

Guide to ‘Best marketing practices for the Gruyère AOP association’

Version adopted by the AD 10th June 2015

This guide is applicable to the entire Gruyère AOP association: milk producers, cheesemakers and affineurs.

I. The brand and the association

A. Legal grounds for the brand

Recognised documents, the Specifications, and the different trademarks around the world. Swiss, European, Russian and Jamaican protection. Trade mark in South Africa and the United States. Figurative mark in various countries (take-over of USF brands).

B. The product’s historical foundation

Charter between the Count of Gruyère and the Rougement priory in 1115.
Written records of the name in 1655 and 1688.

C. The operation of the association

The operation of the association is based upon statutes.

Basic decisions are made by the Assembly of Delegates on proposals made by the Committee and special commissions such as the Marketing, Quality, Alpage, Planning and Bio commissions.

Operations are based upon the fair distribution of Gruyère AOP’s economic development between the different partners working as independent contractors within the association. The voting system of the Assembly of Delegates prevents one group from developing at the detriment of others. Each group has to approve a decision.

A standard contract system exists between the different members of the association. This defines, amongst other things, what can be produced and what can be commercialised.

Each member is committed to the promotion of the image of Gruyère AOP and the association. Each individual should respect brand defence strategies and the spirit behind a united association.

References:

¹ Document : Specifications, dated 6 July 2001, updated following the European AOP in 2014

² Document : Legal position of Gruyère AOP, dated 31 December 2014.

³ Document : Statuts de l’IPG, dated 10 June 2015.

II. Production and the product

A. Presentation of production (in relation to the image conveyed of the product)

The image of the product and its production should be impeccably presented.

Dairy farms presented should be relatively modern freestall barns.

Milking should be shown as taking place in a milking parlor. Care should be taken to always show clean and healthy cows. For milking in alpine regions, bucket or direct milking are preferred.

Fodder preparation should be portrayed using modern machines, with care being taken to show the grass and the hay. Show the cows at pasture.

In the scenery depicted, silage (towers and bales) should not be visible. Landscapes should be varied (Prealps, plateau and Jura).

People should be dressed in appropriate work clothes. Each individual is important to the image of the association.

The work of the cheesemakers should be represented by a building of a certain style with a cellar.

Milk deliveries should be shown using tankers (and no longer milk churns). Twice daily contact between the cheesemaker and the milk producers should be emphasised. Another important point to be highlighted should be traceability (samples). This shows not only how traceability is taken very seriously, but also the importance of the relationship between the producer and the cheesemaker.

Once inside, the work of the cheesemaker should be portrayed by clean individuals wearing a cheesemaker's hat (if possible with the Gruyère AOP logo) as opposed to a mob-cap. The Gruyère AOP T-shirt should also be worn whenever possible (complying with the FROMARTE file).

Any actions or gestures should show the cheesemaker's hand.

When showing equipment, an open copper vat should be used.

An effort should be made to show quality controls.

Try to depict the reality whilst emphasising the artisanal rather than the industrial aspects of production.

The making of Gruyère d'Alpage AOP should be denoted with a cauldron over a wood fire.

In addition, the use of a cheesecloth should be emphasised.

When showing the moulding and pressing of the cheese wheels, ensure that the casein mark and date are shown. The heel mark should also be visible as it is this which demonstrates the wheel's traceability.

Show the placing of the cheese in the salt bath, paying attention to how the salt bath is presented.

When displaying the care received by the cheese once in the cellars, show the turning and brushing of the wheels both by hand and by a robot. Workers should be wearing a cap and a white coat. Focus should be placed upon the contact between the wheel and the worker's hands.

In the cellar, take care to show the spruce shelves and the wheels themselves. Clearly show the progression in the colour of the wheels as they mature (from white to yellow as the rind develops).

The *affineur* should be presented working in the cellar with the wheels in the background. A white coat and either the company's cap or a Gruyère AOP cap should be worn.

The importance of the weighing of the wheels should be shown by focusing on the quality controls that take place (such as the tapping and probing of the cheese) and the contact with the cheesemaker.

The value of the taxation process should also be highlighted, showing the different people (the taxation officer and the weigher) involved. Care should be taken to show the cheese tester and the cheese's texture being analysed. Any individuals shown should be wearing a cap.

Each production site (farm, dairy, affinage) should display the Gruyère AOP logo. This may be visible on a production plaque, neon sign, alpage or affineur plaque or a flag. The point of this is to show the producer's pride in belonging to the association.

B. Presentation of Gruyère AOP (its image and the product itself)

Each wheel displayed should have a wheel label.

Gruyère AOP should be presented in such a way that it is easily identifiable by the consumer when shopping. It should be clearly recognisable so as to avoid confusing it with other cheeses.

Always present the product in an appetising way.

The product should always be presented with the rind and a label which conforms to the graphic charter. The 'King Cut' shape should only be used exceptionally and should follow the measures prescribed by the Graphic Charter (under clear film).

Cutting a wheel should, whenever possible, be performed by dividing it into quarter wheels. When shown in a photo, an effort should be made to ensure that the heel mark and a part of the cheese itself is visible.

Gruyère AOP can be presented inside, in a cellar or a shop, or on a neutral base without a background.

III Commercialisation and communication

A. The presentation of Gruyère AOP in advertisements

The 'King Cut' shape should not be used in consumer advertising, but may be exceptionally authorised for use in advertising that targets professionals.

For whole cheese wheels, show off the rind. If possible, show small pieces of cheese cut as if for a cheese-tasting.

The *mise-en-scene* of Gruyère AOP is possible.

B. The presentation of members of the association in advertisements

The points made in the previous chapter should be considered. Overall, the making of the cheese is shown as it is. The *bredzon*, or traditional male attire of the cattle farmers, is to be used in connection with Gruyère d'Alpage AOP in Switzerland or abroad. For Gruyère AOP it can be used in certain advertisements abroad but it should not be the only image associated with the brand. The *bredzon* promotes the idea of there being a tradition behind the making of the cheese.

In all advertisements, a human presence should be prioritised as this confirms the artisanal roots of the cheese.

C. Pricing policy

Gruyère AOP is sold in the mid to high-end segment of the market. It should not be given a permanently low price, and should not be found in the low-cost lines (M-budget, Prix Garantie, Premier Prix, for example).

D. The positioning of the brand in each international market

The product is situated in the mid to high-end segment of the market. It should be sold in traditional shops, at markets and in large supermarket chains.

E. Positioning in relation to other labels (de la Région pour la Région, Suisse Garantie ...)

Gruyère AOP is positioned by its brand and its AOP label as a national and international product. For this reason, there are no other labels on the packaging. The intrinsic characteristics of the product can be described. The only authorised variations of the name are Alpage (Specifications) and Bio. The trademarks of affineurs and sellers should meet the requirements prescribed in the Specifications (affinage structure in Switzerland and trademarks relating to the affinage process).

F. Packaging

In general, packaging should be qualitative. Any originality is welcomed (eg: resealable packets) The packaging should ensure that branding is clearly visible and should conform to the requirements outlined in the Specifications and the Graphic Charter.

G. Sales strategy in the face of an article similar to Gruyère AOP

Any promotion of a similar product which could negatively impact the sales or the image of Gruyère AOP should be avoided.

H. Media strategy (Media - inappropriate mediums)

All forms of conventional media can be used, according to the market. However, each tool chosen should correspond to the brand's image.

The medium selected needs to be compatible with our product's image (eg: as a natural food product) If in doubt, the matter should be discussed with the IPG (eg: an advert on a rubbish truck)

I. Overall guidelines for marketing investments (Proportion for advertising, sponsoring, sales promotions...) in each market.

The marketing strategy is worked upon and proposed by the IPG before being adopted or modified according to decisions made by the different authorities at the IPG (the Marketing Commission, the Assembly of Delegates).

J. The promotional argument for distribution sales support

Gruyère AOP is a traditional cheese made from raw milk with an inimitable taste and quality.

It is a natural product. A democratic association brings together milk producers, cheesemakers and affineurs. The brand has an excellent image. It is created with heart and soul by those involved.

K. The promotional argument for consumer sales support

A natural, traditional product which delivers an equitable return to all those belonging to the association. Short food supply chain. No unnecessary transportation. Guaranteed traceability.

L. The promotional argument for retailer sales support

A product with a strong history which can add value to the shop and provide a large sales margin.

M. The promotional argument for cheesemaker sales support

Gruyère AOP is the fruit of the cheesemaker's daily investment and is the basis of their income. Responsibility for the transmission of the *savoir-faire* needed to make the cheese is borne by them.

Gruyère AOP is their product. Its connection to the region.

N. Internal and external (to the association) communication rules (in times of crisis or in the case of difficult situations in the dairies or with producers, positive communication...)

All communication by the association should be carried out in accordance with the following procedure adopted by the IPG:

- Task force for emergency situations
- Controlled communication, active or passive
 - Ensure that communication from the IPG to parties within and external to the IPG is coordinated and intelligible
 - The mouthpiece of the IPG is the Management in Pringy
 - If necessary, the Management will confer with the Committee, the Board or in emergencies, with the President or the Vice-president
 - For routine or repetitive information, the Management will make decisions depending on the strategy adopted in each case.

An objective yet positive communication style is preferred. Problems within the association should not be spread. They should be solved through targeted internal communication.

L'Oiseau is the internal mouthpiece of the association and is distributed internally and to interested parties (political and administrative).

O. Other

Promotional material - to be discussed with the IPG and graphics checked.