

The role of producers' associations in the valorisation of traditional products: an Italian North-West poultry and rabbit breeds consortium

Lazzaroni C., Moriano G.

in

Olaizola A. (ed.), Boutonnet J.P. (ed.), Bernués A. (ed.).
Mediterranean livestock production: uncertainties and opportunities

Zaragoza : CIHEAM / CITA / CITA
Options Méditerranéennes : Série A. Séminaires Méditerranéens; n. 78

2008
pages 267-271

Article available on line / Article disponible en ligne à l'adresse :

<http://om.ciheam.org/article.php?IDPDF=800275>

To cite this article / Pour citer cet article

Lazzaroni C., Moriano G. **The role of producers' associations in the valorisation of traditional products: an Italian North-West poultry and rabbit breeds consortium.** In : Olaizola A. (ed.), Boutonnet J.P. (ed.), Bernués A. (ed.). *Mediterranean livestock production: uncertainties and opportunities*. Zaragoza : CIHEAM / CITA / CITA, 2008. p. 267-271 (Options Méditerranéennes : Série A. Séminaires Méditerranéens; n. 78)



<http://www.ciheam.org/>
<http://om.ciheam.org/>

The role of Producers' Associations in the valorisation of traditional products: An Italian North-West poultry and rabbit breeds Consortium

C. Lazzaroni* and G. Moriano**

*Department of Animal Science, University of Torino, via L. da Vinci 44, 10095 Grugliasco, Italy

**Consortium for Protection of Piemontese Fawn Hen, Saluzzo White Hen and Carmagnola Grey Rabbit, Asproavic Piemonte, via S. Pellico 10, 10022 Carmagnola, Italy

SUMMARY – The valorisation of traditional methods of production can be useful not only for the survival and recovery of local breeds but also for economic purposes and to guarantee higher incomes to breeders interested in a more sustainable livestock production. To achieve such objectives requires time and money to support the breeders, as well as an organized structure to market and promote the products. The amount of local breeds still reared in Italy is few in number: in the North West (Piemonte region) there are only two poultry breeds (the Piemontese Fawn Hen and the Saluzzo White Hen) and one rabbit breed (the Carmagnola Grey Rabbit). After years devoted to increasing the numbers of these animals as well as improving their productive performances, now a Producers' Association has been established to improve the marketing strategies for these three breeds.

Key words: Meat products, local breeds, Piemontese Fawn Hen, Saluzzo White Hen, Carmagnola Grey Rabbit.

RESUME – "Le rôle des Associations de Producteurs pour la valorisation des produits traditionnels : Un Consortium du Nord-Ouest de l'Italie pour les races de poulets et de lapins". La valorisation des productions traditionnelles est utile non seulement pour la survie et la sauvegarde des races locales mais surtout pour des motifs économiques et pour garantir de meilleurs revenus aux éleveurs qui réalisent une production plus durable. Pour la réalisation de ces objectifs il est nécessaire de disposer de temps et de fonds pour aider les éleveurs, et en même temps d'une structure organisationnelle pour commercialiser et faire connaître les produits. Concernant les poulets et lapins, les races locales aujourd'hui élevées sont peu nombreuses : dans le Nord-Ouest de l'Italie (Région du Piémont) il y a seulement deux races de poulets (Poule Blonde du Piémont et Poule Blanche de Saluzzo) et une race de lapins (Lapin Gris de Carmagnola). Suite aux années consacrées à augmenter le nombre et les performances productives de ces animaux, a été fondée aujourd'hui une Association de Producteurs concernant ces trois races pour améliorer les stratégies de commercialisation.

Mots-clés : Produits d'origine animale, races locales, Poule Blonde du Piémont, Poule Blanche de Saluzzo, Lapin Gris de Carmagnola.

Introduction

The survival and rescue of local breeds, as a more sustainable livestock production system, can only be obtained if the breeders' income is guaranteed. The valorisation of traditional methods of production is one of the steps needed to achieve this objective, even if this requires time and money to support breeders, as well as an organized structure to market and promote the products.

There are few local breeds of poultry and rabbit still reared in Europe. In fact, after years of carelessness in favour of intensive production using selected crossbreed, it is only recently that the consumers have rediscovered the traditional produce, through the higher attention paid to quality and to old and traditional tastes and dishes.

In the North-West of Italy (Piemonte region) there are few local poultry and rabbit breeds still reared: the Piemontese Fawn Hen, the Saluzzo White Hen and the Carmagnola Grey Rabbit (Errante, 1998, 2002), that have been added to the official lists of the traditional products, first of the Piemonte region (BURP, 2001) and then of Italy (MiPAF, 2002), with another 3558 different agro-industrial products (of which only 52 are from poultry or rabbit). Additionally, for the safeguard of these breeds two Slow Food Presidia have been also created: one for poultry and one for rabbit (www.slowfoodfoundation.com).

Materials and methods

After years devoted to improving the numbers and the productive performances of such animals, a number of very interesting results have been obtained (Lazzaroni *et al.*, 2000, 2002, 2003; di Francesco *et al.*, 2002; Lazzaroni, 2002; Lazzaroni and Biagini, 2002a,b; Falciola *et al.*, 2003; Lazzaroni and Luzi, 2004; Toscano Pagano and Lazzaroni, 2004; Lazzaroni and Moriano, 2005). Recently, for the three breeds a producers' association has been established, to improve the marketing strategies: the "Consortium for Protection of Piemontese Fawn Hen, Saluzzo White Hen and Carmagnola Grey Rabbit".

The aims of the Consortium are: (i) the protection of biodiversity of the local traditional breeds; (ii) the preservation of the purebred Carmagnola Grey Rabbits; (iii) the valorisation and promotion of the local breeds productions; (iv) the technical assistance for the partners; (v) the application of the production rules for the involved breeds among the partners; (vi) the labelling of the slaughtered animals; and (vii) the inspection and checking of the production, transformation and commercialisation stages.

One of the first steps of the Consortium, established in 2005 and containing at the present around 30 poultry and rabbit breeders from the North-West of Italy (Piemonte region), was to carry out a market study, in order to know the number and the rate of production of the potential partners. This was followed by the registration of a brand name, to make it easier to distinguish the products on the market, and the drafting of production rules (both for poultry and rabbit breeders), to guarantee the consumer about the production methods. There were then further studies on the possibility of improving the marketing strategies and increasing the number of saleable products.

For the development of the market of local breeds reared by traditional methods it is important to be able to sell not only the fresh meat, or the entire fresh carcass, but also portioned products stored under vacuum or modified atmosphere packaging, as well as in the form of ready-to-cook and ready-to-eat products, more suited to the present habits and life style of consumers.

Results and discussion

The potential structure of the Consortium, in terms of distribution of farmers according to the reared breed, so as the number of heads reared each year and the breed market percentage is reported in Table 1.

Table 1. Potential Consortium structure and market

Breeds	Breeders (n)	Estimated production (heads/year)	Breed's market (%)
Piemontese Fawn Hen	140	70,000	30
Saluzzo White Hen	50	5,000	70
Carmagnola Grey Rabbit	18	5,000	80

The numbers are encouraging for the future of the Consortium, testifying both the consumers' interest for this kind of breeds (high number of reared animals) and the possibility of increasing the number of partners, along with an improvement of the Consortium activities.

The productive rules set up for the Consortium's partners concern several aspects (farm organisation, barn and cage characteristics, animals and feeds to be utilised, rearing and feeding techniques, health therapy, etc.), but are particularly characterised by the slaughtering requirements in term of age of animals, their live weight, and kind of products obtainable (Table 2), so as by the labelling rules.

Table 2. Consortium slaughtering requirement and classification

Breeds	Animal age (d)	Live weight (kg)	Carcass weight (kg)	Carcass class
Piemontese Fawn Hen	>120	1.5-2	1.350	1
		2-2.5	1.350-1.600	2
		>2.5	>1.600	3
Saluzzo White Hen	>120	1.5-2	1.350	1
		2-2.5	1.350-1.600	2
		>2.5	>1.600	3
Carmagnola Grey Rabbit	>90	>3	>1.800	1

For the development of the market several products have been tested. Attention has been focussed particularly on the ready-to-eat products, to examine the possibility of better utilising the produced meat, without then being linked to the productive cycles, and to extend the products shelf-life.

The first chosen ready-to-eat products to be tested are linked to the traditional utilisation of such meats and are: cooked meat in oil (breast and leg) obtained from the Saluzzo White Hen or from the Carmagnola Grey Rabbit, meat sauce (meat and tomato) and pâté (meat and liver) obtained from the Carmagnola Grey Rabbit.

For each product different traditional recipes have been tested by expert gastronomists to choose those more suitable to the taste of today's consumers, and now the products are present on the market (Table 3).

Table 3. Consortium products ingredients and suggested utilisation

Breeds	Products	Ingredients	Use
Saluzzo White Hen	Meat in oil	Saluzzo White Hen meat, olive oil, raspberry vinegar, salt	Hors d'oeuvre, served alone or with salad and balsamic vinegar
Carmagnola Grey Rabbit	Meat in oil	Carmagnola Grey Rabbit meat (73%), olive oil, butter, onion, white wine vinegar, black pepper, garlic, natural aroma, salt	Hors d'oeuvre, to be served with corn salad and balsamic vinegar
	Meat sauce	Tomato, Carmagnola Grey Rabbit meat (45%), extra vergine olive oil, onion, parsley, garlic, salt	Dressing for pasta, preferably fresh tagliatelle
	Pâté	Carmagnola Grey Rabbit meat (65%) and liver (22%), onion, bacon, extra vergine olive oil, white wine vinegar, salt, carrots, celery	On warm toasts or as vol-au-vent stuff

At present, in one year of activity, the Consortium has been able to produce and commercialise a good amount of these ready-to-eat products (Table 4).

Table 4. Consortium ready-to-eat production

Products	Pots (n)	Pot weight (g)
Saluzzo White Hen meat in oil	1500	300
Carmagnola Grey Rabbit meat in oil	300	280
Carmagnola Grey Rabbit meat sauce	3000	180
Carmagnola Grey Rabbit pâté	4000	90

Some of them have been also tested by the consumers, showing a high acceptance rate in a sensory evaluation test using a hedonic rating on a 5 point scale (1 = dislike; 5 = high appreciation). In fact 70% or more of the consumers' answers are over the mean value: 68.9% for the Saluzzo White Hen meat in oil (n = 100), 81.1% for the Carmagnola Grey Rabbit meat sauce (n = 200), and 75.5% for the Carmagnola Grey Rabbit pâté (n = 100) (Table 5).

Table 5. Consumers' test answers for the Consortium ready-to-eat products

Products	Consumers' answers (%)				
	1	2	3	4	5
Saluzzo White Hen meat in oil	1.6	4.8	23.8	31.7	38.1
Carmagnola Grey Rabbit meat sauce	2.4	3.6	13.0	36.7	44.4
Carmagnola Grey Rabbit pâté	0.0	2.0	22.4	42.9	32.7

Conclusions

The results obtained are encouraging, and more products are going to be tested (cooked salami obtained from the Piemontese Fawn Hen, etc.). This allowed producers to better utilise their production and consequently increase their income. A web site has also been opened (www.asproavic.it), to increase the awareness of the Consortium and to publish its activities.

References

- BURP (2001). *Bollettino Ufficiale Regione Piemonte*, 10(suppl.), 7 March 2001.
- di Francesco, G., Falciola, R., Lazzaroni, C., Moriano, G. and Regis, E. (eds) (2002). La Bionda e la Bianca. Storia e futuro delle galline Bionda Piemontese e Bianca di Saluzzo e Cavour. *La Bionda, la Bianca e il Grigio*, Vol. 2, Asproavic Piemonte, Carmagnola (Italy).
- Errante, J. (ed.) (1998). Patrimonio zootecnico del Piemonte e della Valle d'Aosta; Razze animali autoctone. *Quaderni della Regione Piemonte Agricoltura*, 13(suppl.). Available at: <http://www.regione.piemonte.it/agri/biodiversita/zootecnia/schede.htm>
- Errante, J. (ed.) (2002). *Le razze autoctone Piemontesi: Situazione e interventi di tutela*. Available at: <http://www.dsz.unito.it/razzeautoctone/index.html>
- Falciola, R., Lazzaroni, C., Moriano, G. and Regis, E. (eds) (2003). Il Grigio. Storia e futuro del coniglio Grigio di Carmagnola. *La Bionda, la Bianca e il Grigio*, Vol. 3, Asproavic Piemonte, Carmagnola (Italy).
- Lazzaroni, C. (2002). The Carmagnola Grey Rabbit. In: Rabbit Genetic Resources in Mediterranean Countries, Khalil, M.H. and Baselga, M. (eds). *Options Méditerranéennes, Series B*, 38: 141-150. Available at: <http://www.iamz.ciheam.org/medrabbbit/docs/carmagn.pdf>
- Lazzaroni, C., Benfatti, G., Androne, A. and Biagini, D. (2000). Adattabilità del coniglio all'ingrasso a diverse tipologie di allevamento. In: *Atti Convegno Nazionale "Parliamo di... Allevamento e Benessere Animale"*, Fossano (Italy), 14-15 October 1999, pp. 205-208. Available at: <http://www.dsz.unito.it/parliamodi/Parliamo di... 2000.pdf>
- Lazzaroni, C. and Biagini, D. (2002a). Meat production in the Carmagnola Grey Rabbit: Different housing systems and sex effect. In: *Abstracts 2nd Meeting Working Group 5 "Meat Quality and Safety"-COST Action 848 "Multi-facetted Research in Rabbits: A model to Develop a Healthy and Safe Production in Respect with Animal Welfare"*, Athens (Greece), 11-14 April 2002.
- Lazzaroni, C. and Biagini, D. (2002b). Allevamento rurale per il recupero delle razze autoctone: Il coniglio Grigio di Carmagnola. In: *Atti Convegno Nazionale "Parliamo di... Zootecnica e Sviluppo Sostenibile"*, Fossano (Italy), 11-12 October 2001, pp. 235-238. Available at: <http://www.dsz.unito.it/parliamodi/Parliamo di... 2002.pdf>
- Lazzaroni, C., Biagini, D. and Moriano, G. (2002). Allevamento rurale per il recupero delle razze autoctone: La gallina Bionda Piemontese, ecotipo di Cuneo. In: *Atti Convegno Nazionale "Parliamo di... Zootecnica e Sviluppo Sostenibile"*, Fossano (Italy), 11-12 October 2001, pp. 231-234. Available at: <http://www.dsz.unito.it/parliamodi/Parliamo di... 2002.pdf>
- Lazzaroni, C. and Luzi, F. (2004). Il coniglio Grigio di Carmagnola. *Professione Aviconiglicoltore*, 5(5): 13-16.

- Lazzaroni, C. and Moriano, G. (2005). Valorisation of poultry and rabbit local breeds: Market organism and new saleable products. *Ital. J. Anim. Sci.*, 4(suppl. 2): 256 (Abstr.).
- Lazzaroni, C., Moriano, G., Bagnus, E. and Zena, A. (2003). La diversificazione delle produzioni avicunicole piemontesi: Gradimento da parte dei consumatori delle carni della gallina Bionda Piemontese e del coniglio Grigio di Carmagnola. In: *Atti Convegno Nazionale "Parliamo di... Globalizzazione e Diversificazione in Zootecnica"*, Cuneo (Italy), 26-27 September 2002, pp. 83-90. Available at: <http://www.dsz.unito.it/parliamodi/Parliamo di... 2003.pdf>
- MiPAF (2002). *Prodotti di qualità: Prodotti tradizionali*. Available at: <http://www.politicheagricole.it/qualita/tipici/home.asp>.
- Toscano Pagano, G. and Lazzaroni, C. (2004). Il Coniglio Grigio di Carmagnola: Recupero e selezione della razza. *Rivista di Coniglicoltura*, 41(1): 14-20.