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Enhancing sustainability and innovation through Geographical Indications in organic fruit breeding

This presentation explores the role of Geographical Indications (GIs) as drivers of innovation and sustainability in the organic fruit sector, focusing on the management of genetic resources. Moving beyond a purely technological approach to breeding, it emphasizes the social processes that accompany innovation, contributing to the transformation of the broader socio-technical system. In this context, GIs act as a form of social innovation by addressing specific social needs and generating positive changes within agricultural and rural communities, promoting rural development, community empowerment, and biodiversity conservation.

Breeding within GIs should not be viewed merely as an input but as a dynamic process that can shape the entire system. Notably, breeding practices in GIs challenge the dichotomy between conservation and innovation (Bowen & De Master, 2011). Although research has shown that GIs—particularly in the EU—are increasingly aligning with biodiversity goals, their impact on biodiversity varies depending, for instance, on whether they promote single or multiple varieties or techniques (Belletti et al., 2015; Bowen & Zapata, 2009). However, the role of GIs in fostering social innovation through breeding and biodiversity management remains underexplored.

This presentation addresses this gap by demonstrating how GIs contribute to collaborative governance and social innovation in organic fruit breeding. Two cases, identified within the Horizon Europe InnOBreed project, illustrate these processes:

1. Susina di Dro PDO (Italy): A participatory initiative focused on improving the local plum variety through genetic and sanitary selection, ensuring high-quality nursery materials while involving a wide range of stakeholders.

2. Sidra de Asturias PDO (Spain): A PDO for Asturian cider that involves over 70 traditional apple varieties, managed through a public-private partnership that fosters collaboration and biodiversity conservation.

Through these cases, we will illustrate how GIs localize production within specific environments and resources while promoting participatory approaches that engage farmers, researchers, and communities. By integrating local knowledge, ecological adaptation, and genetic diversity, GIs might support sustainable, resilient, and socially inclusive organic fruit breeding practices and management approaches, benefiting both producers and consumers.

Bibliographic references

Belletti, G., Marescotti, A., Sanz-Cañada, J., & Vakoufaris, H. (2015). Linking protection of geographical indications to the environment: Evidence from the European Union olive-oil sector. *Land Use Policy*, 48, 94–106. DOI:

Bowen, S., & De Master, K. (2011). New rural livelihoods or museums of production? Quality food initiatives in practice. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 27(1), 73–82. DOI:

Bowen, S., & Zapata, A. V. (2009). Geographical indications, terroir, and socioeconomic and ecological sustainability: The case of tequila. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 25, 108–119.

Please choose the main keywords of your contribution (with an X, unlimited number)

- Agriculture
- Biodiversity **X**
- Diversification
- Sustainability
- Innovation **X**
- Politics
- Quality
- Resilience
- Food System

Secondary keywords *

- Family Agriculture
- Urban Agriculture
- Agroecology
- Territorial Approach **X**
- Short Food Channels
- Consumm'actors
- Cultural Diversity
- Right to Food
- Circular Economy
- Gastronomy
- Social Inclusion **X**
- Geographical Indication
- Initiatives/Projects
- Mountain
- Tools
- Heritage
- Landscape



Origine
Diversité
Territoires

- Small producers
- Participatory Process **X**
- Network
- Traditional "Savoir-Faire"
- Food Security
- Valorisation Strategies
- Certification and Labelling
- Sustainable Tourism



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