Understanding milk: cheesemakers in the Altopiano of Asiago

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Altopiano di Asiago = Site of Community Importance and Special Protection Area

No plans, projects or action must impact negatively on the fauna and flora.
Only 10% of the area is urbanised.
90% of the green area is collectively owned.

878 km²
CHEESELEADERS

The research will analyze:

- the modes of operation of pastures
- the management of herds
- milk processing
- the marketing of the final product
“core of this work”

international campaign for the collection of oral histories and visual documents of all the “bearers of knowledge” in this field
What oral histories provide is:

→ recollection about self
→ about relationships with others and with the environment
… insights rarely provided in such depth by other methods.
“common trans-nationally shared Alpine production identity”
OH approaches have considerable potential for how we interpret and manage:

- environmental heritage
- traditions
- crafts
- life practices
- tangible and intangible cultural heritage

“Environmental consciousness”
“We haven't had any specific education we’ve just done what we were taught to do, first my mother from my father, then me from my mother. Then I did some courses to get up-to-date a little. Most of what I know I've learnt on the job.”
We are not looking for truth
We want to understand
They are representing themselves and their production
We are interested in the way they decide to represent their activities
What they decide to say and what they decide to hide

Thanks to video we can also understand what they want us to see
“Do you see, because it was a little more acidic it has thickened sooner, the other day it took half an hour to get it like this. Can you see how it's breaking up? See, my finger is clean, before it wasn't. Now we need to wait a little longer and then we can cut it.”
“Narrating Environment Narrating Food”

OH have the ability to engage the public, not just in term of the popular consumption of environment knowledge, but also in the actual construction of environmental knowledge.
Final products:
Cheese and diaries

Alps’ Pastures
Alps’ Water
Alps’ Herds
Alps’ air
Traditions
Life practices
“Understanding milk”

Cheesemakers ‘understand’ milk

What does it means?

Let’s try to understand it from the cheesemakers’ voices…..