

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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Quality Regime for Agricultural Products in Malta

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Report Highlights:

The Maltese government has decided to team up with the Italians on quality labelled products (geographic indicators-GIs). In February 2014, the Maltese Agricultural Directorate and the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari, Italy, signed an agreement to collaborate on developing a quality regime and a quality mark for agricultural products in Malta.

General Information:

Quality Regime for Agricultural Products in Malta

The Maltese government has decided to invest time and resources in order to tap into the lucrative market of quality labelled products (geographic indicators-GIs).

Note: The EU Commission recently published a study analyzing the added value of EU quality labelled products, reporting that the GI sector is worth €54.3 billion worldwide and represents 15% of total EU food and drink exports. Over the period 2005-2010 period, wines accounted for 56% of all sales of food and agricultural products with a GI (€30.4 billion), agricultural products and foodstuffs for 29% (€15.8 billion), spirit drinks for 15% (€8.1 billion) and aromatized wines for 0.1% (€31.3 million). The study also analyzed the value premium of products bearing a GI, i.e. the premium that a GI can expect on the market, compared to similar non-GI products. On average, GI products sold for 2.23 times more than comparable non-GI products.

Thus, the Maltese Government is teaming up with the Italians, EU leaders in registered GIs, to tap this potential. In February 2014, the Maltese Agricultural Directorate within the Ministry for Sustainable Development, the Environment and Climate Change, signed an agreement with the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari, Italy. The Maltese Agricultural Directorate is seeking technical assistance in setting up of a quality regime and quality mark for agricultural products in Malta. The scheme will be funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)

The Government plans to hold public consultations on the draft legislation needed to create the quality regime and develop the national register of Traditional Products. The Agricultural Directorate has already organized several round table meetings, one with the value chains for tomatoes for processing and pork. Other meetings will be held with the value chains for olive oil, honey, and milk. The voluntary scheme will be open to all interested stakeholders who are part of a recognized agricultural value chain, such as: poultry and eggs, pork, rabbit, bovine and sheep milk, olive oil, honey, fruits and vegetables. The proposed legislation will establish additional rules concerning traceability, control and labelling.

The quality mark aims to benefit producers, consumers and the food supply chain. It envisages an increase in market access, market share and better profit margins for the producers of certified products; more reliable and trustworthy product and process information for consumers; and, assurance to intermediate actors in the food supply chain in the form of assuring quality standards and label claims.

The Quality Regime will consist of the following elements:

- binding product specifications for each product which identify the production method and the elements that characterize the “superior quality” of the product or of the farming/production method;
- an origin label;
- a control system of the product/method specification;
- a compulsory traceability system of the chain which guarantees the transparency of the scheme and

assures complete traceability of products.

Quality Product Logo Competition

The Ministry is launching a logo design competition with a prize of €500 Euro. The Quality Product logo will be used to identify products that abide by the specification stipulated under the new quality regime for agricultural products. The logo also will be accompanied by a clear indication of the origin of the agricultural product. The logo will be used as a Quality Mark on every quality product that adheres to the quality regime and on all the promotional material and events that will be organized to promote those products. The logo will serve as a Quality Mark that guarantees quality and origin. The design must also work across all digital platforms as well as traditional print.

The Quality Mark

By establishing a quality mark the Maltese government intends to:

- Add value to agricultural products with a controlled high quality standard.
- Increase awareness amongst consumers of the quality characteristics of the products and the services bound to the quality mark through information and promotional campaigns.
- Promote and sustain the commercial marketing and the sale of these products.

The Quality Mark indicates the quality of the product and will require that the product's origin be printed in a way that complements the quality mark. This will ensure that the consumer is provided with clear information on the quality parameters and origin as well as facilitate traceability of the product.