

RUMINANT LIVESTOCK FARMING AND THE GASTRONOMIC HERITAGE



« How does the diversity of products from ruminant farming contribute to the prestige of French gastronomy? »

1

The products from ruminant farming embody the richness of the terroirs, the diversity of flavours and craftsmanship. They contribute to the influence of French gastronomy.

Product quality labels guarantee the geographical origin, tradition and expertise that characterize specific products, ensuring consumers an authentic taste and cultural experience.

2

The professions of production, processing and marketing are essential to French gastronomic identity.

These professions rely on traditional skills that help maintain the quality and authenticity of French products.

RUMINANT LIVESTOCK FARMING AND THE GASTRONOMIC HERITAGE

WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

French gastronomic heritage encompasses products, recipes, expertise, but also traditions that trace the culinary history and dietary practices of the country. Products from ruminant farming play an emblematic role in French gastronomy by contributing to the richness and diversity of its cuisine. France is renowned for its varied cheeses, which represent a precious culinary heritage and are often integrated into characteristic French dishes. Similarly, meats are present in most traditional French dishes. Their quality and tenderness are often highlighted in French haute cuisine. These products play an essential role in the preservation and promotion of traditional crafts related to their production, thus helping to maintain a precious cultural and artisanal heritage.

KEY FIGURES

In France there are **16** Red Label cattle schemes, **12** Red Label lamb schemes and **4** Red Label veal schemes (www.label-rouge-viandes.fr).

In France in 2021:
46 PDO cheeses,
3 PDO butters,
2 PDO creams,
9 PGI cheeses,
1 PGI cream
(INAO, CNAOL, 2022).

The proportion of cow, sheep and goat milk used in PDO in French collection are respectively **12.4%**, **36.3%** and **14%** (CNAOL, INAO, 2023).

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Products from ruminant farming and the influence of French gastronomy

The reputation of products from ruminant farming in France

French dairy products, meats and tripe products are renowned for their quality and for the diversity of their flavours. French dairy products, whether cheese, cottage cheese, cream or butter, benefit from ancestral know-how passed down from generation to generation. Each region of France has its own dairy specialties, reflecting the richness of the terroirs and local traditions. Similarly, French meats, whether beef, veal, lamb or goat, are renowned for their excellent taste. Meat consumption varies according to French gastronomy within the regions. For example, when it comes to beef, heifers are mostly consumed in the southeast, and young cattle in the northeast. French farmers pay particular attention to animal welfare and environmental preservation, which contributes to high-quality products.



Quality and origin initiatives contribute to this reputation.

The Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) refers to a product for which each stage of production follows a specific recognized expertise, in a defined geographical area, thereby giving the product its distinctive characteristics. This quality mark ensures that the product's name is protected in all European Union member countries. In France, there are 101 PDO products, 51 of which are dairy products, including 46 PDO cheeses (Data from INAO, 2020). **The Controlled Designation of Origin (CDO)** designates products that meet the PDO criteria and guarantees the protection of their name on French territory (www.inao.gouv.fr). These certifications are granted to products from a precisely defined terroir, where the interaction between natural, climatic, physical and human factors gives the product typical and distinctive qualities. They thus guaranty a close link between a product, its terroir and traditional production and/or processing techniques (www.france-genetique-elevage.org/).

The Red Label, on the other hand, is a national sign awarded to products whose production or manufacturing conditions guaranty a higher level of quality than that of similar products available on the market. In the meat sector, the Red Label is historically the most prevalent sign and is very often associated with an animal breed (e.g., Charolais Beef from Bourbonnais, Aubrac Farm Beef, Limousin Veal raised by its mother, etc.).

The Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) offers consumers the guaranty of the quality and authenticity of agricultural products by highlighting their close connection with their region of origin.

Finally, the **Traditional Specialty Guaranteed (TSG)** refers to a product whose distinctive characteristics are associated with a composition, manufacturing methods and processing techniques that have relied on a specific tradition (www.inao.gouv.fr). As an example in France, Berthoud, a dish composed of several ingredients under PDO, was recognized as a guaranteed traditional specialty in 2020 within the European Union. One of the main ingredients of this dish is Abondance PDO cheese from Haute-Savoie.

Moreover, other valorizing mentions are subject to specific labelling. The mention "mountain products", regulated at the European level, can apply to products manufactured or processed in mountainous areas. The raw materials and animal feed must essentially come from a mountainous area. The terms "Farm Product" or "Farm Produce" refer to traditional processing methods directly on farm. Beyond quality marks, the brands themselves are actors in the promotion of products, actively contributing to highlighting the characteristics and authenticity of dairy and meat products.



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Products from ruminant farming and the influence of French gastronomy

Intangible cultural heritage: enhancing the value of traditional products and expertise

In 2010, the French meal was recognized as part of UNESCO's intangible cultural heritage. The gastronomic meal follows a precise order: it begins with an aperitif and concludes with a digestif. Between these two moments, it includes at least four courses: an appetizer, fish and/or meat accompanied by vegetables, cheese and a dessert. The attention given to intangible cultural heritage highlights the artisanal skills related to food production, such as the expertise of cheesemakers and refiners in the case of cheeses or butchers for meat products, and allows for the recognition of their importance in local culinary traditions.

The international renown of French recipes

French recipes are famous around the world for their refinement and delicacy, highlighting quality ingredients such as red meat and dairy products. Among the iconic dishes is "Boeuf Bourguignon", a dish of meat slowly simmered in red wine, with onions, mushrooms and aromatic herbs. Regarding dairy products, French cheeses are widely celebrated for their diversity and quality. They offer a very wide variety of textures and flavours, ranging from creamy Camembert from Normandy to strong Roquefort. Furthermore, "Crème Brûlée," composed of cream, vanilla and a layer of caramelized sugar, is an iconic dessert recognized worldwide. These recipes, true ambassadors of French cuisine, bear witness to the country's artisanal know-how.



KEY FIGURES

More than **8** out of **10** French people prioritize regional products and made-in-France items on the shelves (Ifop Survey for Ouest France, 2023).

France has the most varied range of dairy products in the world: **1,500** consumer products including 1,200 cheeses (FNPL, 2023).

In France, in 2022, **72,651** Red Label cattle, **8,114** Red Label + PGI cattle, **4,997** PDO cattle and **88,274** organic cattle (INTERBEV, 2023).

At the beginning of 2021, **1,917** dairy farmers were involved in one or more PGI schemes (INAO, CNAOL, 2022).

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« Ruminant livestock farming and the production of food for humans ».

RUMINANT LIVESTOCK FARMING AND THE GASTRONOMIC HERITAGE

2

Traditional crafts

Processing professions: guardians of authenticity and French gastronomic heritage

The professions related to the production and processing of animal products, such as dairy products, red meat and offal, hold a central place in France's gastronomic and economic identity. These professions encompass a variety of activities, ranging from animal husbandry to the processing into finished products. The importance of traditional skills in these fields is crucial to ensure the quality and authenticity of French products. The farmers, processing companies, animal product manufacturing cooperatives, cheesemakers, butchers, tripe dressers and artisans of related trades perpetuate ancestral techniques passed down from generation to generation, which allows them to provide exceptional products.

These traditional skills not only guarantee the quality of the products but also their distinctive character, rooted in French history and culture. By preserving these practices, France also preserves its gastronomic heritage and strengthens its culinary identity. Thus, these professions play an essential role in promoting the excellence of French products in national and international markets, while also contributing to the enhancement of local regions and regional traditions. The agricultural fair, for example, is a privileged event to showcase the expertise of professionals in the dairy and meat sectors.



KEY FIGURES

Operators involved in PDO and PGI sectors:
16,186 milk producers,
1,314 on farm processors,
384 processing workshops
 and **238** refineries
 (INAO, CNAOL, 2022).

The dairy industry covers
80% of French territory
 and **85%** of employees
 live in municipalities
 with fewer than **15,000**
 inhabitants. The country has
750 processing sites and
58,000 dairy farms
 (www.produits-laitiers.com).

The meat industry includes
5,400 livestock traders,
2,900 producer organizations,
28,710 fallers and processors
 for cutting and preparation,
3,350 meat wholesalers
 and **85,100** employees in
 hypermarkets, supermarkets,
 restaurants and traditional
 butcher shops/tripe shops
 (Interbev, 2023).

2 Traditional crafts

On-farm processing: preserving heritage

On-farm processing is a fundamental pillar of traditional agriculture, where raw products are processed on-site. This not only preserves the expertise of producers-processors but also regional culinary traditions. By promoting proximity between producers and consumers, on-farm processing also strengthens community ties and contributes to the local economy. Despite modern challenges, these skills continue to thrive, offering consumers authentic products and preserving traditions and the added value of local products.



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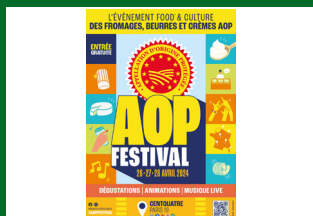
« Ruminant livestock farming and employment ».

KEY FIGURES

In France, **7,200** farms with on-farm processing (Agreste agricultural census 2020, processing Institut de l'Élevage).

Farmers process approximately **430 million** litres of milk per year, which are transformed into a wide range of dairy products and cheeses, of which **88%** consumers have a positive image (IFOP/CNIEL/CNAOL, cited by Spelle and Raynaud, 2020).

In 2020, **3,000** goat dairy farms, **2,600** bovine dairy farms, **1,100** sheep dairy farms and **500** mixed farms processed on farm (Agreste agricultural census 2020, processing Institut de l'Élevage).



ACTIONS AND TOOLS IMPLEMENTED BY THE SECTORS

Agricultural fairs

The International Agricultural Show (IAS), the Sommet de l'élevage (the Livestock Summit): every year in France, these large-scale events gather thousands of visitors, farmers, consumers, as well as professionals in the agri-food industry. For several days, the exhibition halls host a variety of stands showcasing French agricultural expertise, from local products to technological innovations. It is also an opportunity for breeders and producers to showcase their work and raise public awareness about the challenges of contemporary agriculture, from sustainability to the preservation of traditions. During these events, the richness of French gastronomy is celebrated, and producers from all over the country travel there to share their products and expertise with visitors. For example, every year during the IAS, the young butchers' competition takes place to highlight their talent, thus emphasizing the importance of passing on traditional skills.

Les Rencontres à table! Love meat and those who produce it

The 10th anniversary of Ecounters MADE in VIANDE, celebrated this year by the Livestock and Meat sector, is an opportunity to reinvent its traditional open house through a new event format and a new visual identity. In line with previous Meetings, the professionals in the sector wished to continue organizing a key opportunity for discussion with the public by creating Les Rencontres À Table! Love meat and those who produce it. This major national event takes place every year on the first weekends of June, giving professionals the opportunity to showcase their professions and commitments to ever more sustainable French meat production.

Brigade des Tripes (Tripe Brigade)

Launched in 2023, the Brigade des Tripes (brigadedestripes.com) revitalizes the offal industry by bringing together restaurateurs, master butchers, artisan offal butchers, charcutiers and caterers around their common passion. They highlight these products to a new generation of consumers, emphasizing their originality, taste, texture, nutritional value, accessibility and their role in an anti-waste and inventive cuisine, thus integrating them into current societal trends.

PDO festival

This event is dedicated to the 51 cheeses, butters and creams with Protected Designation of Origin status in France. Over three days, it offers visitors to discover the secrets of production, the techniques and expertise of producers, refiners and cheese makers through production demonstrations, tasting and plating workshops, culinary and musical shows, as well as farmers' markets (www.produits-laitiers-aop.fr/aop-festival/).



ACTIONS AND TOOLS IMPLEMENTED BY THE SECTORS

Qualainov Project: Innovating to support and promote quality in farm dairy production.

The Qualainov project aims to facilitate access to knowledge for producers and to renovate existing support methods for controlling the sensory and technological quality of farm dairy products. By mobilizing the Farm Dairy Products network, this project will revitalize it and raise its profile and recognition. The challenge is to meet the needs of farm dairy producers and their advisors by enabling them to develop their skills, while taking into account the current challenges facing the sector.



DOCAMEX: capitalize on cheesemaking expertise

DOCAMEX was created in 2017 by a collective composed of PDO-PGI cheese sectors (CNAOL), researchers (INRAE, University of Bordeaux), technical centers (ACTALIA, CTFC, AOP Massif Central Cheese Hub, Ceraq) and dairy schools (ENIL Network, ANFOPEIL). It is a digital platform that preserves and capitalizes on cheesemaking expertise. It is composed of a structured knowledge base accessible online (including a library of generic knowledge on cheese technology). DOCAMEX aims to become the future toolbox for cheesemaking expertise. It is aimed at all stakeholders in the dairy and cheese industry, for:

- HR professionals in competency management, training, team management, cheese personnel, etc;
- Production, Research and Development, workshop operators, technical services of the cheese sectors (www.docamex.fr).

AMEZ LA VIANDE,
MANGEZ-EN MIEUX.

www.naturelement-flexitariens.fr



Collective communication campaign « Love meat, eat it better »

Launched in 2019 by the Livestock and Meat sector, this collective communication campaign, signed "Naturally Flexitarian," highlights the numerous advantages of the sector in terms of the environment, animal welfare and sustainable food. It is aimed at individuals who question their meat consumption but still wish to include it more thoughtfully in their diet. These are informed and autonomous flexitarians, convinced that meat can be an integral part of a balanced diet when consumed in moderation. It is in this spirit of "Eat better," promoted by this campaign, that the entire sector has been committed for several years to providing consumers with quality, environmentally friendly and sustainable meat.



« Bienvenue à la ferme » activities

Created by the Chambers of Agriculture in 1988, the "Bienvenue à la ferme" (Welcome to the Farm) brand supports more than 10,000 farmers across France. Focused on the values of hospitality and friendliness, "Here, you are welcome," producers open their doors to the public. Visitors can make purchases, share a warm meal, stay in a cottage or bed and breakfast, or even discover agricultural activities. "Bienvenue à la ferme" highlights the diversity of French agriculture by offering local and seasonal products, promoting the "farm-to-table" experience, while offering agritourism activities to extend the farm immersion.

For farmers, "Bienvenue à la ferme" represents a supportive network that allows them to share their values with visitors. These values include listening, discovery, authenticity, product quality, responsible practices, and a passion for their region (www.bienvenue-a-la-ferme.com).

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