(Announcements)

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 121/05)

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.

SUMMARY

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006
‘MELÓN DE LA MANCHA’
EC No: ES-PGI-0005-0511-06.12.2005
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 Alimentarios. Secretaría General de Medio Ambiente y Medio Rural y Marino
   Address: Paseo de la Infanta Isabel, 1
            28071 Madrid
            ESPAÑA
   Tel. +34 913475394
   Fax +34 913475410
   E-mail: —

2. Group:

   Name: Asociación para la promoción del melón de la Mancha (Association for the promotion of ‘Melón de la Mancha’)
   Address: C/ Pedro Domecq, 2
            13700 Tomelloso (Ciudad Real)
            ESPAÑA
   Tel. +34 926538216
   Fax +34 926538217
   E-mail: —
   Composition: Producers/processors ( X ) Other ( )

3. **Type of product:**
Class 1.6. Fruit, vegetables and cereals, fresh or processed

4. **Specification:**
(summary of requirements under Article 4(2) of Regulation (EC) No 510/2006)

4.1. **Name:**
'Melón de La Mancha'

4.2. **Description:**
They are melons of the botanical variety 'saccharinus' and of the cultivars 'Piñonet' or 'Piel de sapo' in any of their commercial varieties and they are sold to consumers fresh.

The protected geographical indication will only apply to Category I melons, with a minimum sugar content (refractive index of the pulp) of 13 °Brix (± 0.5 °) and a unit weight of between 1.8 and 4 kg (± 0.1 kg.)

Melons of the 'Piñonet' or 'Piel de sapo' variety are elliptical or oval in shape.

The skin can be smooth or slightly rough and is between 0.6 and 0.8 cm thick. It is netted or has grooves of varying intensity that run lengthways, and this is usually more abundant around the stalk area and the scar left by the stigma. It is mainly green in colour with some medium-sized shadows that are distributed uniformly and turn yellow as it ripens. The pulp is white or cream-coloured. The placental zone is in the central cavity, which is relatively small in comparison to other varieties, and is orange. The seeds are here.

From a sensory point of view, the main characteristics that make 'Melón de La Mancha' popular are its sweetness, its juiciness and the low level of fibres in its flesh.

4.3. **Geographical area:**
The production zone for 'Melón de La Mancha' is in the geographical area of Mancha which is adjacent to Alto Guadiana in the Autonomous Community of Castile-La Mancha. It includes the municipalities of Alcázar de San Juan, Arenales de San Gregorio, Argamasilla de Alba, Campo de Criptana, Daimiel, Herencia, Las Labores, Llanos del Caudillo, Manzanares, Membrilla, Puerto Lápice, Socuéllamos, Tomelloso, Valdepeñas y Villarta de San Juan.

4.4. **Proof of origin:**
Agricultural Production Programme
Producers will complete seed declarations every year giving details among others of the cadastral reference numbers of the parcels and of their location, extension, capacity estimate, etc. They will also establish individual mutual commitment contracts with the agricultural structures containing the technical specifications for the production and quality of 'Melón de La Mancha'.

The organised agricultural supply structures are responsible for ensuring that melons that are labelled as 'Melón de La Mancha' meet the conditions by using a self-checking system.

4.5. **Method of production:**
Agricultural Practice
Site preparation: the first work is done in October or November at a depth of 30-40 cm and the aim is to get the lower strata nice and soft. In February further work is done on the surface to crumble the soil. Once the soil is ready, the parcel is marked to indicate the distance between the planting rows.
Planting: planting is done between mid-April and early June when the seedlings' first leaf stage is well developed. Planting is done by hand.

Tasks during the growing cycle: apart from watering, fertilising, weeding and clearing, the removal of fruit from plants that have too many must be done in order to get sizes and weights that are suitable for sale.

Harvesting: the melons are cut by hand. Then they are placed along the rows to be collected later with a trailer. The frequency of the harvest varies from two to three times a week when the weather is warm to once a week when the weather is cooler. The harvest starts in mid-July and ends in October.

Post-harvest phase and packing

Reception and storage: the fruit is unloaded in handling centres and packed by the organised agricultural marketing structures, which also record the weight, the identification of each item and the result of the quality control on entry. 'Melón de La Mancha' melons are always stored undercover at room temperature with enough humidity and ventilation.

Handling and packing

The calibration of the melons is a determining factor for the weight of each fruit, which is always between 1.8 and 4.0 kg.

The largest 'Melón de La Mancha' in the box must not weigh more than 30 % more than the smallest.

Depending on their calibre, 'Melón de La Mancha' melons are packed and presented for sale in wooden or cardboard boxes and/or Green Box packaging, up to a maximum weight of 120 kg.

Checks before sending: each pallet stacked with products supplied by one or more producers will have a traceability label which will make it possible to identify the producer or producers that supplied the 'Melón de La Mancha' melons, the parcels of origin and the packing date.

'Melón de La Mancha' melons can be stored for a maximum of 45 days after the cutting date.

Each consignment is checked using aggregate samples to evaluate the conformity of the calibration performed during packing, and the consignment is rejected if more than 3 % of the pieces do not meet the minimum or maximum weight requirements or if more than 20 % of the cases inspected do not meet the requirement of a maximum of 30 % difference in weight between the pieces, without exceeding 50 %.

Each consignment is checked using reduced samples (for a number of pieces whose joint weight does not exceed 10 % of the total weight of the pieces used in the aggregate sample) for conformity with the maturity criteria, that the pulp is not vitreous and that the seeds have not become detached.

4.6. Link:

History

The 'Piñonet' or 'Piel de sapo' melon is one of the socio-horticultural crops that are typical of the La Mancha region and is particularly representative of the north-eastern zone of the Ciudad Real province. Thirty-five per cent of the national production comes from this region, where it is a good complement to family farms whose main income comes from wine and cereals.
Melon farming was most probably introduced to La Mancha by the Arabs.

The oldest references can be found in the original and objective ‘Tratado Agrícola’ by Ibn Bassal al-Tulaytubí, a student of Ibn Wafid, Visir of Yahya ben Ismail al-Mamún, who ruled under the name Yahya I al-Mamún over the isolated kingdoms of Toledo (1043-1075) and Valencia (1065-1075).

This product’s link to the area can be proven by its inclusion in the Inventario Español de Productos Tradicionales’ (Spanish Inventory of Traditional Products) (Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación, 1996, p. 332).

**Natural environment**

The La Mancha plain is a sedimentary basin which is almost perfectly horizontal and flat with the exception of a few hills that stand out slightly. The average altitude is between 500 and 700 m.

The basin is filled with natural detritus (sandstone, arkose and clay) and is affected by carbonated deposits (caliche). The land where the crop is grown is not very deep. The arable land is not deeper than 35 cm, is not very fertile and has low levels of organic material and high pH values. But it consists of sand or sandy loam, which is very permeable with a high mineral content and the subsoil consists of a stony limestone layer which is porous and easy to work.

In terms of climate, it is a cold and dry region due to its distance from the humid winds from the Atlantic. The area where ‘Melón de La Mancha’ melons are grown has rainfall of between 300 and 400 mm with high levels of radiation and evapotranspiration in the summer, a diurnal temperature variation of between 18 and 20 °C and low levels of relative humidity.

These soil and climatic conditions give the product certain qualitative characteristics with respect to size, colour, the netted skin and the external shape of the fruit, the texture and fibrousness of the pulp and the juiciness and sweetness of the flesh.

The high sugar content is particularly remarkable. The high temperatures, high luminosity and low relative humidity lead to high insolation and evapotranspiration. Also, due to the diurnal temperature variation, the plants consume less reserves during the night-time respiratory process, which explains why the net photosynthesis is greater. These conditions lead to a high sugar content, with the minimum sugar content for ‘Melón de La Mancha’ being 13 °Brix.

**4.7. Inspection body:**

The inspection body and the product certification scheme will be provided by the following private inspection body:

Name: Servicios de Inspección y Certificación, S.L. (SIC)
Address: C/ Ciudad, 13-1
45002 Toledo
ESPAÑA
Tel. +34 925285139
Fax +34 925285139
E-mail: sic-toledo@sicagro.org
http://www.sicagro.org
4.8. Labelling:

The label on the melons will include the endorsement Protected Geographical Indication (or PGI), 'Melón de La Mancha' and, optionally, the mark of conformity from the product certification body for the control structure.