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 202/05)

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 from the date of this publication.

SINGLE DOCUMENT
COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006
‘TEKOVSKÝ SALÁMOVÝ SYR’
PGI (X) PDO ( )

1. Name:
‘Tekovský salámový syr’

2. Member State or third country:
Slovak Republic

3. Description of the agricultural product or foodstuff:
3.1. Type of product (according to Annex II):
Class 1.3. Cheeses

3.2. Description of product to which the name in (1) applies:
‘Tekovský salámový syr’ is a natural semi-hard, ripened full-fat cheese, smoked or unsmoked, in the shape of a cylinder 30-32 cm long, with a diameter of 9-9,5 cm. It is produced by curdling heat-treated milk and then forming the curd into the traditional cylindrical shape. After pressing, the cylinders are separated, processed and checked by hand. The smoked variety undergoes the smoking process after salting and drying.

The cheese gets its characteristic organoleptic properties from the cylinder shape itself, which is reminiscent of a salami and gives it its common name; the cheese has a soft, pliable and elastic structure, free of holes or with smallish holes apparent when cut. The relatively short ripening time gives the cheese its mildly acidulous characteristic dairy taste.

‘Tekovský salámový syr’ is placed on the market in food-quality film, the packaged weight of the individual cheeses varying slightly.

Properties:

Colour: creamy white to slightly yellowish or, in the case of smoked varieties, golden-yellow
Consistency: soft, pliable and elastic, the cut surface being close-textured and free of holes or, possibly, with smallish holes
Odour and taste: acidulous, milky, mildly aromatic, mildly salty and, in the case of smoked varieties, typically smoky
Composition: Dry matter: 53,5-58,5 % by weight
Fat content in the dry matter: 43,0-47,5 % by weight
Edible salt: maximum 2,5 % by weight
Microbiological properties: ‘Tekovský salámový syr’ is made from pasteurised milk with the addition of pure lactic acid cultures of the genera Lactococcus or Streptococcus.

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

'Tekovský salámový syr' is produced using pasteurised cow’s milk with the addition of a lactic acid culture. The quality of the milk is regularly checked and recorded at the milk-processor’s premises, the following parameters being monitored: the inhibitory substances, temperature, acidity, fat, specific weight and non-fat dry matter.

The total number of micro-organisms and the number of somatic cells are established by accredited laboratories.

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 quality of the product is not dependent on the origin of the raw milk.

The entire production procedure takes place within the defined geographical area and the specific production step is step 4.

**Production procedure:**

Step 1: The raw cow’s milk is pasteurised to a temperature of 73-79 °C.

Step 2: The standard procedure for producing natural semi-hard cheeses is used for the renneting, cutting and firming of the curd and the preparation of the cheese grains.

Step 3: The whey/cheese grain mixture is placed in prepared moulds and pressed until the desired degree of firmness is achieved; the pressing time is about 80 minutes.

Step 4: The further processing of the pressed cheeses is still done by hand in order to ensure better control over the quality and shape of the cheese, comprising:

(a) cutting and separating the moulded salami-shaped cheeses;

(b) taking the cheeses out of the moulds and removing any irregular scraps from the ends;

(c) placing the conditioned and checked cheeses into the salting racks.

Step 5: Salting: the cheeses are salted by being immersed in brine for 24 hours: concentration: 16-18 °Be NaCl; acidity: pH: 4.6-5.3; temperature: 12-18 °C.

Step 6: Drying of the cheese at a temperature of around 13 °C for about 24 hours.

Step 7: For the production of the smoked variety:

Smoking: the cheese is smoked with direct cold smoke with a temperature in the region of 30-35 °C in a forced air circulation smoking chamber with smoke from sawdust until it turns a golden-yellow colour.

Step 8: Ripening: the cheeses are ripened on racks at a temperature of 8-12 °C with a relative humidity of 90 % maximum, for at least two weeks.

Step 9: Packaging: the cheeses are packaged in food-quality film. The packet is labelled with a coloured label bearing the product name ‘Tekovský salámový syr’ or, in the case of the smoked variety, ‘Tekovský salámový syr údený’.

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

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3.7. **Specific rules concerning labelling:**

Any producer making ‘Tekovský salámový syr’ in accordance with this specification is entitled to use the name ‘Tekovský salámový syr’ when labelling, advertising or marketing the product.
Labels affixed to the product must state the following:

— the name ‘Tekovský salámový syr’, prominently positioned,

— the words ‘protected geographical indication’ or the abbreviation ‘PGI’ and the associated EC symbol.

4. Concise definition of the geographical area:

Tekov is the historical name of the region located on the boundary between the current Nitra and Banská Bystrica administrative regions.

‘Tekovský salámový syr’ is produced in the Tekov region, which stretches across the broad fertile lowlands of south-western Slovakia, from the municipalities of Jur nad Hronom, Dolná Seč and Žemliare and extending up to the foothills of the Štiavnica mountains in the north. The eastern border is formed by a string of municipalities running from Uhliská to Demandice and from Jablonevce to Krškany.

Tekov is a lowland area with little industry but high levels of milk production, which began to be processed into salami cheese. The name of the region became part of the name of the cheese: ‘Tekovský salámový syr’. Production of this cheese was very important after the Second World War in particular as it provided employment for women and became the basis for livelihoods in the region. The name has been retained commercially and in colloquial usage to the present day to refer to this food product. Today the Tekov name is used only informally for the region, but is still in common use and very well known to all.

5. Link with the geographical area:

5.1. Specificity of the geographical area:

Tekov is a predominantly lowland area with a hilly section in the north. The area is well-known not only as a wine-growing region, but also as a region with extensive cattle farming; it is one of the largest areas in Slovakia producing milk for cheese-making.

The processing of milk into cheese in this area dates back to 1905, when one of the first cooperative dairies in Slovakia was set up in the town of Bátovce.

However, the production of semi-hard salami-shaped cheese began somewhat later, in 1949, at the Tekovské Lužany dairy. Following the closure of this dairy, production moved to a dairy in Šahy and, later on, to a dairy in Levice, which is where it has been made ever since. The production of ‘Tekovský salámový syr’ took place and continues to take place in the defined geographical area and depends on the specific and unique skills of the producers. The production process and the special shape and quality of the product have been maintained thanks to the skill, experience and know-how acquired from previous generations.

5.2. Specificity of the product:

What makes ‘Tekovský salámový syr’ special is its shape, which is unusual for a cheese. Part of the production process follows the standard procedure for semi-hard cheeses (the preparation of the cheese grains and the pressing), whereas the rest of the process is carried out using the special skills of the producers. After pressing, and while still warm, the cheese is carefully taken out of the mould by hand in such a way that it folds over onto the inside of the arm, so that the shape of the cheese is not damaged; at the same time the shape is checked visually and any pressing defects are removed by hand so that the regular, round shape is retained. It is then carefully placed, by hand, on salting racks.

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):

The application for protected geographical indication is based on the special shape of ‘Tekovský salámový syr’, i.e. the salami shape it is named after, which is unusual for a cheese, as well as on its reputation and quality.
Tekov is situated in a predominantly lowland area of south-western Slovakia. The area is well-known for its high production of cow’s milk, much of which is currently processed to make the natural semi-hard cheese ‘Tekovský salámový syr’.

‘Salami cheese as a distinct product was developed by Jozef Sotz, owner of the dairy and cheese factory at Dobrá Niva, together with the cheese makers Rudo Pudelka and Štefan Slančík. The wooden moulds were made in Štefan Ľupták’s wheelwright workshop. His workshop also made beechwood cylinders for ripening salami cheeses. The presses and metal tools were produced in the workshop of the locksmith Karol Mozoľa, which was next to Jozef Soc’s dairy and cheese factory. The salami cheese production process was invented in 1921.’ (Ján Keresteš, Ján Selecký et al. — Mliekarstvo a syrárstvo na strednom Slovensku (The Dairy and Cheese Industries in Central Slovakia), 2003, p. 87).

During the Second World War the dairy and cheese factory at Dobrá Niva were completely destroyed and did not resume production. After 1948, when private and cooperative enterprises were nationalised in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, new national dairy enterprises were created, each specialising in a particular product range. Under this arrangement production of salami cheese was moved to Tekovské Lužany.

‘Production of semi-hard salami cheese began after the Second World War in 1949 at the Tekovské Lužany dairy’, the Hospodárske noviny newspaper reported on 23 June 2008 in a series on original Slovak products.

The historical records show that salami-shaped cheese was first made in this area at the Tekovské Lužany dairy between 1949 and 1953, before production shifted to a nearby dairy in Šahy, where it was made until 1996. Following the closure of the facility in Šahy, production of the salami-shaped cheese was moved to the Levické mliekarne dairy factory in Levice, which is where it started being made in two varieties: smoked and unsmoked. The production move had no adverse effect on quality; the outstanding quality of the cheese was maintained, as attested by the fact that it won first prize as dairy product of the year in a nationwide competition in 1996.

The product has been continuously produced only in the defined geographical area. All three dairies — Tekovské Lužany, Šahy and the Levické mliekarne — are located in the defined geographical area, Tekov. Cheese production is currently restricted to the Levické mliekarne dairy plant in Levice.

It is significant that, despite a number of changes in the production location and premises, the traditional production process has been maintained to this day with only minor alterations. ‘Tekovský salámový syr’ has also maintained its quality, as attested by the prizes it was awarded in the cheese category in the nationwide Dairy Product of the Year competitions (Mliekarenský výrobok roka) in 2003 and 2006.

The Tekov region continues to be the leader in milk production and milk quality in Slovakia. The producers take care to maintain the high quality of their products. Articles in the press also attest to the reputation and tradition of ‘Tekovský salámový syr’.

‘It is recognised by consumers not only in Slovakia, but also in the Czech Republic, and even in Brussels ... this cheese delicacy has helped to make Slovakia and the Tekov region well-known abroad ... ’, the Nitrianske noviny newspaper reported on 21 May 2007.

‘Tekovský salámový syr’ enjoys an outstanding reputation both in Slovakia and abroad, as shown by the prestigious awards it has won. The cheese has featured at important regional and national events (such as the World Milk Day celebrations and the Pohronske dni), in specialised international activities as part of IMF 2006 and at various receptions and exhibitions in Slovakia and abroad (in Poznań, Moscow and London).

The uniqueness of this cheese lies in the fact that it has been made in the same way for years. It is hand-processed in the production tradition established at the Levické mliekarne dairy’ (Nitrianske noviny, 21 May 2007).
What makes 'Tekovský salámový syr' a unique product is its shape, which is unusual for a cheese, and the fact that it is still made using a traditional production method that involves meticulous processing and checking by hand in the shaping of the cheese.

Reference to publication of the specification:
(Article 5(7) of Regulation (EC) No 510/2006)