural products and foodstuffs [2]. By this regulation, two groups of products were designated as „protected designation of origin” (PDO) or „protected geographical indication” (PGI). The designation PDO means that a product originates from given region, specific place or country, quality of a product is given by special geographical environment and production, processing and preparation take place in the defined geographical area. The designation PGI means that a product

originates from given region, specific place or country, reputation or other characteristics are attributable to that geographical origin, and the production and/or processing and/or preparation take place in the defined geographical area. After the registration of PDO and PGI products in the Central register of protected designation of origin and protected geographical indications of EU, they are protected against direct and indirect commercial use by comparable products, or misuse, false and any other illegal manipulation, respectively [2]. However, to obtain this registration, an exact design, appearance and characteristics of products have to be defined as much as possible. Up to date, there are hundreds of such designated and protected products in the Register, e.g. cheeses Roquefort (PDO), Camembert de Normandie (PDO) and Parmigiano Reggiano (PDO), ham Prosciutto di Parma (PDO) and Prosciutto di San Daniele (PDO), sweets Jijona (PGI) and Pardubický perník (PGI), fish Třeboňský kapr (PGI), Polish cheese Oscypek (PDO) and Hungarian sausage Budapesti téliszalámi (PGI). So far,

Soňa Supeková, Marian Honza, Denisa Kačenová, VÚP Food Research Institute Bratislava, Priemyselná 4, SK – 824 75 Bratislava, Slovakia.

Correspondence author:

Soňa Supeková, e-mail: supekova@vup.sk

Slovak Republic has four foods registered as PGI products – Slovenská bryndza, Slovenský oštiepok, Slovenská parenica and Skalický trdelník.

Skalický trdelník is a fine bakery product of hollow cylindrical shape with an internal diameter of 3–5 cm and an external diameter of 6–10 cm. It is produced by winding soft dough, which has first been allowed to rise, onto a roller called a “trdlo”. After wound onto the roller, the dough is smeared with egg whites and sprinkled with chopped walnuts, almonds, or apricot kernels, respectively. Than, it is baked until golden and sprinkled with sugar – vanilla mixture.

Slovenská bryndza is a natural, white, mature, spreadable cheese, manufactured according to the traditional method, by milling a of matured sheep cheese or milling a mixture of sheep and cow cheese, however, percentage of sheep cheese have to be more than 50%.

Slovenská parenica is a steamed, lightly smoked cheese wound into two opposed rolls 6–8 cm in diameter and 5–8 cm high, forming “S”-shape bulk. Moreover, the rolls are bound with cheese string. Prior to rolled up, the cheese strip is 2–3 mm thick, 5–8 cm wide and 4–6 m long.

The last PGI product is Slovenský oštiepok characterized as a half-fat semi-hard cheese made of sheep milk or mixture of sheep and cow milk, which may be steamed or not steamed, smoked or not smoked. Slovenský oštiepok is produced either directly at a “salaš” (small-scale mountainside sheep farm), using the traditional on-farm method of production, or at dairies, using the industrial procedures of production. Slovenský oštiepok is characterized by special shape, similar to large egg or pinecone with surface relief decoration.

A common feature of all products to be desig-

nated by PDO and PGI indications is exceptional and unique quality. However, perception of food quality by consumers is different and depends strongly on personal preferences such as experience level, cultural influences, demographic and physiological characteristics [3], perceived product authenticity [4] and quality expectations. The latter may be affected by several factors, e.g. origin [5–8] brand name [9], price [10], nutritional information [11] and traditional process technology [12].

The aim of this work was assess the perception of food products designated by PGI indication by Slovak consumers.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

To obtain data on the relation of Slovak consumers to PDO and PGI designated foodstuffs, 300 men and 300 women were interviewed directly and by e-mail communications. Acquired data were processed by SPSS (SPSS, Chicago, Illinois, USA).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

First question was related to knowledge about EU protection of foodstuffs by PDO and PGI designations. Results are shown in Fig. 1. The percentage of 79% women and 66% men of Slovak population who knew this designation may be taken as high.

Second question was aimed at association of PDO and PGI designations to higher quality of foodstuffs. As follows from Fig. 2, 79% women and 60% men of Slovak population confirmed this

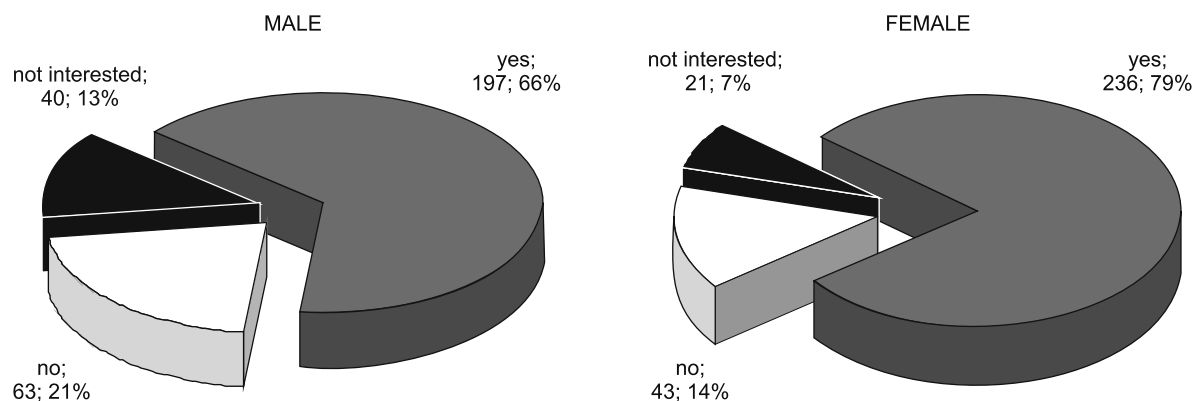


Fig. 1. Proportion of answers to the question: “Do you know that EU protects foodstuffs by PDO and PGI designations?”

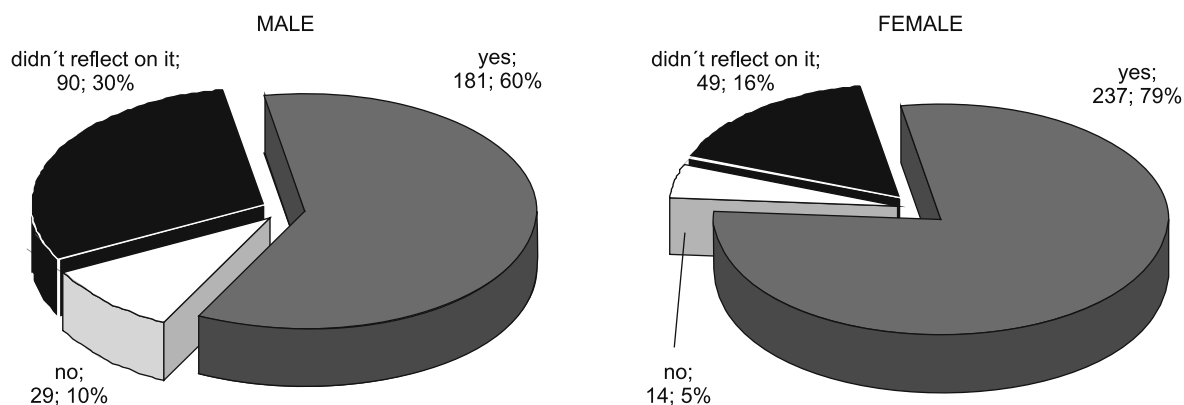


Fig. 2. Proportion of answers to the question: “If foodstuffs are designated by PGI, or PDO, does it mean for you higher quality in comparison to common foodstuffs?”

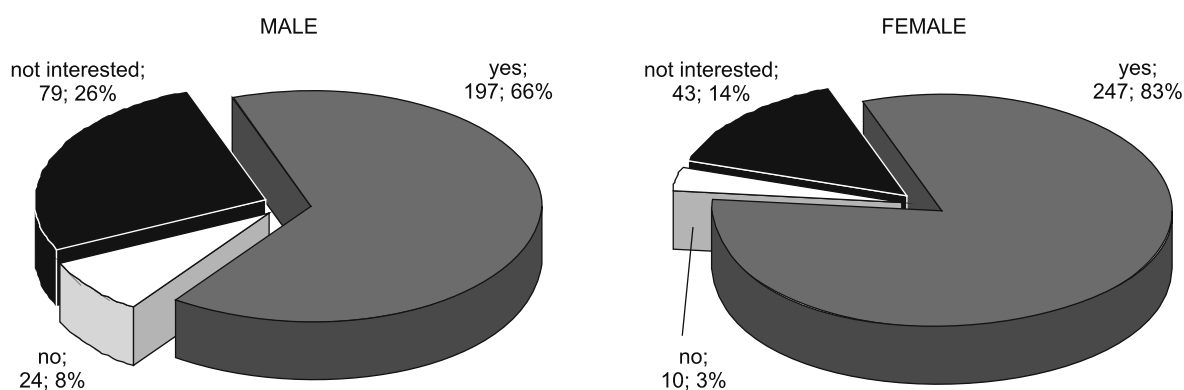


Fig. 3. Proportion of answers to the question: “Do you think that the Slovak producers of foodstuffs in Slovakia should continue in production of products to be designated by PDO and PGI?”

association which indicated a high level of confidence in such designated foods in spite of the fact that PDO and PGI convey valuable information to consumers only in specific cases [13].

Third question was oriented to the opinion about continuation of producers in the production of food products designated by PDO and PGI. As shown in Fig. 3, 83% women and 66% of men

were persuaded that producers in Slovakia should continue in the production of such products.

The last question was related to knowledge of Slovak consumers about Slovakian products designated by PGI. As follows from Tab. 1, all four products designated by PGI were well known, however, Skalický trdelník and Slovenská bryndza were by far more known in comparison to Sloven-

Tab. 1. Knowledge of Slovak consumers about Slovakian products designated by protected geographical indication (PGI).

| Sex | | Skalický trdelník | Slovenská bryndza | Slovenská parenica | Slovenský oštiepok |
|--------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Male | Number | 114 | 117 | 64 | 86 |
| | Proportion [%] | 38.0 | 39.0 | 21.3 | 28.7 |
| Female | Number | 150 | 156 | 93 | 119 |
| | Proportion [%] | 50.0 | 52.0 | 31.0 | 39.7 |

ská parenica and Slovenský oštiepok. This disproportion could be assigned to the fact that Skalický trdelník was the first Slovakian food product designated and Slovenská bryndza belongs already to national Slovakian food symbols for a long time. Relatively little knowledge about Slovakian PGI products was probably due to the fact that all four products were registered during last two years. As also follows from Tab. 1, women were, in general, more interested in PGI aspects and designated foodstuffs in comparison to men.

CONCLUSION

Analysis of knowledge about PGI designation and Slovak PGI foodstuffs showed that Slovak consumers perceive positively PGI designations and prefer strongly buying these products. Also, Slovak consumers think that such products should continue to be produced and they associate PGI designation with higher quality of foodstuffs. Women exhibited more interest in PGI designation, its association to foodstuffs quality and more knowledge about Slovak PGI food products in comparison to men.

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