

Publication of an amendment 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

(2014/C 468/03)

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⁾.

AMENDMENT APPLICATION

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006

on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs ⁽²⁾

AMENDMENT APPLICATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE 9

‘MAÇÃ DE ALCOBAÇA’

EC No: PT-PGI-0117-0261-7.12.2011

PGI (X) PDO ()

1. Headings in the product specification affected by the amendment

- Name of product
- Description of product
- Geographical area
- Proof of origin
- Method of production
- Link
- Labelling
- National requirements
- Other [to be specified]

2. Type of amendment(s)

- Amendment to Single Document or Summary Sheet
- Amendment to Specification of registered PDO or PGI for which neither the Single Document nor the Summary Sheet have been published
- Amendment to Specification that requires no amendment to the published Single Document (Article 9(3) of Regulation (EC) No 510/2006)
- Temporary amendment to Specification resulting from imposition of obligatory sanitary or phytosanitary measures by public authorities (Article 9(4) of Regulation (EC) No 510/2006)

3. Amendment(s)

3.1. Description of product

Amendments have been made to the list of groups of apple varieties covered by the PGI and it now includes the Pink group which, in the soil and climatic conditions described, produces fruit with the characteristics laid down for ‘Maçã de Alcobaça’.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 343, 14.12.2012, p. 1.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 93, 31.3.2006, p. 12. Replaced by Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012.

Like the other groups of varieties covered by the specification, apples of the Pink group grown in the defined geographical area also have a specific aroma and sweet-tart taste that distinguish them from other apples.

It is this balance which makes 'Maçã de Alcobaça', including the Pink group apples, crisper and juicier; this is due to the specific temperature and humidity conditions deriving from proximity to the sea and the natural barrier formed by the Aire-Candeeiros-Montejunto mountain system, which runs from north to south parallel to the coast.

The Pink group has other specific quality and organoleptic characteristics that may also be attributed to the particular environmental conditions found in the geographical area. These include very firm and crunchy flesh, a very distinctive deep pink colour, an intense aroma, conspicuous scattered lenticels on the epidermis and solid russeting in the stalk cavity.

The Pink group varieties have adapted well to the geographical area and produce a good yield.

In addition to whole, fresh fruit, and in view of new consumer requirements, the product may now be sold either whole, unpeeled or peeled, or in pieces, unpeeled or peeled. The peeling and cutting is done by physical means.

3.2. Geographical area

This has been extended to include the municipalities of Peniche, Lourinhã, Torres Vedras, Bombarral, Cadaval, Rio Maior, Marinha Grande, Batalha and Leiria, because:

- the soil and climatic conditions in the area historically known as the Coutos de Alcobaça are similar to those found in the area now defined and proposed,
- the orchards have the same characteristics as the existing ones,
- the apples produced have quality characteristics which meet the specific requirements laid down in the specification for 'Maçã de Alcobaça' — PGI.

The main chemical and organoleptic differences that distinguish 'Maçã de Alcobaça' derive from the specific environmental conditions found in the geographical area where it is grown, influenced by proximity to the sea and the natural barrier formed by the Aire-Candeeiros-Montejunto mountain system, which runs from north to south parallel to the coast.

The Aire, Candeeiros and Montejunto ranges form a clearly visible line of mountains, running roughly parallel to the coast, which separate the 'Maçã de Alcobaça' production area from all the neighbouring geographical areas.

The hydrology is also different, as virtually all the rivers and streams in the geographical area flow towards the sea. In the north they flow towards the Mondego river basin while in the east they flow towards the Tagus river basin.

As regards geology, the 'Maçã de Alcobaça' geographical area runs along a longitudinal fault line running north to south (which follows the summit line), where Jurassic formations predominate.

In no other region of Portugal do orography and the Atlantic influence combine to create an environment such as that found in the geographical area defined for 'Maçã de Alcobaça'.

Proximity to the sea, the mountain barrier, clouds, fog, morning mists, dewy nights, sunshine, humid air and soil combine in a unique way, both in relation to the country as a whole and in relation to the adjacent areas. It is the combination of all these factors and not just one or some of them, that produces 'Maçã de Alcobaça' PGI, whose distinctive characteristics are well known.

3.3. Labelling

Irrespective of the product's commercial presentation, the following must always appear on the labelling: the words Maçã de Alcobaça — IGP or Indicação Geográfica Protegida and the 'Maçã de Alcobaça' logo.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006

on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs ⁽³⁾

‘MAÇÃ DE ALCOBAÇA’

EC No: PT-PGI-0117-0261-7.12.2011

PGI (X) PDO ()

1. Name

‘Maçã de Alcobaça’

2. Member State or Third Country

Portugal

3. Description of the agricultural product or foodstuff

3.1. Type of product

Class 1.6. Fruit, vegetables and cereals, fresh or processed

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

Fruit of the Casa Nova, Golden Delicious, Red Delicious, Gala, Fuji, Granny Smith, Jonagold, Reineta and Pink groups which, when produced in the defined geographical area, are very firm and crunchy and have a high sugar and acid content, which gives them a sweet-tart taste and intense aroma.

A study of the nutritional and functional characteristics of ‘Maçã de Alcobaça’ varieties (Table 1 — Almeida and Pintado, 2008) gives high average values for total acid content. This is crucial to the sugar-acid balance which gives Alcobaça apples the specific aroma and sweet-tart taste that distinguish them from other apples.

Table 1

Soluble solid content and titratable acidity of the apple cultivars analysed

Average range of values for the apple varieties	Soluble solids (g/100g)	Titratable acidity (g malate/100g)
	10,2-15,3	0,2-0,76

Source: Domingos Almeida & Manuela Pintado, 2008. *Caracterização nutritiva e funcional de variedades de Maçã de Alcobaça*. Projecto Agro 937

The apples also have other quality and organoleptic characteristics that are considered specific and can be attributed to the particular environmental conditions found in the production area. These include the very firm, crunchy flesh, the deep red colour of the red and bicoloured fruit, the intense aroma, the conspicuous scattered lenticels on the epidermis and solid russeting in the stalk cavity.

Alcobaça apples may be marketed:

(a) whole, unpeeled or peeled: and

(b) in pieces, unpeeled or peeled

3.3. Raw materials (for processed products only)

Not applicable

3.4. Feed (for products of animal origin only)

Not applicable

⁽³⁾ Replaced by Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012.

3.5. *Specific steps in production that must take place in the defined geographical area*

All the steps in the production of 'Maçã de Alcobaça', from the planting of the orchards to the harvesting of the fruit, take place in the defined geographical area.

3.6. *Specific rules concerning slicing, grating, packaging, etc.*

The apples are harvested at a stage of ripeness that allows them to continue to ripen and be stored in a cold environment under proper conditions; the apples are not all packaged as soon as they are harvested and delivered to the storage/packaging centre; checks are performed on all the operations and records permitting traceability back to source.

For the other forms of commercial presentation, all the mandatory requirements for the unprocessed apples must be met, except size and class.

Washing, cutting and packaging must not alter the characteristics of unprocessed 'Maçã de Alcobaça', and batches of peeled or cut apples that do not meet the requirements laid down are rejected. The apples are washed whole and uncut so that this will not alter the characteristics of the unprocessed product.

To reduce oxidation, peeling, cutting and packaging must take place in a chilled environment. The apples must be packaged in barrier packaging made of special film that does not allow gas exchange with the outside, where an altered, i.e. low-oxygen, atmosphere is then introduced. The product must then be prepared for sale, stored and transported in a chilled atmosphere.

3.7. *Specific rules concerning labelling*

In addition to the mandatory wording required by the law, the following must also appear on the labelling:

- (a) the words Maçã de Alcobaça — IGP or Indicação Geográfica Protegida;
- (b) the 'Maçã de Alcobaça' logo, shown below:



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

Administratively, the defined geographical area comprises the municipalities of Alcobaça, Batalha, Bombarral, Cadaval, Caldas da Rainha, Leiria, Lourinhã, Marinha Grande, Nazaré, Obidos, Peniche, Porto de Mós, Rio Maior and Torres Vedras.

5. **Link with the geographical area**

5.1. *Specificity of the geographical area*

The 'Maçã de Alcobaça' production area lies roughly between the Serra dos Candeeiros and the sea, which creates a very specific microclimate. This, together with well-suited soil, creates conditions that are ideal for growing apples of high organoleptic quality with specific characteristics that distinguish them from apples grown in other regions.

The area's physical geography is diverse, so it is the specific microclimate that explains why these apple varieties behave differently there. Since the area is close to the Atlantic, temperatures are consistent; the daily average is around 15 °C. Total precipitation ranges from an annual average of 600 mm to 900 mm close to the Serra dos Candeeiros in the Alcobaça district. Air humidity is affected by the proximity of the sea and prevailing north and north-westerly winds, and the annual figure is around 80 %. Sunshine, although attenuated by the Mediterranean influence, is affected by cloud cover and the average ranges from 2 400 to 2 500 hours.

It is the area's very specific microclimate that explains why these apple varieties grow so well and behave differently there.

5.2. Specificity of the product

The apple varieties described, grown in the defined geographical area, are very firm and crunchy and have a high sugar and acid content that gives them a specific sweet-tart taste and an intense aroma.

When compared to the apple reference values set out in the tables published by the Instituto Ricardo Jorge (Table 2 — INSA, 2006), the average values found in a study of the nutritional and functional characteristics of 'Maçã de Alcobaça' varieties (Table 1 — Almeida and Pintado, 2008), show a marked difference in total acid content (almost double).

Table 2
Nutritional composition of apples

Apple	Energy (kcal/100 g)	Water (g/100 g)	Fibre (g/100 g)	Carbohydrates (g/100 g)	Organic acids (g/100 g)	Protein (g/100 g)	Fat (g/100 g)	Ash (g/100 g)
	57	82,9	2,1	13,6	0,20	0,2	0,5	0,32

Source: INSA (2006)

A study entitled *Caracterização nutritiva e funcional de variedades de Maçã de Alcobaça* gives, inter alia, the nutritional composition of 'Maçã de Alcobaça' (Table 3). The figures set out in Table 3 show that the average carbohydrate and protein values for 'Maçã de Alcobaça' are higher than the values for most other apples set out in the *Tabela da Composição de Alimentos* published by the Instituto Nacional de Saúde Dr Ricardo Jorge (Table 2 — INSA, 2006).

Table 3
Nutritional composition of certain varieties of Alcobaça apple. The values are for fresh weight of the edible part of the fruit (skin and flesh)

Average	Energy (kcal/100g)	Water (g/100g)	Fibre (g/100g)	Carbohydrates (g/100g)	Protein (g/100g)	Fat (g/100g)	Ash (g/100g)
	52,7	84,5	2,1	14,9	0,37	0,10	0,22

Source: Domingos Almeida & Manuela Pintado, 2008. *Caracterização nutritiva e funcional de variedades de Maçã de Alcobaça*. Projecto Agro 937

5.3. Causal link between the geographical area and the quality or characteristics of the product (for PDO) or a specific quality, the reputation or other characteristic of the product (for PGI)

Notwithstanding genetic (Iglesias et al., 2008; 2012) and ecophysiological (Gonzalez-Talice et al., 2013) factors that affect the quality and organoleptic characteristics of 'Maçã de Alcobaça', notably as regards colour and aroma, the importance of the environmental conditions, particularly temperature and humidity, cannot be disregarded.

The specific temperature and humidity conditions created by proximity to the sea and the Aire-Candeeiros-Monte-junto mountain system which runs from north to south, parallel to the coast, determine the nutritional composition of 'Maçã de Alcobaça', which makes it crisper and juicier and distinguishes it from other apples.

However, the apples have obtained PGI status not only because of their distinctive qualities but also because of the prestigious reputation they have enjoyed on the market for hundreds of years.

The 'Maçã de Alcobaça' production area corresponds to the area historically known as the Coutos de Alcobaça. This was originally demarcated in the 12th and 13th centuries for political reasons and there is evidence to show that it did in fact extend further south.

Thus the monks took over the land that was suitable for farming, which corresponds to the areas where the apples are grown today.

Fruit growing, especially apple growing, started to become an important activity. At a time when there were few sweets, apples were eaten for dessert at the end of sumptuous meals. According to M. Vieira Natividade, 'the monks always tended their fruit trees with great care.'

The apples grown in the Alcobaca region started to become known for their organoleptic qualities: ‘They had qualities that made them stand out: the gradual progression from sweetness to acidity through the long list of varieties; the wonderful fragrance, the beautiful vivid colour, ...’ (Natividade, M. V.; 1912 — *Frutas d’Alcobaca*).

M. Vieira Natividade also wrote that: ‘there were so many apple orchards that still today in the Alcobaca region fruit means apple and orchard means apple orchard.’

Publication reference of the specification

(Article 5(7) of Regulation (EC) No 510/2006 ⁽⁴⁾)

http://www.dgadr.mamaot.pt/images/docs/val/dop_igp_etg/Valor/CE_Maca_Alcobaca_Nov2013.pdf

⁽⁴⁾ See footnote 3.