Publication of an application for registration pursuant to Article 6(2) of Council Regulation (EEC) No 2081/92 on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin

(2002/C 114/08)

This publication confers the right to object to the application pursuant to Article 7 of the abovementioned Regulation. Any objection to this application must be submitted via the competent authority in the Member State concerned within a time limit of six months from the date of this publication. The arguments for publication are set out below, in particular under 4.6, and are considered to justify the application within the meaning of Regulation (EEC) No 2081/92.

COUNCIL REGULATION (EEC) No 2081/92
APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION: ARTICLE 5
PDO (x) PGI ( )

National application No: 6/2000

1. Responsible department in the Member State
   Name: Ministero delle Politiche agricole e forestali
   Address: Via XX Settembre, 20, I-00187 Roma
   Tel. (39-06) 481 99 68
   Fax (39-06) 42 01 31 26

2. Applicant group
   2.1. Name: Consorzio Salumifici Artigiani Vicentini
   2.2. Address: Via Enrico Fermi, 134, I-36100 Vicenza
   2.3. Composition: producers/processors.

3. Type of product: Type 1.2 — Meat-based products

4. Specification
   (Summary of requirements under Article 4(2):
   4.1. Name: Soprèssa Vicentina
   4.2. Description: Soprèssa Vicentina is a sausage meat product contained in casings and matured, uncooked, average to large in size, obtained by processing high-quality cuts of pig meat.

   When placed on the market Soprèssa Vicentina has the following characteristics:

   Physical characteristics:

   External appearance: cylindrical in shape, bound with colourless twine, which may be elasticated, fastened vertically and with a series of rings made of the same material, placed horizontally on top of the fastening along the entire length of the Soprèssa. Netting may not be used for binding. Where the product contains garlic, coloured twine may be used to cover the end section (eyelet) only. The rings, of which there must be at least three, are placed at intervals of 2 to 4 cm. The outer surface has a patina which develops naturally during the maturing process.

   Appearance on cutting: the meat appears dense and at the same time tender. Slices contain a mixture with fat globules distributed in a way that surround the pieces of meat so that the product remains soft, even after a lengthy maturing period. Slices are slightly dull in colour, with no clear distinguishing line between fat and lean, and of average-sized grain.
**Chemical characteristics**

Total protein content: 15 % or more; fat content: between 30 % and 43 %; mineral salts (ash) content: between 3.5 % and 5 %; moisture content less than 55 %; pH between 5.4 and 6.2.

**Microbiological characteristics**

Mesophilic microbe content: prevalence of lactic bacteria and micrococcaceae.

**Organoleptic characteristics**

Aroma: spicy, possibly with fragrance of aromatic herbs with or without garlic;

Flavour: delicate, slightly sweet and peppery or garlicky;

Colour: pink to reddish;

Consistency: average-sized grain, requiring little chewing.

4.3. **Geographical area:** The production area of Soprèssa Vicentina comprises the whole of the province of Vicenza.

4.4. **Proof of origin:** The traditional historical and cultural evidence for the origin of Soprèssa Vicentina includes:

— precise historic references attesting to the product's origin and links with the region together with references in recipes and in the gastronomic and culinary traditions of the Vicenza area,

— the close cultural links of this typical high-quality product with the region in the form of traditional events and public fairs focusing on Soprèssa Vicentina that have been held since the 1950s. Nowadays the event with the widest impact in the province and the region takes place in the municipality of Valli del Pasubio during the second week of August,

— the presence of processors with small-scale slaughtering and processing facilities who use pigs from local farms and who, over the years, have continued to employ traditional methods for producing Soprèssa Vicentina which are typical of Vicenza farming customs,

— traceability: the fact that the (PDO) product comes from (originates in) the specified geographical production area is certified by the inspection body referred to at 4.7 on the basis of the many formalities the producers must carry out throughout the production cycle.

These formalities, which ensure that the product can be traced at each stage in the production chain, rearing of the pigs, slaughter, processing and preparation of the sausage, maturing and packaging and, accordingly, guarantee that the raw material comes solely from, and is processed in, the specified area of origin, essentially consist of:

(a) the prior inclusion of producers/processors in special registers (registers of farms, slaughterhouses and processing and/or maturing plants) drawn up and kept by the inspection body;

(b) the placing of a tattoo on the pig's leg within 30 days of birth;

(c) the chronological recording by producers-processors in registers designed for this purpose, and checked beforehand by the inspection body, of the quantities of pigs or products consigned at the various stages in the production chain referred to above;

(d) the declaration to the inspection body, by those in final possession, of the consignments of product about to be placed on the market;
the subsequent certifying of all consignments of the product packaged and with labels bearing the protected designation of origin ‘Sopressa Vicentina’ prior to being placed on the market for consumption.

4.5. **Method of production:**

**Rearing of the pigs.** The raw material used to produce Sopressa Vicentina is pigmeat from animals born and reared on farms located in the province of Vicenza.

The genetic characteristics of the animals which may be used must be those of pure breeds, or crossbreeds obtained without genetic manipulation, of traditional breeds such as Large White, Landrace and Duroc listed in the Italian national herd-book or non-Italian herd-books recognised by the Italian national herd-book and with aims that comply with the latter for the production of heavy pigs.

The pigs must be capable of achieving a considerable weight at the time of slaughter (130 kg deadweight).

They must be nine months old or more upon slaughter. This may be verified on the basis of the data shown on the mark tattooed on their leg in the first 30 days following birth.

The housing and facilities on pig farms must be properly insulated and aired to ensure the correct temperature, optimum renewal of the air and the removal of harmful gases. Floor surfaces must be made of water-repellent, thermal and non-slip materials.

All housing and facilities must satisfy anti-corrosion requirements under food classification rules.

Free range or semi-free range pigs may also be used.

Meat meal may not be fed to the pigs from birth until the end of the growing-finishing phase and feed prepared from animal material other than milk may not be given to the pigs during fattening.

Feed should preferably be in liquid form or consist of a mash to which water and, where possible, whey is added. To obtain fat cover of satisfactory quality the maximum linoleic acid content should be equivalent to 2 % of dry diet matter. Whey and buttermilk must not total more than 15 litres head/day.

Buttermilk means the by-product of butter production and whey the by-product of curds.

**Slaughter.** The pigs must be slaughtered on premises that have been approved by the health authorities as provided for under Italian and Community rules, and located within the recognised PDO area.

Slaughtered pigs must weigh 130 kg deadweight or more.

Meat from pigs that are carriers of apparent muscular dystrophies (PSE; DFD; after-effects of previous manifest inflammatory and traumatic conditions) established by a veterinarian at the slaughterhouse may not be used for processing.

**Processing of meat.** The meat must be processed and the product matured at plants located within the defined area. Processing establishments must be approved by the health authorities as provided for under Italian and Community rules.
Recipe and ingredients: the preparation of 'Soprèssa Vicentina' uses all the most valuable parts of
the selected half-carcase, including the hams, neck, shoulder, belly, neck fat and loin.

The ingredients below are added, subject to the following maximum quantities:

— salt: 2,700 g/100 kg of mix,
— ¼ grain pepper: 300 g/100 kg of mix,
— mixture of finely ground spices (cinnamon, cloves and rosemary) 50 g/100 kg of mix,
— garlic 100 g/100 kg of mix,
— sugar 150 g/100 kg of mix,
— potassium nitrate within permitted limits.

Method of preparation: The product is prepared as follows:

The pig half-carcases are cut and the pieces chilled at a temperature of between 0 °C and + 3 °C for
24 hours or more. They are then boned and trimmed and the nerves are removed. The selected
pieces are minced in a meat grinder fitted with a perforated plate with holes between 6 mm and
7 mm in diameter. The ingredients (premixed) are added to the minced meat at a temperature of
between + 3 °C and + 6 °C. Indigenous microbe culture preparations may be added to start
fermentation. All the ingredients are then carefully mixed so that the fat combines with the
lean to become a blend. The resulting mixture is placed in natural gut casings with a diameter
of 8 cm or more.

The product is presented in casings at the following weights: 1 to 1.5 kg, 1.5 to 2.5 kg, 2.5 to
3.5 kg, 3.5 to 8 kg.

Drying: The drying process comprises: (a) draining for 12 hours at temperatures between 20 °C
and 24 °C; (b) drying for four to five days at decreasing temperatures ranging from 22 to 24 °C to
12 to 14 °C.

Maturing: The maturing period for 'Soprèssa Vicentina', including draining and drying, depends on
size:

60 days or more for sizes between 1 and 1.5 kg;
80 days or more for sizes between 1.5 and 2.5 kg
90 days or more for sizes between 2.5 and 3.5 kg
120 days or more for sizes between 3.5 kg and 8 kg.

4.6. Link: There is, at all stages in its production, a close link between 'Soprèssa Vicentina' and its
natural surroundings.

The climate and characteristics of the air in this geographical area, enclosed by the Piccole
Dolomiti (lesser Dolomites), the Colli Berici (Berici hills) and the Altopiano di Asiago (Asiago
plateau), play a part both during the rearing of the pigs and while the product is being matured,
giving Soprèssa Vicentina its distinctive and exclusive flavour, fragrance and aroma.

The link between the product and the local population is demonstrated by the fact that the area of
production, the Vicentino, has traditionally been the home of numerous farmers and/or craftsmen
who, by using characteristic methods for rearing pigs and processing and curing the meat obtained
therefrom, gave rise to the 'Soprèssa Vicentina', a truly unique product whose method of prep-
paration has changed very little over time.
Evidence of the link with the environment is to be found in the specific characteristics of the raw material, which in turn are based on the products, traditional and consisting almost entirely of high-quality cereals grown locally, used for fattening the pigs.

A link between the raw material and the area lies in the fact that whey from the cheese industry is used, more often than not roughly mixed with meal, as feed. This is part of a long-standing tradition, the province of Vicenza being a producer of two major PDO cheeses (Asiago and Grana Padano).

The whey is a by-product of the manufacture of these two PDO cheeses.

It is strongly characterised by the milk and the process of separation of the substances used in cheesemaking.

Pigfarms in the Vicentino use the whey because of the characteristics it imparts to the pigmeat and hence to the processed pigmeat. Owing to its high water content, the whey has an extremely low concentration of nutritional substances and, as a result, tends to be used as feed on a strictly local basis, thus contributing to the traditional diet of the pigs used for the production of ‘Soprèssa Vicentina’.

Evidence of the link with the environment is also to be found in the presence in the province of Vicenza of processors with small-scale slaughtering and processing facilities who use pigs from local farms and who have continued over the years to employ traditional methods for producing ‘Soprèssa Vicentina’ which are typical of Vicenza farming customs.

The maturing process is characterised by the humidity in the air following changes in temperature which trigger the first and second stage fermentation undergone by the sausagemeat in its casings.

This link with the natural surroundings determines the originality of a product whose special characteristics distinguish now, as they have done in the past, the Soprèssa produced in the Vicenza area from similar sausagemeat produced in other areas, this being confirmed by the historical literature on the subject.

4.7. **Inspection body:**

Name: CSQA

Address: Via San Gaetano, I-36016 Thiene (VI).

4.8. **Labelling:** The name ‘Soprèssa Vicentina PDO’ is untranslatable and must be shown on the label in clear and indelible letters.

The brand name ‘Soprèssa Vicentina PDO’ must be shown on the label in accordance with the instructions contained in the illustrated handbook: Annex A to the specification.

4.9. **National requirements:** —

EC No: G/IT/000145/00.07.19.

**Date of receipt of the full application:** 18 February 2002.