

## OTHER ACTS

## EUROPEAN COMMISSION

**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**

(2015/C 6/06)

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 <sup>(1)</sup>.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

**COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006****on protected geographical indications and protected designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs <sup>(2)</sup>****‘TELEMEA DE IBĂNEȘTI’****EC No: RO-PDO-0005-01182 — 20.11.2013**

PGI ( ) PDO ( X )

**1. Name**

‘Telemea de Ibănești’

**2. Member State or Third Country**

Romania

**3. Description of the agricultural product or foodstuff****3.1. Type of product**

Class 1.3 Cheeses

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

‘Telemea de Ibănești’ is a cheese produced by acid coagulation of milk obtained from indigenous cows.

On release for consumption, it has the following characteristics: blocks with a square base may weigh 0,3-1,0 kg, while blocks with a rectangular base may weigh 0,3-0,7 kg. It is a compact, firm mass with even consistency, and is smooth and buttery. It comes apart easily, without breaking. Its colour ranges from white to white with slightly yellowish notes, and is uniform throughout the entire mass. It has a pleasant taste which is slightly sweet and sour and slightly salty, becoming stronger as the cheese matures. The aroma and fragrance are delicate and pleasant and also become stronger with maturing. It has a marked aroma of mountain pasture. Moisture is below 62 % and the fat content of the dry matter is less than 38 %. Its energy value is 198 kcal per 100 grams of product. The minimum calcium (Ca) and magnesium (Mg) contents of ‘Telemea de Ibănești’ cheese are, respectively, 400 mg and 35 mg per 100 grams of product.

This type of cheese can be produced throughout the year.

It is marketed using the indications ‘*proaspătă*’ (fresh) or ‘*maturată*’ (mature). Fresh ‘Telemea de Ibănești’ — Protected Designation of Origin can be consumed 24 hours after manufacture. The minimum maturation period for mature ‘Telemea de Ibănești’ — Protected Designation of Origin is 20 days from the date of manufacture.

**3.3. Raw materials (for processed products only)**

The raw material used to produce the cheese ‘Telemea de Ibănești’ — Protected Designation of Origin is milk obtained from extensively farmed healthy cows reared and kept in the Gurghiu Valley.

<sup>(1)</sup> OJ L 343, 14.12.2012, p. 1.

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

For the renneting of the milk, microbial rennet is used.

For salting, brine extracted from the salt water well in Orșova is used. This brine contains: 184,4 mg of calcium and 94,6 mg of magnesium per litre, compared with 88,2 mg of calcium and 32,4 mg of magnesium per litre in brine produced from drinking water and salt, at the same salt concentration of 21-23 %.

The brine causes a rise in osmotic pressure, slows down or stops the activity of unwanted micro-organisms, and regulates the micro-flora in the cheese as a result of its bacteriostatic effect. This also ensures that the cheese can be preserved for a longer time.

#### 3.4. *Feed (for products of animal origin only)*

The dairy cows which produce the raw material for 'Telemea de Ibănești' — Protected Designation of Origin are fed exclusively fibre feed from the defined geographical area, in the Gurghiu Valley.

In spring and summer, the cows feed on green mass by means of grazing or, in exceptional cases, indoors. In autumn and winter, they are fed hay harvested on grassland within the defined geographical area.

The feed for these dairy cows does not include any concentrated feedstuffs. The minimum annual grazing period is six months.

The quality of the milk stems both from the free-range method of dairy farming and from the quality of feed available in the Gurghiu Valley. The pastures and the grassland areas are maintained and fertilised using exclusively natural fertilisers (manure).

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

Rearing the dairy cows, collecting the milk and the brine, and the processing, salting and maturation all take place in the defined geographical area.

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

The blocks of 'Telemea de Ibănești' — Protected Designation of Origin are packaged in vacuum-sealed bags immediately after salting. The blocks may also be packaged, immediately after salting, in drums in which the cheese is covered in brine. This ensures that the cheese retains its combined sweet and salty flavour and consistency, and eliminates the risk of dehydration and of the blocks crumbling.

#### 3.7. *Specific rules concerning labelling*

The cheese 'Telemea de Ibănești' — Protected Designation of Origin is marketed in the form of parallelepiped or cubic blocks to which is attached the product label bearing the words 'Telemea de Ibănești' — Protected Designation of Origin.

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

The production area comprises the administrative areas of the municipalities Gurghiu, Hodac and Ibănești in Mureș county. The territories of these municipalities in part form the Gurghiu Valley.

### 5. **Link with the geographical area**

#### 5.1. *Specificity of the geographical area*

The geographical area in which the cheese 'Telemea de Ibănești' — Protected Designation of Origin is produced corresponds in part to the valley of the river Gurghiu. This area is characterised by a specific flora favourable to the farming of animals, especially dairy cows; by salt water springs which the locals use to preserve dairy products, meat and vegetables; and not least by the people who preserve ancestral culinary and craft traditions.

The Gurghiu Valley has an alpine temperate climate, which is wet and cool in its higher sections, and a continental temperate climate in the plateau area. The richness and diversity of the flora in the area is due to this climate.

The richness of the flora in the Gurghiu Valley (1 194 species) and the presence of a relatively large number of endemic, endangered, vulnerable or rare species bear witness to the absence of pollution sources in this area.

The varied topography of the Gurghiu Valley is an asset for dairy farmers and Telemea cheese producers. The areas in question can provide the green mass necessary for feeding the dairy cows in summer and the hay used to feed them in winter.

The Sânioara, Osoiul and Orungii hills in the northern part of the Gurghiu Valley, and the Isticeu and Măgura hills in the Orșova Valley are sub-Carpathian anticline hills composed of Miocene deposits, with isolated salt deposits.

During the Roman occupation, several salt mines were built and operated. Following the collapse of one of those mines, a salt lake known as Jabenita was formed.

The ground water in this area is not drinkable, because it greatly exceeds the admissible salt concentration (665,23 mg/l of Cl anion and 420,5 mg/l of Na<sup>+</sup> and K<sup>+</sup> cations).

The feed for the dairy cows does not include any concentrated feedstuffs, which would increase the milk's acidity. All of these actions have only one aim, namely to produce a clean and tasty milk with the fragrance and aroma characteristic of the Gurghiu Valley.

Given the cheese's reputation, based on its taste and preservability, the local method of producing 'Telemea de Ibănești' — Protected Designation of Origin has been passed on from generation to generation.

## 5.2. Specificity of the product

The name of the cheese 'Telemea de Ibănești' — Protected Designation of Origin corresponds to a soft to semi-hard cheese which owes its pleasant, slightly salty taste to the milk obtained from dairy farms in the Gurghiu Valley.

Its consistency and high Ca and Mg contents are achieved thanks to the salting and preservation method using brine extracted from the salt water well in Orșova. These characteristics make it stand out clearly from a product manufactured using brine made from drinking water and salt.

Test reports on the minerals found in the cheese 'Telemea de Ibănești' — Protected Designation of Origin kept in brine extracted from the salt water well in Orșova and a product kept in brine made from drinking water and salt (NaCl) show a calcium (Ca) content of 540 mg per 100 grams of product for the former compared with 380 mg per 100 grams of product for the latter. The respective values for magnesium (Mg) are 50 mg and 32 mg per 100 grams of product. This is what gives 'Telemea de Ibănești' its specificity compared with a product kept in brine composed of drinking water and salt.

## 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)

The link between the product and the production area is based in particular on a long tradition specific to the Gurghiu Valley in dairy farming and in the production and salting of 'Telemea de Ibănești' — Protected Designation of Origin.

The cows' rich and varied diet confers particular organoleptic characteristics to the milk, which gives the cheese the unique flavour and aroma differentiating it from other products of the same category.

The skill and experience of the locals, combined with the local specific methods of wet salting using brine from the salt water well in Orșova, make the product specific to the area in question.

The long-standing techniques that are still practised in the production stages of 'Telemea de Ibănești' — Protected Designation of Origin include rapid rennet-based curdling (less than one hour) and breaking the curds to a fine grain. Utensils of the past which are still used today in the production of 'Telemea de Ibănești' — Protected Designation of Origin include a tool popularly known as the '*harfă*', for shredding the curd, and other mixing tools, such as the '*dog de lemn*' (wood board), a craft tool made mainly of wood and used for mixing the curd and preventing it from sticking to the sides of the vessel.

The wet salting process creates a permanent balance between the soluble constituents in the brine and those in the cheese, and an exchange of Na, Ca and Mg ions and the ions in the cheese. Soluble nitrogen, fat, lactose and mineral salts pass to the brine, causing partial solubilisation of the protein content in the cheese and changes in the proteins inside the cheese, which influence the texture, solubility and conformation of the proteins. At the same time, sodium, calcium and magnesium ions pass to the cheese.

Absorption of salt in the course of brining is sometimes accompanied by a rise in the amount of water close to the cheese-brine contact area, in particular in light brines lacking calcium or magnesium, which causes defects such as a soft rind or gas holes. Such phenomena do not occur when using brine extracted from the Orșova salt water well, due to its high content of calcium and magnesium.

Another advantage of using brine from the Orșova well is the fact that the cheese dehydrates more slowly and a lower percentage salt content can be achieved.

The salt water springs in the Orșova area provide a natural source of brine for salting and preserving 'Telemea de Ibănești' — Protected Designation of Origin. These salt water springs have higher concentrations of calcium and magnesium.

Since time immemorial, the rearing of dairy cows has traditionally been carried out by nuclear families for whom milk processing has been an important source of income. There is a considerable amount of historical evidence, dating as far back as the 17th century, proving that 'Telemea de Ibănești' — Protected Designation of Origin is part of the area's gastronomic tradition.

**Reference to publication of the specification**

(Article 5(7) of Regulation (EC) No 510/2006 <sup>(3)</sup>)

(<http://www.madr.ro/docs/ind-alimentara/produse-traditionale/caiet-de-sarcini-telemea-ibanesti.pdf>)

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<sup>(3)</sup> See footnote 2.