

## **Milk: pearl of the filière**

The dairy sector filière revolves around milk: this is an undisputed fact, perhaps even rather banal because it is so obvious.

The quality of milk is found at the start of a masterly cycle: in fact, the excellence of every milk by-product originates on the farm. Here's another statement that is just as indisputable: weighed on an economic scale, this acquisition strengthens the demand for a good return for the commodity.

**Quality, however, has to mark the entire cycle of the filière through which milk travels;** it must characterise each and every processing phase, thus meaning each phase involved in the making of the by-products. This too is an additional, necessary consideration that has to integrate the preceding ones.

And this is the basis of my reflections.

I think it is important to consider **what gives milk value, what determines its valuation in terms of its qualities and its remunerative value.**

**What gives milk value lies in its destination for use in prestigious products.**

**Parmigiano Reggiano, Grana Padano, Gorgonzola, Provolone, Fresh Milk...**

- are the accredited manifestos of Italian-made products, a multiple guarantee of know-how with perfection, of things wholesome and characteristic, of things that are “good” and aesthetically “pleasing”, of modern technology and tradition - they are the showcase of Italian-made products that should be promoted and given support at every level, whether public or private.
- but they also stand as evidence of a commodity quality that can not be underestimated or discounted.

As the market gained by Italian-made products expands, fine Italian products are extending their circulation world-wide, in a world that is becoming a wider and wide open one, and the filière is growing stronger, rewarding all the players involved: Producers and Processors.

I believe that the value of milk is taken on through a process that resembles the pearl formation process.

A pearl comes into being in a live nucleus, within the “mantle” of an oyster. It is not the size of the nucleus that creates value, but the layers around it. The layers overlap it and give it its last, final lustre.

Milk is the live nucleus of every by-product. It is the necessarily best departure point to ensure the success of the subsequent processing phases.

If dictated by experienced know-how, safety standards and characterised by fine workmanship, the subsequent processing phases will, in turn, contribute to add value to the initial commodity.

However, if this asset is not galvanised by a lively, wide and lucrative market, how can the economic value of milk be defended?

**Just as in the case of a pearl, it is the cycle of transitions that gives milk its value.**

**And for milk, the final and indispensable transition consists of the milk and dairy product market - a market that must necessarily be expanded and oriented towards quality and innovation.**

**The value added assigned by the market is the essential element!**

**Total quality** ( which originates from the controlled origin of the "milk" commodity, of livestock diets, farm health standards, milk collection and preservation regulations, etc. ), **filière quality** ( expertness and safety standards during the by-product processing phases) and **market turnover create appreciation**; the rest is nothing more than a palliative that is destined to wear out.

- **Energising the market**, opening new "markets", also to foreign subjects, from the perspective of **markets that are globally-communicating, but bound ethically to the principles of quality, wholesomeness, characteristic distinctiveness, and to the rejection of imitations,**
- **the constant safeguarding of these values concerning product excellency,**
- **promoting, informing, making known, increasing awareness about good products that are good for us....**



**these are grand tasks, upon which name, credibility....and prices depend.**

That is why a joint effort is needed, a significant pact between Producers and Processors, so that the arena of the global market is not reached by twos and threes, with each player bound solely to their own "particulars".

The filière must create a communality of participation in the economic enterprise, in forms that see Producers and Processors actively involved on the same front for market expansion.

There is a need to invent forms of reciprocal outlets, mixed bodies, that are representative of the interests of all and not experienced as conflicting interests.

There is a growing need for more Producers in processing Co-operatives that are oriented towards the market, Co-operatives which, in turn, take the route of aggregate association to take over economic areas, as well as other forms of advanced joint industrial efforts.

There is a growing need for Producers in Industrial Partnerships.

There is a growing need for "enlightened" minds among industrialists, thinkers who are willing to intertwine industry's ends with the routes taken by production.

In the end, the entire filière profits by the value added created by the market.

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