

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

(2004/C 30/04)

This publication confers the right to object to the application pursuant to Articles 7 and 12d of the abovementioned Regulation. Any objection to this application must be submitted via the competent authority in a Member State, in a WTO member country or in a third country recognized in accordance with Article 12(3) 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: 14/2003**

1. *Responsible department in Member State*

Name: Ministero delle Politiche agricole e forestali

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2. *Applicant group*

Name: Comitato Promotore della Denominazione di Origine Protetta «Caseus Romae», «Ricotta Romana», «Caciotta Romana» e della Indicazione Geografica Tipica «Abbacchio Romano»

Address: Via Raffaele Piria, 6 — Roma

Tel. (39-06) 407 30 90

Composition: Producer/processor (x) other ( ).

3. *Type of product*: Category 1.4 — Other products of animal origin (eggs, honey, various milk products, excluding butter, etc.) listed in Annex II — Ricotta.

4. *Specification*

(summary of requirements under Article 4(2))

4.1. *Name*: 'Ricotta Romana'.

4.2. *Description*: The *Ricotta Romana* protected designation of origin (PDO) is reserved exclusively for cheese fulfilling the requirements laid down in the specification. On release for consumption, *Ricotta Romana* presents the following characteristics:

- Product: fresh
- Body: white, with lumpy texture
- Flavour: sweetish, milky taste
- Weight: up to 2 kg
- Fat content: from 17 to 29 % in the dry matter

4.3. **Geographical area:** The whey must be obtained from whole ewe's milk from the Region of Lazio. The whey must be processed into *Ricotta Romana* and packed within the Region, as shown on the map, so as to guarantee traceability and control.

4.4. **Proof of origin:** The origin of the product is proven by:

Historical references going way back

- M. P. Cato collected the regulations on sheep farming in Republican Rome. Ewe's milk was used for three purposes: religious/sacrificial; food, as a drink; processing into fresh or matured cheeses and the use of the residual whey for producing ricotta.
- Galenus, in Chapter XVII of his book on food 'Della natura et vertu di cibi' (1572), says that 'what Galenus and the Greeks knew as oxygala, we now call ricotta'.
- Mario Vizzardi, in his book 'Formaggi italiani', asserts that ricotta originated on the Roman plain and that the person responsible for its diffusion was Saint Francis of Assisi who, finding himself in 1223 in a district of Lazio for the purposes of creating a Nativity scene, taught the local shepherds how to make ricotta.
- Columella in Chapter VII of 'De re rustica' describes ricotta-making techniques.
- Ercole Metalli, in 'Usi e costumi della campagna romana' (1903) says of shepherds that '... They then place the vat on the fire again to extract the ricotta ... The ricotta, along with a little bread, is their only food, ...'
- Trinchieri in 'Vita di pastori nella Campagna Romana' (1953), describes the techniques for producing Ricotta Romana.
- Tomasetti in his book 'La campagna romana' (1910) states the following: 'As for a shepherd ... his pay in cash and in kind amounts to one lira, fifty centesimi a day, plus bread, salt, ricotta and polenta.'
- R. Marracino, referring back to 1950 in Chapter XXII of his book 'Tecnica lattiero-casearia' (1962) says that 'the renowned ricotta, in local muslin, is made from the curds that rise first out of a whey rich in fat; this ricotta is the creamiest, fattest, most delicate and flavoursome.'

### Cultural references

- The 'Migrazione e lavoro' exhibition, a visual history of the Roman countryside in 1900, organised by the Cooperativa Pagliacetto, includes many photographs showing shepherds eating ricotta from a basket (*fiscella*).
- In his book 'La Campagna romana' (1910) Tomassetti says that 'Rural people believe that particular saints offer special protection; Saint Martin, for example, protects horned animals and ricotta ...'
- In his book 'Usi e costumi della campagna romana' (1903) Ercole Metalli explains that, during periods of transhumance and mountain pasturing, when the herd arrives at a halting site the shepherd offers as a gift 'a little ricotta that he has no problem in giving away in the course of the trip'.
- Chapter X of the Chamber of Commerce's collection of customs and usage in the province of Rome (1951) describes how ricotta was bought, sold and traded.
- In 'Vita di pastori nella Campagna Romana' (1953) Trinchieri describes a shepherds' meal 'Acqua cotta — ... shepherds were given only bread and ricotta as a meal. There was a kilo of bread a head and a full spoonful of ricotta ... The cheese-maker was tasked with giving out the ricotta'.
- Romolo Trinchieri in 'Vita dei pastori nella Campagna Romana' (1953) describes a shepherds' cabin: 'There is thus a main cabin that is larger than the others, where the unmarried shepherds live and where they cook collectively and make cheese and ricotta'.

### Statistical references

- The presence of this product on the markets of the Lazio region is exemplified by data extracted from the market reports of the CCIAAs (Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Crafts and Agriculture) in Rome (1922-65), Viterbo (1949-73), Frosinone (1955-99) and Latina (1951-77).
- The commodities market of the CCIAA in Rome shows the price variations suffered by the product between 1952 and 1998.

### Social and economic references, such as the presence of producers who have been engaged in this kind of production for years now

- The Castel di Guido farm: according to information supplied by the director, in 1969 the farm holding produced about 3 500 litres of ewe's milk; some of it was sold and some of it was used to produce *Ricotta Romana*, as shown in the farm accounts and initialled by the shepherd and director in 1958, 1960 and 1965.
- The Gasparri farm, whose accounts indicate the price per kilo and the total number of kilograms of *Ricotta Romana* produced during the farming seasons between 1907 (70 centesimi a kilo until 15 March and 45 centesimi thereafter, total production being 850 kg) and 1924 (total production of 932,5 kg).

### Folklore references

- For some 30 years now the municipality of Barbarano Romano (VT) has been celebrating a country festival for 'attozzata' (sheep ricotta).
- Since 1978 the municipality of Fiamignano (RI) has organised a sheep and sheep products festival, the 'Mostra Rassegna Ovina'.

### Gastronomic references

- In addition to being eaten as a meal in itself, *Ricotta Romana* is widely used as an ingredient in traditional dishes from Lazio.

Its origin is proven, furthermore, by the registration of the breeders, producers and packagers in the appropriate registers held and updated by the control body referred to in point 4.7.

## 4.5. Method of production

### Raw material

The raw material for *Ricotta Romana* is full-fat sheep whey obtained from the commonest breeds in the geographical area referred to in Article 3, i.e.: Sarda, Comisana, Sopravvissana, Massese and their cross-breeds.

The whey, a liquid product of the coagulation of milk, is obtained by separating it from the curds intended for the production of sheep cheeses obtained from ewe's milk from the demarcated area.

The whey is 'sweet' because of the type of feed given to the milk ewes, forage from natural pastures, meadows and characteristic grasslands of the Lazio Region. The resulting product, *Ricotta Romana*, has a sweetish flavour that distinguishes it from any other kind of ricotta.

Full-fat sheep whey is light yellow in colour and contains:

- non-fat dry matter: 5,5-6,5 %;
- proteins: 1,0-2,0 %;
- fat: 1,4-2,4 %;
- lactose: 3,4-5,0 %;
- ash: 0,4-0,8 %

To produce *Ricotta Romana* the whey is reheated to between 50 and 60 °C; full-fat sheep's milk from the abovementioned breeds from the demarcated area can be added, up to 15 % of the total volume of whey.

During the summer, when the ewes stop producing milk, the traditional practice of mountain pasturing is permitted.

The sheep feed includes pasture, meadow and grassland typical of the geographical area of production. Dried fodder and concentrates are also permitted feed, but synthetic substances and genetically modified organisms are not.

Milk ewes must not be subjected to forced feeding, environmental stress and/or hormonal alterations designed to increase production.

### Production method

The whey, without the addition of acidity correctors, is reheated to 85-90 °C and stirred repeatedly. This reheating, which usually occurs in the same cheese-vats that the cheese was made in, encourages the precipitation and coagulation of the whey proteins, which thus rise to the surface as little flakes.

Suspending re-heating for about 5 minutes then makes them consolidate on the surface as a layer of white flakes. This curd is separated from the whey. The ricotta is then collected and placed in perforated conical baskets known as fuscelle, for 8-24 hours, so allowing the whey to continue to drain. The resulting product is then left to dry in a cool place.

The resulting ricotta is finely shaped, with a more marked colour than bovine ricotta and a delicate, sweet flavour.

- 4.6. **Link:** The rearing conditions of the sheep and the processing of the cheese must be traditional to the area and must be such that they confer on the milk and the resulting product their specific characteristics.

The factors proving the link to the environment are:

#### Natural factors

The particular soil and weather conditions of the Lazio Region, such as:

- various reliefs (volcanic and limestone mountains, hills, alluvial plains);
- an annual average temperature ranging between 13-16 °C;
- annual rains ranging from a low of 650 mm along the coast to 1 000-1 500 mm in the inland plains, reaching 1 800-2 000 mm on Terminillo (the highest mountain in Lazio) and in the Simbruini mountain range

all ensure the best possible conditions for rearing sheep, without stressing the animal.

These natural factors make it possible to exploit the natural pastureland and meadows as a food source for the sheep, so imbuing the milk used for cheese-making with particular qualities and establishing an exceptionally favourable synergy in terms of the product's quality and the homogeneous nature of its characteristics.

This type of feed and the favourable rearing conditions confer on *Ricotta Romana* characteristics that distinguish it from other ricottas.

#### Human factors

There are two crucial moments for determining the product's quality:

- the separation of the curds, as required by the particular working methods of the cheese-makers, themselves the result of centuries' worth of skill and experience throughout the area covered by the PDO;
- the traditional practice of mountain grazing, allowing the animals to escape from the summer heat and thus from the possible environmental and nutritional stresses they would be subject to in the lowlands. The sheep feel the benefit of these factors and even when they have just returned down to the valleys they produce high quality milk, thereby directly influencing the quality of the cheese produced from it.

#### 4.7. **Inspection body**

Name: Agroqualità.

Address: Via Montebello 8, Roma.

- 4.8. **Labelling:** The product must be packed within the circumscribed area.

*Ricotta Romana* is packed in conical wicker, plastic or metal baskets with a maximum capacity of 2 kg. The upper part of the basket is covered in a plastic sheet. These other kinds of packaging are allowed:

- parchment wrapping
- plastic and/or vacuum containers.

In addition to the Community symbol and relevant references (in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 1726/98 and later amendments thereto) and the information required by law, the packaging must display the following in clearly printed, legible letters:

- the term *Ricotta Romana* must be printed in significantly large, clear and indelible type, it must be quite separate from any other wording and must be followed by the words 'Denominazione Origine Protetta' (DOP);
- the name, company name and address of the producing and packaging company;
- the product logo consists of a square box formed by three lines of colour, green, white and red (from the outside in), inside which there is a stylised sheep's head between two capital letters 'R' the left one of which is yellow, the right one red. The square is interrupted on the side by a red letter R and below the initials 'DOP' in red capital letters. Within the lower part of the square are the words 'Ricotta' in yellow letters and 'Romana' in red letters.

Any other description not expressly allowed by the production specifications is prohibited, including the following adjectives: fine, select, selected, superior, genuine, or otherwise praising the product. Use is however permitted of brand names provided they have no laudatory purpose and are not such as to mislead the consumer, the name of the enterprise from whose holdings the product comes, and of other truthful and documentable references that are permitted under Community, national or regional law and do not conflict with the purposes and content of the production specification.

The designation *Ricotta Romana* must appear in Italian.

Products made from *Ricotta Romana*, including those resulting from its preparation and processing, may be put up for consumption in packaging carrying a reference to the name but without the Community logo if:

- the protected designation product certified as such is the sole component of the commodity category in question;
- the users of the protected designation product are authorised by the holders of the intellectual property right conferred by the DOP registration grouped in a consortium under the supervision of the Ministry for Agricultural and Forestry Policies. The consortium will also be responsible for registering them and keeping watch on the correct use of the protected designation. In the absence of a delegated safeguarding consortium, these functions will be discharged by the Ministry for Agricultural and Forestry Policies as the responsible authority for implementing Regulation (EEC) No 2081/92.

Non-exclusive use of the protected designation may involve only reference to it, in accordance with the rules in force, as one of the ingredients of the product that it contains or into which it has been worked or processed.

4.9. National requirements: —

EC No: IT/00298/24.6.2003.

Date of receipt of full application: 4 December 2003.

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