

## 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**

(2017/C 92/06)

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>.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

**'THYM DE PROVENCE'****EU No: FR-PGI-0005-01364 — 18.9.2015****PDO ( ) PGI (X)****1. Name(s)**

'Thym de Provence'

**2. Member State or Third Country**

France

**3. Description of the agricultural product or foodstuff****3.1. Type of product**

Class 1.8. Other products of Annex I to the Treaty (spices etc.)

**3.2. Description of the product to which the name in (1) applies**

'Thym de Provence' is an aromatic plant belonging to the species *Thymus vulgaris* L. of the *Labiatae* family. It is an aromatic shrub that is 10-30 cm in height and thickly branched, with ligneous lower stems. It is usually trained to grow in tufts or in small, very dense bushes.

The evergreen leaves, which are grey or green according to the season, and the young stems and calyces, are interspersed by glands filled with essential oil. The essential oil is phenolic and its principal components are carvacrol (minimum content 15 %), thymol and para-cymene (their precursor).

'Thym de Provence', a perennial plant, is cultivated in an open field or picked in an approved parcel in its natural environment.

'Thym de Provence' comes from the following varieties: VP83 (population thyme), variety *Carvalia*, variety *Thymilia*.

The list of authorised varieties may be revised on the basis of a revision protocol aiming at ensuring the following characteristics:

- phenolic profile (carvacrol content + thymol + para-cymene > 50 %),
- carvacrol content equal to or higher than 15 %,
- straight and ligneous plant.

After each amendment, this list is distributed to producers, the inspection body and the competent supervisory authorities.

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

'Thym de Provence' is presented in the form of dried or frozen leaves or fresh or dried branches. The branches may be sold in bulk or in bouquets.

It has the following characteristics:

- regardless of the form of presentation, the essential oil must contain at least 15 % of carvacrol, additionally, depending on the form of presentation:
- for fresh branches: a maximum stem length of 16 cm,
- for dried branches: a maximum stem length of 16 cm and a maximum moisture content of 12 %,
- for dried leaves: a maximum moisture content of 12 %, a maximum proportion of stems of 4 % and a maximum proportion of small particles of 2 %,
- for frozen leaves: a maximum proportion of stems of 4 % and a maximum proportion of small particles of 2 %.

3.3. *Feed (for products of animal origin only) and raw materials (for processed products only)*

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

The following operations must take place in the geographical area: harvesting, processing (drying/threshing, sorting, freezing) and making bouquets.

3.5. *Specific rules concerning slicing, grating, packaging, etc. of the product the registered name refers to*

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3.6. *Specific rules concerning labelling of the product the registered name refers to*

In addition to the compulsory information provided for by the legislation in force, the labels affixed to the consumer units of 'Thym de Provence' must include the MDD (minimum durability date) as well as an insert with the name and address of the certifying body preceded by the words 'certified by'.

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

The department of Vaucluse: all municipalities.

The department of Bouches-du-Rhône:

- the following cantons in their entirety: Aix-en-Provence (1 and 2), Allauch, Aubagne, Berre-l'Étang, Châteaurenard, Ciotat, Gardanne, Marignane, Marseille (1 to 10), Martigues, Péligasse, Salon-de-Provence (1 and 2), Trets, Vitrolles,
- the canton of Istres, with the exception of the municipality of Fos-sur-Mer.

The department of Gard:

- the following cantons in their entirety: Bagnols-sur-Cèze, Pont-Saint-Esprit, Redessan, Roquemaure, Uzès, Villeneuve-lès-Avignon,
- the canton of Alès-2: the municipalities of Belvézet, Bouquet, Fons-sur-Lussan, Lussan, Seynes, Vallérargues,
- the canton of Alès-3: the municipality of Castelnau-Valence,
- the canton of Beaucaire, with the exception of the municipalities of Bellegarde, Fourques,
- the canton of Marguerittes: the municipalities of Manduel, Marguerittes, Poulx,
- the canton of Rousson: the municipalities of Barjac, Méjannes-le-Clap, Saint-Jean-de-Maruéjols-et-Avéjan, Saint-Privat-de-Champclos, Tharaux.

The department of Alpes-de-Haute-Provence:

- the following cantons in their entirety: Château-Arnoux-Saint-Auban, Forcalquier, Manosque (1 to 3), Oraison, Reillanne, Valensole,
- the canton of Digne-les-Bains-2, with the exception of the municipalities of Champtercier, Digne-les-Bains,
- the canton of Sisteron, with the exception of the municipalities of Authon, Saint-Geniez,

- the canton of Riez: the municipalities of Bras-d'Asse, Le Castellet, Le Chaffaut-Saint-Jurson, Entrevennes, Estoublon, Mézel, Moustiers-Sainte-Marie, Puimichel, Puimoisson, Riez, Roumoules, Saint-Jeannet, Saint-Julien-d'Asse, Saint-Jurs,
- the canton of Seyne: The municipalities of Claret, Melve, Sigoyer, Thèze, Valernes, Vaumeilh.

The department of Ardèche:

- the canton of Bourg-Saint-Andéol in its entirety,
- the canton of Pouzin: the municipality of Rochemaure,
- the canton of Teil: the municipalities of Alba-la-Romaine, Aubignas, Saint-Andéol-de-Berg, Saint-Maurice-d'Ibie, Saint-Thomé, Le Teil, Valvignères,
- the canton of Vallon-Pont-d'Arc: the municipalities of Labastide-de-Virac, Orgnac-l'Aven, Saint-Remèze.

The department of Var:

- the following cantons in their entirety: Brignoles, Draguignan, Garde, Garéoult, Hyères, Ollioules, Saint-Cyr-sur-Mer, Saint-Maximin-la-Sainte-Baume, Seyne-sur-Mer (1 and 2), Solliès-Pont, Toulon (1 to 4),
- the canton of Crau: the municipalities of Hyères, La Crau,
- the canton of Flayosc, with the exception of the municipalities of Bargème, Bargemon, Brenon, Châteauvieux, Claviers, Comps-sur-Artuby, La Bastide, Le Bourguet, La Martre, La Roque-Esclapon, Trigrance,
- the canton of Luc, with the exception of the municipalities of Collobrières, La Garde-Freinet,
- the canton of Vidauban, with the exception of the municipality of: Le Muy.

The department of Hautes Alpes:

- the canton de Laragne-Montéglin in its entirety,
- the canton of Serres: the municipalities of Le Bersac, Bruis, Chanousse, L'Épine, Étoile-Saint-Cyrice, Eyguians, Lagrand, Méreuil, Montclus, Montjay, Montmorin, Montrond, Moydans, Nossage-et-Bénévent, Orpierre, Ribeyret, Rosans, Saint-André-de-Rosans, Sainte-Colombe, Sainte-Marie, Saint-Genis, Saléon, Savournon, Serres, Sorbiers, Tresléoux.

The department of Drôme:

- the following cantons in their entirety: Grignan, Tricastin, Montélimar-2,
- the canton of Dieulefit, with the exception of the municipalities of Bézau-dun-sur-Bîne, Bourdeaux, Bouvières, Comps, Crupies, Félines-sur-Rimandoule, Francillon-sur-Roubion, Mornans, Le Poët-Célar, Les Tonils, Orcinas, Rochebaudin, Saou, Soyans, Truinas,
- the cantons of Nyons et Baronnies, with the exception of the municipality of Chaudebonne,
- the canton of Diois: the municipalities of La Motte-Chalancon, Rottier,
- the canton of Montélimar-1: the municipalities of Ancône, Montélimar, Savasse.

## 5. Link to the origin

### *Specificity of the area*

The geographical area of 'Thym de Provence' is part of a territory commonly called 'Provence' and situated in the south-east of France.

The most frequently occurring soil types are clay-limestone soils of varying density. They let the rain penetrate or trickle away and disappear easily. The soils are very often stony. These open, calcareous, dry and sunny environments called 'garrigues' are typical of Provence.

The geographical area is also characterised by a Mediterranean climate, with hot and dry summers and mild winters. There are a number of long periods of sunshine, and the occasionally frequent and sustained northerly/north-westerly wind keeps the humidity level low. Provence winters have rare periods of frost, which are usually short and mild.

Finally, the geographical area is characterised by a high density of spontaneously growing phenolic thyme that contains a substantial proportion of carvacrol and makes up near-pure populations that spread in more or less circular formations.

As a result of a long tradition of picking wild thyme that is practised even today and ancient methods of drying, sorting and making bouquets of thyme, the producers in the geographical area have developed a specific know-how.

The producers of 'Thym de Provence' have ensured that the population thyme growing spontaneously in its natural state in the area is reproduced through the varietal selection of phenolic thyme, the essential oil of which contains more than 15 % of carvacrol.

In addition, in the case of cultivated parcels, the producers limit watering, thereby ensuring a production method that is close to natural conditions.

The exploitation of the cultivated parcels is limited, since beyond a certain age, the thyme stems become too thick and the ratio of leaves to the weight of the wood (the thick stems) becomes insufficient. In the case of wild thyme, the pickers skilfully evaluate the size of the plants that can be picked in order to guarantee the same result.

Besides, the producers focus all their attention on the optimum harvesting stage and on the aerated storage of thyme before processing or drying, and they do this by relying on the dry climate of the geographical area.

As regards processing, the operators' know-how lies, in particular, in the rapid processing of the thyme after harvesting (drying the thyme leaves or freezing the thyme, depending on the form of presentation).

Drying is also an important step that helps control the humidity level and enables the handling of the product later on without the risk of degradation: if it is not dry enough, 'Thym de Provence' cannot be worked properly (the stems will not become detached from the leaves), while if excessively dry, too many stems will be broken during threshing. The drying phase is carried out taking into account the external climatic conditions, and it determines the appearance of the product and its preservation over time. It is underpinned by a genuine know-how and the use of highly specialised machines (visual evaluation of the fresh product, batch-specific sorting, etc.).

Making thyme bouquets likewise requires special skills of the producers, who estimate the humidity level of their product in order to limit the loss of leaves and the deterioration of the quality. This know-how offers the basis necessary for obtaining the expected final product.

By harnessing their specific equipment and their experience, the local operators are able to implement particularly efficient and rigorous sorting methods. Their knowledge of the product allows them to select the tools necessary to guarantee optimal sorting of the thyme and eliminate undesirable particles to the extent possible.

#### *Specificity of the product*

'Thym de Provence' is characterised by a characteristic strong aroma and taste: warm and pungent.

It is distinguished from other thymes, the great majority of which are 'mild' thymes or garden thymes that have a pure thymol chemotype and a weaker aromatic strength, with a smaller portion made up of cineolic thyme (*Thymus mastichina* L. *cineolifera*).

The other distinctive characteristics of 'Thym de Provence' include: cleanness, homogeneity of the leaves, near-total absence of impurities (for thyme presented as leaves).

When the thyme is sold in bouquets, the bouquets are regular, well-shaped and leafy.

These specificities confer a solid reputation on 'Thym de Provence'.

#### *Causal link*

The characteristics of the well-drained soils of the geographical area, together with the temperature regime, encourage the spontaneous growth of 'Thym de Provence' and its cultivation. In order to grow in good conditions and develop its aromatic strength, 'Thym de Provence' requires the heat and sunshine present in the geographical area.

The traditional varieties selected, which are specific to this climate, promote the secretion of a highly characteristic essential oil that is rich in carvacrol and accentuates the warm and pungent aromas typical of 'Thym de Provence'. The significant amount of carvacrol in the essential oil of the leaves is a secondary characteristic following from the adaptation of the plant to its environment, which is distinguished, in particular, by very dry summers.

The controlled irrigation makes it possible to limit grassing (which affects the final product's cleanness) and maintain low-humidity conditions close to those in the natural environment.

The harvesting, carried out at just the right time by the producers, brings out the aromas better and also affects the cleanness of 'Thym de Provence'.

The practices of drying or freezing the thyme rapidly after harvesting as well as the aerating storage ensure that thyme homogenous in colour is obtained and contribute to the fixing of the aromas. These crucial steps benefit from the local operators' experience, in particular from their ability to rapidly evaluate visually the quality of the freshly harvested product.

The cleanness of 'Thym de Provence' is guaranteed by the know-how linked to the working and sorting stage, which play an important part in ridding the plant of most of the stems, and by limiting breakage.

'Thym de Provence' presented in regular, well-shaped and leafy bouquets benefits from the know-how required to eliminate thick stems and evaluate the humidity, including choosing the right moment for this operation.

The presence of thyme in Provence, and the aromatic and gustative particularities of 'Thym de Provence', are often cited in literature: from Pliny the Elder in the 1st century to contemporary authors such as Marcel Pagnol (*Les Bucoliques*, Grasset, 1958). 'Thym de Provence' is a pillar of the gastronomic heritage of Provence, and it is widely marketed in different forms.

**Reference to publication of the specification**

(the second subparagraph of Article 6(1) of this Regulation)

<https://www.inao.gouv.fr/fichier/CDC-IGP-ThymdeProvence.pdf>

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