

Publication of an application for registration pursuant to Article 6(2) of Council Regulation (EEC) No 2081/92 on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin

(2000/C 108/02)

This publication confers the right to object to the application pursuant to Article 7 of the abovementioned Regulation. Any objection to this application must be submitted via the competent authority in the Member State concerned within a time limit of six months from the date of this publication. The arguments for publication are set out below, in particular under 4.6, and are considered to justify the application within the meaning of Regulation (EEC) No 2081/92.

COUNCIL REGULATION (EEC) No 2081/92

APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION: ARTICLE 5

PDO (x) PGI ()

National application No: 80

1. Responsible department in the Member State:

Name: Ministero delle Politiche agricole e forestali

Address: Via XX Settembre n. 20, I-00187 Roma

Tel.: (00 39) 06 481 99 68

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2. Applicant group:

2.1. Name: Assolivo (Association of olive growers from Palermo and Trapani provinces)

2.2. Address: Via Generale Arimonti, 48, I-90143 Palermo

2.3. Composition: producer-processor

3. Type of product: Class 1.5 Extra virgin olive oil

4. Specification:

(Summary of requirements under Article 4(2))

4.1. Name: Val di Mazara

4.2. Description: an extra virgin olive oil with the following chemical and organoleptic characteristics:

— maximum acidity 0,5 %,

— peroxide value $\leq 11,00$ meq. O₂/kg,

— golden yellow colour with a hint of deep green,

- fruity aroma sometimes accompanied by almonds,
- smooth fruity flavour with a sweet after-taste.

Other chemico-physical properties conform with the current EU standard.

- 4.3. *Geographical area:* The geographical area comprises all the municipalities in the province of Palermo and the following municipalities in the province of Agrigento: Alessandria della Rocca, Biovina, Burgio, Calamonaci, Caltabellotta, Cattolica Eraclea, Cianciana, Lucca Sicula, Menfi, Montallegro, Montevago, Ribera, Sambuca di Sicilia, Santa Margherita del Belice, Sciacca and Villafranca Sicula.
- 4.4. *Proof of origin:* The first records date the spread of the olive as a cultivated crop to the period of Greek colonisation when according to the chronicles of Diodorus Siculus, the Sicilian historian, who mentioned the Agrigento olive groves, olives acquired significant economic importance and began to be exported in not inconsiderable quantities, especially from Agrigento.

According to the French historian Henry Bresc olive groves were planted, in about the 12th century, on the hills around Cefalù, the Conca d'Oro, Carini and Partinico. Again in the Palermo area, there is mention of olive groves in the 14th century belonging to the Chiaramontes at Passo di Rigano that were capable of producing 300 quintals of olives, as well as the olive grove of Giovanni de Frisello in the Sabucia area and the Olivetum Magnum of the Monastero di Santa Caterina.

Between the 15th and 16th centuries there were many olive mills in Palermo, while at Monreale, where olive growing seemed to be quite widespread, in the surrounding countryside, in 1516 people complained that they had to crush their olives at the only olive mill which was owned by the archbishop where 'it was common knowledge, robberies and vexations' occurred.

In Monreale, between 1538 and 1539, Benedictine monks leased one of their olive groves in the coastal area where the trees were only a few decades old for a rent of 37 *cantari* of oil, equivalent to 29,35 quintals.

Val di Mazara is the old name for the largest region in Sicily, as it was divided up in the Early Middle Ages and the Modern Era. The area defined by the PDO Val di Mazara includes the largest part of the territory which corresponds to the administrative subdivision of the island called Val di Mazara.

The olives come from plantations in the production area and to ensure this growers register their own olive plantations in a register which is duly set up and updated.

Oil extraction and bottling and packaging are carried out in the area defined above by mills that are deemed suitable and registered in the proper register. The inspection body checks that the technical requirements laid down in the specification for entry in the registers are met and that the various operators in the production chain fulfil their obligations so that product lots can be sufficiently identifiable.

- 4.5. *Method of production:* Val di Mazara extra virgin olive oil is produced from healthy olives picked directly from the tree by hand or by using mechanical methods and at least 90 % consists of the Biancolilla, Nocellara del Belice and Cerasuola varieties used together or singly. Not more than 10 % of the oil may come from other varieties in the area, in particular from Ogliarola Messinese, Giaraffa and Santagatese. Olive production per hectare cannot exceed 8 000 kg in specialised olive plantations, with a maximum oil yield of 22 %. Harvesting begins when they start to change colour and ends before 30 December every year. Before, the harvested olives are crushed, they must be kept in rigid but well aired containers, laid out in thin layers and in premises that can provide low relative humidity and a maximum temperature of 15 °C. Olives must be crushed within two days of harvesting.
- 4.6. *Link:* Processing olive oil in the area in question has significantly contributed to the development of the economic and commercial activities that have distinguished the area of Val di Mazara for centuries. The success of olive growing in this area is largely due to the soil-climate combination which is particularly suited to olive growing. Furthermore, the varieties present are perfectly suited to the growing environment, and enable produce with unique quality characteristics to be obtained.

These characteristics are determined by:

- (a) cultivars present exclusively in this area;
- (b) special techniques used in growing, particularly forms of training, (bush shaped pruning), fertiliser (mainly organic), manual harvesting or harvesting by aid of mechanised harvesters and plastic nets, etc.;
- (c) characteristic aromas of the oil obtained, due to the presence throughout the defined area of artichokes, citrus fruit and almonds;
- (d) characteristic microclimate and soil morphology: suitable olive groves are situated up to 700 m. above sea level with soils which are of medium texture, deep, permeable, dry but not arid and are characterised by a subtropical Mediterranean climate that is semi-dry, with average precipitation exceeding 500 mm/year — 90 % of which falls during the autumn-winter period.

4.7. *Inspection body:*

Name: CERMET — Certificazione e Ricerca per la Qualità — Soc. Cons. ar.l.

Address: Via Aldo Moro, 22 — I-S. Lazzaro di Savena (BO)

4.8. *Labelling:*

Olio extra vergine di oliva
'Val di Mazara'
Denominazione di origine controllata

4.9. *National requirements:* —

EC-No: IT/00061/97.12.22.

Date of receipt of the full application: 25 November 1999.
