OTHER ACTS

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Publication of an application pursuant to Article 50(2)(a) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs (2013/C 312/15)

This publication confers the right to oppose the application pursuant to Article 51 of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council (1).

SINGLE DOCUMENT

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006

on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs (2)

‘REQUEIJÃO DA BEIRA BAIXA’

EC No: PT-PDO-0005-0847-10.01.2011

PGI ( ) PDO ( x )

1. Name

‘Requeijão da Beira Baixa’

2. Member State or Third Country

Portugal

3. Description of the agricultural product or foodstuff

3.1. Product type

Class 1.4 — Other products of animal origin (eggs, honey, various dairy products except butter, etc.)

3.2. Description of the product to which the name in point 1 applies

‘Requeijão da Beira Baixa’ is produced through the precipitation or coagulation, by heating, of the lactoalbumin and lactoglobulin in the whey obtained as a by-product of the manufacturing of ‘Queijos da Beira Baixa’ (‘Queijo de Castelo Branco’ PDO, ‘Queijo Amarelo da Beira Baixa’ PDO, ‘Queijo Picante da Beira Baixa’ PDO) and is obtained in the specified geographical area. It is presented as a fresh, unfermented product.

3.2.1. Chemical characteristics

It is a product of heterogeneous composition in that it results from the milk of two species of ruminants, ovine and caprine, and from different types of cheeses with different manufacturing processes.

Moisture: 60 % to 70 %

Total fat: 14 g to 19 g/100 g of product

Total protein: 10 g to 13 g/100 g of product

Ash: 1.4 g to 1.8 g/100 g of product

3.2.2. Physical properties

Shape: ‘Requeijão da Beira Baixa’ assumes the truncated cone shape and characteristic criss-cross pattern of the traditional wicker or plastic baskets into which the mass is placed for draining. The weight of each unit can vary between 150 g and 400 g.

Texture: the product is presented without a rind. The mass has a soft consistency and a light, grainy texture; it is sliceable or spreadable, cuts smoothly, and is white in colour.

Flavour and aroma: the product has a sweet, milky taste and a pleasant bouquet, melting easily in the mouth.

3.3. Raw materials (for processed products only)

‘Requeijão da Beira Baixa’ is produced from the whey obtained as a by-product of the production of ‘Queijos da Beira Baixa’, to which potable water and raw sheep’s or goat’s milk from the geographical area defined below are added.

Water and sheep’s and goat’s milk may constitute up to 10 % of the total volume of the whey used.

3.4. Feed (for products of animal origin only)

The only possible production system is traditional extensive grazing based on low stocking density — all year round the animals spend most of the day grazing and in the evening are brought back to the stable, where they are milked and spend the night, at least during winter. The animals feed exclusively on natural forage or forage improved with pasture species adapted to the soil and climate characteristics of the region, which thus influences the extensive farming and is supplemented in periods of scarcity with stored fodder (hay and straw), gathered exclusively in the geographical areas of production defined in point 4.

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

‘Requeijão da Beira Baixa’ is a complementary product obtained from the production of ‘Queijos da Beira Baixa’ DPO, which are made in the same geographical area.

Although ‘Requeijão da Beira Baixa’ is produced at high temperatures, its high protein, lactose and water content cause an increase in microorganisms during post-production handling. Such qualitative and quantitative alterations in the microflora result in changes in the product’s physical and chemical properties which drastically influence its acceptance by the final consumer.

This presupposes that the entire production process for ‘Requeijão da Beira Baixa’ takes place using the same production facilities as for ‘Queijos da Beira Baixa’ DPO, and thus in the same geographical area. Otherwise, a series of different handling operations would result in the deterioration in quality and authenticity that would be detrimental to the interests of producers and consumers.

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

Although ‘Requeijão da Beira Baixa’ is produced at high temperatures, its high protein, lactose and water content cause an increase in microorganisms during post-production handling. Such qualitative and quantitative alterations in the microflora result in changes in the product’s physical and chemical properties which drastically influence its acceptance by the final consumer.

For this reason, the materials used for packaging ‘Requeijão da Beira Baixa’ or that come into contact with it must be innocuous and inert as regards their content. Vacuum packaging is permitted as well as any other form of packaging that has been demonstrated to guarantee the necessary conditions for preserving the product and its overall quality.

Furthermore, in order to prevent repeated handling of the product to the possible detriment of its quality, it may be packaged only once it reaches the area defined in point 4.
3.7. **Specific rules on labelling**

In addition to compliance with the legal requirements regarding labelling, the following logo must also appear on the product’s label:

![Logo](image)

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

The geographical area of production of the raw materials, and of processing and packaging is, as for the geographical area of production of ‘Queijos de Beira Baixa’, the municipalities (concelhos) of Belmonte, Castelo Branco, Fundão, Idanha-a-Nova, Mação, Oleiros, Penamacor, Proença-a-Nova, Sertã, Vila de Rei, Vila Velha de Ródão and the parishes (freguesias) of Aldeia de São Francisco, Aldeia do Souto, Barco, Boidobra, Casegas, Conceição, Covilhã, Dominguinhos, Ferro, Orjais, Ourondo, Peraboa, Peso, Santa Maria, São Jorge da Beira, São Martinho, São Pedro, Sobral de São Miguel, Teixoso, Tortosendo, Vale Formoso and Vales do Rio of the municipality of Covilhã.

5. **Link with the geographical area**

5.1. **Specificity of the geographical area**

The traditional extensive grazing systems characteristic of the region are closely connected with the predominant climate and soils, as these heavily influence the development of fodder species. The climate of the region is characterised by high annual mean temperatures, long, hot, dry summers and moderate winters, with relatively low total average precipitation and occasional frost. Dryness is a dominant feature, increasing from north to south or from west to east.

The natural pastures produced by sandy soil are constituted by grasses with greater tillering range and capacity (Agrostis, Poa, etc.) and annual legumes of greater grazing value (Ornitopus, T. Cerleri, T. Arvense, etc.). The local pastures on loose soils of granite origin, composed of slow-growing annual grasses (Vulpia, Periballia) and some low-energy legumes (Trifolium angustifolium and T. Stellatum), are of poor quality and unproductive. On soils of slate origin with good water retention capacity, reasonable quality pastures are found where annual grasses — frequently perennials (Lolium spp.) — predominate. Legumes are generally of good grazing value (Tifolium spp. and Ornithopus).

It is therefore clear that, with such diversity, the reputation of ‘Requeijão da Beira Baixa’ is due in part to the wisdom inherited from the good practices of the communities who, faced with the heterogeneity of the raw material available owing to the time of year, milk-producing species, technology used and type of cheeses providing the whey, manage to produce a high-quality product of uniform taste.

5.2. **Specificity of the product**

The specificity of the product and its characteristics are the result of the raw materials used and the methods of obtaining them and, as mentioned above, are also due in large part to the good practices of the communities who, using techniques and wisdom handed down from their forebears, have managed to preserve the product.
'Requeijão da Beira Baixa' is made from the whey obtained as a by-product of the manufacture of 'Queijos da Beira Baixa', which is from the same area. The whey is strained to remove the remains of the curd and water is added if salt forms in the milk. The whey is then heated to temperatures varying between 80 °C and 90 °C and is maintained in constant slow movement until coagulation commences, as evidenced by the appearance of flakes which, owing to their low density, float to the surface. The temperature is reduced and movement is interrupted until just before boiling — this operation takes between 15 and 30 minutes. To obtain a larger quantity and thicker mass, a small amount of sheep's or goat's milk is usually added just before boiling. Using a ladle, the mass is then removed from the recipient in which coagulation took place and placed in small wicker or plastic baskets to obtain the desired shape, size and consistency. These processes are the fruit of years of continuous work on the product in the region and it is because of them that the characteristic consistency, shape and size of the product have evolved in a particular way in the region.

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)

Sheep's and goat's milk intended for the production of 'Queijos da Beira Baixa', from which the raw materials are obtained for the production of 'Requeijão da Beira Baixa', may come only from livestock farms located in the geographical area of production. The production system is traditional extensive grazing based on low stocking density — the animals spend most of the day grazing and in the evening are brought back to the stable, where they are milked and spend the night, at least during winter.

The basis of the feed is thus natural fodder or fodder improved with pasture species adapted to the soil and climate characteristics of the region. The cultivation of fodder plants for the production of hay and the use of second-cut hay for pasturing continues to be a common practice throughout the region. Hence, the milk produced by the ewes and goats grazing in the region has certain attributes that link it to the local environment and to the way in which the ewes and goats are reared.

Because of all of these geographical and human factors the product has taken on particular characteristics which, together with the ancestral techniques and know-how inherited from the wisdom passed down through the generations, have been shaped in such a way that even today the production and packaging processes enable the production of specific products recognised by consumers, who refer to them by the name of the region of origin.

Reference to publication of the specification
(Article 5(7) of Regulation (EC) No 510/2006 (3))