GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS

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Consortium for Common Food Names
Purpose
• Protect rights of producers and consumers to use common food names

Structure
• Based in Washington, members and supporters from countries in the Americas and Oceania
• Some of our members are from small, less developed countries and include small manufacturers in countries like Costa Rica, Guatemala, Ecuador.

www.commonfoodnames.com
WHAT WE BELIEVE:

• GIs are a legitimate form of intellectual property

• CCFN supports registration systems that guard against consumer confusion and the use of misleading information

• Not seeking right to use very specific names such as “Parmigiano Reggiano”
What Is Our Rationale

- U.S. and other New World countries are nations of immigrants
What Is Our Rationale

• Over years, immigrants brought their culture to U.S. & elsewhere

  Built businesses and **MARKETS** using knowledge and skills

  Example: introduced Italian-style cheeses, used Italian names, created market demand
A Global Challenge

• Attacks on common names & lack of clarity in GI regulations pose risks to many producers and consumers:
  – Examples abound in cheese alone:

  - Guatemalan parmesan producer
  - Singaporean feta importer
  - Uruguayan danbo producer
  - Japanese camembert producer
A Careful Balance

Acquired Rights

- GIs merit protection, but so do common names.
- Common names are part of public domain
- All producers should have right to them without interference

Trade & Competition Impacts

- Clawback of use of common names can have serious adverse effects on exports from New World producers
- Use of “parmesano” in Costa Rica
Potential Pit-Falls in WIPO

• WIPO Lisbon Agreement
  – Many countries do not respect terms’ generic status
  – “GI Fast-Track” undermines national IP authorities’ roles
  – Ample confusion & uncertainty re: GI coverage
  – Geneva Act: lost opportunity to seek consensus
    • Risks aggravating existing problems.
What is the Solution?

- Preserving rights to use common names does not need to prevent registration and protection of GIs.
- Possible to grant GI applicants protections they deserve... 
  - Without unduly affecting economic interests of producers in other countries.
Within WIPO...

- WIPO: Lisbon Agreement

**Prospective Members:**
- Carefully Weigh trade violation risks & new obligations

**Lisbon Members:**
- Take pre-cautions to implement agreement in a more trade-compliant manner
- Preserve judgement capacity of national IP authorities
CCFN’s Goal

- In WIPO & Other Forums:
  - Foster balance between appropriate protections for GIs and comparably effective safeguards for Common Names

- We look forward to working with you in pursuit of this goal.

THANK YOU!