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

(2011/C 116/08)

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

‘MIOD Z SEJNEŃSZCZYZNY/ŁOŻDZIĘJSZCZYZNY’/‘SEINŲ/LAZDIŲ KRAŠTO MEDUS’

PGI ( ) PDO ( X )

1. Name:
   ‘Miód z Sejneńszczyzny/Lożdziejszczyzny’/‘Seinų/Lazdių krašto medus’

2. Member State or third country:
   Poland and Lithuania

3. Description of the agricultural product or foodstuff:

3.1. Type of product:
   Class 1.4. Other products of animal origin, honey

3.2. Description of the product to which the name in (1) applies:

Only bees’ honey from polyfloral nectar may be sold under the name ‘miód z Sejneńszczyzny/Lożdziejszczyzny’/‘Seinų/Lazdių krašto medus’. At the time of sale the honey may be in liquid form (strained honey) or crystallised form (set honey). The honey may have a thick translucent liquid consistency or a crystallised consistency. It is obtained from several dozen melliferous plant species characteristic of this area, including: various species of willow and maple, common dandelion, raspberry, buckthorn, white and red clover, bird’s-foot trefoil, mellilot and other papilionaceous plants (Papilionaceae), viper’s bugloss, lungwort, lime, weeds of the Cruciferae family (Brassicaceae), cornflower, willow herb, false acacia, foxtail lily, plum and plants of the Umbelliferae, Caryophyllaceae and Labiatae families.

Pollen of monoculture crops may be present in the honey only in trace quantities (not exceeding 5 % in total). In no case may the presence of such pollen lead to changes in the honey’s characteristic taste, smell or colour. The honey has a very characteristic colour, ranging from dark yellow to dark golden. A characteristic feature of the honey is its slight cloudiness. The colour of the honey is allowed to be somewhat darker; this is caused by the inclusion of honeydew, which sometimes occurs during the period of nectar production in some plants. The maximum amount of honeydew that may be included, measured in terms of electrical conductivity, is 0,5 mS/cm.

Physico-chemical characteristics:

— water content — not more than 18 %,
— density — over 1 400 g/cm³,
— proline content — not less than 25 mg/100 g of honey,
— 5-hydroxymethylfurfural (HMF) content — not more than 2,0 mg/100 g of honey,
— stable pH (3,8-4,8),

— monosaccharide (glucose and fructose) content — not less than 60 g/100 g.

— sucrose content — not more than 5 g/100 g.

— diastase activity on the Schade scale — not less than 8,

— free acids — not more than 50 meq/kg,

— electrical conductivity — not less than 0.8 mS/cm.

3.3. Raw materials (for processed products only):

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

Bees' main food during the apicultural season and during overwintering is the natural honey and pollen that they have stored away in their hives. These are left in sufficient quantities to ensure that the bees overwinter well, until fresh nectar and pollen become available in spring. However, in the event of adverse weather conditions in late summer, bees may use some of the food they have stored up. It is then necessary to replenish the supplies in August and September. A syrup made from sugar (sucrose) and water in a ratio of between 1.5:1 and 2:1, depending on the time of year and the air temperature, is used for this purpose. This feed is given in the evening (so as not to attract predators to the apiary), and in several doses (so that it is thoroughly processed and converted by the bees). If it is necessary to provide supplemental feed in early spring owing to a protracted winter, adverse weather conditions or nectar dearth, the first course of action is to provide supplies of honey and propolis kept in the storage area of the beekeeper's premises, uncapping them as needed, one after another. If there is none, a thinner sugar syrup than is used in autumn is administered, as bees require more water in spring, the sugar-to-water ratio being between 1:2 and 1:1, as well as ground pollen, so that the bees get some protein. Sugar syrup made from beet sugar and water or invert sucrose syrup is used for feeding. The syrup is administered using top- or frame-feeders. The bees must not be given supplemental feed during the period in which ‘miód z Sejneńszczyzny/Loździejszczyzny’/Seinų/Lazdijų krašto medus’ is collected.

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

All steps in production — from the siting of the apiaries to the final packaging of the honey — must take place in the specified geographical area. On account of the very short growing season of plants in this area, ‘miód z Sejneńszczyzny/Loździejszczyzny’/Seinų/Lazdijų krašto medus’ is produced solely during a three-month period, i.e. from mid-May to mid-August. The honey is cold-spun in a honey extractor using centrifugal force. Strained honey is put up in (decanted into) unit packages with a capacity not exceeding 1 400 g. The honey should be stored away from light at a temperature of 4-18 °C in dry, well-ventilated premises. It is not permitted for the pollen to be filtered out, or for the honey to be creamed, pasteurised or artificially heated. The temperature of the honey must not be permitted to rise above 42 °C during any of the steps in production. During the period in which the honey is produced, it is forbidden to administer medicines to the bees. The use of chemicals or other bee deterrents, whether in solid, liquid or gaseous form, is also forbidden.

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

The beekeepers themselves decant the honey into individual retail packaging (having a capacity of not more than 1 400 g). In this way they avoid the risks associated with any change in the honey's physico-chemical and organoleptic properties that could occur when moving the honey over long distances if it has not been properly packaged.

If the honey could be transported outside the area in packaging other than retail packages, there is also a risk that ‘miód z Sejneńszczyzny/Loździejszczyzny’/Seinų/Lazdijų krašto medus’ could be mixed with other types of honey or that honey not originating in the geographical area defined at (4) could be placed on the market under the protected designation.
This restriction is designed to eliminate any factor that might compromise the quality of 'miód z Sejneńszczyzny/Łoździejszczyzny’/Seinų/Lazdijų krašto medus’ and to maintain the high level of credibility of the inspection system.

3.7. Specific rules concerning labelling:

All beekeepers and entities engaged in the buying-in of the honey and its subsequent presentation under the protected designation in Poland and Lithuania are required to use one type of label. Inscriptions appear on the label in the relevant official language. The name of the product may be indicated in the relevant national language.

Every label must include the name 'miód z Sejneńszczyzny/Łoździejszczyzny’/Seinų/Lazdijų krašto medus’ and information on the capacity of the container, amongst other things, as well as indicating the producer's address, the veterinary registration number, the date on which the honey was decanted and its shelf-life. Labels will also include the EU PDO symbol or the EU symbol and the inscription ‘Protected Designation of Origin’.

Labels in Poland will be distributed by the District Beekeepers’ Circle (Terenowe Koło Pszczelarzy) in Sejny, and in Lithuania by the District Beekeepers’ Society in Lazdijai. The association in question forwards detailed rules to the competent inspection body concerning the distribution of the labels. Such rules must not in any way discriminate against producers who produce ‘miód z Sejneńszczyzny/Łoździejszczyzny’/Seinų/Lazdijų krašto medus’ in accordance with the specification but do not belong to the association.

4. Concise definition of the geographical area:

'Miód z Sejneńszczyzny/Łoździejszczyzny’/Seinų/Lazdijų krašto medus’ is collected in the following area:

— in Poland: four municipalities in Sejny county (Sejny, Giby, Krasnopol and Puršik) and five municipalities in Suwałki county (Suwałki, Szypliszki, Jeleniewo, Rutka-Tartak and Wiżajny),

— in Lithuania: twelve civil parishes in the Lazdijai District municipality (Kapičiamiestis, Veisejai, Kučiūnai, Lazdijai, Seirijai, Norageliai, Šventežeris, Teizai, Šlavantai, Būdvietis, Šeštokai and Krosna).

5. Link with the geographical area:

5.1. Specificity of the geographical area:

The area in which 'miód z Sejneńszczyzny/Łoździejszczyzny’/Seinų/Lazdijų krašto medus’ is produced is situated in the Niemen river basin on the border between Poland and Lithuania, in the Eastern Suwałki Lake District (Pojezierze Wschodniosuwalskie) mesoregion. The area of what was once a single territory inhabited by the Yotvingian tribes is now situated within an area called Ziemia Sejneńśka (Sejneńśczyzna) and Lazdijų kraštas. The term 'miód z Sejneńszczyzny’ relates to the honey produced in Poland and the term ‘Lazdijų krašto medus’ to the honey produced in Lithuania. However, this area constitutes a homogeneous territory within which the same methods are used to obtain an identical product. ‘Miód z Sejneńśczyzny’ and ‘Lazdijų krašto medus’ refer to the same honey.

Ziemia Sejneńska and Ziemia Łoździejska (Lazdijų kraštas) are situated in the Eastern Suwałki Lake District in the Lithuanian Lakeland (Pojezierze Litewskie) geographical region. This area is united in particular by its geographical situation, climate, identical flora and fauna and relief. These lands also share a common history. The region was divided by a state border in 1919 (following the final shaping of the territories of Poland and Lithuania after the First World War). However, the border has not weakened the cultural ties between the people who live there and these ties have an opportunity to flourish anew since Poland and Lithuania became part of the Schengen Area in 2007.

This area's relief was shaped as a result of many phases of glaciation. The characteristic elements of this area are lakes, deep glacial channels created under the ice (now occupied by lakes or rivers) and post-glacial hollows — small depressions with no outlet, sometimes filled with water, which were mainly created when lumps of stationary ice melted. There are around 150 lakes in Lazdijai District municipality, and several dozen lakes in Ziemia Sejneńska, the biggest of which is Lake Galadus, part of which is in Lithuania.
The area in question has a severe climate with very pronounced continental features. Winter temperatures are lower — and summer temperatures higher — than the national average. The average annual temperature there is 6.1 °C. Throughout the area described, precipitation averages between 550 mm and 600 mm per year. The growing season for plants begins between one week and two weeks later than in the surrounding regions and is of very short duration, being less than 150 days.

The vegetation in this area is the result of its climate, geology and hydrology and of anthropogenic changes and is well-adapted to the prevailing conditions. The relief, the air temperatures in winter and summer, the moderate level of precipitation, the very short growing season and the clean environment are key factors in determining the vegetation. Plants of relict, boreal and arctic species, including Salix lapponum, Betula humilis, Rubus chamaemorus, Ledum palustre, Glyceria lithuanica and Baeothryon alpinum, occur in the area where 'miód z Sejneńszczyzny/Loździejszczyzny'/Seinų/Lazdijų krašto medus' is obtained. The flora of the area in question creates the following ecotypes: field/meadow, forest, swamp/peat-bog (to a considerable extent preserved in a state very close to the original). All these plant communities, natural and man-made, include many types of papilionaceous plants: clovers (Trifolium), melilots (Melilothus), vetches (Vicia), medicks (Medicago), vetchlings (Lathyrus) and bird’s-foot trefoil (Lotus), the nectar of which contains a number of alkaloids, glycosides and essential oils.

The human factor is very important during the production of 'miód z Sejneńszczyzny/Loździejszczyzny'/Seinų/Lazdijų krašto medus'. The beekeepers' skills relate in particular to rules on the siting of apiaries, the breeding of bees and traditional bee-farming, consisting, amongst other things, of the use of wooden beehives; compliance with the restrictions on the supplemental feeding of bees during the winter period and the prohibition of the filtering of pollen and the creaming, pasteurising and artificial warming of honey; the cold-spinning of the honey and compliance with the restrictions on the decanting and storage of honey. The beekeepers' skills have been built up over many years and have been passed from generation to generation. The long tradition of beekeeping in this area is confirmed by numerous materials and publications and the many legal instruments. The Beekeeping Law was officially entered in the Statute Book of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in 1529. In the 14th and 15th centuries, the Dukes of Lithuania granted the people of this area the right to use forest resources, including the right to use primitive forest beehives (wchody bartne).

In 1873, the Beekeepers' Circle was founded in Sejny, the first in the Kingdom of Poland. Many beehive registers also still exist in this area, for example dating from the 1830s and from 1948.

5.2. Specificity of the product:

The characteristic features attesting to the uniqueness of 'miód z Sejneńszczyzny/Loździejszczyzny'/Seinų/Lazdijų krašto medus' are:

— low water content — not more than 18 %,
— high density — more than 1 400 g/cm³,
— strong aroma,
— bitterish aftertaste,
— low proportion of pollen from flowers of monoculture crops — not more than 5 %,
— high proline content — not less than 25 mg/100 g of honey,
— low 5-hydroxymethylfurfural (HMF) content — not more than 2.0 mg/100 g of honey,
— stable pH (3.8-4.8),
— characteristic colour, ranging from dark yellow to dark golden and sometimes darker owing to the inclusion of honeydew, and slight cloudiness.
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):

‘Miód z Sejneńszczyzny/Łoździejszczyzny’/Seinų/Lazdijų krašto medus’ is a unique product, closely linked to the area in which it originates. It owes its characteristic strong aroma and bitterish after-taste to the diversity of nectariferous plants specific to the area defined in (4), a significant proportion of which are papilionaceous plants. The specificity of the geographical area is also due to the fact that the proportion of pollen from monoculture crops in this honey does not exceed 5%.

The quality of ‘miód z Sejneńszczyzny/Łoździejszczyzny’/Seinų/Lazdijų krašto medus’ also owes much to the specific skills of local beekeepers. They have had to apply their skills to the difficult climatic conditions (in this area, honey can be produced solely in a three-month period, i.e. from mid-May to mid-August, because of the very short growing period). The beekeepers’ craft and the exceptional nature of the area impart the honey produced with distinctive features such as a low water content, high density, a low 5-hydroxymethylfurfural content and a stable pH.

Another characteristic which distinguishes ‘miód z Sejneńszczyzny/Łoździejszczyzny’/Seinų/Lazdijų krašto medus’ and testifies to its high quality is its high proline content, which it owes to its natural origin, environmental factors and, occasionally, also the inclusion of honeydew.

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

http://www.zum.lt/documents/Kokybe-medus.doc