

**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 162/13)

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**

**'PORC DU SUD-OUEST'**

**EC No: FR-PGI-0005-0909-07.11.2011**

**PGI ( X ) PDO ( )**

**1. Name:**

'Porc du Sud-Ouest'

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

France

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

**3.1. Type of product:**

Class 1.1: Fresh meat (and offal)

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

'Porc du Sud-Ouest' meat is fresh meat obtained from pigs born and raised in the South-West of France and fed with a minimum of 30 % of dent maize during the entire course of their fattening period (which starts 12 weeks after birth).

They are slaughtered at a minimum warm carcass weight of 90 kg (with no upper weight limit) with a 3 kg tolerance during periods of intense summer heat (from 1 June to 30 September).

'Porc du Sud-Ouest' carcasses have an ultimate pH of between 5,5 and 6,2.

The cuts obtained from these carcasses have a colour score of 3 to 6 on the Japanese colour scale for loins.

From a physical and chemical perspective, 'Porc du Sud-Ouest' meat is rich in polyunsaturated fatty acids (with in particular a linoleic acid level of between 10 % and 15 % of the total fatty acids making up the meat's fat content) and less rich in saturated fatty acids.

It is also rich in lipids and vitamin E.

From an organoleptic point of view, 'Porc du Sud-Ouest' meat is redder than standard pork, is juicy and tender and has an intensive taste.

In order to limit the stress on the pigs, which has a negative influence on the ultimate pH and reduces the quality of the meat, the distance between the farm and the slaughterhouse must be as short as possible: a maximum of 200 km or six hours of transport between the farm and the slaughterhouse.

When put on the market, fresh 'Porc du Sud-Ouest' meat is sold fresh in the following formats: carcasses, half-carcasses, cuts, boned or bone-in meats.

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

Not applicable.

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

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

During the entire rearing period, the feed must not contain manioc, sweet potato, swill, meat-and-bone meal, feathers, blood or any other protein from land animals, except for gelatines used as a base for vitamins and minerals and for proteins obtained from milk and milk products.

From weaning to slaughter, the pigs are given feed containing a minimum of 60 % of cereal grains and their products and by-products.

During the fattening period, which is from 12 weeks after birth until slaughter, the feed must neither contain palm oil (a source of saturated fatty acids) nor products obtained from fish, animal fat or growth-promoting additives. During the same period, the pigs are given feed containing at least 30 % of dent maize and between 1,1 % (11 g/kg of feed) and 1,7 % (17 g/kg of feed) of linoleic acid.

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

The fact that the various stages of rearing of the pigs (birth, post-weaning, fattening) must be located in the geographical area guarantees the quality of the meat.

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

Not applicable.

3.7. *Specific rules concerning labelling:*

The product's labelling includes:

- the name of the Protected Geographical Indication 'Porc du Sud-Ouest'
- The European Union's PGI logo in colour, possibly with the added wording 'Protected Geographical Indication'.

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

The geographical area of the 'Porc du Sud-Ouest' PGI covers the following administrative regions:

- Aquitaine region,
- Midi-Pyrénées region,
- Poitou-Charentes region.

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

5.1. *Specificity of the geographical area:*

The South-West has two specificities: it has for a very long time been an area for the production of pigs and it has a tradition of using dent maize, which adds specific nutritional features to the pigs' feed given that the area has a favourable climate for its cultivation.

**An area with a long tradition of pig production**

Pig farming has been prominent in the South-West for several centuries. Several piglet trade fairs and markets dating back to the Middle Ages bear witness to this farming tradition: Garlin, Tarbes, Lembeye, Soumoulou, Dax, Garris, Saint Palais, Rabastens de Bigorre, Puylaurens, Villefranche de Rouergue, spreading to Aveyron and Tarn at the end of the 19th century.

In 1862, three departments in the South-West (Dordogne, Corrèze, Aveyron) were the first three French departments in which pigs were herded.

For a long time, pork accounted for the bulk of the meat consumed in the rural areas of the South-West. Most country families owned a pig whose slaughter during winter represented a genuine cause for celebration with family and neighbours. Their expertise strengthened over time: the pig carcasses were used up in their entirety (local consumption followed by market sale), as fresh meat or as processed meat (savoury, dried or preserved in fat). Ancestral traditions and recipes survive today among rural families in the South-West.

The local heritage attests abundantly to this age-old production and consumption of 'Porc du Sud-Ouest' meat (legal texts, literature, documents, works of art, etc.).

Traditional use of dent maize which adds specific features to the pigs' feed

The South-West is a historical area for the production of grain maize (89 % of national production in 1930 and 41 % today). With more than three times as much agricultural area in use dedicated to grain maize than in other French departments, the South-West produces more than 50 times as much as its pig-farming sector needs.

The type of maize grown in the South-West is mainly dent maize for historical reasons, but above all because of the area's climatic conditions that favour this late variety which requires a great deal of heat and humidity: high temperatures during its entire growing cycle and heavy rainfall during the summer. The risk of having overall temperatures in the South-West which do not meet the needs of late varieties is less than 20 % — an acceptable risk for farmers operating in this geographical area. Farmers in the South-West also exclusively grow dent maize because the yield of late maize is 15 % to 20 % higher than that of earlier varieties.

Dent maize has particular nutritional properties: low humidity when harvested (between 25 % and 30 %) and a high starch content which gives it a high energy value (between 750 g and 780 g/kg of dry matter). It is characterised above all by specific fats, essentially made up of unsaturated fatty acids which account for 60 % of the total fatty acids, including linoleic acid (omega 6). Dent maize is also rich in E vitamins (1,1 mg to 1,8 mg/g). It is a high-energy cereal.

## 5.2. Specificity of the product:

A meat with specific qualities

'Porc du Sud-Ouest' meat has a specific make-up in terms of fat content, with a low level of saturated fatty acids (around 40 %) and a high level of unsaturated fatty acids (almost 60 %) which are essential to the human organism as they cannot be synthesised by the body. They are present both in subcutaneous and in intramuscular fat.

Linoleic acid, a polyunsaturated fatty acid, accounts for 10 % to 15 % of the meat's total fatty acids.

'Porc du Sud-Ouest' meat also contains a relatively high level of lipids (around 5,4 % of the fatty acids compared to 3,8 % for standard French pork), a controlled and optimum pH (between 5,5 and 6,2) and a high level of vitamin E (an antioxidant). The results of comparative analyses carried out in January 2011 between fillets of 'Porc du Sud-Ouest' meat and standard French pork revealed a higher level (15 % more) of vitamin E in 'Porc du Sud-Ouest' meat (0,16 mg/100 g) than in standard French pork (0,13 mg/100 g).

The meat's specific physical and chemical characteristics have an impact on its organoleptic properties and make it renowned for its juiciness, tenderness and intensive taste when cooked.

The meat's juiciness and tenderness vary according to the quantity of lipids and water it contains, and above all according to its capacity for retaining water. 'Porc du Sud-Ouest' meat has a higher lipid content and the linoleic acid reduces the size of adipocytes, which increases water retention, as does the pH which ranges from 5,5 to 6,2.

'Porc du Sud-Ouest' meat has an intensive taste when cooked. The meat's flavour, that is to say the olfactory and gustatory sensations it triggers when tasted, depends for the most part on its lipid and pH levels. Lipolysis and oxidation of the polyunsaturated fatty acids lead to the formation of simple secondary molecules. The latter shape the overall intensity of the taste, which is higher than in standard pork, as well as the intensity of the aroma of the product when cooked and tasted.

The flavour and aroma also depend on the release of molecules during the maturation phase. This only occurs at a certain pH level, in accordance with the pH included in the specifications for the 'Porc du Sud-Ouest' PGI.

The consumer recognises this difference.

Moreover, 'Porc du Sud-Ouest' meat is redder than standard French pork. The meat's colour depends on the quantity of myoglobin it contains.

The high levels of vitamin E in 'Porc du Sud-Ouest' meat slow down the loss of its red colour during preservation since vitamin E retains myoglobin and acts as a form of protection during oxidation.

There is a sufficient amount of skin and intramuscular fat, which is white in colour.

A tradition of rearing 'Porc du Sud-Ouest' animals which are heavier than standard French pigs

Pigs reared in the South-West have always been heavier than standard French pigs. In terms of weight, the results of slaughtering in 2010 show that standard French pork had an average carcass weight of 91,71 kg compared to 94,03 kg for 'Porc du Sud-Ouest' meat (with an average weight of 121 kg before slaughter).

This tradition of rearing heavier pigs led in 1967 to the creation of a quotation area in the South-West in order to take stock of transactions of pigs reared in the South-West. This quotation area, which concerns the heavier carcasses of 'Porc du Sud-Ouest' meat, is recognised by Council Regulation (EEC) No 2112/69 of 28 October 1969 (OJ 29.10.1969). A variable payment system applying to carcasses of pigs from the South-West — an inheritance of the South-West quotation — is still in force today and is still published by the 'Service des Nouvelles des Marchés'.

The renown of 'Porc du Sud-Ouest' meat

The tradition of producing pigs which are both heavier than average and maize-fed led groups of producers to start showcasing and 'protecting' their product by collectively organising their supply. The 'Porc au grain du Sud-Ouest' quality-based approach, launched by 'Interprofession Porcine d'Aquitaine' in the 1980s, led to the obtaining of a 'Label Rouge' (Red Label) which gave a true *status* to pork from the South-West.

'Porc du Sud-Ouest' meat continues this approach and shares common characteristics with Red Label 'Porc au grain du Sud-Ouest' meat: the feed ration is characterised by a high proportion of maize and cereals and the meat's characteristics meet the same physical, chemical and visual criteria. Finally, identical — or even stricter — requirements apply in terms of the sorting and showcasing of carcasses.

This approach made 'Porc du Sud-Ouest' meat a resounding success from the very start, a success which continues today. Proof of this includes press articles and cooking recipes published in dailies and specialised magazines since 1991, the number of operators following the approach (1997-2010) and internet pages dedicated to the product. The reputation of 'Porc du Sud-Ouest' meat is well established thanks to this approach and its renown.

The renown of 'Porc du Sud-Ouest' meat has survived over the years and still remains very strong. This is demonstrated by the spontaneous choice of consumers who have a clear preference for it, who consider it significantly different from standard French pork and who are prepared to pay a higher price for it.

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):*

Dent maize-based feed at the root of the meat's specificities

The South-West area has two specificities: it has for a very long time been an area for the production of pigs and it has a tradition of using dent maize which adds specific nutritional features to the pigs' feed given that the area has a favourable climate for its cultivation.

The extent of the cultivation of dent maize in the South-West allowed it to be used as feed for fattening purposes: it accounts for a minimum of 30 % of the feed intake of 'Porc du Sud-Ouest' pigs as from the 12th week after birth. The feed must also contain a minimum of 1,1 % of linoleic acid. The meat's specificity is thus explained by the animals' consumption of feed containing a high proportion of dent maize, which gives it a higher energy content and makes it richer in linoleic acid: the meat has a specific make-up in terms of fat content, with a low level of saturated fatty acids, a high level of unsaturated fatty acids and a relatively high level of lipids and of E vitamins.

It has also been amply demonstrated in several studies that, the pig being a monogastric animal, the physical and chemical characteristics of the pork are closely related to those of the animals' diet which, thanks to a high dent maize content, contains a high proportion of linoleic acid.

In monogastric animals, fatty acids in their feed are deposited directly into the tissues without any chemical changes while this is not true for ruminants: the latter saturate the fatty acids in their feed, thus stripping polyunsaturated fatty acids of their nutritional advantages (C. Dutertre, agronomist).

In pigs, the nature of the fatty acids in their diet impacts directly on the composition of fatty acids in their adipose tissues (Flanzy et al 1970, Brooks 1971, Desmoulin et al 1983, Rhee et al 1988, «Effets de la nature lipidique des régimes sur la composition en acides gras du jambon chez le porc lourd», Pantaleo et al, 1999).

The polyunsaturated fatty acids which are ingested by 'Porc du Sud-Ouest' pigs can be found in the animals' adipose tissues (Courboulay et Mourot 1995, Warmants et al 1999, Courboulay et al. 1999). This was already clearly brought to the fore in the results of experiments carried out by ADAESO ('Association pour le Développement Agro-Environnemental du Sud-Ouest') between 1994 and 2000.

As far as the composition of lipids in the carcasses is concerned, it is thus well established that the make-up of fatty acids in the tissues, particularly in the adipose tissues, is closely linked to the amount of fatty acids in the diet.

A study carried out by ADAESO showed that a diet containing 30 % of dent maize (minimum specification) guarantees the specific qualities of 'Porc du Sud-Ouest' meat.

We can thus conclude that the specific characteristics which make 'Porc du Sud-Ouest' meat so reputable (red colour, juiciness, tenderness and intensive taste) stem essentially from the local expertise of farmers in the South-West, who preserve local traditions by fattening pigs with dent maize, making them heavier, and from the specific qualities of dent maize as regards its composition in fatty acids.

**Reference to publication of the specification:**

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

<https://www.inao.gouv.fr/fichier/CDCPorcduSudOuest31012012.pdf>

---