

## REGIONAL BRANDS AS AN ATTRIBUTE OF PRODUCT QUALITY

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### Abstract

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Labelling of product origin arose spontaneously through tradition and consumers automatically associated high quality or specific characteristics with such designations. Systems for labelling regional products have developed over time as third party activity, which assesses relevant criteria and guarantee their fulfilment by awarding a certificate. The aim of this paper is to define competitive environment in the designation of regional products in the Czech Republic and to demonstrate the link between regional product and quality. Part of the paper is identification of parameters determining the quality of products (in general) and the assessment of quality perception as one of the basic attributes of regional products. The article used secondary data from publicly available sources in the form of official web presentation of guarantors and coordinators of individual designation systems, methodological guidelines for granting and using brands, catalogues of certified products, etc. and presents partial results of research conducted via questionnaire survey, whose respondents are residents/visitors of various micro-regions in the Czech Republic. The research shows that the perception of quality of products by a customer are not overly influenced by quality label, local origin (Czech product), or by labels in general. Doubts are also raised by the number of different certification systems. Regional brands provide space for differentiation from competitors, but only if they reach a unique position.

Keywords: regional branding, marketing management, consumer, quality, positioning

### INTRODUCTION

In terms of the purchasing behaviour of consumers, the place of origin of products is especially important for food and agricultural products. Cases with physically harmful goods imported from abroad, or campaigns to promote domestic products, contribute to increased interest about this information. However, the range of products tied to a specific region is much broader and their use value is equally diverse for customers, the producer and the region itself as a social grouping.

A region is generally defined as a more or less bounded territorial unit which, thanks to its unity, uniformity or conformity of characters or a certain organizational principle, differs from other territorial units. This is not a natural entity, but rather a political and social structure whose

development is advocated by participants from both the inside and the outside. Furthermore, Chromý (2009) draws attention to the fact that the regions are transitory in time – not only do their importance or meaning, nature, function or integrity change, but also their definition (borders) and perception (by the local community and external entities).

Data about the origin of products are communicated in a simplified form using brands or trademarks. Labelling the origin of goods arose spontaneously through tradition. The names of some renowned products have become so common that consumers automatically associated high quality or specific characteristics of the goods with such designations. Typically, this special character of the goods was linked to a particular place (Horáček, Čada and Hajn, 2011). Systems for labelling regional products have developed over time as third party activity, which assesses

relevant criteria and guarantee their fulfilment by awarding a certificate. Apart from the genuineness, sustainability, origin and quality, regional labels may trigger associations that could influence product evaluations (Chalupová, Prokop, 2016). Local food has the following advantages associated with it: high quality and safety of food product; freshness and non-industrial; minimum use of packaging materials; customer satisfaction and friendliness to the environment (Pícha, Skořepa, Navrátil, 2013).

The supranational level of designation is represented in the Czech Republic by the European Union's system, which includes protected designation of agricultural products and food – Protected Designation of Origin (PDO), Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) and Traditional Specialty Guaranteed (TSG). National designation systems are managed by central government authorities (e.g. a Ministry) or by private or other entities operating throughout the Czech Republic. The brands covered by the national system include, for example, *Klasa*, *Český výrobek*, *Česká potravina* (Czech product, Czech food) – guaranteed by the Food Chamber of the Czech Republic, *Czech Made*, *Česká kvalita* (Czech Quality), *Nositel tradice lidového řemesla* (Bearer of the Tradition of Folk Crafts), *Regionální potravina* (Regional Food), *Vína z Moravy*, *Vína z Čech* (Wines from Moravia, Wines from Bohemia) and others. Many designations have negative effects in terms of worsening consumer orientation or doubts about the credibility of individual brands.

Systems of a regional character operate in individual regions, and in most cases are controlled by regional governments. Regional systems have a competitive nature, and include *Product of the Year of the Liberec Region*, *Mls of the Pardubice Region* and *Chutná hezky* (Good Taste). *Jihočesky* (South Bohemian Taste) and others. At the micro-regional level, brands are managed by independent and non-profit entities with a regional scope (e.g. *Bohemian Paradise Association* – brand “*Regional Product of the Bohemian Paradise*,” *MAS Moravian Wallachia* micro region – trademark named *PRAVÉ VALAŠSKÉ* (TRUE WALLACHIAN), micro region *Sokolov* – East – brand “*Original product of Sokolovsko*”), etc.

The designation of local products was implemented by the Regional Environmental Centre of the Czech Republic as part of the “*Natura 2000 – Lidé přírodě, příroda lidem* (People for Nature, Nature for People)” project, whose implementation was financed by the European Commission from 2004 to 2006. Regional designation of products was one of the main parts of this project focused on increasing the knowledge of citizens about the Natura 2000 Europe-wide network of protected areas. In 2008, a marked interest in regional brands and efforts to also implement them for tourism services led to covering all of the activities related to designation, and

the Association of Regional Brands was established (ARZ, 2016).

The main objective of this designation is to promote rural regions and support the development of a socially, culturally and environmentally oriented economy in areas that are interesting due to their natural and cultural heritage (Čadilová, 2011; Visegrad Fund, 2012). The regional designation concept should thus contribute to the economic recovery of regions with respect to all three pillars of sustainable development. Designation should help manufacturers, farmers and other entrepreneurs with the promotion and sale of local products, and to increase the prestige of products through the reputation of the region. Adding value to local food through product certification promotes development by local people so they can pass it on to the next generation as a local brand (Uchiyama, Yuta *et al.*, 2017). Regional brands also contribute to the development of tourism. The offer of tourist regions for visitors is differentiated through the brands. With regard to local residents, a brand can strengthen solidarity with the region and encourage public participation in developments in the region and mediate contacts between producers and other local participants (Kažmiersky, 2013). The results of a successful branding are reflected in increased arrivals to a particular destination, higher demand for products and services, increasing real-estate prices, better tourist outcomes and, finally, in the contentment of the domicile residents. A successful region branding should result in maintaining and attracting all interest groups and influential groups, in accordance with the established brand strategy of the region (Krajnović, Bosna, Jašić, 2013).

Consumers increasingly demand foods with a traditional character or image, which are often perceived as higher quality, and more sustainable foods, which fulfil a need for cultural identity and ethnocentrism (Iaia, Maizza, Fait, Scorrano, 2016).

The aim of this paper is to define competitive environment in the designation of regional products in the Czech Republic and to demonstrate the link between regional product and quality. Part of the paper is identification of parameters determining the quality of products (in general) and the assessment of quality perception as one of the basic attributes of regional products.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The methodological approach of this paper is generally based on the structure of explorative research. The research methods are based on an analysis of secondary data and primary data collection. The current state of knowledge of the analysed problem is prepared on the basis of Czech and foreign professional literature; the concept of region and regional products is defined, and the various systems of the designation of these products in the Czech

Republic (supranational, national, regional and micro-regional level) are described. Secondary data are obtained from publicly available sources in the form of official web presentation of guarantors and coordinators of individual designation systems, methodological guidelines for granting and using brands, catalogues of certified products, etc.

Primary data was collected as part of a research project focused on regional designation of products in the Czech Republic. Respondents were contacted via an electronic questionnaire created using Google Docs. Snowball sampling method was used. The questionnaire contains closed, semi-closed and open questions. The article presents the outcomes of closed (dichotomous and multiple choice) and semi-closed questions.

A total of 743 respondents took part in the questionnaire survey. Data was collected in selected regions: Českosaské Švýcarsko (8.2%), Český ráj (3.1%), Haná (12.4%), Jeseníky (35.7%), Krušné hory (14.9%), Orlické hory (13.7%) and Poohří (12%). Women were predominant in the sample (71.2%), and about one third of the sample was men (28.8%). The age structure of respondents is as follows: up the age of 24 (12.4%), ages 25–39 (42.5%), ages 40–54 (33%) and age 50 and higher (12.1%). In terms of education structure, university students and high school students with graduation have a balanced representation in the sample (41.1%). The rest of the sample was high school students with graduation (41.1%), without graduation (11%), and respondents with higher vocational and basic education have a minority representation of 3.8% or 3.1%. Finally, the status of specific respondents toward specific regions was ascertained – local residents (45.1%), visitors (49.1%) and unknown (5.8%).

## RESULTS

The essence of this chapter is to specify protected designation of agricultural products and food according to the European Union (EU) system, specify brands and trademarks guaranteeing Czech origin and quality products backed mainly by state institutions, and to focus on designation which is covered by the Association of Regional Brands on the micro-regional level.

### Protected designation of agricultural products and food – EU system

For consumers, products bearing protected designation according to the EU (Fig. 1) are a guarantee of a certain quality and geographical origin or tradition.

“Protected Designation of Origin (PDO)” identifies a product, for which all of the production stages take place in the defined geographical area (CAFIA, 2016b). In the Czech Republic, six products have this designation – Všecká cibule/Všecká onions, Chamomilla Bohemica, Český kmín/Czech cumin, Nošovické kysané zelí/Nošovické sauerkraut, Pohorelický kapr/Pohorelický carp and Žatecký chmel/Saaz hops (European Commission, 2016). “Protected Geographical Indication (PGI)” identifies a product for which at least one of the production stages takes place in the defined geographical area (CAFIA, 2016b). In the Czech Republic, the right to use this designation concerns 23 products, e.g. Budějovické pivo/Budějovické beer, Hořické trubičky/Hořické rolls, Štramberk uši/Štramberk ears, Třeboňský kapr/Třeboňský carp, Olomoucké tvarůžky/Olomouc curd cheese, Karlovarské oplatky/Karlovarský wafers, Valašský frgál/Wallachian frgal and others (European Commission, 2016). In both cases, these are products characterized by a specific quality, reputation or other characteristics attributable to the relevant geographical origin.

Four Czech products – Liptovský salám/Liptovský salami, Lovecký salám/ Lovecký salami, Spišské párky/Spišska sausages and Špekáčky/sausages (European Commission, 2016) are registered as “Traditional Speciality Guaranteed (TSG)”. The special nature of traditional specialties is associated with the use of traditional raw materials, or it must be characterized by traditional composition or a traditional method of production or preparation, but not with geographical origin. “Traditional” means proven usage on the Community market for a time period showing transfer between generations, i.e. at least 25 years (eAgri.cz, 2016).

### National designation systems

The presented brands concern food and non-food products, and they are the most used in the Czech Republic (Fig. 2).



1: Logos of protected designation of agricultural products and food according to the EU (CAFIA, 2016b)



2: Logos of brands covered by national systems (dTest, 2016)

An applicant for a “Czech product – guaranteed by the Federation of the Food and Drink Industries CR” label may only be a manufacturer registered to do business in the Czech Republic, and must supply the food product (group of products) or agricultural product under its label to the retail network. Such designated products must be manufactured in the Czech Republic and must meet a certain% of the proportion of raw materials of domestic origin (FFDI, 2016). This label is registered for different kinds of products, e.g. meat, fish, poultry and game, fruits and vegetables, jellies, jams, eggs, milk and dairy products, coffee, tea, cocoa, sugar, rice, tapioca, sago, coffee substitutes, flour, bread, bread products and confectionary products, ice cream, honey, yeast, baking powders, salt, mustard, vinegar, live animals, seeds, animal feed, malt, beer, mineral water, etc.

The “KLASA – National mark of quality” designation does not bind to Czech food origin in the sense that that it does not have to come from a Czech company<sup>1</sup>. The main condition for obtaining this designation is that at least one of the properties of the product must exhibit exceptional qualitative characteristics, and it must be unique compared to other similar products on the Czech market. The label is awarded for three years (CAFIA, 2016a). As of April 2016, 1,091 products were designated with the KLASA logo in the following categories: Flour, Bakery and Confectionery Products; Delicatessen; Milk and Milk Products; Fruits and Vegetables; Meat and Meat Products; Fish Products; Non-alcoholic Beverages; Alcoholic Beverages; Ice Creams; Other Products – from 220 manufacturers (Klasa, 2016).

The CZECH MADE label has a long tradition in the Czech Republic and concerns products from various sectors. In 1995, its scope was expanded to the services sector. In 2002, the CZECH MADE label was adopted by the government as one of the first quality labels in the Czech Quality Programme – Support Programme for Selling Quality Products and Providing Quality Services. This is a complex label, which, unlike quality system certification, focuses on customer satisfaction. The entrepreneur must be registered in the Czech Republic. The label certifies that the product meets the requirements of SCJ<sup>2</sup> directives, and when it is to be awarded, how the product affects the environment and energy consumption is also taken into account. The label is granted for 2 years. A valid CZECH MADE license covers 10 products and 8 services (SOK, 2016).

License to use the ČESKÝ VÝROBEK (Genuine Czech) label is granted by the Nadační fond ČESKÝ VÝROBEK (Czech Product Foundation Fund). The goal of this non-profit organization is to inform consumers about the quality Czech products and support their sales. A company that applies for a license to use the ČESKÝ VÝROBEK label must be owned by Czech citizens, or by a Czech legal entity, and business returns are not transferred outside the Czech Republic. The label relates to products which were categorized into 44 main categories (NFČV, 2016).

The registered trademark “Vína z Moravy, vína z Čech” (Wines from Moravia, Wines from the Bohemia), or “Vína z Moravy” and “Vína z Čech”, may only be used on bottled wines that were approved by the Commission of the State

1 The products of some foreign companies can bear the KLASA logo, but only under the premise that that production takes place in the Czech Republic. National companies may also acquire the KLASA designation if they have a company in their ownership structure that manufactures food in the Czech Republic and supplies it to the Czech market.

2 “Sdružení pro Cenu ČR za jakost (SCJ)” (Association for Czech Award for Quality) is the original name of “Sdružení pro oceňování kvality (SOK)” (Association for Awarding Quality).





3: Logos representing designation on the micro-regional level (ARZ, 2016)

Agricultural and Food Inspection Authority (CAFIA) as quality wines, or quality wines with special attributes. The origin of the grapes from the Czech Republic is very closely monitored, as well as the quality of the wines (Vinařský fond, 2016). The label is used to promote the wines and wineries of Bohemia and Moravia.

The “Regionální potravina” (Regional Food) label is awarded to the winners of regional competitions based on the results of the evaluation commission of the relevant region<sup>3</sup>. The competition is intended for food or agricultural products from small and medium-sized food businesses (up to 250 employees). The product must be manufactured in the relevant region from raw materials from the region, and the proportion of these raw materials must be at least 70% (the primary raw material must be 100% domestic origin). Awarded products demonstrate uniqueness in comparison to conventional production available on the market (be it thanks to a traditional recipe typical for the region, an original manufacturing process or specific use of regional raw materials). Thus far, a total of 577

certified products in the following categories are available: Cooked Meat Products; Non-perishable Meat Products; Cheeses (including curd); Dairy Products; Bakery Products; Confectionery Products; Alcoholic and Non-alcoholic Beverages; Fruits and Vegetables; and Other. The project aims to support domestic manufacturers of local food and motivate their customers to search them out in shops, at farmers’ markets or directly from the manufacturers. For such food, the customer has a guarantee of quality and will support the relevant region<sup>4</sup> by buying them (Regionální potravina, 2016).

#### Designation on the micro-regional level

There are dozens of regional brands in the Czech Republic, but a substantial proportion of them are members of the Association of Regional Brands (ARZ). The Association ensures the coordination of the designation system of local products and services at the national level. A regional coordinator operates in each region<sup>5</sup>, who manages the relevant labels and communicates with local manufacturers and ARZ. Products are awarded the label by an

3 The evaluation committee has 5–8 members who are appointed by the Ministry of Agriculture. They are representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic, the State Agricultural Intervention Fund, the Czech Food Chamber, the Agrarian Chamber of the Czech Republic, the regional office of the relevant region, the State Veterinary Administration of the Czech Republic and the Czech Agricultural and Food Inspection Authority

4 Regional logo alternatives with the name of the region underline the origin of the food, thereby supporting the region from which the product originates.

5 Since 2004, 27 regions – Krkonoše, Šumava, Beskydy, Moravský kras, Orlické hory, Moravské Kravaňsko, Górolsko Swoboda, Vysočina, Polabí, Podkrkonoší, Haná, Českosaské Švýcarsko, Jeseníky, Prácheňsko, Broumovsko, Kraj blanických rytířů, Železné hory, Moravská brána, Zápazří, Znojensko, Toulava, Opavské Slezsko, Krušnohoří, Kraj Pernštejnů, České středohoří, Poohří and Kutnohorský have become involved in the regional labels system.

independent certification commission (separate for each region) upon fulfilment of the uniform rules. A regional label primarily guarantees the product's origin in the relevant region, its quality, environmental friendliness and uniqueness in relation to the region (traditions, local raw-materials, manual or intellectual labour, motive and specificity in the region and exceptional quality). It is generally intended for craft and art products, food or agricultural and natural products. It also appears to a lesser extent in accommodation and food services and experiences that a particular place or an entire region uniquely presents. Brands involved in ARZ are characteristic through a unified visual style of brands and promotional materials (ARZ, 2016).

Other labels in the Czech Republic that are based on principles similar to the ARZ designation, include Regionální produkt Lužické hory a Máchův kraj (Lužické hory and Máchův kraj Regional Product), Regionální produkt Jizerské hory (Jizerské hory Regional Product), Regionální produkt Český ráj (Český ráj Regional Product), Kvalita z Hlinecka (Quality from the Hlinec Region), PRAVÉ VALAŠSKÉ (Real Walachian), Tradice Bílých Karpat (Bílé Karpaty Tradition), Tradiční výrobek Slovácka (Traditional Product of Slovácko), Regionální značka Vltavotýnsko (Vltavotýnsko Regional Brand), Regionální značka ČESKÝ LES (ČESKÝ LES Regional Brand), Místní výrobek ze západu Čech (Local Product from West Bohemia), Original product of Sokolovsko (Fig. 3). ARZ points to the relevant brands.

Each region uses symbols in its logo which are typical for the given area to ensure easy identification of the product with the place of origin. For example, the visual appearance of label "Místní výrobek ze západu Čech" (Local Product from West

Bohemia) was prepared on the basis of drafts from children who emerged from an art competition among pupils at local primary schools. The logo consists of an apple as a symbol of an agricultural product, but also of the traditional Apple Festivities in Krasíkov, which are always accompanied by a craft fair. It also shows a house symbolizing production at home in contrast to manufacturing in factories, and home has the meaning of "local". The window in the building reminds of a button, but also of a decorated tart – both are associated with manual work. The four dots in it may also symbolize the four regions which form LAG Czech West – Micro Region Konstantinolažeňsko, Stříbrský Region, Plánský and Micro Region Hracholusky (MAS Český Západ, 2016).

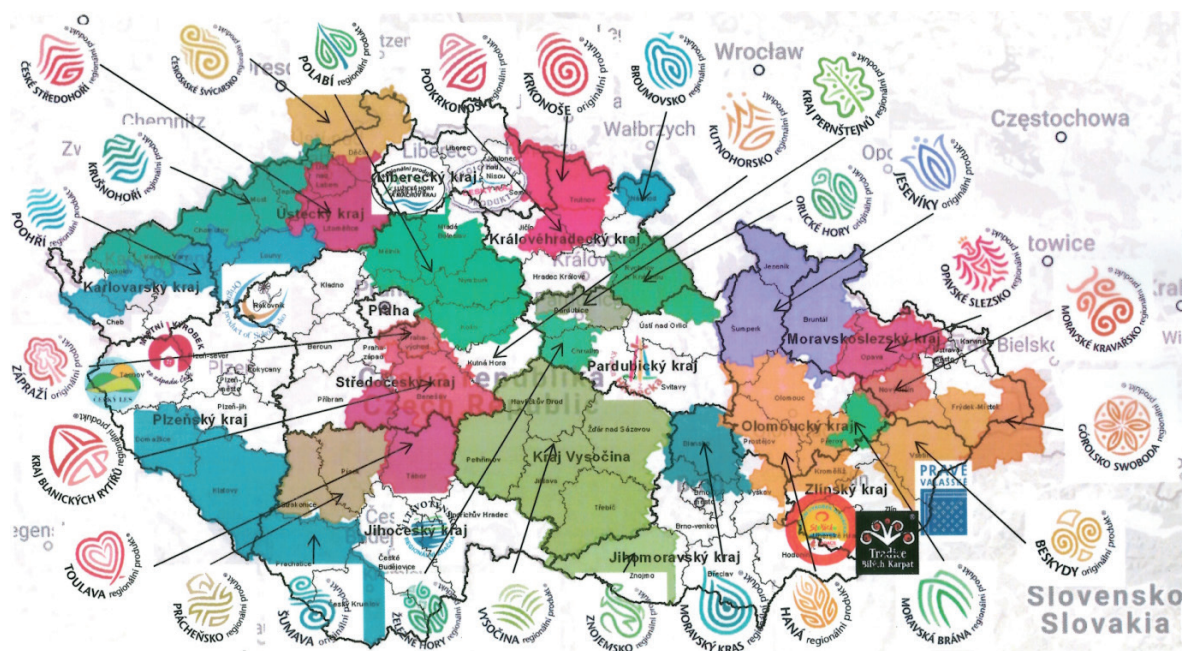
The following map shows the overlap of the regions involved in the ARZ system from Czech regions and the scopes of other regional brands in the areas in which the designation covered by ARZ has thus far not penetrated (Fig. 4).

#### Results of the questionnaire survey

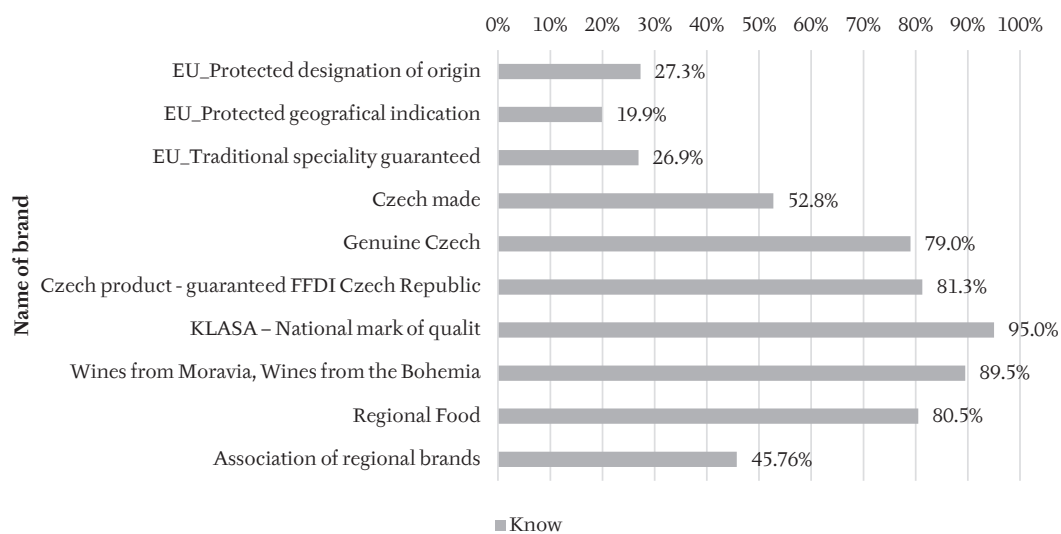
Awareness of the label "Protected Designation of Origin" (PDO), "Protected Geographical Designation" (PGI) and "Traditional Specialty Guaranteed" (TSG) is relatively low amongst people (Fig. 5), although it also concerns well-known products.

As seen from the graph (Fig. 5) the most well-known labels are KLASA – national brand of food quality, Czech product – guaranteed by the Federation of the Food and Drink Industries CR, Wines from Moravia, Wines from Bohemia and Regional food.

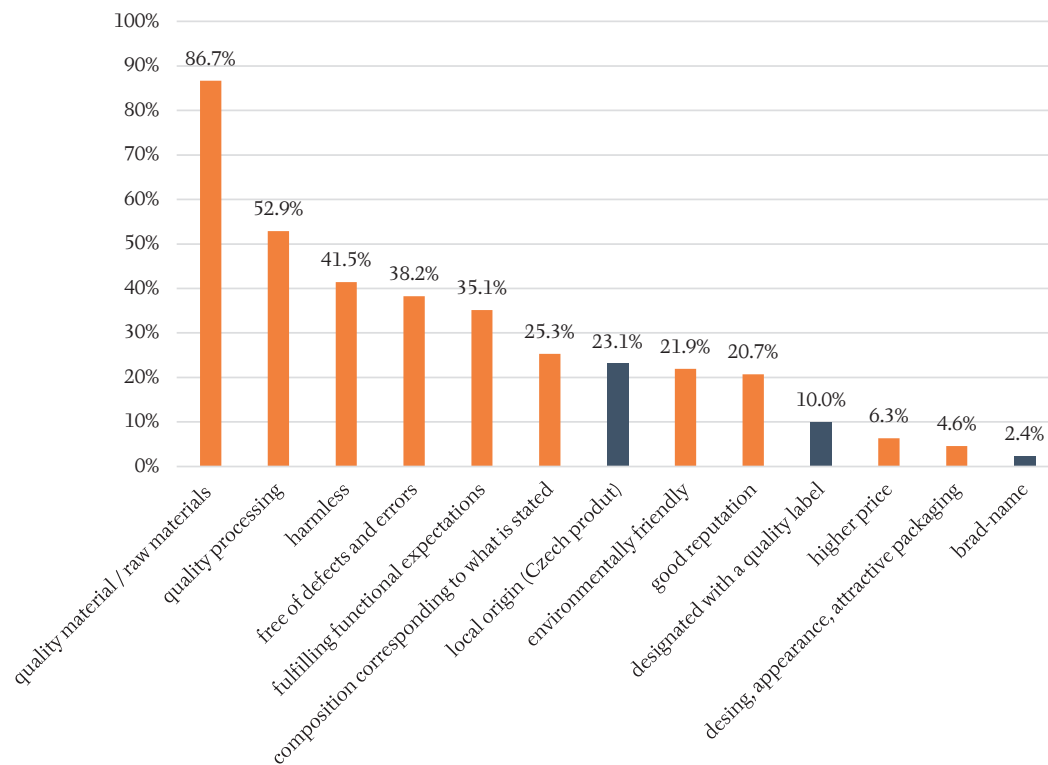
Even designation systems at the micro-regional level are not lagging behind in terms of certification



4: Competencies of designation covered by ARZ and other brands in the Czech Republic (own processing according to ARZ, 2016)



5: Knowledge of the designation or the origin of products in the Czech Republic (own research, 2016)



6: Product attributes expressing its quality (own research, 2016)

of products. These are often managed by a Local Action Group or similar local group. The Association of Regional Brands stands out among these systems.

From the supranational level to the micro level, in addition to local origin, the specified labels also try to inform about the quality of the products that bear the labels. If a given fact is supported, these products have the potential to find a response in Czech consumers. The following graph shows what most consumers associate quality with (Fig. 6).

Product attributes expressing its quality are above all quality material/raw materials, quality processing, harmless, fulfilling functional expectations and composition corresponding to what is stated.

## DISCUSSION

The number of Czech foods that have a protected designation at the European level has stagnated in the last two years. According to the Food Chamber, applicants are being discouraged by



the unresponsive approach of the Industrial Property Office (ČTK, 2016). The 29 existing designations of origin or geographical designations of food and agricultural products should be extended to PGI for "Český mák" (Czech poppy), followed by "Český česnek" (Czech garlic). A pending application for registration of Prague ham also remains from an earlier time period. Protected designation of agricultural products and food according to the European Union (EU) system is unknown for consumer (STEM/MARK, 2015), it may therefore have meaning particularly for manufacturers to protect their products from falsification.

The acquaintance of labels as a KLASA – national brand of food quality, Czech product – guaranteed by the Federation of the Food and Drink Industries CR, Wines from Moravia, Wines from Bohemia and Regional food can be attributed to the number of certified products and extensive support from the Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic, Food Chamber of the Czech Republic and other competent entities. The latest survey from the Wine Fund confirmed that knowledge is continuing to grow about brands "Wines from Moravia, Wines from the Bohemia", which 63% of respondents know about according to current data (61% in 2014, 39% in 2007). Respondents associate the brand with high quality of good wines, good taste (66%), or a better taste compared to foreign wines, and guaranteed domestic origin (Bukajová, 2016). Although unlike in Austria and Slovakia, designation is voluntary in the Czech Republic and even a new draft of the Wine Act does not count on it being mandatory, many winemakers have joined with it, and awareness of the general public (not just wine lovers) was provided by a media campaign, the face of which was Ondřej Brzobohatý.

Winning products in the Regional Food competition are also becoming more visible. Products are promoted both in the region where they were made, and at nationwide events – exhibitions and fairs; educational activities (conferences, courses, lectures, etc.); cultural, social and promotional events, and at tastings.

ARZ helps regional coordinators search for funds for the designation system, is involved in the promotion and presentation of brands, maintains a joint website of the system – Portal on the Regional Designation of Products and Services, ensures exchange of experiences between regions that are members of the system, as well as promotion and presentation of the system and individual brands on a national and international level. Designation is intended for visitors to the region by helping them discover local products and the uniqueness of the given area, as well as local residents, who can support "their" local producers by purchasing the labelled products. Due to the label, manufacturers have gained various benefits, in particular unified promotion of their products, new contacts and the possibility of new

forms of cooperation. Compared to other regional brands, the nationwide competence of ARZ and consistency of designation across regions can be considered a competitive advantage. Consumers have available clear information that simplifies purchasing decisions with regard to certified products.

As evidenced by the survey ordered by the Association of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises and Crafts of the Czech Republic, Czech products are preferred by 64% of respondents (N = 801), mainly due to quality. One of the reasons why people buy products from Czech raw materials is to support local manufacturers and producers, and they also want to be aware of the origin of the food they consume. Most purchases still happen at supermarkets, but goods are also purchased (28%) at small private shops where local products are available. Roughly half of the respondents are interested in the various certifications. Producers have reported that the main aspect is that the product is from the Czech environment that the customers know, whereas as certifications are not considered important. Consumers and manufacturers agree on the small support of Czech production by the state (in terms of public opinion, independent associations are most involved in this), and lack of awareness is also a problem (AMSP ČR, 2016).

Brand knowledge is the basis for brand perception and product differentiation. On a saturated market where a number of comparable products are produced, the relationship to the brand is a very significant marketing phenomenon. In such a market, a "quality relationship with the brand" often decides on comparable quality products with a very similar design. Recently, the social networks seem to be a good source to track customer attitudes. Blogs and social networks have recently become a valuable resource for mining sentiments in fields as diverse as customer relationship management, public opinion tracking and text filtering. In fact knowledge obtained from social networks such as Twitter and Facebook has been shown to be extremely valuable to marketing research companies, public opinion organizations and other text mining entities (Mostafa, 2013; Mini *et al.* 2017). Netlytic is seems to be a suitable tool (Gruzd, 2016). Brand research can also comprise brand image research (brand ideas) based on the measurement of so-called spontaneous associations associated with the brand, image measurement in the so-called competitive field.



## CONCLUSION

The research shows that the perception of quality of products by a customer are not overly influenced by quality label, local origin (Czech product), or by labels in general. The question remains what contribution such a designation has for the parties involved. Doubts are also raised by the number of different certification systems. This leads to a situation where products are next to each other, which, in addition to the manufacturer's label, are (not) differentiated by another logo that is very similar in many cases. The conformity of conditions for the acquisition and subsequent use of the individual designation does not provide sufficient space for differentiation from competitors.

Using a management analogy, the entire area of the designation of origin and quality products can be called "a jungle of labels". Existing designation systems implemented in the Czech Republic disorient not only consumers, but perhaps even the manufacturers. Although the research shows increasing familiarity of brands among customers, it remains more at the level of awareness rather than providing the expected information value. Emphasis is primarily placed on quality for food and agricultural products, but even here the designation of Czech origin is not an unambiguous guideline. Some change has been seen in shift from the mere guarantee of domestic processing and a certain proportion of domestic raw materials to quality assessment.

In the future, an increasingly greater tendency of consumers to prefer local products is expected, for which it is necessary to correctly identify their added value. Regional brands may also contribute to this, but only if they reach a unique position.

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