



The Absinthe PGI : know-how and authenticity

In August 2013, three of the objections to the inclusion of “Absinthe”, “Fée Verte” and “La Bleue” in the Federal Register of Protected Geographical Indications (PGI) were rejected by the *Swiss* Federal Administrative Court (FAC) on the grounds that the status of those objecting did not provide a basis for them to complain.

Eleven objections are still to be answered. At this interim stage, the Interprofessional Association of Absinthe would like to take this opportunity to emphasize its philosophy.

It should be remembered that the system of AOP’s (Appellations d’Origine Protégée) and PGI’s were developed in the Mediterranean countries in the early 20th century. This was on the one hand to protect the appellations, the know-how and the authenticity of “terroir” products, and on the other to protect against fraud. Wines and spirits are at the very origin of this legal instrument. Cheeses, meats and other foodstuffs were subsequently inspired to protect their appellations. The Absinthe PGI process is completely in line with this vision of authenticity and “terroir”.

It is well established that absinthe was created in the Val -de-Travers and that its fame spread from there. During almost 100 years of prohibition, the distillers of the Val-du-Travers risked very heavy penalties in order to keep this iconic product alive. Without their courage and tenacity, absinthe may well have disappeared by now.

With the *Swiss* legalization of 1 March 2005, in an increasingly globalized market, the PGI is the only collective opportunity to protect the authenticity of the name “absinthe”, to cultivate the “know-how”, and to perpetuate the heritage of our predecessors. It is therefore fortunate that the PGI process is progressing through the *Swiss* federal authorities. Note that *Swiss* recognition of the PGI does not lead to an automatic European recognition since each country has its own jurisdiction over this matter.

The Absinthe PGI provides real benefits for its producers, for food and drink lovers, for those who believe in “terroir”, and, naturally, for the inhabitants of the Val-de-Travers.

Association interprofessionnelle de l’absinthe

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