OTHER ACTS

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

(2009/C 74/06)

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

‘LIMONE INTERDONATO MESSINA’

EC No: IT-PGI-005-0558-16.10.2006

PGI ( X ) PDO ( )

1. Name

‘Limone Interdonato Messina’

2. Member State or Third Country

Italy

3. Description of the agricultural product or foodstuff

3.1. Type of product (Annex II)

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

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

The ‘Limone Interdonato Messina’ Protected Geographical Indication is reserved for the ‘Interdonato’ cultivar, a natural hybrid between a citron clone and a lemon clone. On placing on the market, it must have the following characteristics: FRUIT: medium to heavy, weighing between 80 g and 350 g; SHAPE: oval with a pronounced umbo and a shallow stem joint; EPICARP: thin and smooth with distended oil glands; COLOUR: at the start of ripening for the market, matt green to yellow and on physiological maturity, yellow with matt green ends; FLESH: yellow, deliquescent with medium texture and very few or no pips; JUICE: lemon yellow with a yield of not less than 25 %. Total acidity is less than 50 g/l with no less than 6.2 °Brix. COMMERCIAL CATEGORY: Extra and I.

The ‘Limone Interdonato Messina’ PGI is harvested from 1 September to 15 April.

3.3. Raw materials (for processed products only)

3.4. Feed (for products of animal origin only)

3.5. Specific steps in production that must take place in the identified geographical area

Production operations must take place within the production area defined in point 4 in order to ensure the origin and control of the product as provided for in Article 4(2)(e) of Regulation (EC) No 510/2006. Harvesting is carried out by hand during the period referred to in point 3.2 using scissors so as not to remove the ‘button’ (stem stub).

3.6. Specific rules concerning slicing, gratting, packaging, etc.

Lemons covered by the ‘Limone Interdonato Messina’ PGI that are not marketed immediately after harvesting may be stored at low temperature. They are stored in cold stores in which a high relative humidity level is maintained (75-95 %) to conserve the turgidity of the fruit. The air is changed (5 times the volume of the store every 24 hours) to remove the carbon dioxide and ethylene that builds up as the fruit breathes. The lemons are stored at a temperature of between 6 and 11 °C. The fruit must be packed within 30 days of harvest.

‘Limone Interdonato Messina’ PGI lemons are marketed in wooden, plastic and/or cardboard containers and/or trays, in nets of a maximum weight of 5 kg and in corrugated cardboard bins. Packages, bags and bins must be sealed to prevent the contents being removed without breaking the seal. The lemons may also be released for consumption in bulk provided each fruit is identified by an individual sticker.

3.7. Specific rules concerning labelling

The label on the packaging must carry a reference to the ‘Limone Interdonato Messina’ PGI and the logo, in characters larger than those of the other information given on the label, the name, business name and address of the producer and/or packager and the commercial category (‘Extra’ or ‘I’).

The logo is composed of two concentric circles: inside the first circle, against a background of the same green colour as the Interdonato lemon at the beginning of ripening, appear the words: ‘LIMONE INTERDONATO’ and two photographs of the lemon. Inside the second circle, against a blue background representing the sea is the image of Colonel Interdonato, the breeder of the eponymous cultivar, a depiction of Sicily and the word ‘Messina’, supplementing the PGI.

4. Concise definition of the geographical area

5. **Link with the geographical area**

5.1. **Specificity of the geographical area**

The geographical area in which ‘Limone Interdonato Messina’ PGI is grown covers a broad swathe of the Ionian coast of Messina, with a uniform exposure to the Ionian Sea, and takes in all the municipal areas between Messina and Taormina.

The cultivar is found from sea level to around 400 above sea level, but is also found higher up on the fertile shores of the area’s numerous streams and drainage basins.

The orography is shaped by the Peloritani mountain chain, which rises sharply from the Ionian Sea and has its highest peaks close to the coast, giving a mountainous terrain and steep slopes, even at low altitude. In fact, most of the terrain has a gradient of more than 40% and the only level land is to be found near the banks of streams and near the coast.

Regarding the area’s geology, stratigraphically, the north-eastern corner of Sicily is linked to Calabria, with a base of granitic, schistose and phylladic rocks covered by more recent soils. This base is probably Cambrian and comprises a seam of porphyroid granite and schist.

The post-Cambrian marine sedimentation is made up of alternate layers of limestone, dolomites, schists and clays, with the successive series of Pliocene sedimentations represented by basal conglomerates, marls, clays and finally loose sandstones and sand.

As regards tectonics, the principal consequences of such a geological structure are fragmentation of the rocks, leading to the formation of springs, and stable soils with thick alluvial deposits, encouraging the accumulation of infiltration water on the water table. These two factors ensure the availability of groundwater for irrigation.

The area has a range of soils, with a predominance of alluvial lithosols and extremely fertile brown soils.

As regards the area’s hydrology, note should be taken of the widespread presence of watercourses, which become streams only exceptionally, following heavy rainfall. Waters rich in sulphur, salt, bromine and iodine are found in the subsoil and are exploited by thermal spas.

Water resources therefore principally consist of hydrometeors, springs and groundwater drawn from a large number of wells.

The area’s climate is typically Mediterranean, with mild winters and long, dry, hot summer periods.

The prevailing winds are from the west and the north-east. During winter, the maestrale and the libeccio are frequent and can be particularly strong. Also very evident is the scirocco, a hot, humid wind that blows from the south-south-east for long periods.

From the above, it can be seen that the soil, terrain, climate and environment of the area in which the ‘Limone Interdonato Messina’ is grown constitute a unique environmental system not found elsewhere.

The proof is that lemon trees of the Interdonato cultivar grown on hillsides in other parts of Sicily and in Calabria have never produced fruit with the same prized typical and specific characteristics as those grown in the defined area.

5.2. **Specificity of the product**

The basic characteristics of the ‘Limone Interdonato Messina’ are its early ripening, which means that it can be placed on the market before any yellow lemons have been produced in the other citrus-growing areas of the Mediterranean, the sweetness of its flesh because of its low citric acid content (less than 50 g/l), exceptional resistance to ‘mal secco’ disease (*Phoma tracheiphila*) of citrus fruits and a smooth, thin, fine-grained epicarp with distended oil glands.
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 application for registration of ‘Limone Interdonato Messina’ as a PGI is justified by the reputation this product has always enjoyed in the area where it is grown. It was back in 1875 that Colonel Interdonato, a hero of Garibaldi’s campaigns, selected this particular cultivar, whose fruits are distinguished by their early ripening, their large size, their long, cylindrical shape, their juiciness and their very smooth peel. It was soon recognised and appreciated by the inhabitants of the region, who also gave it other names such: ‘limone speciale’ or ‘fino’, which are still used today in conjunction with the name ‘Limone Interdonato’. The fruit’s basic characteristics, in particular its early ripening, the sweetness of its flesh because of its low citric acid content and its thin epicarp are the result of a combination of factors: soil, climate, tree and cultivation methods typical of the PGI production area. Among the agronomic practices that are important in developing the specific characteristics of the Interdonato cultivar grown in the PGI production area are fertilisation based on the addition of high levels of organic substances and on slow-release nitrogen fertilisers. Since it is scientifically proven that nitrate supplements have a strong influence on the roughness of the epicarp, the use of slow-release organic fertilisers favours the gradual uptake of nitrogen by the plant and the distension of the fruit’s oil glands. Another special technique used is adequate and continuous irrigation throughout the fruit’s growing and ripening period, which is mainly during summer. The presence of ‘Limone Interdonato Messina’ on the Ionian coast of the Province of Messina is a natural development brought about by a combination of natural and human factors peculiar to the production area and that can be reproduced nowhere else. This is confirmed by the failure of all attempts to extend cultivation to the neighbouring areas of Catania and the western slopes of Messina along the Tyrrhenian coast, while cultivation has remained stable and productive in the area of origin. In addition, the fruit’s early ripening is also, without doubt, due to the citron clone from which the ‘Interdonato’ cultivar originates. To sum up, as early as the XIX century, the ‘Limone Interdonato’ reshaped the landscape of the whole of the Ionian coast of the Province of Messina, which acquired the reputation of being a ‘land of ever-verdant gardens’, influencing the economy, customs, the social make-up, events, culture, rites and traditions.

Reference to publication of the specification

The Government launched the national objection procedure with the publication of the proposal for recognising ‘Limone Interdonato Messina’ as a protected geographical indication in Official Gazette of the Italian Republic No 285 of 7 December 2003. The full text of the product specification is available on the following website:

www.politicheagricole.it/DocumentiPubblicazioni/Search_Documenti_Elenco.htm?txtTipoDocumento=Disciplinare%20in%20esame%20UE&txtDocArgomento=Prodotti%20di%20Qualit%CE%B3>Prodotti%20DIp.%20Igp%20e%20Stg

or

— by going directly to the home page of the Ministry (www.politicheagricole.it) and clicking on ‘Prodotti di Qualità’ (on the left of the screen) and finally on ‘Disciplinari di Produzione all’esame dell’UE (Reg CE 510/2006)’. 