

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

(2003/C 110/05)

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 Section 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 () PGI (X)

National application No: 100

1. Responsible department in the Member State

Name: Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación
Dirección General de Alimentación
Subdirección General de Denominaciones de Calidad y Relaciones Interprofesionales y Contractuales

Address: Paseo Infanta Isabel, 1, E-28071 Madrid

Tel. (34) 913 47 53 94

Fax (34) 913 47 54 10.

2. Applicant group (Article 1 of Regulation (EEC) No 2037/93)

2.1. Name: Queserías Picos de Europa SL

2.2. Address: c/ Travesía de Prada, 2, E-24915 Posada de Valdeón (León)

Tel/fax (34) 987 74 05 14

2.3. Composition: producer/processor (X) Other ().

3. Type of product: Class 1.3 — Cheese.

4. Specification

(Summary of requirements under Article 4(2))

4.1. Name: 'Queso de Valdeón'

4.2. Description: 'Queso de Valdeón' is a fat, blue-veined cheese manufactured from cow's milk or from a mixture of cow's milk and ewe's and/or goat's milk and is marketed whole or as crumbled cheese. The rind of the whole cheese is natural, thin, tender and of yellowish colour with grey tones. The cheese itself is of ivory to cream colour and is shiny with a faint aureole depending on the degree of ripeness. When cut, numerous irregular, variably sized, evenly distributed, greenish blue holes can be seen. It has an intense, salty, spicy and slightly sharp taste.

The cheese has a fat content of at least 45 %, a moisture content of at least 30 % and a salt content of less than 3,5 %.

The whole cheese is cylindrical in shape and weighs between 0,5 and 3 kg. It may also be marketed in wedges of a minimum weight of 250 g.

The crumbled version is without rind and has the same colour, smell and taste of the whole cheese but the cream is sticky, increasingly so as it gets warmer, with a medium, almost buttery consistency. It is packed in portions of between 20 g and 1,5 kg.

4.3. Geographical area: The area of the municipality of Posada de Valdeón (León).

4.4. Proof of origin: Checking and certification procedures guarantee that the product originates in the defined area.

Aspects that must be taken into account:

- the cheese must come only from cheese dairies and ripening establishments registered with the Regulatory Council,
 - an initial evaluation must be made of cheese dairies and ripening establishments before they are registered with the Regulatory Council and evaluations must then be carried out on a regular basis to guarantee that they still fulfil the requirements for registration,
 - the cheese must be produced in accordance with the method described in Section 4.5 of this document,
 - only cheese that has passed all the checks laid down may be marketed with the guarantee of origin certified by the Regulatory Council's approval mark,
 - the number of secondary labels issued by the Regulatory Council to cheese dairies must tally with the volumes of milk processed and the types and quantities of cheese produced,
 - the regular checks and evaluations must include analyses of the milk when it is placed in the curdling vats, inspection of the method of production, checks on documentation, checks on stocks, sampling and tests on the product,
 - where appropriate, the Regulatory Council will apply the penalties laid down in its rules where irregularities are detected,
 - the Regulatory Council has a register showing the quantities of numbered labels, membership documents and certificates issued and to whom they are issued.
- 4.5. *Method of production:* On arrival at the cheese dairy, the different deliveries of milk are analysed to ensure that the milk in the curdling vat meets the following criteria: fat > 3,5 %, protein > 3,1 %, dry matter > 12,0 %.

The necessary rennet is added to ensure lactic-acid coagulation lasting 60 and 120 minutes. While still in the curdling vat, the curd is injected with *Penicillium* fungus. During coagulation and addition of the fungus, the milk must be kept at a temperature of between 28 and 32 °C.

The curd is cut to obtain grains of approximately one cubic centimetre. It is then left to rest for between 14 and 17 minutes. It is subsequently stirred, the whey is drained off and the curd is placed in the cylindrical moulds in which it will acquire its shape, leaving the grains loosely packed, and is left to rest. Next, it is salted with dry salt on both faces and pricked to allow air to penetrate inside the curd.

The temperature of the ripening rooms must be between 5 and 10 °C, with humidity of more than 85 %. The cheeses are ripened for a minimum of two months for cheeses manufactured with raw milk and one and a half months for cheeses manufactured with pasteurised milk.

Crumbled cheese is made as follows from cheeses made and ripened in accordance with the method described above: the crust is removed and the cheese is then cut up, crumbled and packed.

4.6. *Link*

Historical background: There is evidence that goat's milk cheese was made in Valdeón in pre-Roman times. Pascual Madoz, in his *Diccionario* (1845-1859), refers to cheese production and the size of the goat population in the Valdeón Valley.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, cheese production was an important activity in the Valdeón Valley. When livestock was grazed in high pasture during the summer, milk was made into cheese directly in the shepherds' huts or carried down to the valley. The Count of Saint-Saud testified to this in 1892: 'The robust young women of Valdeón climb up there morning and evening, wearing their clogs with three wooden blocks attached to the sole, carrying a goat-skin bag in which, on the way up, they carry their food and, on the way down, they carry wineskins full of milk from the herds on the mountain'. The cheese was ripened in mountain caves.

Natural environment: The defined area is a valley at an average altitude of 650 metres between the substantial natural barriers formed by the Panderruedas Pass (1 450 metres), the Pontón Pass (1 311 metres) and the Pandetrave Pass (1 562 metres). There is a large number of natural caves in the mountains, which have always been used by shepherds for shelter and for ripening cheese.

The defined area has a high-mountain climate. Winters are long and cold, with more than 100 days of frost between November and April and abundant precipitation, often in the form of snow. Summers are short and cool, with average temperatures ranging between 5 or 6 and 18 °C. There is abundant precipitation and high relative humidity because of fog and mist. Average annual precipitation is 1 100 mm in the valley and 1 800 mm on the peaks.

This special microclimate favours the development of the microbial flora characteristic of the area's cheeses.

4.7. *Inspection body:*

Name: Consejo Regulador de la Indicación Geográfica Protegida 'Queso de Valdeón'

Address: c/ El Cantón s/n, E-24915 Posada de Valdeón

Tel. (34) 609 08 57 70

Fax (34) 987 74 05 14

E-mail: pedro_fermig@yahoo.es

The Regulatory Council for the protected geographical indication 'Queso de Valdeón' complies with standard EN 45011 'General Criteria for certification bodies operating product certification'.

4.8. *Labelling:* Commercial labels must be authorised by the Regulatory Council. The words 'Indicación Geográfica Protegida Queso de Valdeón' and the logo of the Regulatory Council must be clearly visible on commercial labels and the secondary labels issued by the Regulatory Council. The numbered secondary labels issued by the Regulatory Council are the approval mark.

4.9. *National requirements:*

- Law 25/1970 of 2 December 1970 on vineyards, wine and alcohol,
- Decree 835/1972 of 23 March 1972 laying down rules of application for Law 25/1970,
- Order of 25 January 1994 laying down the correspondence between Spanish legislation and Regulation (EEC) No 2081/92 as regards designations of origin and geographical indications for agricultural products and foodstuffs,
- Royal Decree No 1643/1999 of 22 October 1999 on the procedure governing applications for entry into the Community register of protected designations of origin and protected geographical indications.

EC No: ES/00267/2003.01.13

Date of receipt of the full application: 13 January 2003.
