OTHER ACTS

EUROPEAN 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

(2010/C 42/03)

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

‘ŚLIWKA SYDŁOWSKA’

EC No: PL-PGI-0005-0634-23.07.2007

PGI (X) PDO ( )

1. Name:
‘Śliwka szydłowska’

2. Member State or third country:
Poland

3. Description of the agricultural product or foodstuff:

3.1. Type of product:
Category: Class 1.6 — Fruit, vegetables and cereals, fresh or processed

3.2. Description of the product to which the name in (1) applies:
‘Śliwka szydłowska’ is an unpitted or pitted prune which has undergone the process of drying and smoking.

The prune’s shape depends on the variety and may range from oblate to prolate. The fruit is characterised by its even, elastic flesh and has a very pure and very intense taste and smoked aroma. The prune is also characterised by its very wrinkled but shiny skin with a dark blue sheen.

The size of ‘śliwka szydłowska’ depends on the variety of the plum used and the weight ranges from 50 to 160 prunes per kg of fruit. The water content in the finished product is between 35 and 45 %.

3.3. Raw materials (for processed products only):

Only cultivars of the blue plum (*Prunus domestica* L. ssp *domestica*) and its derivatives are used for the production of ‘śliwka szydłowska’. Stanley, Amers, Węgierka Dąbrowicka, Empress, Oneida, Jojo, Top, Valjevka, President and Damacha. The fruit of these varieties have desirable characteristics for drying and smoking, including a high sugar content and a relatively low water content.

Only fruits which are ripe and ready for consumption are harvested and used for the production of ‘śliwka szydłowska’. The fruit must be healthy, without signs of rotting or mechanical damage and it must be free of visible damage by insects, mites or other pests. The fruit used must be free of any other damage, impurities or other unspecified organisms which would make it unfit for consumption.

3.4. Feed (for products of animal origin only):

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

The drying units in which the entire drying and smoking process takes place must be located in the geographical area indicated at point 4. Production is permitted only in special traditional Szydłów drying units. The wood used in the production process comes from oak, hornbeam, beech or fruit trees. The use of other types of wood is permitted but resinous wood (from conifers) is strictly forbidden.

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

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3.7. Specific rules concerning labelling:

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4. Concise definition of the geographical area:

The production area for ‘śliwka szydłowska’ covers the municipality of Szydłów (108 km$^2$), which is situated in the district of Staszów, in Świętokrzyskie voivodship.

5. Link with the geographical area:

5.1. Specificity of the geographical area:

The area of production of ‘śliwka szydłowska’ is confined to the municipality of Szydłów. This area is characterised by poor soils which are, however, very rich in lime (Miocene limestone). The average annual precipitation in this area is usually 500-700 mm. A low level of precipitation in the summer months is also characteristic of the area, as is a relatively high amount of sunshine. The length of the vegetation period ranges from 200 to 215 days. Plums are grown on about 80 % of all land used for fruit cultivation in this area. Plum orchards occupy around 900 ha.

Local producers have easy access to the raw materials and have devised a way of processing them in special drying facilities. Characteristic drying units designed and built by the local people in a style adapted to their unique skills form an integral part of the landscape in the municipality of Szydłów. There are around 400 specific drying units in the area identified at point 4. Considering that the area in question covers 108 km$^2$ and had a population of 5 118 in 2004, there was on average one drying unit for every 13 inhabitants that year and 3.7 drying units per km$^2$. This is undeniable proof of the very close link the product has to the given area and bears witness to the skills of local producers.

Only drying units in which the plums can be smoked and dried using smoke and hot air, and not hot air alone, are used for the production of ‘śliwka szydłowska’. The drying unit is a building, the size of which depends on the producer's individual needs (as regards the number and size of trays). The doors open to reveal vertical racks supporting openwork trays known as ‘laski’, which can be slid out like drawers. These trays are made of wood. The lowest tray is about 50 cm from the bottom of the oven, which is below ground level. A drying unit may not be more than 3 metres high. The building includes a special table for sorting the plums.
The fruit is laid out on the trays by hand. It should be arranged in such a way as to allow the air and smoke to reach each plum easily. Depending on the size of the fruit, different numbers of layers of plums are placed onto the various trays. A layer may not be more than 12 cm thick.

The plums are dried and smoked by means of hot air and the smoke from hardwood burned in an oven under the trays. The mixture of hot air and smoke passes through the trays and the fruit lying on them. Gravitational air and smoke circulation is used to that effect. The temperature in the drying unit ranges from 45 to 90 °C, depending on the amount and calorific value of wood put into the oven. The temperature is highest at the bottom and lowest in the middle part of the drying unit due to the gravitational air circulation. The entire drying and smoking process takes about 48 hours on average, but this time may vary according to the size of the fruit, the temperature maintained in the drying units and external atmospheric factors, notably temperature and humidity.

The evenly dried and smoked fruit is collected from the trays. The fruit is collected and sorted by hand. Each producer checks (by means of an organoleptic analysis) if the prunes satisfy the criteria laid down in the product description and if they are adequately dried and smoked. Each prune is checked individually. Fruits that satisfy the requirements are then collected, the rest is put back into the drying unit.

Local producers’ skills are related, among other things, to a knowledge of how to select plums of the correct quality as a raw material for drying, as well as to the smoke-drying process itself. In the smoke-drying process, important local skills influencing the quality of the final product are as follows: the skill of arranging the plums on trays so that the hot air and smoke can reach each plum, the sorting and turning of the plums on the trays by hand, at least twice a day, ensuring that trays are placed at the correct distance from the oven, the determination on a daily basis of the smoking and drying time and the temperature in the drying units depending on the size of the fruit and the extent of smoking and drying required, as well as an individual organoleptic check on each plum to guarantee that the correct quality, characteristics and level of smoking and drying have been achieved.

5.2. Specificity of the product:

‘Śliwka szydłowska’ typically has flesh of an even, elastic consistency which is dried and smoked evenly throughout and has a very intense and easily identifiable smoky taste and aroma. The prune is also characterised by its very wrinkled but shiny skin with a dark-blue sheen. ‘Śliwka szydłowska’ has a high water content of between 35 and 45 % at the time of sale. The fact that the plums are arranged in a layer no more than 12 cm thick on each tray and that they are turned by hand several times every day means that the warm air and smoke reach each plum in equal measure, thus guaranteeing that they are both smoked and dried and acquire the specific characteristics of ‘śliwka szydłowska’.

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

The link which ‘śliwka szydłowska’ has to the region is based on its exceptional quality, which is the result of the unique skills of local producers, and on its reputation which is built on a long production tradition.

The unique skills of local producers and the traditional methods of production they use are factors which ensure the high quality of ‘śliwka szydłowska’. The design of the drying units and the method of drying used are derived from the expertise of local producers. The skills and know-how of the local producers differ significantly from the methods used in other parts of Poland and in the neighbouring regions.

The design of the drying units ensures that air and smoke circulate simultaneously, thereby drying and smoking the plums. Changing the position of trays in the drying units, determining the correct temperature and drying time for ‘śliwka szydłowska’ guarantee that the correct quality, characteristics and level of smoking and drying is achieved. This unique local expertise is not found in other regions.
The reputation enjoyed by ‘śliwka szydłowska’ is connected with a long tradition of producing the prunes. The history of plum-drying and smoking in Szydłów goes back to at least before the Second World War, as has been proven by ethnographic research carried out in the Szydłów municipality. According to the results of this research, plum-drying in this area has a history dating back some 80 years. In a reprint of a press article entitled ‘Szansa dla miasteczka’ published in Słowo Ludu on 25 November 1988, we can find information about ‘śliwka szydłowska’ production and about the purchasing problems associated with it. The scale of production in earlier years is shown by invoices issued by various purchasing centres in 1964 and 1967. ‘Śliwka szydłowska’ production currently stands at about 800 tonnes a year.

Press articles published in Echo Dnia – Echo Powiśla on 25 August 2006, in Gazeta Wyborcza – Kielce on 26 July 2007, and in issue No 10 of the magazine Hasło Ogródnice in 2005, bear witness to the reputation enjoyed by the product. ‘Śliwka szydłowska’ is also recommended at the website http://www.potrawyregionalne.pl (‘Sezon na śliwki’).

The product’s good reputation is also reflected in the fact that it was awarded a ‘Perła’ prize in 2005.

A special event lasting several days and promoting the product has been organised in Szydłów for 10 years now — the ‘Święto Śliwki’ (Plum Festival). One of the attractions at the festival is a demonstration of plum-drying using the special, traditional trays typical of Szydłów. This demonstration is clearly indicated on the posters promoting the festival.

Reference to publication of the specification:
(Article 5(7) of Regulation (EC) No 510/2006)
http://www.minrol.gov.pl/DesktopDefault.aspx?TabOrgId=1620&LangId=0