



Food qualities and their institutions in France

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Quality / Qualities

- ▶ Beauty lies in the eye of the viewer...
- ▶ Quality = A **judgment** in a situation of uncertainty / no "total" quality
- ▶ Quality = A matter of **trust**
- ▶ The **qualification** process:
who qualifies, on which basis, is he credible ?



Two distinct notions :

- ▶ There are 2 basic notions underlying usage of the term "quality". It is crucial to distinguish:
 - no defaults / standard production, mass market: *"generic" quality*
 - excellence, distinction / added value: *"specific" quality*
- ▶ 3 intertwined levels, appeared successively:
 - absence of fraud and deception
 - expected properties
 - characteristics in demand



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- ▶ **Generic quality and its institutions**
- ▶ **Specific quality and its institutions**
- ▶ **Joint framework for the two dimensions of quality**
 - ▶ **For each quality, its own governance.**
 - ▶ **State + Inter Professional associations + private sector**

1 – “Generic” quality

- ▶ **Definition** : standard level of exigencies required to ensure the consumers’ health, security and information.
- ▶ **Basis of food legislation:**
Food safety, control of consumer deception
- ▶ **Extended on 2 fronts:**
 - food and public health / rules on **labelling**
 - “proper” functioning of supply chains & markets / **standardization**



The institutions of generic quality

- ▶ **3 Ministries / edict a body of rules**

 - Consumption Code

 - Rural Code

 - Health Code

- ▶ **Inter Professional Agency / in charge of risk assessment, management, and surveillance**

 - Monitoring plans (Industries)

 - National Agency in charge of Food, Environment and Labour Safety (ANSES ex AFSSA)

- ▶ **Public Programme (Min. Health) / to mobilize society: Consumers' information and education**

 - National Program on Nutrition and Health



Expertise : ANSES

- ▶ **Monitoring of epidemiological risks**

Nation-wide data collection

Assessment of dangers linked to population exposure

- ▶ **Official notices**

A scientific and technical support to public authorities, based on formal requests.

- ▶ **Advisory reports**

Specialized expert committees

Exploration of emergent risks (crises)



Consumption

- ▶ **Rules of labelling**
- ▶ **Nutritional qualities**
Foods / balance / meals
Categories / education
- ▶ **Which consumers' needs ?**
Price ? Marks ? Labelling ?
Guaranteed without X and enriched in Y...



Standardization

- ▶ Certify products, services and enterprises.



- ▶ Standards: ISO 9000, ISO 14000



- ▶ Quality insurance, HACCP
Quality circles
/ introspection
/ and framework for behaviours

Possibly misleading:
“guides of Good Practices”



2 – “Specific” qualities

- ▶ **Definition** : differentiation strategy aimed at underlining the product’s own characteristics as compared to the common products available on the market.
 - For example, special quality linked to a variety, a breed or a place of production
- ▶ **Public policies based on**
 - Voluntary approaches
 - Rules defined through supply chain dialogue
 - Controls by third party



The institutions of specific quality

- ▶ **Expert advisory bodies:**

National Food Council

National Consumption Council

- ▶ **INAO: National Institute for Origin and Quality (M. Agric)**

5 national Committees: to examine the applications for official quality signs

1 national Council on Approvals and Controls



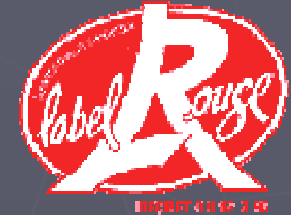
Quality signs management: INAO

- ▶ **Each committee** is responsible for
 - instruction of the applications
 - revisions of the rules
 - set the main control points
- ▶ **A paritary membership by**
 - representatives from supply chains which already received the quality signs
 - qualified persons and representatives from Ministries
- ▶ **Democratic decisions**
 - voting by 2/3
 - proposal sent for the Minister's signature



Superior quality

- ▶ **The LABEL ROUGE (red label)**



- ▶ **Specifications
/ quality control management approach**
- ▶ **Notion of “comparable product”**

Quality linked to origin

- ▶ A protected geographical name
An intellectual property (WTO)
 - a link to "terroir" **AOP**
 - an anchorage within the territory **IGP**
- ▶ Local **resources**, place-based **know-how** maintained by local actors



Societal qualities

▶ Cannot be found in the end-product

▶ **Organic agriculture**

A production process
without synthetic chemical compounds
Low-input production



▶ **"Fair trade"**

An alternative project
The consumer as a citizen



Rural development

- ▶ Qualities stimulate the links between members of a supply chain in a given territory:
Creation of **inter-professions** recognized by the State
- ▶ The identification of products stimulates local dynamics of rural organization:
Product's **Defense and Management body**
- ▶ Para-statal institutions are collaborating in land planning:
Regional and Provincial Chambers of agriculture



3 – Joint frameworks for both dimensions of quality

One major device, the **Fraud repression service**

- ▶ A national Department within **Ministry of Budget**.
Regional directions in charge of verifications everywhere in France.
- ▶ A capacity for **police**
Inspection, seizure, fines, complaints at Commercial Court



Tracability and controls : The certification bodies

- ▶ Attach information flows to physical flows
A now-on generalized requirement
- ▶ Architecture of controls
 - self-controls
 - internal controls
 - external controls : by approved **certification bodies** (private institutions)
- ▶ Responsibilities over sanctions
Corrective actions / costs
/ a **market of control**



The approval of certification bodies: COFRAC

- ▶ **Approval** by para-public association
- ▶ Conformity w. **EN 45011 (ISO 17020)** standard
 - Independence
 - Impartiality
 - Competence
 - Objectivity
- ▶ **Internal Certification Committees:**
the controller is controlled
- ▶ **Supervision of activity by the General Food Directorate (MINAGRI)**



Conclusion 1 :

The two notions of quality

- ▶ Several qualities = several public policy **tools**
- ▶ For each notion of quality, the corresponding institutions, procedures and forums.
- ▶ Similarly, the legal basis and regulations are dedicated.



Conclusion 2 : a public – private partnership

- ▶ Qualities require that **all stakeholders** be engaged at the same time and in one same direction.
- ▶ Publics authorities organize a joint mobilization of **professionnal** actors from the supply chains and from the territories.
- ▶ The **State** remains guarantor of the procedures, in which it makes sure **private actors** play their role.

