



# Slippery character gets recognition!

By Gary Johnston

Northern Ireland has notched up its first granted Protected Geographical Indication (PGI). The unlikely product for this prestigious grant is the Lough Neagh eel! Mirroring the eel's own arduous and epic journey, the three year application to the EU finally matured to grant on 8th September 2011.



A PGI grant provides legal protection against imitation throughout the EU and recognises the regional importance of the Lough Neagh eels which are harvested and produced using traditional and sustainable methods. Interestingly, the vast majority of the 400 tonnes fished every year are exported from Northern Ireland and find their way to many EU destinations where they are served alongside such bedfellows as Parma ham, champagne and Roquefort cheese. Closer to home companions include Arbroath Smokies, Cornish Sardines and Whitstable Oysters.

Waiting in the wings for PGI status for Northern Ireland are Armagh Bramley apples and Comber potatoes.