

AOC Beaufort cheese (Alps, France) A collective quality and territorial strategy

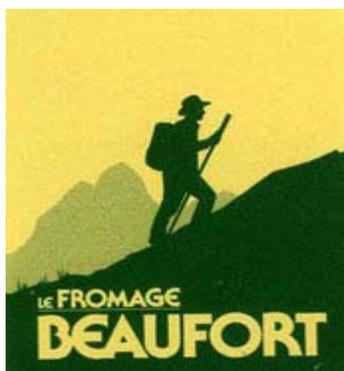
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Some data

- The AOC Beaufort organisation is a territorialized productive system, based on high valorisation of mountain agriculture milk, processed into cheese, called Beaufort. The cheese is recognized as high quality and expensive cheese, marketed at the country level. The official Beaufort area, defined by the AOC *cahier des charges*, covers 450 000 ha of the 630 000 ha of Savoie county
- Starting year: 60's
- 520 milk farms produce Beaufort milk
- Small farms: average per farm is 80 000 kg of milk / year
- In 2005, 45 millions kg of milk were produced in the Beaufort area and 95% processed in Beaufort cheese
- 7 cooperatives process 71.1% of the production
- 29 independent processors (processing only the milk of their own cattle)
- 2 maturing cooperatives assume the maturing stage (which has to be 5 months minimum)
- 6 pasture associations, which manage collectively altitude pastures, collect the milk and process only summer Beaufort
- 2 private industrial milk purchasers produce Beaufort in the AOC area

Anchoring of the system within the territory

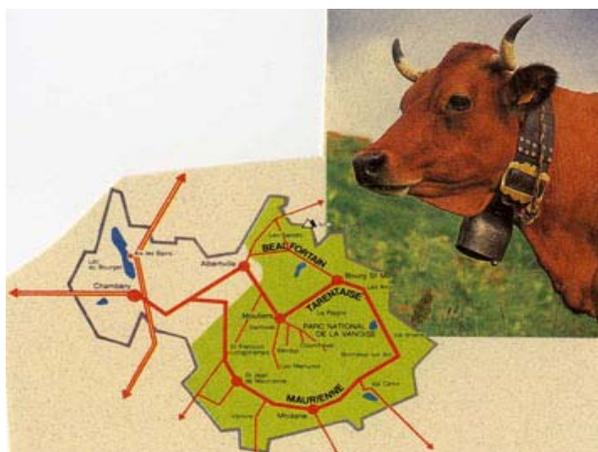
- The complicated interactions between milk / cheese production and tourism
- The positive impacts on local agricultural economy
- Environmental impacts, rather difficult to measure



Characteristics

A long history in a very specific territory

- Stability of its organisational configuration, with 2 support organisations: UPB as a cooperative support organisation and SDB, as AOC supportive body
- A pragmatic marketing policy
- The AOC managed and enriched as a collective heritage



Key questions on the future of this collective initiative

- The marketing system and the relations with wholesalers: the concentration process of the wholesaling sector is at work: how Beaufort system can anticipate the modification of the power relation?
- The trade off between tourism and mountain agriculture: how decentralised policy supports will manage the uncertainties weighting on the future of mass tourism in ski resorts, while snow will become a rare resource because of global warming?
- The drastic changes of the CAP to be expected with major impacts on local agriculture?

