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 112/05)

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
‘AGNEAU DU PÉRIGORD’
EC No: FR-PGI-0005-0711-10.07.2008
PGI ( X ) PDO ( )

1. Name:
‘Agneau du Périgord’

2. Member State or third country:
France

3. Description of the agricultural product or foodstuff:
3.1. Type of product:
Class 1.1. Fresh meat (and offal)

3.2. Description of the product to which the name in (1) applies:
‘Agneau du Périgord’ lambs are slaughtered between 80 and 180 days’ old, and have a carcase weight of between 15 and 21 kg and a conformation which results in a good meat yield thanks to the selection of meat breeds for the rams and hardy or semi hardy breeds for the ewes.

The rams are chosen from among the following meat breeds: Berrichon, Charollais, Ile de France, Rouge de l’Ouest, Suffolk, and Texel.

The ewes are either pure-bred hardy breeds: Lacaune viande, Blanche du Massif central or INRA 401 or semi-hardy breeds, i.e. a cross between hardy breeds and the above meat breeds.

The lambs have an E-U-R conformation with muscles developed over a fine skeleton and fat cover of 2 and 3 in the EUROP grading scale.

When sold fresh, the lamb meat is light in colour. The fat is white, with a firm consistency, and is uniformly curdled and not greasy. The lamb meat has a balanced taste of Périgord lamb as a result of the suckling of the lambs with milk from their mothers (for at least 60 days), and specific supplemental feeding with whole or flattened grain and fodder.

3.3. **Raw materials (for processed products only):**

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

3.4.1. **Feeding the lambs**

— From birth to at least 60 days, the lambs are suckled by their mothers on demand. They live with their mothers until they are weaned, a process which usually takes between 80 and 90 days.

— After 60 days and during the finishing stage, the proportion of milk feeding decreases until weaning is complete, and milk is replaced by fodder and supplemental feed consisting of cereals (barley, wheat, corn, etc.) and a nitrogen supplement.

3.4.2. **Feeding the ewes**

Grass is the staple diet of the ewes. They graze on natural or temporary meadows and ranges for at least seven months a year.

The fodder harvested is grown throughout the geographical area and mostly on the holding.

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

‘Agneaux du Périgord’ lambs are born and reared in the defined geographical area. All the breeders are first identified by the inspection body and the location of their holding in the area is checked.

To ensure that the quality of the lamb meat is preserved, excessively long transport times and any stress to the animals before slaughter should be avoided. Accordingly, the journey time between the holding and the slaughter-house should be less than eight hours. In practice, the journey time is less, given the proximity between the holdings and the slaughter-houses.

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

3.7. **Specific rules concerning labelling:**

4. **Concise definition of the geographical area:**

The geographical area corresponds to the municipalities of:

— Dordogne, with the exception of the municipalities of the La Force and Sigoulès cantons,

— Corrèze: Ayen, Brive-la-Gaillarde (Sud-Ouest), Juillac and Larche cantons,

— Lot: Cazals, Gourdon, Payrac, Puy-L’Évêque, Salvac and Souillac cantons,

— Lot-et-Garonne: Cancon, Castillonnes, Fumel, Lauzun, Monflanquin and Villeréal cantons.
5. **Link with the geographical area:**

5.1. **Specificity of the geographical area:**

The Périgord area is characterised by pedo-climatic variability, with poor soil and rough terrain, marked differences between winter and summer temperatures and very variable mid-seasons.

These features have resulted in very diverse agricultural production and very little specialisation, and the holdings are generally small. On each holding there are areas with low agricultural potential which in Périgord are traditionally known as ‘picadies’. These ranges are characterised by poor, rocky or steep soils, with occasional thickets and woods, and they are unsuitable for mechanised farming and are only maintained by the sheep.

5.2. **Specificity of the product:**

The specificity of ‘Agneau du Périgord’ is mainly attributable to the traditional way in which the lambs are reared: a suckling period with their mothers followed by a finishing period in a sheepfold.

The lamb meat is light in colour (white to light pink). Its fat is white, with a firm consistency, and it is also characterised by a delicate taste of lamb and a tender and ‘melt-in-the-mouth’ texture. The tenderness of the meat is mainly attributable to the age of the animal while the ‘melt-in-the-mouth’ nature of the meat is due to the quality of the fat.

Its light colour is the result of two complementary features of the method of obtaining the product: the age of the lambs when slaughtered (at most 180 days) and the suckling period of at least 60 days. The age at which the lambs are slaughtered and the suckling period also give the meat a delicate flavour that is not too strong and is different from the flavour and aroma of ordinary lamb meat which consumers may consider to be very pronounced.

The firm white fat is attributable to a specific diet during the finishing period. This diet is based on fodder and supplemental feeding with whole or flattened grain exclusively.

This specific dietary supplement during the finishing period gives Périgord lamb meat an intrinsic balanced fat content: the texture of the meat is not dry, and it has just enough succulence to give the impression of melting. Lastly, the fat cover of Périgord lamb meat is quite thin, and it has a delicate taste and melts in the mouth.

The result is a distinctive type of lamb that has a delicate taste and aroma, making it a meat that is much sought after for the balance of its flavour.

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):**

‘Agneau du Périgord’ is produced in a traditional way in the renowned Périgord area.

5.3.1. **Specific know-how**

The Périgord sheep farmers have acquired specific expertise with regard to sheep farming that takes account of the constraints of the area.

They have adapted to the constraints of the area which is characterised by unfavourable soil and climatic conditions. Given the variability of rainfall and temperatures, and also of the soil, complex farming systems have been established, combining all available resources.
With the passage of time the shepherds have become sheep farmers, and they have developed practices characterised by a range of measures and diversified use of natural areas. Their traditional sheep farming methods make effective use of land areas that are not very productive in agricultural terms.

These constraints are responsible for the selection of hardy breeds in the case of the ewes. These breeds were chosen for their endurance, their healthy diet, their ability to graze on poor rangeland, and their ability to breed by natural service all year round and to feed their lambs without difficulty. The use of meat breed rams enhances the conformation of the lambs for slaughter.

These constraints also influence the feeding system established by the farmers who organise their flock in homogeneous herds according to the physiological needs of the ewes and lambs which, depending on their situation, will be on rangeland or meadowland or in a fold.

5.3.2. A special quality

The specific quality of the lambs is related to the herding method which is based on an efficient farming system that makes effective use of the rangeland and is adapted to local constraints. In addition, the rearing of Périgord lambs takes place in two stages: the suckling period when the lambs follow their mothers and the finishing period in a sheepfold where they receive all the attention they need: their own space and top-quality feed.

As a result of this herding method and the features of the finishing period, the lamb meat is light in colour (white to light pink). Its fat is white, with a firm consistency, and it is also characterised by a delicate taste of lamb which is not too strong, the texture of the meat is not dry, and it has just enough succulence to give the impression of melting. Lastly, the fat cover of Périgord lamb meat is quite thin, and it has a delicate taste and melts in the mouth.

5.3.3. The reputation of ‘Agneau du Périgord’

The reputation of ‘Agneau du Périgord’ is confirmed both by the traditional presence of sheep in Périgord and the meat’s appeal to gourmets.

The sheep-rearing practices have changed little since the 19th century when there were already a significant number of sheep in Périgord. The sheep population is estimated to have been over 667,400 head in 1809. While wool was the primary product, there is evidence of use being made of the lamb meat in the local cuisine.

Trading took place at numerous fairs, the biggest ones attracting over 1,000 head. In the second half of the 19th century, many writings indicate that farming was becoming much more focused on the production of meat, with farmers being encouraged to adapt their local breed to the rearing of lambs for slaughter. In 1897, the statistics refer to significant numbers of lambs being slaughtered in Périgueux.

‘Agneau du Périgord’ lamb meat is a festive delicacy in Périgord that is eaten especially at Christmas and Easter, and takes many forms, occupying an important place at mealtimes.

Proof of this can be found in a book written in the early 20th century by a famous Périgord cook called ‘la Mazille’ which gives pride of place to Périgord lamb among over 300 local recipes. To quote from this book, ‘there is indeed, in Périgord, a breed of sheep which yields excellent meat from all points of view’.

There are many recipes and restaurant menus that explicitly mention ‘Agneau du Périgord’ lamb meat.

Reference to the publication of the specification: