

OTHER ACTS

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Publication of an application for approval of a minor amendment in accordance with the second subparagraph of Article 53(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs

(2017/C 286/08)

The European Commission has approved this minor amendment in accordance with the third subparagraph of Article 6(2) of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 664/2014 ⁽¹⁾.

APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF A MINOR AMENDMENT

Application for approval of a minor amendment in accordance with the second subparagraph of Article 53(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽²⁾**'MONTASIO'****EU No: PDO-IT-02251 — 21.12.2016****PDO (X) PGI () TSG ()****1. Applicant group and legitimate interest**

Consorzio per la Tutela del Formaggio Montasio
Vicolo Resia, 1/2
33033 Codroipo (UD)
ITALIA

Tel. +39 0432912052
E-mail: info@formaggiomontasio.net

The consortium for the protection of Montasio cheese is formed by producers of 'Parmigiano Reggiano' cheese. It is authorised to submit an amendment application under Article 13(1) of Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policy Decree No 12511 of 14 October 2013.

2. Member State or Third Country

Italy

3. Heading in the product specification affected by the amendment(s)

- Product description
- Proof of origin
- Method of production
- Link
- Labelling
- Other [to be specified]

4. Type of amendment(s)

- Amendment to the product specification of a registered PDO or PGI to be qualified as minor in accordance with the third subparagraph of Article 53(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012, that requires no amendment to the published single document.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 179, 19.6.2014, p. 17.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 343, 14.12.2012, p. 1.

- Amendment to the product specification of a registered PDO or PGI to be qualified as minor in accordance with the third subparagraph of Article 53(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012, that requires an amendment to the published single document.
- Amendment to the product specification of a registered PDO or PGI to be qualified as minor in accordance with the third subparagraph of Article 53(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012, for which a single document (or equivalent) has not been published.
- Amendment to the product specification of a registered TSG to be qualified as minor in accordance with the fourth subparagraph of Article 53(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012.

5. Amendment(s)

Product description

The parameters relating to the weight and diameter of the cheese have been slightly amended.

Current wording:

‘weight: 6-8 kg;

diameter: 30-35 cm;’

Amended text:

‘weight: 5,5-8 kg;

diameter: 27-35 cm;’

The moulds used in the production of ‘Montasio’ cheese have a diameter of 30 to 35 cm; they have been used since the consortium was set up in 1986. In all these years the maximum mould size has always been used and the weight and diameter of the cheese after 60 days of maturation as indicated in the product specification are consistent with this use. In the event that the minimum mould size of 30 cm is used, the diameter of the cheese is necessarily less than 30 cm, given that ‘Montasio’ decreases in weight by approximately 15 % between 24 hours after production and 60 days of maturation, and its weight, which is approximately 6,5 kg when produced, is less than 6 kg following the weight loss.

Cheeses produced using the minimum mould size satisfy the needs of direct buyers on the one hand, who appreciate the smaller cheeses, and large retailers on the other, given that the cheeses better meet their requirements for pre-packaged products.

This amendment is to be considered as minor since the change in the parameters, as set out above, does not affect subsequent stages of processing, maturing or, in particular, the characteristics of the finished product, which remain as set out in the specification.

Method of production

The paragraph relating to the quality of the cows’ feed has been slightly reworded.

Current wording: ‘Feed which traditional cheesemakers regard as adversely affecting cheese production is banned, such as fodder from marshy land or located beside busy roads. Also not authorised are vegetables, fruit and rape, or the by-products of processing rice, meal of animal origin, industrial feed for medical use, moist or silaged fresh beet pulp, by-products of beer or of distilled products, silage (except hay and maize silage) and fermented substances from the industrial processing of fruit, beet, beer and distilled products.’

Amended text: ‘Industrial feed for medical use and meal of animal origin are banned both as such and as ingredients in other feed. The following foods may not be used fresh: vegetables, fruit, rape, by-products of processing rice, beet pulp and by-products of the processing of beer, of fruit and of distillates in general. The use of hay, maize and cereal silage is allowed.’

The intention here was to clearly and unambiguously highlight the fact that industrial feed for medical use and meal of animal origin are prohibited in any form of use. It has been specified that the fermentable fresh by-products from the processing of vegetables, fruit, etc. may not be used as they are.

The use of silage has been extended to include cereals; this product is replacing the traditional maize silage, as it is less subject to aflatoxin contamination, and thus represents a healthier food for the cattle and for milk production. The general reference to feed which inhibits cheese production has also been removed, as this definition is considered inconsistent with the specification and a careful assessment of new developments in the sector is considered more useful for identifying and assessing any changes in the cattle’s diet.

It should be noted that the amendments described above do not alter the quality of the milk used to make 'Montasio' and are therefore to be considered as minor.

The third last paragraph of Article 5(11) of the specification has been slightly amended in order to make it clearer and less open to interpretation.

Current wording: "Montasio" cheese may be marketed whole or in portions after a minimum maturing period of 60 days.'

Amended text: "Montasio" cheese is released for consumption after a minimum maturing period of 60 days. "Montasio" cheese may be pre-packaged, pre-portioned etc. after a minimum maturing period of 60 days.'

The intention here was to clarify that the 'marketing of "Montasio" cheese' means marketing directly to the consumer and not to other entities earlier in the supply chain of cheese 'suitable for becoming Montasio'.

In addition, it was also considered important to make clear that pre-packaging, portioning, cutting into cubes, grating etc. are carried out only on 'Montasio' cheese that has completed its minimum maturation period of 60 days.

The final paragraph of Article 5(11) of the product specification relating to the grated product has been deleted.

Current wording:

"Montasio" PDO cheese is used for grating after at least 12 months of maturing and when the cheese appears crumbly, straw yellow in colour and with a few, tiny eyes'.

It has been decided to remove this limitation on how to use 'Montasio', which is now out of date and which was clearly aimed at informing consumers, as consumers should be free to decide how to consume and use the product, and also considering the fact that tastes and habits have changed in recent years.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

'MONTASIO'

EU No: PDO-IT-02251 — 21.12.2016

PDO (X) PGI ()

1. **Name**

'Montasio'

2. **Member State or Third Country**

Italy

3. **Description of the agricultural product or foodstuff**

3.1. *Type of product*

Class 1.3. Cheeses

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

'Montasio' is a cheese made from cow's milk, with medium or long maturing, cylindrical in shape, with a straight or almost straight heel and flat or slightly convex sides. 'Montasio' cheese is made from unpasteurised milk using only natural lactic bacteria or authorised starter cultures; it must be matured for at least 60 days and the moisture content is checked on the basis of samples after 10 and after 60 days of maturing. After 60 days of maturing, cheese bearing the PDO 'Montasio' must have the following characteristics: a maximum moisture content of no more than 36,72 %; fat content over dry matter: minimum 40 %; weight: 5,5-8 kg; diameter: 27 to 35 cm; heel: maximum 8 cm; rind: smooth, regular and elastic; consistency: compact with some eye-holes; colour: natural, slightly straw-coloured; aroma: distinctive; taste: agreeable, tending towards spicy in the case of long-matured 'Montasio'.

'Montasio' cheese may be released for consumption after a minimum maturing period of 60 days. 'Montasio' cheese may be pre-packaged, pre-portioned etc. after a minimum maturing period of 60 days. 'Montasio' cheese may be marketed as 'fresco' (young) after a minimum maturing period of 60 days, as 'mezzano' (semi-mature) after a minimum maturing period of 120 days, as 'stagionato' (mature) after a minimum maturing period of 10 months and as 'stravecchio' (extra mature) after a minimum maturing period of 18 months.

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

The PDO 'Montasio' is produced from milk from farms located in the production area. The main breeds reared in the geographical production area are Brown Swiss, Italian Red Pied and Black Pied, and their cross-breeds. No preservatives are added and no heat treatment is authorised, only cooling to a minimum temperature of 4 °C.

At least 60 % of the feed comes from the geographical area.

The cows' feed comprises at least 60 % raw cereals, dry and green fodder and silage. The remaining proportion may contain concentrates and/or protein cattle-cake.

Industrial feed for medical use and meal of animal origin are banned both as such and as ingredients in other feed.

The following foods may not be used fresh: vegetables, fruit, rape, by-products of processing rice, beet pulp and by-products of the processing of beer, of fruit and of distillates in general.

The use of hay, maize and cereal silage is permitted.

The use of mineral and vitamin supplements is authorised.

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

The whole production process (cattle rearing, milk production, coagulation, processing of the curds, forming, draining, salting and maturing of the cheese) must take place within the area indicated in point 4.

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

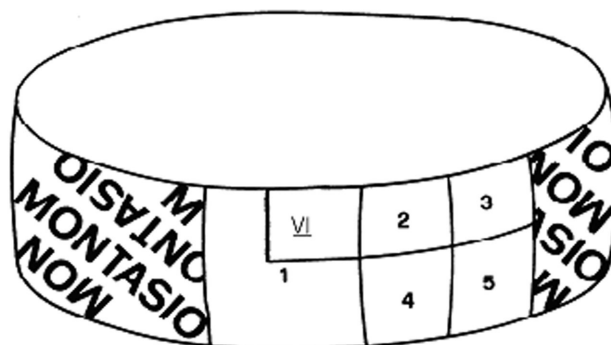
—

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

The product is identified by marking, at the outset, in a specific mould which states the producer's code, the provincial acronym and the production date (year, month, day). The 'Montasio' PDO origin mark consists of the word 'Montasio' printed diagonally the right way up and upside-down (see Figure 1).

This origin mark appears on all 'Montasio' cheese, whether or not the producers are members of the consortium, provided the product specification has been followed.

Figure 1



1) Hot-branding of the word 'Montasio' and label with the letters 'PDM' / 2) Month of production / 3) Day of production / 4) Cheesemaker's code / 5) Provincial acronym / VI) Year of production

The logo for the designation consists of a stylised capital 'M', below which appears the word 'MONTASIO'. This logo must always be reproduced using the 'HORATIO' font. It must comply with the proportions of Figure 2 (for example, 8 cm wide and 6 cm tall).

Figure 2



Where the entire production process, from production of the milk to the minimum 60-day maturation period, takes place in parts of the PDO production area that qualify as mountainous under the national legislation in force, the term 'prodotto della montagna' ('mountain product') may be used in the labelling. In these cases, a label with the letters 'PDM' (the acronym for 'prodotto della montagna') is printed on the heel of the cheese.

At the request of any producer (whether or not a member), the consortium may, after verification, hot-brand the PDO logo on the heel of 'Montasio' PDO cheese that has been matured for over 100 days (Figure 2).

4. Concise definition of the geographical area

The production area for 'Montasio' PDO cheese consists of: Friuli-Venezia Giulia — the whole region; Veneto — the whole of the provinces of Belluno and Treviso and part of the provinces of Padua and Venice, as follows: 'along the boundary of the province of Padua from where it intersects with that of the province of Treviso to the Serenissima motorway, continuing to the motorway bridge over the Brenta river and then along the river to its mouth'.

5. Link with the geographical area

The natural factors are those linked to the climate in the production area, which consists largely of mountains and foothills where pasture and mountain pasture are still practised, contributing in turn to the quality of the cows' fodder.

'Montasio' cheese appears in the price lists of San Daniele and Udine from 1773 and 1775, which shows that it was traded and thus produced not merely locally or for own consumption. The product's strong link with the production area is shown by the extent to which it has stimulated the growth of production cooperatives. 'Montasio' cheese and the particular technique for producing it spread quickly in Friuli and eastern Veneto, not only because of human factors and the equipment used (the new dairy cooperatives or the foundation of the cheese-making college), and by the 1960s there were more than 650 active dairies. This growth would not have been so steady, however, in a less conducive environment than that in which the technique originally spread.

As regards the characteristics of the production area, the eastern part of Italy is, and always has been, characterised by high rainfall in the spring and autumn, and this has nurtured the spread of the grassland and cereal (wheat and barley) cultivation that provide the cattle's basic diet. The development of maize as a crop and therefore its use in fresh feed and silage also gained in importance over time. In the past few years, the growing of soya as a protein supplement has also become a typical feature of the production area.

The main characteristic of 'Montasio' is its great suitability for medium- to long-term maturing. In the range of national cheeses, 'Montasio' is among the semi-hard cheeses, but as it can be matured for up to 36 months, it is also in the rare category of long-matured hard cheeses.

Another characteristic of 'Montasio' is its size.

Moreover, the 'Montasio' PDO product specification has retained the ban on pasteurising the milk, thereby preserving to the maximum extent possible the spontaneous bacterial load of the milk produced in the production area.

Small doses of lactic fermenting agents are used (about 1 %), cooking is done at low temperatures (between 42 and 48 °C) and the draining and pressing give the cheese a medium firmness, with a moisture content at 2 months (which corresponds to the minimum age for marketing the cheese) of about 36 %.

The environment in which 'Montasio' developed has microbiological characteristics adapted to its development and dissemination. The product is characterised by the presence of a thermophilic microbial flora which has always made it unique among cheeses in that it can be consumed fresh (nowadays after a minimum of 2 months as it is produced from non-pasteurised milk) but can also be matured for more than 36 months; this cheese therefore has organoleptic characteristics, firmness, flavours and aromas which vary over time, precisely thanks to the bacteria naturally present in the meadows/pastures and fodder of the production area.

In fact, at 2 months' maturity 'Montasio' is a medium-firm cheese with a delicate flavour reminiscent of the milk from which it is produced. As maturing is extended and substances concentrate, 'Montasio' acquires more marked and slightly spicy flavours and the cheese becomes firmer and crumblier.

With the improvement in animal husbandry, more efficient crop-growing and the introduction of increasingly hygienic milking methods, it was felt necessary to enrich the milk with micro-organisms useful for the production of 'Montasio'. Thus lactic acid starter cultures and selected fermenting agents (high in cocci and low in bacilli), from the milk in the production area, started to be used, a practice which subsequently became widespread.

Reference to publication of the specification

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

The consolidated text of the product specification is available on the internet: <http://www.politicheagricole.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/3335>

or alternatively:

by going directly to the homepage of the Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policy (www.politicheagricole.it) and clicking on 'Prodotti DOP e IGP' (at the top right-hand side of the screen), then on 'Prodotti DOP IGP STG' (on the left-hand side of the screen), and finally by clicking on 'Disciplinari di Produzione all'esame dell'UE'.
