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(Announcements)

## 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**

(2015/C 29/06)

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 <sup>(1)</sup>.

AMENDMENT APPLICATION

**COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006**

**on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs <sup>(2)</sup>**

**AMENDMENT APPLICATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE 9**

**‘SAINT-NECTAIRE’**

**EC No: FR-PDO-0117-01091 — 3.12.2012**

**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: inspection

**2. Type of amendments**

- Amendments to the Single Document or Summary Sheet
- Amendments to the specification of the registered PDO or PGI for which neither the Single Document nor the Summary Sheet has been published
- Amendments to the specification that require no amendments to the published Single Document (Article 9(3) of Regulation (EC) No 510/2006)
- Temporary amendments to the specification resulting from the adoption of obligatory sanitary or phytosanitary measures by the public authorities (Article 9(4) of Regulation (EC) No 510/2006)

<sup>(1)</sup> OJ L 343, 14.12.2012, p. 1.

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

### 3. Amendment(s)

#### *Description of product*

Constituents that contribute to the special properties of the product have been added (renneted milk, uncooked, fermented and salted paste) in order to describe it in more detail and thus facilitate inspections.

The minimum dry matter content of 'Saint-Nectaire' at the end of maturity has been reduced from 52 % to 50 %. It has varied greatly over time, ranging from 50 % to 56 % according to different texts from the 20th century. The purpose of the requested amendment is to guarantee the supple and smooth character of the cheese without affecting the product's essential organoleptic characteristics. The amendment is essential for farmhouse production, which uses raw whole milk with a non-standardised fat content where there may be marked changes in the composition of the milk from a single herd and in the cheese produced after each milking.

The percentage of the dry matter content — not lower than 48 % — of the pre-matured cheeses sold in order to be matured later has been deleted, as it has been found that the determining factor is the drying conditions of the pre-matured cheeses before they go into a cellar. Therefore these conditions, necessary for good maturation, have been specified under 'Method of production' (a minimum drying period of 24 hours and a temperature of 6 to 10 °C).

The approximate diameter, height and weight of the cheese have been replaced by minimum and/or maximum values that make it easier to define and inspect the product. The large-size 'Saint-Nectaire' is described as a 'slightly tapered cylinder 20 to 24 cm in diameter and 3,5 to 5,5 cm in height, with a weight not exceeding 1,850 kg' instead of: 'In the shape of a flat cylinder, it is approximately 21 cm in diameter and 5 cm high, with a weight of approximately 1,7 kg'. For the small-size 'Saint-Nectaire', the specification '12 to 14 cm in diameter and 3,5 to 4,5 cm high' has replaced 'approximately 13 cm in diameter and 3,5 cm high', while 'with a weight not exceeding 0,650 kg' has replaced 'weighs approximately 600 g'. The minimum maturation period of the large cheese after it has been placed in the cellar has been increased from 3 weeks to 28 days. This 1-week increase contributes to strengthening the product's organoleptic characteristics. The minimum maturation period of the small cheese after it has been placed in the cellar remains the same.

The rind has been described in more detail on the basis of the experience gained by tasting panels. Thus the sentences 'The cheese has a rind that is dotted with mould and similar on both sides. Depending on the degree of maturation, the mould is white, brown or grey and may reveal a cream-coloured to orange background, possibly with a yellow and/or red bloom. Cheeses that are white, orange or black all over are excluded.' has replaced the sentence 'The surface mould is covered in flower-shaped, white, yellow or red spots, depending on the stage of maturation.' The description takes into account the diverse situations traditionally encountered while avoiding unacceptable practices.

The organoleptic description of the product has been made more precise by using a greater number of descriptors that better reflect the complex taste of 'Saint-Nectaire'. The taste is clean, slightly salty, with a variety of milky tastes (fresh milk, cream, butter) and flavours related to the maturing process (cellar, straw mats, earth or undergrowth), often enhanced by an overall subtle nuttiness'.

Finally, the approved shapes for slices of 'Saint-Nectaire' have been specified (possibility to sell the cheese in portions, part of which must include the rind). Given the continuous changes in the ways cheese is consumed, these clarifications establish a framework in order to prevent there being different types of cut.

#### *Proof of origin*

The amendments made are linked to the reform of the system for inspecting designations of origin resulting from changes made to the regulations at national level. In particular, operators must now furnish a statement of identity before their ability to meet the specification of the designation from which they wish to benefit is confirmed. Inspection to ensure that the specification is met takes place according to an inspection plan drawn up by an inspection body. The specification describes the contents of the statements necessary for recognition and monitoring of the products and how to submit those statements.

Details of the documents and registrations required for monitoring traceability and inspecting production conditions have also been given, along with the methods for inspecting the product's characteristics.

The identification marks used for the marking of 'Saint-Nectaire' have been changed:

- The sizes have been modified slightly. Consequently the diameter at the large end of the oval-shaped marking affixed on farm-made cheeses has decreased from 72 mm to 45 mm and the diameter at the small end from 38 mm to 30 mm. The side of the square-shaped marking affixed on dairy-made cheeses has decreased from 45 mm to 35 mm.
- The layout of the words on the label is now different.
- The number of the cheese has been added. Each label includes an individual identification number, restarting from zero every year, to ensure better traceability of the cheeses.

It has been laid down that identification marks are distributed by the group to accredited producers and that these plates are taken away if the producer's accreditation is suspended or withdrawn. In other words, identification marks are distributed to all producers that comply with the specification.

The traceability of 'Saint-Nectaire' cheeses is ensured by affixing numbered labels and this has been explained (keeping of registers).

#### *Method of production*

The terms 'herd', 'dairy cows' and 'heifers' within the meaning of the specification have been added in order to make clear exactly which animals are subject to the production conditions laid down in the specification and thus facilitate inspections. The introduction of an obligation stating that dairy cows whose milk is used to make 'Saint-Nectaire' must have been born and bred in the area defined in point 4 of the Single Document as from 1 January 2015 means that the animals will be better adapted to the specific upland environment, the living conditions in this environment and the feed, especially as there are no requirements as to breed. It also enables special attention to be given to the selection of animals that are pathogen-free, which is important for this designation that partly makes use of raw milk. However, for health reasons and for the Salers, Ferrandaise, Abondance, Simmental Française and Brune breeds, only small numbers of which are kept in the area and for which demand exceeds supply, a derogation from the obligation for the dairy cows to have been born and bred in the area may be granted by the competent national authority for a specific period of time and for a well-justified reason. These breeds are deemed to be better suited to mountainous areas, and therefore they are adapted to the geographical area as is required. In addition, they are subject to the same production conditions as cows of other breeds if they are present on a holding engaged in the production of the 'Saint-Nectaire' PDO, in particular to the requirement concerning a minimum grazing period.

The conditions for milk production have been laid down in detail. It has been specified, among other things, that permanent grassland must make up at least 90 % of the holding's area under grass, that the dairy cows' basic ration must be composed exclusively of grass from the area defined in point 4 of the Single Document, that grazing is obligatory for at least 140 days a year and that the share of supplementary feed is limited to 30 % of the total ration. This strengthens the prominent place of fresh or preserved grass in the feed of the animals, which in turn makes it possible to reinforce the link between the origin of the milk and the special nature of the cheese. The stocking density in the forage areas of holdings is limited to 1,4 livestock units per hectare and there are rules on the application of fertilisers (in particular, on limiting the annual application of nitrogen to 130 units per hectare and on the conditions for the spreading of organic manure) so as to encourage the use of permanent grassland with a diverse flora for feeding the cows. The use of fermented fodder in the dairy cows' feed is not permitted as from 1 May 2017. The raw materials and additives allowed in the supplementary feed have been placed on a positive list. There is a provision on the banning of GMOs in order to maintain the traditional character of the feed.

The procedure for the maintenance of the milking and refrigeration equipment and the minimum equipment requirements for the production workshop have been clarified. The milk may not be stored on the holding for more than 48 hours (a maximum of four milkings), which is reduced to 24 hours (a maximum of two milkings) if raw milk is used to produce the cheese. These provisions make it possible to limit any spoilage of the milk and consequently to preserve the characteristics of the cheese. In addition, by separating the different milks it is easier to verify compliance with the specification and thus ensure traceability.

The methods for the heating and standardisation of the milk have been defined in detail in order to provide a better framework for the practices preceding the processing of the milk.

Several provisions have been added on the use of treatments and additives for the cheeses: a ban on the concentration of milk by partially removing the water in it before coagulation, a positive list of the authorised ingredients or processing aids or additives, a ban on conserving the dairy raw materials, partially finished products or curd at a temperature below 0 °C, a ban on conserving fresh cheese and cheese undergoing maturation under a modified

atmosphere. New techniques, some of which concern treatments and additives, such as microfiltration, partial concentration of milk or enzymes for the maturing process, have a potential impact on the characteristics of 'Saint-Nectaire'. In particular, certain enzyme additives appear to be incompatible with preservation of the key characteristics of 'Saint-Nectaire'. It was necessary for the specifications to define the current practices regarding the use of treatments and additives for milk and for cheese production, in order to prevent future practices not covered by the rules from compromising the characteristics of 'Saint-Nectaire'.

The sentence 'The milk, renneted when warm, is curdled in a recipient called "baste" or "gerle"' has been deleted. In addition, the procedure for conserving the milk and for renneting have been described. 'Saint-Nectaire' is made by farm-based producers but also by dairy enterprises: in the case of the latter, use of the milk is deferred by cold storage and collection. The milk is then heated and renneted. Nowadays the milk is hardly ever curdled in 'bastes' or 'gerles' (wooden tubs), which have been replaced by stainless steel vats.

The stages in the production of 'Saint-Nectaire' have been described in more detail. In particular, values for the renneting temperature, the renneting time, the dimensions of the moulds, the duration of the pressing, the drying time and temperature and the duration between renneting and the cheeses being placed in the cellar have been added so as to provide guidelines for the production steps. Farm-based production is distinguished from dairy-based production because of the differences in the milk used (a mix of milk from several herds and cold storage in the case of dairy-based production, milk from a single herd processed immediately after milking in the case of farm-based production) and the equipment used. Providing a framework for these operations makes it possible to preserve the quality of the cheeses and the know-how of the cheesemakers.

The treatments which the cheeses undergo during maturation are described more clearly: there is an obligation to wash the cheese at least twice, rub it and turn it at least once a week. The use of rind colorants, originally composed of iron-oxide-rich soil used to rub the cheeses and prevent the growth of undesirable mould, has been prohibited, as materials have been developed that enable a better command of the maturation process. It has been specified that the temperature of the cellar must be between 6 and 12 °C, with a humidity of at least 90 %. A framework has thus been provided for the traditional rules of maturation. The objective is to obtain a product whose rind complies with the description in 'Description of product'. More detailed information has been provided also on the fixtures and fittings in the cellars, the maintenance of the supports and equipment used during maturation and the treatment products, as all of these help maintain favourable maturation conditions for 'Saint-Nectaire'.

A definition of 'pre-matured cheese' has been added in order to facilitate inspections. The conditions for the freezing of pre-matured cheeses have also been specified. The maximum freezing period (10 months), the packaging of the cheeses during the freezing process, the labelling of frozen pre-matured cheeses and the equipment of the storage rooms for frozen cheeses have been defined. The dates when the cheeses are frozen and defrosted have been set: they are frozen between 1 April and 31 July and defrosted before 31 March of the following year. In other words, freezing is a way of stocking cheeses produced when the dairy cows are turned out to pasture, when they are consuming fresh grass, so as to be able to stagger the beginning of maturation throughout the year and shift it to periods of peak consumption (especially in December). This practice has no effect on the characteristics of 'Saint Nectaire'.

#### *Labelling*

The obligation to affix the INAO logo has been dropped following changes in national rules. It has been replaced by an obligation to affix the European Union's PDO symbol.

The indications on the labelling that may accompany the designation of origin, regardless of the regulatory references, are set out in a positive list in order to improve the clarity of the text for consumers and facilitate inspections.

The labelling must indicate the production type in characters at least two thirds of the size of the designation 'Saint Nectaire' so as to provide consumers with better information by making the products easier to identify and to facilitate inspections.

#### *National requirements*

In accordance with the above-mentioned national reform of the system for monitoring designations of origin, a table has been added which sets out the main points of the specification to be checked and the evaluation method to be used.

#### *Other*

— Control:

The contact details of the inspection bodies have been updated.

## SINGLE DOCUMENT

## COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006

on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs<sup>(3)</sup>

## 'SAINT-NECTAIRE'

EC No: FR-PDO-0117-01091 — 3.12.2012

PGI ( ) PDO ( X )

## 1. Name

'Saint Nectaire'

## 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

'Saint Nectaire' is a cheese made exclusively from renneted cow's milk, with a semi-hard, pressed, uncooked, fermented and salted paste. It has a minimum fat content of 45 grams per 100 grams of completely desiccated cheese. The dry matter content must not be less than 50 g per 100 g of matured cheese.

It is presented in the form of a slightly tapered cylinder 20 to 24 cm in diameter and 3,5 to 5,5 cm in height, with a weight not exceeding 1,850 kg. The minimum maturation period of the cheese is 28 days after it has been placed in the cellar.

'Saint Nectaire' can also be made in a smaller size that is 12 to 14 cm in diameter and 3,5 to 4,5 cm high, with a weight not exceeding 0,650 kg. In this case, the minimum maturation period is reduced to 21 days after the cheese has been placed in the cellar.

The supple, smooth paste yields to the touch. The cheese has a rind that is dotted with mould and similar on both sides. Depending on the degree of maturation, the mould is white, brown or grey and may reveal a cream-coloured to orange background, possibly with a yellow and/or red bloom. Cheeses that are uniformly white, orange or black are excluded.

The taste is clean, slightly salty, with a variety of milky tastes (fresh milk, cream, butter) and flavours related to the maturing process (cellar, straw mats, earth or undergrowth), often enhanced by an overall subtle nuttiness.

Cheeses covered by the designation of origin 'Saint-Nectaire' may also be presented in packaged portions, with each piece having part of the designation's distinctive rind.

## 3.3. Raw materials (for processed products only)

As from 1 January 2015, the cows of each herd producing milk used to make 'Saint-Nectaire' must have been born and bred in the area defined in point 4.

However, for health reasons and for the Salers, Ferrandaise, Abondance, Simmental Française and Brune breeds, only small numbers of which are kept in the area defined in point 4 and for which demand exceeds the supply authorised by the Director of the National Institute for Origin and Quality, a derogation from this measure may be granted by the Director of the institute.

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

The dairy cows' basic ration is composed exclusively of grass from the area defined in point 4.

The dairy cows must graze for a minimum period of 140 days a year. During that period all green feeding is prohibited.

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

Outside the grazing period, the grass distributed as dry feed with a dry matter content of over 80 % must make up at least 50 % of the dairy cows' daily basic ration, expressed as dry matter.

As from 1 May 2017, fermented fodder is prohibited in the dairy cows' feed. The only preserved fodder authorised is grass distributed as dry feed with a dry matter content of over 80 %.

At all events, the amount of supplementary feed may not exceed 30 % of the total ration expressed as dry matter per year for all of the dairy cows.

The heifers' basic intake is composed exclusively of grass, at least 40 % of which must come from the area defined in point 4.

Heifers intended for the renewal of the dairy cows of a holding accredited for the production of 'Saint-Nectaire' must be kept on the holding and are subject to the same feeding conditions as the dairy cows at the latest starting 3 months before their first lactation.

Only plants, by-products and supplementary feed derived from non-transgenic products are authorised in the animal feed. The planting of transgenic crops is prohibited in all areas of holdings producing milk intended for processing into cheese with the designation of origin 'Saint-Nectaire'. This prohibition applies to all types of plant likely to be given as feed to animals on the holding and all crops liable to contaminate such plants.

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

Milk production, cheesemaking and maturation must take place in the defined geographical area.

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

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### 3.7. *Specific rules on labelling*

All cheeses with the designation of origin 'Saint-Nectaire' must bear a label showing the name of the PDO in letters at least two thirds the size of the largest lettering on the label.

The labelling must include the European Union's PDO symbol.

Irrespective of the regulatory terms applicable to all cheeses, the use of any adjective or other words accompanying the designation of origin is prohibited in labelling, advertising, invoices and commercial documents, with the exception of:

- specific brand names or trademarks,
- the words 'produced from milk from the Salers breed', 'matured in a natural cellar', a specific maturation period of more than the minimum of 28 days, 'matured on straw', 'matured on the farm', 'matured on firwood' and 'matured on spruce wood'. At all events, the text may not be more than two thirds the size of the designation 'Saint-Nectaire',
- the words 'produced in a dairy' or any other indication suggesting dairy origin.

The labelling of the cheeses indicates whether they come from a farm or a dairy.

The dairy or farm origin is indicated in characters at least two thirds of the size of the designation 'Saint Nectaire'.

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

The geographical area of the designation of origin 'Saint-Nectaire' covers the territory of the municipalities of the Cantal and Puy-de-Dôme departments.

Milk production and cheesemaking must take place in an area where the natural and human factors referred to in point 5.1 are taken into account.

## 5. Link with the geographical area

### 5.1. Specificity of the geographical area

#### Natural factors

The geographical area of 'Saint Nectaire' is located in the centre of France, in the Massif Central.

Milk production and cheesemaking benefit from the special conditions to be found at an altitude above 700 m.

The prevailing winds from the west bring substantial humidity to the western slopes of the volcanic mountain, less so to its eastern slopes. Owing to the very fertile volcanic soil, there is grass everywhere and the flora is abundant and varied: thyme absolute, yellow gentian, spignel, yarrow, alpine clover, etc. Forage production is based principally on the use of permanent grassland, which is rich in flowering plants and covers at least 90 % of the holdings' area under grass.

#### Human factors

'Saint Nectaire' has been produced in the Monts Dore region for several centuries. Its name made its first appearance in gastronomy in the 17th century. With the name of the cheese appearing in numerous publications (in particular in 1786 and 1787), the production of 'Saint Nectaire' developed in the 19th century and then further in the 20th century on small mountain farms which kept a small number of livestock, where making the cheese became the prerogative of the farmers' wives and where the production skills became established. Traditionally, cheesemakers only very rarely matured their cheeses and they would take them to the many markets in the area without maturing them. The expert maturers of Puy-de-Dôme and Cantal, who had the requisite facilities and know-how, bought the cheeses and matured them close to consumption centres. This tradition has survived into the present, though nowadays pre-matured cheeses are collected at the place of production.

'Saint Nectaire' was recognised as a designation of origin by decision of the court of Issoire in 1955.

The resources employed in feeding the dairy cows used to produce milk for making 'Saint Nectaire' are those referred to in 'Natural factors'. The basic ration is composed solely of grass and grazing is obligatory during part of the year. The use of supplementary feed is limited.

The maturation phase is another important step in the production of 'Saint Nectaire'. The maturers have skills that are essential for the treatment processes which the cheeses undergo. The cheeses are washed a number of times, then rubbed and turned regularly so that a rind develops.

### 5.2. Specificity of the product

'Saint Nectaire' is a cow's milk cheese with a pressed, uncooked paste. It is presented in the form of a slightly tapered cylinder with a maximum diameter of 24 cm and a maximum height of 5,5 cm, which is a modest size compared to other cheeses originating in mountain areas. The mould is white, brown or grey and may reveal a cream-coloured to orange background, possibly with a yellow and/or red bloom. The taste is clean, slightly salty, with a variety of milky tastes (fresh milk, cream, butter) and flavours related to the maturing process (cellar, straw mats, earth or undergrowth), often enhanced by an overall subtle nuttiness.

### 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 corresponds to the area where the different steps in the production of 'Saint Nectaire' have always taken place. Certain natural factors, such as the altitude of the grazing land and the flora, and human factors must come together in order to produce the milk and make 'Saint Nectaire'.

This area with its volcanic soil is favourable to the presence of permanent grassland, where the flora is abundant and perfumed. The frequency of the rainfall brought by the winds from the west that prevail in this high-altitude area allow a nearly continuous irrigation of the grassland, which enhances their richness. As a result of this botanical diversity, the flowers have a number of aromatic compounds (for example terpenes), which are consumed by the cows when they feed on fodder from this grassland.

These factors, together with the production know-how and the treatment which 'Saint Nectaire' undergoes during maturation, endow it with a variety of milky tastes (fresh milk, cream, butter) and flavours related to the maturing process (cellar, straw mats, earth or undergrowth), often enhanced by an overall subtle nuttiness.

In addition, the treatment processes administered to 'Saint Nectaire' by the maturers determine how the surface mould will develop and vary in colour between whitish-grey and orangey-brown.

The size of 'Saint Nectaire' is linked to its history. Indeed, it was suitable both for farms with small herds (a few cows) and for bigger holdings that sought to increase the value of their relatively limited wintertime milk production and whose more abundant milk production in the summer was used to make 'Fourme de Cantal'.

**Reference to publication of the specification**

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

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

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<sup>(4)</sup> See footnote 3.