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Project Title

Towards a Common Quality Control and food chain traceability system for the Greek – Italian primary sector of activity



Agroquality
VALLEDAGLIUCCI

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With the collection of data for the olive oil in 2012/2013, in the agricultural phase and in the first processing step, the monitoring in the olive oil sector allows the survey on the progress of supply and use, in order to integrate information available in these two stages, which are closely linked, and therefore allows to know much more informations about the dynamics of the sector.

In order to understand the characteristics of the olive industry olive oil, it's important to start from the structure of the agricultural phase of the first processor and then from the relations between the protagonists which, in the case of short chain, can also take on different functions.

The producers of olives, which are the base of the production process can in fact get directly the oil, if equipped with its own processing plant or, otherwise, to deliver the raw material to another crusher for the subsequent milling.

The delivery can be as:

- Sale of olives to the mill
- Contribution of the olive oil or oil obtained to the cooperative or association with the mill
- Delivery of the olives to the mill only for the processing, with subsequent withdrawal of the oil that the olive oil producer sells directly
- Delivery of the olives to the mill with reliance on a sale of the oil produced at the mill .

In the last two cases, the grinding may be paid with the sale of part of the oil produced or with cash payment.

The mills are the first processing industry: the processes olives and obtain the different types of virgin oil. Their activities directly affected the trend of the collection. A decline in production of olives translates, in fact, a contraction of the milling industry, and it could also result, in some campaigns, the closing of the milling plant. Often mills are also equipped with a packaging structure and therefore they can sell the product both to the distributor and the final consumer, using, as a point of strength, in the latter case, the strong relation of the oil with the territory.

Alternatively, the product can be sold in bulk to bottling or refining industry, through wholesalers/intermediaries, which may have an important role in the sale of the packaged product.

It's clear that the investigation of the first agricultural stages and the following transformation, through questionnaires that can be integrated with each other, allows to shed light on a complex web of interrelationships and patterns of behavior within the sector.

The monitoring step was carried out in the producers of olive oil that have been selected after a survey carried out in Salento .

The following step to the interviews conducted with the conductors of the different farms has been the choice of the pilot companies (3) to be included in the project. The parameter which was taken into greater account was, firstly, the availability and the active involvement of the conductors of the three companies. For all in fact produce quality becomes a common constant regardless of the final destination of the product.

- The first of the companies chosen (Az. Silvia Coppola) is a very important manufacturing company within the territory of Salento. Even though it doesn't complete the cycle of the supply chain, it produces olive oil of high quality standard designed to millers or traders dealing with the sale of extra virgin olive oil and therefore willing to pay more for a high quality product, free from pest attacks.

In contrast, the highest value obtained from the sale of olives to the manufacturer guarantees the achievement of an income to justify his interest and his direct involvement in the production process.

In particular, the investigation and the data captured by an analysis of the questionnaire showed that the company does not use synthetic herbicides for containment of wild flowers, merely carrying out any shred whenever requested. For the control of phytosanitary issues. it only uses copper-based products for the containment of bacterial and the peacock's eye (spiloea oleagina).

The timing of harvesting operations and the use of sticky traps for mass trapping, allows to restrict, within acceptable parameters, the possible presence of the olive fly infestation for the portion of the product to be allocated to the production of extra virgin olive oil .

- The second pilot company - Gregoraci Massimiliano's Company - represents one of the multiple farms which, even though very small, can, thanks to the farmhouse inside, to reach directly the final consumer by offering a product of high quality. It allows to recover the higher costs necessary to realize a high quality product. Even for that company the production process is not completed within the body corporate directly: the transformation is carried to a local mill which also provides latest to bottling and labeling.

- Finally, the last company chosen as a pilot company (Az. Georgopoulos) represents the top companies in the area of Salento.

Characterized by a remarkable extension, by a different irrigated type of plants (Traditional and intensive ones), by well-stocked machineries (Tractors, shakers, flail mowers, trailers, sprayers, etc.), by a constant search for innovation and presence of a direct point of sale. Az. Georgopoulos dedicated 360 days a year to the activity of olive oil quality. Among its products, we have extra virgin olive oil in different types (more or less fruity and delicate), mono-varietal oils (cv. Leccino, Cv. Ogliarola and Cv. Cellina), table olives (Kalamata), olive paste, etc..

The last two pilot companies selected for the investigation, even though not using the organic method for the productive purposes, uses insecticides only for nr. 2 applications, when exceed the threshold for intervention: the first one is against the first generation of carpophagous moth (*prince oleae*) and the second one against the olive fly (*dacus oleae*) which are distributed respectively in the period June / July and August / September (in conjunction with foliar fertilizers treatments). Even for these two companies, the problems related to bacterial and peacock eye are faced through the distribution on the foliage products based on copper salts, while, as regards the containment of the spontaneous flora weed, not performing any kind of processing to land, they are oriented to use mechanical means of control, made in this case by hammer choppers.

