

ALERT



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Chairman's Message



Does the EU Have a Point?

Should Europe have the right to protect the names of the specialty foods that its artisans have made for generations?

Yes, it should.

Does my response surprise you? In fact, CCFN has never been opposed to geographical indications (GIs), when they are properly defined.

Let's take the most famous example to date: "Parmigiano Reggiano". It's fine for the EU to continue to seek protection of this name on a global scale. But the word "parmesan" by itself is something different. This word should not belong to one single nation or region.

The EU will argue that it must own "parmesan" in order to protect "Parmigiano Reggiano" -- to avoid confusion and bastardization of its brand. But it is doubtful there is any real confusion; consumers are likely smart enough to know that Parmigiano Reggiano is a specific type of parmesan. And here are three more thoughts to consider:

1. **Should every name that originated in Europe be protected? Nonsense!** I am sure my paisanos would like to protect "pizza", "pasta", "pesto" and "tiramisu". Yet these names, as well as "parmesan", entered into common usage generations ago. As Italians immigrated to North and South America, Australia, and other



Support and Successes

U.S. Congress Demands Protection of Common Names - As the U.S. negotiates with the EU on the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), CCFN has helped facilitate several actions from the U.S. Congress to expose and block



any EU attempts to restrict the use of generic names.

In May, 177 members of the U.S. House of Representatives joined the call for U.S. negotiators to push back on EU efforts to confiscate common food names. The House [letter](#) to the U.S. Administration echoes [similar statements](#) made in March and April by U.S. Senators on the subject, demonstrating a unified effort to protect common cheese names such as "**parmesan**" and "**feta**", and meat names such as "**bologna**".

"This type of barrier to trade and

countries around the world, should they have been prevented from preparing any of their foods the same way they did back home, and calling them by the same names? Of course not. The same can be said of countless words that enter into the vernacular of languages through the years - from kimono (Japanese) to pajamas (Persian). "Parmesan" is a generic name for a type of hard cheese; it is not the same thing as "Parmigiano Reggiano." More parmesan cheese has been made outside of Italy than within it for many, many decades.

2. **The EU is really just looking for a way to eliminate competition.** Consumers will read the label and determine their favorite foods. If they taste both a parmesan from Wisconsin and Parmigiano Reggiano from Italy, they'll decide which one they like best, and at what cost, and make their decision. Is it fair to lock out a local producer in, say, Costa Rica, who has made parmesan for decades, and let Parmigiano Reggiano be the only parmesan on the market? No.
3. **The EU is shooting itself in the foot.** The more people try parmesans, the more popular hard Italian cheeses like Parmigiano Reggiano can become -- far beyond Parma, Italy. Having more than one cheesemaker offer parmesans, asiagos and fetas helps broaden the marketplace for all food producers -- local and foreign.

So let the system of GIs continue, and viva Parmigiano Reggiano! But "parmesan" belongs to everyone.

Errico Auricchio
CCFN Chairman

commerce defies the fundamental goals of a trade agreement, and we urge you to work aggressively against the EU's efforts in this respect in order to preserve both domestic and export opportunities for these products," the House letter states.

As noted in the last CCFN ALERT, these congressional letters have garnered significant positive media coverage. The House letter in May prompted an opinion piece in the [Burlington Free Press](#). And in addition to coverage from the cheese-focused letter, the Senate's meat-focused letter also prompted widespread media coverage in April. Here's a sample:

- USA TODAY - [Senators: Back Off our Brats, Beer](#)
- Politico - [Lawmakers Ready To Fight EU Over Geographic Indicators](#)
- KOAM-TV - [Sen. McCaskill Calls EU Trade Rules 'Complete Bologna'](#)
- Philadelphia Magazine [Sen. Bob Casey Pushes Back Against Euro Meat Claims](#)

Top U.S. Cheese State Chimes In - Joining the chorus of the U.S.

Congress in defending common food names, Wisconsin - the leading U.S. cheese-producing state - unanimously passed a [resolution](#) in April on the importance of common names to its state economy. As part of its strategy regarding current TTIP negotiations, CCFN provided information and recommendations to Representative



Current Threats and New Restrictions

A Watchful Eye on China - CCFN is watching closely the development of a GI agreement between China and the EU, which may be finalized by the end of this year. According to a report in "EU Trade Insights", the deal would immediately protect the names of 200 European and Chinese agricultural products, with provision for 160 more to be added in the first four years. Some of the European GIs immediately protected could include **feta cheese, Irish whisky, Rioja wine, champagne, gorgonzola** and **Scotch whisky**.



CCFN will be awaiting details on how GI approvals may affect the use of generic food names. The outcome could have ramifications both for producers within China, and for those producers importing into this enormous and fast-growing market.

CCFN Files Objection to Havarti Decision -

CCFN recently filed its intent to oppose the EU's decision (made in January) to allow Denmark to move forward with an application for a GI that would grant it exclusive use of the name 'havarti' in the EU. What's most alarming about the application is that the Codex Alimentarius years ago set an international product standard for havarti -- approved by the EU. A major reason to have international standards is to prevent barriers to trade.



"The EU's disregard of the Codex standard raises the question of whether any generic food term is safe from being confiscated by the European Commission," said CCFN Executive Director Jaime Castaneda.

CCFN also pointed out that the term "havarti" is

Warren Petryk, who introduced the resolution, co-sponsored by Senator Jerry Petrowski.

The legislature "urges U.S. trade negotiators to combat inappropriate restrictions on the use of common food names, where those barriers to trade and commerce take the form of geographic indications or other similarly unjustified regulatory impediments," the resolution states.

Product names commonly used in Wisconsin that already face bans in certain world markets include **asiago, feta, fontina, gorgonzola, grana, gruyere, muenster, neufchatel, parmesan** and **romano**.

The resolution is a good example of how CCFN can work with local industries to help expose and fight the threat of restrictions on the use of common food names.

CCFN's Efforts in Latin America

Bear Fruit: Faced with possible restrictions coming out of the EU's FTAs with several Latin American nations, CCFN has worked with local industries to help beat back new regulations that could potentially ban local producers and importers from using common food names. CCFN has seen or heard positive comments by government officials in El Salvador, Guatemala, Colombia and Peru that common cheese names like "parmesan" and "provolone" are not currently restricted. While the EU has appealed some of these decisions, CCFN will



used widely around the world, both within and outside of the EU. In the U.S. alone, havarti is produced by more than 40 companies in a dozen states.

More News From Asia - Japan and Singapore have both issued final GI regulations, and in both cases the impact on some generic names won't be clear until the details are laid out within the approval process. CCFN, working closely with the U.S. government, launched a strong defense of common names throughout the process. CCFN also coordinated efforts with other countries to submit comments. Although we remain vigilant until the regulations clearly indicate that generic names are safe, we can say that the EU doesn't seem pleased with the regulations coming out of either country.

Opportunities for Progress

CCFN Talks GI With Various Food Industries



Many food categories -- from potatoes, to wines, to cold cuts -- are interested in protecting the names of their specialty products, and CCFN has been talking with several food associations about positive approaches to GI protections.

"Our ultimate goal is to foster the adoption of high-standard and model GI guidelines throughout the world, which we think is achievable and can be workable for specialty producers," says CCFN Executive Director Jaime Castaneda.

Two good examples that fit the model in the U.S. are "Idaho Potatoes" and "Napa Wine", which seek to protect the distinct terms "Idaho" and "Napa" without restricting the use of "wine" or "potatoes". EU examples include "Orkney Scottish Island Cheddar" and "Holsteiner Tilsiter", which are protected in the EU as complete names and are accompanied by safeguards related to the continued free usage of "cheddar" and "tilsiter" respectively. Read more on CCFN's concept of

continue to do everything possible to retain open market opportunities for both local and foreign industries.

A recent example is in Guatemala, where in response to CCFN's filed opposition, the government issued favorable rulings that some key GIs will only be protected as compound terms (e.g. "Parmigiano Reggiano") - - and the common generic term within the GI (e.g., "parmesan") will remain generic. While the EU is appealing these rulings, CCFN is taking the legal steps necessary to defend the ruling. Moreover, the decisions indicate that Guatemala is inclined to recognize that the names "parmesan", "provolone", "brie", "camembert" and "emmental" should remain generic.

Uncommon Hero

Ron Buholzer, Klondike Cheese

Our profile of one of the heroes who protect and promote common food names.



Ron (right) and brothers Steve (middle) and Dave

Swiss immigrant Ernest Buholzer began making Swiss cheese in southern Wisconsin in 1925, establishing a family cheesemaking business that continues to this day. Seven members of the Buholzer family now work together at

model GI protections [here](#).

About CCFN

The Consortium for Common Food Names (CCFN) is an independent, international non-profit alliance that represents the interests of consumers, farmers, food producers and retailers. We are working to protect worldwide the right to use common food names.

For more information:
www.CommonFoodNames.com

Pass It Along!

Help spread the word by passing this newsletter on to other companies affected by the attack on common food names! Use the "Forward this email" feature at the bottom of this page.

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Klondike Cheese Co., including President Ron Buholzer (the founder's grandson), his brothers Dave and Steve, and fourth generation family members.

The company makes feta, muenster, brick and havarti cheeses, as well as an exciting new venture in Greek-style yogurt.

"We are recognized nationally for our very authentic, award-winning feta," said Ron Buholzer. "We have four master cheesemakers, state-of-the-art equipment, and great employees who are really committed to providing superior quality and consistency for all our products."

At this year's U.S. Cheese Championship Contest, Klondike won top awards for its lowfat feta in brine, muenster, and reduced-fat peppercorn feta in brine. Last year its Odyssey® brand Med Herb flavored feta, Odyssey® fat-free feta and Swisconsin® Havarti all won first place in their categories.

"Our cheeses have earned many awards but our greatest joy is when we hear from someone how much they have enjoyed one of our cheeses," says Buholzer.

Obviously, efforts to take away Klondike's right to use the common names "feta", "havarti" - and even "Greek yogurt" cut pretty close to the bone for this fourth-generation cheese company.

"It's outrageous, really, that anyone

would claim to have sole ownership of these names," says Buholzer. "We take great pride in the quality of our feta and havarti, and have for decades. This is an economic issue for us, certainly, but it's also personal - it's about what's right and fair."

"We've been an active member of CCFN since 2012. I think one of the most important things they're doing is spreading the word about this issue, because it has the potential to affect many, many food producers all over the world. It's important to draw a line in the sand and make it clear that these names belong to all of us," Buholzer said.

To hear from other CCFN "UnCommon Heroes", click [here](#).