**TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS FOR THE
REGISTRATION OF THE GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION**

**NAME OF THE GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION**

Wódka ziołowa z Niziny Północnopodlaskiej aromatyzowana ekstraktem z trawy żubrowej / Herbal vodka from the North Podlasie Lowland aromatized with an extract of bison grass

**PRODUCT CATEGORY**

Spirits

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN**

Poland

**APPLICANT**

Polski Przemysł Spirytusowy (Polish Spirits Industry)

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**PROTECTION IN THE COUNTRY OF ORIGIN**

*Date of Protection in the European Union:* 15.1.2008

*Date of Protection in the Member State:* 1.5.2004

**PRODUCT DESCRIPTION**

“Wódka ziołowa z Niziny Północnopodlaskiej aromatyzowana ekstraktem z trawy żubrowej / Herbal vodka from the North Podlasie Lowland aromatised with an extract of bison grass” is a spirit drink:

• Manufactured from Polish ingredients in the Republic of Poland, only in the North Podlasie Lowland region;

• Obtained by flavouring ethyl alcohol of agricultural origin, with alcohol content not less that 96.5% vol., with macerate of bison grass (Hierochloe odorata and Hierochloe australis) that grows in North Podlasie Lowland;

Whose coumarin content is not less than 7 mg/l and sugar content is not more than 4.5 g/l as per inverted sugar.

Flavor: herbal

Fragrant: fragrant of a freshly cut hay

Color: light green with gold shadows

Physical and chemical parameters:

- Coumarin: from 7,0 to 10,0 mg/l;

- Reduction sugars: not more that 4.5 g/l;

Production of “Wódka ziołowa z Niziny Północnopodlaskiej aromatyzowana ekstraktem z trawy żubrowej / Herbal vodka from the North Podlasie Lowland aromatized with an extract of bison grass” is a multi-stage process:

• **Collecting and preparation of bison grass**

Only qualified suppliers collect and prepare bison grass and cooperate with contracted harvesters of herbs and forest fruit. They have a long-term experience in harvesting and know how to collect herbs in an rational way, in particular those which grow in a wild. Harvesting of bison grass in Białowieża forest is allowed only on the basis of formal approval from the Ministry of Environment.

Bison grass should be collected during dry weather, which assure high quality of the material. The leaves should be carefully selected (all leaves with residue, different diseases and defects must be rejected) and cut. Grass cannot be tainted with sand, stones or soil.

The next stage is drying the bison grass. It should take place in dark, airy places, where grass would be protected from the sun shine. Bison grass is placed there is thin layers on clean sieves or sheets of paper. It is admissible to dry bison grass in heated drying stoves, in temperature not higher than 350c. Such conditions ensure the quality of the material. After drying, bison grass should have a uniform color and intensive, characteristic smell of a freshly cut hay. It’s moisture should not exceed 11,5%.

Bison grass prepared in this way is delivered to qualified suppliers, who assess the quality of the raw material, taking into account the following parameters:

- appearance – of the straws and leaves

- color – green with silver elements, in particular on the leaves

- taste and smell – unique, with coumarin elements,

- content of organic and mineral residue

Bison grass with traces of mold, fungal diseases or pests are rejected

Each bison grass straw used as a decoration in the bottle is carefully selected and cut to the length compatible with the bottle size.

Bison grass is divided in two assortment groups: decorative – intended for bottle decoration and in form of hay on basis of which a macerate is prepared.

On average, from 6 kg of bison grass collected in the forest, only 1 kg of grass is used to decorate the bottles.

• **Preparation of macerate**

Bison grass designed to produce macerate is placed in special devices called macerator and poured with a mix of water and alcohol. Then, the material circulates in a closed circuit. The process takes place under strictly controlled conditions, which allows receiving macerate of appropriate parameters. Then, the macerate is seasoned in oak casks. Seasoned macerate is filtered, and as a result a liquid of an intense green color, taste and odor of newly mown hay is obtained, often called the taste of the wilderness.

• **Finishing and bottling of “Wódka ziołowa z Niziny Północnopodlaskiej aromatyzowana ekstraktem z trawy żubrowej / Herbal vodka from the North Podlasie Lowland aromatized with an extract of bison grass”**

The finishing process involves mixing agricultural ethyl alcohol, water, and macerate obtained from bison grass with a small amount of sugar syrup. After mixing, the liquid has to undergone multiple filtration process and then is stored. The final product is bottled, labeled and packaged.

Each bottle of “Wódka ziołowa z Niziny Północnopodlaskiej aromatyzowana ekstraktem z trawy żubrowej / Herbal vodka from the North Podlasie Lowland aromatized with an extract of bison grass” contains a single blade of bison grass, selected and manually inserted during the process of filling in order to highlight vodka’s natural and traditional origin.

Grass in the bottle, in addition to distinctive, specific taste and smell, is the most important part of the product.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE GEOGRAPHICAL AREA**

Northern Podlasie Lowland, POLAND

**LINK WITH THE GEOGRAPHICAL AREA**

Bison grass owes its special flavor to the forest Białowieża of North Podlasie Lowland, which is a geographical area mostly covered by forests, of which three main are: Knyszyńska, buksztelska, and białowieska.

Bison grass, occurring on meadows surrounding the forests, is one of the components of bison’s nutrition. Bisons find first blades of żubrówka already in April and May, and find them in places where snow melted early. A common name of grass "żubrówka" comes from the Polish word for bison “Żubr”. Żubrowka is folk name for the two species of grasses which are: hierochloë odorata and hierochloë australis (Turówka leśna and Turówka wonna).

Turówka grass has a characteristic smell of coumarin (a substance resembling the smell of freshly mown hay). It is difficult to find it and only experienced harvesters are able to collect the grass from inaccessible and only known to them places. Only experienced people can identify the bison grass among many other species of grasses.

**SPECIF RULES FOR LABELLING, IN CASE THESE EXIST**

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**CONTROL BODY**

Inspekcja Jakości Handlowej Artykułów Rolno-Spożywczych (Agricultural and Food Quality Inspection)

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