

# IOTA

**Institute of Organic Training & Advice**

Cow Hall : Newcastle on Clun : Shropshire : SY7 8PG

Office tel: 01547 528 546 : Email: [iota@organicadvice.org.uk](mailto:iota@organicadvice.org.uk)

---

## **IOTA Monthly Updates: February 2011** **The Protected Food Name (PFN) scheme**

**Fay Francis**

I have been an ADAS consultant for 25 years and for 99% of this time I have been based in the furthest reaches of West Wales. During my time with ADAS, I have specialised in the following areas; organics, agri-environmental and the rural economy. However last year I was given the opportunity to be trained in the European Union Protected Food Names scheme. I thought I would take this opportunity to let other consultants know about what I believe is a very interesting, slightly different and hopefully growing area of work.

### **What is the Protected Food Name scheme?**

The Protected Food Name (PFN) scheme <http://www.euprotectedfoodnames.org.uk/> was established by the European Union to maintain and enhance one of Europe's great cultural assets: the diversity of its traditional food and drink products. By doing so it aimed to protect employment in farming and related industries.

While Britain has relatively recently caught on to the value of its own local and regional food, many regional specialities from Continental Europe e.g. cheeses, air dried hams and ciders, have for decades enjoyed a valuable cachet in global markets worldwide. One result of this is that other producers both in Europe and further afield have been able to exploit that reputation with often cheaper copycat products. This creates two problems. For producers of the "real thing" it damages their sales and, in case of inferior copies, can undermine the standing of the true product.

So in 1992, the EU established the PFN scheme. The PFN system created levels of legal protection for which individual producers or groups of producers could apply. Two of these are based on territory, that is, the source of ingredients or the region in which the food is made. The other is based on methods of production – techniques that are rooted in tradition within a particular region or country. There are three symbols or logos to look out for.

(see below)

- **Protected Geographical Indication (PGI)**



The product must be produced or processed or prepared in the designated geographical area. It will have specific characteristics or a special reputation linking it to the given area, and at least one stage of production must be carried out in that area. Unlike PDO products (see below), raw materials may come from another region. In the UK, examples range from Welsh Lamb to Arbroath Smokies to Dorset Blue cheese to Gloucestershire Cider.

- **Protected Designation of Origin (PDO)**



The product must have been produced and processed and prepared in the designated geographical area. The quality of characteristics of the product are essentially due to the terrain of the area in which it is produced and the abilities of the producers in that area. One example is Shetland Lamb: only lamb born, raised and slaughtered in the Shetlands and meeting specific quality requirements can carry the Shetland Lamb name and the PDO logo.

- **Traditional Speciality Guaranteed. (TSG)**



Only a genuinely traditional product can apply for TSG status. The product will have distinctive features linked to the use of traditional raw materials or stemming from traditional methods or production or processing. An example is Traditional Farmfresh Turkey from the UK – birds raised slowly using a specific feed and housing regime and slaughtered and hung to a particular specification.

In each case to gain PFN protection the producer(s) must go through a rigorous and time consuming application process. The key element is drawing up a product specification spelling out the detail of how and where the product must be produced. This has to be vetted by both National and EU authorities but once approved it provides the basis for legal protection under the scheme. The whole process can take at least two years and includes periods of going out to both National and EU consultation.

In the new world of booming farmers markets, supermarket local sourcing and a burgeoning Slow Food movement, the EU's PFN scheme has been sorely underplayed in the UK compared to some of our EU counterparts such as France, Italy and Spain. However things are changing. Consumers have never been so receptive to the idea of "real" local and traditional food and capturing this mood, more producers are getting together to apply for PDO, PGI and TSG status for their products.

Over the next year or so, more than 40 British specialities are set to join the 42 current UK PFN products. In Wales the Welsh Assembly is supporting up to seven applications during the next two years and these applications will be administered by ADAS. Currently Wales can only claim two Protected Food Names – Welsh Lamb and Welsh Beef – both have PGI status. Irene Bocchetta (ADAS) has been responsible for promoting and administering the EU scheme in England and she is now training me so that I can be the first point of call for any applications in Wales.

If any consultants or their clients would like further information regarding the scheme and the application process, please contact me at [fay.francis@adas.co.uk](mailto:fay.francis@adas.co.uk) or contact me by telephone: 01239 654044, mobile 07776170662

*Fay Francis is an Accredited Member of IOTA, based in Wales.*