

## OTHER ACTS

## EUROPEAN 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**

(2012/C 38/15)

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****'ISLE OF MAN QUEENIES'****EC No: UK-PDO-0005-0855-08.02.2011****PGI ( ) PDO ( X )****1. Name:**

'Isle of Man Queenies'

**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:**

Isle of Man Queenies is the name given to queen scallops caught in Isle of Man waters.

The queen scallop (*Aequipecten opercularis*) is a medium-sized species of scallop, an edible 'marine bivalve mollusc' of the family Pectinidae. The shell can vary in colour including yellow, orange, red, brown and purple and grows to a maximum of 90 mm in diameter. There are some 19–22 broad radiating ribs on both halves, with numerous concentric growth rings running across the shell. The meat or main body of the queenie is far smaller than a king scallop; it is a circular muscle, cylindrical in shape 20 mm in diameter and 15 mm in height. The meat is opaque/cream in colour; a two-part orange/white, crescent shaped roe is attached to the body. The queenie can be served with the roe left intact or removed.

Isle of Man Queenies are caught in Isle of Man territorial waters, mainly by Manx registered vessels, although other registered fishing vessels who hold the appropriate licence, may also fish for them and land them on the Isle of Man if they chose to. They are subsequently landed and processed on the Isle of Man.

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

Queenies are sold:

- naturally packed 'dry' (unsoaked),
- nr individually quick frozen (IQF),
- or as fresh or frozen 'half shell' (still attached to half of the shell),
- loose or vacuum packed — depending on customer requirements,
- market size and weight depending on customer requirements.

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

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

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

#### Fishing/harvesting the Queenies

Isle of Man Queenies can only be caught during the queenie season which traditionally starts on 1 June. This is entirely due to the physiology of the animal, and the unusual way in which it is caught. Most species of scallop are harvested by means of some sort of dredge, which 'scrapes' the scallop from the seabed floor. Unusually, Isle of Man Queenies are taken by means of a light otter trawl. This relies on the escape response of the queenie in response to stimulation — they flap up into the net when disturbed by a light chain towed slightly ahead of the net. The escape response is very slow at low water temperatures, meaning that the trawl fishery is only viable between June and December, when water temperatures are at their highest. In years with a very cold spring, water temperatures may not have risen sufficiently until the middle of June.

This unique method of taking Queenies means that, unlike dredged scallops, no grit is forced inside the shell during capture. This leads to a much higher quality meat compared to dredge caught queenies, higher meat yields, and also ensures that undersized queenies returned to the seabed have extremely high survival rates, unlike dredge caught scallops, where discard mortality can be very high.

#### Production stages

- (a) Manx Queenies are trawl caught using 80–90 mm gauge nets. The catch is washed and sorted aboard the vessel.
- (b) Queenies are iced or chilled on board the vessel within two hours of capture.
- (c) Fishing vessels land their catch at harbours in Peel, Ramsey, Douglas, and Port St Mary.
- (d) The Queenies are transported by covered lorry; within a two-hour period of landing, to an Isle of Man processing factory where they are chilled overnight.
- (e) Queenies are hand-processed (shucked) the following day using a flat metal knife.
- (f) Meat is removed and washed twice by hand — washing is very fast, to prevent water being absorbed by the meat.
- (g) The roe is left intact.
- (h) The Queenie meat is weighed.
- (i) The meat is naturally packed — dry (unsoaked) or individually quick frozen at  $-35^{\circ}\text{C}$ .

## Half Shell

Stages (a-c as above)

(d) Hand-processed (shucked) opened using a flat metal tool; half shell discarded, along with the gills, stomach and mantle.

(e) Meat and roe left on shell.

(f) Individually quick frozen or fresh.

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

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### 3.7. Specific rules concerning labelling:

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## 4. Concise definition of the geographical area:

The Isle of Man

The Isle of Man Queenie is fished in extensive beds within the Manx territorial sea. This area of 3 917 square kilometres legally extends to 12 nautical miles or the median line from the Isle of Man base line.

## 5. Link with the geographical area:

### 5.1. Specificity of the geographical area:

#### Environment

The Gulf Stream moderates the Island's climate which benefits from a warming temperature that provides a temperate climate. Summers tend to be cool and fairly sunny, while the winters are mild and wet with very little frost and snow.

The Isle of Man Queenie is fished in extensive beds within the Manx territorial sea. Queenies have distinct habitat preferences and live in aggregated distributions (beds) around the Isle of Man. Their relative immobility has resulted in the comparatively unchanged geographical position of the beds. Beds may be permanent aggregations, precise in their location and separated by clearly demarked areas that are unsuitable for scallops.

Queenie beds have been documented in the Isle of Man for many generations. Early references to the occurrence of abundant populations of queen scallops around the Isle of Man are cited in Marine Forna of the Isle of Man (Moore, 1937). There are a limited number of major areas within the geographical range where population is sufficiently abundant to support a commercial fishery. Such areas or grounds are usually widely separated by areas that are environmentally unsuitable for the species. Within each ground, there are usually a number of regions or beds which can be of an area of several square kilometres, where queen scallop abundance is higher than elsewhere.

#### Water quality and temperature

The Queenie beds in the Manx territorial sea are surrounded by high quality waters in respect of both organic and inorganic pollutants. Basic environmental sampling of seawaters off the Isle of Man has the longest time series in the British Isles, extending back to the very early 20th century. As scientific advances progressed, further environmental and biological parameters have been monitored and, presently, the Isle of Man government monitors many variables including nutrients, bacteria, phytoplankton and phytoplankton toxins.

The Isle of Man can demonstrate consistently, high water quality standards with scientific research that dates back to 1904.

The tidal range around the Isle of Man is the greatest in Western Europe. This tidal range, coupled with the relatively shallow seabed surrounding the Island, means that exceptionally strong tides flow around the Isle of Man. Whilst presenting unique challenges to fishermen using light trawls, these tides also mean that Isle of Man queenies have a constant source of planktonic food sweeping past them, assisting their fast growth rates, and distribution of their planktonic larval stage.

#### Tradition

Fishing has been a traditional industry in Isle of Man, with herring fishing well established and organised in the 1500s. Queenie fishing originally started in the mid 1800s when they were used as bait in longline fishing for cod.

During this time, Queenie beds provided a prolific feeding ground for the shoals of cod. In the 1960s, Manx fishermen began to explore the possibility of fishing for queenies. In 1969, the first commercially caught Queenies were landed in Peel and quickly became recognised as a delicacy.

The island's individual Queenie beds have been given names by fishermen such as Lower and Higher Chickens, Warts Bank and Burrow Head.

The Manx fishing fleet extended to approximately 60 vessels in 1971 with a peak in production being recorded at this time of approximately 7 500 tonnes (caught live weight). The majority of this catch was exported directly to America.

#### 5.2. Specificity of the product:

The queen scallop (*Aequipecten opercularis*) is a medium-sized species of scallop, an edible 'marine bivalve mollusc' in the family Pectinidae. The shell can vary in colour including yellow, orange, red, brown and purple and grows to a maximum of 90 mm in diameter. The meat or main body of the queenie is far smaller than a king scallop which is a different species. It is a circular muscle, cylindrical in shape 20 mm in diameter and 15 mm in height. The meat is opaque/cream in colour; a two-part orange/white, crescent shaped roe is attached to the body. When cooked, the queenie is firm and smooth with a meaty texture which remains moist. Its taste is uniquely sweet and distinctive from that of other scallops with a delicate flavour and a mild taste of the sea. Isle of Man Queenies are caught by a light trawl in Isle of Man territorial waters, mainly by Manx registered vessels, and are subsequently landed, processed and packaged on the Isle of Man.

Queenies are a fast growing long-lived species with a maximum lifespan that rarely exceeds five years. They reach market size of 55 mm within 2–3 years depending on the available micro-algae feed from the water column.

The Gulf Stream moderates the Island's climate which benefits from a warming temperature that provides a temperate climate. Queenies have distinct habitat preferences and live in aggregated distributions (beds) around the Isle of Man, their relative immobility has resulted in the comparatively unchanged geographical position of the beds. Beds may be permanent aggregations, precise in their location and separated by clearly demarked areas that are unsuitable for queenies.

#### 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 combination of environmental conditions — water quality, temperature, strong tidal flows and availability of suitable planktonic food, mean that Queenie densities in the Isle of Man territorial sea are consistently high, and that the fast growing meats produced are particularly succulent. In addition, the meat content within the shell is higher than those found elsewhere. Typical meat yields from Isle of Man queenies is 12–14 %, the typical yield from queenies caught elsewhere is 6–8 %.

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In the early 1980s the Isle of Man began to create new markets in France and Spain, for which queenie was sold as a 'roe on' product. At the present time, Isle of Man Queenies are sold to markets in Spain, France, Italy and the United Kingdom. Processors are looking for ways into new quality markets on a continual basis, although production will always be limited by the natural productivity of the beds, and the need to ensure sustainable stocks for future years.

The Isle of Man Queen Scallop won the Billingsgate Sustainable Seafood of the Year 2011 Award, at an annual event in London attended by a mixture of food writers, seafood buyers, restaurant owners and environmental NGOs. This prestigious award is presented after the finalists have each given a 20 minute presentation on the sustainable nature of the fishery in question. A link to the award can be found online ([http://www.seafoodtraining.org/celebrating\\_sustainable\\_seafood\\_at\\_billingsgate\\_school.htm](http://www.seafoodtraining.org/celebrating_sustainable_seafood_at_billingsgate_school.htm)).

The Isle of Man won the award as it was able to demonstrate, using externally commissioned, and published science to back up the 'sustainability' claims made. This same science has also underpinned the Marine Stewardship Council accreditation process for Isle of Man Queenies, that is about to reach a conclusion. On 20 May 2011, the Isle of Man Queenie fishery was formally awarded Marine Stewardship Council Accreditation, the first scallop fishery in the Northern Hemisphere to do so, and only the second in the world. Details of the accreditation, and the assessors' findings, can be found online (<http://www.msc.org/track-a-fishery/in-assessment/north-east-atlantic/isle-of-man-queen-scallop>).

**Reference to publication of the specification:**

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

<http://archive.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/food/industry/regional/foodname/products/documents/isle-of-man-queenie-pdo.pdf>

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