

## PROMOTION OF REGIONAL FOOD PRODUCTS IN EASTERN POLAND AND WESTERN UKRAINE

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### ABSTRACT

This article seeks to describe the attitude of residents of Eastern Poland and Western Ukraine towards regional food products. The objective of the project was to evaluate the elements of promotion, which encourage consumers to buy regional products.

Author's questionnaire was used in the survey of 1,128 residents from Poland, and 1,072 from Ukraine. The Likert five-point scale was used to measure the participant's attitudes following the construction and validation procedure. The Statistica 13.1 PL program was used in statistical analysis.

The most important promotional activities for residents in both countries were: presentation of food products at regional exhibitions, fairs and events of regional and foreign range.

The increased interest in regional food products is a manifestation of new food-related tendencies and in particular to preserve behaviors and values stemming from the cultural heritage of both Poland and Ukraine. It is also connected with high quality of regional products. Appropriate promotion helps consumers see the value of regional products.

**Key words:** regional products, Eastern Poland, Western Ukraine, regional food

### INTRODUCTION

Regional food products constitute an important element of the European food industry, culture, identity and heritage. The uniqueness of regional food in Europe, from an interdisciplinary perspective based on the studies, is a key factor in promoting the competitiveness of the craft food industry, both at local and international level [Kuznesof et al. 1997, Lehtinen 2012]. The need to create heterogeneous cultural and regional food markets is underlined in the economic approach to development of rural areas in Europe. Due to this approach, the European Commission introduced an ambiguous definition of regional food: “the foods involved are identified by, and traceable to a farmer.

The number of intermediaries between farmer and consumer should be minimal or ideally nil” [Niemi and Pekkanen 2016].

Spreading globalization causes that food markets are becoming more and more international. The market share of imported and cheaper consumer goods is increasing. This has an impact on blurring of differences between particular types of food [Byrne et al. 2013]. Without obtaining adequate information, a consumer is not able to distinguish the original product from the mass product [Eriksen 2013].

It is pointed out that appropriate advertising and promotion are the most important media tools in raising public awareness that local food has shorter and more transparent supply chain than conventional food.

This is the main reason for differentiating these two types of food [Arsil et al. 2014, Penney and Prior 2014].

Knight [2013] claims that locality is one of the hottest trends in the food world, and more socially responsible and ethically-minded food consumers look for ecologically and socially sustainable food. Local food is equated with organic and healthy food with original flavor qualities and coming from a known source [Selfa and Qazi 2005, Wojciechowska-Solis and Soroka 2017].

The growing interest in local food has been noticed by the governments of individual countries that support and promote the production of local food. Undoubtedly, such approach has an impact on the development of this food production sector in the above-mentioned countries [Bianchi and Mortimer 2015].

Traditional and regional food products are produced using traditional methods, have designation of regional products, appropriate certificates guaranteeing their authenticity and the EU labels. They are an important part of European culture, identity and heritage [Tregear et al. 2007]. It is a form of cultural and territorial capital that allows obtaining greater social and economic benefits for local rural areas [Kuznesof et al. 1997]. Producers of protected products have the right to mark them with appropriate signs that testify to the quality and uniqueness of the labeled products under the Common Agricultural Policy. Such products may be registered as the Protected Designation of Origin (PDO), Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) and Traditional Specialty Guaranteed (TSG).

Issues related to the protection of regional products and those produced using traditional methods are defined in the European Union law by the European Parliament Regulation, the Commission Delegated Regulation and the Commission Implementing Regulation.

The name of a regional product uses or refers to: a region, a specific place, in exceptional cases to a country where the product is produced. The purpose of the system of protected designations of origin and protected geographical indications is to support producers of products related to a given geographical area through: guaranteeing decent income from the products they produce; ensuring uniform protection of the name as one of the intellectual property rights on the

territory of the European Union; providing consumers with clear information on the additional values of products [Article 4 Regulation (EU) 1151/2012].

Traditional Specialty Guaranteed (TSG) means an agricultural or food product recognized by the European Union due to its specific nature, which means features or sets of characteristics that clearly distinguish the agricultural or food product from similar products belonging to the same category.

The GTS product, unlike the PDO and PGI, does not refer to the specific nature related to geographical origin. The production of such product takes place without a territorial restriction, as in the case of the Protected Designation of Origin and the Protected Geographical Indication, when the conditions of the specification are met [Ministerstwo Rolnictwa i Rozwoju Wsi 2018].

In Poland, the unit responsible for maintaining the registration system of products with specific geographical origin as well as of specific and traditional quality, within the meaning of EU regulations is the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Poland. At present, the Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food of Ukraine is carrying out works related to the certification of regional and traditional products. The certification system is to be modeled on solutions used in the European Union – PDO/PGI/TSG for food products [Ministerstvo ahraryoi polityky ta prodovol'stva Ukrayiny 2017].

The aim of this study was to examine opinions of inhabitants of Eastern Poland and Western Ukraine on the promotion of regional food products. The effort was made to indicate the reasons for making purchases as well as determine the sources of information on regional food products. There were evaluated the forms of promotion that are applied as well as the promotional activities that should be undertaken to increase the interest of inhabitants of Eastern Poland and Western Ukraine in regional food products. The criterion used was the division of respondents based on their place of residence and sex. Due to the fact that in Ukraine there are carried out works related to the adaptation of the certification system of regional and local products to the EU models, the introductory part of the questionnaire contained the EU definition of a regional product.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

A diagnostic survey with author's questionnaire was used in the studies. The study was conducted in May and June 2017. After the use of construction and validation procedures, a five-point Likert scale was applied to measure the attitudes. An indicator of scale reliability was calculated where Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was 0.87.

In the sample selection procedure a stratified random sampling was applied for each group of respondents, for the inhabitants of Eastern Poland and Western Ukraine. In the next stage, respondents were proportionally divided taking into account their sex and place of residence. Methodological procedures allowed calculating a size of sample, where the level of confidence was set at 0.95, the estimated size fraction at 0.50 and the maximum error at 0.05.

After taking into account the sex and place of residence of the population under survey, a quota selection was used, where respondents were selected on the basis of their availability. In the case of inhabitants of Eastern Poland<sup>1</sup>, the research sample was calculated from 3,456,183 of adult inhabitants, whereas in the case of Western Ukraine from 3,134,021 of adult inhabitants<sup>2</sup>. An author's questionnaire was used in the studies to examine 1128 respondents from Eastern Poland that is Podlaskie, Lublin and Subcarpathia regions as well as 1,072 from the territory of Western Ukraine that is Volyn, Lviv and Transcarpathia regions. There were 1,200 respondents surveyed from each country. Some of the questionnaires were rejected due to the lack of reliability and errors. The survey was conducted by telephone (using the CATI technique – computer-assisted telephone interviewing) and included all the criteria applied.

The Statistica 13.1 PL program was used in statistical analysis, and within it discriminant function analysis was applied to determine which variables discriminated the emerging groups. Classification functions were used in the form of calculation of their coefficients which were determined for each group. Prior to the analysis, a multivariate normality was examined,

testing each variable for normality. It was assumed that the matrices of variances were homogenous in groups. Slight deviations were not of a great importance due to the large number of respondents in each group. Statistically, significant were those differences in averages of which probability of randomness was less than  $p < 0.05$ .

## RESULTS

In the opinion of the inhabitants of Eastern Poland the most important source of knowledge about regional food products was information obtained from family or friends. Such opinion, to a significantly higher degree, was declared by women than men. Also in the case of Ukrainian respondents, however with less intensity, but also significantly higher than men, such statement was declared by women.

In the opinion of respondents from Ukraine, television and radio advertisements were the most important sources of the knowledge about regional products. These channels of information obtained the highest value of discriminatory function in the created model. Among Polish respondents, TV advertisements did not appear in the created model, the same as another source of information that is the Internet.

The inhabitants of Western Ukraine also more often sought in the folders and leaflets the proper promotion of regional products. In the case of respondents from Eastern Poland, these values were of definitely lower importance for both women and men.

Respondents from Poland drew knowledge about regional food products from regional events and travels. In the case of respondents from Western Ukraine, this knowledge was at a lower level (Table 1).

High quality of regional products was the main motive for purchasing regional food among respondents from both countries. In Ukraine, men more often than women pointed to this motive, while in Poland by women.

Friends' recommendation on regional products was an important argument for the respondents from

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<sup>1</sup> As at 31 June 2017 according to Statistics Poland [Główny Urząd Statystyczny 2018].

<sup>2</sup> As at 31 July 2017 according to Ukrainian State Statistics Service of Ukraine [Derzhavna sluzhba statystyky Ukrainy 2018].

**Table 1.** The source of knowledge of respondents from Eastern Poland and Western Ukraine about regional food products

Source of information	Wilks' lambda: 0.686 – Poland Wilks' lambda: 0.614 – Ukraine			Sex		
	Wilks' lambda	F value	p value	women	men	
Eastern Poland	from friends/family	0.578	12.218	0.001*	2.463	2.247
	from organized regional events	0.628	8.753	0.003*	1.481	1.386
	from travels	0.632	2.809	0.094	1.475	1.488
	from folders, leaflets	0.587	35.587	0.001*	0.883	1.201
	from the press	0.631	1.132	0.287	1.504	1.558
	Constans				14.778	15.878
Western Ukraine	from friends/family	0.654	42.198	0.001*	1.856	1.344
	from organized regional events	0.621	11.987	0.001*	0.866	1.090
	from travels	0.592	39.159	0.001*	0.576	1.037
	from folders, leaflets	0.626	1.434	0.236	1.797	1.866
	from the Internet	0.602	30.778	0.001*	1.738	2.889
	from TV/radio	0.587	2.787	0.096	2.301	2.196
	Constans				15.238	17.443

\*Level of significant difference at  $p < 0.050$ .

Source: Author's own analysis based on study material.

Eastern Poland, where men significantly more often than women gave such declaration. This motive among respondents from Ukraine did not gain acceptance, thus was not included in the created model.

A motive emphasizing the traditional and natural way of producing regional products did not receive any approval among Polish respondents, while it was very popular among respondents from Ukraine, especially among women. On the other hand, men, to a significantly higher degree than women, paid attention to health benefits of regional products. This argument was underestimated by respondents from Eastern Poland, as it did not appear in the created model.

A motive increasing the significance of original taste and smell of regional food products was not approved by the respondents from Ukraine (Table 2).

Folders and leaflets were the most valued forms of promotion of regional food products by the Ukrain-

ians. Men, to a significantly higher degree than women, paid attention to these forms of promotion. Similar approach was shown by Polish respondents, however with less intensity.

Polish respondents treated fairs and regional events as the most important forms of promotion of regional food products. Such attitude was more often expressed by women than men. Above-mentioned forms of promotion were less often declared by respondents from Ukraine.

TV and radio advertisement reached similar values of the classification function, both among respondents from Poland and Ukraine. However, significant differences occurred between respondents taking into account their sex. In the case of respondents from Poland, significantly higher values of classification function were achieved by women than men, while among Ukrainians these relations were reversed (Table 3).

**Table 2.** Motives of purchasing regional food products by residents of Eastern Poland and Western Ukraine

Source of information		Wilks' lambda: 0.532 – Poland Wilks' lambda: 0.587 – Ukraine			Sex	
		Wilks' lambda	F value	p value	women	men
Eastern Poland	high product quality	0.589	4.143	0.042*	2.388	2.254
	curiosity, unusual character of the dish	0.521	1.602	0.207	1.448	1.371
	original taste and smell	0.576	11.701	0.001*	1.826	1.617
	friends' recommendation	0.576	9.664	0.001*	2.158	2.333
	constans				15.628	14.419
Western Ukraine	high product quality	0.598	3.709	0.049*	4.400	4.571
	curiosity, unusual character of the dish	0.573	35.877	0.0018	0.931	0.537
	health benefits of the product	0.598	7.496	0.006*	1.967	2.148
	traditional, natural method of production	0.6002	5.637	0.017*	2.422	2.338
	constans				16.322	17.323

\*Level of significant difference at  $p < 0.050$ .

Source: Author's own analysis based on study material.

**Table 3.** Assessment of the applied forms of promotion of regional food products by residents of Eastern Poland and Western Ukraine

Source of information		Wilks' lambda: 0.603 – Poland Wilks' lambda: 0.532 – Ukraine			Sex	
		Wilks' lambda	F value	p value	women	men
Eastern Poland	TV/radio advertisement	0.603	39.803	0.001*	2.132	1.732
	fairs, regional events	0.639	24.821	0.001*	2.690	2.392
	folders and leaflets	0.609	19.699	0.001*	0.891	1.134
	constans				11.444	10.162
Western Ukraine	TV/radio advertisement	0.532	61.552	0.001*	1.634	2.222
	fairs, regional events	0.587	28.452	0.001*	1.584	1.936
	folders and leaflets	0.587	55.263	0.001*	2.805	3.315
	constans				11.469	12.562

\*Level of significant difference at  $p < 0.050$ .

Source: Author's own analysis based on study material.

Out of seven proposed promotional activities, three of them appeared in the discriminant function model created for Polish respondents, while six in the model created for Ukrainian respondents.

Both surveyed groups declared their participation in cultural events in various regions of the country and abroad, treating this activity as the most important for the promotion of regional products. In the case of re-

spondents from Ukraine, the level of such declarations was similar for women and men, while among Poles women more often expressed such opinion.

Respondents from Western Ukraine sought the biggest opportunities to promote regional food products in publications, local and national press and on popular websites. Women considerably more often than men paid attention to such ways of promotion. These types of promotion were not included in a discriminatory function model created for Polish respondents.

However, promotion that uses the publication of articles on regional products in the press dedicated to health was also highly appreciated by Polish respondents. In the case of respondents from Western Ukraine, this type of promotion was significantly more important for women than men. On the other hand, men

more often than women appreciated the promotion of regional products through radio programs as well as culinary guides sent by email (Table 4).

## SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The aim of the conducted studies was to obtain opinions of the residents of Eastern Poland and Western Ukraine on the promotion of regional food products. This study demonstrates that regional food is perceived by consumers both regions in a very positive way, and the main motives for acquiring it are high quality and specific taste qualities.

There were defined sources of knowledge about regional products. It turned out that family and friends were the most popular and the best source of

**Table 4.** Promotional activities having the greatest impact on the promotion of regional food products in the opinion of residents of Eastern Poland and Western Ukraine

Type of promotional activities	Wilks' lambda: 0.428 – Poland Wilks' lambda: 0.512 – Ukraine			Sex		
	Wilks' lambda	F value	p value	women	men	
Eastern Poland	Participation in cultural events in various regions of the country and the world	0.489	32.165	0.001*	2.453	2.119
	Articles in the press dedicated to health	0.502	1.648	1.199	1.602	1.679
	Radio programs dedicated to the subject of regional products	0.465	40.074	0.001*	0.974	1.320
	Constans				9.403	9.238
Western Ukraine	Participation in cultural events in various regions of the country and the world	0.512	3.296	0.069	2.098	1.973
	Articles in the press dedicated to health	0.582	18.007	0.008*	1.207	0.843
	Radio programs dedicated to the subject of regional products	0.519	48.480	0.001*	1.179	1.768
	The use of popular websites	0.538	53.789	0.001*	2.541	2.005
	Culinary guides sent by email	0.529	18.389	0.001*	1.129	1.456
	Publications in the local and national press	0.528	62.387	0.001*	2.990	2.339
Constans				16.987	17.092	

\*Level of significant difference at  $p < 0.050$ .

Source: Author's own analysis based on study material.

information, having positive effects on the increase of consumption of such products.

All kinds of promotional events in the form of regional fairs such as „Lubelskie smakuje” were of great importance for respondents from Eastern Poland. Also festivals of flavors are very popular, where consumers can get acquainted with regional products [Sim 2009]. It is worth creating local food promotion programs [Onken et al. 2011, Sala 2011], like in some US states such as Maryland or Pennsylvania, which involve informing consumers about products of a particular region.

Residents of Western Ukraine rated radio and television as well as folders and leaflets as important sources of information. In the case of Polish group, these sources of information were of less significance. However, the Internet was important for both groups of respondents.

Above-mentioned sources of information also corresponded with the forms of promotion which were considered the most appropriate by respondents. This concerned folders and leaflets that were particularly important for residents of Western Ukraine. Both groups of respondents indicated television and radio as the important elements of the promotion. Polish residents, especially women, to a greater extent emphasized the role of local fairs as the best form of promotion of regional products.

The motives for purchasing and consuming regional products are related to their high quality and originality. This was appreciated both by residents of Eastern Poland and Western Ukraine. The motive of traditional and natural production of such products was raised especially by Ukrainians, what corresponded to studies carried out by Bianchi [2017]. Women in particular pointed to health motives, as it was shown in Grzybek's studies [2009] which indicated that women, unlike men, attach greater importance to the quality of products and originality of taste. What is more, women, unlike men, trust their friend's recommendations to a lesser degree.

An important motive was also the encouragement of family and friends, a motive that corresponded to the source of knowledge about regional products.

According to respondents, the main sources of promotion are the participation and showing products during regional exhibitions and fairs. Men, to a greater extent than women, associated promotion of regional products with websites and publications in regional magazines. Peštek and Činjarević [2014] claim that local products are an important element of regional promotion and a good advertisement of the country abroad.

Both in Poland and Ukraine women drew greater attention to the promotion of regional products than men. In both countries, the promotion of regional products was emphasized through culinary guides as well as radio and television broadcasts. Czezelewski et al. [2017] drew attention to the press and TV commercials as the important sources of promotion of local products. They indicated in their studies that one of the main reasons for buying regional food was a desire to try the flavors of the region.

According to Bearsworth et al. [2002], and also confirmed by this study, men and women have different opinions about food, therefore they are motivated by different motives when purchasing the same product. The thesis has been confirmed that women more than men value high quality products as well as prefer food with high nutritional values and health values [Chen 2011]. This can be attributed to the fact that mostly women buy food products, take care of high quality meals, pay attention to information about different food products and are willing to pay higher price for their originality SERIO [2008].

The development of regional products contributes to the sustainable development of a specific area, namely to: stimulate and support agricultural activity and food production, increase the attractiveness of tourism, strengthen the position of the community, build the local identity [Rand et al. 2003].

The development of region can be significantly stimulated through the development of regional products, strengthening its territorial potential and tourism attractiveness. It contributes to the enrichment of gastronomic and tourism offers of a single agritourism farm, the town itself and, consequently, the whole region. Regional products are a tool useful to promote tourism in rural areas.

Regional food increases the attractiveness of the food sector in the eyes of consumers, who appreciate the innovativeness of this sector [Barska and Wojciechowska-Solis 2018]. It is consistent with the market trend, whereby consumers want to experience and “taste” the region they visit. The number of Polish regional products submitted for registration in the EU and national institutions is systematically growing. In practice, this will contribute to the increase in income of the rural community, as well as the promotion of the regions of their production. Considering that GDP per capita in Poland is USD 15,050 and in Ukraine USD 2,906, the increase of income of the society of both countries will also allow Poland and Ukraine to reduce the income gap of the population in relation to countries such as Estonia or the Czech Republic<sup>3</sup>.

The obstacles to the development of the market of regional products may be their high price and consumer’s ignorance. Producers of regional products must also eliminate infrastructural and market barriers. Limiting these barriers will allow them to benefit more from the growing demand for regional food.

The development of regional food in Poland and Ukraine depends on the efficiency of institutions supporting the food chain at its various stages [cf. Barham et al. 2012]. They should support production and distribution as well as offer marketing services in the field of promotion, allowing easier access to new and additional markets, where independent access is difficult or even impossible.

## CONCLUSIONS

1. The most important promotional activities are related to presenting regional food products at regional and foreign exhibitions, fairs and events. Programs should be introduced that will promote regional products and indicate their positive impact on health of the local community as well as development of local entrepreneurship.

2. Due to the fact that women are more involved in family shopping and meal preparation, they pay more attention than men to the problem of promoting regional products.
3. There were differences between women and men and between residents of Eastern Poland and Western Ukraine in the opinion on the promotion and significance of regional products. However, in general, it can be stated that respondents of both groups see the need to participate in the promotion of regional food products.

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<sup>3</sup> As at 30 July 2018 according to World Bank database.

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## **PROMOCJA REGIONALNYCH PRODUKTÓW ŻYWNOŚCIOWYCH NA TERENIE WSCHODNIEJ POLSKI I ZACHODNIEJ UKRAINY**

### **STRESZCZENIE**

W artykule podjęto próbę określenia stosunku mieszkańców wschodniej Polski i zachodniej Ukrainy do regionalnych produktów spożywczych. Celem pracy była ocena elementów promocji, które zachęcają konsumentów do zakupu produktów regionalnych.

W badaniu wykorzystano autorski kwestionariusz ankiety, który posłużył przebadaniu 1128 respondentów z Polski oraz 1072 z Ukrainy. Do pomiaru postaw wykorzystano pięciostopniową skalę Likerta, po wcześniejszym zastosowaniu procedury konstrukcji i walidacji. Przy analizach statystycznych wykorzystano program Statistica 13.1 PL.

W opinii ankietowanych z obu krajów najważniejszym działaniem promocyjnym jest prezentowanie żywnościowych produktów regionalnych na wystawach, kiermaszach i imprezach o zasięgu nie tylko krajowym, ale i zagranicznym.

Wzrost zainteresowania regionalnymi produktami jest przejawem nowych tendencji żywnościowych, a w szczególności konserwacją zachowań i wartości wynikających z dziedzictwa kulturowego Polski i Ukrainy. Jest to również związane z wysoką jakością produktów regionalnych. Odpowiednia promocja pomaga konsumentom dostrzec wartość regionalnych produktów.

**Słowa kluczowe:** produkty regionalne, wschodnia Polska, zachodnia Ukraina, żywność regionalna