

# How acceptable are climate change adaptation measures to consumers?

*Results of two focus groups conducted in  
May 2024 within the ADAOPT project*

**ADAOPT**

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# Cheese Geographical Indication (GI) sectors face growing challenges, including climate change



Foundations of PDOs and PGIs (*Protected Designations of Origin and Protected Geographical Indications*)

A strong link to the land  
“terroir”

A collective  
organization

A set of specifications

Optimized use of the region's  
natural resources

Feed criteria: type of feed,  
self-sufficiency

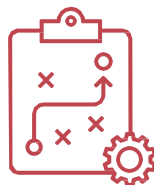
**AD AoPT**

Support six dairy PDO and PGI  
sectors in drawing up and  
monitoring their climate change  
adaptation strategies.

Requests for **temporary  
changes** to specifications

(26 requests for exemption during the  
drought in 2022)

**INCREASINGLY  
FREQUENT CLIMATIC  
HAZARDS**



# Focus group objectives and recruitment

## Why consult consumers?

- Understand their knowledge of the impact of climate change on PDOs and PGIs
- Test their acceptance of certain adaptation practices that we had identified in the project

### One « urban » focus group



City of Lyon



7



A weekday evening



Idele Lab database

### One « suburban » focus group



City of Savigny , on the outskirts of Lyon



8



A weekday evening



Gymnastics associations and the mayor

Compensation €20 per person



# Methodology: a two-hour qualitative group survey to gather consumer opinions

Awareness and discussions about their perceptions of livestock farming, livestock farmers and the consequences of climate change on livestock farming.



Cheese: representations, locations and purchasing criteria. Knowledge of PDOs.



Expression on images (created by AI) representing ways of adapting to climate change in small and large groups



Game involving the purchase of different cheeses through auctions – willingness to pay



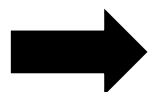
# Methodology: a variety of solutions to adapt to CC tested with consumers



- **Purchase of fodder outside the PDO territory**
- **Introduction of new fodder into animal feed**
- **Return of cheese to shelves after summer stock shortages**
- **Water retention facilities**
- **Installation of solar panels to provide shade for animals**
- **No grazing in summer, grazing in winter**



*Expression on images generated by Artificial Intelligence*



*Levers selected based on stakeholder discussions, with an attention to facilitate consumer expression.*

*These solutions have not been validated by the Cheese Protection Consortia.*



# Photos and practices discussed: “*exotic*” forages



**Caption:** This image shows sorghum. It is a plant that is more resistant to drought than most plants historically cultivated in France. It can be used for animal feed.

**Positive** reviews for both groups :  
*Comprehensive, curious, rewarding the efforts*

## City

*‘It could enable farmers **to work more calmly** in the face of climate change.’*

*‘Regardless of the impact of sorghum on cheese quality, **cows need to be able to eat.***

*‘I would be **curious to taste it** and see if it has an impact.’*

## Outskirts

*‘**Agriculture has to adapt.***

*‘We see people **taking action, experimenting.** It’s encouraging.’*

*‘You have to put yourself in the shoes of a farmer who has to feed his animals.’*

# Photos and practices discussed: *out-of-area fodder*



**Caption:** In this image, a truck is bringing in fodder from another region because there is no longer enough grass to feed the animals in the region (due to drought).

**Mixed** opinions on both groups:  
*OK in the short term but not a solution in the long term*

## City

*'Driven by the reality of climate change, yes, we have to do something! But **I think it's a shame...**'*

*'On the one hand, we have a truck bringing in hay and polluting the environment, it becomes a **vicious circle**.'*

*'It's a **very short-term solution**; we have to find a way to do without it.'*

## Outskirts

*'It would be better if they could feed their animals locally.'*

*'It seems **logical if the animals don't have to eat**.'*

*'It's **not a remedy** that can change things.'*

*'The **carbon footprint** must not be good.'*

# Photos and practices discussed: *reversed seasons*



**Caption:** In these images, we see:

- Animals inside a building in the middle of summer, because it is too hot to leave them outside. There is no more grass to eat in the meadows.
- Animals outside in the middle of winter, under the snow. The animals have enough to eat.

## Mixed opinions on both groups: *suggesting alternative propositions*

### City: comprehensive but not in favor

*'They choose **the shed to have some shade**, because it's a heatwave.'*

They suggest giving the animals a choice with **access to the barn as needed**.

They suggest **adding trees** to the fields to provide *'shade that may be cooler than the barn.'*

*'The CC is more in favor of letting them out in winter and bringing them in during summer.'*

### Outskirts: why not in winter, but mixed for summer

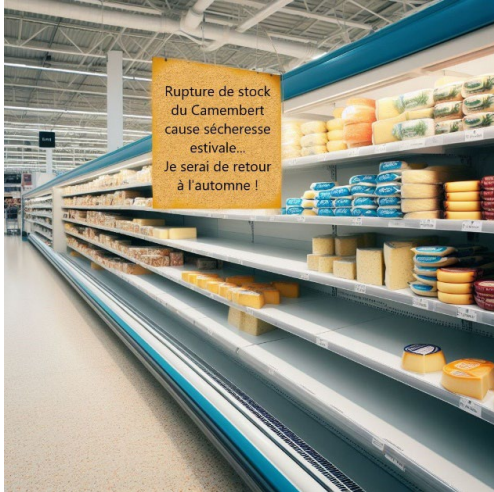
*'Acceptable if periods in the building are **alternated with periods in more spacious areas**'*

*'Even if the period when the animals are let out is longer, it is still winter. But with less cold winters it will be less of a problem.'*

They suggested to **'Plant trees** so that the grass does not dry out and to have green grass in summer, rather than hay.'



# Photos and practices discussed: *seasonal break*



**Caption:** In this image, there is no more Camembert de Normandie in the supermarket shelf, because the drought is too severe and farmers have been unable to produce it.

**Positive** reviews for both groups:  
*Logical, natural, seasonality*

## City

*'It's sad.'*

*'I'll come back to the product later.'*

This **seasonality** seems **'logical'** to them.

*'You get used to everything.'*

*'It can be a pleasure, a **seasonal product!**'*

## Outskirts

*'It is up to the consumer to adapt'*

*'I'll come back to that.'*

In terms of animal welfare: *'The animals are **treated better**; it's more in tune with their rhythm.'*

*'**Better than cheese made on the other side of the world.**'*

# Willingness to pay (WTP) varies depending on adaptation levers



Starting price 2€10

City

Outskirts



Purchase of fodder outside the PDO territory in case of drought

3 purchase refusal

**WTP - - -**

*'It's no longer PDO, we're downgrading the product.'*

2 purchase refusal

**WTP - -**

Consumers feel that they are losing out on quality compared to what an PDO promises.



Keep the animals indoors in summer (with hay) and let them outside in winter.

2 purchase refusal

**WTP - -**

*'It must be stressful for them.'*

5 purchase refusal

**WTP - - - - -**

A proposal that does not satisfy half of consumers, who do not want to buy the product.



Providing more exotic fodder that has not historically been cultivated in the region

**WTP +++**

1 purchase refusal

**WTP +**

Proposal that may justify an increase in the price of cheese



Cheeses are produced seasonally, so they are not available on the shelves at certain times of the year.

**WTP +++**

**WTP ++++**

*'the most reasonable and rational'*

This proposal would best justify an increase in the price of cheese for consumers in both cities. They are even willing to pay more to see their cheese back on the shelves.

## Conclusion:

Adaptation measures are more or less accepted, depending on the people and locations involved.

- The practices that are most acceptable to consumers are not necessarily the easiest to implement.
- Biases to keep in mind:
  - Small groups, which illustrate a diversity of opinions but are not statistically representative.
  - The use of AI to generate photos has made some levers unrealistic from a visual point of view.
  - A limited number of practices, the economic and technical consequences of which are difficult to assess.



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