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# Role of Region of Epirus at the certification of Kashkaval of Pindos as PGI

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## Abstract

Region of Epirus (Greece) has a longstanding tradition in the production of a broad variety of traditional artisanal cheeses, well known for their unique distinctive texture, flavor and aroma. The fact that these characteristics are clearly connected with their production terroir has emerged the importance of supporting their proper certification and promotion in order to maintain the tradition of producing these local cheeses.

In this context, Kashkaval of Pindos -a traditional paste filata cheese produced seasonally in the mountains of Pindos as a farmhouse product- constitutes an intriguing case. During the last years its production and marketing has attracted an increasing interest as a consequence of an increase of consumers' demand. This has prompted the Governor of Epirus to initiate a series of activities performed by the Directorate of Rural Economy and Veterinary of Ioannina, concerning the:

- determination of its physicochemical characteristics during ripening. The study was implemented by scientists of the Hellenic Agricultural Organization-DIMITRA, Department of Dairy Research. The respective results were published in the Journal of Food Research 2020 (Vol 9, No6).
- collection of numerous historic data -retrieved from books, references and scientific journals- concerning its production technology, fame and chronicle of spread into Balkan and Middle East countries.
- gathering and creation of Kashkaval of Pindos producers' union, which in collaboration with the Agricultural University of Athens composed an application dossier for the product's certification as PGI (Protected Geographical Identification). The application was submitted to the Greek Ministry of Rural Development and Foods, which has evaluated-accepted the request. Currently the application is under evaluation by the EU authorities.

In addition:

- the Department of Tourism of the Region of Epirus constantly promotes the production of local cheeses such as Kashkaval of Pindos, in the terms of its participation in International, European and National Food Fairs and Exhibitions.

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-the Region's Directorate of Development Planning has financed the activities of the Kashkaval of Pindos producers' union, in the terms of an Epirus RIS specific call dedicated to finance the production-promotion of local traditional products.

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