



Photo by Comune di Borgo Val di Taro

It was, and is, a representative reference of the policy and law related to wild mushroom harvesting in Europe and the US.

COMPANY IDENTITY

	Fungo di Borgotaro IGP (Borgotaro Mushroom PGI)	Name
	Italy	Country
	www.fungodiborgotaro.com	Web site
	1964 (Consorzio Comunalie Parmensi) 1993 (Borgotaro Mushroom Consortium)	Starting year
	1,200,000€ (2012)	Annual turnover
	Expansion	Current status
	Local	Market scale
	Direct markets	Market-based instruments
	Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) standard	Awards

FROM IDEA TO BUSINESS



The case of Borgotaro mushroom PGI (“Fungo di Borgotato” IGP in Italian) all started from the idea of linking wild mushroom production in forest areas to recreational wild mushroom collection in 1993, where numbers of mushroom pickers reached over 100,000 in 2012. Thanks to the introduction of picking permits, the local forest owners covered the additional management costs for myco-silviculture, while local commercial pickers had higher availability of wild mushrooms. The mushrooms sold by commercial and recreational pickers to local dealers can be labelled within a traceability procedure that can result in the certification of the mushrooms with the EU PGI label. The total area covered by the myco-silviculture activity is approximately 63,000 ha, out of which the Borgotaro Mushroom Consortium and the forest owners manage an annual revenue between 0.5 and 1.2 M€ (reinvested partially in forests), while the wild mushroom supply chain can generate additional annual revenues of around 0.5 M€ of added value from the 5-10 tonnes of wild mushrooms sold. The economic performance depends highly on the seasonal availability of wild mushrooms. The networking among different activities of the area strengthens the marketing strategy beyond the EU PGI label that so far it is the only wild product labelled under such label. Hotels, B&Bs, restaurants, tourist agencies, local shops and public transportation, these are just some of the actors that are involved in the network of recreational wild mushroom picking, where so far, the main direct revenue from the local forest comes.



The income is used to cover the administrative costs of the picking permit commercialization (5%), while the remainder is transferred to the forest owner to reinvest in socio-economic activities, and a small part is reinvested in the forest to enhance wild mushroom productivity.

ACTORS INVOLVED



Private
Mix public-private

Promoters



Private

Developers



Private (forest owners)

Investors



Private:

Other actors

- Implementer (ConSORZI Comunalie Parmensi, involved from 1964)
- Manager of the picking permit commercialization (ConSORZIO Fungo di Borgotaro, from 1993)
- Companies purchasing local mushrooms (Bottega del Fungo from 1970 and Borgolab from 1984)
- Company providing accommodation (a local B&B, from 1970)

Public:

- Supporters (local municipalities)

Mix private-public:

- Promoter of the products (a touristic agency and the system of food roads from 1996)

IMPACTS



positive: new seasonal job opportunities

Social

negative: competition between commercial and recreational picking

positive: from a product that had only social importance to a product that is worth over 2.8M€

Economic

negative: increment of land price, with less capability of the locals to purchase pieces of land

positive: increment of forest resilience

Environmental

positive: coordination among stakeholders and increment of forest added value

Institutional

negative: increment of the costs of managing the forests

MAIN WEAKNESSES



Seasonality of mushroom production and limited forest area managed according to myco-silviculture practices. Private forest owners have a tendency to close the forests and sell the harvesting rights to the pickers, though there are higher taxation rates for private-vs-private commercialization, compare to the taxation rate applied for public-vs-private commercialization.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS



Improvement of myco-silviculture techniques through quantitative models and further development of additional marketing/promotional tools. For example, the "Happy ticket" mechanism has been recently introduced: visitors staying within the valley overnight are awarded with a free picking permit (where 60% is paid for by the public administration, 30% by the hotel or B&B and 10% by the forest owner). Moreover, the Borgotaro Mushroom Consortium is working to improve the connection between the tourism entering the region, in order to commercialize daily "wild mushroom packages" during the season, and interlinking it with the existing network by the Museum of Food, a special public organization of the Museum related to food of the Parma province.