

Publication of an application pursuant to Article 50(2)(a) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs

(2016/C 185/06)

This publication confers the right to oppose the application pursuant to Article 51 of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽¹⁾.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

‘PAŠKA JANJETINA’

EU No: HR-PDO-0005-01347 — 19.6.2015

PDO (X) PGI ()

1. Name(s)

‘Paška janjetina’

2. Member State or Third Country

Croatia

3. Description of the agricultural product or foodstuff

3.1. Type of product

Class 1.1. Fresh meat (and offal)

3.2. Description of product to which the name in (1) applies

‘Paška janjetina’ (Pag lamb meat) is a fresh meat obtained from the slaughter of young male and female suckling lambs born on the island of Pag of an autochthonous Croatian breed of sheep of the same name — ‘Paška ovca’ (Pag sheep) — bred solely on the island of Pag.

The young, lightweight lambs slaughtered to produce ‘Paška janjetina’ must be no more than 45 days old (calculated from the date of lambing to the date of slaughter) at the time of slaughter and have been kept with the sheep on the pasture and fed solely on sheep’s milk until they are slaughtered.

The carcass of lambs used to produce ‘Paška janjetina’ belongs to the category of carcasses weighing up to 13 kg. It may be up to 62 cm long and weigh between 4 kg and 10 kg; their meat is pale pink, with a fine, soft muscle fibre streaked with fat, a small amount of fatty and connective tissue, and no distinctive odour of lamb meat (mutton).

The fatty tissue of Pag lambs used to produce ‘Paška janjetina’ (subcutaneous and abdominal) must be white in colour, without any yellowish or yellow tinges. The carcass of slaughtered lambs is covered with a very thin, almost transparent layer of subcutaneous fatty tissue.

‘Paška janjetina’ is placed on the market only when fresh, in the form of a carcass or half-carcass (obtained by separating the carcass along the line of separation, which runs through the middle of each vertebra and the head and through the middle of the sacrum, sternum and pelvic bones), without the organs of the digestive system, the spleen, skin or lower parts of the leg. At the same time, the head and kidneys with the kidney tallow, the lungs with the larynx and heart, and the liver, form integral parts of the carcass.

‘Paška janjetina’ is eaten in cooked form only. Its meat is particularly succulent and soft, with a pleasant taste and a faint odour as a result of the slaughter of young lambs fed on milk.

3.3. Feed (for products of animal origin only) and raw materials (for processed products only)

Before slaughter, lambs used to produce ‘Paška janjetina’ are fed solely on sheep’s milk.

3.4. Specific steps in production that must take place in the identified geographical area

All stages in the production of ‘Paška janjetina’ must take place in the geographical area referred to in point 4.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 343, 14.12.2012, p. 1.

The production process consists of:

1. The breeding of Pag sheep
2. The mating and lambing of Pag sheep
3. The breeding of Pag lambs
4. The slaughter of Pag lambs

3.5. *Specific rules concerning slicing, grating, packaging, etc. of the product the registered name refers to*

'Paška janjetina' is placed on the market fresh, in the form of half-carasses or whole skinned carcasses with the head, without the lower parts of the leg, and with the offal or organs of the thoracic and abdominal cavities (the liver, the lungs with the larynx and heart, and the kidneys with the kidney suet). When placed on the market, 'Paška janjetina' must be wrapped in a transparent, self-adhesive plastic film.

'Paška janjetina' is packaged, i.e. wrapped in plastic film, after slaughter in slaughterhouses on the island of Pag, before the product is placed on the market, to ensure the meat remains fresh and retains its quality and above all hygiene. Packaging 'Paška janjetina' in slaughterhouses after slaughtering prevents the meat from coming into contact with some of the sources of microbial contamination while it is being handled or transported. Also, wrapping 'Paška janjetina' in plastic film in the slaughterhouses where the lambs are slaughtered prevents fresh meat from coming into contact with the air, which could break down the proteins in the meat and cause mucus to form on the surface of the meat and create unpleasant smells.

3.6. *Specific rules concerning labelling of the product the registered name refers to*

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4. **Concise definition of the geographical area**

'Paška janjetina' is produced throughout the island of Pag. The coastline of the island of Pag marks the limit of the geographical area of production. The island of Pag lies between the Velebit and Kvarner Channels and between the islands of Rab, Olib and Vir.

5. **Link with the geographical area**

Specificity of the product

'Paška janjetina' is a meat obtained from young, lightweight Pag lambs fed exclusively on sheep's milk. According to the established average colour values L*, a* and b*, measured using an internationally recognised method, the meat of Pag lambs is classified as pale pink. Slaughtering Pag lambs at an early age results in the specific carcass indicators of lambs of Pag sheep (Mioč, B., Vnućec, I., 2010: *Paška janjetina, Dani paške ovce i paškog sira* ('Paška janjetina', Pag sheep and Pag cheese days), proceedings).

A comparison of the chemical composition of the muscle tissue of the lambs of Pag sheep, the Dalmatian Pramenka breed and Istrian sheep reveals marked differences in the proportion of fat (Pag lambs having by far the highest proportion), the protein content in dry matter (Pag lambs having the lowest content) and fat in dry matter (Pag lambs having the highest proportion) (Vnućec, I. (2011): *Odlike trupa i kakvoća mesa janjadi iz različitih sustava uzgoja* (Carcass features and the quality of meat of lambs from different breeding systems), doctoral thesis, Faculty of Agriculture, Zagreb).

'Paška janjetina' is special on account of the age-old practice among the shepherds of Pag of not separating the lambs from the sheep after lambing and of slaughtering suckling lambs. That is how the lamb's meat is produced. 'Paška janjetina' does not have a specific odour, since the meat is from very young suckling lambs, unlike the meat of older lambs (Barać et al., 2008: *Paška ovca — hrvatska izvorna pasmina* (Pag sheep — a Croatian autochthonous breed), Novalja).

In contrast to the traditions on the island of Pag, where very young, lightweight lambs are slaughtered to make way for milk and cheese production, in neighbouring regions with similar Mediterranean conditions (e.g. on the island of Cres or the Istrian peninsula) lambs with a greater average body weight (approx. 20 kg) are slaughtered mostly to produce meat, i.e. lambs with a carcass weight of approximately 12 kg, for roasting on a spit.

The first written records of Pag lambs and their meat date far back in history. As early as 1554, the historian Sabollico noted that Pag lambs were the tastiest in the whole of Ilyria (Karavanić, B., 2006: *Građa za povijest grada i otoka Paga* (Historical account of the town and island of Pag), Cathedral Chapter of St Anastasia).

'Paška janjetina' is the name that has always been used, as evidenced by numerous historical records, and the same name is used to this day in everyday speech and in trade (Evidence of the use of the name in everyday speech and in trade).

The marketing of 'Paška janjetina' is highly seasonal, since the sheep used to produce it mostly mate between June and October, usually through planned mating, so that lambing lasts from November to March, with most lambing occurring in January.

Specificity of the geographical area

Natural factors

The island of Pag has a predominantly Mediterranean climate, with warm, dry summers and somewhat colder winters. One of Pag's particular features is its karst pastures stripped bare by the Bora wind and criss-crossed by dry-stone walls. Such a landscape is unique in Croatia; no other Croatian island is affected by the Bora to such an extent, making Pag the 'most barren' island in the Croatian Adriatic. Most of the island consists of rocky pastures of asphodel-chrysopogon, the bioproduction of which forms the basis of the island's sheep breeding, as well as rocks of feather grass and medicinal sage, plant varieties adapted to drought. Over 300 plant species grow on the rocky pastures of the island of Pag on which Pag sheep graze. Most of these species belong to the Mediterranean floral element.

Thanks to the conical shape of their head and the agility of their jaw and lips, Pag sheep can reach blades of grass in between and under stones, in the stones and in bushes, and thus survive and withstand the harshest conditions.

The soil on Pag can be roughly divided into two groups: anthropogenic soils (all arable land) and pasture/meadow/forest soils (poorly developed soils that comprise limey/Dolomite dark soil and rocks, shallow brown soils and terra rossa) on which Pag sheep graze.

The Bora is the dominant wind on the island of Pag, frequently reaching gale force, collecting drops of water from the sea and depositing them all over the island, causing a 'salt sediment' to form, which greatly increases the concentration of salt in the soil and vegetation.

Human factors

The inhabitants of the island of Pag have engaged in agriculture since ancient times. An old folk song testifies to the fact that Pag has long been synonymous with lamb's meat: 'Oh, Pag, our pride and joy, what great abundance you bestow on us. Enough cheese, wine and lamb to last for many years'.

Each region of Croatia has a different sheep-breeding tradition, depending on the intended use of the produce and the well-established habits of consumers. The age and weight of lambs when slaughtered to produce 'Paška janjetina' are the result of the tradition of sheep-breeding on the island of Pag, where very young lambs (up to 45 days old) are slaughtered to obtain light carcasses (weighing up to 10 kg). The main reason for slaughtering young, lightweight lambs is that the milking process begins as early as possible, and to take advantage of the peak of lactation to produce the milk to be processed into Pag cheese.

Causal link between the geographical area and the product

'Paška janjetina' is named after the region in which Pag sheep are bred: the island of Pag.

In line with sheep-breeding tradition, the sheep bred on the island of Pag are mainly intended for the production of milk to produce Pag cheese, to which all the breeding techniques have been adapted, and breeders earn most of their income from the sale of sheep's milk. For that reason, in contrast to other, neighbouring regions, the lambs slaughtered on the island of Pag are very young, lightweight lambs fed on sheep's milk, which gives the meat of 'Paška janjetina' its pale-pink colour. The strong link between 'Paška janjetina' and the geographical area is the result of tradition and a confluence of circumstances. Pag sheep are the autochthonous breed of the island of Pag and are bred solely on the island of Pag. From birth to slaughter, the lambs are kept with the sheep at all times to ensure they suckle. The lambs are slaughtered when they are no more than 45 days old, in approved slaughterhouses on the island of Pag, to prevent the young lambs from becoming stressed and possibly dying while being transported to other areas. Research has shown that the carcass features and quality of meat of Pag lambs differ from those of lambs of similar breeds, thanks mainly to the early slaughter of suckling lambs, which is the result of the sheep-breeding tradition of the island of Pag. The high fat content in the muscle tissue of Pag lambs can be attributed to the breed, as well as the fact that the lambs feed on Pag sheep's milk, which, due to its high fat content, is extremely rich in energy.

Due to the mild Mediterranean climate, Pag sheep and their lambs spend their life outdoors. Keeping the sheep and lambs outdoors day and night, in the Bora wind and the sunshine, in unpolluted pastures and fresh sea air, also affects the quality of the meat, distinguishing it from the meat of lambs on the mainland. The floral composition of the pastures of the island of Pag is reflected in the quality of Pag sheep's milk and in the meat of Pag lambs fed on sheep's milk (scientific work, Ljubičić, I. et al., 2012, *Florni sastav ovčarskih pašnjaka otoka Paga* (Floral composition of the sheep pastures of the island of Pag)). Thanks to the island's specific agroclimatic conditions, the particularities and diversity of its vegetation and its many varieties of aromatic and medicinal plants, 'Paška janjetina' has a distinct, specifically 'Mediterranean' taste. The high concentration of salt in the soil and frequent 'salt sediments' directly affect the structure and quality of the vegetation, which in turn affects the quality of Pag sheep's milk and of the meat of 'Paška janjetina' (Mioč et al., 2011, *Program uzgoja ovaca u Republici Hrvatskoj* (Programme of sheep breeding in Croatia), Zagreb).

Reference to publication of the specification

(the second subparagraph of Article 6(1) of this Regulation)

<http://www.mps.hr/UserDocsImages/HRANA/PASKA%20JANJETINA/Specifikacija%20Paška%20janjetina0001.pdf>
