

## The Food Sector in Cuneo

The province of Cuneo holds third place in Italy for gross saleable agricultural production, with a contribution to GDP and employment well above the national average.

The agricultural products of the Cuneo area reflect the geoclimatic nature of the zone: the hilly areas and internal plains are ideal for pulses, fruit and cereals, the mountains are the perfect habitat for livestock breeding and chestnut and hazelnut groves, while the Langhe areas have the greatest production of DOC and DOCG wines and white truffle harvesting. All these products are appreciated throughout the world and Cuneo agriculture is wide open to foreign markets.

Competitiveness and agricultural development have led to the creation of production chains both up and downstream, which have strengthened the fields of agricultural machinery and equipment and the food industry.

### *Fruit and vegetables*

The Cuneo area between 300 and 800 metres above sea level is a very fertile and sun blessed land, ideal for **fruit growing**, while the excellent exposure on the hills and irrigation in the plains have led to the development of a **vegetable market**. The production chain stands out for the variety of crops, the amount and quality of produce and the strong export vocation. In the fruit sector 75% of Piedmont production comes from the province of Cuneo, for a value of around 100 million euro. In 2004 almost 600,000 quintals of produce were exported.

Five very important **IGPs** (protected geographic indication) have been recognised: **Cuneo red apples**, **Cuneo strawberries**, **Cuneo small fruits**, **Cuneo chestnuts**, **Piedmont hazelnuts**. Among the excellent production we must also remember the **actinia bushes**, with an estimated production of 70,000 tons and a constant growth over an area of now 3,500 hectares.

Vegetable growing in Cuneo is traditionally on the plain, especially the area around Bra where it is very widely extended. There are numerous different productions, many already protected and others are awaiting recognition; to mention a few: **potatoes** from Bisalta, Entracque and Cebano, **carrots** from San Rocco (a small hamlet on the outskirts of Cuneo), **leeks** from Cervere, **beans and peppers** from Cuneo.

### *Perfume of cheese*

43% of the milk from Piedmont dairies is produced in the province of Cuneo. The average yearly amount is calculated around 4 million quintals, and 70% - i.e. 2,800,000 quintals – is collected and processed in the dairies, being then bottled, transformed into yoghurt, fresh cheese or original denomination protected cheese. Overall, more than 300,000 quintals of cheese are produced each year: a very important resource with around one thousand companies spread around the province working to produce the required “raw material”.

The most important item is the DOP cheeses, and four of these have their reference geographic area limited to the province of Cuneo.

Others are shared with other areas of the Piedmont region and provinces in Lombardy and Liguria: in the former group we have **Bra, Castelmagno, Murazzano** and **Raschera cheeses**, in the second **Toma Piemontese, Grana Padano** and **Gorgonzola**. Dairy produce and local wine and food specialities are very closely linked, in recipes that include products from the plains and the mountain pastures, with different maturing periods and using just cows' milk or mixed with sheep's milk. Special protection associations have been formed to ensure that the production regulations are respected. These have now converged into the AssoPiemonte Doc and IGP with headquarters in Turin.

#### ***Home of great wines***

The area from the Maritime Alps that slope down to the Po Valley forms the "Granda Province" and in the hilly stretch is the kingdom of vineyards. From the 16,500 hectares of vineyard in the Cuneo area 7,000 enterprises in just the Langhe and Roero areas make their living, some specialised in vine cultivation while others are specialised in wine making. In 2004 the harvest supplied grapes for 100 million bottles of DOC wine. They are exceptional wines and have been rewarded with many DOC designations and four DOCG: **Barolo, Barbaresco, Asti** and **Roero**.

#### ***Traditional desserts***

The close bond with local products, intelligent management of resources, the prevalence of countryside over towns and the festive nature of the people have all given the Cuneo area a range of sweet specialities that have gone well beyond the borders of the province and are now known throughout Italy and the world: **Rum Cuneesi, Hazelnut cake, Meliga pastries, Nougat**. All the ingredients, from the flour to the hazelnuts, butter and honey are produced locally, with the occasional addition of others from further afield, like chocolate, rum and almonds, but the traditional recipes are always scrupulously followed.

**File prepared by Patrizia Mellano, Market Support Dept.,  
Chamber of Commerce in Cuneo  
Tel. 0171.318783, E mail [patrizia.mellano@cn.camcom.it](mailto:patrizia.mellano@cn.camcom.it)**

**For further information: <http://www.piemonteincifre.it>**