Polish meat products - tradition and modernity

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Abstract. The production and promotion of high-quality traditional food are playing an important role in the European Union. One of the main indications of the production quality is the awarding of signs confirming the quality of the traditional products. Meat and meat products play an important role in preserving the tradition. They are produced according to traditional recipes, passed down from generation to generation, and their preparation uses products typical of the region, from local crops and breeding. Thanks to this, they gain specific taste values, unheard of in other parts of the country.

1. Introduction
Consumers in Poland are increasingly looking for natural products that are minimally processed. However, modern processing methods are most often used to ensure maximum shelf life and food safety. In recent years, the interest in traditional food has increased significantly. This may be due to the fact that the high quality of traditional products is the result of the use of natural raw materials and additives, relatively short, uncomplicated production methods and immediate distribution. The growing interest in traditional food means that increasing numbers of consumers choose traditional products, assuming that 'traditional' is synonymous with 'high-quality'. An important place in Polish regional culture is held by meat and meat products, which for most people have always been something special. Polish cold cuts, sausages, hams, and smoked meats provide an inexhaustible range of highly valued flavors and aromas. Depending on the culinary regions, these products are prepared in different ways. Using various culinary techniques, the method of serving makes each product really special. It all adds up to the uniqueness of the culinary traditions of a given region.

2. Traditional and regional products in Poland
Food referred to as traditional covers different categories of food products that are characterized by specific characteristics of the raw materials, processing methods and place of origin. However, according to the definition adopted by the European Commission, this term refers to food that is on the market for a period indicating its transmission from generation to generation. This period should correspond to the time usually assigned to one generation, at least 25 years [1,2]. In order for a given product to be described as such, it should have specific features that distinguish it from other similar products within the same category in terms of 'traditional ingredients' from which it was made, 'traditional taste' and 'traditional production or processing methods' [1,3].
The changes that have taken place in the public awareness over the years have also caused significant changes in the lifestyle and attitudes of modern consumers. Currently, easy access to food is no longer enough, but the quality, variety and attractiveness of the food products on offer are starting to play an increasingly important role [5,6]. The choice of certain foods is also influenced by cultural heritage. Despite the widespread access to food from various exotic parts of the world, or resulting from the use of advanced technology in its production, traditional food and patterns of its consumption are still used to meet various needs, including mental and social needs [7,8]. The growing interest in traditional food is also related to the desire to preserve and display the values of cultural heritage. In Poland this food is perceived by consumers as extremely tasty and high quality [1,7,9].

An important place in Polish regional cuisine is held by meat, which has always been something special for most people. Meat products, especially highly processed and consumed in excess, can have an adverse effect on human health and well-being. However, it is a very important part of the diet, so meat should not be eliminated from it. Therefore, traditional food, the production of which is based on simple ingredients and natural technology, is an ideal solution. Polish cuisine is divided into several culinary regions. In many of them, similar raw materials are used for the production of food, but the specificity of the regional cuisine lies in the unique method of combining raw materials, the use of specific culinary techniques, and the method of serving or naming. It all adds up to the uniqueness of the culinary traditions of a given region.

2.1. Kindziuk or skilandis - Traditional specialty from eastern Poland

Kindziuk is a very tasty and durable product from Podlasie in the eastern part of Poland (Figure 2), and thanks to the addition of salt, it can hang in a cool place, even in hot weather. This meat is an example of how to manage keeping the product fresh without the preservatives and chemicals that are used nowadays. The history of its creation is related to the need to provide food for the harvest season in a time when refrigerators were not known. Meat and cold cuts were prepared in winter, so that they were ready for the time of intensive work in the field (spring and summer). The meat of the ham, sirloin and shoulder blades was cut into 1-3 cm pieces, salted and seasoned abundantly with garlic and pepper, then firmly stuffed into a cleaned pork stomach and sewn up. They were hung for a short time in a warm place by the stove to be dried, and then taken to the attic, where, in an airy place, the kindziuk dried. Sometimes it was smoked. Kindziuk cut into smaller pieces, served with home-made bread and...
butter is considered a delicacy. In summer, kindziuk can be used to cook very tasty borscht and sour soups with a specific aroma [10].

The modern method of making kindziuk resembles the traditional one, except that today it is more often made in a pork bladder than in the stomach. Thanks to this, the products have smaller size. Also nowadays, more spices are added to cure the meat (e.g. allspice, coriander, mustard) [11].

2.2. Bilgorajska sausage

Bilgorajska sausage is produced in family farms using local, traditional recipes passed down from generation to generation. From the 60-70s the recipe, composition of raw materials, production and smoking methods have never been changed [12].

Bilgorajska sausage consists mainly of crushed meat and fat as raw materials. The natural casing sticks tightly to the stuffing, is brown to dark brown and evenly wrinkled. Jelly and looser binding of meat raw materials is allowed. It is a crispy and brittle sausage. It has the taste and smell characteristic of pork, and smoked and roasted sausages. The aroma of smoking is strongly felt in a traditional smokehouse with the use of alder wood and spices, especially garlic. Bilgorajska sausage is based on raw materials obtained exclusively in the region (Figure 3), from the ecologically clean areas of Roztocze. These are: pork livestock, garlic and alder wood for smoking [13]. Throughout the production process, the most important factor influencing the quality of the final product is the quality of the meat and spices. The raw materials prepared after cutting are mixed, and cooked pork skins are also added. In winter and spring, about 10% more garlic is given due to the loss of aroma during storage. Alder wood is also an important factor, which gives a specific flavor and aroma bouquet. Thermal treatment consists of smoking with hot smoke in a special smokehouse made of burnt bricks fired with alder wood. The smoking process takes about 4-6 hours, then the sausage is air cooled [14].

2.3. Salceson polski from the Karkonosze Region

This product entered the list of traditional meat products in 2019 and it comes from the Dolny Śląsk part of Poland (Figure 4). To prepare salceson, pork stomachs or beef bladders are filled with a stuffing made of pork head meat, tongues, hearts, and meat made of pork knuckle with jelly. The spices used to make it are mainly salt, cumin and black pepper. The meats are cured in brine with bay leaf, allspice, garlic and pepper. Then, the stomachs are tied at the ends with yarn, boiled, placed on nets, and pressed with a heavy object in order to obtain the characteristic kidney-shape. Salceson contains clear, amber-colored jelly. The cross-section shows pieces of meat, masks, heads and offal. In consistency, the product is compact, resilient and slightly greasy. In taste, there is noticeable garlic, marjoram, pepper and cumin and its aroma is typical of cured meat and offal [15].
3. Conclusions
The production, protection and promotion of high-quality food plays an increasingly important role in the European Union countries. One of the basic methods of implementing the quality policy in the Community is the implementation of the Strategy for the Identification and Promotion of Traditional Products. The benefit of promoting regional products is to show consumers and producers how rich various regions of Poland are in terms of traditional food production and cultural heritage.

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