

Conventions and competitiveness in the production chain of Spanish salted fish industries

1. Name of research leader and project participants

Project leader: Professor Knut Bjørn Lindkvist, FUnC and UiB

Others: Associate Professor Kjell Hines, FUnC, Lorena Gallart-Jornet, SINTEF, phd candidate Heidi, Bjønnes Larsen, UiB, spanish researcher Ana Espinosa Seguí, Universidad de Alicante and Inmaculada Martínez Alba, Universidad de Sevilla, master student Anita Pleym Henriksen and May-Britt Drage Bakke, UiB.

2. Project objectives

1. Develop regional production and consumer profiles of Spanish markets
 - Map and analyse geographical patterns in Spanish salted fish production, including the distribution channels
 - Examine the composition of products and production methods applied employed in the regional markets
 - Analyse the Spanish importation of salted fish
2. Analyse conventions and other institutions which govern the Spanish salted fish industry
3. Test samples of new Norwegian products
4. Establish a Norwegian-Spanish network for the promotion of Norwegian salted fish in Spain, and improvement of Norwegian-Spanish social relations in the salted fish sector.

3. Background

Changes in the Spanish market of salted fish products have opened the door to new products like salted fillets and frozen light salted fillets. The market for traditional salted fish, though processed with modern salting technology, has, however, also increased. Since 1998, the Norwegian producers have encountered problems in Spain and have lost ground. Icelandic producers have increased their influence in Spanish markets through the use of technology, institutional arrangements and conventions and organisation of the salted fish market.

4. Research problems

Which driving forces (technological, economic, institutional and social) influence the restructuring of the Spanish salted fish markets? What is the future of salted fish in the Spanish food menu? Which products will probably increase? What are the consequences for Spanish consumers of the Icelandic market dominance? And what can the Norwegians learn from the Icelandic producers? What strategies should be suggested if Norwegian producers are to renew their appeal in these markets?

5. Theories and methodologies

The project relies on evolutionary and institutional economic theories focused on production systems and production chain theories, marketing strategies, internationalisation practices and social economic geography and on conventions and governance institutions.

Methodologically, the project will develop an overview of Spanish producers, importers and products. A sample of Spanish salted fish producers will be interviewed (via postal or internet questionnaires focusing on prevailing conventions and innovation activities). Focus groups will be established in order to test new products and discuss the status of conventions, innovations and network activities among producers and international actors. Studies of some central formal regulation documents will be performed. To regional databases will also be established, one of them based on the questionnaires. These data will be treated statistically through, discrimination- and factor analyses of the regional variations within the spatial production systems in Spain.

6. Relation to the tasks of the main project

Tasks 1.1.-1.4, 3.2, 4.3- 4.5

7. Time schedule:

May 2009 to December 2010