



## Press Release

# **COUNTERFEIT PRODUCTS AT SIAL IN PARIS: ASIAGO, PARMIGIANO REGGIANO AND PECORINO ROMANO MANAGE TO BLOCK THEM**

**European obligation for protection “ex officio” of PDO products implemented with prompt action by the French authorities.**

Vicenza, 20th October 2016 – the Consortia for the Protection of Asiago, Parmigiano Reggiano and Pecorino Romano cheeses obtained the immediate seizure by the French authorities of a series of products either bearing, or improperly evocative of, the names of the three PDO cheeses, recognised and protected throughout the EU. This action took place at SIAL, the International Food Exhibition in Paris that opened on the 16th of October and will close today.

The request made by the three Consortia to the French authorities is based on Article 3 of the Treaty on European Union, which recognises the value of diversity, guarantees monitoring of its protection and expresses, among other things, the obligation for protection “ex officio” of PDO products in all Member States, imposing on every state the duty of monitoring compliance with the regulation and of adopting appropriate intervention measures.

The three Consortia indicate that in the first eight months of 2016, within the scope of the activity of protection *ex officio* introduced by Regulation (EU) 1151/2012, there have been a total of 109 reports of misuses and evocations concerning products wrongly referred to as Italian PDOs by the ICQRF (Central Inspectorate of Quality Protection and Fraud Repression) of the Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policies to the competent authorities, both in Europe and in non-European countries. The outcome of 70% of these reports was successful.

This situation also occurred in the past few days, with identification of counterfeit products exhibited at SIAL, particularly by American exhibitors. The Consortia for the Protection of Asiago, Parmigiano Reggiano and Pecorino Romano cheeses acted immediately by contacting the DGCCRF (Direction Générale de la Concurrence, de la Consommation et de la Répression des Fraudes) to take prompt action and withdraw the products. In the words of the Director of the Consortium for the Protection of Asiago Cheese, Flavio Innocenzi: “Early intervention is a key element. In the case of SIAL, the monitoring system of the Consortia took immediate action and the protective mechanisms introduced, not without major effort, in recent years in EU States once again proved their effectiveness. This result is the consequence of cultural growth and increasing attention towards protection of the uniqueness and specificity that distinguishes Italian PDO products.”

According to Riccardo Deserti, Director of the Consortium of Parmigiano Reggiano, “The action taken and the result achieved once again confirm the effectiveness of monitoring implemented on a global scale by the Consortia for the Protection, but they also show that behaviours deceptive for the consumer and damaging for the manufacturer are still widespread.”

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“The success obtained in Paris offers proof that the European protection mechanisms work, but also of the fact that where there are no legislations to protect PDOs, we find practices that must be urgently eradicated, with immediate benefit, above all, for the very consumers of these nations,” continued Deserti.

“The action of the Consortia and the synergy with the supervisory bodies,” concludes Salvatore Palitta, President of the Consortium for the Protection of Pecorino Romano, “brought to light deceptive practices and we were inflexible on this occasion, just as we are, at present, in the domestic market, in which we are taking decisive action against activities detrimental to consumers. In this sense, the action taken at SIAL is an example and warning of our commitment to protect the market.”

In recent years, as well as action aimed at protection there has been an increase in the monitoring of products sold on the Internet. In fact, since 2014 the agreement signed by AICIG (Italian Association of Geographical Indication Consortia) with ICQRF and eBay allows activation of the VeRO (Verified rights owner) program, through which commercial offers and counterfeit products can be removed from the platform in just a few hours. From January to August 2016, this action led to a total of 356 blocked products on eBay.

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