

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

(2013/C 159/06)

This publication confers the right to oppose the amendment 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 ACCORDING TO ARTICLE 9****'CHAOURCE'****EC No: FR-PDO-0217-0940-24.01.2012****PGI () PDO (X)****1. Heading in the 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 has been published

⁽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.

- 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

3.1. Amendment to point 2 'Description of product'

- Raw material: a requirement stipulating that the full-cream milk that is processed must not have had its composition altered has been added, in order to prevent the addition or removal of fats or proteins.
- The fat content of the product has been reduced to prevent an excess of non-traditional fats.
- Surface flora: clarifications have been made with regard to the predominance of *Penicillium candidum* and the presence of *Geotrichum*.
- A description of the organoleptic characteristics has been added.
- Format of the cheeses: the two formats have been more clearly defined and verifiable target values have been set.

3.2. Amendment to point 4 'Proof of origin'

In the light of developments in national legislation and regulations, the section 'Evidence that the product originates in the defined geographical area' has been expanded and now includes provisions on declaration obligations and on keeping registers for product traceability and monitoring production conditions.

Aspects have been added to allow the milk and the cheeses to be traced more easily and thereby guarantee the origin of the products with this designation. The PDO specification is checked in accordance with an inspection plan drawn up by an inspection body.

This section also contains several new provisions on registers and declaration documents guaranteeing product traceability.

3.3. Amendment to point 5 'Method of production'

Milk production: this part has been amended to highlight the link between the geographical area and the origin of the animals and their feed. A requirement stipulating that at least 80 % of the animals must have been born in the area has been included, and rules have been set defining feed self-sufficiency for the area. These rules also relate to the management of pasture and the importance of grass in the feed ration (i.e. they define the minimum amount of pasture for heifers and lactating animals) and requirements for fodder and feed supplements.

Cheese production: verifiable target values for the various stages of production have been set (temperature for and duration of maturation, renneting, draining, drying and ripening, and the pH at the time of moulding and renneting).

3.4. Amendment to point 8 'Labelling'

Some rules defining how the product is to be labelled and making the labelling more legible for the consumer (use of the European Union's PDO symbol and the group's logo, etc.) have been proposed.

3.5. Amendment to point 9 'National requirements'

A table of the main points to check has been inserted at the end of the product specification.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006**on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs⁽³⁾****'CHAOURCE'****EC No: FR-PDO-0217-0940-24.01.2012****PGI () PDO (X)****1. Name**

'Chaource'

2. Member State or third country

France

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 point 1 applies

'Chaource' is a soft cheese with surface mould, predominantly lactic, and made exclusively from full-cream cow's milk that has not had any fats or proteins added to or removed from it.

The cheese mass is salted and has a dry matter content of at least 40 %, of which at least 48 % is made up of fat.

The rind must be covered predominantly by the white mould *Penicillium candidum*. A marbled or rugged surface owing to the presence of *Geotrichum* is acceptable.

The cheese gives off a light mushroom aroma, can develop fruity aromas such as hazelnut, and has a light taste of fresh mushrooms.

It is cylindrical in shape, with flat ends. It comes in two formats:

- a large format, weighing between 450 g and 700 g at the end of the minimum ripening period and whose characteristic diameter is that of the inside of the cheese mould, namely between 110 mm and 115 mm,
- a small format, weighing between 250 g and 380 g at the end of the minimum ripening period and whose characteristic diameter is that of the inside of the cheese mould, namely between 85 mm and 90 mm.

3.3. Raw materials (for processed products only)

The milk used to obtain 'Chaource' is full-cream cow's milk that has not had any fats or proteins added to or removed from it, apart from those in the growth medium for the starter culture, up to a maximum of 3 %. The milk must be collected, stored and processed separately from other milk, either in completely separate collection rounds and processing establishments, or in a single plant where the milk and processed products are separated from each other from the time the milk is collected until the time when the cheeses have ripened.

3.4. Feed (for products of animal origin only)

The average share of the feed which is produced on the holding annually accounts for at least 75 % of the dry matter content of the dairy herd's total ration. Furthermore, the average share of feed which comes from the geographical area of the designation 'Chaource' accounts for at least 85 % of the dry matter content of the dairy herd's total ration.

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

Lactating cows have access to pasture for at least five months of the year. During this time each of them must be able to graze at least 20 ares of pasture. The areas under green fodder serving as a supplement to pasture must not exceed 10 ares per lactating cow.

In the feed of lactating cows, pasture makes up at least 30 % of the dry matter of the roughage. In the feed of heifers, which is calculated independently of that of lactating cows, pasture makes up at least 30 % of the dry matter of the roughage. These requirements apply at all times throughout the year.

In the feed of lactating cows, the annual average share of feed supplements constitutes less than 27 % of the dry matter content of the total ration.

The total ration for lactating cows is defined as the roughage and distributed feed supplements, taken as a whole.

The specification includes a positive list of types of fodder and concentrated feed.

The heifers must spend a season of at least four months grazing in the geographical area of the designation after weaning and before their first lactation.

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

The milk must be produced and the cheese manufactured and ripened within the geographical area.

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

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3.7. *Specific rules concerning labelling*

The labelling must include the name of the designation of origin and the European Union's PDO symbol.

No other qualifiers or indications may be placed with the designation of origin on the label, in marketing material, on invoices or in commercial documents, with the exception of:

- trademarks,
- the words 'artisanal' or 'fabrication artisanale', to be used only by an artisanal processor recognised as such under the rules applicable to craft industries,
- the wording 'affiné par' or 'affineur', or any other wording referring to the ripening of the product,
- the logo of the Syndicat de Défense du Fromage de Chaource.

In addition, the full name and address of the last approved operator for the 'Chaource' designation of origin, namely the cheese ripener, must appear on the label.

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

The production area covers a very limited geographical area on the borders between the departments of Aube and Yonne including the naturally damp region of Champagne which has at its centre the municipality of Chaource.

Department of Aube

Districts completely covered by the geographical area: Aix-en-Othe, Bar-sur-Seine, Bouilly, Chaource, Ervy-le-Châtel, Mussigny-sur-Seine, Les Riceys and Troyes (seven cantons).

Department of Yonne

Districts completely covered by the geographical area: Ancy-le-Franc, Crusy-le-Châtel, Flogny-la-Chapelle, Tonnerre.

Municipalities completely covered by the geographical area: Bagneaux, Boeurs-en-Othe, Cérilly, Chigy, les Clérimois, Coulours, Flacy, Foissy-sur-Vanne, Fontaine-la-Gaillarde, Fournaudin, Maillot, Malay-le-Grand, Malay-le-Petit, Noé, Saint-Clément, Saligny, Sens, les Sièges, Theil-sur-Vanne, Vareilles, Vaudeurs, Villeneuve-l'Archevêque, Villiers-Louis, Voisines.

Municipalities partially covered by the geographical area: Arces-Dilo (part situated to the north of national road 5), Cerisiers (part situated to the north of national road 5), Lailly (part situated to the south of departmental road 28), La Postolle (part situated to the south of departmental road 28), Soucy (part situated to the south of national road 439), Thorigny-sur-Oreuse (part situated to the south of departmental road 28), Vaumort (part situated to the north of national road 5).

5. Link with the geographical area

5.1. Specificity of the geographical area

A. Natural factors

The protected designation area has been defined as the Chaourçois production area and similar neighbouring areas. This area covers the naturally damp region of Champagne which has at its centre the municipality of Chaource. It is bordered to the north by the Forest of Aumont and the River Seine, to the south by the Forest of Maulnes and the River Armançon, to the west by the calcareous plateau of the Pays d'Othe, and to the east by the River Sarce.

This area is characterised by impermeable subsoil composed mainly of limestone and clay. The terrain is criss-crossed by a large number of watercourses and gives rise to many springs.

A particularly important factor contributing towards the isolation of this small region is the forest situated between two major communication routes:

- Troyes-Saint-Florentin, and
- the Seine Valley.

The area's clayey soil is most often covered by natural meadows. In an environment endowed with constant moisture, the soil is conducive to the development of pasture, and remains unable to be used or adapted for growing crops. Use of some areas for grazing at the start of the season, such as the humid valleys, is often delayed, resulting in grass which has lost its nutritive value and milk lacking in nutrients ('Procès Verbal de l'Assemblée Générale du Contrôle Laitier', 23 January 1937).

As a result of area's diverse soils and the diverse uses which they can support, mixed cropping/livestock farming has become widespread. By relying on the rearing of cattle, the production of 'Chaource' has permitted and continues to permit the maintenance of traditional agricultural activities in this area, one which is marked by the harshness of its continental climate.

B. Human factors

The cheese began to be produced in the region in the Middle Ages, and production was closely associated with the presence in the region of numerous abbeys and commandries. It was the monks alone who possessed the fields and woods needed to provide feed for livestock and for milk and cheese production. Most of the monks refused to eat meat, often replacing it with cheese, leading to the development of livestock farming and the transfer of cheese-processing techniques.

The women of the region took over these skills in the 17th and 18th centuries to produce cheeses produced exclusively for home consumption. Cheese-making had to fit in with their numerous other daily chores, which left them with little free time. The cows were milked in the morning or the evening, following which the milk was left to curdle naturally before being picked up at the end of the day or the following morning. The cheese was made with non-skimmed milk (without 'the cream having been removed'). This process was particularly well-adapted to the farmers' wives' pace of life, as the curd could drain slowly, without requiring any special supervision.

This system of production gave the cheese its lactic character and determined the main stages in the cheese-making process (time taken for the cheese to curdle, and free and slow drainage).

The cheeses were consumed in various ways, either fresh or dried; in general, fresh cheeses were preferred in summer because of their freshness, but also for practical reasons. Ripening varied depending on how difficult it was to preserve the cheeses, these difficulties being most often associated with temperature: in unfavourable conditions, the cheeses were consumed fresh to avoid spoilage, but when conditions allowed, they could be preserved for up to two months. These consumption habits have lasted up to the present day, resulting in the cheese being produced in two different formats which have developed slightly differently from each other.

The cheeses not consumed on the farm were sold at market. Records of these sales can be found dating back to 1829 ('Tableau des foires existantes dans le département de l'Aube', October 1929). Most of the time, the cheeses were collected by *cossonniers* (cheese sellers), who sold them on at local markets and at the main national markets of Paris, Lyon, Dijon, Toulouse, Reims, Metz, Douai, Clermont-Ferrand, Annecy and Lons-le-Saunier.

As agriculture developed during the 19th and 20th centuries, milk yields improved, permitting milk production to be increased. Market sales expanded. However, producing and selling cheeses remained time-consuming, and the farmers' wives preferred to deliver milk to the dairies which were becoming established at that time. Faced with a lack of farm-produced cheeses, the cheese sellers started making the cheeses themselves. By the beginning of the 1960s, artisan cheese-makers had definitively taken over from the farmers' wives.

The cheese-making process and the raw material used have allowed the cheese-makers to always obtain added value in comparison with the smaller dry cheeses made in the surrounding areas from partly skimmed milk ('milk with the cream removed').

5.2. Specificity of the product

A. Specific characteristics of the product

The 'Chaource' is made exclusively with full-cream cow's milk.

The cheese mass, which is salted with dry salt, is smooth, soft, yet at the same time quite firm. One of its distinctive characteristics is that it ripens from the outside towards the middle; over time, a contrast develops between its creamy circumference and the fine and slightly granulous texture of its core.

The rind is covered predominantly by the white mould *Penicillium candidum*.

It gives off a light mushroom aroma, can develop fruity aromas such as hazelnut, and has a light taste of fresh mushrooms.

This is the only cheese made from cow's milk using a lactic method and with a surface mould which has the shape of a tall cylinder with flat ends. This shape stems in particular from the use of moulds which are considerably taller than they are wide, allowing them to hold a significant quantity of curd and favouring free drainage by the mere force of gravity, without any external intervention.

B. Prior use of the name and reputation

The oral tradition goes back to the first half of the 19th century. At that time, the farmers' wives in the Chaourçois were making a cheese from the milk of their cows which was already referred to as 'le fromage de Chaource' ('the cheese of Chaource').

Dr Pourriau in his work 'La Laiterie' in 1872 and M. Huguier-Truelle in his 'Le Petit Guide de la fermière de l'Aube' of 1883 already gave a precise description of the 'Chaource' cheeses and the main rules for making them.

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 geographical area has been defined on the basis of the area in which the 'Chaource' cheese has traditionally been made and dairy cattle reared.

Alternating calcareous and clayey soils have led to the establishment of mixed crop and livestock farms, with some farms located on clayey soils and in flood-prone valleys orienting themselves towards grass production.

Livestock rearing practices are influenced directly by the nature of the climate and soils of the area, and by its geographical location. The location of the area, at a crossroads between a number of areas where different breeds of cattle are reared, has led to no particular breed of cow being favoured and a preference for local animals. The fact that the farms operate in an autarchic fashion to make the best use of local resources has led to a preference for the use of feed (fodder and feed supplements) produced on the farm and in the nearby area (at least 75 % of the feed comes from the farm itself, and 85 % from within the area). As a result, grass constitutes an important part of the animals' feed, whether in the form of pasture (more than 20 ares per cow for at least five months) or preserved grass (more than 30 % of the utilisable dry matter of the fodder). This grass, which often comes from natural flood-meadows, is not of sufficiently good quality to produce milk with a structure suitable for cheese processing, so the grass needs to be supplemented with other energy-rich fodder and with feed supplements.

The nutritional impoverishment of the milk, but also and above all the ability of the farmers' wives to adapt to the constraints of their work, led them naturally towards making cheese with a lactic method using full-cream milk (as a result of which the dry matter content of the cheeses is at least 48 % fat). Indeed, agricultural chores were many and varied, leaving little time to devote to cheese-making. The farmers' wives therefore needed a system that fitted in with the rhythm of their lives and required little supervision. This explains why the stages in the production of the cheese were so long and few (curdling time of at least 12 hours, free and slow drainage). Ripening also took place in harmony with the pace of life: by virtue of their refreshing lactic taste and for obvious reasons associated with preservation, the cheeses were generally eaten fresh in summer, while more mature cheese was consumed as soon as conditions permitted. These consumption habits have persisted and have led to two types of the cheese being produced, with similar ripening periods: a small, matured cheeses and a larger cheese with just a little mould and a more pronounced lactic taste.

Reference to publication of the specification

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

<https://www.inao.gouv.fr/fichier/CDCChaource.pdf>

⁽⁴⁾ See footnote 3.