



# GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS

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## 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](http://www.commonfoodnames.com)

# CCFN Supports GIs

## 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 “parmeseano” 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!**