

Book Reviews

Claudio Besana, Rita D’Errico, Renato Ghezzi (eds.), *Cheese Manufacturing in the Twentieth Century. The Italian Experience in an International Context*, Peter Lang, Brussels, 2017, pp. 407.

This volume collects contributions from researchers in Italy, other European countries, and North America. It focuses on the most profitable segment of the dairy sector, the cheese industry. The main actors in this industry are Western Europe and North America, and Italy is one of the leaders. It is the fourth largest producer of dairy products, and together with France it leads the world in the number of cheeses registered as Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) or Protected Geographical Indication. So Italy, say some researchers, can be described as “the land of cheese.”

The editors start from these considerations to focus on various aspects of the cheese industry. They study quite a long period of time, over a century, from the last three decades of the 19th century to the present. This period straddles the modernisation of cheese manufacturing, essentially its achievement of independence from the agricultural sector to become an industry in its own right. The long-term view also enables the authors to examine the waves of globalisation and their effects on the production and consumption of dairy products and cheese from an international perspective.

The editors’ introduction poses the research questions that the volume addresses (p. 22). With regard to Italian dairy production, they investigate first its strengths and weaknesses and second the national and international factors that helped to determine its present position. They take their examination beyond national borders to present

comparative analyses, with the rest of Europe and also with non-European countries, in particular the U.S., Canada and Brazil.

The book is divided into three parts covering some of the most interesting aspects of the field. Each is given over to a specific topic, ranging from national experiences to analysis of some specific products and, finally, the development and characteristics of cheese-making enterprises. The first part, "The Experience of Different Nations during the Age of Globalisation," has seven chapters, and as the title indicates it presents comparisons of the experiences of several countries. Claire Delfosse, in "Cheese-making in France at the beginning of the twentieth century: a specially diffuse, complex and unique organization," explores the case of France from the final decades of the nineteenth century through the first twenty years of twentieth. She finds four principal systems of dairy production, each specialising in a certain type of cheese, namely Gruyère, Camembert, Brie and Roquefort. The second nation analysed is Switzerland. Luigi Lorenzetti, in "Switzerland's dairy industry in the twentieth century: small-scale artisan production meets the market economy," focuses on the role of institutions in the cheese industry between 1950 and 1990. Claudio Besana, in "The Italian dairy industry between 1930 and 1970: production and organizational structure," describes the Italian dairy industry, with its varieties and regional differences. The role of institutions is also considered by Stefanella Stranieri and Paolo Tedeschi in their chapter on "The influence of European institutions and policies on the Italian dairy sector." They concentrate on the effects of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the consequences of European market integration in Italy. Benoit Mario Papillon, in the chapter entitled "The Canadian dairy sector in the twentieth century: from openness to closure and self-sufficiency," shows that in the 1970s Canadian dairy production switched from an open market to a regulated market and goes more deeply into the consequences of this transformation. For the Brazilian dairy industry as it struggles to find its place internationally, according to Hildete De Moraes Vadopives and Valter Galan, "Contemporary challenges to the Brazilian dairy industry," the main

difficulties are protectionism and the lack of public investment in research and technological innovation. The authors explain this context more thoroughly. Julia Lapp, "New York State cheese: nineteenth and twentieth century transformation," describes the effects of population growth and urbanisation on the New York state dairy industry between the early nineteenth century and the First World War and evaluates the state's consequent loss of leadership in the dairy sector.

The second part, "Terroir, Typicality and Market Openness in the Dairy Sector," has seven contributions on the history of a group of internationally renowned cheeses, a story marked by tradition, authenticity and innovation. The first example is Parmigiano Reggiano, studied in Stefano Magagnoli's "Parmigiano Reggiano cheese: the industrialization of typicality," which unfolds the features of its success starting in the early twentieth century. Sylvie Vabre, "Roquefort: a large company creates its territory," focuses on the Société des Caves, the company that promoted Roquefort cheese in order to conquer the international market by investing in commercial strategies. For Pecorino Romano cheese, the original lands of production were abandoned owing to the poor future prospects for entrepreneurs and the lack of public support, but this did not result in a decline in the production of this variety. Rita D'Errico, "The production of Pecorino in the Roman countryside from the end of the nineteenth century up until the 1930s," shows that this process of de-localisation is feasible. The new area in which the production of Pecorino Romano took root most extensively was Sardinia. Giuseppe Doneddu, "Production and processing of sheep milk in Sardinia (1950-2015)," shows how this connection developed. Renato Ghezzi, "The Tuscan ovine milk industry, 1950-2000: a quantitative analysis," recounts the rebuilding of the dairy industry in Tuscany and the success of Pecorino Toscano, a PDO product since 1987. Vanessa Pollastro, "From Milan to Novara: the production and sale of Gorgonzola in the twentieth century," points out the important role of consortia in the protection of typical cheeses, in production control and coordination among producers. Franca Pirolo, "Buffalo Mozzarella in Campania from its origin to the twenty-first century," describes how this

typical cheese from the southern Italian region of Campania rapidly gained international diffusion and renown.

Finally, the four chapters that make up the third part analyse "Forms of Enterprises in Italy in the Late Nineteenth and Twentieth Century." Manuel Vaquero, "The modernization of the dairy industry in Italy in the late nineteenth century: social dairies," concentrates on the cooperative form and the spread of cooperatives in Italy. Silvia Conca, "Enterprises, trade and industry in the Lombardy dairy sector: the origins of Locatelli and Galbani (1860-1914)," traces the history of two of Italy's largest dairy companies of the twentieth century, namely Galbani and Locatelli, from their origins up to the First World War. Gianpiero Fumi, "The rise and decline of a large company: The Polenghi Lombardo," focuses on another of Italy's main dairy companies, Polenghi Lombardo, which was founded in the 1870s and is still in business today. Andrea Locatelli's chapter, "The multinationals and the Italian agri-food industries: the dairy sector, 1974-1993," concludes the volume with an analysis of the growing presence of foreign capital in Italian dairy companies in the decades covered.

The editors' introduction observes, finally, that the book does not represent a completed study but a work in progress that should invite other scholars to deepen their research on this interesting topic. They accordingly propose some possible areas for further research. They suggest, for example, a more thorough analysis of the commercial dairy industry, both Italian and international; of the forms and types of cheese-making enterprises, with special attention to multinationals; on the quality and standards of dairy products; and, for purposes of comparison, on other notable cheese-producing countries not included in this volume, such as the Netherlands, Spain, Germany, the Scandinavian countries and New Zealand. It is now up to researchers around the world to pick up on these suggestions and continue their inquiries.

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