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

(2006/C 279/03)

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

SUMMARY

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006

Application for registration according to Article 5 and Article 17(2)

‘BAREGES-GAVARNIE’

EC No: FR/PDO/005/0306/30.7.2003

PDO ( X ) PGI ( )

This summary has been drawn up for information only. For full details, interested parties are invited to consult the full version of the product specification obtainable from the national authorities indicated in section 1 or from the European Commission (1).

1. Responsible department in the Member State:
   Name: Institut National des Appellations d'Origine
   Address: 51, Rue d'Anjou
            F-75008 Paris
   Tel.: (33) 153 89 80 00
   Fax: (33) 142 25 57 97
   E-mail: info@inao.gouv.fr

2. Group:
   Name: Association Interprofessionnelle du Mouton Barèges-Gavarnie
   Address: Maison des Associations — Soucastets
            F-64120 LUZ SAINT-SAUVEUR
   Tel.: (33) 562 92 32 16
   Fax: —
   E-mail: —
   Composition: Producers/processors ( X ) Other ( )

3. Type of product:
   Class 1.1. Fresh meat and offal

4. Specification (summary of requirements under Article 4(2))
   4.1. Name:
       ‘Barèges-Gavarnie’

4.2 Description:

Fresh adult sheepmeat from ewes aged between 2 and 6 years or castrated males known as ‘doublons’ aged over 18 months.

The ewe carcass weighs a minimum of 22 kg, while the ‘doublon’ carcass weighs a minimum of 23 kg.

The carcass is longlineal, the legs are stretched out and flat, the saddle is broad at its base. The waxy fat cover is predominantly white.

The meat is of a pronounced and consistent bright red colour. It is marbled, but without excessive fat. It does not have a strong smell of sheepmeat or wool grease.

4.3 Geographical area:

The meat originates from animals born, raised and slaughtered in the geographical area made up of the following municipalities of the department of Hautes-Pyrénées: Barèges, Betpouey, Chèze, Esquièze-Sère, Esterre, Gavarnie, Gèdre, Grust, Luz-St-Sauveur, Saligos, Sazis, Sazos, Sers, Viella, Viey, Viscos, Vizos, and part of the municipality of Cauterets.

Within this production area there is a ‘mountain pasture area’ in which the animals must stay during the summer period.

4.4 Proof of origin:

Each operator applies for a declaration of aptitude from the Institut national des appellations d’origine (INAO); the declarations enable the INAO to identify all the operators of the designation.

Flocks are made up of animals recognised under the PDO product specification. Suitable animals are identified by a mark on both ears made prior to their first ascent to the mountain pasture.

Each farmer keeps a register known as an ‘inventory of suitable animals’.

Suitable animals taken from the flock for slaughter should be accompanied by a withdrawal note filled out by the farmer.

Slaughterhouses keep a register of arrivals and departures, enabling them to identify the origin of the sheep and the destination of the meat.

These registers are available to authorised inspection officers.

Only those carcasses which bear the animal’s identifying mark undergo an organoleptic examination. Carcasses that comply with the PDO product specification are marked on both sides with a food dye strip containing the initials ‘B-G’.

The carcass and the resulting cuts are accompanied by a label identifying the meat.

4.5 Method of production:

The animals must be born, raised and slaughtered in the geographical area specified in point 4.3.

Breed and flock

Flocks must be composed exclusively of sheep belonging to the Barégeoise breed. Genetic selection must be in keeping with the practices employed in the free mountain pasture. The whole flock present on the holding must comply with the PDO product specification. Each flock should contain at least one Barégeoise ram per 50 ewes and must include a minimum of 20 % ‘doublon’ castrated males of all age ranges in relation to the number of ewes. The farmer keeps replacement ewe lambs originating from his flock equivalent to a minimum of 30 % of the number of ewes. Each animal must spend at least 12 months in the flock of the holding. Tupping must be allowed to take place naturally. Castration is performed after the descent of the testicles into the scrotum.

Flock management and sheep farming practices

The animals must be reared in accordance with the seasons and with grass growth, depending on the altitude and exposure of the pastures. The total stocking density of the animals on a holding may not exceed 1.4 LU per hectare, with mountain pastures and vacant low pastures included in the calculation for a maximum of 180 days per year. Meadows are farmed by mowing or grazing. In line with ancestral practices, the life of the animals throughout the year comprises four stages.
The winter period: from 1 November until 31 March, the animals are kept at the lowest point of the holding in sheepfolds located close to the villages. Access to pasture in the hay meadows is compulsory once climatic conditions permit.

The shoulder season: during the transitional periods of spring and autumn, the animals graze in the highland areas known as the ‘intermediate area’ or the ‘barn’ area. The intermediate areas are located at an altitude of between 1 000 m and 1 800 m. Each farmer must have an area of pasture in the intermediate area.

The summer period: from May to October. Animals are taken to mountain pastures at altitudes of between 1 500 and 2 800 m, which are located in a designated area. Grazing in mountain pastures is compulsory for all of the flock between 15 June and 31 August at the least, excepting animals that are taken for slaughter. In the mountain pasture, the animals graze freely day and night in order to obtain the food necessary for growth and fattening. In order to obtain the designation, animals must have spent at least two summers in the mountain pasture. During their second period in the mountain pasture, ‘doublon’ castrated males cannot be slaughtered before 1 July.

In order to preserve the diversity of wild flora, the total stocking density of the animals may not exceed 0.5 LU per hectare for all animal species.

Nutrition

Nutrition consists chiefly in open air grazing of hay meadows, shared vacant low pastures and the mountain pastures.

During the winter period, nutrition consists chiefly of hay and second-growth hay harvested within the production area. If there is a lack of fodder during this period, dried fodder may be purchased from outside the production area, up to a maximum of 20 % of the needs of the flock for the period. To complement the dried fodder, whole or kibbled grain cereals are authorised for ewes and castrated males. During the shoulder season and the mountain pasture period, only grazing is allowed. Provision is made for a few derogations from the rules on nutrition for lambs and freshly lambed ewes.

Partially or fully fermented fodder and fodder preserved by silaging or wrapping are not permitted on the holding. However, holdings rearing cattle in complete separation from the sheep are permitted to feed this type of food to the cattle on the basis of an annual authorisation issued by the Institut national des appellations d’origine.

The only authorised food additives are vitamins, trace elements and technological additives contained in mineral licks or in complete feedingstuffs for animals under the age of 4 months.

Slaughter

To ensure that the animals are not subjected to excessive stress and to guarantee a better quality of meat, the duration of the transport from the completion of loading and the start of unloading at the slaughterhouse may not exceed one hour. Slaughter takes place within a maximum of 15 hours after the start of unloading. Flaying and evisceration are carried out with particular care so as not to remove the fat cover and soil carcasses that are not washed. The whole carcasses undergo a period of airing in a strongly ventilated refrigerated room at a temperature of between 4 °C and 6 °C for a minimum of 24 hours.

4.6 Link:

The geographical area is highly enclosed and access is extremely difficult, as the valley is very isolated, especially in winter. The men have been forced to organise themselves to live in conditions of virtual self-sufficiency and to exploit the natural resources at their disposal to the maximum.

Owing to the relief, the environment is characterised by climatic conditions specific to an oceanic climate sheltered from continental influence and marked by high levels of light and dry periods favourable for the harvesting of hay. Variations in temperature and cloud cover factors have resulted in a distribution of vegetation by height that is clearly visible in the landscape. Faced with these very strict environmental limitations, farmers use all altitudes according to the season and have transformed the original ecosystem into an agro-sylvo-pastoral system which has literally shaped the landscape, maintaining grass-covered open spaces: these contain a very wide variety of native flora.
The sheep farming practices in this unique system of animal husbandry make optimal use of the three altitude levels: the valley bottoms in winter, the intermediate area in spring and autumn, the mountain pasture in summer. This allows for grazing at all seasons, especially in the mountain pasture, where the sheep are left to graze night and day in total freedom. At the same time, the presence of sheep-meat production preserves the natural environment. This system of animal husbandry continues to exist in the sector on account of the demand for sheepmeat.

Meat bearing the ‘Barèges-Gavarnie’ designation originates from a local breed: the Barégeoise, which exists only in the geographical area of the designation. It is one of the hardy breeds of the central Pyrenees. Its shape, metabolism and behaviour make it perfectly adapted to the environment, the farming practices at the different levels of the mountain, particularly through its adaptation for transhumance to mountain pastures, and also to the production of adult sheepmeat. Its out-of-season breeding, its resistance to climatic conditions, its herd behaviour, well adapted to life in conditions of total freedom in the high altitude mountain pasture, its resistance to nutritional restrictions in winter and its capacity for fattening on grass make it the breed of choice for ‘Barèges-Gavarnie’ meat.

It is these sheep farming practices, particularly the freedom afforded to the sheep in the mountain pasture, that give the adult sheepmeat of this breed the original characteristics that are typical of the designation.

4.7 Inspection body:

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Name: D.G.C.C.R.F.
Address: 59, Bd V. Auriol
F-75703 Paris Cedex 13
Tel.: —
Fax: —
E-mail: —

4.8 Labelling:

The carcass must be marked with a food dye identification strip bearing the initials ‘B-G’ on both sides of the carcass and all down its length.

The carcass and cuts are accompanied by a label stating:
— the name of the designation of origin,
— the words ‘appellation d’origine contrôlée’ or the letters ‘AOC’,
— the word ‘doublon’ when the meat originates from castrated males over the age of 18 months,
— the animal’s specific identification number,
— the date of slaughter,
— the name of the farmer, in plain text,
— the name and address of the cutting plant or slaughterhouse,
— the words ‘la carcasse ne peut être découpée avant une durée de 5 jours à compter de la date d’abattage’ (carcass may not be cut for 5 days after slaughter).

4.9 National requirements:

Decree on the Appellation d’Origine Contrôlée ‘Barèges-Gavarnie’.