

Cultural Village of Europe
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**Contribution from
PERGINE VALDARNO
ITALY**



PRODUCTION AND MARKETING OF REGIONAL PRODUCTS

by Arezzo's Province- Agricultural Department –Pergine Valdarno's Municipality

When you think about a territory in terms of marketing, you think in particular to the inheritance this territory can offer us, all the products we can reckon on, in order to present it and to let it be appreciated. This view allowed us to go further than the masterpieces and we were able to see also other treasures. We discovered nature with all its suggestive expressions. We transformed it into a product we could use for the local economy. We discovered gastronomy with all the incredible varieties, handicrafts and all the connected peculiarities.

In order to transform the local products into sources, we had to follow a parcours bringing us far away from the concepts of the product tout court and we started to see culture this product, the knowledge tradition, people, history ecc. This is a great job

We thought about a product which could tell us the territory history, in the same way if the masterpieces. We related products to each other and we saw the farmer producing good products and the restaurants offering them to their customers, or to people who sell them, handicraftsmen transforming them. In this way we started to see a net on the territory composed of all the players who have got the same aim: to work well and live well. This has required us a deep analysis of the characteristics and a research on those productions which can be defined traditional products. We speak about a territory with its history and traditions which can be found in the local productions.

For this reason, to market the local products we need first of all to put near this product the knowledge lying behind it, to tell about these products and let the added value come out, the value of a particular territory.

In Tuscany we made a deep job relative to the typical products, both agricultural products and handicrafts. This meant to become "aware" of our important inheritance.

This is a great job our Province has been involved in for a long time. However also in our specific area Valdarno "Arno Valley" different municipalities, among which Pergine Valdarno, together with the Province, agreed upon to cooperate together in order to give value to the typical products, to rural tourism as well as to focus on the important item of the connection between "land and table". Altogether they want to suggest a synergy between economic and socio-cultural dimension.

In this way altogether they planned different actions to be achieved during this year:

- A multilingual tourist magazine spreading the territory knowledge, mentioning all the activities and event
- They coordinated a calendar with all summer events to be communicated to tourists.
- They promoted actions to incentive the presence of the typical quality products on the tables in the local restaurants and they supported the direct sales inside farms.

- They cooperated within a nice initiative called “IL Mercatale”: a special market of local productions, able to involve even small farms and which takes place once a month. It has become a very famous market also among tourists.
- They promoted initiatives aimed to support the local typical products such as olive oil, wine and so on...
- They opened in cooperation a tourist office near the highway outgoing.

Moreover, as you can see in a further power point presentation, Pergine Valdarno, together with other small Municipalities situated in the surrounding areas, took part to a Rural Med project, aimed to study the features of our landscape as well as the typical cultivations originating there.

This project focuses on the strong relationship between the socio-cultural background and the typical products as well as on the generational changes, trying to understand a possible way to keep our small fields alive. We think it is a nice way to show, even through images, the attention we pay to this theme.

This is the way we are engaged, as a Municipality, in supporting and promoting the marketing of regional products.

We think it could be a good thing to continue working together on this theme on a European level, seen that as small villages we are all particularly interested in preserving the quality of the typical productions. Only through quality we can together win nowadays globalization. This is the goal our local administrations, especially in our region Tuscany, are trying to achieve.