

Novel conditions or just new paths for re-territorialization through Geographical Indication: Case study of Yamanashi wine GI in Japan

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(PHOTOS : H. FEUER)



Interrogating the GI impacts...

GI, a juridical tool to protect the name

With the capacity to differentiate the product and create value

Subject to the capacity of the stakeholders to collectively manage the common resource that is the GI (the reputation of the product)



...in a specific context: Japanese wine sector

History

- Centuries of *budou-shu* production
- Wine production since the Meiji era (mid-19th century)
- A wine boom from 1998

The dominant system: the vinification of imported grape juice concentrate

But a growing development of “Japanese wine” and an evolution of Law

A favorable context for the development of GI wines ?
What impacts ?

Start of GIs in the wine sector

- Yamanashi wine GI in 2013
- 4 others from 2018 to 2021



Results – Yamanashi wine: An inclusive and downstream-driven GI

GI registration was initiated by the Yamanashi Prefecture Wine Manufacturers' Association

- led at that time by Mercian (Kirin Holdings), now managed by Suntory

Several wineries, still experimenting with different grape varieties and techniques

- Very inclusive Specifications

Complex relationships between wineries and grape farmers

- Wineries: consider grape farmers as substitutable suppliers of raw materials
- Grape farmers: very reluctant to enter the wine industry when the table grape market is very lucrative

Origin of Grapes	100% Yamanashi Prefecture
Varieties of Grapes	42 varieties, including hybrids
Sugar adding	Allowed: 10g/100ml for Koshu, 6g/100ml for Vinifera, 8g/100ml for other varieties
Production area	Entire Yamanashi Prefecture
Specificity	Organoleptic: Well-balanced wine with clear tastes and aromas Chemical: Alcohol 8.5-20.0%



Results: a GI that can bounce back from changes in the sector

Limits of « spot markets » between grape farmers and wineries

- New forms of contracts, increasingly advantageous to grape growers

New forms of horizontal cooperation between wineries and with the smaller winegrowers

Yamanashi grape producers' new innovative capacities in producing grape varieties more suitable for winemaking

Development of agri-tourism and wine festivals in the region, which benefits from its proximity to Tokyo



Discussion

A process of relocalization, which may lead to a « re-territorialization »?

A need to go further in reducing power asymmetry

Product specificity, Specification and the construction of a scarce territorial resource: a key process in GI development

