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

(2012/C 11/05)

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
‘JAGNIĘCINA PODHALAŃSKA’
EC No: PL-PGI-0005-0837-12.11.2010
PGI ( X ) PDO ( )

1. Name:
‘Jagnięcina podhalańska’

2. Member State or third country:
Poland

3. Description of the agricultural product or foodstuff:

3.1. Type of product:
Class 1.1 — Fresh meat (and offal)

3.2. Description of product to which the name in (1) applies:
The protected geographical indication covers the following breeds of lamb: Polish mountain sheep, coloured mountain sheep and/or Podhale zackels. These breeds of sheep are not cross-bred.

A ‘Jagnięcina podhalańska’ is a lamb which is not more than 60 days old. These are suckling lamb carcasses weighing between 4 kg and 8 kg.

‘Jagnięcina podhalańska’ has the following properties:

1. organoleptic properties,
   — light pink colouring,
   — a soft, elastic structure,
   — delicate flavour, succulent,

— a characteristic aroma which is similar to game (to venison in particular),
— minimal carcass fat — fat class 1 in the EUROP system,
— a small quantity of white kidney fat (30 g to 40 g);

2. physico-chemical properties:
— average total protein content: from 18 % to 23 %,
— average dry matter content: from 20 % to 25 %,
— average crude fat content: from 1,25 % to 2,2 %.

3.3. Raw materials (for processed products only):

3.4. Feed (for products of animal origin only):
Lambs are fed solely with their mother’s milk.

In summer and autumn the sheep are grazed in mountain pastures, green fodder forming the basis of their diet. In winter and early spring the sheep are fed hay, hay silage and concentrated feed. With the exception of concentrated feed, feed must come from the geographical area defined in point 4.

3.5. Specific steps in production that must take place in the identified geographical area:
Lambs must be born in the area defined in point 4 and raised there until such time as they reach the requisite age and body weight.

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

3.7. Specific rules concerning labelling

4. Concise definition of the geographical area:
In Silesia province: Cieszyn district, Istebna municipality;
Żywiec district: Milówka, Węgierska Górka, Rajcza, Ujsoły, Jeleśnia and Koszarawa municipalities.

In Lesser Poland province: the whole of Nowotarski district and the whole of Tatrzański district;
Sucha district: Zawoja, Bystra and Sidzina municipalities;
in Limanowa district: Niedźwiedź and the part of Kamienica which is situated within the Gorce National Park or south of the River Kamienica, and the following civil parishes in Mszana Dolna municipality: Olszówka, Raba Niżna, Łostówka, Łętowe and Lubomierz;
Nowy Sącz district: Piwniczna, Muszyna and Krynica municipalities.

5. Link with the geographical area:
5.1. Specificity of the geographical area:
5.1.1. Natural factors
The area defined in point 4 forms part of the Western Carpathians, which includes the Tatras, Beskids, Pieniny and Gorce. The area in which ‘Jagnięcina podhalańska’ is bred is larger than the Podhale area in its present configuration; this name refers to the microregion which forms the centre of the whole production area. This is a coherent area in historical, ethnic, cultural and geographical terms. The unique method by which sheep are reared in this area was developed over centuries and forms an integral part of the region's landscape and culture.

The region suffers from a harsh climate with a low average temperature of around 5 °C, lengthy snow cover and significant precipitation ranging from 900 mm to 1 200 mm. Thermal conditions relating to the lie of the land are an important feature of the climate. The high altitude of the area results in cooler temperatures.
The Podhale area is home to a wealth of unique vegetation, including both native and imported plant species. Podhale is the only part of Poland in which the following plants can be found: *Delphinium oxysepalum*, *Linum extraaxillare*, *Gentiana nivalis*, *Gentiana clusii*, *Saussurea alpina*, *Saxifraga hieracifolia*, *Viola alpina*, *Campanula alpina*, *Anthyllis alpestris*, *Hieracium villosum* and *Astragalus penduliflorus*.

The Pilsko massif (1 557 metres altitude) in the Żywiec Landscape Park, on which a subalpine zone has formed, as in the Tatras, is one of the most unspoilt areas in Poland. The subalpine zone extends from an altitude of around 1 400 metres to the summit of Pilsko.

Polish mountain sheep, coloured mountain sheep and Podhale zackels are grazed in the area indicated in point 4. Only lambs of these breeds, reared with mothers raised by traditional methods, are used for the production of 'Jagnięcina podhalańska'. The sheep are grazed in mountain pastures throughout the season, from the end of April to the beginning of October. Lambing takes place continually throughout the year. Lambs born during the winter months are kept in the sheepfold throughout the rearing process. When the mothers are taken out to pasture, the lambs are kept separately. Lambs born during the spring may accompany their mothers to grazing if the weather permits.

Grazing must take place within the area defined in point 4.

The Podhale zackel is a breed whose appearance in the area defined in point 4 coincided with the migration of the Vlach shepherd tribes across the Carpathian mountains, which started in the 14th century and ended at the Moravian Gate in the 16th century. Podhale zackels are versatile, well adapted to the region’s harsh climate and resistant to disease. They have a strong herd instinct and produce excellent meat.

The Polish mountain sheep evolved from the Podhale zackel, the Carpathian zackel from Transylvania and the East Frisian. Breeding improved the body weight of adult ewes, the yield and quality of their wool and their milk yield. The improvement in the breed’s productive parameters was combined with characteristics which make it ideally suited to the difficult climate: sound health, longevity, disease resistance and its good — for the conditions in which it is reared — milk yield and fertility. It has also been possible to maintain the quality and characteristics of the lambs’ meat. Polish mountain sheep have a white coat. Coloured mountain sheep have a dark-brown coat which turns grey or russet with time.

5.1.2. Historical factors and human skills

The arrival of the Vlach tribes marked a profound change in the agricultural economy of the whole region and the start of sheep, goat and cattle breeding in the area. The Vlachs brought with them skills associated with the production of milk, cheese, wool and leather. The oldest written reference to the Vlachs can be found in the 15th century work ‘The Life of Saint Kinga of Poland’ by Jan Długosz. A report produced in 1564 refers to the Vlachs grazing sheep in the Lanckorona district of the Żywiec region and in the Duchies of Oświęcim and Zator. Documents from Podhale dating from the end of the 16th century refer to authorisations to graze sheep freely in mountain pastures, indicating that herds were already in the area at that time.

Local breeders of ‘Jagnięcina podhalańska’ work exclusively with the breeds referred to in point 5.1.1, as these animals are genetically well adapted to the harsh mountain climate and are the result of many generations of natural selection. The ability to work with these breeds is closely associated with the experience acquired by local breeders. These breeds are native to the Podhale area, as stated in the
eight-volume 1960 publication ‘Pasterstwo Tatr Polskich i Podhala’. Another characteristic grazing practice is the ‘redyk’, whereby sheep are taken up to mountain pastures and brought back down; this facilitates muscle development and boosts their immune system. The ‘redyk’ also means that the sheep eat a plant diet which changes according to the subalpine area in which grazing takes place, thus ensuring a varied diet which provides a wide range of nutrients. The know-how of the local highlanders and the well established rules by which sheep are reared are reflected in the quality of ‘Jagnięcina podhalańska’. The production of ‘Jagnięcina podhalańska’ forms an integral part of the local culture and the traditional methods of rearing sheep help to bind together different generations and preserve the community’s unique identity, dialect, culture, art and traditions.

5.2. Specificity of the product:

‘Jagnięcina podhalańska’ is noted for its low carcass fat and its exceptional succulence, which is related to the intramuscular fat content or marbling. The meat is also distinguished by its light pink colour and its soft but elastic structure. The most characteristic and distinctive feature of ‘Jagnięcina podhalańska’ is its specific taste and aroma which is similar to game (and in particular to the aroma of venison).

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 link between ‘Jagnięcina podhalańska’ and the region is based on the product’s characteristics, which are associated with its geographical origin and reputation.

The characteristics of ‘Jagnięcina podhalańska’ are derived from the rearing method. The lambs are reared extensively with optimal use of pasture exclusively in the area referred to in point 4. The rearing method involves constant transhumance, except during winter. The grazing method ensures the product’s specific character, since the mothers feed on diverse, unique vegetation in areas which are not used intensively, and this affects the milk with which the lambs are fed and thereby the characteristics of ‘Jagnięcina podhalańska’. During winter, when the sheep are kept in confinement, they are fed hay and hay silage from the geographical area defined in point 4. In view of the above, the mothers are fed roughage with a similar botanical composition throughout the year.

The genetic make-up of the breeds traditionally used to produce ‘Jagnięcina podhalańska’, coupled with the specific natural conditions prevailing in the region, has a decisive impact on the negligible fat content of the lambs’ meat. The method used to feed the lambs, based solely on their mothers’ milk, also helps to account for the meat’s low fat content. The natural conditions prevailing in the area and, in particular, the exceptional vegetation used to feed the sheep, affect the quality and nutritional value of the mothers’ milk. This is directly reflected in the specific taste of the meat and its gamey aroma, which is the most distinctive characteristic of ‘Jagnięcina podhalańska’. The unique qualities of the vegetation native to the region are passed on to the lambs in their mothers’ milk. The original genotype which characterises the breeds used to produce ‘Jagnięcina podhalańska’ also contributes to its specific taste.

‘Jagnięcina podhalańska’ owes its exceptional succulence to its marbling, i.e. intramuscular fat. During cooking this fat melts but remains within the meat and makes it succulent. The meat juices comprise substances conveying taste and aroma. The volatile substances contained in the fat are the main components of taste and aroma. Apart from the animal’s young age, it is the composition of ‘Jagnięcina podhalańska’s’ diet which essentially determines these characteristics.
Reputation of the product

‘Jagnięcina podhalańska’ is highly prized by Polish and foreign consumers alike. The strong image of ‘Jagnięcina podhalańska’ among consumers is based on the long tradition of sheep farming in the region. The tradition, several hundred years old, of grazing mountain sheep, thereby building a strong ‘brand’, means that domestic consumers identify ‘Jagnięcina podhalańska’ with the region in which it originates. Consumer awareness of the deeply rooted tradition of pastoral farming and the popularity of the highland ethos has contributed further to the reputation of ‘Jagnięcina podhalańska’.

One of Poland’s most popular high mountain areas is located within the region, and this has further raised the profile of the region’s produce. Consumers have been aware for many years that the whole area enjoys a clean natural environment with unique vegetation, and that this is reflected in the quality of ‘Jagnięcina podhalańska’. The very first map of Cieszyn Silesia, published in 1724, identifies 50 shepherd’s huts and the second edition of the map enjoins the reader to visit the mountainous part of the Duchy of Cieszyn and enjoy the health-giving properties of ewe’s milk, particularly in May, when the herbs are at their most effective. In view of consumer awareness of the positive impact on the product of the area’s unspoilt natural environment and its good reputation, people are prepared to pay higher prices for ‘Jagnięcina podhalańska’.

Consumers particularly value ‘Jagnięcina podhalańska’ for its exceptional and specific aroma and delicately flavoured meat. As a result of the quality, taste and dietetic properties of ‘Jagnięcina podhalańska’ it has become a highland speciality.

The reputation of ‘Jagnięcina podhalańska’ is confirmed by the ‘Perlą’ first prize awarded to this product in the nationwide ‘Our Culinary Heritage’ competition in 2008.

The reputation of ‘Jagnięcina podhalańska’ is reflected in the higher prices charged for it in comparison with lamb from other regions. The price obtained by producers for ‘Jagnięcina podhalańska’ is approximately 10-20% higher than for lamb from other parts of Poland.

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


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