

OTHER ACTS

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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

(2011/C 129/09)

This publication confers the right to object to the amendment application pursuant to Article 7 of Council Regulation (EC) No 510/2006 ⁽¹⁾. 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 ACCORDING TO ARTICLE 9****'NEUFCHÂTEL'****EC No: FR-PDO-0117-0126-16.03.2006****PGI () PDO (X)****1. Heading 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 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 phytosanitary measures by public authorities (Article 9(4) of Regulation (EC) No 510/2006)

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 93, 31.3.2006, p. 12.

3. Amendment(s):

3.1. Description:

This point has been re-written in its entirety for the sake of clarity and precision.

The terms 'lactic, supple, no tendency to collapse, firm but not excessively so, non-sticky, non-runny and non-grainy' are added to describe the paste of the cheese in more detail.

Instead of reading 'In accordance with custom, it can take the following form ... 2,4 cm high' read '“Neufchâtel” takes the form of a cylindrical log, square, briquette, double log, heart or big heart according to the shapes and dimensions of the moulds described in Chapter 5.'

New: 'At the end of the minimum ripening period laid down in Chapter 5 concerning the method of production.'

The requirement for a minimum ripening period pursuant to Chapter 5. The method of production is laid down in more detail by specifying that the weights and the minimum fat and dry matter contents apply to the finished product at the end of this period.

3.2. Proof of origin:

This heading specifies the means of identifying all the operators and keeping registers and declarations enabling the registration of the operators' practices and/or stock accounts for the products.

3.3. Method of production:

This point has been re-written in its entirety for the sake of clarity and precision. The following amendments are required:

- New: 'For the purpose of this specification, herd means the entire dairy herd of a holding composed of lactating cows and dry cows. At least 60 % of the herd of a producer of milk intended for the production of “Neufchâtel” must consist of animals of the Normande breed' and 'Only milk from the previously defined herds may be introduced into the premises used for the production of “Neufchâtel”, from the delivery of the milk to the ripening of the cheeses.'

New conditions for the production of milk have been added. Their purpose is to ensure that a majority of the cows in the producers' herds are cows of the local breed, the Normande breed. At the time when 'Neufchâtel' was recognised as a registered designation of origin in 1969 the experts did not deem it necessary to include in their decree any mention of the use of the Normande breed and its mainly grass-based feed, as these practices were commonplace among breeders and did not risk being replaced by others. Over time new practices such as the use of maize silage and the Prim'Holstein breed were introduced and became more widespread, while producers became increasingly aware of the importance of the Normande breed and grass on the specific nature and on the image of 'Neufchâtel'. In order to stop this trend, re-establish the conditions that existed when this product earned its reputation and thus strengthen the link between the product and its geographical area, the group wanted to specify the method of milk production by setting a minimum requirement for the proportion of cows of the Normande breed and of grassland used as pasture. These new provisions help the 'Neufchâtel' designation strengthen its link with the product's origin, taking into account the long relationship between the region's breeders and the animal, the way the local breed has adapted to its surroundings and the special qualities of this breed's milk that make it so well suited to cheese-making.

- New: 'The herd grazes for at least six months a year. During this period, grazing provides more than 50 % of the basic ration on a dry matter basis. (...) In exceptional circumstances, mainly as a result of unexpected adverse weather conditions, temporary derogations may be granted to ensure continued feeding of the herd.'

These provisions define the feeding conditions of dairy cows also for the purpose of strengthening the link between the cheese and its origin. It is specified that 80 % of the basic ration of the herd, on a dry matter basis, comes from the holding. The grazing conditions of dairy cows and the load rules within each holding (minimum area of pasturable grassland per dairy cow, maximum area under maize silage production per dairy cow, management of grasslands) are also laid down. These provisions aim at preserving and increasing the proportion of grass in the feed of the dairy cows.

- New: 'In milk production, milk may not be stored on the farm prior to collection for more than 48 hours from the first milking. (...) Fresh cheese and cheese undergoing the ripening process may not be conserved under a modified atmosphere.'

All of the production conditions of the cheese have been set out in order to better preserve the characteristics of the product. Strict rules apply to the storage of milk on the farm prior to its use as well as to the renneting, draining and pressing of the curd. The moulding and processing of the paste obtained are defined in detail, as are the ripening conditions.

The use of treatments and additives in cheese-making used to be subject to general rules. However, new techniques, some of which concern treatments and additives, such as microfiltration, partial concentration of milk or enzymes for the ripening 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 PDO products. It therefore became necessary to stipulate in the specification of each product with a designation of origin 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.

The formats of the moulds have also been specified in this paragraph. This amendment, which proposes substituting these more precise dimensions for the dimensions of the finished product included previously in the specification, follows an investigation by the group concerning the dimensions of the moulds used.

3.4. *Link with the geographical area:*

This point is clarified and reorganised into three points. It discusses how to maintain the special characteristics of 'Neufchâtel' obtained through diversified authorised practices. The history of the Normande breed and its importance to the special characteristics of 'Neufchâtel' are explained (historical breed of Pays de Bray whose milk is exceptionally well suited to cheese-making owing to its high casein and fat content).

3.5. *Labelling:*

The particulars that are compulsory on the labelling are set out. The obligation to use the INAO logo is waived.

The obligation to use the Community logo is added.

3.6. *National requirements:*

A table presenting the main points to be checked, their reference values and their evaluation methods is added.

4. **Summary updated where appropriate.**

Reference to publication of the specification:

<https://www.inao.gouv.fr/fichier/Cahier-des-Charges-Neufchatel.pdf>

SUMMARY

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006

'NEUFCHÂTEL'

EC No: FR-PDO-0117-0126-16.03.2006

PDO (X) PGI ()

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

1. Responsible department in the Member State:

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2. Group:

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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:

'Neufchâtel'

4.2. Description:

'Neufchâtel' is a cheese made exclusively from renneted cow's milk; it has a soft, lactic, slightly salty paste without holes that is supple, does not collapse, is firm but not excessively so, velvety and smooth, non-sticky, non-runny and non-grainy. It has a surface mould that is white in colour and the rind has no holes.

'Neufchâtel' takes the following forms: cylindrical log, square, briquette, double log, heart, big heart.

At the end of the minimum ripening period, a log, square or briquette of 'Neufchâtel' weighs at least 100 g, a heart or double log 200 g and a big heart 600 g.

The cheese contains a minimum of 45 grams of fat per 100 grams of cheese when completely dry and 40 grams of dry matter per 100 grams of cheese.

4.3. Geographical area:

The Pays de Bray, covering part of the departments of Oise and Seine-Maritime. It includes in the department of Oise (60) the municipality of Quincampoix-Fleuzy; in the department of Seine-Maritime (76), the municipalities of Argueil, Aubéguimont, Aubermesnil-aux-Érables, Aumale, Auwilliers, Avesnes-en-Bray, Bailleul-Neuville, Baillolet, Beaubec-la-Rosière, Beaussault, Beauvoir-en-Lyons, La

Bellière, Bois-Guilbert, Bois-Hérault, Bosc-Bordel, Bosc-Édeline, Bosc-Mesnil, Bosc-Roger-sur-Buchy, Bouelles, Bradiancourt, Brémontier-Merval, Buchy, Bully, Bures-en-Bray, Callengeville, Le Caule-Sainte-Beuve, La Chapelle-Saint-Ouen, Clais, Compainville, Conteville, Criquiers, Croixdalle, Cuy-Saint-Fiacre, Dampierre-en-Bray, Dancourt, Doudeauville, Elbeuf-en-Bray, Ernemont-sur-Buchy, Esclavelles, Fallencourt, Ferrières-en-Bray, La Ferté-Saint-Samson, Fesques, La Feuillie, Flamets-Frétils, Fontaine-en-Bray, Forges-les-Eaux, Le Fossé, Foucarmont, Fréauville, Fresles, Fresnoy-Folny, Freulleville, Fry, Gaillefontaine, Gancourt-Saint-Etienne, Gournay-en-Bray, Grandcourt, Graval, Grumesnil, La Hallotière, Haucourt, Haudricourt, Haussez, Héronnelles, Hodeng-Hodenger, Illois, Landes-Vieilles-et-Neuves, Londinières, Longmesnil, Lucy, Marques, Massy, Mathonville, Maucomble, Mauquenchy, Ménerval, Ménonval, Mésangueville, Mesnières-en-Bray, Mesnil-Follemprise, Le Mesnil-Lieubray, Mesnil-Mauger, Meulers, Molagnies, Montérolier, Mortemer, Nesle-Hodeng, Neufbosc, Neufchâtel-en-Bray, Neuville-Ferrières, Nolléval, Notre-Dame-d'Aliermont, Nullemont, Osmoy-Saint-Valery, Pommereux, Pommeréval, Preuseville, Puisenval, Quièvecourt, Réalcamp, Rétonval, Ricarville-du-Val, Richemont, Roncherolles-en-Bray, Ronchois, Rouvray-Catillon, Sainte-Agathe-d'Aliermont, Sainte-Beuve-en-Rivière, Sainte-Croix-sur-Buchy, Sainte-Geneviève, Saint-Germain-sur-Eaulne, Saint-Jacques-d'Aliermont, Saint-Léger-aux-Bois, Saint-Martin-au-Bosc, Saint-Martin-l'Hortier, Saint-Martin-Osmonville, Saint-Michel-d'Halescourt, Saint-Pierre-des-Jonquières, Saint-Riquier-en-Rivière, Saint-Saëns, Saint-Saire, Saint-Vaast-d'Équiqueville, Saumont-la-Poterie, Serqueux, Sigy-en-Bray, Smermesnil, Sommary, Le Thil-Riberpré, Vatierville, Ventes-Saint-Rémy, Villers-sous-Foucarmont, Wanchy-Capval.

4.4. *Proof of origin:*

All milk producers, processing plants and ripening facilities fill in an identification declaration, which is registered with the group, allowing it to identify all operators involved. All operators must make their registers and any documents required for checking the origin, quality and production conditions of the milk and cheese available to the competent authorities.

As part of the checks carried out on the characteristics of the product to which the designation of origin refers, 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.

Farm producers keep a register showing the daily amounts of renneted milk or the weight of the curd obtained, the number and type of cheeses produced, the number of cheeses sold under the designation 'Neufchâtel' and, with the exception of direct sale to customers, their destination, as supported by invoices.

Milk producers keep a register showing the daily amounts of milk or paste purchased by each producer, the amount of milk or paste used and the number of all cheeses produced as well as the number of cheeses sold under the designation 'Neufchâtel' and their destination, as supported by invoices.

The purchasers of milk or paste make the list of their milk suppliers and any changes thereto available to the control authorities.

4.5. *Method of production:*

'Neufchâtel' is produced from extra-fresh whole cow's milk obtained from herds composed mainly of cows of the Normande breed whose feed consists principally of grass, which is ensured by requiring that the cows graze for at least six months of every year, by providing for at least one hectare of grassland near the milking rooms for every four dairy cows and by limiting the amount of concentrated feed to 1 800 kg/cow/year. Eighty per cent of the basic ration of the herd, on a dry matter basis, comes from the holding.

The lightly renneted milk to which milk starters have been added coagulates for 18 to 36 hours. The curd is put inside draining sacks or cloths, then pressed, mixed and moulded, salt is added to the surface or to the mass, the curd is wiped again if necessary and ripened. The cheese is placed in cellars or cheese ripening rooms at a temperature ranging from 10 °C to 14 °C and ripened for at least 10 days calculated from the moulding date, during which time it becomes coated with a characteristic white mould.

4.6. *Link:*

The origins of 'Neufchâtel' cheese date back to the 10th century. According to Ghislain Gaudefroy, 'Neufchâtel' is one of the oldest Normandy cheeses and it is related to the cheeses that are produced in Pays de Bray and mentioned for the first time in a charter dating from 1037. However, 'Neufchâtel' cheese is referred to by name for the first time in the accounts of the abbey of Saint-Amand in Rouen in 1543-1544: 'it is a large cheese from Neufchâtel.'

According to Figuiet, author of 'Merveilles de l'industrie' (1876), 'Neufchâtel' cheese was well known already in the 16th century. Abbot Decorde (1843) stated that in 1700 three markets a week were organised in Neufchâtel and the cheese was traded very actively.

In 1802, Napoléon I received a basket of cheeses from Neufchâtel as a tribute. In 1845, the congress of Neufchâtel revealed that the price of this very valuable cheese was four times higher than that of butter.

This cheese flourished during the 19th century, when demand exploded owing to the development of transport and in particular the creation of the railway system. Consequently, 'Neufchâtel' was found in markets in Paris (Husson indicated in 1856 that Parisians consumed nearly three million of these cheeses a year), but also in Belgium, Great Britain and even in the colonies. In 1865, 'Neufchâtel' cheese was awarded a gold medal at the Concours de Paris.

In order to prevent counterfeiting, 'Neufchâtel' was defined by a decree on 20 October 1936. In 1957, the farm producers and milk producers involved in the production of 'Neufchâtel' established an association.

The cheese's link to its geographical area is based on the capacity of the area to enable milk production in grasslands from herds composed mainly of cows of the Normande breed whose milk is processed using simple cheese-making technology that is very well adapted to farm production. The capacity of the grasslands results principally from the existence of humid clay soils that are regularly replenished by frequent rainfall. These soils, which are often found in hilly regions, contribute to the presence and growth of grass while at the same time making ploughing difficult. In addition, the tight network of streams and rivers and the numerous ponds have always provided watering places for grazing herds. As the winters are long and rigorous, the stabling period is rather long and local breeders must stock large amounts of hay and grass, rendered possible by the extensive grassland areas. Furthermore, the presence of soils developed on the Cenomanian and lower Portlandian limestone shelves, together with the grasslands, enable ploughing that promotes the self-sufficiency of dairy farms in roughage other than grass. This contributed to the development of important dairy farming know-how.

The Normande breed is the result of the selective breeding performed by farmers in Normandy. The animal is adapted to the production system used in Pays de Bray (grass and pasture) and produces a milk that has a high fat and protein content and is exceptionally well suited to the production of soft cheese. Local breeders have developed and maintained a simple cheese-making technology, similar to the methods used to make fresh cheese, that is adapted to the volumes of milk and the materials available on farms and to their working rhythm. The cheese-making know-how of Pays de Bray, in particular the succession of short phases (excluding moulding) separated from each other by periods of 6 to 24 hours and the draining and pressing of the curd before moulding, determines the specific characteristics of 'Neufchâtel' and its unique place among soft cheeses with a surface mould. The development of this know-how marked by the rapidity of the ripening process owes a great deal to the geographical location of Pays de Bray, which has always fostered regular and rapid trade connections. In addition, this method of production is perfectly compatible with the production, typical of 'Neufchâtel', that is carried out in the numerous small farm workshops. Farmers engage in these activities in addition to their other breeding work.

4.7. *Inspection body:*

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The Institut national de l'origine et de la qualité (INAO) is a public administrative body with legal personality and reports to the Ministry of Agriculture.

INAO is a competent authority within the meaning of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 of 29 April 2004 on official controls performed to ensure the verification of compliance with feed and food law, animal health and animal welfare rules.

A particular task of INAO is to ensure that checks are performed to verify compliance with the specification and, if necessary, to take measures against any failure to comply with the specification.

Name: Direction générale de la concurrence, de la consommation et de la répression des fraudes (DGCCRF)

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

4.8. Labelling:

In addition to the regulatory information requirements applicable to all cheeses, each cheese with the registered designation of origin 'Neufchâtel' is marketed under an individual label containing the name of the registered designation of origin in characters at least two-thirds the size of the largest characters on the label.

The words 'Protected Designation of Origin' and the EU PDO logo must be added to the label of cheeses with the Protected Designation of Origin 'Neufchâtel'.
