

Publication of an 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

(2006/C 320/07)

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 from the date of this publication.

SUMMARY

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006

Application for registration according to Article 5 and Article 17(2)

‘MEJILLÓN DE GALICIA’ or ‘MEXILLÓN DE GALICIA’

EC No: ES/PDO/005/0156/10.10.2000

PDO (X) PGI ()

This summary has been drawn up for information only. For full details, interested parties are invited to consult the full version of the product specification obtainable from the national authorities indicated in section 1 or from the European Commission ⁽¹⁾.

1. *Responsible department in the Member State:*

Name: Subdirección General de Calidad y Promoción Agroalimentaria. Dirección General de Industria Agroalimentaria y Alimentación. Secretaría General de Agricultura y Alimentación. Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación

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2. *Group:*

Name: Organización de Productores de Mejillón de Galicia (OPP-18) Orden Ministerial de 30 de diciembre de 1986 (BOE nº 23 de 27 de Enero de 1987)

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Composition: Producers/processors (X) Other ()

3. *Type of product:*

Class 1.7.: Fresh fish, molluscs and crustaceans and products derived therefrom

⁽¹⁾ European Commission, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, Agricultural Product Quality Policy, B-1049 Brussels.

4. **Specification** (summary of requirements under Article 4(2))

4.1. Name: 'Mejillón de Galicia' or 'Mexillón de Galicia'

4.2. Description: Fresh mussels of the species *Mytilus galloprovincialis*, cultivated using rafts.

This is a bivalve mollusc whose shell consists of two identical valves of calcium carbonate covered by a layer called the periostracum. The high productivity of the Galician *rías* [flooded river valleys] generates a wealth of marine flora and fauna, as a result of which species such as barnacles, polychaets, bryozoans and algae often adhere to the periostracum.

The meat inside is normally creamy orange in colour and comprises two fleshy lobules with a sinuous dark violet band running along the edge.

In order for the mussels to be covered by the Protected Designation of Origin 'Mejillón de Galicia' when they reach the fresh-consumption market, they must pass through a purification/dispatch centre in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 853/2004. They must also be purified using sea water from the Galician *rías* in the provinces of A Coruña and Pontevedra to ensure that the quality and characteristics deriving from geographical factors linked to cultivation remain unchanged.

4.3. Geographical area: The cultivation area will be the internal maritime area of the Galician *rías* in the provinces of A Coruña and Pontevedra, which are authorised to cultivate mussels using rafts. It will comprise the following areas: Ría de Ares-Sada, Ría de Muros-Noia, Ría de Arousa, Ría de Pontevedra and Ría de Vigo.

The purification/dispatch area is the coastal provinces of A Coruña and Pontevedra.

4.4. Proof of origin: The Regulatory Board will create a 'register of rafts' and conduct the necessary periodic checks aboard the rafts in order to confirm whether the conditions which entitled them to be listed still apply. The Board will also check the cultivation processes to ensure that these comply with the conditions in the specification, and make a note of all this in the relevant documentation.

Once the cultivated mussels reach port, a certification document will be issued for each batch, stating all the data identifying origin, the batch characteristics obtained by sampling, the farmer and the consignee. A unique identifier code will be allocated at this stage in order to ensure traceability.

In order to be covered by the Protected Designation of Origin 'Mejillón de Galicia' when it reaches the fresh-consumption market, each batch of mussels entering the purification/dispatch centres must have the relevant documentation. The Regulatory Board will create a 'register of purification/dispatch centres' and conduct the necessary periodic checks in order to confirm whether the conditions which entitled them to be listed still apply. The Board will also check the processes and products to ensure that these comply with the conditions in the specification, and make a note of all this in the relevant documentation. The processes for treating the mussels inside the purification/dispatch centres must comply with the rules issued by the technical services of the Regulatory Board for the Protected Designation of Origin so that the requirements for checking traceability are met.

4.5. Method of production: This will be the traditional method used in Galicia. It is carried out on board a floating structure called a raft [*batea*], which has a maximum surface area of five hundred and fifty square metres. The ropes may not exceed five hundred in number and will be no more than twelve metres in length.

The cultivation stages will be: obtaining the seed, pre-fattening the seed, thinning and harvesting. Once the cultivated molluscs attain marketable size and condition, the mussel ropes suspended from the raft are raised (until then, they have been submerged in the sea). This is done using hydraulic cranes located on board the auxiliary cultivation boats. The ropes are hoisted and immediately handled so that the mussels are removed from them.

Once on land, the entire batch undergoes random testing by the inspection services in order to determine the product's yield and classification, and to ensure that all the obligatory conditions have been met. This process is documented and registered, and will accompany and identify the batch.

Mussels from a cultivation area which, for microbiological purposes, is classified as area 'B', will be required to be taken to a purification centre where they will be purified using water which must come from the Galician *rías* in the provinces of A Coruña and Pontevedra. If the mussels come from a cultivation area classified for microbiological purposes as area 'A', they may be dispatched directly to the market from a dispatch centre. In both cases, the centres are responsible for conditioning the mussels so that they meet the requirements in Regulation (EC) No 853/2004.

Once the mussels have been conditioned so that they meet the market-entry criteria (i.e. once they have been purified and had the byssus removed, as appropriate), they are handled and conditioned in a conventional atmosphere, under vacuum, or in a protected atmosphere. They are presented in accordance with market requirements, using materials authorised under applicable legislation, in different formats and weights which form independent sales units. A control label and tamper-proof seal are attached to the latter for the purposes of guaranteeing traceability.

Packaging must take place in the geographical area described in section 4.3 of the present summary.

This restriction is justified for the purposes of preserving product quality, given:

- the perishable nature of the product,
- its susceptibility to degradation,
- the high risk of deterioration due to improper handling.

In addition, the mussels must be purified using sea water from the Galician *rías* in the provinces of A Coruña and Pontevedra in order to ensure that the quality and characteristics deriving from geographical factors linked to cultivation (accredited in section 4.6) remain unchanged. The purification/dispatch centres will accordingly be located near the coast.

Furthermore, as stated in the actual definition of a dispatch centre which is laid down in the aforementioned Regulation (EC) No 853/2004, these will be 'any on-shore or off-shore establishment for the reception, conditioning, washing, cleaning, grading, wrapping and packaging of live bivalve molluscs fit for human consumption'.

- 4.6. Link: Historical link: mussels have from earliest times been a food source for the first inhabitants of the Galician coast. There is ample evidence of this in the *castros* [fortified villages] and in historical documents (Navaz, 1942, Vázquez Varela and García Quintela, 1998, VVAA 1988 and 1998, Senén-López Gómez, 1999). Following on from these beginnings, one should highlight that mussels have featured in the most outstanding gastronomic events from the past (e.g. at the Spanish Hapsburg court, in *escabeche real*). There is no doubt that the history of Galicia and its coast is closely linked to mussels. This relationship thus dates back to the sixth century BC and continues to the present day, as evidenced by the multitude of place-names, personal names and gastronomic festivals (*mejillonadas*), etc. Galicia's very landscape would be inconceivable today without the rafts in its *rías*, reflecting the development of the mussel sector. A specific vocabulary with words deriving from mussel cultivation has even been coined: *mexilla* (breeding of mussels), thinning (part of the production process), etc. Such is the historical tradition that it has engendered a specific system of cultivation which is recognised internationally as the *Galician system*, with equipment and materials of dedicated design, and traditional working methods which result in a distinctive product (López Capont, 1973; López Capont and Fidalgo Fernández, 1977; Otero Pedrayo, 1980; Lorenzo, 1982; Calo-Lourido, 1985 a, b and c).

Natural environment: the Galician *rías* are considered to be ecosystems and have significant primary production, involving the cultivation of bivalve molluscs and mussels in particular. These species are low down the food chain, which is essential in order to obtain large yields. Differences in production (growth and meat yield) observed in mussels in the Galician *rías* are due to physiological adaptive processes connected with nutrient absorption (Fernandez Reiriz and Labarta). The unique quality of mussels cultivated in the Galician *rías* is due to their adaptation to the characteristics of the ecosystem where they are cultivated, and is directly linked to food availability and quality.

4.7. Inspection body:

Name: Consello Regulador DOP Mexillón de Galicia (complies with standard EN 45.011)

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4.8. Labelling: The Board will apply its own label, which must identify all packaging which contains mussels covered by the Protected Designation of Origin. The words *Denominación de Origen Protegida Mexillón de Galicia* [Protected Designation of Origin, *Mexillón de Galicia*] must appear conspicuously on the label, beneath the logo. The control codes uniquely identifying the mussels in accordance with the parameters set will also appear.

Products manufactured using *Mejillón de Galicia DOP* [*Mejillón de Galicia PDO*] as the primary material (including where a technological treatment or conservation process has been followed) may be sent to the consumer in packages which state *Elaborado con Denominación de Origen Protegida Mejillón de Galicia* [Made with Protected Designation of Origin *Mejillón de Galicia*], without the Community logo, provided that:

- *Mejillón de Galicia DOP*, certified as such, is the exclusive component of the product category concerned, and
- Individuals using the words *Elaborado con Denominación de Origen Protegida Mejillón de Galicia* have been authorised.

In this context, the Regulatory Board will authorise use of the words *Elaborado con Denominación de Origen Protegida Mexillón de Galicia* in the products manufactured, as it holds the intellectual property rights granted by registering the designation *Mejillón de Galicia DOP*.

The Regulatory Board will enter in the relevant registers those authorised to use the words *elaborado con Denominación de Origen Mejillón de Galicia* and ensure that the protected designation is used correctly.

4.9. National requirements:

- Law No 2/2005 of 18 February 2005 promoting and protecting food quality in Galicia
 - Law No 25/1970 of 2 December 1970 on rules governing viticulture, wine and Spirits
 - Decree No 835/72 of 23 March 1972 Regulation implementing Law No 25/1970
 - Royal Decree No 4189/82 of 29 December 1982 on the transfer of functions and services of the State Administration to the Autonomous Community of Galicia as regards designations of origin, viticulture and enology and nautical-fisheries professional training
 - Royal Decree No 728/1998 of 8 July 1998 laying down rules applicable to specific and generic designations of origin for non-wine agri-food products
 - Royal Decree No 1414/2005 of 25 November 2005 on the procedure governing applications for entry into the Community register of protected designations of origin and protected geographical indications and opposition thereto
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