

## 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 55/08)

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 of the date of this publication.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006

‘ABENSBERGER SPARGEL/ABENSBERGER QUALITÄTSSPARGEL’

EC No: DE-PGI-0005-0852-26.01.2011

PGI ( X ) PDO ( )

1. **Name:**

‘Abensberger Spargel/Abensberger Qualitätsspargel’

2. **Member State or third country:**

Germany

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

Class 1.6 — Fruit, vegetables and cereals, fresh or processed

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

Asparagus (*Asparagus officinalis*) is a member of the *Asparagaceae* family. The edible stalks of asparagus are the shoots of a perennial shrub which are put up for sale peeled or unpeeled. ‘Abensberger Spargel’ is produced according to the rules of good farming practice.

White Abensberg asparagus may vary in colour from white to violet and may not exceed 22 cm in length, while green Abensberg asparagus may not exceed 27 cm in length.

With the exception of what is sold by the producer directly to the consumer, Abensberg asparagus is prepared in accordance with UNECE Standard FFV04 (asparagus). However, this standard also applies to white and violet asparagus up to a minimum diameter of 5 mm. In addition, broken asparagus shoots may also be marketed under the ‘broken asparagus’ category.

The taste of ‘Abensberger Spargel’ is characterised by the typically strong aroma of the asparagus. Harvesting once or twice a day and careful and appropriate handling after harvesting guarantee that ‘Abensberger Spargel’ will reach consumers fresh regardless of the marketing channel.

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

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:*

Production of 'Abensberger Spargel', from growing to picking, must take place in the defined geographical area.

The asparagus produced in the Abensberg area is mainly the cultivated form of white asparagus, which is grown underground in large ridges. Due to the lack of sunlight, the shoots growing upwards in the ridges fail to turn green, and therefore white or reddish-white shoots with white to violet tips are produced, normally to a length of 22 cm.

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

Freshlyharvested asparagus must first be washed off and then cleaned with fresh water (from the tap).

After harvesting and cleaning, the cut asparagus must be rapidly chilled to preserve its quality. 'Rapid chilling' means cooling the asparagus with ice-cold water, as quickly as possible after harvesting, to a temperature of 1-2 °C, to preserve its freshness, tenderness and ivory-like colour. This also minimises the growth of bacteria and fungi which reduce the quality of the asparagus.

The stalks are then cut to length and sorted expertly. The shoot is cut cleanly at the bottom end, at right angles to the axis. This minimises the cut surface, thus also minimising water loss and the entry of bacteria. Should the shoot be hollow or woody at the bottom end, it is expertly shortened to less than 22 cm, or 27 cm in the case of green asparagus, so as to guarantee its high quality.

They must then be stored at 1-2 °C in a place with a high level of humidity (99 %), but must not be stored in water. The cold chain must not be interrupted by the producer. Packaging, refrigeration and any sales premises must comply with health requirements.

The above measures, which go far beyond the legal minimum requirements, contribute to the product's high level of hygiene and quality.

3.7. *Specific rules concerning labelling:*

'Abensberger Qualitätsspargel' must, when put up for sale, also be marked with the following logo:



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

The geographical area covers, in particular, the 'Sandgürtel' (sand belt) between Siegenburg, Neustadt an der Donau, Abensberg and Langquaid, and is situated exclusively within the Kelheim rural district.

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

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

A description by Maximilian Georg Kroiss of the economic activities of the Carmelite order states that asparagus was probably grown in the Abensberg region as early as 1730. The same article also contends that another historian, Angrüner, is wrong to assume that the first asparagus was not grown in Abensberg until around 1900. Kroiss also underlines the fact that even today Abensberg is famous for its asparagus.

Due to the optimum soil and climate the Abensberg region, i.e. the 'Sandgürtel' zwischen Siegenburg, Neustadt an der Donau, Abensberg and Langquaid, is an excellent asparagus-growing area. For example, the area's average annual temperature of 9,8 °C and average rainfall of 703 mm represent good climatic conditions for growing asparagus. According to the Bavarian soil atlas, the soils are mainly sandy. At the same time, they contain more minerals and silt than other well-known German asparagus-growing areas. This means that 'Abensberger Spargel' has a particularly strong taste.

Cultivation of 'Abensberger Spargel' is limited mainly to the following soil types:

- Sand (S)
- Slightly loamy sand (Sl)
- Loamy sand (lS)
- Very loamy sand (SL).

To guarantee the special characteristics of 'Abensberger Spargel' as regards taste and freshness due to the soils, it is cultivated and processed as described above.

There are around 70 asparagus producers on a cultivated area of 210 hectares. The Abensberg region is one of Bavaria's main asparagus producing areas. In addition, the local growers have constantly developed and improved their production techniques.

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

The quality of 'Abensberger Spargel' is attributable to the climatic conditions described and the types of soil in the defined geographical area.

'Abensberger Spargel' is very highly regarded by consumers and is renowned for its flavour by connoisseurs. It is a traditional Bavarian speciality and has therefore been included in the internet database maintained by the Bavarian agriculture ministry (<http://www.food-from-bavaria.de>).

Alongside the name 'Abensberger Spargel', this product has also been marketed for the past 10 years under the collective trademark 'Abensberger Qualitäts Spargel'. The rules for awarding this collective trade mark specify a high product quality.

That high quality means that consumers are prepared to pay a premium; indeed, the price of 'Abensberger Spargel' is even higher than that of the well-known 'Schrobenhausener Spargel'.

'Abensberger Spargel' is also renowned because there is a cookbook specifically written for it, and because, each year, the 'Asparagus Queen' is chosen to represent this region's speciality. The year 2007 marked the 75th anniversary of asparagus growing in Abensberg.

The Abensberger Qualitätsspargel Producers' Association (Erzeugergemeinschaft Abensberger Qualitätsspargel e.V.) recommends the varieties which particularly meet the agronomic (field trials) and taste requirements based on sensory testing in relation to the specification.

It lists these varieties on its homepage (<http://www.qualitaetsspargel.de/>) and updates the data annually.

5.3. *Causal link between the geographical area and the quality or characteristics of the product (for PDO) or a specific quality, the reputation and/or other characteristic of the product (for PGI):*

'Abensberger Spargel' owes its specific qualities not only to the climate and special soils in the region but also to the long tradition of asparagus-growing in the Abensberg production area and the expertise of the farmers who have been growing it for generations. The light, sandy soils, which are at the same time richer in minerals and silt than other growing areas, as well as the daily harvesting, mean that 'Abensberger Spargel' has particularly tender shoots with a spicier, nuttier taste than asparagus grown elsewhere.

Reputation:

Thanks to the Abensberger Qualitätsspargel Producers' Association's strict rules on how their asparagus must be grown and processed (<http://www.qualitaetsspargel.de/index.php/erzeuger/qualitaetsordnung>), some of which go far beyond the legal minimum, for decades now only the best-quality 'Abensberger Spargel' has been placed on the market. This has led to consumers' high regard for this product, and that high regard is reflected in the official price data. For example, 'Abensberger Spargel' can command a higher price on the market than asparagus from other areas.

The asparagus sector today covers some 210 hectares of land and is now one of the principal economic factors in the Abensberg region.

The growers living in the geographical area have been passing on their knowledge and experience in asparagus-growing from one generation to another for over 70 years. This guarantees the best possible quality, the basis for successful marketing.

The asparagus season in the region is a 'fifth season', a time of celebration, attracting day trippers and tourists from far and near. At this time of the year, both domestic kitchens and restaurants focus on asparagus. Restaurants seek to attract both locals and the visitors who come to Abensberg in droves for the asparagus season by coming up with ever more creative recipes. During the season, markets achieve most of their turnover from asparagus products.

An 'Abensberg Asparagus Queen' has been crowned every year since 1996. She conducts many interviews with the press, radio and TV and carries the good name of 'Abensberger Spargel' far beyond the region itself.

**Reference to publication of the specification:**

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

Markenblatt Vol. 19 of 14 May 2010, Part 7a-aa, p. 8178

<http://register.dpma.de/DPMAreger/geo/detail.pdfdownload/13351>

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