

OTHER ACTS

COMMISSION

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

(2009/C 108/09)

This publication confers the right to object to the application pursuant to Article 7 of Council Regulation (EC) No 510/2006Publication of an application pursuant to Article (1). Statements of objection must reach the Commission within six months from the date of this publication

SINGLE DOCUMENT

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006**‘CORNISH SARDINES’****EC No: UK-PGI-0005-0589-23.1.2007****PGI (X) PDO ()****1. Name:**

‘Cornish Sardines’

2. Member State or Third Country:

United Kingdom

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

Class 1.7 — Fresh fish, molluscs and crustaceans and products derived therefrom

3.2. Description of product to which the name in 1 applies:

Cornish Sardines is the name given to the pelagic fish of the species *sardina pilchardus* which have been caught up to six miles off the Cornish Coast, landed and processed in the county of Cornwall. The colloquial name given to the fish is pilchard.

Cornish sardines are metallic green or olive coloured along the back with golden flanks and pearlescent silver shading to silvery-white on the belly. There are a series of dark spots along the upper flanks, sometimes with a second or third series below. The size of the fish can vary during the season. Each kilogram of sardines must contain between 9 and 18 sardines.

The flesh has a firm, fine texture when fresh; this soon softens and deteriorates exponentially as temperatures rise above 1 ° C. The individual strength of taste varies with the freshness of the fish and level of fat in the flesh.

Fresh Cornish Sardines should be bright and firm, with most scales intact, gills should be dark pink or red in colour. They should be plump and smell fresh and are at their best in late summer when they are moist and full of taste. Cornish Sardines may be sold either fresh or frozen.

(1) OJ L 93, 31.3.2006, p. 12.

3.3. *Raw materials:*

Not Applicable

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

Not Applicable

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

The fish must be caught within the Cornwall Sea Fisheries Committee (CSFC) area of jurisdiction — up to six miles off the Cornish Coast; and landed and processed within the county of Cornwall.

Processing in this context is regarded as any one, or a combination of filleting, heading, gutting, freezing, marinating, salting and packing.

— Filleting is defined as the manual or mechanical separation of the head and backbone from the meat.

— Heading and gutting is defined as removal of the head and intestine, with the tail on or off.

— Freezing is defined as the entire product being brought and held below a temperature of 0 ° C whereby it changes into a solid state.

— Salting or marinating is defined as the preservation of the product by the reduction of the water phase, through the addition of salt and/or acids, to create an environment inhospitable to spoilage bacteria.

— Packing is defined as being packed in individual containers of less than 10 kg.

3.6. *Specific rules concerning slicing, grating, packaging, etc.:*

Not Applicable

3.7. *Specific rules concerning labelling:*

Not Applicable

4. Concise definition of the geographical area:

The County of Cornwall including the coastal sea areas of the Cornwall Sea Fisheries Committee (CSFC) area of jurisdiction — up to six miles off the Cornish Coast.

The jurisdiction of the Cornish Sea Fisheries District was created by order under the Sea Fisheries Regulation Act of 1888 and empowered to make bylaws for regulation of sea fisheries within the district. The CSFC is responsible for the statutory enforcement of fisheries legislation around the Coast of Cornwall. The coastal district covered is up to six miles offshore, around 1 350 nautical miles.

5. Link with the geographical area:

5.1. *Specificity of the geographical area:*

There is a very specific link between the geographical area and the fishing practices including the catching, landing and processing of Cornish Sardines, these are well documented traditional fishing methods. The Cornish Sardine is drawn to the geographical area by its environment, i.e. the conditions available to it in the shallow waters of the bays close to the Cornish coast. These waters provide the environment preferred by the fish. The North Atlantic Oscillation (NAO) is the main climatic phenomenon of the Atlantic area in which Cornwall lies and is generally responsible for the temperatures and tides which also control where the phytoplankton, i.e. food, for Cornish Sardines is found.

The specific link with the geographical area is that fishing for the sardines takes place when the fish move to these shallow bays. This characteristic style fishing technique is reminiscent of the traditional practices of previous generations.

Traditionally, the fish were caught when they came closer to the shore. In the past this was through actual sightings of the shoals by scouts on lookout on the cliffs, once the shoals of fish were sighted, the lookouts would direct (by a local semaphore) the vessels to make the catch. The area was limited by the line of sight from the cliff tops. This tradition continues; the knowledge of where the fish congregate has been passed down through generations, although modern technology has replaced the cliff top watch. The addition of modern technology means that the distance offshore has broadened over the decades but the local fleets still stay within sight of the shore following the fish where they congregate in shallow water. The geographical limits of the fish catching operations are all within the six mile limit of the CSFC and the area therefore well describes the fish catching area.

Because the fish are fragile they have to be landed quickly and so the small boats coming from local ports in each area return back to their local ports which are all within Cornwall. This is a continuing tradition of this fishery.

5.2. *Specificity of the product:*

The long-standing historical tradition and technique of catching, landing and processing sardines in the specified geographical area forms the basis of the link to the geographical area. The fish are now caught using modern sustainable fishing techniques which ensure good management of the fishery.

5.3. *Causal link between the geographical area and a specific quality, the reputation or other characteristic of the product:*

The Catch

The life cycle of the fish require them to swim close to the shore and the appearance of the shoals gave rise to the traditional fishing methods which historically became a community event. Fishermen and townsfolk came together to bring the fish in.

Whilst methods may have evolved fishing remains a vital part Cornwall's economy. A diverse fleet of vessels continues to catch Cornish Sardines from ports, harbours and coves dotted around the 329 mile Cornish coastline.

The long-standing tradition of fishing in the area is evident in the skills acquired by the Cornish fishermen. Skills which have been passed down from generation to generation include the ability to locate sardines, and also the experienced delicate handling of the gear for catching.

A successful catch also depends on the tradition of vessels working as a team; several vessels from one port or business group working together.

Landing and processing

In the past each port had storage and processing premises (fish cellars) and the local population joined in to ensure that the fish products were processed quickly. In a similar way today the delicate composition of the fish requires them to be landed promptly. The boats return to their local Cornish ports and from there they are taken to factories in Cornwall for packaging, storage, processing.

The fish is processed in the defined area of the county of Cornwall. This area, includes the traditional cove and ports where processing took place in the past. The modern technology and hygiene standards and the pressures on coastal property now means that the factories on industrial estates have taken over from fish cellars in village harbours but all the factories are still within Cornwall and the geographical area describes these well.

When whole, fresh fish is packaged in ice and cool boxes of 10 kg or less for transportation to customers. Otherwise the fish are frozen and packaged in boxes or bags for frozen storage and then onward to customers. Any processing of the fish must take place within the area of Cornwall.

Reputation

The name of Cornwall and 'Cornish' was used for centuries on the fish products and are therefore strongly linked by reputation with the fish caught, landed and processed in the geographical area.

The first recorded exports of salted sardines (known then as pilchards) were in 1555 from the Cornish port Looe. During the 17th and 18th centuries these exports become one of the mainstays of the Cornish fishing industry with the largest recorded landings being for 1871, equivalent to some 16 000 tonnes. The Catholic-based countries of Europe were the main recipients, particularly Italy where the product was known in the north as 'Salacche Inglesi'.

The use of the name Cornish Sardine and the reputation of the quality of the product has grown in the past 10 years due to the hard work of the members of the Cornish Sardine Management Association and the high quality of their product. Cornish Sardines have achieved an increasing volume of sales particularly in the United Kingdom retail market where they have acquired a cachet.

Reference To Publication Of The Specification

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/foodrin/foodname/pfn/products/documents/cornishsardines-pdo.pdf>
