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FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR FOOD MANUFACTURERS – EUROPEAN AND POLISH FOOD QUALITY SYSTEMS

In the European Union and Poland, one of the priorities within the framework of the policy of quality and distinguishing food products is to preserve regional traditions and customs. This is realized through European and Polish food quality systems, which aim to protect specific agricultural products and food, including traditional, regional and ecological food. This protection is based on high quality, a recipe that adds authenticity to products, as well as unique and unchanging character. For several years, there has been a growing interest in the European Union and Poland in high quality products with appropriate markings.

The aim of the article was to present European and Polish food quality systems and to indicate the possibility of financial support for food manufacturers within the framework of these systems.

Participation of Polish food manufacturers in programs for the development and maintenance of the quality of manufactured products and their distinctions is crucial to exist and stay in the highly globalized and competitive market. The geographical location of our country, rich cultural heritage, culinary tradition and an unpolluted natural environment are the advantages that undoubtedly contribute to the development of these systems. The purpose of supporting food quality systems is also evident by the involvement at the level of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and in activities of individual regions and entities applying for these quality certificates. It can be assumed (by observing the set requirements and reported needs of customers and available financial support options for food manufacturers) that the quantity of reported products within the framework of European and Polish quality systems will grow and be appreciated by customers and manufacturers.

Key words: *Financial Assistance, Food Producers, Food Quality Systems, European Union, Poland.*

В Європейському Союзі та Польщі одним із пріоритетів у рамках політики якості та розрізнення харчових продуктів є збереження регіональних традицій та звичаїв. Це реалізується за допомогою європейських та польських систем якості харчових продуктів, які спрямовані на захист конкретних сільськогосподарських продуктів та продуктів харчування, включаючи традиційні, регіональні та екологічні продукти харчування. Цей захист базується на високій якості, рецептурі, що додає справжності продуктам, а також унікальному та незмінному характеру. Протягом декількох років у Європейському Союзі та Польщі зростає інтерес до високоякісної продукції з відповідним маркуванням.

Метою статті було проаналізувати європейські та польські системи якості харчових продуктів і визначити можливість фінансової підтримки виробників харчових продуктів у рамках цих систем.

Участь польських виробників харчових продуктів у програмах з розвитку і підтримання якості виробленої продукції та їх відмінності має вирішальне значення для існування та утримання на високоглобалізованому та конкурентному ринку. Географічне розташування нашої країни, багата культурна спадщина, кулінарні традиції та незабруднене природне середовище є перевагами, які, безсумнівно, сприяють розвитку цих систем. Мета підтримки систем якості харчових продуктів також очевидна завдяки залученню на рівні Міністерства сільського господарства та розвитку сільських районів до діяльності окремих регіонів та суб'єктів, які подають заявки на отримання цих сертифікатів якості. Можна припустити (дотримуючись встановлених вимог, визначених потреб споживачів та доступних варіантів фінансової підтримки для виробників харчових продуктів), що кількість зареєстрованої продукції в рамках європейських та польських систем якості зростатиме та оцінюватиметься споживачами та виробниками.

Ключові слова: *фінансова допомога, виробники продуктів харчування, системи якості харчових продуктів, Європейський Союз, Польща.*

Introduction

In the era of progressing globalization and universal access to mass products, we can observe more and more intensive attempts to return to the roots, which are a source of diversity, constituting the rich culture of a given country [Grębowiec 2014]. People want products that are manufactured in the most environmentally friendly way, natural, free from artificial colors and additives.

Currently, it is noted that expectations and opinions of purchasers regarding the concept of food quality evolve in the opinion of consumers. There is a belief that good quality food is the food that does not come from intensive production methods, but from production systems positively received by the consumer – like organic farming [Dykiel et al. 2018] or with certificates and markings awarded to high-quality food.

Along with the development of the market, the internationalization of trade and increase in the number of links between entities involved in the production, processing and marketing of agri-food products, the risk of deterioration of food quality increases. This threat can occur at all stages of the food chain. Therefore, it

is necessary to create systems, in which all participants will have to meet established requirements to ensure higher quality parameters of the product [Krzyżanowski 2017]. The progressing globalization and internationalization of operations caused that the production of food and its exchange with foreign countries became a challenge for individual countries, including members of the European Union [Michalczyk 2014].

In the European Union and Poland, one of the priorities within the framework of the policy of quality and distinguishing food products is to preserve regional traditions and customs. This is realized through European and Polish food quality systems, which aim to protect specific agricultural products and food, including traditional, regional and ecological food. This protection is based on high quality, a recipe that adds authenticity to products, as well as unique and unchanging character. For several years, there has been a growing interest in the European Union and Poland in high quality products with appropriate markings.

The aim of the article was to present European and Polish food quality systems

and to indicate the possibility of financial support for food manufacturers within the framework of these systems.

European and Polish food quality systems

Today, an important goal of the Common Agricultural Policy is to conduct an agricultural policy that will be more environmentally friendly, as well as more effective both in economic and environmental terms [Grębowiec 2014].

In 1992, the European Union introduced European (community) food quality systems, among others the following systems:

- Protected Designations of Origin,
- Protected Geographical Indications,
- Traditional Specialty Guaranteed,
- Organic Farming.

The legal basis for the launch of these systems included three regulations (EEC Regulation 1991/1992) [Krzyżanowski 2017], and (currently) the Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council (EU) No. 1151/2002 of 21 November 2012 on quality systems for agricultural products and foodstuffs (Regulation, 2012).

In addition to European quality systems, which are binding in all EU member states, each country has the right to create its own innovative quality systems. In Poland, the national quality systems recognized by the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development are:

- „Quality Tradition” (JT),
- Quality Meat Program (QMP),
- Pork Quality System (PQS),
- Quality Assurance for Food Products (QAFP),
- Integrated Production (IP).

The aim of European and Polish food quality systems is to distinguish high-quality products and highlight the region, place of their origin as, well as traditional methods of their production and care for the natural environment. The main attribute of national quality systems is that the products participating in these systems are systematically controlled and certified by accredited control authorities. Giving products special markings (under the certification and labeling system) guarantees

their production in accordance with the rules of food quality systems, protects customers against mass production of poorer quality imitations of these products, provides clear and reliable information about their originality, creates opportunities for manufacturers to promote their products and enables protection against unfair competition and counterfeiting.

The rules for registration and protection are regulated at EU level by the Regulation (EU) No. 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 November, 2012 on quality systems for agricultural products and foodstuffs [www.produktytradycyjne-dobrepraktyki.pl].

1. European food quality systems

Protected Designation of Origin

(PDO) means the name of a region, a specific place or, in exceptional cases, a country, used to indicate an agricultural product or foodstuff originating from this area. The designation is given to a product, whose all raw materials and the entire technological process take place in this specific geographical area and whose quality or characteristics are (mainly or exclusively) related to this particular geographical environment and its natural and human factors. The relationship with a region, a specific place or a country that is used to designate an agricultural product or foodstuff must be strong enough and ensure the production of a given product is impossible in other places [<http://malopolskie.ksow.pl>]. In Poland, this quality mark has 9 products [http://www.produktyregionalne.pl/edc_media/List/Item-36/TinyFiles/Produkty-ze-znakiem-chnp.pdf].

Protected Geographical Indication

(PGI) – The product has a special quality, reputation or other features attributed to its geographical origin [<http://certification.co>]. In addition, at least one production stage takes place in the defined geographical area. Currently, 18 products have this indication in Poland [http://www.produktyregionalne.pl/edc_media/List/Item-82/TinyFiles/Produkty-ze-znakiem-chog.pdf].

Traditional Specialty Guaranteed

(TSG) means a traditional agricultural product

or foodstuff recognized by the Community due to its specific character. "Specific character" means a characteristic or combination of characteristics that clearly distinguish an agricultural product or a foodstuff from similar products or foodstuffs in the same category. In practice, this means that the product must have a traditional composition, production takes place with the use of traditional raw materials, production method, processing, and preparation for sale reflects the tradition in the method of production, the product has been in the market for at least 30 years. The name of the product from the TSG must be specific or express the specific character of an agricultural product or a foodstuff [http://malopolskie.ksow.pl/fileadmin/user_upload/malopolskie/pliki/O_systemach_jakosci_zienosci_vademecum.pdf]. In Poland, 6 products have this mark. [http://www.produktyregionalne.pl/edc_media/List/Item-83/TinyFiles/Produkty-ze-znakiem-gts.pdf].

Organic farming means a farming system with sustainable plant and animal production within a farm. It is based on technologically unprocessed biological and mineral products. The basic principle is the rejection of agricultural, veterinary and food chemistry in the food production process. Products are manufactured excluding GMOs and other derivatives of these organisms. They are not treated with ionizing radiation and they are processed only to the necessary extent with the use of ecological methods.

The so-called organic food defines only certified food - guaranteeing high product quality. Certification ensures that the purchased goods come from processors and manufacturers, who use ecological methods at all stages of production, participate in the control system and have a certification of the certification authority [Sikorska 2017].

Currently, there are 13 authorized Certification Bodies in Organic Farming in Poland (as of 24 September 2019) [<https://www.gov.pl/web/rolnictwo/jednostki-certyfikujace>].

2. Polish food quality systems

„Quality Tradition” quality system is a system, in which raw materials of traceable origin, not containing GMOs, are

used for production. The system focuses on product quality, i.e. the acceptance of high-quality products resulting from their traditional character, having special quality, reputation or other features that distinguish them from others in the same category. The manufacturer declares the maintenance of higher production standards or exceptional product features. Manufacturers are required to have a certificate of compliance confirming the production of the product in accordance with the specification. Products are controlled in order to ensure that the applied method of production is in accordance with the method declared in the application [Podkarpackie Regional Chamber and Local Product <http://www.produktyregionalne.pl/jakosc.html>].

There are 5 accredited and authorized by the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development certification bodies. They are authorized to control compliance with the specifics of "Quality Tradition" [<http://www.produktyregionalne.pl/jakosc.php?body=article&name=jednostki-certificatesujace&lang=pl>], and 299 products with this quality mark (as of November 2, 2019) [http://www.produktyregionalne.pl/edc_media/List/Item-33/TinyFiles/Tabela-jt-www-list-November-2019.pdf].

Integrated Production (IP) is a modern and developing cultivation system that takes into account the expectations of customers in relation to not only attractive-looking fruits, vegetables and other agricultural products, but also products with high qualitative values. The Integrated Production was recognized by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development as the national food quality system on 14 June 2007. The basis of the Integrated Production's system are correctly selected elements such as: correct crop rotation and agricultural engineering, rational fertilization based on real demand of plants and the use of plant protection products in justified situations that pose the least risk to human and animal health and the environment. This method does not reject chemical protection of plants and the use of mineral fertilizers. The general rule is to use as few plant protection products as possible, but as much as necessary. Within

the framework of the system, the State Plant Protection and Seeds Service control the entire production process until harvest. The Integrated Production takes into account ecological targets, such as the protection of the agricultural landscape and biodiversity.

[http://malopolskie.ksow.pl/fileadmin/user_upload/malopolskie/pliki/O_systemach_jakosci_zywnosci_vademecum.pdf].

In the Integrated Production's system, 9 certification bodies implement the certification process [<https://piorin.gov.pl/integrowana-produkcja/>].

QMP certification system (Quality Meat Program) was created by the Polish Association of Beef Cattle Manufacturers with a view to supporting the production of safe and good culinary beef. In 2008, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development recognized it as the official national beef quality system. The QMP system is a voluntary system, open to manufacturers of beef cattle, manufacturers of feed, livestock carriers and meat processors, who are subject to the control of an independent certification body. Everyone, who works in the QMP system, must strictly comply with specific rules (QMP Standards). Compliance with these rules is annually controlled by an independent certification body. The QMP system's standards define the entire beef production process, from indicating cattle breeds to the best meat, to packaging and labeling. Thanks to them, beef with the QMP certificate, which goes to trade and on the tables, is always tasty tender, juicy, soft. It comes from a reliable source, regardless of the region of origin [<http://www.pzpbm.pl/QMP>].

In the QMP system, the certification process is carried out by 3 certification bodies [<http://www.pzpbm.pl/node/152?language=pl>].

Pork Quality System (PQS) was developed by the Polish Pig Breeders and Producers Association „POLSUS” and the “Polish Meat” Association. On 11 December 2009, it was recognized by the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development as the national food quality system. PQS is a

complex system for the production of high-quality pork. Its purpose is the production of lean and low-fat pork, while maintaining important meat quality parameters for consumers and processors. The system includes the stage of primary production (breeding and production of pigs), pre-slaughter circulation and processing. The standards of conduct, developed for the PQS system at each of these stages, affect the final quality of the product and guarantee obtaining pork meat characterized by a special, high quality. Meat produced in the PQS system is characterized by a number of favorable parameters that increase its durability, culinary and processing usefulness, as well as palatability and attractiveness for consumers. The system is voluntary and open, i.e. any participant from the production chain, who voluntarily decides to comply with the additional requirements specified for each stage of production, can join it. The system guarantees reliability, both in terms of high quality of the product and its traceability, because it is confirmed by the control of an independent certification body

[<https://www.polsus.pl/index.php/inicjatywy-i-projekty/system-jakosci-wieprzowiny-pqs-pork-quality-system>].

In the Pork Quality System (PQS), the certification process is carried out by two certification bodies [<https://www.polsus.pl/index.php/pork-quality-system>].

Quality Assurance for Food Products (QAFP) was developed by the Union of Meat Industry Manufacturers and Employers. On 11 December 2009, the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development gave this system the status of a national food quality system.

Pork meat produced under the QAFP has a special quality that distinguishes it from other products in the same category. The production stages are covered by the standards, ranging from breeding, animal nutrition and conditions of breeding, through slaughter, cutting, processing, transport, packaging and packaging, to storage and sale. The QAFP is a transparent system. It provides the ability to identify (fully) the manufactured product at each of the stages

of production. The production of a given product in accordance with the quality standards of the system is verified by an independent control body. Manufacturers are required to have a certificate of compliance [http://malopolskie.ksow.pl/fileadmin/user_upload/malopolskie/pliki/O_systemach_jakosci_zywnosci_vademecum.pdf].

Only one body deals with the certification under the Quality Assurance for Food Products (QAFP) [<https://www.gov.pl/web/rolnictwo/system-gwarantowane-jakosci-zywnosci-qafp>].

In summary, the national systems accepted by the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development can be divided into two groups. In the first group, the value added of the product is widely understood tradition, and in the second group, the special quality is the result of cooperation and compliance with the rules by system participants at individual stages of production [Szteyn 2014].

3. Financial support for food manufacturers under food quality systems

Food quality systems may be qualified for financial support and recognized as national systems, provided that they meet certain criteria set out in the Regulation of the Council (EC) No. 1698/2005.

Financial support for food manufacturers is available, among others, within the framework of Action 3 - Quality Systems for Agricultural Products and Foodstuffs, Measure 3.1 - support for joining quality systems within the framework of RDP 2014-2020.

Applicants, who produce agricultural products or foodstuffs for human consumption under the quality system that did not receive this kind of support for the same agricultural product or foodstuff under the action "Participation of farmers in food quality systems", may apply for financial support covered by RDP 2007-2013.

Financial support is granted to food manufacturers, who will provide a copy of a certificate of compliance or a quality certificate confirming the compliance of the product's production process with the specification of a given quality system (valid

for a period of at least 14 days during the period of assistance, for which the payment application is submitted).

Financial assistance may include the following eligible costs:

- costs of control (including specialist tests and analyzes) and certifications connected with the issue of a certificate or a quality certificate during the assistance period,
- costs of a membership fee for a group of producers implementing activities related to the quality system, for which a payment application is submitted (incurred during the period of assistance),
- costs of purchasing specialized publications connected with conducting production within the scope of the quality system (covered by the payment application),
- costs of purchasing pheromone, colored and sticky traps.

Financial support for food manufacturers takes the form of reimbursement of a part of the project's eligible costs (refund) incurred during the agreed periods of assistance, in accordance with the provisions in force during the call. The total amount of assistance cannot be higher than the equivalent of 2000 EUR per farm per year [<https://www.arimr.gov.pl>].

Additionally, food manufacturers can apply for financial support in the Rural Development Program (RDP) for 2014-2020: Action 9 - Creation of producer groups and producer organizations, Action 10 - Agri-environment-climate action, Action 11 - Organic farming, Action 3 - Quality systems for agricultural products and foodstuffs; Measure 3.1 - Support for joining quality systems, Measure 3.2 - Support of information and promotion activities carried out by producer groups in the internal market [<https://www.arimr.gov.pl/pomoc-unijna/prow-2014-2020.html>].

Summary

In highly developed countries, especially taking into account their wealthier inhabitants, there is a tendency to move away from the consumption produced on an industrial scale and mass food and choose

local products of known origin, which (although they often have a higher price) are generally healthier, tastier and more original [Grębowiec 2014].

Participation of Polish food manufacturers in programs for the development and maintenance of the quality of manufactured products and their distinctions is crucial to exist and stay in the highly globalized and competitive market. The geographical location of our country, rich cultural heritage, culinary tradition and an unpolluted natural environment are the advantages that undoubtedly contribute to the

development of these systems [Michalczyk 2014]. The purpose of supporting food quality systems is also evident by the involvement at the level of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and in activities of individual regions and entities applying for these quality certificates. It can be assumed (by observing the set requirements and reported needs of customers and available financial support options for food manufacturers) that the quantity of reported products within the framework of European and Polish quality systems will grow and be appreciated by customers and manufacturers.

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