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 140/05)

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 of the date of this publication.

SUMMARY

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006

‘PEMENTO DO COUTO’

EC No: ES-PDO-0005-0464-03.05.2005

PDO ( ) PGI ( X )

This summary sets out the main elements of the product specification for information purposes.

1. Responsible department in the Member State:
   Name: Subdirección General de Calidad Agroalimentaria y Agricultura Ecológica — Dirección General de Industrias y Mercados Agroalimentarios — Secretaría General de Medio Rural del Ministerio de Medio Ambiente, y Medio Rural y Marino de España
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2. Group:
   Name: COOPERATIVA DO CAMPO O VAL
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   Telephone: +34 981453901
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   E-mail: horta@cooperativaoval.com
   Composition: Producersprocessors ( X ) Other ( )

3. Type of product:
   Class 1.6 — Fruit, vegetables, cereals, whether or not processed


4.1. Name:
   ‘Pemento do Couto’

4.2. Description:
   Peppers covered by the Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) ‘Pemento do Couto’ are the fruit of the Capsicum annuum L species of the local ecotype known by the same name. The fruit is picked in summer unripe and early (commercial size) and intended to be marketed fresh. Its characteristics are as follows:

   — Shape: trapezoidal truncated conical longitudinal section and rounded cross-section. At times the cross-section appears slightly grooved with three or four edges at the extreme tip.

   — Weight: between 4 and 6 grams per unit.
— Fruit length: between 4 and 8 cm.
— Approximate width: 2 cm.
— Stalk: Between 2 and 3 cm, always shorter than the fruit. It is stiff, usually straight or slightly curved.
— Skin: Dark green, with little lustre.
— Thickness of the wall or flesh: Thin, between 1 and 1.5 mm approximately.
— Tasting: fine-textured juicy flesh, sweet taste, slightly herbaceous with no bite owing to the absence of capsaicin, with a moderately strong aroma and few seeds.

4.3. Geographical area:

The geographical area consists of all of the district of Ferrol in A Coruña, consisting of the following municipalities: Ferrol, Narón, Valdoviño, Cedeira, Moeche, As Somozas, San Sadurniño, Neda, Fene, Mugardos and Ares. It is a natural district since the low height above sea level, the protection afforded by the mountain ranges which surround the producing valleys and the proximity to the coast give rise to a differentiated microclimate, characterised above all by its mildness and its slight fluctuations in temperature, together with the presence of soil which is very appropriate for this crop.

The name of the indication 'O Couto' is a geographical name which corresponds to the place in which the monastery commonly known by the same name is situated, itself linked to the origin of the selection and cultivation of these peppers.

4.4. Proof of origin:

The traceability of the product is ensured by its identification in each of the production and marketing stages.

In order to check that the requirements of the specification have been fulfilled, the control body will manage a register of producers and plots which will be constantly updated: only peppers grown in accordance with the conditions laid down in the specification and other additional rules, in plots and by producers entered in the corresponding register, may be covered by the PGI 'Pimento do Couto'.

Further, registered producers are required to declare the quantity of peppers covered by the PGI actually produced and marketed by means of entries in the registers set up for the purpose. The control body will check that the quantities marketed by the packers correspond to the production of the farmers which supply them and their production in relation to the agronomic yield of the parcels registered.

All legal and natural persons entered in the registers, plots, stores, processing undertakings and products will be subject to inspections and checks carried out by the control body with a view to verifying that the protected products fulfil the requirements in the specification and other additional rules. The controls will be based on an inspection of the plots, stores and processing undertakings, the review of documentation and checks that the physical criteria described are fulfilled, checking that the peppers when picked are whole, good, clean and undamaged and unblemished. It will be possible in addition to carry out multi-residual analyses to check that the values obtained for pesticides are below the Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) set by the current legislation for the crop.

4.5. Method of production:

Nursery plants come from authorised producers entered in the relevant register.

The process to obtain the product is described below:

Propagation and planting out:

Once the ripe fruit has been picked it is dried and the seed is removed, which after being disinfected is ready to be sown. Preparation of the seedbed and the seed begins in October and continues in November, December and January. Sowing is carried out in containers over a substratum composed of a mixture of peat and gravel in equal proportion. Following germination, and when the plant has grown to approximately 5 cm, it is pricked and planted out using tray fillers.
Production restrictions:
Peppers produced both in the open and under cover will be eligible for protection under the PGI 'Pemento do Couto'. Maximum yield permitted will be, in general, 4 kg/m² and 6 kg/m² respectively.

The structures under cover are simple plastic tunnels without heating or artificial lighting, which are used only to protect the crop (which is grown directly on the soil) from occasional freezing and, above all, to bring production forward and extend it for a few weeks in the autumn. Its use has also been extended to protect selected kinds of this pepper ecotype from unwanted hybridisation.

Planting:
Where cultivation is in the open, planting takes place in April and May, with a density of 3-5 plants per square metre, and picking begins in June-July. In the event that it is sought to use seed to produce seedlings, the parcels must be away from other plantations in the open of that ecotype in order to preserve selected types.

Planting under cover takes place in February and March so that picking of the fruit is begun in the middle of April. The density is 2-4 plants per square metre. It is advisable to cover the ground with polythene sheeting to prevent competition from weeds. It is unnecessary to stake due to the fact that with the planting standard used some plants support others.

Growing practices:
Fertilisation will be as appropriate for the purpose of maintaining a balance between, and the levels of, nutrients in the soil and in the plant, and in this way taking into account the extractions of the crop, the nutritional state of the plant, the level of fertility of the soil and the contribution made by other means (water, organic matter and so on).

Control of possible pests and/or diseases will be directed towards the application of growing methods such as: disinfection of seeds, treatment of seedbeds, less irrigation in order always to avoid water-logging the ground and excessive earthing up.

If it is necessary to use chemicals, the active materials used will be those having less environmental impact, more effectiveness, less toxicity and fewer residue problems, less effect on secondary fauna and less strength.

Harvesting:
Harvesting will take place manually, before the fruit ripens and at the time when, in the light of the experience of the farmers, suitable conditions for its marketing are present, in accordance with the physical characteristics listed in point 4.2. It will consist of as many runs as required, with material (tools, boxes or containers and so on) and human means to prevent deterioration of the product.

Transport and storage:
The peppers are transported in rigid containers, avoiding crushing. Unloading is carried out in such a way as to reduce the effects of dropping the product. Storage areas must be correctly ventilated.

Marketing:
Packing is carried out by homogeneous lots according to origin and length of the fruit and in sacks of 200 g or 400 g in weight. The materials used will be those authorised under current food law. It may be possible to set up other forms of presentation if it is shown that they do not adversely affect the quality of the product. The marketing period will be between 15 April and 31 October; the control body may extend or reduce that period when the characteristics of the product require it in the light of the seasonal weather conditions.

4.6. Link:
The 'Pemento do Couto' is a local ecotype traditionally grown by farmers in the district of Ferrol. As a result of its limited production and distribution over the years, its cultivation has not spread beyond that geographical area, which even today remains the only place in which this pepper is produced.
As a reflection of its reputation, in 1999 the ‘Festa do Pemento do Couto’ was established as a gastronomic festival celebrating the ‘Pemento do Couto’ held annually at the end of July in its place of origin, near the monastery of Santa Maria do Couto. As evidence of its reputation, it is worth noting that various restaurants in the district of Ferrol which include ‘Pemento do Couto’ on their menus.

Many factors, including the plant material, production techniques and the microclimate of the producing valleys, come together and result in the emergence of a product with several specific characteristics and a quality which have led it to acquire a notable reputation.

**Plant material:**
The traditional practices of local farmers maintaining and selecting the best plants, while adapting production techniques to the local conditions, have resulted in a differentiated and very popular product. The selection carried out, together with the care in preventing unwanted hybrids, have been decisive factors when it comes to producing a pepper which has absolutely no bite (at least under the environmental conditions of the district), an aspect which is unusual in peppers with similar characteristics.

**Production techniques:**
The use of structures under cover on the part of the farmers of the region for several decades shows how they have adapted production techniques, without entailing a loss of the interaction between the environment and the specific characteristics of the product: simple plastic tunnels are used in which there is no real control of agro-climatic growing conditions of the product, which remains exposed, essentially, to the natural environmental elements.

**Climatic characteristics:**
The production area includes a number of valleys at a low height above sea level, protected by several mountain ranges and very close to the coast, which gives rise to a microclimate characterised by a high annual rainfall, with fairly significant precipitation even in the summer period, mild temperatures and slight fluctuations in temperature, high relative humidity and little sunshine in comparison with other pepper-producing areas, which directly influences the thinness of the wall and the fine texture, smoothness and juiciness of its flesh on the palate.

4.7. **Inspection body:**

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INGACAL is a public body for which the Consellería do Medio Rural de la Xunta de Galicia is responsible.

4.8. **Labelling:**

Peppers marketed under the Protected Geographical Indication ‘Pemento do Couto’ must bear the commercial label corresponding to the brand name of each producer/packer and an alphanumeric coding label with correlative numbering, authorised by the control body, with the logo of the Protected Geographical Indication. Both the commercial label and the specific label of the designation must bear the words Protected Geographical Indication ‘Pemento do Couto’.