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Cause and Effect Relationships Between Product Quality and Environment as Prerequisite for Denomination of Origin Labels in Coffee

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Abstract

Geographical indications (GIs) and the more demanding denominations of origin (DOs) are known more familiarly as labels of origin. The Protected Denomination of Origin PDO status is applied to products that originate in a specific region, place, or country, and have qualities or characteristics that are essentially or exclusively due to a particular geographical environment. The PDO's have often been used with wine and spirits, but are also applied to other foods (*e.g.* cheeses, meat products, oils, or nuts). PDO's pursue a double purpose; they protect a product and are tools of marketing a unique product. Several coffee producing countries and regions launched their denomination of origin in the last decade based on different criteria. The objective of this paper is first to review and compare existing coffee denominations schemes, secondly to describe a scientifically sound method to underpin denomination of origin labels, and finally to demonstrate the method in Cauca and Nariño, two selected Colombian coffee growing areas. The results show that the denomination schemes being implemented across the coffee producing countries are based on a variety of methodologies and focuses. The success of the methodology we propose rests on answering four core questions: (i) Is the geographical environment different to other environments, (ii) is the quality different to other qualities, (iii) what is the relation between the environment and the quality, and (iv) how can the areas geographically be delimited. In the Cauca and Nariño growing area case study the results show that coffee domains can statistically be distinguished by their predominant environment and the produced beverage quality, and subsequently be delimited by means of spatial modelling.

Keywords: Coffee, Colombia, denomination of origin, geographical indication