

Title Building and protecting the Thanh Ha lychee through a protected geographic indication: product definition and stakeholder adhesion

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Abstract

In Vietnam, the Thanh Ha lychee has a reputation for quality. An integrated approach to upgrade the value chain based on a Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) was successfully applied by GTZ and the Vietnamese Academy of Agricultural Science (VAAS) for this lychee. The aims of building a PGI for the Thanh Ha lychee were to improve the marketing skills of the producers and the marketability of the product. The involvement of small producers through collective action brought a larger quantity of more homogeneous product onto the market, enabling producers to develop a specific distribution network to reach target markets. The Thanh Ha Lychee Production and Commercialization Association has emerged to take charge of this challenging task. A common technical package based on indigenous scientific knowledge (or GAP) and market demand to stabilize lychee production and quality was the first part of the project to be implemented. The quality of the product is overseen by an internal quality management mechanism. Legal protection of the Thanh Ha lychee PGI will be approved in 2007. The research carried out thus far has helped farmers to build a product zoning map to recognize the variety and production processes, highlighting the close relationship between specific quality and local environmental conditions in order to achieve a PGI. Professional labelling and marketing tools designed to establish distribution contracts with external companies, supermarkets and private retailers have also contributed to the increasing recognition of the product. A Thanh Ha lychee website is being built to promote the product and to attract tourists to Thanh Ha district. The Thanh Ha lychee case shows how it is possible to upgrade the value chain for a PGI product in a developing country. This has the potential to differentiate local product in what is rapidly becoming a congested market following the recent accession of Vietnam to the WTO.