

Publication of an amendment application pursuant to Article 6(2) of Council Regulation (EC) No 510/2006 on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs

(2007/C 279/08)

This publication confers the right to object to the application pursuant to Article 7 of Council Regulation (EC) No 510/2006. Statements of objection must reach the Commission within six months of the date of this publication.

AMENDMENT APPLICATION

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006

Amendment application pursuant to Article 9 and Article 17(2)

'ÉPOISSES'

EC No: FR/PDO/117/0118/07.09.2004

PGI PDO

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 Summary has 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 phyto-sanitary measures by public authorities (Article 9(4) of Regulation (EC) No 510/2006)

3. Amendments

The general aim of the requested amendments is to set out all the details needed to consolidate the conditions governing the production of milk and the product itself.

These amendments serve to strengthen the link between the product and its geographical area, to provide greater protection of the product's characteristics and to ensure compliance with the rules.

Method of production

Addition of the following paragraph: 'The milk used to produce *Époisses* is exclusively milk from cows of the breeds *Brune*, *Montbéliarde* or *Simmental Française*. Farms that do not meet this requirement have until 31 December 2009 to comply'.

Explanation: The use of local breeds strengthens the link between *Époisses* and the geographical area. However this provision will entail substantial changes for some farms. For this reason, a time period in which farms can adjust to meet the new rules is requested.

Addition of the following paragraphs:

'The total ration for the herd comprises, as a total annual average, at least 85 % of fodder produced in the geographical area of production, as a percentage of dry matter'.

'The proportion of fodder produced in the geographical area of production referred to above may not be less than 80 % of the total daily ration, as a percentage of dry matter'.

'The basic ration, excluding agricultural co-products, is produced in the above-mentioned geographical area of production'.

'Feed supplements make up less than 30 % of the total ration, as a percentage of dry matter'.

'From the time the herd is turned out to pasture until at least 15 June, the fodder given to dairy cows mainly consists of pasture grass, grazed or distributed fresh, the share of which is at least 50 % of the basic ration for a minimum area of 20 acres per lactating cow or 15 acres per lactating cow in farms that practice green feeding. At other times, fodder stored in dry form, i.e. containing over 85 % dry matter, and hay stored in tied bales make up at least 30 % of the basic ration'.

'Feed that may negatively impact the aroma or taste of milk or cheese, its coagulation properties or that poses a risk of bacterial contamination may not be used in the basic ration'.

Explanation: The amendment lays down the fodder given to dairy cows, here again to strengthen the link between the cheese and its area of origin. One of the main features is the use of fodder produced mainly in the geographical area of production.

Addition of the following paragraphs:

'The milk may not be concentrated by partially removing the watery part before coagulation'.

'In addition to the dairy raw materials, the only ingredients or production aids or additives authorised in the milk during production are rennet, innocuous bacterial cultures, yeasts, moulds and salt'.

'Coagulation may be carried out only using rennet'.

'The dairy raw materials, curd and fresh cheese may not be conserved by keeping them at below zero centigrade during the production process'.

'Fresh cheese and cheese undergoing the maturing process may not be conserved under a modified atmosphere'.

Explanation: The use of treatments and additives to make cheese is subject to a set of general rules. Some new techniques, including the use of treatments and additives, such as microfiltration, partial concentration of milk or enzymes for the maturing process, have a potential impact on the characteristics of cheeses with designations of origin. Certain enzyme additives in particular appear to be incompatible with maintaining the key characteristics of products with designations of origin.

It therefore became necessary to stipulate in the specification of each product with a designation of origin, under the heading 'Method of production', the current practices regarding the use of treatments and additives for milk and cheese production to prevent future practices not covered by the rules from undermining the characteristics of cheeses with designations of origin.

Link with the geographical area

Addition of the following paragraph: 'The breeds *Brune*, *Montbéliarde* and *Simmental Française* are consistent with the traditional, local and historical practices of milk production and are adapted to this environment'.

Explanation: The purpose of this provision is to strengthen the link with the geographical area by promoting the use of local breeds.

SUMMARY

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006

'ÉPOISSES'

EC No: FR/PDO/117/0118/07.09.2004

PDO (X) PGI ()

This summary sets out the main elements of the product specification for information purposes.

1. Responsible department in the Member State:

Name: Institut National de l'Origine et de la Qualité (INAO)
Address: 51, rue d'Anjou
F-75008 Paris
Tel. (33) 01 53 89 80 00
Fax (33) 01 53 89 80 60
E-mail: info@inao.gouv.fr

2. Group:

Name: Syndicat de Défense de l'Époisses
Address: Mairie d'Époisses
F-21460 Époisses
Tel. (33) 03 80 96 34 61
Fax (33) 03 80 96 34 61
E-mail: contact@fromages-epoisses.com
Composition: Producers/processors (X) Other ()

3. Type of product:

Class 1.3 — Cheeses

4. Specification:

(Summary of requirements under Article 4(2) of Regulation (EC) No 510/2006)

4.1 Name: 'Époisses'

4.2 Description: Made from whole cow's milk, this is a soft cheese with a washed, smooth or slightly creased and glossy rind, pale orange to brick red in colour and cylindrical in shape. It comes in two formats: either with a diameter of 95 to 115 mm and weight of 250 to 350 grams, or with a diameter of 165 to 190 mm and weight of 700 to 1 100 grams. It has a fat content of at least 50 % of the dry weight and at least 40 % dry matter. The cheese is pale beige in colour and is supple, creamy, soft and slightly salty. It may be partially proteolysed in the centre, depending on the maturity of the cheese.

4.3 Geographical area: Part of the Departments of Côte d'Or, Yonne and Haute-Marne, in the Burgundy Region.

— Department of Côte d'Or:

— The entire Cantons of Arnay-le-Duc, Bligny-sur-Ouche, Liernais and Pouilly-en-Auxois.

— The entire Cantons of Dijon (5th Canton), Gevrey-Chambertin, Grancey-le-Château, Is-sur-Tille, Saint-Seine-l'Abbaye, Selongey and Sombernon.

— The entire Cantons of Aignay-le-Duc, Baigneux-les-Juifs, Châtillon-sur-Seine, Laignes, Montbard, Précy-sous-Thil, Recey-sur-Ource, Saulieu, Semur-en-Auxois, Venarey-les-Laumes and Vitteaux.

— Department of Haute-Marne:

— The entire Cantons of Auberive and Prauthoy.

— Department of Yonne:

— Entire Cantons of Avallon, Guillon and Isle-sur-Serein.

- 4.4 *Proof of origin:* Each operator must compile a 'statement of suitability' registered with the *Institut National de l'Origine et de la Qualité* (INAO) which allows the INAO to identify all operators involved. All operators must keep their registers and any other documents required for checking the origin, quality and production conditions of the milk and cheese at the INAO's disposal.

As part of the checks carried out on the specified features of the designation of origin, an analytical and organoleptic test is conducted to ensure that the products submitted for examination are of high quality and possess the requisite typical characteristics.

- 4.5 *Method of production:* The milk is produced, and the cheese is manufactured and matured in the geographical area set out in point 4.3.

The milk used to produce *Époisses* is exclusively milk from cows of the breeds *Brune*, *Montbéliarde* or *Simmental Française*. Farms that do not meet this requirement have until 31 December 2009 to comply. The proportion of fodder produced in the geographical area of production referred to above may not be less than 80 % of the total daily ration, as a percentage of dry matter.

From the time the herd is turned out to pasture until at least 15 June, the fodder given to dairy cows mainly consists of pasture grass, grazed or distributed fresh, the share of which is at least 50 % of the basic ration for a minimum area of 20 acres per lactating cow or 15 acres per lactating cow in farms that practice green feeding. At other times, fodder stored in dry form, i.e. containing over 85 % dry matter, and hay stored in tied bales make up at least 30 % of the basic ration.

In addition to the dairy raw materials, the only ingredients or production aids or additives authorised in the milk during production are rennet, innocuous bacterial cultures, yeasts, moulds and salt.

Époisses is produced from full cow's milk by coagulating a predominantly lactic curd, set in moulds after a rough cut without causing the curd to disintegrate. The product is left to drain naturally. It is dry salted and matured for at least four weeks, during which it is washed with water containing marc de Bourgogne, which lends the cheese its natural brick red colour due to the pigmentation of surface bacteria. The use of colorants is forbidden.

- 4.6 *Link:* The product was created in the early XVIth century by Cistercian monks living in *Époisses* and then further developed by local farmers. Praised by Madame de Sévigné and named the '*Roi des fromages*' (king of cheeses) by Brillat-Savarin in 1825, it began to be traded more widely as of 1840.

Originally produced in the Pays d'Auxois, production then spread to nearby areas in similar slightly hilly ground, with marly soil, ideal for developing natural pastures suited to stock breeding. These pastures lend a specific mineral content to the milk of cows of the breeds *Brune*, *Montbéliarde* and *Simmental Française*, which are suited to this environment and form an important part of the production of *Époisses* cheese, as do the expertise of farmers (especially regarding the maturing process) and the fact that many stages are still carried out manually.

This original production is part and parcel of the region's cultural and economic heritage. It has enabled small production units to survive and has maintained the presence of traditional breeds of cows on farms.

- 4.7 *Inspection body:*

Name: Institut National de l'origine et de la qualité (INAO)

Address: 51, rue Anjou
F-75008 Paris

Tel. (33) 01 53 89 80 00

Fax (33) 01 53 89 80 60

E-mail: info@inao.gouv.fr

The *Institut National des Appellations d'Origine* is a public administrative body with legal personality and reports to the Ministry of Agriculture.

INAO is responsible for monitoring the production conditions for products with a designation of origin.

Failure to comply with the defined geographical production area or any of the production conditions results in forfeiting the right to use the designation of origin in any form or for any purpose.

Name: Direction Générale de la Concurrence, de la Consommation et de la Répression des Fraudes (DGCCRF)

Address: 59, Boulevard Vincent Auriol
F-75703 Paris Cedex 13

Tel. (33) 01 44 87 17 17

Fax (33) 01 44 97 30 37

E-mail: C3@dgccrf.finances.gouv.fr

The DGCCRF is a department of the Ministry of the Economy, Finance and Industry.

- 4.8 *Labelling*: The product must bear the logo containing the INAO acronym, the wording '*Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée*' and the name of the designation of origin.
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