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 305/09)

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.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006
‘LÜNEBURGER HEIDEKARTOFFELN’
EC No: DE-PGI-0005-0614-03.07.2007
PGI (X) PDO ()

1. Name:
‘Lüneburger Heidekartoffeln’

2. Member State or third country:
Germany

3. Description of the agricultural product or foodstuff:
3.1. Type of product:
Class 1.6: Fruit, vegetables and cereals, fresh or processed

3.2. Description of the product to which the name in (1) applies:
Ware potatoes and early potatoes of class ‘extra’ produced in the Lüneburger Heide. ‘Lüneburger Heidekartoffeln’ have a pale, smooth skin with flat eyes and yellow flesh. They correspond to the cooking qualities ‘vorwiegend festkochend’ (vf) (mainly firm boiling) or ‘festkochend’ (f) (firm boiling) and fulfill the quality characteristics of class ‘extra’; they are therefore healthy, whole, firm and practically clean potatoes; for the elongated varieties there is a lower grading limit of 30 mm, for the round varieties a limit of 35 mm. The biggest difference between the largest and the smallest tuber within a consignment or packaging unit must not be more than 30 mm.
In total, the proportion of potatoes which do meet quality standards, in other words rotten tubers, tubers with a strange smell or sprouts of more than 2 mm, with an abnormal moisture content, blackleg, marked glassiness, frost or heat damage and impurities (such as earth or loose sprouts), must not exceed 5 %. The proportion of tubers with late blight, soft rot and dry rot and with frost, heat or salt damage is limited to a maximum of 1 %. Speckling must normally not affect more than 25 % of the tuber's surface and the proportion of foreign varieties of tubers is limited to a maximum of 2 % of the weight of the relevant packaging unit.

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 defined geographical area:

Cultivation must be in accordance with the guidelines on good farming practice regarding agricultural land use, as applicable, and based on the Lower Saxony Chamber of Agriculture's current recommendations on crop cultivation and crop protection. The two sets of guidelines far exceed the legal requirements. For example, nitrogen fertilisation in the area is limited to 160 kg nitrogen/hectare minus the plant-available nitrogen in the soil so as not to adversely affect the potatoes' taste.

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

3.7. Specific rules concerning labelling:

4. Concise definition of the geographical area:

The rural districts of Celle, Gifhorn, Harburg, Lüchow-Dannenberg, Lüneburg (excluding the Neuhaus authority area located to the north of the River Elbe), Soltau-Fallingbostel and Uelzen, as well as the municipality of Visselhövede in the rural district of Rotenburg (Wümme).

5. Link with the geographical area:

5.1. Specificity of the geographical area:

In terms of general climate, the Lüneburger Heide is located in a sub-Atlantic moderate zone with mild winters and cool summers and with precipitation all year round. This climate creates optimum conditions for potato-growing. Heathlands have been created by centuries of excessive utilisation of the land using traditional farming methods (intensive use of forest land exceeding the forest's regenerative ability, followed, as the forest receded, by further overuse through the removal of plaggen, i.e. removal of the upper layer of soil by hoe and spade for use as livestock bedding). As a result, the area is dominated by unforested, low humus, sandy soils, with the formation of wind-borne sand as well. Nitrogen mineralisation of the soil is low.

Potato-growing has a long tradition in the Lüneburger Heide. Since the second half of the 19th century the Lüneburger Heide has been one of the best-known and largest potato-growing areas in Germany. As the Lüneburger Heide is a traditional potato-growing area, farmers have acquired experience of potato-growing over a number of generations.

Potatoes are today still of special significance to the region, as demonstrated for example by the tradition of annual potato festivals in many places in the Heide, the election of a 'Heide Potato Queen' and the existence, in the eastern part of the Heide, of Germany's first potato hotel.
Potatoes from Lüneburger Heide are distributed very widely by independent retailers and the trade with an indication of geographical origin; this is done outside of the region throughout the whole of Germany as well.

Local restaurants offer the products as a particularly tasty regional speciality. The potatoes are available in numerous forms, including special 'Heidekartoffel' menus.

5.2. **Specificity of the product:**

‘Lüneburger Heidekartoffeln’ have acquired considerable renown and a good reputation in the region and beyond.

The varieties grown in the Lüneburger Heide are traditionally those whose characteristics are such that they are known as ‘mainly firm boiling’ and ‘firm boiling’ potatoes. Therefore only those varieties are to be used. The potatoes from the region typically have a pale skin and yellow flesh.

They therefore enter the distribution chain unblemished and clean, which are considerable quality characteristics.

Their taste is not affected by a high soil nitrogen mineralisation potential.

5.3. **Causal link between the geographical area and the quality or characteristic of the product (for PDO) or a specific quality, the reputation or other characteristic of the product (for PGI):**

The long tradition of potato-growing in the defined geographical area, favoured by the optimum climate and the optimum soil conditions, and the associated special potato culture in the Lüneburger Heide have led to consumers holding the potatoes from this area in particularly high regard as a regional speciality.

The low humus, sandy soils make it possible to produce the pale-skinned potatoes which are typical of the area. Given the structure of the soil, they are easy to harvest and therefore enter the distribution chain unblemished and clean, which are considerable quality characteristics. In view of the low nitrogen mineralisation potential of the soils, the taste is not affected by excessive release of nitrogen. Rather, producers are able to produce potatoes with a good taste by means of targeted but low-level nitrogen fertilisation.

The high quality of the products and the long tradition of growing have led to the Lüneburger Heidekartoffel being held in extremely high regard.

**Reference to publication of the specification:**

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

Full specification published in:


(http://publikationen.dpma.de/DPMApublikationen/dld_gd_file.do?id=15)