

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 155/10)

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

SINGLE DOCUMENT

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006**‘ΞΗΡΑ ΣΥΚΑ ΤΑΞΙΑΡΧΗ’ (XIRA SYKA TAXIARCHI)****EC No: EL-PDO-0005-0790-23.09.2009****PGI () PDO (X)****1. Name:**

‘Ξηρά Σύκα Ταξιάρχη’ (Xira Syka Taxiarchi)

2. Member State or Third Country:

Greece

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:

Xira Syka Taxiarchi are dried figs (*Ficus carica*) of the Smyrna variety. The figs are yellowish in colour, have a pleasant smell and taste sweet.

The specific characteristics of Xira Syka Taxiarchi as shown by regular laboratory tests carried out in accredited laboratories are summarised below:

Fruit: has a thin skin and a pulp the consistency of honey

Colour: yellowish, uniform

Aroma: pleasant, sweet

Taste: sweet, rich

Size: 45-55 pieces per kilo

Nutrients per 100 g:

Proteins: min. 3,0 g

Sugars: min. 55 g

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 93, 31.3.2006, p. 12.

Saccharose: min. 0,60 g

Dietary fibre: 3,0-5,0 g

Moisture content: max. 19 %

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

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 defined geographical area:*

All the stages of production, treatment and processing of Xira Syka Taxiarchi must be carried out within the defined geographical area.

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

Xira Syka Taxiarchi must be packaged within the defined geographical area because they have thin skin and for this reason they need to be treated against insects twice, the first time after drying and before packaging and the second time after final packaging, in order to prevent infestation, which would significantly impair the fruit. If packaging were permitted outside the defined geographical area, it is likely that the second anti-insect treatment would not be done properly, or not be done at all, which would endanger the quality and reputation of the product.

3.7. *Specific rules concerning labelling:*

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

Taxiarchis figs are grown exclusively within the geographical area delimited by the communities of Taxiarchis, Neos Pyrgos, Agios Georgios, Orei, Istiaia, Kamaria and Kastaniotissa in Northern Evia. The area is enclosed by the mountains of Northern Evia on three sides and bordered by the sea on the fourth, which creates a distinct microclimate.

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

5.1. *Specificity of the geographical area:*

Soil

In Northern Evia and in particular in the defined geographical area the soil is sandy-clayey-loamy, medium alkaline, with a high total calcium content and a low to slightly low organic matter content.

Climate

The mild, warm, dry climate, typical of the southern Mediterranean, especially benefits from the presence of the neighbouring mountains, the land configuration and the breeze from the Aegean sea. The area has long hours of sunshine, especially in spring and summer, when the figs are ripening on the trees.

Human factor

In addition, besides the impact of inherent natural factors, the contribution of the producers is equally important in shaping the final product. This comes from their long-standing experience of fig-growing, their use of specific cultivation techniques to produce fruit of the right quality, and their interest in producing and safeguarding a product that is special. The specific cultivation techniques are summarised below:

— pruning, which is done from December to January to maintain the shape of the trees, encourage new growth and ensure that the inner part of the crown is exposed to ample light and is well aired. It includes the removal of dry and entangled branches with oblique cuts and the cutting of small branches, so that the trees remain in the best possible condition.

- ripening of the figs on the trees. The producers leave the figs to ripen completely on the trees and fall off by themselves onto the harvesting nets spread below.
- the method of pollination. On each fig tree the growers place a small plastic net containing 5-7 caprifigs. Inside the caprifigs there are adult female fig wasps which leave the caprifigs and enter the female figs through the ostioles. The fig wasps thereby transfer pollen from the male fig trees to the female flowers. The growers collect the male figs (caprifigs) late in the afternoon and place them in the fig orchards in the evening or early in the morning before the sun rises, because the fig wasps are active mainly in the morning and that is the best time for pollination.
- natural drying in the sun.

5.2. Specificity of the product:

The specificity of Xira Syka Taxiarchi is that they are dried naturally in the sun, that the pulp has a special sweet taste and their size. Xira Syka Taxiarchi are a uniform yellowish colour, with a thin skin and a pulp the consistency of honey. They have a pleasant smell and taste sweet. They are big: 45-55 pieces per kilo.

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 distinctive native variety of Smyrna fig that is grown almost exclusively in Northern Evia and is one of the best known fig varieties in the world. Specifically, the combination of climatic and soil conditions in Northern Evia that have contributed to the predominance of this specific local variety of fig and its steady yield.

The chemical composition of the soil, which is important in determining the quality of the figs produced and hence the organoleptic characteristics of Xira Syka Taxiarchi. The high calcium content of the soil in the defined geographical area has been proven to significantly reduce sunburn damage to the fruit and splitting of the ostioles. Consequently, Xira Syka Taxiarchi, which are grown only on this soil, are of exceptional quality.

The climate of Northern Evia, which guarantees long hours of sunshine and no major fluctuations in temperature all year round, especially during the ripening period, when the organoleptic characteristics of the figs develop. The long hours of sunshine in the area, combined with the fact that the fig orchards are planted on slopes and exposed to bright light, produce figs with a high sugar content. The figs contain the highest possible percentage of sugars because they are left to ripen fully on the trees and fall off by themselves onto the harvesting nets spread below. This unique combination of factors gives Xira Syka Taxiarchi the special sweet taste for which they are famous.

The fact that the fig orchards are planted on the slopes of low mountains that are exposed to frequent, strong winds. Because of this, and the cup-shaped form created by the growers' careful pruning, the trees are very well aired, which prevents the development of fungi and infestation by insect pests. The pruning done by the growers helps to produce large fruit because it strengthens the trees.

The systematic irrigation of the fig orchards, which protects the fig trees from distress caused by lack of water during the critical stages of their production cycle and contributes to their productivity and to the production of large fruit.

The natural drying of the figs in the sun means that moisture is lost gradually and prevents the loss of the heat-sensitive volatile compounds that give the figs their characteristic aroma. This gives Xira Syka Taxiarchi their special fragrance.

Publication reference of the specification:

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

<http://www.minagric.gr/greek/data/Προδιαγραφή%20Προϊόντος%20ΞΗΡΑ%20ΣΥΚΑ%20ΤΑΞΙΑΡΧΗ.doc>