



Press Release

International protection: increasingly strong presence of the Consortium for the Protection of Asiago Cheese in China and Japan

Protected designation of origin continues its operation in China and is invited by the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture to the EU-Japan bilateral meetings and to the Festival of Protected Geographical Indication cheeses in Tokyo

Vicenza, 24th September 2018 – The Consortium for the Protection of Asiago Cheese flies to Japan, invited to Tokyo by the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, to participate in the EU-Japan bilateral meetings and to the first event, on 29th September, dedicated entirely to European protected geographical origin cheeses. On the eve of ratification of the EU-Japan economic partnership agreement (EPA) and after full recognition of the intellectual property rights established by a series of legal victories against attempts of infringement obtained in Japan and China, the Consortium for the Protection of Asiago Cheese continues its action to promote and valorize the PDO from the Veneto and Trentino regions.

"Asiago" has been registered as a trademark in Japan since 2012 and, by virtue of this recognition, in the last six years the Consortium for the Protection has taken strong legal action, managing to successfully thwart all attempts of fraudulent use in the country. At the same time, in the EU-Japan negotiation, currently awaiting ratification, Asiago has also been entered in the list of the two hundred geographical indications and among the ten protected Italian cheeses.

According to Flavio Innocenzi, Director of the Consortium for the Protection: "Over these years we have worked hard to guarantee protection and, at the same time, to promote and valorize our product. In this way, we have created the best conditions to be able to make even better future use of the opportunities offered by a market showing increasing appreciation for the gastronomic and cultural value proposed by Protected Denomination of Origin products over generic and standardized productions. The decrease in custom duties arising from conclusion of the negotiation will offer new opportunities for growth that will depend on the marketing abilities of our producers and exporters."

In Japan cheese consumption rose from 2012 to 2017 by 14%, reaching 2.50 kg per capita (CIA data). A figure that is still modest, also due to customs duties, which until now were high for imported products, but which offers great opportunities for growth for a Protected Denomination of Origin product like Asiago. Thanks to the Consortium's protective action and to promotional activities, from 2016 to 2017 sales of Asiago PDO increased by 50.4%. A positive start that, on the eve of ratification of the EU-Japan economic partnership agreement (EPA) now sees the Consortium for the Protection invited to a series of bilateral meetings to take place in Tokyo and, on 29th September, to the EU Geographical Indications Cheese Festival, the first event dedicated entirely to these cheeses.

The strategy of the Consortium for the Protection of Asiago Cheese has always focused on Asian markets. In 2014 Asiago also registered its name in China where, since then, it has organized trade missions, as well as participated in the FHC CHINA show in the three years from 2014 to 2016. It was at this fair that, creating a significant precedent that anticipated the EU-China

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bilateral agreement for the mutual protection of geographical indications in which Asiago is in the list of the 100 Italian products protected once it has come into force, the Consortium blocked some products attempting to infringe the name ASIAGO through improper use. A result followed by a series of legal victories, proving that the future of the high quality Italian agri-food sector is necessarily linked to global supervision of markets to ensure the authenticity of the great wealth of values and the reputation of Made in Italy.

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