

OTHER ACTS

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Publication of an amendment 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

(2014/C 463/08)

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 ⁽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 IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE 9

'PONT-L'ÈVEQUE'

EC No: FR-PDO-0117-01044 – 12.10.2012

PGI () PDO (X)

1. Sections of the specification affected by the amendments

- Name of product
- Description of product
- Geographical area
- Proof of origin
- Method of production
- Link
- Labelling
- National requirements
- Other: inspections

2. Type of amendments

- 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 343, 14.12.2012, p. 1.

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

3. Amendment(s)

3.1. Description of product

Certain technical and organoleptic data used to describe 'Pont-l'Évêque' have been updated in the description of the product.

In order to describe each size, the dry matter content, previously indicated only for 'Pont-l'Évêque' and *petit* 'Pont-l'Évêque', is now specified also for the sizes *grand* 'Pont-l'Évêque' and *demi* 'Pont-l'Évêque'. The net weight indicated on the packaging is likewise specified for each size on the basis of existing practices so as to better describe the product:

- *grand* 'Pont-l'Évêque' has a net weight of 1 200 to 1 600 g and a dry matter content of 650 to 850 g, as indicated on the packaging,
- 'Pont-l'Évêque' has a net weight of 300 to 400 g, as indicated on the packaging,
- *demi* 'Pont-l'Évêque' has a net weight of 150 to 200 g, as indicated on the packaging,
- *petit* 'Pont-l'Évêque' has a net weight of 180 to 250 g, as indicated on the packaging.

Deletion of the reference to the orange colour of the rind and replacement of the golden yellow to orange shades with a whitish to reddish colour follows from the group's decision to prohibit the use of 'rocou' as a rind colouring agent.

The reference to the smoothness of the rind has been dropped, as that was a clear error in the specification registered in accordance with Commission Regulation (EC) No 1107/96 of 12 June 1996 on the registration of geographical indications and designations of origin under the procedure laid down in Article 17 of Council Regulation (EEC) No 2081/92⁽³⁾, given that the rind of 'Pont-l'Évêque' has never been smooth.

The usual practices have been described in more detail. The rind may be brushed (the physical action of a dry or damp brush against the rind) or washed (spraying of an aqueous solution under pressure). The practice of brushing has always existed and is considered equivalent to washing, even though it is not referred to as such in the specification registered in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 1107/96. It is therefore specified that brushing may be considered a type of washing, though the optional nature of both of these is made clear by the words 'may be'.

Finally, the elements related to the description of the method of production (draining and salting) have been moved to the appropriate paragraph.

3.2. Geographical area

The modified geographical area of 'Pont-l'Évêque' now comprises 1 365 municipalities, or 38 % of the area presented in the specification registered in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 1107/96 (2 129 municipalities have been excluded). The reduction in the geographical area is the result of work done to strengthen the link between the designation 'Pont-l'Évêque' and grass-based dairy production systems in Normandy and to define the heartland of the designation and its characteristics (natural environment/practices). Thus each municipality in the updated geographical area is in an area that is conducive to the growth of grass and has a fresh and humid climate and/or the presence of marshes and valley floors. The municipalities are characterised by the presence of a wooded landscape, which testifies to the maintenance of traditional grass-based dairy farming, and of dairy farms that continue to rely to a large extent on grass.

The reduction in the area is also part of a revision of the specification which strengthens the link with the locality by introducing an obligation to use some cattle of the Normande breed and a predominantly forage-based diet to produce the milk.

3.3. Proof of origin

The changes to paragraph 4.1 are linked to changes in national rules. In particular, provisions on authorising operators are included in order to acknowledge that they are able to meet the requirements of the specification for the designation from which they wish to benefit.

⁽³⁾ OJ L 148, 21.6.1996, p. 1.

A specific declaration is provided for in paragraph 4(2) to demonstrate the operators' commitment to a gradual shift towards herds of the Normande breed.

A provision on the necessary declarations concerning knowledge and monitoring of quantities allows the group to gather the requisite data for the designation of origin 'Pont-l'Évêque'.

The paragraphs on record-keeping and checks on the product have been supplemented.

3.4. Method of production

Several points concerning the method of production have been clarified in the specification in order to provide a better description of the conditions under which the milk is produced and processed into cheese and which contribute to the characteristics and reputation of 'Pont-l'Évêque'.

— The milk production conditions:

'Pont-l'Évêque' is produced in part using milk from cows of the Normande breed, which make up at least 50 % of the dairy herd on each holding. In order to allow all breeders and producers of 'Pont-l'Évêque' to commit and adapt to this new production condition, the specification lays down a transitional period running until the end of April 2017. This amendment makes it possible to strengthen the link with the locality by making it obligatory to include cows of the Normande breed in the dairy herds.

For the purpose of simplifying the implementation of the specification, a definition of 'herd' has been introduced. 'Herd' means the entire dairy herd of a holding composed of lactating cows, dry cows and replacement heifers.

The dairy cows graze for at least six months a year. Each holding consists of at least 0,33 ha of area under grass per dairy cow milked, of which at least 0,25 ha is pasturable and accessible from the milking rooms, and of 2 ha of grassland per hectare of silage maize used to feed the animals in the herd. This makes it possible to guarantee a predominantly grass-based diet (grazing, hay, etc.), in line with the grass-feeding tradition of the geographical area.

In order to ensure a link to the geographical area, at least 80 % of the dry matter in the basic ration of the herd (fodder) must come from parcels of the holding located in the geographical area.

Outside of the grazing periods, the dairy cows are supplied with hay on a daily basis. The amount of complementary feed provided is restricted to 1 800 kg per cow in the herd per calendar year. The fodder and complementary feed authorised have been listed in the specification. Thus the link to the locality is asserted through the feed autonomy of the holdings and by restricting the amount of complementary feed.

— The milk used:

In order to avoid to the extent possible any alterations of the raw dairy material, the storage times of the milk used to make 'Pont-l'Évêque' have been specified. The milk may not be stored for longer than 48 hours on the holding and 96 hours from the first hour of milking until the start of ripening. This duration is reduced to 72 hours for raw-milk products.

Furthermore, to avoid any practices not in line with traditional know-how, it has been added that the milk may not be concentrated by partially removing the water in it before coagulation and that, in addition to the raw dairy materials, the only ingredients, production aids or additives authorised in the milk and during its production are rennet, innocuous bacterial cultures, yeasts, moulds, salt and calcium chloride.

This latter provision in effect prohibits the use of 'rocou', a rind colouring agent that was formerly used to correct imperfections in the grain of the rind caused by the sanitary status of the milk. Improvements in the sanitary status of milk in recent years have rendered 'rocou' unnecessary. 'Pont-l'Évêque' producers have not used it for more than 15 years.

— The cheese production conditions:

The processing conditions of 'Pont-l'Évêque', from the renneting of the milk to ripening, have been laid down in greater detail than in the specification registered in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 1107/96. The different stages of the production process of 'Pont-l'Évêque', which correspond to local, trustworthy and established practices, have been described, in particular by using target values.

The following are thus specified:

- the milk container, a vat of a maximum of 600 litres, which makes it possible to mould the cheese in one operation and guarantee that the curdling time of the milk has been the same for all the moulded cheeses,
- the ripening conditions: for less than 26 hours at a temperature below 40 °C, in order to regulate the parameters related to this stage,
- the renneting conditions: traditionally using rennet of animal origin only at a renneting temperature of 32 to 40 °C,
- the method of obtaining curds: cutting into pieces of average size measuring less than 25 mm and stirring to ensure fairly substantial drainage in the vat,
- partial elimination of the whey prior to moulding, as a consequence of kneading the paste and forced drainage,
- The renneting/moulding interval: moulding is carried out less than 2 hours after renneting in order to limit the acidification of the curd,
- the in-mould draining conditions: the minimum duration is 10 hours between 17 and 31 °C, which are more precise temperature conditions than the references to ambient temperature and heated rooms in the specification registered in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 1107/96, and the cheese is turned over several times,
- salting: it is done 1 to 4 days after renneting, as this is the minimum time required for the development of surface flora,
- the drying phase and conditions: drying is the phase between salting and the beginning of ripening, and its temperature conditions (between 10 and 22 °C) are specified in order to regulate this parameter,
- ban on the conservation of the dairy raw materials, partially finished products, curd or fresh cheese at a temperature below 0 °C, in order to avoid any practices that are not in line with traditional know-how.
- Ripening of the cheese:

The conditions for ripening have been amended for the purpose of optimising the organoleptic qualities of the cheeses. The minimum ripening period, formerly 14 days for all sizes, has been increased to 18 days from the renneting date, except for *grand 'Pont-l'Évêque'*, for which the duration has been set at 21 days. Ripening takes place over a minimum period of 8-9 days, depending on the size, at a temperature of 11 to 19 °C. In order to allow the temperature of the cheeses to decrease after the drying phase following salting (where, it is recalled, the temperature may be between 10 and 22 °C), the maximum ripening temperature has been increased from 14 to 19 °C. 'Pont-l'Évêque' may also undergo additional ripening at a temperature of 4-15 °C once it has been packaged. The reference to red cultures (*Brevibacterium linens*) has been removed from the specification, because these cultures do not develop systematically, nor are they necessarily desirable. As the cooling required before transport blocks ripening, it has been additionally specified that the minimum ripening period does not include transfer times between production facilities and ripening facilities, it having already been established that these transfers may not take more than 72 hours.

3.5. Link

This part of the specification has been re-written in accordance with the provisions forming the basis of PDO specifications. The specificity of the geographical area and of the product and the causal link between the physical and human factors of the geographical area and the characteristics of the product have been described herein. More detailed information has thus been provided on the know-how that is essential to the production of the milk and to the method of producing and processing the cheese and contributes to the qualities and specificity of 'Pont-l'Évêque'. Furthermore, the role of the Normande breed, which nowadays is facing competition from other, more productive, dairy breeds, has been strengthened.

3.6. Labelling

For the specifications to conform to national rules, the obligation to affix the 'INAO' logo has been dropped. The words 'Appellation d'Origine Protégée' or 'PDO' are obligatory, as is the EU PDO logo.

3.7. Other

The bodies responsible for monitoring compliance with the specification have been specified and a table of the main items to be checked and the evaluation methods to be used have been added to the specification.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006

on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs⁽⁴⁾

'PONT-L'ÈVEQUE'

EC No.: FR-PDO-0117-01044 – 12.10.2012

PGI () PDO (X)

1. Name

'Pont-l'Évêque'

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 the product to which the name in (1) applies

The name 'Pont-l'Évêque' is reserved for cow's milk cheeses that have a soft paste and surface mould that can be brushed or washed, a square or rectangular shape and at least 45 g of fat per 100 g of cheese after total desiccation. The rind is whitish to reddish in colour. The ivory-to-straw-yellow, supple paste, which is not sticky or runny, is homogenous, except for a few holes. The cheese has a mild flavour with a variety of aromas (plant-like, milky, creamy or slightly smoky).

'Pont-l'Évêque' comes in the following formats:

- *grand* 'Pont-l'Évêque' has a square surface that is 190 to 210 mm long, a net weight, indicated on the packaging, of 1 200 to 1 600 g and a dry matter content of 650 to 850 grams,
- 'Pont-l'Évêque' has a square surface that is 105 to 115 mm long, a net weight, indicated on the packaging, of 300 to 400 g and a minimum dry matter content of 140 grams,
- *demi* 'Pont-l'Évêque' has a rectangular surface that is 105 to 115 mm long and 52 to 57 mm wide, a net weight, indicated on the packaging, of 150 to 200 g and a minimum dry matter content of 70 grams,
- *petit* 'Pont-l'Évêque' has a square surface that is 85 to 95 mm long, a net weight, indicated on the packaging, of 180 to 250 g and a minimum dry matter content of 85 grams.

3.3. Raw materials (for processed products only)

As from 1 May 2017, at least 50 % of the dairy cows of the holdings must be cows of the Normande breed.

⁽⁴⁾ Replaced by Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012.

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

In order to guarantee a close link between the locality and the product by using specific feed from the geographical area, the dairy cows graze for at least six months of the year and the holding must have a minimum area under grass of 0,33 ha for each dairy cow being milked, of which a minimum of 0,25 ha is pasturable and accessible from the milking rooms, as well as 2 ha of grassland per hectare of silage maize used to feed the animals in the herd.

At least 80 %, expressed as dry matter, of the fodder-based basic ration of the herd must come from parcels of the holding located in the geographical area. The amount of complementary feed provided is restricted to 1 800 kg per cow in the herd per calendar year.

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

The milk is produced, and the cheeses are manufactured and ripened in the geographical area described in point 4.

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

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3.7. *Specific rules on labelling*

Each PDO 'Pont-l'Évêque' cheese sold must bear an individual label that includes the name of the designation of origin written in letters at least two thirds the size of the largest characters on the label, as well as the words 'Appellation d'Origine Protégée' or 'PDO' and the European Union's PDO symbol.

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

List of the cantons and municipalities in the geographical area of production of the PDO 'Pont-l'Évêque'.

In the department of Calvados

The entire cantons of Aunay-sur-Odon, Balleroy, Bayeux, Le Bény-Bocage, Blangy-le-Château, Cambremer, Caumont-l'Évêque, Condé-sur-Noireau, Dozulé, Honfleur, Isigny-sur-Mer, Lisieux, Livarot, Mézidon-Canon, Orbec, Pont-l'Évêque, Saint-Pierre-sur-Dives, Saint-Sever-Calvados, Thury-Harcourt, Trévières, Trouville-sur-Mer, Vassy and Vire.

The canton of Cabourg, with the exception of the municipalities of Colombelles, Escoville, Hérouvillette and Ranville. The canton of Falaise-Nord, with the exception of the municipalities of Aubigny, Bons-Tassilly, Falaise, Potigny, Saint-Pierre-Canivet, Soulangy, Soumont-Saint-Quentin, Ussy and Villers-Canivet. The canton of Villers-Bocage, with the exception of the municipalities of Le Locheur, Missy and Noyers-Bocage.

The municipalities of Airan, Argences, Barou-en-Auge, Bazenville, la Caine, Canteloup, Cléville, Courcy, Commes, Curcy-sur-Orne, Goupillières, Grimbosq, Hamars, La Hoguette, Janville, Jort, Longues-sur-Mer, Louvagny, Magny-en-Bessin, Le Manoir, Manvieux, Montigny, Moulton, Les Moutiers-en-Auge, Les Moutiers-en-Cinglais, Norrey-en-Auge, Ouffières, Préaux-Bocage, Port-en-Bessin-Huppain, Ryes, Saint-Vaast-sur-Seulles, Saint-Ouen-du-Mesnil-Oger, Saint-Pair, Saint-Pierre-du-Jonquet, Sainte-Honorine-du-Fay, Saint-Martin-de-sallen, Sommervieu, Tracy-sur-Mer, Troarn, Trois-Monts, Vaux-sur-Aure, Vendevre and Vienne-en-Bessin.

In the department of Eure

The entire cantons of Bernay-est, Beuzeville, Cormeilles and Thiberville.

The canton of Bernay-Ouest, with the exception of the municipalities of Plasnes and Valailles. The canton of Broglie, with the exception of the municipality of Mesnil-Rousset. The canton of Pont-Audemer, with the exception of the municipalities of Colletot and Corneville-sur-Risle. The canton of Quillebeuf-sur-Seine, with the exception of the municipalities of Aizier, Bourneville, Sainte-Croix-sur-Aizier, Tocqueville and Vieux-Port. The canton of Saint-Georges-du-Vièvre, with the exception of the municipalities of Saint-Benoît-des-Ombres, Saint-Christophe-sur-Condé, Saint-Grégoire-du-Vièvre and Saint-Pierre-des-Ifs.

The municipalities of Morsan, Notre-Dame-d'Épine and Saint-Victor-d'Épine.

In the department of La Manche

The entire cantons of Barenton, Barneville-Carteret, Brécey, Bréhal, Canisy, Carentan, Cerisy-la-Salle, Coutances, Gavray, La Haye-du-Puits, La Haye-Pesnel, Isigny-le-Buat, Juvigny-le-Tertre, Lessay, Marigny, Montebourg, Montmartin-sur-Mer, Mortain, Percy, Périers, Sourdeval, Saint-Clair-sur-l'Elle, Sainte-Mère-Eglise, Saint-Hilaire-du-Harcouët, Saint-Jean-de-Daye, Saint-Lô, Saint-Lô-Est, Saint-Lô-Ouest, Saint-Malo-de-la-Lande, Saint-Ovin, Saint-Pois, Saint-Sauveur-Lendelin, Saint-Sauveur-le-Vicomte, Le Teilleul, Tessy-sur-Vire, Torigni-sur-Vire, Valognes, Vesly and Villedieu-les-Poêles.

The canton of Avranches, with the exception of the municipalities of Avranches, Marcey-les-Grèves, Saint-Martin-des-Champs, Vains and Le Val-Saint-Père. The canton of Quettehou, with the exception of the municipality of Octeville-l'Avenel.

The municipalities of Les Chéris, Marcilly and Le Mesnil-Ozenne.

In the department of l'Orne

The entire cantons of Athis-de-l'Orne, Briouze, Domfront, La Ferté-Macé, Flers, Flers-Nord, Flers-Sud, Gacé, Juvigny-sous-Andaine, Le Merlerault, Messei, Passais, Putanges-Pont-Ecrepin, Sées, Tinchebray and Vimoutiers.

The canton of Carrouges, with the exception of the municipality of Ciral. The canton of Courtomer, with the exception of the municipalities of Bures and Sainte-Scolasse-sur-Sarthe. The canton of Ecouché, with the exception of the municipalities of Goulet and Sentilly. The canton of Exmes, with the exception of the municipality of Silly-en-Gouffern. The canton of Ferté-Frênel, with the exception of the municipalities of Couvains, Gauville, Glos-la-Ferrière, Marnefer and Saint-Nicolas-de-Sommaire. The canton of Mortrée, with the exception of the municipalities of Boissei-la-Lande, Marcei, Médavy, Saint-Christophe-le-Jajolet and Saint-Loyer-des-Champs.

The municipalities of Boitron, Bursard, Chambois, Coudehard, Ecorches, Essay, Louvières-en-Auge, Mont-Ormel, Montreuil-la-Cambe, Neauphe-sur-Dive, Nécly, Saint-Gervais-des-Sablons, Saint-Lambert-sur-Dives and Trun.

5. Link with the geographical area

5.1. Specificity of the geographical area

The geographical area of 'Pont-l'Evêque' covers part of the territory of the three departments of Lower Normandy (Calvados, Manche and Orne) and the western fringe of the department of Eure. This area benefits from a temperate oceanic climate, with abundant precipitation (> 700 mm) distributed evenly throughout the year. There are gently rolling pasture landscapes in which fields enclosed by hedgerows predominate and a dense network of rivers with many associated marshes. Grassland, which has historically made up a vast proportion of the farm land of the geographical area, still accounts for over half of it.

This region with a long tradition of cattle farming is the cradle of the Normande breed, which, though it faces competition from the more productive Prim'Holstein breed, has always been present in the geographical area. There is a declared wish to maintain and increase its numbers. Nowadays, too, the feeding conditions of the dairy cows are marked by the predominance of grass in the animals' diet and the consumption of this grass by grazing for at least six months of the year. Therefore a minimum area under grass for each dairy cow has been defined for the holdings. In addition, in order to assert the primacy of grass, in particular in relation to maize, holdings have, for the purpose of feeding their herds, an area under grass that is twice as large as the land under maize.

These age-old pasture and dairy farming traditions, which exist still today, have led to the development of recognised know-how in the making of soft cheeses. These ancient skills have been kept alive by a cheese processing method that uses curdling vats of a limited size and relies exclusively on rennet of animal origin and where the curd is cut into very small to medium-sized pieces.

This cheese, which is consumed after a relatively short ripening period, earned its reputation as early as 1622: Hélie le Cordier, a writer from Normandy, published a poem in 16 cantos in honour of 'Pont-l'Evêque'. It contains the following well-known sentence: 'Tout le monde également l'aime car il est fait avec tant d'art que, jeune ou vieux, il n'est que crème'. Gradually, in an effort to set 'Pont-l'Evêque' apart from other cheeses, the cheese acquired its square shape when wooden moulds started being used at the beginning of the 18th century.

5.2. Specificity of the product

'Pont-l'Evêque' is a cow's milk cheese with a soft paste which, since the introduction of wooden moulds in the 18th century, has had a square or rectangular shape with sharp edges and corners. Its whitish to reddish rind encloses a supple, non-sticky paste whose colour ranges from ivory to straw yellow. It has a mild taste with flavours that are often milky and plant-like and sometimes slightly smoky.

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 rainy and mild climatic conditions of the geographical area mean that grass production is significant throughout the year. This in turn makes it possible to produce milk from animals that have been fed mainly on grass. The milk, which comes from cows that graze for long periods of time, is very well suited to cheese-making. This specificity is further reinforced by the presence of animals of the Normande breed.

Alongside this pasture and dairy farming expertise, cheese-making skills developed which have been crucial to the reputation that 'Pont-l'Évêque' has had since olden times. The cheese-making skills used rely on 'soft cheese' technologies, where the ripening period is fairly short. These technologies are very well adapted to the absence of climatic and topographical constraints that would make it necessary to preserve the milk in the form of cheese for a very long time. The result is a mild and tasty cheese whose excellent quality has been recognised for centuries.

Reference to publication of the specification

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

<https://www.inao.gouv.fr/fichier/CDCPontl-Eveque.pdf>

⁽⁵⁾ See footnote 4.