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The Protected Denominations of Origin Agneau des Prés-Salés de la Baie du Mont Saint-Michel et de la Baie de Somme, official quality labels committed to agro-ecology

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Abstract

This article presents the case study of the 2 French "Agneau des Prés-Salés" PDOs as illustrative cases of agro-ecological approaches. It is based on an interview with staff from the Institut National de l'Origine et de la Qualité (INAO) and an analysis of the commitments made in the specifications. It details the construction of these two approaches, in terms of their genesis, organization, market-building support functions, levers mobilized and obstacles encountered. Although the operators interviewed did not at first refer to agroecology, their reaction to the elements of agroecology proposed by the FAO, and the commitments of the specifications show that all these elements resonate in the end. They can be considered an innovation niche, since we can observe a dynamic around the experimentation of practices that preserve both the characteristics of the product and the fragile equilibrium of these ecosystems shared by several users, and that the first approach initiated has inspired two others.

Keywords : sheep, meat, public maritime domain, ecological balance

1. Introduction

The French sheepmeat sector is heavily involved in the SIQO (Quality and Origin Identification Signs), with 19.1% of sheepmeat slaughterings in 2021 (expressed in head nationally), ahead of chicken (17%), beef cattle (5.6%), veal (5.5%) and pig (5.3%) (Chatellier, 2024; Figure 1). Label Rouge, whether or not associated with a Protected Geographical Indication (PGI), is predominant (12%), and organic (O) accounts for 3%. There are also 3 Protected Denomination of Origin (PDO) products: "Agneau des Prés-Salés de la Baie du Mont Saint-Michel", "Agneau des Prés-Salés de la Baie de Somme" and "Mouton de Barèges-Gavarnie". These 3 PDOs are small in size (Figure 1), but the two lamb PDOs seemed to us to be illustrative cases of agro-ecological approaches, since the aim of the 'Agro-ecology and the Market' project run by the INRAE sector research groups was to analyse approaches other than organic farming (OF). The aim of this article is to present the development of these two approaches, in terms of their genesis, organisation, levers used and obstacles encountered, based in particular on an analysis of the specifications for these two PDOs and a 2-hour interview with 3 officials from the Institut National de l'Origine et de la Qualité (INAO). The parts of the text in italics are verbatim.

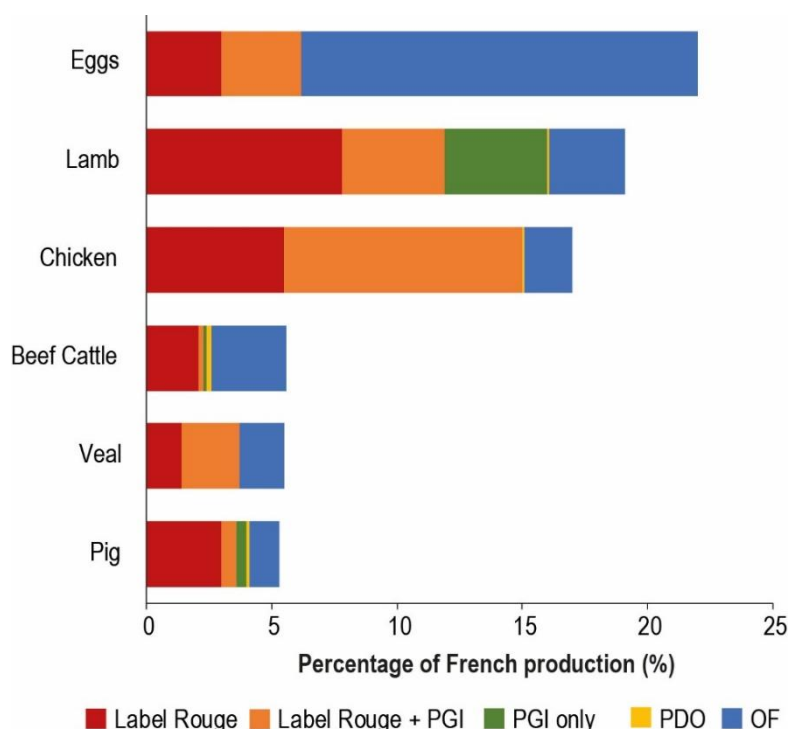


Figure 1: Share of French production (in terms of number of animals slaughtered or eggs marketed) in 2021 of several animal products covered by the different SIQO (including Organic Farming -OF-) (source: V. Chatellier, 2024).

2. Presentation of the PDO approach: origin, issues and market

2.1. Members and missions

The PDO 'Agneau des Prés-Salés de la Baie du Mont Saint-Michel' and 'Agneau des Prés-Salés de la Baie de Somme' are two distinct designations. The initial aim of both was to protect the production and the name, because the product's reputation meant that far more salt-meadow lamb was sold than could be produced by farmers.

The designation of origin process had been in gestation in the Bay of Mont Saint-Michel since the mid-1980s. Farmers initially set up 2 associations to register the 'Agneaux des herbus' brand in Ile et Vilaine and the 'Le Grévin' brand in Manche (registered with the Institut National de la Propriété Industrielle). The "Agneau des Prés-Salés de la Baie du Mont Saint-Michel" designation of origin was granted in 2009.

Despite being in the designation of origin geographical area, 'Le Grévin' withdrew from the process in 2006, considering in particular that the designation of origin specifications imposed an excessively restrictive grazing period for the lambs on the salt meadows, which made it impossible to sell the lambs for Easter, a period of high demand. This led to a split between some Les Havres du Cotentin farmers who wanted to continue with the designation of origin process and the 'Le Grévin' association. This led to the merger of the 2 unions into what became the Organisme de défense et de gestion (ODG).

The PDO "Agneau des Prés-Salés de la Baie du Mont Saint-Michel" currently includes 10 farmers, half of whom are located in the southern part of the Bay and half in the Havres du Cotentin (Figure 2). The association that holds the 'Le Grévin' brand has around 70 farmers.

In the Bay of the Somme, farmers first registered a trademark in 1991 ('Estran'), then applied for recognition as a designation of origin in 1997, which was granted in 2007. The European equivalent, PDO,



was obtained in July 2012. There are now 11 farmers in the 'Agneau des Prés-Salés de la Baie de Somme' PDO (geographical area around the Somme and Authie bays, Figure 3).

The authorization applies to farmers and slaughterers. Although these two PDOs are small in terms of the number of farmers (around ten for each PDO) and the quantity of meat produced (1,800 lambs and 30 tonnes of meat marketed for the "Agneau des Prés-Salés de la Baie du Mont Saint-Michel" PDO, 2,100 lambs and 45 tonnes of meat marketed for the "Agneau des Prés-Salés de la Baie de Somme" PDO), the product has a very high profile. It is sold in 6 French regions (Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, Bourgogne-France-Comté, Bretagne, Hauts-de-France, Ile-de-France, Normandie), although the main outlets are local. It is mainly sold in butchers' shops, but can also be found in supermarkets and hypermarkets, canneries and delicatessens (as well as restaurants).



Figure 2: Location of "Agneau des Prés-Salés de la Baie du Mont-Saint-Michel" PDO breeders

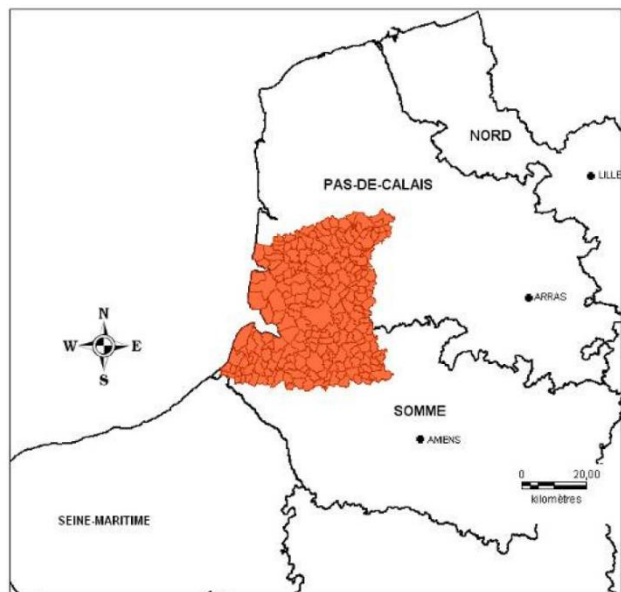


Figure 3: Geographical area of the "Agneau des Prés-Salés de la Baie de Somme" PDO

2.2. The direction of change and the relationship with agro-ecology

The farming rules set out in the specifications are designed to preserve both the characteristics of the product and the fragile equilibrium of the salt meadows. The fundamentals of the 2 PDOs are the links between the product and its terroir, through extensive farming on natural meadows (salt meadows, also known as 'herbus') made up of halophytic plants which give the meat its distinctive flavour. The specifications require a minimum duration of grazing on salt meadows and limit the amount of concentrate fed or the length of time the lamb is finished indoors (Table 1), all important factors in meat quality (Prache et al., 2022). In the 'Agneau des Prés-Salés de la Baie de Somme' PDO, the flocks are transhumant: they leave the farm to graze the salt meadows day and night (guarded by a collective shepherd) and leave the salt meadows only to be slaughtered or to be finished indoors for a few days. In the "Agneau des Prés-Salés du Mont Saint-Michel" PDO, on the other hand, the animals can return to the sheepfold every



evening. All the forages supplementing the salt meadow pasture herbage, and most of the concentrated feed, come from the geographical area. The use of silage is restricted (Table 1). Animals with lesions linked to parasites must be isolated and treated outside the salt meadows, to avoid the corresponding environmental impacts. The introduction of fertilisers other than animal manure is prohibited.

Table 1: Some of the commitments in the specifications for the 2 Agneau des Prés-Salés PDOs.

Grazing period on salt meadows	At least 50% of the lamb's life, with a minimum of 70 days for the PDO "Agneau des Prés-Salés de la Baie du Mont Saint-Michel" and 75 days for the PDO "Agneau des Prés-Salés de la Baie de Somme".
Concentrate supplementation during the grazing period and/or finishing duration indoors	In the PDO 'Agneau des Prés-Salés de la Baie du Mont Saint-Michel', the use of concentrates is limited and regulated: either the lambs do not receive any concentrate supplementation during the grazing period on the salt meadows, in which case they may be finished indoors for 30 days (if finishing period begins before 1 September) or 40 days (if finishing period begins after 1 September), or the lambs can be given a concentrate supplementation indoors in the evening during the grazing period (up to a limit of 400 g per day per lamb), in which case finishing indoors is prohibited. In the "Agneau des Prés-Salés de la Baie de Somme" PDO, the duration of finishing indoors is limited to 1 day for 4 days of grazing on salt meadows, with a maximum of 6 weeks.
Distribution of silage	The distribution of maize silage is banned in the "Agneau des Prés-Salés de la Baie du Mont Saint-Michel" PDO, and all silage is banned in the "Agneau des Prés-Salés de la Baie de Somme" PDO.

In these 2 PDOs, farmers do not have complete control over their land. The salt meadows are on the Domaine Public Maritime, which "*belongs to everyone and to no-one*". The corresponding grazing sectors are identified by the INAO and their characteristics regularly examined, in order to guarantee the suitability of the salt meadows to produce PDO lambs. Authorisation is given for a certain stocking rate in each of these sectors, and the INAO can ask PDO farmers to reduce the stocking rate if pasture availability is deemed insufficient. However, the INAO has no control over farmers who do not have a PDO. There are also constraints on the characteristics of the fallback plots used during periods of high tide (stocking rate, location, maximum altitude), which had been considered at the start of the process so as to be able to offer guarantees also for the periods when the animals were removed from the salt meadows. Farmers sometimes have difficulty finding these fallback plots, because they need to be accessible and have a watering point.

There have been changes in salt meadow management practices, which were not included in the specifications. "*We're moving forward and learning as we go. We said that couch grass was no good, but we realised that it was also an ecological niche for certain species, particularly during tides. So today, we're more interested in finding a balance between each of the partners and each of the occupants of the salt meadows*". Practices not initially included in the specifications are being tried out and implemented, such as mowing and rotational grazing with mobile fencing.

When identifying and examining salt meadow sectors, the INAO ensures that ecological balances are respected, for example i) that grazing does not destroy areas that must be maintained for other activities, such as fishing (these are areas of obione (*Halimione portulacoides*), a halophyte plant that is very sensitive to grazing and trampling by sheep, which allow sea bass to develop) and ii) that there is sufficient pasture available on the salt meadows for the lambs to be fed from the salt meadows and not from what they are given indoors. The aim of salt meadow management is therefore to maintain this equilibrium and the diversity of flora and fauna in this ecosystem, and to enable the environment to be maintained without the deleterious effects of excessive trampling.

The position of the operators interviewed on agroecology changed considerably over the course of the interview. Initially, their position was clearly distant: "*It's a fairly vague term, which ultimately has no real connection with agriculture; it's more of an intellectual concept than a practical reality; it doesn't inspire me much; we fiddle around in it, but without necessarily intellectualising the concept; there are practices and measures, but we don't necessarily put that term behind them*". Finally, when we presented the FAO



grid, the following verbatim comments were made: *"These FAO principles all have a certain resonance. In the end, we tick all the boxes"*. Almost all the elements of the FAO grid were cited and discussed by the interviewees, apart from 'circular and solidarity economy', 'efficiency' and 'recycling', which are not used very much in these PDOs. The views of the operators interviewed are summarised in Table 1. It should be noted that they point out that, increasingly, the value and economic viability of an appellation is taken into account when it is recognised. *"Will this designation allow human beings to make a living from this type of production ? Will this appellation be viable in the future ? How can we think about production constraints and the perimeter of the geographical area so that these do not become obstacles in the future ?* For example, the growing tension between the development of slaughterhouses (specialisation and a decline in their network as they are grouped together within the territories) and the uniqueness of the geographical area (which must be one and the same for the appellation) is a major challenge for the two PDOs and has even led to a recent revision of the geographical area of the PDO "Agneau des Prés-Salés de la Baie du Mont Saint-Michel" in order to be able to integrate a new slaughterhouse. The operators interviewed also pointed out that pressure from the farmers' environment (certain fussy administrations, certain urban neighbours, competing farmers in a favourable economic position because they do not respect the PDO constraints) can affect the resilience, particularly of the PDO "Agneau des Prés-Salés de la Baie du Mont Saint-Michel".

Table 2: Interviewees' views on the 10 elements of agroecology proposed by the FAO (in the order in which the operators themselves chose to address them). Sentences in italics are verbatims.

Responsible governance	Recognition as an ODG (a group of producers of the same product who work together within a structure to manage the SIQO recognition process, from drawing up specifications to protecting and promoting the product). The INAO is organised in such a way that it is PDO sector operators who decide on the direction or recognition of specifications.
Co-creation and knowledge sharing	<i>"An appellation can only be a collective ; it is this collective that will share its know-how and practices (empirical or new). Defining the link to the terroir, formalising the common denominators that define the family trait of an appellation is necessarily a matter of co-creation and sharing knowledge"</i> .
Food culture and traditions	<i>"Recognition that this is an exceptional meat. A PDO is the consecration of practices, a culture and a tradition of consumption"</i> .
Diversity	<i>"We're trying to maintain the ecosystem and its equilibrium, in which each type of user has a role to play"</i> . <i>"Everyone should be able to use these salt meadows, which are part of the Public Maritime Domain, including i) livestock farmers, ii) the diverse fauna (fish, crustaceans, birds - including barnacle geese -) which needs floral and structural diversity on the salt meadows, and iii) hunters"</i> . <i>"Hunters mow to ensure they have sufficient visibility ; it's useful for barnacle geese and sheep. The obione is necessary for the development cycle of certain fish, so it must be preserved"</i> .
Synergies	<i>"Rather than considering the different uses of the salt meadows, which are part of the Public Maritime Domain, as competing with each other, we need to consider them, and increasingly they are considered in this way, as a need for mutual support, for synergies between all these functions and features"</i> .
Human and social values	<i>"The PDO is a fabulous tool for regional development and for maintaining the rural fabric in place, and at the same time for maintaining a form of agriculture that promotes values and the economy. Human and social values are at the heart of the process of recognising a PDO, because they carry a history."</i>
Resilience	<i>"A PDO has to be resilient, as it recognises a product that is at least 50 years old, but more likely hundreds of years old, or even a thousand years old for Agneau des Prés-Salés PDOs"</i> . <i>"Increasingly, we are taking into account all aspects of value-adding and economic viability: will this designation allow human beings to make a living from this type of production ? will this designation be viable in the future?"</i> <i>However, pressure from the farmers' environment (authorities, neighbours, competitors) can mean that this production is not resilient"</i> .



2.3. Market construction

Production and therefore marketing are seasonal, with the PDO "Agneau des Prés-Salés" lamb product sold between June and December. The people interviewed consider that this seasonal nature does not pose a problem and can even be an advantage, as it is an opportunity to communicate at the opening and people look forward to this opening. Although the sale of PDO "Agneau des Prés-Salés" lamb is not possible at Easter (it is not compatible with the constraints of the specifications), it has developed a lot for Christmas and New Year's Day. At Easter, Mont Saint-Michel PDO farmers sell their lamb under another brand ('Agneau de la Baie').

The selling price per kg of carcass is on average 50% to 100% higher than for standard lambs. It should be pointed out, however, that the economic profitability of these farms is hampered by low animal productivity (number of lambs produced per ewe), linked to the difficult soil and climate conditions and the higher risk of mortality (grassland-based production, long walks, risk of getting stuck). This would be worth quantifying. It should also be pointed out that the size of the farmers' collective is small (around ten for each PDO), which makes the "Agneau des Prés-Salés de la Baie du Mont Saint-Michel" PDO particularly vulnerable to competition from private brands. *"When we go to defend these causes with administrative departments other than the INAO, we are told, 'Well, how much tonnage are we talking about ? Admittedly, we're not talking about a lot of tonnage, but we're still talking about something that everyone is happy with when it comes to communicating and that everyone wants to maintain: a postcard of Mont Saint-Michel is Mont Saint-Michel with lambs in front of it'".*

3. Market construction support functions

3.1. Knowledge construction (and internal dissemination) function

The salt meadow environment is difficult, even hostile, and it's the farmers who are the main players. *"The principle behind all designations, and this is especially true of the 'Prés-Salés' PDOs, is that it cannot be reproduced elsewhere. These are things that are based on human know-how and practices. It's an extremely empirical type of farming that requires very detailed knowledge of the environment (criches, for example). This knowledge of the environment is taught from farmer to farmer, from old to new, and from one place to another, you don't have the same constraints. You learn it on the job or you learn it from your predecessor, but in terms of the profession, you can't learn it.* It's worth noting that in the "Agneau des Prés-Salés de la Baie de Somme" PDO, the sheep are guarded by shepherds, encouraging communication and alliances between farmers. Distributors are more closely involved in the "Agneau des Prés-Salés de la Baie de Somme" PDO, because even before it was recognised as a PDO, farmers were used to working with butchers and restaurateurs. The latter attend the ODG's general meeting and pay a membership fee (per kg of lamb marketed). This organisation enables to get rapid feedback from butchers and restaurateurs and to adapt farming practices. Note that there was a commercial problem one year (some lambs were not sold). The cause of the problem has not been elucidated, but given the historically heavy weight of the carcasses, it is difficult to market them outside traditional channels. For the "Agneau des Prés-Salés de la Baie du Mont Saint-Michel" PDO, the organisation is weaker, with only butchers paying an annual fee to be included on the list of butchers marketing the product.



3.2. Mobilising resources and extending the network

The chambers of agriculture provide technical support to farmers. In addition, the Conservatoire du Littoral, which manages these coastal areas, is a key player in the consideration of these designations, their development and their possible impact. Finally, the Groupe d'études des milieux estuariens et littoraux (GEMEL), which aims to increase knowledge on these ecosystems and encourage exchanges between scientists and coastal users, is paying particular attention to the estuaries of Picardy (Somme and Authie, which are home to the PDO "Agneau des Prés-Salés de la Baie de Somme"). In particular, it is in charge of studies and monitoring regarding the ecological evolution of the different sectors of the salt meadows, which it presents every year to the grassland monitoring committee. For example, it is carrying out studies on the evolution of reed beds and quackgrass, showing the impact of the different users of this ecosystem and making the relationships between them to evolve. *"It's true that in the Baie de Somme, up until 10 years ago, hunters and farmers were shooting at each other, but now they've finally understood that by working together, there's more to be gained than by going against each other, so things are changing"*. The example of quackgrass management came up frequently during the interview. *"In the Bay of Mont Saint-Michel, partnerships are being set up with the various salt meadows users, whether they be hunters, conservationists or farmers, because the interests of some sometimes overlap with those of others. The hunters agree to do the first mowing and then the farmers agree to regularly bring in their ewes and lambs to maintain these areas. So I think that agro-ecology also needs to be thought through in consultation with all the partners and occupants of these areas"*.

The PDO area is limited by the characteristics of the terroir, which limits the extent of each PDO. At Mont Saint-Michel, the flushing effect of the small coastal river Couesnon, accentuated by the new infrastructures providing access to the site, has shifted the sediments (extension and/or regression of certain salt meadows), but the extensions do not necessarily correspond to the areas where there is a desire for farmers to set up or expand.

In the Baie de Somme, production is well established, with a stable number of farmers and a renewal of generations that seems to be a given. At Mont Saint-Michel, on the other hand, the PDO has been weakened and eroded by i) competition from private brands (outside the designation), which are 'sucking' in the designation and taking advantage of the price differential, without having the constraints (*"To sell lamb at the same price, I'm not going to bother with the designation ; why should I bother with the appellation when I can sell lambs that are not controlled"*), and ii) a certain amount of social pressure (local residents who can't stand the smell of the animals), specific to the "Agneau des Prés-Salés de la Baie du Mont Saint-Michel" PDO, as the flocks generally return to the sheepfold in the evening. The Loi Littoral (coastal law) also makes it virtually impossible to build sheepfolds on the coast, which hampers the renewal of generations (*"you have to be really passionate and really convinced of the idea to want to get involved in an appellation like 'Agneau des Prés-Salés du Mont Saint-Michel'"*).

Conversely, it is interesting to note that there has been an extension of the approach by 'inspiration', i.e. the approach has inspired others. For example, the "Agneau des Prés-Salés de la Baie de Somme" PDO has benefited from the application for recognition as a PDO submitted by the salt meadow lamb farmers of Mont Saint-Michel (*"if they can do it, why can't we ?"*). *"They left later and arrived earlier"*. The main aim of this designation was to gain better recognition for the product, and in particular to improve the price. The product is not exactly the same in the 2 PDOs (even if the animals graze the same type of meadows - salt meadows - the farming practices are slightly different), and the marketing channels are also different. As there is far more demand than supply, there is no competition between the 2 PDOs. The 2 French ODGs know each other well and communicate with each other, and each is invited to the other's general meeting. *"We can use the experience of some to feed the experience of others"*. On the other hand, another Agneau des Prés-Salés PDO, which was inspired by the two French PDOs and has just been registered (PDO Gower Salt Marsh Lamb, in Wales, registered in July 2023), could pose a problem, as its specifications allow freezing, unlike the 2 French Agneau des Prés-Salés PDOs. France therefore opposed its registration.



3.3. Relations with public authorities

In the Baie de Somme, the actions of the local authorities are welcomed and support the PDO. They encourage consultation on issues that raise questions. On the issue of water contamination, for example, the sub-prefecture, which is responsible for monitoring, has launched studies into the potential sources of *Escherichia Coli* contamination (herds, potentially, but also campsites, sewage treatment plants, etc.), without deliberately incriminating the animals, as was the case in the PDO "Agneau des Prés-Salés de la Baie du Mont Saint-Michel", where the public authorities have forced farmers to withdraw their animals for long periods, without analysing all the possible causes upstream.

3.4. Governance and securing relationships

Being organised as an ODG and recognised as such reflects responsible governance.

In the Baie de Somme, while the application for AOC status was being examined, the players regularly increased prices, in agreement with butchers and restaurateurs. They had anticipated that, once AOC status was obtained, the constraints of the specifications would lead to an increase in production costs, while at the same time improving the visibility of the product. This well-considered consultation between producers and marketers shows the interest that the various links in this sector had in recognition as an appellation, and how they organised and secured it. In the Bay of Mont Saint-Michel, prices also rose after recognition as an appellation, but not really in consultation with marketers.

4. Limits and prospects

4.1. Limits of the study

Only the INAO was interviewed (two engineers and a technician); we had no contact with the other links in the chain (farmers, slaughterers, distributors), but the INAO knows them well, and we were able to cover a wide range of issues in these two PDOs. The FAO's framework for representing agroecology was useful for covering the different sectors represented in this dossier (animal and plant); we have supplemented it with the one proposed by Dumont et al. (2013), which focuses on animal sectors.

4.2. Assessment of the PDOs and their prospects

These two PDOs are very committed to agro-ecology, although they do not explicitly state this. They continue to experiment with adaptations to salt meadow management in order to preserve this particular ecosystem, which is responsible for the special quality attributes of the meat and other ecosystem services. However, the people interviewed point out that it is not the specifications themselves that emphasise respect for the environment and attention to the ecosystem equilibrium, nor do they reflect this, but rather the expert reports. "*Perhaps we should do this one day*", they say.

Recognition as an appellation has enabled these two approaches to gain recognition for their practices and products, but it has not prevented them from 'siphoning off' their reputation, particularly in the case of the 'Agneau des Prés-Salés de la Baie du Mont Saint-Michel' PDO. We can talk about an innovation niche, in the sense that i) innovations in salt meadow management are continuing and ii) the first initiative (PDO "Agneau des Prés-Salés de la Baie du Mont Saint-Michel") has inspired two other PDOs ("Agneau des Prés-Salés de la Baie de Somme" and "Gower Salt Marsh Lamb").

Ten years after their recognition, the two PDOs are beginning to think about revising their specifications. The driving forces behind this are changes in the environment, particularly with regard to slaughterhouses (as discussed above) and feed suppliers (disappearance of long-standing suppliers, which poses a



problem in terms of compliance with the specifications). However, the fundamentals of the 2 PDOs (farming practices, grazing time on the salt meadows) are reaffirmed by the 2 ODGs, even if some farmers would like to relax the constraints so that they can produce more easily, particularly in the PDO "Agneau des Prés-Salés de la Baie du Mont Saint-Michel" due to competition from private brands. There is also a desire to make the specifications more 'intelligible' to consumers (in particular, to make it easier to understand the farming practices). The usefulness of certain criteria also seems questionable today in view of the constraints they impose on farmers (maximum altitude of fallback plots used during high tides). On the other hand, practices that were not originally envisaged because they were not used, and which are prohibited in the specifications, could offer enormous advantages in the management of salt meadows (rotational grazing), without impacting on the product's link to its terroir. Validation of changes to the specifications is ultimately the responsibility of the National Committee and the European Commission, which ensure that the product is linked to its terroir.

5. Conclusion

These two PDOs are illustrative cases of a strong commitment to agro-ecology in the sheep-meat sector. There are other agro-ecological initiatives in this sector, in particular the 'Organic' SIQO and the Mouton de Barèges-Gavarnie PDO, but the latter concerns a different and very specific type of animal (adult sheep) and we wanted to study non-organic initiatives. These two PDOs produce a very well-known product. The selling price is 50% to 100% higher than that of standard lamb, but the economic profitability of the corresponding farms needs to be quantified, since animal productivity is limited by the difficult soil and climate conditions and the risks of mortality are higher.

The dynamic around research and experimentation with new practices to preserve both the characteristics of the product and the fragile equilibrium of these areas shared by several users, in conjunction with various bodies, including the INAO, and partnerships with the various users or managers of these special areas, is particularly noteworthy. This can be seen as an innovative niche, since the first initiative inspired the next two. It should be noted that the latest PDOs risks competing with the first two, due to the lower commitments involved.

The situation differs between the 2 PDOs. One (the "Agneau des Prés-Salés de la Baie de Somme" PDO) appears to be serene, well established, with a stable number of farmers and a renewal of generations that seems to have been achieved; consultation with the downstream sector (butchers, restaurateurs) is organised, well thought out and secure. The other (the "Agneau des Prés-Salés de la Baie du Mont Saint-Michel" PDO) appears to be weakened and eroded, as the small-scale collective is faced with larger competitors who are putting themselves in a more favourable economic position by "usurping" the product's reputation without respecting the constraints of the PDO's specifications. It should be noted that the two PDOs are both faced with the problem of grouping abattoirs within territories, in tension with animal welfare and the uniqueness of the geographical area.



Ethics

Not applicable.

Declaration on the availability of data and models

The data supporting the results presented in this article are available on request from the author of the article.

Declaration on Generative Artificial Intelligence and Artificial Intelligence Assisted Technologies in the Drafting Process.

The authors used artificial intelligence technology (DeepL Pro) in the translation of the article from French to English.

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Author's contributions

Conducting interviews, collecting and analysing information and data, writing the manuscript.

Declaration of interest

The authors declare that they do not work for, advise, own shares in, or receive funds from any organisation that could benefit from this article, and declare no affiliation other than those listed at the beginning of the article.

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