

Autochthonous breeds and marketing of their food products in Croatia

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Introduction

Autochthonous breeds have been during last decades in centre of the public interest as a part of preservation total biodiversity strategy. Furthermore, autochthonous breeds are important in regard to ensuring genetic variability, essential for food production in the future. Changes, climatic and economic that are happening at a moment are in first place expressing need for accumulation of genetic adaptability. Autochthonous genotype protection programmes in Croatia already for two decades take care about autochthonous genotype sustainability. Systematic public support with a goal of genotype preservation is expressed through substantial yearly state's subsidies to autochthonous breed breeders. However, interest of wider public is directed to reactivating old breeds in order to preserve tradition, traditional culinary, rural environment, pasture and other areas. By this, a touristic offer continental and coastal area is enriched. Public services stimulate this kind of reflection in order to diminish direct public contributions. Breeders of autochthonous breeds reflect about marketing promotion of breeds and their products.

Marketing promotion of autochthonous genotypes and their products

Genetic and cultural value of autochthonous genotypes has been recognized in Croatia. Care about autochthonous breeds preservation started in 80's XX century. State stopped using financial subsidies negative trends in endangered populations and they have been structurally and in number stabilized. Promotion of autochthonous breeds has been done through different traditional, cultural and touristic events. Autochthonous breeds protection programmes are now in faze of stimulation economic affirmation. Tendency is to find most efficient model of autochthonous genotypes use in quality food production, which is enriched by traditional technological and culinary preparation. Enriching final product on this way it is expected to achieve extra income bonus in relation to industrially made food. Public services stimulate this kind of approach in autochthonous breed protection. Ministry of agriculture initiate this programmes through "Marketing preparation of agro-food products" programmes that are referring to preparing and placement products based on autochthonous genotypes exploitation. Most of programmes are driven to create food products with authenticity and geographical origin food mark (NN 80/05).

Almost for all autochthonous breeds, especially endangered one, are made programmes (products) that are combining tradition and uniqueness of genotype. Autochthonous breeds of horses, cattle, sheep's, pigs and poultry are included in certain food products production programmes.

Program of meat production from Istrian cattle is one of current examples of economical affirmation autochthonous breeds through recognisable product. Initiative for making meat from Istrian cattle as a recognisable product came from breeders and regional agency responsible for finding out products with traditional and regional

character. Development of recognisable product (meat from Istrian cattle) is stimulated through national and regional projects. Because available population for production of quality meat is relatively small in number guideline is: production of excellent and recognisable product of particular culinary predisposition based on defined genotype, fattening technology, slaughter treatment, ripening, storage, distribution and meat supply through smaller number of top-quality restaurants. Present experiences in functioning project "beef from Istrian cattle" are showing complexity in professional support system and marketing preparation of product in chain of all participants in process, from breeders to consumers. Breeders expect higher meat price because of smaller yield and technology, while consumers expect top-quality product for small amount of money. In product price is necessary to calculate expenses of slaughter, ripening, storage, packaging and distribution. Besides that, it is necessary to stimulate gastronomic subjects to make additional effort in culinary enriching product (beef meat) according to traditional heritage, so that consumer can taste difference.

Autochthonous pig breeds are included in recognisable products production programmes, smoked ham, 'Kulen' and sausages, made according to traditional technologies. Black slavonian pig is breed which has been by newer marketing programmes directed in 'Kulen' production, product based on specific traditional production technology. There have been carried out, in order to standardize and promote 'Kulen' on market, research and marketing-developing projects, initiated and financed by Ministry of agriculture. Relatively small population size of black slavonian pig (650 sows) does not provide raw material for bigger product series of given characteristics. Small series of product and big number of producers is causing smaller standardization of product, being in some extent a problem. We are mentioning that on market there is already equal product of industrial character that with smaller price is satisfying demand of broader market (consumers).

Autochthonous horse breeds are in smaller part directed to meat product production that incorporates horse meat. There are active projects of standardisation and marketing preparation of "foals' sausages" produced from foals of Posavina horse. Standardisation and marketing preparation of product is in initial faze, but first results are showing good product quality, et. market potential of this autochthonous product. Marketing preparation of product accepts fact that that kind of product contains horse meat which numerous consumers from different reasons do not want to eat. It is important to mention and examples of mares and asses's milk production in function of economic activation of breeds. Mares and asses's milk is appreciate because believe that besides nutritional value has therapeutic effect on some diseases. Part of project deals with researching characteristics of milk and lactation of asses, but till now there hasn't been made any stimulation for marketing promotion of milk and their products.

Autochthonous sheep breeds are dominant in sheep production in Croatia. Their adaptiveness, modesty and resistance make them the most favourable in given production conditions. Considerable amount of sheep milk are used for making traditional cheese, which are part of gastronomic offer of defined climate. An example of successful technological preparation of products is "Pag cheese", which's qualitative merit are appreciable on markets. This example is followed by similar products of sheep from coastal and continental regions of Croatia. One part of sheep production is directed to production of lamb meat or meat from older category of animal ("Kastradina"). Ongoing are the projects of standardisation and marketing promotions of different foodstuffs, respecting the recognizability of genotypes.

The autochthonous poultry breeds are also included in the programme of marketing preparation of recognizable food products. Example is marketing promotion of the Zagorje turkey meat as foods which integrate the rarity of genotype and specific production technology. Some happenings in the environment (bird flu) indicate to need of modification traditional production technologies of Zagorje turkey meat (open farm system) towards the closed farms. Required adaptations of traditional technology to the consumers have been explained (respects of standard and product security). Previous experiences in the production of Zagorje turkey meat indicate an expansion capability of product but also on the need of marketing promotion of product in further.

Conclusion

Autochthonous breeds are part of national heritages about take care the whole community. Supports of civil services to preservations of indigenous breeds are unquestionable. Current programs of sustainability has based mostly on state subsidies. Conservation of autochthonous breeds on state subsidies is not attractively and for long time period reliably. Breeders and the community in the Croatia are urged on finding the possibility repeated economic affirmation of indigenous breeds. Market (consumer) interest for autochthonous breeds products which incorporate the bonus of genotype and traditional production technology has been expressed. Several new projects are active in marketing preparation of food product (Istrian beef meat, Kulen, Pag cheese and other). We are defined some problems (product price, adaptation of tradition technology, integration of new food standards, affirmations all business entities in the chain breeders-consumers). Necessary are follow-up activities on marketing promotions of benefit from autochthonous genotypes and their food products.