

**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**

(2011/C 304/11)

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

SINGLE DOCUMENT

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

**'SQUACQUERONE DI ROMAGNA'**

**EC No: IT-PDO-0005-0794-04.12.2009**

**PGI ( ) PDO ( X )**

**1. Name:**

'Squacquerone di Romagna'

**2. Member State or Third Country:**

Italy

**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:**

Squacquerone di Romagna PDO is a soft cheese that matures rapidly produced from cow's milk from the defined geographical area indicated in point 4. When released for consumption the cheese Squacquerone di Romagna PDO must have the following characteristics:

Morphological characteristics:

Weight: the cheese Squacquerone di Romagna PDO weighs from between 0,1 kg to 2 kg.

Appearance: the cheese Squacquerone di Romagna PDO is mother-of-pearl white in colour and without any rind or crust.

Form: depends on the container in which it is placed, as its very creamy texture means that it does not have a distinct shape.

Physical and chemical characteristics: fat content (of dry matter): between 46 and 55 %; moisture content: between 58 and 65 %; microbiological characteristics: pH: between 4,95 and 5,30.

Organoleptic characteristics:

Taste: pleasant, sweet, slightly acidic and subtly salty.

Aroma: delicate, distinctive milk taste, with a grassy note.

<sup>(1)</sup> OJ L 93, 31.3.2006, p. 12.

Consistency: soft, creamy, sticky, runny, extremely spreadable.

3.3. *Raw materials (for processed products only):*

Squacquerone di Romagna PDO is a soft cheese made from whole cow's milk from breeds of cattle reared in the geographical area specified in point 4, namely Italian Friesian, Alpine Brown and Romagnola.

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

At least 60 % of the dry mater of the cattle's total ration must consist of forage and silage, supplemented with feed.

The forage and silage is composed of legumes and grasses grown exclusively in the geographic area defined in point 4.

It must be pointed out that the wide variety of species grown also includes various medicinal plants, among which the main varieties used are *Pomposa*, *Classe*, *Garisenda*, *Delta* and *Prosementi*.

The feed serves as a source of concentrated, high-energy nutrition and may include:

1. Proteins: whole seeds and pulses such as soya, beans, sunflower and peas, and also soya and sunflower flours.
2. Fibres such as dry soya pulp, bran and hulls.
3. Energy: maize grain, barley, sorghum, wheat, oats, vegetable oils, soya oil, extruded whole flax seed.

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

The production phases that must take place in the identified geographical area of origin are: milk production and processing.

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

Squacquerone di Romagna must be packed within the identified geographical area, since lacking a rind and therefore being 100 % edible, it is particularly subject to the risk of contamination after production, and therefore to deterioration, through an increase in its level of environmental bacteria, which could enter into contact with the surface of the product during the various stages. Furthermore, as Squacquerone di Romagna is a fresh product, all microbial growth must be avoided during the shelf-life period. In order to avoid the risk of deterioration, the product should be packaged inside the certified production facility. The primary packaging for Squacquerone di Romagna PDO is food grade paper or other appropriate containers suitable for this product, the specificity of which is its soft and creamy texture.

3.7. *Specific rules concerning labelling:*

The cheese produced in accordance with these specifications bears on the packaging the words 'Squacquerone di Romagna — Denominazione d'Origine Protetta' or 'Squacquerone di Romagna — DOP', accompanied by the EU logo. The label must also bear the name, business name and address of the producer/packager. The product must be maintained at a temperature of between 0 °C and + 6 °C. The maximum storage temperature must be indicated on the label. The following label must be affixed to the external protective wrapping of the cheese: Squacquerone di Romagna in Sari Extra Bold Italic font, in the authorised colours Pantone No 2747 blue and white and of a size proportional to the package. It is forbidden to include any description that is not specifically set out in the production specification.

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

The production area for Squacquerone di Romagna PDO includes the following provinces of the Region of Emilia-Romagna: Ravenna, Forlì-Cesena, Rimini, Bologna; and part of the province of Ferrara, bordered on the west by trunk road No 64 (Porrettana) and on the north by the river Po.

#### 5. Link with the geographical area:

##### 5.1. Specificity of the geographical area:

The area in which the cheese Squacquerone di Romagna PDO is produced is characterised by land situated above the flood plain. Cereals, fodder crops and specialised intensive crops are farmed on this land. The area where Squacquerone di Romagna PDO is produced has a temperate sub-continental climate. From time immemorial, this area of origin has witnessed the presence of farms primarily involved in crop production, with limited stock breeding with a dual purpose of milk production and for ploughing, etc. Part of the milk used for human consumption was processed into Squacquerone di Romagna and was intended to supplement the farmer's income through bartering.

Studies carried out on the Squacquerone di Romagna PDO cheese have demonstrated the characteristics of the natural cultures used, revealing a definite uniformity among the species of bacteria it contains: namely autochthonous *Streptococcus thermophilus* biotypes. These natural cultures are developed in fermenters within the geographical area indicated in point 4, always using only milk from the identified geographical area.

Production techniques have remained very similar to historic methods and must take account of the fact that cheese-making times vary according to the season: longer in winter and shorter in summer. The producers' skill and experience plays a key role in obtaining the right consistency of the cheese.

##### 5.2. Specificity of the product:

The salient characteristics of Squacquerone di Romagna cheese that distinguish it from other fast maturing soft cheeses are its mother-of-pearl white colour and its delicate, distinctive milky aroma, with a grassy note.

Its principal characteristic, which has significantly contributed to the reputation of Squacquerone di Romagna, is its creamy-gelatinous texture and its high spreadability because of its soft consistency.

##### 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 characteristics of Squacquerone cheese, in particular its creaminess and high spreadability because of its soft consistency, are the result of the type of milk used to produce the cheese, a milk with specific properties that is low in protein and fat because of how the cattle are fed, which is principally determined by the identified geographical area in question.

To be more precise, the specific qualities of the forage cultivated entirely in the geographical area defined in point 4, which is rich in sugars and highly digestible fibre, provide the cattle with a characteristic diet, notable for its low fat and starch inputs, compensated for by the energy provided by the forage typical of this area. This is how milk low in protein and fats is produced, which determines the typical characteristics of Squacquerone, namely its soft consistency. The milk used produces the cheese's organoleptic properties described in point 3.2, namely its soft and creamy texture, sweet, slightly acidic taste and delicate aroma with a grassy note.

Furthermore, it is thanks to the experience of the producers, who successfully adapt the cheese-making times to the seasons, that they are able to avoid the cheese becoming chalky or overly compact.

Another important link between Squacquerone di Romagna and the identified geographical area is the use of autochthonous culture strains. Taxonomically, *Streptococcus thermophilus* is the species identified in all the natural cultures studied and that characterises the milk microflora typical of Squacquerone di Romagna PDO. The various biotypes isolated show particular physiological and biochemical characteristics that are not found in the selected strains in international collections, demonstrating once again the uniqueness and specificity of the bacterial spectrum used to produce Squacquerone di Romagna. Autochthonous *Streptococcus thermophilus* biotypes have been isolated from various raw milk samples taken from several dairies in the traditional production area for this cheese; these biotypes can therefore be considered autochthonous and, taken as a whole, constitute a characteristic signature of associated microbes that is the result of natural and human selection in the specific ecological niche that distinguishes this particular area of Italy.

**Reference to publication of the specification:**

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

This Ministry launched the procedure referred to in Article 5(5) of Regulation (EC) No 510/2006 with the publication of the proposal for recognising 'Squacquerone di Romagna' as a protected designation of origin in *Official Gazette of the Italian Republic* No 75 of 30 March 2006.

The full text of the product specification is available:

at <http://www.politicheagricole.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/3335>

or by going directly to the home page of the Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policy (<http://www.politicheagricole.it>) and clicking on 'Qualità e sicurezza' (in the top right-hand corner of the screen) and finally on 'Disciplinari di Produzione all'esame dell'UE'.

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