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## **CARING FOR CULINARY PRODUCTS AND TRADITIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL AREAS**

**Abstract:** The study analyzes the role of traditional dishes, food products and customs related to their production and consumption in relation to the sustainable development of rural areas.

Traditional food is usually created on the basis of environmentally-friendly methods. The revitalization of culinary traditions contributes to the harmonious development of rural areas: it activates the local community, creates new sources of income, strengthens cultural identity and increases the tourist attractiveness of the regions. The concept of sustainable development, understood as a harmonious interaction of economic, social and natural systems, aims to achieve contemporary benefits for future generations. The search for and implementation of various activities in rural areas can stop negative demographic and social processes through multi-functional rural development using regional and traditional products.

**Key words:** production, sustainable development, regional food, rural areas.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The aim of the study is to analyze the role of traditional dishes, food products and customs associated with their creation and consumption in the implementation of the idea of sustainable development of rural areas. For the purpose of the topic, the method of analyzing the literature of the subject, as well as the actual use of good practices of sustainable development during the production of traditional culinary products was used. The work is descriptive and analytical. The work presents a critical analysis of the needs and benefits related to the care of culinary products and traditions.

### **POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT OF CULINARY REGIONAL PRODUCTS**

Regional products are products that are produced in a defined geographical area and have unique characteristics that distinguish them from products found elsewhere.

The specific features of regional products are determined by tradition, culture and the specificity of nature, naturalness, method of production and components used to produce them. On the one hand, they may be a showcase of a given region and shape a local image, and on the other hand, the area itself determines their character (Gašiorowski 2007).

Increasing interest in regional and traditional products is analyzed in the context of regionalism as a phenomenon of opposing globalization, which is a response to negative aspects resulting from industrial food production or as a change in consumer preferences resulting from the desire to preserve and show the richness of cultural heritage (Żakowska-Biemas 2012). The production of this type of goods is very often carried out according to old recipes and therefore the technological process itself is not a threat to the environment. The next element is often the ecological character of regional products. As a result, the problem of pollution of nature by pesticides or excess of used fertilizers disappears, which in case of conventional agriculture often causes big problems. The last element to be moved is the fact that very often these products can be found only in the selected area. They are produced locally and sold on site. This, in turn, reduces greenhouse gas emissions and reduces air pollution. (Minta, Tańska-Hus, Nowak 2013)

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Regional products can also help shape local landscape and help maintain balance in nature. Increasingly, agricultural activity is perceived as an activity that contributes to maintaining high natural values and increases species biodiversity (Musiał 2005).

### **TRADITIONAL CROPS**

An important role is also played by running and returning to traditional crops such as buckwheat, sorrel, spelled and herbs (thyme, oregano, lavender, sage, basil and many others) (Machnik 2008). One of such plants is periwinkle formerly used for the production of dyes. As a medicinal plant, it blocks hemorrhage, improves the blood supply to the head (thereby alleviating the pain) and the heart muscle, also relieves toothache. In Masuria, it is used to decorate Easter baskets (as in boxing Wielkopolska in Wielkopolska, and in boletus - in boletus).

On the other hand, dishes are prepared from bred or obtained from surrounding ecosystems of plants and animals. Each region in Poland has its own specific products. In Pomorze, these are mainly fish, in Podhale - meat and cheese from sheep's milk, in Sandomierz and the Lublin region - grains and the noblest species of fruit and vegetables (Krysztofiak 2003).

Currently, the so-called apiturystyka - tourism related to beekeeping and honey production (Kłosiewicz, Kłosiewicz 2011). The best-known apiarian open-air museum is located in Greater Poland in Swarzędz. There are also tourist trails associated with this form of tourism. One of them is the "Małopolska Honey Country" trail promoting open-air museums and beekeeping museums and agritourist beekeeping farms located in the Małopolska region. All agritourism farms, marked on the trail, conduct beekeeping activities and offer tourists the opportunity to taste honey, participate in works in the apiary and relax in the surroundings of nature (Woś, Bień 2013). Another example is the Lubuskie Wine and Honey Route, which also refers to the most well-known type of culinary tourism, which is, of course, enotourism, that is traveling along the vineyard route and tasting wines.

### **DEFINITION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

The definition of sustainable development was officially adopted in 1987 in the Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development. It is "a process aimed at satisfying the developmental aspirations of the present generation, in a manner enabling the pursuit of the same aspirations for future generations" ([www.unesco.org](http://www.unesco.org), 2013.05.16.). It was emphasized that in order to achieve these goals, different activities are needed in three key areas:

- economic growth and an even distribution of benefits.
- protection of natural resources and the environment.
- social development.

Regional products can play an important role in sustainable development. This applies not only to environmental aspects, but also to typical economic ones, which on the one hand will give positive economic effects, and at the same time will take care of the natural environment as much as possible and will not result in excessive exploitation of resources. In addition, sustainable development also means equalizing opportunities between regions with high development potential (most often with the character of large urban agglomerations) and areas with lower development potential. According to such assumptions, the development of the regional products market may favor sustainable development of rural areas, because it gives an opportunity to create new jobs on the spot, raise income and activate some of the local community (Minta, Tańska-Hus, Nowak 2013).

Analysis of the offers of organizations supporting culinary tourism, movements, associations, and activities of public authorities shows that we have several basic forms of actions shaping such an offer.

#### **1. Certification.**

Restaurants, products and events can be certified. Certificates are issued by industry associations, public bodies or tourist organizations.



a. Cooperation with restaurateurs and giving them certificates. Certificates of Slow Food, for example, after the verification process, give their certificates. The first of them was a restaurant in Wzgórza Dylewskie, and the condition was to include at least three typical regional dishes in its menu and use of local products accepted by Slow Food Polska. Currently, there are nearly thirty such restaurants in Poland.

b. Certifying products. Slow Food acknowledges its certificates in the categories of cheese, meats, alcohol, bread, honey, juices, preserves, oils, cakes and cookies.

c. Certifying events and initiatives, for example the Best Certificate

The Tourist Product is awarded by the Polish Tourist Organization (Małopolska Festiwal Smaku, Zielona Góra Wine Festival, International Bread Fair and Living Gingerbread Museum (Plebańczyk 2013).

2. Organization of own events and patronage (Association of Polish Winemakers and Miodosytniki organizes an open nationwide Home-made Nalewki Competition, Slow Food festival in Sopot; Landbrand organizes the Night of the Restaurant, in Krasnystaw there is a National Festival of Chmielarzy and Brewers, which is accompanied by events such as Consumer Beer Contest, Miss Chmielaki's election and the National Chmielarska Session.

Regional events organized by public authorities or under their patronage, such as the Małopolska Festival of Taste, can also be added to this category.

3. Providing tourists with places where products are made, eg beer companies operating in Poland. The breweries are available from Grupa Żywiec and Kompania Piwowarska.

6. Creating culinary routes. The first of them was the Culinary Tourist Trail.

([www.dobrysmak.pl](http://www.dobrysmak.pl), access: 2013.05.20). Culinary trails are created based on the tradition of the region (Silesian Culinary Trail, Białystok Culinary Trail), monoprodukt offer (Lubuski Wine and Honey Trail), product groups (Małopolska Fruit Route) (Plebańczyk 2013).

#### **RURAL DEVELOPMENT - SUSTAINABLE OR MULTIFUNCTIONAL?**

Local development is understood as a process in which the use of human and natural resources plays a fundamental role in order to create employment and achieve prosperity in a given local system (Gorzelać 1992). Agriculture has many functions, it also plays an important role in rural areas - it generates new but also additional fields of economic activity, including those related to processing, warehousing, food logistics, tourism, trade or accompanying services. Support for agriculture and rural areas within the framework of the Common Agricultural Policy enables the implementation of numerous reforms not only of an agrarian nature, but also of environmental or social nature. For several decades, the EU has been trying to develop solutions that would contribute to bridging the disproportion between the village and the city, and, on the other hand, integrate these areas and their inhabitants through complementary and joint actions (Borkowska 2012). Multifunctionality of agriculture is an indispensable condition for sustainable development (Wilkin 2010). It consists in the fact that apart from the basic function of agriculture, which is the production of food products (raw materials) and other organic raw materials used for industrial production, it produces goods and services, and performs other functions that are important for the closer and further environment of the farm. This definition also includes regional food products produced in rural areas. They are recognized in the Community as the cultural heritage of Europe. The legacy of culture and nature has traditionally been considered a non-economic factor of spatial development. Treated as a resource, they can be transformed into capital that can play an important role in the sustainable development strategy, both at the local and national level (Janikowski, Krzysztofek 2009). Idea (Quality Policy UE) distinctions among the vast assortment offer (ie mass, industrial, conventional agri-food products) of agricultural and food products of a regional and traditional nature was a response to the protection of products against unfair competition, creating conditions for consumer protection as well as guaranteeing safety food offered for sale (Borkowska 2012).



The concept of bioregionalism as an alternative form of environmental protection assumes that the world of nature and the world of culture should be treated as a spatial biological-social organism, the individual components of which co-constitute one another. The concept of bioregionalism promotes the development of societies based on respect for resources and local values. The basic form of organization of societies should be a bioregion, an area whose boundaries are defined by nature, not by man. Such an entity does not have to have strict limits, which is important in the case of wider than range values. The balance between the social, economic and natural systems is particularly important in rural areas, where human activity is directly in contact with landscape and nature, which is a generator of activities related to the main function of the village, that is, food production. Bioregionalism should be promoted and implemented in regional politics and tourism strategies (Kirylyuk 2009).

### **REGIONAL PRODUCTS IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL AREAS IN POLAND**

An opportunity for the presence not only of the product on the market, but also its producers are increasingly popular and sought after by consumers products of a regional and traditional nature. The food quality system under the Quality Policy EU protects over a thousand agricultural and food products - original food constituting the cultural heritage (including culinary) of a given country, region, place, tradition before falsification by entering it into the Register of Protected Designations of Origin and Protected Designations by the European Commission Geographic or to the Register of Guaranteed Traditional Specialties. Poland, becoming a full member of the EU, also benefits from this possibility.

Measures for sustainable development are aimed at increasing the importance of food certification as a tool to improve competitiveness in rural areas and disseminating up-to-date knowledge about the certification of Polish products and foodstuffs and sharing experience and increasing practical skills in the application of the certification system in four provinces: Lubelskie, Lubuskie, Podkarpackie and Świętokrzyskie. By promoting their own products, they promote the region while influencing the awareness of the final consumer in the role of high-quality food in a balanced diet creating demand for it. (Certified traditional products and sustainable development of the region) ([www.ksow.pl](http://www.ksow.pl), 08.03.2017).

Therefore, in the case of the future presence of the product on the market (its commodity scale), an important issue is the need for individual or group producers (including farmers, processors etc.) to co-create organized or grouped groups whose common goal would be: to concentrate production and supply, selling products of group members (or organizations, eg cooperatives, etc.), planning the scale and range of production, adapting the product (offer) to the needs and requirements, and also striving to reduce production costs and stabilize product prices. A special role, especially in multifunctional and sustainable development of rural areas, is played by family business entities that, regardless of their legal form, scale of activity or size, maintain their current jobs and create new jobs, especially for local people, use the potential and values of production factors, change the way and living conditions and the model of not only their own consumption, stimulating economic growth, etc. (EEC Council Regulation). Many products should be considered as comprehensive in stimulating the activity and attractiveness of the region, which is oscypek cheese, Podhale cheese, redykołki or Podhalańska lamb. In addition to the meaning of the final product, the consumer's policy is important, that is actions taken by interested parties to stimulate the development of pastoralism in Poland, thus affecting not only biodiversity and balancing the development of less-favored areas, but also indirectly activating the environment for common activities for the development of the region.

The traditional products market is the protection of the environment on a local scale. Thanks to the development of the traditional products market, there will be funds for the return of old breeds,



such as Złotnicka or Puławy pigs, as well as sorghum, millet, the act of ancient varieties of fruit trees (eg pulpwood, antonin, costel or Hungarian plum) (Sieczko 2008).

Another aspect is the economic dimension of sustainable development. Domestic breeds, due to their perfect adaptation to the environmental conditions in which they were produced, are perfect for keeping small, poorly mechanized farms. A small scale of production exposes small farms to all the consequences of fluctuations in purchase prices of agricultural products. Delaying the date of sale is not always possible due to the usefulness of the product for consumption (eggs, milk), and also because the continued maintenance of animals generates costs and prevents sales in the optimal weight (for example, broilers and fattening pigs). As a consequence, production often becomes unprofitable, as costs exceed income. This problem, with a large scale of production, is much smaller, because the larger scale allows for continuous sales. Regular production causes that although some products are sold at low prices, however, there are also periods of favorable purchase prices throughout the year. Therefore, for small farms the support of animal production on native breeds can be - and in many cases is - a way to improve their financial condition. Firstly, in some regions only the native breed can make full use of the available feed resources (eg poor, mountain, hard-to-reach pastures are well used by Polish red cattle). Secondly, for farmers breeding native breeds, farmers receive a subsidy, which covers the income differences that are obtained when using the native race, and which could be obtained by maintaining a more high-yielding breed. Thirdly, the products obtained from them are of excellent quality. So you can get a higher price for them (for example, eggs for green leg hen, known for low cholesterol). Products obtained from native breeds can also be processed in a traditional way. In February 2005, the Regional Union of Sheep and Goat Breeders in Nowy Targ submitted an application for a "Protected designation of origin" for oscypek. The procedures for entering the oscypek in the European list of regional products were successful and, in accordance with Commission Regulation (EC) No 127/2008 of 13 February 2008, the product was included in the register of protected designations of origin and protected geographical indications. Oscypek must be produced from sheep's milk of the "Polish Mountain Sheep" sheep. If cow's milk is used, it must come from cows of the "Polish red cow" breed. Therefore, only milk obtained from native animal breeds can be used for their production. This cheese should only be produced from May to September and must be sold in its entirety. In addition to oscypek, Polish milk products such as sheep cheese and redykołka are also protected (IJHAR-S, 2010). The coverage of these products with EU protection favors the interests of producers, and through the preservation of the traditional way of their production, part of the local community finds permanent employment. In the economic dimension, the protection of the genetic biodiversity of livestock is consistent with the idea of sustainable development. Considering the ecological dimension of genetic biodiversity conservation. As mentioned above, breeders who are the beneficiaries of all animal genetic resources conservation programs must be managed in accordance with the principles of good agricultural practice (Szulc 2011).

Recognizing the problem of protection of local breeding species, programs aimed at cultivating old traditions are introduced (Zarzycki, Korzenich 2013). Another element is the greater involvement of local communities in maintaining traditions and customs and a stronger interest of tourists in pastoralism and active protection of nature. In 2010, the local government of the province Śląskie decided to continue the program until 2014, and later it was extended until 2020 (Jaremicz 2017). The Sheep Plus program enables not only production, but also the sale of several dozen products, such as food (bundz, bryndza, oscypek) as well as non-food products.

More and more consumers value regional products made according to old, precisely defined recipes. The European system of protection of regional and traditional products has over 1,000 items in the register. The most comes from Italy and France. So far, 37 Polish products (meats, fruit, vegetables, bakery products, honey, cheese and oils) have been included on the list. The Protected Designation of Origin is given to a product that originates from a specific place, region, and its



name refers to the place where it is made and highlights the relationship with it. The quality or characteristics of the product are essentially or exclusively attributable to the specific geographical environment, which consists of natural and human factors. Polish products with this sign include: bryndza podhalańska, 'Piękny Jaś' beans from the Dunajec Valley, seaweed beans, zatorski carp, honey from the Sejny region, oscypek, Podkarpacki honeydew honey, redykołka, nadwiślanka cherry.

The Protected Geographical Indication also means products from a specific place. The difference with the PDO is that in the case of PGI, at least one production stage takes place in this area.

Polish products with this mark include: Kielkowska andruty, Lubliner onion, Ruthenian bread, Korczyńska beans, Grójec apples, Łącko apples, Poharanian lamb, Lisiecka sausage, Silesian potato flour, Drahim honey, Miód honey, heather honey from the Lower Silesian Forests, Cracow bagel, rogal świętomarciński, ser koryciński swojski, suska sechłońska, śliwka szydłowska, strawberry Kaszubska, Wielkopolska fried cheese. Positive verification by the European Commission is awaiting (until early December last year) krupniok.

Traditional Specialty Guaranteed is granted to products having a specific character, feature or set of features that clearly distinguish them from others, similar. The product must be made from traditional raw materials or have a traditional composition or production method for at least 30 years.

Polish products with this mark include: mead (półtorak, dwójniak, trójniak, czwórniak), kabanosy, juniper sausage, hunting sausage, oil oil ([www.poradnikzdrowie.pl/zywienie/przydatne-w-kuchni/polskie-produkty-regionalne-and-traditional-protected-in-uelista\\_43453.html](http://www.poradnikzdrowie.pl/zywienie/przydatne-w-kuchni/polskie-produkty-regionalne-and-traditional-protected-in-uelista_43453.html), 01/08/2018).

In Poland, 1661 traditional culinary products are currently produced in 16 provinces. According to the data published on the website of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the most traditional products come from Podkarpacie (221) and then from the Lublin region (184) and Pomerania (177). Among these products, fruit and vegetables and fish and their preserves play the most important role in sustainable development. An important role is also played by various honeys, as well as dairy and meat products and products from cows, goats and sheep ([www.minrol.gov.pl](http://www.minrol.gov.pl) 8.01.2018).

## SUMMARY

The concept of sustainable development understood as a harmonious cooperation of the economic, social and natural systems in order to achieve spatial, economic, social and ecological order is very important especially for sensitive and important for Europe rural areas. Nowadays, these are areas that due to their specificity and functions require not only from decision-makers, but also from their inhabitants to engage in raising the level and quality of life. They imply dynamic changes based on available natural capital, human capital, social capital, financial and production capital. The search for and creation of various activities, through multifunctional rural development (including regional or traditional products), may be one of the directions accelerating the process of development of entrepreneurial activities in rural areas. Regional products, not only food-related, play an important role in the sustainable development of rural areas. They constitute a chance of functioning on the market, especially in small farms, and are an interesting alternative or complementing or diversifying activities by other economic entities in rural areas.

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