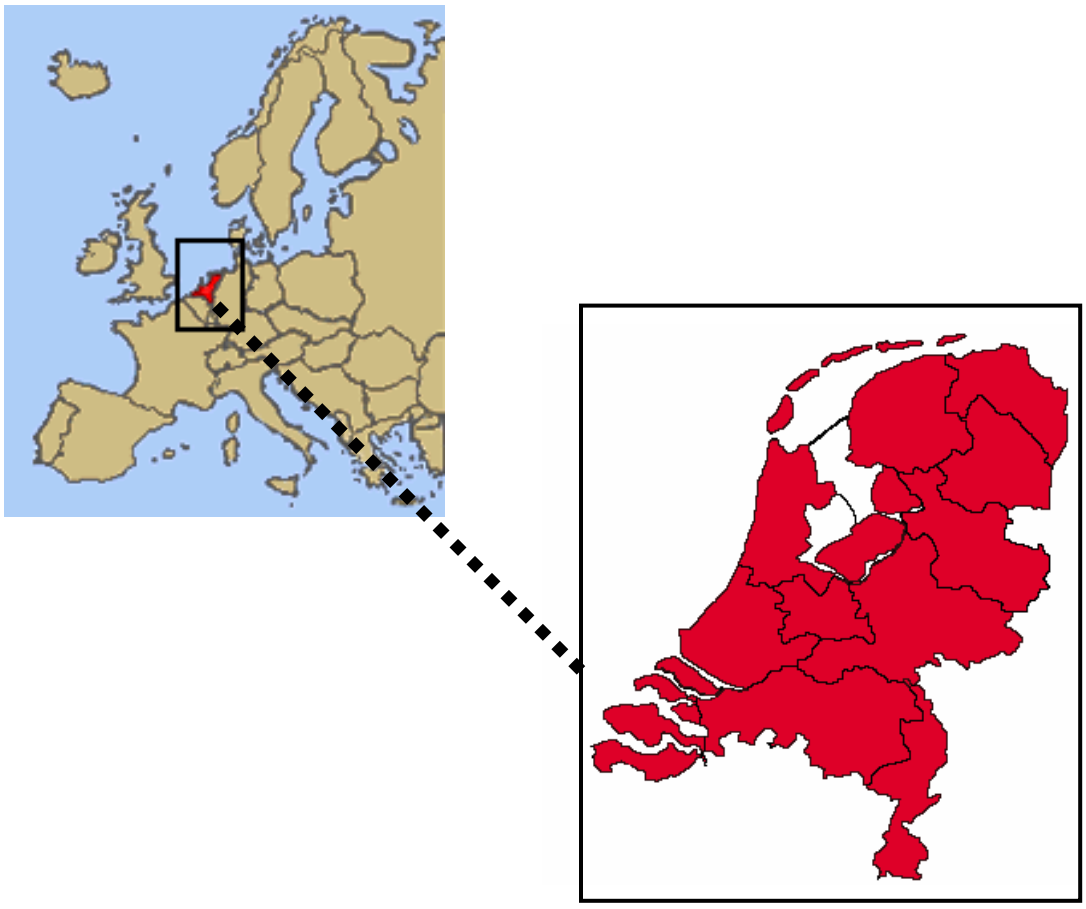
Geographical Indicated Products in The Netherlands

September 8, 2004



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1. Introduction

Geographical Indicated products are indicators that identify a good as originating in a region or locality where its quality, reputation, or other characteristic is essentially attributable to its geographic origin. In this chapter, the differences between Protected Designation of Origin, Protected Geographical Indication and Traditional Speciality Guaranteed are discussed. In the second section, the reasons behind this regulation by the European Union are explained. This chapter ends with a short description about how a product can be registered.

1.1. The difference between Protected Designation of Origin, Protected Geographical Indication and Traditional Speciality Guaranteed

PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) is the term used to describe foodstuffs which are produced, processed and prepared in a given geographical area using recognized methods. Examples are: Altenburger Ziegenkäse (cheese, Germany), Olives noires de Nyons (table olive, France) and Opperdoezer Ronde (potato, The Netherlands).

For the Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) designation, the geographical link must occur in at least one of the stages of production, processing or preparation. Furthermore, the product can benefit from having a good reputation. Examples are: Borrega da Beira (fresh meat, Portugal), Tiroler Speck (meat-based product, Austria), Kritiko paximadi (biscuits, Greece), Coppia Ferrarese (bread, Italy), Aachener Printen (gingerbread, Germany) and Westlandse Druif (grape, The Netherlands).

A Traditional Speciality Guaranteed (TSG) designation does not refer to the origin but highlights a traditional character, either in composition or means of production. Examples are: Mozzarella (Italy), Falukorv (Sweden), Traditional Farmfresh Turkey (United Kingdom), Faro (Belgium) and Panellets (Spain). (europe.eu.int)

1.2. The reasons behind the regulation

In 2003 the European Union sought to restrict the use of region names as trademarks for speciality food and drink to manufacturers from the region. Extending these restrictions outside Europe is sometimes problematic because regional names that are trademarks within Europe are often considered generic in other countries. It is made even more difficult where regional names have been trademarked outside Europe, such as for Parma ham, which is trademarked in Canada by a Canadian manufacturer, preventing the manufacturers of Parma from using their own name. Other products that are affected include Champagne, Bordeaux, Roquefort, Parmesan cheese, Feta cheese and Scotch whiskey.

The PDO, PGI and TSG are classifications that are defined in the European Union Law and include the names of wines, cheeses, hams, sausages, olives, regional breads, vegetables and fruits. As a result, foods like Gorgonzola, Roquefort and Champagne can only be labeled as such if they come from the designated region. To clarify this further; a part of the legislation states: 'Any usurpation or imitation, even if the true origin of the product is indicated or if the appellation is used

in translated form or accompanied by terms such as "kind," "type" (article 13).' (www.fact-index.com)

The three main reasons for this regulation by the European Union are to:

1. Encourage diverse agricultural production,
2. Protect product names from misuse and imitation, and
3. Help consumers by giving them information concerning the specific character of the products. (europe.eu.int)

1.3. The registration process for a product

First, the producers have to define how the product meets specific standards. Then the application, including the specifications, must be sent to the relevant national authority. The national authority is often the Ministry of Agriculture in the country where the product is produced. This organization does a study at the national level and sends it thereafter to the Commission at the European Union level.

If the product meets the requirements, a first publication in the Official Journal of the European Communities will inform those in the Union who are interested. If there are no objections, the European Commission will publish the protected product name in the Official Journal of the European Communities. Only specific products are covered through the three different regulations.

The two mainstays of European quality policy are the rules on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin of agricultural products and foodstuffs [Regulation (EEC) No 2081/92] and the rules on certificates of specific character for agricultural products and foodstuffs [Regulation (EEC) No 2082/92]. At first, the products that were included by regulations (EEC) No 2081/92 and (EEC) No 2082/92 were:

- Fresh meat (and offal)
- Meat-based products (cooked, salted, smoked, etc.)
- Cheeses
- Other products of animal origin (eggs, honey, milk products excluding butter, etc.)
- Oils and fats (butter, margarine, oils, etc.)
- Fruits, vegetables, cereals, whether or not processed
- Fish, mollusks and fresh crustacean–based products
- Beer
- Beverages made from plant extracts
- Bread, pastry, cakes, confectionery, biscuits and other baker's wares
- Other agricultural products.

Products covered only by regulation (EEC) No 2081/92:

- Natural mineral waters and spring waters
- Natural gums and resins
- Essential oils
- Hay
- Cork
- Cochineal (raw product from animal origin).

Products covered only by regulation (EEC) No 2082/92:

- Chocolate and other food preparations containing cocoa

- Pasta, including cooked or stuffed
- Prepared dishes
- Prepared sauces
- Soups and stocks
- Ice cream and sorbet (europe.eu.int).

2. Products in The Netherlands

In this chapter the PDO and PGI products of The Netherlands are discussed. The TSG products will not be considered, because there are no TSG products in The Netherlands. The PDO products are four cheeses ('Boeren-Leidse met sleutels', 'Kanterkaas, Kanternagelkaas and Kanterkomijnekaas', 'Noord-Hollandse Goudse kaas' and 'Noord-Hollandse Edammer kaas') and one type of potato, 'Opperdoezer Ronde', that is part of the fruit, vegetables and cereals section according the European Union. There is one PGI product, the 'Westlandse Druif', a grape that belongs to the fruit, vegetables and cereals section.

Each product and its characteristics are discussed separately. The characteristics contain four parts; when it was started, in what region of The Netherlands it is produced, the type of process used to make the product and if there are some particularities, they will be mentioned.

2.1. 'Boeren-Leidse met sleutels' (PDO) (literally: 'Farmers-Leidse with keys')

'Boeren-Leidse met sleutels' is a semi-hard farm cheese with a fat content of 30 to 40 percent (dry matter basis). The cheese is prepared from semi-skimmed milk that has not undergone any pasteurizing heat treatment. The cumin has to be added during the preparation. After preparation, the cheese is robust, sliceable and when aged is suitable for grating.

2.1.1. Area

Since 'Boeren-Leidse met sleutels' (figure 2.1.) is a PDO product, it has to be produced in a certain area. The region for this cheese is 215,000 hectares (531,277 acres) in total and is divided into different areas;

- the polder* district Hoogheemraadschap or Rijnland,
- the polder district of Amstel and Vecht,
- the polder district of Delfland,
- the polder district of Schieland,
- the greater water board district of Woerden,
- the water board district of Leidse Rijn,
- the rural district of Westerkoggenland, the Beschoot polder,
- the rural district of Giessenlande, the polder of Over- en Neder Slingeland, and
- the rural district of Udenhout.

Figure 2.1. 'Boeren-Leidse met sleutels' cheese

The river basin of the Oude Rijn in the province of Zuid-Holland is the area where the production of the cheese originally started. The cheese was named (300 years ago) after the Town of Leiden, in the river basin of the Oude Rijn.

2.1.2. History

'Boeren-Leidse met sleutels' is a by-product of butter production. In the past milk fat was valuable for its nutritional value and was marketed as butter. Since butter has a limited preservation time, it had to be produced close to the cities where it was sold. In the Middle Ages, the largest cities were in the west side of The Netherlands. This is why there are so many farmhouses in the west side of The Netherlands.

* a part of the land surrounded by dikes, with a controllable water level.

When the cream for the butter was separated from the milk, the leftover substance was often fed to the calves. Another name for the leftover was skim milk and it was only of limited value. Low-fat cheese was seen as another production opportunity. The low-fat cheese was used as a protein source on the ships that sailed to the west because low-fat cheese is more easily preserved than high-fat cheese, especially at higher temperatures. The export of different cheeses began in 1184, when cheese was sent from The Netherlands to Paris. A variety of cheeses was shipped to diverse parts of Europe. The cheeses came from various cities in The Netherlands and were recognized by their names. So the cheese that came from places around Leiden has the name 'Boeren-Leidse met sleutels' and is named after the city of Leiden or the coat of arms of Leiden is used. The coat of arms looks like keys and this is the reason that 'met sleutels' (literally: with keys) is included in the name of 'Boeren-Leidse met Sleutels'.

2.1.3. Process

The milk that is used for the cheese has to be from one or two successive milkings to meet certain quality standards. The milk must be cooled down to 10ºC (50F) and must remain at this temperature for at least 10 hours. The second step is to coagulate the milk with rennet for half an hour at a temperature of 29-30ºC (84.2-86F). The next step, the chopping of the curd into pieces of about 1 ½ centimeters (0.6 inches), takes 15 to 20 minutes. After being left to settle for a short time, the curds and whey mixture are heated using hot water and left to ripen further.

A small amount of the curd is set aside for the so-called 'witte bodems' (literally: white bottoms) which prevent the cumin seeds from collecting in the rind on the smooth sides of the cheese. The rest of the curd is mixed with cumin seed, at a ratio of about 75 grams (1.65 lb) seed per 100 liters (26.42 gal) of milk. After this, the cheese is pressed twice; the first press for a compact cheese takes 14 hours. The second press is to give each cheese a mark with the imprint of two crossed keys circled by the words 'Boeren-Leidse-met-sleutels'. Then the cheese is placed in a brine solution for five or six days.

After being placed in the brine, the cheese gets a rind to protect it from fungus and give it a red color. The color comes from annatto or a red / red-brown-colored cheese rind treatment product. Next, the cheese has to ripen further on the farm or at a cheese dealer. The most important of the different ripening factors are the temperature and the humidity. The age of the cheese is measured in months and depends on how long the cheese remains on the shelf before it is sold (figure 2.2.). The taste of the cheese determines the moment of sale; this is often decided by the cheese retailer.

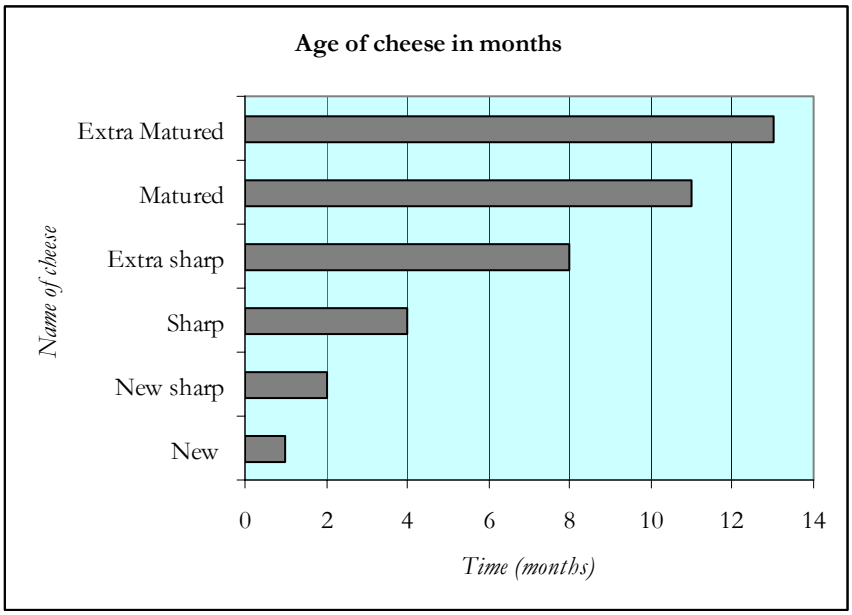

Figure 2.2. Different ages of cheese

2.1.4. Particularities of the 'Boeren Leidse met sleutels'

'Boeren Leidse met sleutels' is a labor-intensive product prepared in relatively small quantities on farms from their own milk production. This technique has been developed over the centuries and it still requires a great deal of attention from the maker, and includes intense manipulation of the curd. The specialist techniques are learned from generation to generation, often on the same farm. The cheese is unique because of the soil conditions and climate; Zuid-Holland has always been ideally suited to dairy farming (polder land). Historically, cattle breeds and humans all have contributed to the specific tradition of this cheese. The exclusive character of this cheese and its accordingly higher price make it possible for the relatively traditional farms to continue their dairy production. Each cheese has, next to the 'Boeren Leidse met sleutels' mark, a uniform number. Often the fat content of the cheese can be recognized through the number '30' and the sign '+' on the rind; this means that the cheese contains more than 30 percent fat.

The producers of the cheese 'Boeren Leidse met sleutels' are checked by the national inspection service 'Stichting Centraal Orgaan voor Kwaliteitsaangelegenheden in de Zuivel' (literally: Central Organ Foundation for Quality Matters in the Dairy Industry). Each business that makes cheese products commercially is a member. Since October 28, 1927, the 'Vereniging van Boeren-Leidse Kaasmakers' (literally: Union of Boeren-Leidse cheese makers) has promoted the interests of the Boeren-Leidse cheese makers. It tries to reach this objective by all legitimate means, including by:

- representing the members at all levels,
- promoting the sale of their product by making 'Boeren Leidse met sleutels' a trademark,
- and regulating the production of this cheese (home.zonnet.nl, www.cdr.wisc.edu, www.formaggio.it/olanda/boerenlaidseE).

2.2. 'Kanterkaas, Kanternagelkaas, and Kanterkomijnekaas' (PDO) (literally: Kantercheese, Kanterclovechees, Kantercarawaycheese)

Figure 2.3. 'Kanternagelkaas' (Kanterclove Cheese)

'Kanterkaas' is a hard cheese that can be flavoured with cloves ('Kanternagelkaas') or caraway ('Kanterkomijnekaas') (figure 2.3.). The cheese is cylindrical; the base of the cheese makes a sharp edge with the side and the side makes a rounded edge with the flat top. The cheese weighs between 3 and 8.5 kilograms (6.6-18.7 lb). The rinds of the three cheeses (Kanterkaas, Kanternagelkaas, Kanterkomijnekaas) differ from each other. 'Kanterkaas' and 'Kanternagelkaas' have a 'natural', colorless or yellow coating rind. The 'Kanterkomijnekaas' can have the same rind as the other two cheeses, but also can have red coating as a rind.

The cheese is made in two fat content categories; 20+ and 40+. 'Kanterkaas' 20+ contains a minimum of 20 percent and a maximum of 25 percent (dry matter basis). The humidity content of the 'Kanterkaas' should be decreased to 48.5 percent after 12 days past production. When the cheese is a 40+ 'Kanterkaas', the cheese has a fat content ranging between 40 and 44 percent in the dry matter. The humidity content is not more than 41.5 percent after 12 days past production.

2.2.1. Area and History

The geographical area where 'Kanterkaas' must be produced includes the province of Friesland and the Westerkwartier area (figure 2.4.). Documentary sources dating back to the Romans show that dairy cattle were mainly kept in the north of the Netherlands, most prominently in the regions of Friesland and the adjoining eastern pasturelands, the Westerkwartier. Since then, better manufacturing methods, hygiene and technology have been developed. Through these advances in technology, production capacity has increased and has moved from farm to factory.

Figure 2.4. The Netherlands; in yellow; the area of 'Kanterkaas'

2.2.2. Process

The milk from the cows is transported to the factory that processes the milk to 'Kanterkaas', 'Kanternagelaas' or 'Kanterkomijnekaas'. The manufacturing process is as follows:

- The milk is delivered at a temperature of about 4°C (39.2F) and is heat-treated within a few hours.
- After standardization, the milk is pasteurized at a temperature of about 72°C (161.6F) for about 15 seconds.
- Then the coagulation takes place at a temperature around 30°C (86F) with the help of cow rennet.
- The next step is to add a mixed culture of starter bacteria that are suitable for 'Kanterkaas'. This provides the desired acidification.
- After this, the curd is washed to obtain the desired pH. Following the washing, caraway is added to 'Kanterkomijnekaas', sometimes a very small quantity is added to 'Kanternagelkaas'.
- The curd is then ripened until the desired pH is obtained.
- In the case of 'Kanterkaas' and 'Kanterkomijnekaas', the curd is subsequently milled, salted and filled into presses.
- As for 'Kanternagelkaas', the curd is cut into strips to which cloves and salt are added before it is milled and filled into presses.
- The three cheeses are pressed for a prolonged period until they have the desired shape and rind formation.
- Next, the desired salt content is obtained by immersing the cheese in brine.
- The ripening of the cheese takes at least four weeks at temperatures of not less than 12°C (53.6F). The length of the ripening period depends on the desired age of cheese.

2.2.3. Particularities of the 'Kanterkaas'

There are four specific characteristics of these cheeses: flavor, cross-section, rind and consistency. The flavor of the three cheeses varies; 'Kanterkaas' is pleasant and sharp to strong (the last part depends on the age of the cheese). 'Kanternagelkaas' has a stronger smell and flavor; the flavor can be sharp to strong (depending on age). 'Kanterkomijnekaas' has a milder flavor than the other two cheeses. All cheeses can be eaten within a period of four weeks to more than a year after manufacture.

Cross-section involves two aspects; the texture and color. The texture of the three cheeses is similar, with limited eye formation. The cloves or caraway are evenly distributed in the cheese. The coloration of 'Kanterkaas' is a uniform ivory or yellow to greenish-yellow; 'Kanternagelkaas' is a uniform yellow-green, sometimes darker around the cloves; the coloration of 'Kanterkomijnekaas' is a uniform ivory or yellow to greenish-yellow.

The rind of the cheese is impervious, smooth and free of mold growth. (The rind actually protects the cheese from mold growth.) The consistency is firm to hard, easy to cut and after some time highly suitable for grating (www.formaggio.it/olanda/kanterkaasE).

2.3. 'Noord-Hollandse Edammer kaas' (PDO) (literally: North Holland Edammer cheese)

'Noord-Hollandse Edammer kaas' is a spherical-shaped cheese with a flat bottom and top. The weight of the cheese round is between 1.7 and 4 kilograms (3.8 and 8.8 lb). The cheese is a 40+ cheese, so the cheese should have a fat content of 40 to 44 percent in the dry matter. An advantage, for persons with higher cholesterol, is that it has a lower salt content (only 3.9 percent) than other Dutch cheeses.

2.3.1. Area and History

The production of 'Edammer' started around 1700 in the province of Noord-Holland, near the city of Edam (figure 2.4.). Over time, the production area enlarged to include the rural area around cities such as Amsterdam, Purmerend, Enkhuizen, Alkmaar and Hoorn. The famous Dutch cheese markets were held in these cities until 1950. Currently there are still cheese markets in Noord-Holland, but these are held only in the summer to show tourists a part of Dutch history.

Figure 2.4. The Netherlands; in yellow; the area of 'Edammer'

Since the province of Noord-Holland was always a waterlogged province, it was impossible to grow crops in this area. So the farmers had to resort to something else to make a living; and they started to raise livestock. The reclaiming and impoldering of the land began around 1600. However, there is an advantage to the large amount of water; this was and is a cheap way to transport goods. In the 17th century, The Netherlands was already famous in the export markets (most of the exports were in Europe; England, France and Germany were the largest export markets). The 'Edammer' cheese not only was transported to Europe, but was used by sailors on their long trips because the cheese has a manageable shape and a high nutrient value.

The people in Noord-Holland did not want to live purely on milk, meat, butter and cheese. Therefore, they started to use the 'Edammer' cheese to trade for other products on the market. The cheese was transported from the farm to the markets on the roads, or in small boats through the waterways if the roads were impassable. On the farm, the farmer's wife made the cheese every day. The skimmed milk was used in the evening and the full milk in the morning. At some point, the farm herd increased and the production of milk increased. The farmer's wife hired dairymaids, but extra personnel were scarce in those times because many people moved to Amsterdam in hopes of earning more money. Consequently, a number of farms joined forces to be able to make the cheese more efficiently and cost-effectively. In 1945, the results of this cooperation were 70 independent cheese factories. Through consolidations, the number of factories has declined to two.

Figure 2.5. 'Edammer' cheese

2.3.2. Process

The milk for the 'Edammer' cheese (figure 2.5.) is derived as raw material from Noord-Holland. The milk can be partially skimmed and/or pasteurized. The first step is to add the traditional ingredients (naturally obtained (calf) rennet, lactic acid and coloring) to the cheese milk. After this step, the milk is curdled and treated in the cheese tub, during which time the curds and whey are extracted. The curds are cut into blocks and then put into molds. Meanwhile, they are put in presses for a few hours to

give the cheeses the right shape and traditional size. After the pressing process, the cheese is immersed in a brine bath for a few days to absorb salt. The last step is to ripen the cheeses on wooden planks under special humidity and temperature conditions. The 'Noord-Hollandse Edammer kaas' can differ in age; in the same manner as the previously mentioned cheeses (www.cdr.wisc.edu, www.formaggio.it/olanda/edammerE.htm, www.noordwesteredammer.nl).

2.4. 'Noord-Hollandse Goudse kaas' (PDO) (literally: North Holland Goudse cheese)

'Noord-Hollandse Goudse kaas' (figure 2.6.) is a semi-soft to hard, sweet-curd cheese. It is similar to 'Edammer' except that 'Noord-Hollandse Goudse kaas' contains more fat. The main ingredients are whole milk and partly skimmed cow's milk, but less than is used in 'Edammer'. The shape looks like a flattened sphere with rounded ends. The weight of 'Noord-Hollandse Goudse kaas' varies from 6 pounds to as much as 50 pounds. A special edition of the 'Noord-Hollandse Goudse kaas' is the so-called 'baby Gouda'. This particular cheese is oval, weighs a pound, can be coated with red wax and is wrapped in a cellophane wrapper.

Figure 2.6. 'Noord-Hollandse Gouda kaas'

Figure 2.7. The Netherlands; in yellow; the area of 'Gouda cheese'

2.4.1. Area and History

The province of Noord-Holland (figure 2.7.) is the area where the cheese is produced. The preparation at dairy farms dates back several centuries. Factory production of this cheese has occurred since 1900. The motivation for the production of 'Noord-Hollandse Goudse kaas' in this area is the same as for 'Edammer'. However, the process of producing 'Noord-Hollandse Goudse kaas' is slightly different, as discussed in 2.4.2.. The quality requirements for 'Noord-Hollandse Goudse kaas' are outlined in the 1911 Patent and Trade Mark Act for Cheese.

2.4.2. Process

After transportation from the farm to the milk factory, the milk gets a heat treatment for 30 seconds at 65°C (149F). The heat treatment has to occur within 12 hours after the pick-up of the milk. The second step is to pasteurize the milk for at least 12 seconds at 72°C (161.6F). Then the milk is curdled with calf or cattle rennet at a temperature between 31°C (87.8F) and 34°C (93.2F). For the souring, type-A lactic acid, Leuconostoc cremoris, Lactobacillus lactis and Lactobacillus cremoris, are used. Next, the curds are treated and washed until the moisture and lactose content are such that a mild, non-acidic taste is obtained in the cheese (pH at 14 days > 5.25). To give the cheese the right salt content of 3.3 to 3.6 percent, the cheese is soaked in brine. The characteristic properties of the 'Noord-Hollandse Goudse kaas' are obtained after ripening the cheese for a minimum of four weeks and a maximum of 18 months.

2.4.3. Particularities of the 'Noord-Hollandse Goudse kaas'

The specific characteristics for 'Noord-Hollandse Goudse kaas' are flavor, cut, rind and consistency. The flavor is aromatic and pleasant and the cheese melts in the mouth. Depending on the age, the cheese is mild to strong in taste. When the cheese is cut, the formation of eyes is visible

and is evenly distributed throughout the cheese. The rind of the cheese is closed and has no visible mold growth. The cheese is a 'soft dairy product', which means that the cheese is very malleable. The basis for these characteristics is the specific combination of the composition of the milk in Noord-Holland pasture area and the applied method of preparation of 'Noord-Hollandse Goudse Kaas' (www.cdr.wisc.edu/cheesedb.nsf, www.formaggio.it/olanda/goudaE.htm).

2.5. 'Opperdoezer Ronde' (PDO) (literally: Opperdoezer Ronde)

The most special potato from the Netherlands is the 'Opperdoezer Ronde' (figure 2.8.). It is a unique potato, with a special name, from a certain village and there is a desired way of eating this potato. This paragraph discusses the area, production, history and some particularities of the 'Opperdoezer Ronde'.

Figure 2.8. 'Opperdoezer Ronde'.

2.5.1. Area and the production (culture)

The only area where the 'Opperdoezer Ronde' can be grown is on the 150 hectares (370 acres) around the West-Friese village of Opperdoes (figure 2.9). This soil has a particular composition of sulfur that gives the special taste to the potatoes. Before the end of September, the 70 cultivators dig up the potatoes; according to tradition this is done by hand. In this way, they prevent damage to the skin of the potato. After the digging up of the 'Opperdoezer Ronde', the potato is sorted into two groups: those above 35 millimeters and below 35 millimeters (1.35 inches). The cultivators belong to a growers cooperative, which is called the 'Opperdoezer Ronde'. After sorting, the potatoes are transported to supermarkets and small stores.

Figure 2.9. The Netherlands; in yellow; the area of 'Opperdoezer Ronde'

2.5.2. History

In 1850, the cultivator Sluis from Opperdoes started to grow 'negen-wekers' (literally: nine-weeks), early potatoes that can be harvested nine weeks after planting. One day, between the 'negen-wekers' he found a trunk with coarse leaves and round tubers. This was the starting point of the 'Opperdoezer Ronde'. The official description is a yellow / white pulpy, irregular, oval, round-shaped tube with low starch content. A simpler explanation is an early, firm potato, which is a delicacy according to specialists.

2.5.3. Particularities of the 'Opperdoezer Ronde'

In the period from July until the end of October, the 'Opperdoezer Ronde' is sold in the supermarket. The traditional method of preparation is to serve the potatoes boiled with creamery butter. During dinner, the potatoes can be dipped in butter. Other foods that can be eaten with the potatoes are a fresh salad and beef. In the tourist season, a historical steam train travels through the village of Opperdoes and the potato fields. In the local restaurants, tourists can enjoy the typical dinner with the 'Opperdoezer Ronde' (www.genietenvanvers.nl).

2.6. 'Westlandse Druif' (PGI) (literally: Westland Grape)

The 'Westlandse Druif' grape is the only protected geographical indicated product of the Netherlands. The name of this grape shows the area where it is produced, processed or prepared: the Westland, a small part of the province of South Holland (figure 2.10). With the certification of the European Union, the 'Westlandse Druif' guarantees a special product with regard to quality, origin and a responsible, sustainable production process. The growing attention for this quality product depends not only on the excellent taste and the striking presentation, but also on the growing consideration of consumers for products with their own regional identity and history. The main reason for the foundation 'De Westlandse Druif' which helps sell this local grape, is to protect the history of the glasshouses of the Westland.

Figure 2.10. The Netherlands; in yellow; the area of 'Westlandse Druif'

2.6.1. History

In the early Middle Ages, monks discovered that fruits and spices grow better in the shelter of a wall. The lords of the castles and the common people adopted this simple practice at a time when most people were living in rural areas and grew their own fruit and vegetables. Around 1850, when the development of the big cities began, the demand increased for fresh food in exchange for money. Consequently, large horticultural areas appeared around the cities. In this area, farmers grew fruits and vegetables and sold them to the city people. The sort of vegetable or fruit that was available depended on the season.

Around 1850, when the first glasshouses were built, grapes were the first fruits to be grown in glasshouses. The construction was quite simple; the glasshouses consisted of one brick wall and the rest were glass. The glasshouses without a brick wall were not built until 1900. These also were the first ones that were heated. Farmers learned that the yield of the plants grown with heating systems was higher than the ones without heating systems. Plants grow faster when they get more light and are located in a constant, warm environment. These products would otherwise grow only in warm countries. In the Westland, the first farmers began by growing grapes and cucumbers. The Westland is still famous for its glasshouse area. At the moment, there is a larger variety of products than in the beginning; a selection of different vegetables, fruits, flowers and plants now belong to the Westland assortment. Figure 2.11. and 2.12. show the glasshouses and harvesting of grapes of a few decades ago.

Figure 2.11. Glasshouses (Photo circa 1900)

Figure 2.12. Harvesting the grapes with a family. (Photo circa 1900)

2.6.2. Cultivation of grapes

Production of the 'Westlandse Druif' takes place in a spot of almost 2 hectares (4.9 acres). The glasshouses for the 'Westlandse Druif' consist of 10.000 meters (32.808 feet) of glass. In 2003, the harvest of the young plants yielded 1,000 kilograms (2205 lb). The expectation for 2005 is 30,000 kilograms (66,138 lb).

Figure 2.13. The Frakenthaler

Figure 2.14. Golden Champion

The grapes are from the following species:

- **Frakenthaler:** Is a popular glasshouse grape with a beautiful bunch and round grapes. Possessed of thin, soft skin and aromatic taste, the grape is extremely well-suited as a table grape. The grape is available from July to September (figure 2.13.).
- **Black Alicante:** Has a thick, dark blue skin with a nice shade. The grape has large bunches of huge grapes with a fresh and sappy taste. They are available in October and November.
- **Muscaat van Alexandrië:** A beautiful, white grape with a medium bunch and firm, sappy pulp. It is considered a real delicacy because of the appetizing sweet, special taste. Available during October and November.
- **Golden Champion:** A good white table grape with a sweet taste. These grapes are larger and heavier than the Muscaat van Alexandrië. They are available from June to October (figure 2.14.).

Harvest time begins with removal of the weeds through hoeing. The second step is to prepare the plants, and finally to shape the bunches. The shaping of bunches is done by volunteers who have learned this from professional vintagers. With the aid of professional vintagers, the foundation 'De Westlandse Druif' cherishes the tradition of a unique, local product of special quality and delicious taste grown in an environmentally friendly way.

2.6.3. Particularities of the Westlandse Druif' (promotion)

The 'Westlandse Druif' is not just a grape, but also a product with ambiance and history. The foundation 'De Westlandse Druif' promotes this in different ways;

- The glasshouses are modern, but do contain historical elements.
- During the year, groups (families or business clubs) may take guided tours through the glasshouses. The doors of the glasshouses are wide enough that people in a wheelchair are able to join the tours.
- The grapes are sold in different ways; in the glasshouses, on the Internet, at traditional markets, exhibitions and an event with a grape princess. The first time someone buys grapes, he or she will receive a welcome gift.
- Occasionally the foundation organizes wine festivals with an orchestra.
- The foundation arranges grape examinations, so the volunteers learn how to grade the grapes.
- In a town nearby, a local restaurant has a 'grape menu' during the grape season.
- The foundation, in addition to all the volunteers, has at least 60 sponsors.

- In 2005, a visitor's center will be built near the glasshouses, so the visitors will have a place where they can eat and drink (www.agriholland.nl/nieuws/artikel.html?id=41154, www.agris.be, www.minlnv.nl, www.westlandsedruif.nl).

3. The market position of a Geographical Indications (GI) product

This chapter provides an overview of the different factors that influence the market position of a GI-product. Since GI-products are a new type of product, there is not much research available about the effects on the buyer and competition with other products. Therefore, it is difficult to explain the difference in market success between GI-products and non GI-products. Not all the GI-products of The Netherlands are discussed in this chapter, because there is information available only for three of the six products. The last section gives conclusions and recommendations for different elements in the market chain.

3.1. Factors that influence market success

The policy goals behind GI-products extend much further than economic performance. Its objectives not only are to protect traditional products and allow them to compete effectively against cheaper lines, but also to promote value-added products in decentralized regions that are often experiencing low economic output. A number of social, environmental and cultural benefits should emerge from such an approach; among them would be the stability of rural populations in remote areas, and the protection of the landscape, the heritage and the tradition. In order to determine which factors have the most influence on the success of a product, two research studies were reviewed (Barjolle et al., 2000; Barjolle and Sylvander, 2000).

If the success or competitive position of a product is going to be assessed, it is important to look first at the efficiency of a competitive market as a whole. This depends, for example, on the industry concentration and the barriers for a new firm to enter the market. A firm has several aspects that are influenced by factors both internal (for example, the organization of a firm) and external (for example, the consumers). The different aspects are the structure, strategy and performance of a firm. Nevertheless, a firm's resources determine if it can outperform other firms. The resources can be divided in four areas: financial, physical, human and organizational. Each resource should be valuable, not commonly found among its competitors, costly to imitate and without close strategic substitutes.

Synergy between firms as they partner with a value chain to meet consumer demand is a factor that also can improve the competitiveness of a product. Synergy between firms means that they work together to create and promote the product. In one of the research studies (Barjolle et al., 2000), this synergy is named a *filière*. For example, milk producers, cheese producers and the ripening houses have similar goals and backgrounds, so it looks as if they function as one organization:

- All the firms are producing either raw or intermediary products with the same standards.
- They have an interest in sharing expenses in advertising or research.

The strategy of the whole filière on the reference market[*] is generally more efficient than addition of the individual firms to the synergies.

To understand why some products are more successful than others, one of the research studies looked at the attractiveness of the various reference markets and the competitive position of the product (Barjolle et al., 2000). These two aspects are influenced by many different factors. This research study chose to use the following factors for the attractiveness test; size of the reference market, the region's image, the sector's image and the socio-economic context of the countries that are producing the cheeses and the countries that are importing the cheeses. To determine the competitiveness of the product, these factors are used; evolution of sales, price tendency, notoriety of the product, image of the product, threats from imitators, geographical breadth of sales and dependence on public support.

[*] Other organizations or filières that produce comparable products and address the same consumers as the filière.

The influence of the different factors on each product separately will be discussed next. When different product factors are compared, the success of a filière is most dependent on its capacity to produce a high-quality, unique product and to influence public institutions to provide financial subsidies and supports. The research study highlights four other main determinants that influence the competitive position of the product (figure 3.1.) (Barjolle et al., 2000).

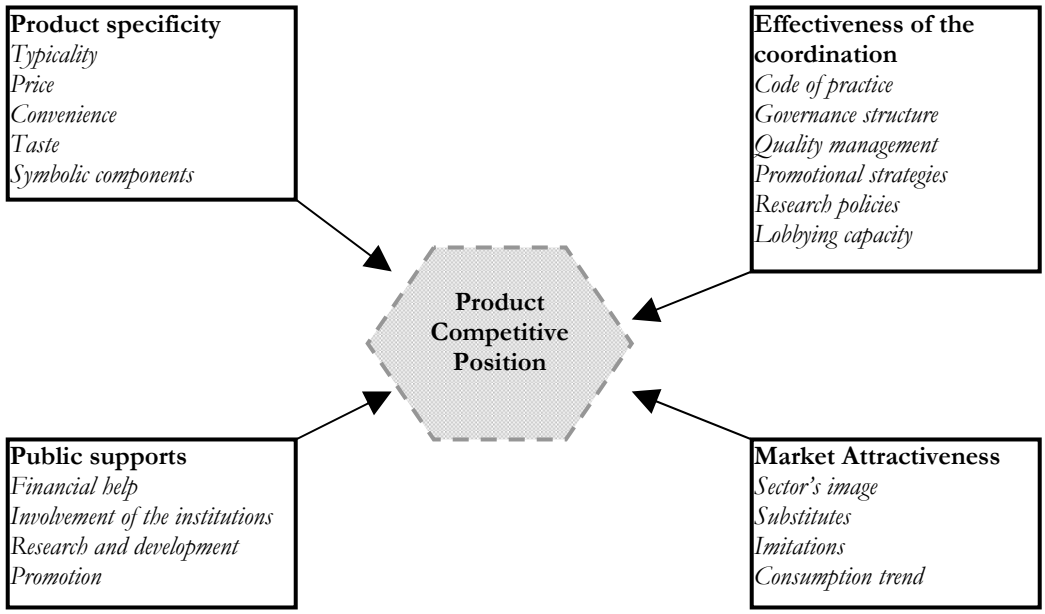

Figure 3.1. The four determinants of the Product Competitive Position (Barjolle et al., 2000).

If one of the determinants is weak, another strong factor may compensate for it. If for example, the promotion of a product is not very good, but there are no imitations of the product, the product can still be successful. The GI-products competition should not be on price level with its reference market. For GI-products, it is important to focus on quality and typicity* to distinguish the product from the reference market. Another factor that might have a high influence on the competitiveness of a product is the cooperation within a filière (Barjolle et al., 2000).

In the research study from Barjolle and Sylvander (2000) the success factors are judged differently. The researchers looked at the calculated and observed success of the GI-products. The calculated success depends on specificity, market relevance, motivation of the firm and coordination. The observed success follows from the supply chain's turnover, supply chain's growth, product's reputation and price premiums. This research study looked at whether the calculated and observed success were the same. The different factors involved are:

- *Specificity;* the product has to be distinguishable from other products by the consumer; there must be discernible and measurable characteristics. The product should have indiscernible characteristics which refer to the production method; these are different from the intrinsic characteristics. The intrinsic characteristics often are shown on the package (like nutritional value), the production method is usually known only by the producer.

* Typicity refers to a significant taste, an intrinsic component of the product, rooted in a historical and geographical context specific to the region of origin. The typicity will increase the product's competitiveness among other products.

- *Market relevance;* the producer has to find the right market for the product. The relevant market for Parmigiano Reggiano, for example, is not so much the cheese market as that of the meal ingredient. The market relevance depends on the customer appeal, the willingness to pay and the distribution channel.
- *Coordination and motivation of the firm;* this factor can be split in different areas. First is the motivation of the operator to distinguish the product as much as possible. Examples of other areas are unauthorized use of the name, the role of an initiator, collective quality management, final taste evaluation, collective marketing management and total coordination.

All these factors influence the market success of a GI-product, In the next section the results will be shown for some of the GI-products from Europe with the focus on three Dutch products: 'Opperdoezer Ronde', 'Noord-Hollandse Edammer' and 'Noord-Hollandse Gouda' (Barjolle and Sylvander, 2000).

3.2. The position of the GI-products

Initially, the research study by Barjolle et al. (2000) looked at the competitive position of nine PDO cheeses in comparison with their market attractiveness. The results are shown in figure 3.2..

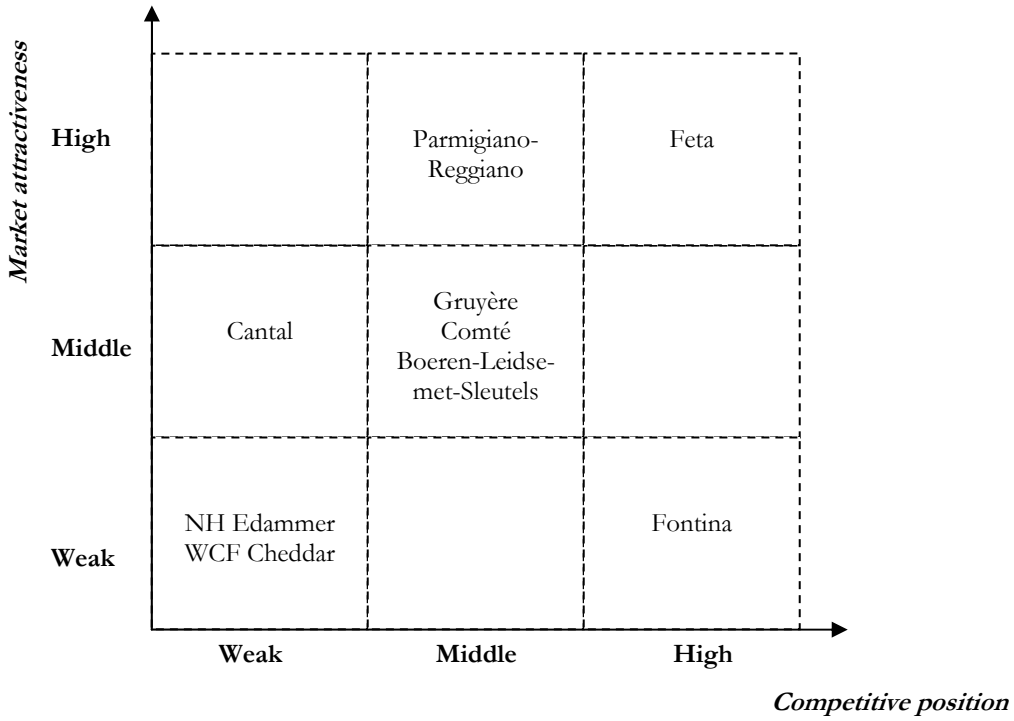

Figure 3.2. Competitive position of the products in relation to the attractiveness of their main reference market (Barjolle et al., 2000).

Figure 3.2. shows two Dutch products, one with weak market attractiveness and a weak competitive position; the 'NH Edammer'. This stems from the generic name of the Edammer cheese and the significant competition from other Edammer cheeses. Another factor is that the differentiation of 'NH Edammer' is not sufficient; therefore, the competition is based on price and not on the quality aspects.

The second Dutch product is 'Boeren-Leidse-met-Sleutels' which has average competitive position and market attractiveness. The reason that this cheese does not score higher is its quality: the quality differs among the cheese makers and changes over time. Second, the cheese makers are not able to adequately gauge the amount of the cheese production needed; the result is a shortage or excess of cheese. The retailers thus prefer to buy factory-made Leidse cheese with more consistent quality. However, 'Boeren-Leidse met sleutels' has a chance to improve its market share, if the producers better organize themselves so they can position the cheese in a higher market segment. Although the producers have a strong vertical integration, 'Boeren-Leidse met Sleutels' is still an average product on the scales of competition and attractiveness.

There are some differences between the two Dutch cheeses; 'NH Edammer' is a nationally known cheese; 'Boeren-Leidse met Sleutels' is famous only in its production region. Both cheeses face competition from other imitation or look-a-like cheeses such as the 'Boeren-Leidse met Sleutels' from other Leidse cheeses in the western part of The Netherlands and 'NH Edammer' from other Edam cheeses all around the world. The 'NH Edammer' is on the reference market of hard cheeses; this market is stable or decreasing in comparison with the other cheese markets. The 'Boeren-Leidse met Sleutels' cheese is on a specialty products market and has the opportunity to expand. The research study by Barjolle et al. (2000) looked at all the different cheeses in figure 3.2. However, because this report focuses on Dutch GI-products only these two cheeses are explained (Barjolle et al., 2000).

The second research study (Barjolle and Sylvander, 2000) compared the calculated* and the observed* success of various products. The results are shown in table 3.1.. There is a statistically significant correlation between calculated and observed success. The factors that indicated calculated and observed success predicted the success of the supply chain for different GI-products.

Table 3.1. Performances of the 21 products under study (Barjolle and Sylvander, 2000)

	Calculated success		
	[0 - 1]	[1 - 2]	[2 - 4]
Observed success			
[0 - 1.5]	Merville Potatoes, Ternasco of Aragon Teruel Ham	Cantal	
[1.5 - 2]	Noord Hollandse Edammer, West Country Farmhouse Cheddar	Boeren-Leidse-met-Sleutels, Feta, Quercy Lamb, Scotch Lamb, Nyons Olive Oil, Peza Olive Oil	Fontina, Parmiggiano-Reggiano
[2 - 3]	Opperdoezer Ronde	Parma Ham, Jersey Royal Potatoes, Luizet Apricot, Zagora Apple	Comté Gruyère

The observed success is larger than the calculated success for all but three products. This is possible, because the factors chosen to determine success are not perfect. For example, success does not depend only on the success of the supply chain itself, but is also affected by whether the European Union wants to support the product.

* These definitions were explained in paragraph 3.1.

Some conclusions from table 3.1.:

- The *nature of the product* does not predict the outcome; the products are spread equally through the range of success.
- The *country of origin* is of some importance, because tradition is dependent on the country. Nonetheless, Jersey Royal Potatoes (UK), Feta (Greece), Zagora Apples (Greece) and 'Opperdoezer Ronde' (The Netherlands) are classed the most successful products.
- The *number of firms in the supply chain* was thought to be a constraint that would compel them to coordinate their actions. However, this is not the case. Some extensive chains are well coordinated, others less so. Similarly, some short supply chains are well coordinated.
- *There is no one success factor*; it seems that different factors together create the success. Production specificity is a very important part of creating a successful product. However, some very specific products, like Luizet Abricot, have not met with any success. Less specific products, for example Jersey Royal Potatoes, have performed well thanks to fine commercial and technical management.
- *Market relevance* is definitely an important factor, because it determines consumer-purchasing behavior. Nevertheless, there are different results for products with a relevant market. This depends partly on the number of substitutes or look-a-likes and partly on the coordination of the filière.
- *Coordination* seems to be a significant factor, but it is not clear in what way. The coordination can happen formally via a *channel captain*. This is one firm that facilitates the coordination for the whole filière. Another way is *informal coordination* which is possible when there are only a few firms in the supply chain.
- *Government funding* can be beneficial with the launch of a new product. But it is better for the funding to be temporary or else the firm will be in a dependent situation.
- The *capacity of several firms to construct their specific supply chain;* this means collectively setting relevant objectives on the basis of their individual competencies. (Barjolle and Sylvander, 2000).

3.3. Conclusions and recommendations

It cannot be concluded from the different research studies that the terms PDO, PGI or Geographical Indicated products are well known among consumers. Consumers do not buy a product because it is a PDO cheese or a PGI grape. The consumers may even ignore the existence of geographical indication. In 1998, the European Commission conducted a research study among consumers that demonstrated their familiarity with the PDO name. This program, Eurobaromètre 50.1, showed that only 6.3 percent of the consumers knew the letters 'PDO' and 13.5 percent knew the full designation 'protected designation of origin'. Moreover, consumers do not always know what PDO guarantees. A third of them know that it means that the product has a well-defined geographical origin but only a quarter can say that the main ingredients must all come from the production area. Many consumers consider the PDO only as a quality label without appreciating the importance of geographical origin. Therefore, consumer awareness should be increased (Barjolle et al., 2000). There are different ways to do this:

- The specificity of the GI-products has to be increased in all areas, such as the preparation of the product, the production of the raw materials and the marketing.
- Usage goals of the products have to be clarified.
- The regional variation should increase; the difference between firms is now larger than the region's variation (European Commission, 2000).

However, the GI product designation can have a major influence on the competitive position of the product for three reasons. First, a PDO strategy chosen by a filière will force the professionals to define the quality of their product in a code of practice and stick to it. This can help the filière to preserve the quality and specificity of the product and prevent it from becoming a standardized product. Second, the need to work together in order to define the specificity of their product, to improve its quality, to promote the product, to find solutions to manage the quantities might encourage the professionals to organize their filière in a better way. The third potential effect of the PDO is, of course, the protection of designation, which can offer new opportunities for development.

Finally, some general thoughts to conclude this report:

- When a filière is discussed, many internal and external factors have to taken into consideration to assess the performance of several organizations in a comparative way.
- Probably the most important factor that influences the success of a product is the co-operation within a filière in the pursuit of competitive advantages.
- It is necessary for the (smaller-scaled) firms to set up a better legal framework to promote their activities and encourage common strategies (Barjolle et al., 2000).
- For the producers, it is a challenge to produce a product with specific distinguishing qualities.
- For the research and certification institutes, it is a test to determine how the typicity of the GI-products can be supported.
- A challenge for the retail and dealer organizations is to increase consumer awareness of these products. This can be achieved by improving the marketing programs of the various GI-products (Klawer et al, 2000).

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My name is Laura Mout; I am a student at Wageningen University and Research Center in Wageningen, Netherlands. At this university, I am doing two masters degrees: Animal Science and Business & Consumer Science. My first specialization is Animal Production Systems. This university study looks at the agricultural system from farmer to consumer and all the organizations that are involved with agriculture. The other specialization is Food Quality Management; this program focuses on the processing industry, consumer concerns, food safety and quality issues.

A required part of my university program is an internship in another country. I wanted to go to a developed country, so the United States of America was one of the options. Among the various universities, I preferred the different research programs at Iowa State University. Therefore, I started my internship of five months at Iowa State University at the end of April 2004.

The largest part of my internship consisted of collecting sampling data for the I-FARM model of the IFAFS project. This project looks at the re-integration of livestock and crops on farms in Iowa. I have visited several farms and a packing plant in Iowa. Since I am interested in sustainability, I became aware of the Leopold Center and I have done two assignments for them. The result of one of the assignments is this report about Geographical Indicated products in The Netherlands.

Technical edits of this paper were made by Mary Adams and Rich Pirog – Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture. Zach Paskiet, student in Management Information Systems at Iowa State University (ISU), helped with the final layout and formatting.