

Italy will start using blockchain technology for Sicilian red oranges

The Italian Ministry of Agriculture has announced that it would use blockchain technology –a complex digital verification method that also facilitates the use of crypto currencies like Bitcoin-- to assure that the all blood-red Sicilian oranges sold abroad as such are the real things.

The oranges, which have an orange-color skin and deep red flesh inside the fruit, have a protected geographical status in Italy, similar to certain high-end cheese and wines. The oranges are exported to dozens of countries around the world. The majority of blood-red oranges are grown in Italy, but they are not unique to the country, according to Elena Albertini, vice-president of the Sicilian red orange protection consortium.

"There's a unique characteristic to the Sicilian red oranges, which have a special balance between sweetness and acidity," Albertini told Xinhua. "There's a risk that other oranges grown elsewhere, which have the red flesh but a different overall taste and quality, could be sold internationally as if they were the authentic Sicilian product."

Blockchain would help guard against that. Each package of the products, which range in size from 500 grams to 5 kilograms or more would include a special blockchain "tag" that will record every step of the package's passage from farm to market.

"Soon, we will know where the oranges are at any point on the supply chain," Albertini said.

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