



Restaurant  
& Catering

SAVOUR  
AUSTRALIA



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Australia-European Union Free Trade Agreement  
Office of Trade Negotiations  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

By email: [a-eufta-gisubmissions@dfat.gov.au](mailto:a-eufta-gisubmissions@dfat.gov.au)

To whom it may concern,

R&CA appreciates the opportunity to provide a submission relating to our objections concerning terms proposed by the European Union for protection as geographical indications (GI) in Australia. R&CA notes that the Australian Government launched negotiations in June 2018 for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the European Union (EU), which will provide increased commercial opportunities for Australian exporters. As stated on the DFAT website, a GI is essentially a name used on a product that has a specific geographical origin and possesses qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin.

### **Restaurant and Catering Australia**

Restaurant & Catering Australia (R&CA) is the national industry association representing the interests of more than 47,000 restaurants, cafés and catering businesses across Australia. R&CA delivers tangible outcomes to small businesses within the hospitality industry by influencing the policy decisions and regulations that impact the sector's operating environment.

R&CA is committed to ensuring the industry is recognised as one of excellence, professionalism, profitability and sustainability. This includes advocating the broader social and economic contribution of the sector to industry and government stakeholders, as well as highlighting the value of the restaurant experience to the public.

### **Objections**

R&CA wishes to list objections to the following GIs proposed by the EU as part of the FTA negotiations:

Foodstuffs:

- Gruyere
- Gorgonzola
- Grana Padano
- Fontina



RESTAURANT & CATERING INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

PO Box 121, SURRY HILLS NSW 2010 T: 1300 722 878 F: 1300 722 396 E: [info@restaurantcater.asn.au](mailto:info@restaurantcater.asn.au)

HOSTPLUS [www.rca.asn.au](http://www.rca.asn.au) [www.savouraustralia.com.au](http://www.savouraustralia.com.au)

- Mortadella Bologna
- Parmigiano Reggiano
- Taleggio

The reasoning for R&CA objections to the names above fall into three key categories. Firstly, the name does not carry specific or particularly well-known geographical region, or none exists whatsoever. Secondly, there is a lack of consistency within the GI list proposed by the EU, where similar products are treated differently and with differing levels of protection sought, and thirdly, where there is no obvious alternative name available for the product, leading to increased consumer confusion.

R&CA also contends that if the EU FTA were to be signed in a current form, a wide-ranging public awareness campaign would be needed to properly inform the public about name changes and what to look for as alternative names for commonly identified foodstuffs.

### **No Specific Geographical Location associated with GI**

A key basis for R&CA's objections is the lack of readily identifiable geographical location associated with a particular product. Where in the case of other well-known GIs such as 'Champagne' there is an obvious geographical location, products listed under the proposal list such as Gruyere, Feta, Grana Padano, Mortadella, Fontina, Gorgonzola & Parmigiano Reggiano have no discernible location within the EU that similarly applies.

For this reason, the protection level should be sought to be decreased in line with proposals sought for similar products from other EU nations, such as Edam Holland and Gouda Holland, Pecorino Remano and Pecorino Toscana, where the protection sought deals with products that purport to be made in that specific location, rather than the product itself. In these circumstances, Edam or Pecorino is usually the identifiable term that would still be allowable post-EU FTA but for other examples listed above this methodology is not applied consistently.

This objection also encompasses products with multiple geographical locations which lay claim to the product, such as gruyere (France, Switzerland) & Feta (Denmark, Greece).

### **Lack of Consistency in applying GI**

This lack of consistency in the application of GIs across the proposed list is another key focus of R&CA's objection. R&CA submits that a clear point of negotiation with the EU should be a clear and consistent application of the GI structure. However, to have a situation where one type of food stuff (e.g. gorgonzola) is treated differently to another similar foodstuff (edam) under its sought protection is unworkable and does not meet the stated goals of the EU's GI system.

Also, clarity needs to be sought on products whose specific GI may interact with a broader product (e.g. Mortadella Bologna – it is not clear if the sought protection should block the use of Mortadella or Bologna separately or just the specific term Mortadella Bologna). This lack of clarity and possible interactions should be rectified and clearly specified in the FTA.

### **Inability to Identify Alternative Names**

Another key component of R&CA's objections relates to an inability to readily identify an alternative name. Within the restaurant industry, a clear concern relating to the introduction of GIs for foodstuffs is consumer confusion and an inability to recognise replacement products due to no alternative names being readily available. This could lead to consumers purchasing items from menus that contain items not to their taste and unknowingly putting allergies at risk.

For all of the options identified above as objections, there is no clear alternative name for the product in question, not only as a component part of a wider dish but also when used in very specific settings such as cheese platters and charcuterie boards.

### **Consumer Education and Confusion**

Finally, R&CA submits that prior to the signing of any EU FTA that contains specific and numerous GIs, the Australian Government has a clear duty to inform the Australian public of these changes, how they will impact their interaction with these products including at restaurants and food businesses. This campaign, should the objections listed above not change, clearly address proposed new names for the products listed above to smooth the transition and ensure no confusion occurs as stated above.

### **Conclusion**

If you wish to discuss R&CA's views further, do not hesitate to contact Tom Green, Manager – Policy and Government at R&CA by email at [tom@R&CA.asn.au](mailto:tom@R&CA.asn.au).

We thank you again for the opportunity to provide comment to you.

Regards



**Wes Lambert CPA FGIA MAICD**

Chief Executive Officer

Restaurant and Catering Australia