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 317/08)

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)

‘MIELE VARESINO’


PGI ( ) PDO ( X )

1. Name

‘Miele Varesino’

2. Member State or Third Country

Italy

3. Description of the agricultural product or foodstuff

3.1. Type of product

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

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

‘Miele Varesino’ is a single-flower acacia honey (Robinia pseudoacacia L.)

Chemico-physical characteristics:

‘Miele Varesino’ must have the following chemical and physical characteristics: the HMF (hydroxymethylfurfural) content (when the product is put on sale) must be less than 15 mg/kg and the water content must not exceed 17,50 %.

Sensory characteristics:

‘Miele Varesino’ has the following organoleptic characteristics:

colour: transparent, from almost colourless to straw yellow;

scent: typical of honey, light and delicate, without any strong tones;

taste: very sweet;

aroma: delicate, sweet and with notes of vanilla;

physical state: generally liquid, rarely crystallises and then only after considerable time;

pollen characteristics:

‘Miele Varesino’ is produced by bees from nectar from Robinia pseudoacacia flowers. Robinia pseudoacacia pollen can be identified by qualitative melissopalynological analyses.

'Miele Varesino' has to have over 25% Robinia pseudoacacia pollen with regard to the nectariferous spectrum, calculated excluding pollen from species that do not bear nectar and pollen that can be considered as contaminating.

Average PK/10 g has to be below 20 000 (average 9 500).

The main pollen combination associated with Robinia pseudoacacia is composed as follows: non-nectariferous species: Palma trachycarpus fortunei, Ilex aquifolium, Gramineae, Fraxinus, Quercus robur, Rumex, Sambucus nigra, Chelidonium, Luzula, Actinidia, Pinaceae. Nectariferous species: Acer, Prunus f., Salix, Trifolium repens e Castanea sativa (always present in the pollen spectra), Aesculus, Gleditsia, Liriodendron.

'Miele Varesino' must not contain the following pollen: Loranthus europaeus, Hedysarum coronarium, Onobrychis.

3.3. Raw materials (for processed products only)

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3.4. Feed (for products of animal origin only)

It is absolutely prohibited to use pollen that is not strictly local in origin for the bees' protein nutrition.

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

All the production phases, including the bees gathering nectar in the field and that of extracting and preparing the honey for consumption, must take place in the province of Varese.

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

Honey is a living product which depends greatly on atmospheric conditions. It is highly hygroscopic, sensitive to changes in temperature and to light. The maturing — decanting of the honey and the packaging take place in the production area and the honey is not transported until it has been packaged so as not to undermine the quality, freshness and shelf-life.

3.7. Specific rules concerning labelling

The labelling must contain the following indications:

— the name ‘Miele Varesino’,

— the acronym ‘PDO’ or written out in full ‘Protected Designation of Origin’,

— the EU symbol,

— the product identification logo,

— information on how to store the product: ‘store in a cool and dry place and away from direct light’,

— the best before date: ‘best before: month and year’ which shall not be longer than 36 months following the date of extraction.

'Miele Varesino' acacia honey is packaged in glass jars sealed with a metal lid stamped with the product logo.

The stamp is distributed to producers who have declared that they accept in full the production rules and agree to be subject to the requisite checks.

Packaging the honey in small plastic containers, individual packs and pots or jars made out of a suitable material is also permitted; the labelling on such packs must bear the information required by the legislation currently in force.
The ‘Miele Varesino’ acacia honey logo, as depicted below, is made up of: a central design on a white background made up of three orange hexagons out of which springs a ‘flower-bee’ with five petals, flanked by three blue mountains over six blue lines of decreasing thickness representing a lake; a yellow circle surrounds the central design, printed with the words ‘MIELE VARESINO D.O.P’ and ‘di acacia’ in blue; the logo is placed in an orange frame.

4. **Concise definition of the geographical area**
   The geographical area extends from the foot of the Alps, between the Ticino and Olona rivers and the Maggiore and Lugano lakes. This area coincides with the territory of the province of Varese.

5. **Link with the geographical area**
   5.1. **Specificity of the geographical area**
   The geographical area enjoys a mild continental climate with low fluctuations in temperature during both summer and winter due to the moderating effect of the lakes. This geographical area is characterised by such conditions which are also propitious for exotic trees to flourish.

   The lakes make the climate more clement and spring comes earlier than in the region of Milan: this renders multiple and long-lasting flowerings possible on the gentle, sun-bathed hills.

   The species that provides the bees' main sustenance — robinia (*Robinia pseudoacacia* L.), grows widely and densely such that it has taken over marginal farmland areas and is the main species of tree growing in the woods.

   During the *Robinia pseudoacacia* L. flowering season in the area of the province of Varese, it is by far the most abundant nectariferous species in flower. The flowering of *Robinia pseudoacacia* L. in the majority of the Varese territory is in fact progressive and lasts for a considerable time thanks to the valleys that extend southwards, such as the Ticino and Olona, and to the sun-bathed hillsides that are protected from the wind.

   The vegetation of the territory of the province of Varese is therefore the result of the interaction between topographic, climatic and pedological aspects, plus of course the influence of human intervention.

   In this geographical area, many cities with extensive parks were built between the 17th and 20th centuries; these parks were planted with exotic ornamental species that over time, thanks to the propitious climatic conditions, thrived to the point of overrunning parks and gardens and also local woodland.

   Bee-keeping has always been widespread in the province of Varese, principally among farmers, members of the various ecclesiastic orders based in this area and by the bourgeoisie with a passion for scientific research.

   At the beginning of the last century, the dramatic growth and spread of *Robinia pseudoacacia* L. in woodland areas due to the propitious environmental conditions led local bee-keepers to specialise increasingly in the production of acacia honey which, on account of its particular organoleptic and physical characteristics, stood out from the other honey produced in this area up to that point.
Bee-keeping in the province of Varese at that time had been able to develop a high degree of specialisation in honey production of honey and in particular acacia honey which became the honey most commonly produced in this province.

Bee-keeping in this province gradually became professional with the start of experiments with new types of hive and new production methods.

The modernisation of production methods happened with the change over from the traditional, rustic hives to modern rational hives, as traditional cone shaped skep beehives were replaced with rational beehives and the introduction of the honey extractor, which enabled the production of monofloral honey and the removal of the honey from the honeycomb placed in movable frames without killing the bees.

Lastly, even the continued selection of varieties of bees that were more productive and more resistant to the various diseases contributed to further improving both the quality and the quantity of the honey produced by province's bee-keepers.

5.2. Specificity of the product

'Miele Varesino' is a monofloral acacia honey with a high level of purity with regard to the origin of the nectar, which is typically robinia nectar and pollen, with some pollen from ornamental plants.

The sediment of this honey contains pollen from both nectariferous and non-nectariferous species as specified in point 3.2.

This honey is particularly liquid and light in colour, varying from transparent to straw yellow; it has a light and delicate fragrance, without any strong odours and has a very sweet taste. Its fragrance is delicate and sweet with a note of vanilla.

'Miele Varesino' also stands out from other honey due to the absence of pollen from sainfoin (Onobrychis), French honeysuckle (Hedysarum coronarium) and most importantly from mistletoe (Loranthus europaeus), as certified by the research of renowned botanists indicating that mistletoe does not grow in the production area for this honey.

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 presence in this geographical area of extensive, plentiful and consistent Robinia pseudoacacia flowerings has led to, since at least the last 150 years if not longer, the development of bee-keeping and the successful production of 'Miele Varesino'. The extensive presence of Robinia pseudoacacia L. in the woods of the area around Varese has contributed to the development and evolution of local bee-keeping, in terms of improved production, breeding and race selection.

Indeed, over the years ever more bee-keepers have adopted bee-keeping as their main profession or as a hobby or semi-professional activity, as testified by the progressive increase of bee hives in the Varese woods during the Robinia pseudoacacia flowering season. This increase can be attributed to the fact that, distinct from other areas which produce acacia honey, in the area of Varese there are no flowering crops or wild plants that adversely influence the quality of the product, thus resulting in purer honey that is fully consistent with the best examples of acacia honey.

Furthermore, the specificities of the geographical area, including its climatic and environmental characteristics, enable the production of an acacia honey that can be distinguished from other types of honey. The tradition in this region of cultivating ornamental plants to embellish gardens and parks, distinguishes 'Miele Varesino' from other Lombardy acacia honeys due to the presence of pollen from ornamental exotic species well adapted to the environmental conditions. The presence of such species influences the organoleptic characteristics of the Varese honey, not least the aroma, thanks to pollen from evergreens (Ilex aquifolium, Trachycarpus fortunei).
Reference to publication of the specification

(Article 5(7) of Regulation (EC) No 510/2006 (3))

The Ministry launched the national objection procedure with the publication of the proposal for recognising 'Miele Varesino' PDO as a protected designation of origin in Official Gazette of the Italian Republic No 297 of 22 December 2011. The full text of the product specification is available on the following website:
http://www.politicheagricole.it/flex/cm/pages.ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/3335
or alternatively:

by going directly to the home page of the Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policy (http://www.politicheagricole.it) and clicking on ‘Qualità e sicurezza’ (at the top right of the screen), and then on ‘Disciplinari di produzione all’esame dell’UE’.

(3) See footnote 2.