

Publication of an application pursuant to Article 6(2) of Council Regulation (EC) No 510/2006 on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs

(2007/C 85/03)

This publication confers the right to object to the application pursuant to Article 7 of Council Regulation (EC) No 510/2006. Statements of objection must reach the Commission within six months from the date of publication.

SUMMARY

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006

'PECORINO DI FILIANO'

EC No: IT/PDO/005/0279/25.02.2003

PDO (X) PGI ()

This summary sets out the main elements of the product specification for information purposes.

1. *Responsible department in the Member State:*

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2. *Group:*

Name: Consorzio per la tutela del Pecorino di Filiano
Address: Via Giovanni XXIII
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Tel.: (39) 0971 83 60 10
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Composition: Producers/processors (X) Other ()

3. *Type of product:*

Class 1.3 — Cheese.

4. *Specification:*

(summary of requirements under Article 4(2) of Regulation (EC) No 510/2006)

4.1 Name: 'Pecorino di Filiano'

4.2. Description: 'Pecorino di Filiano' is a hard cheese produced from raw whole sheep's milk from one or two milkings and originating in holdings located in the area indicated in point 4.3.

It is a semi-cooked cheese, cylindrical with straight sides and a straight or slightly convex heel. Its rind bears typical golden yellow basketwork marks (which are dark brown in more mature specimens) and the surface is treated with extra virgin olive oil and wine vinegar.

The colour of the cheese varies from white to straw, the latter being typical of the more mature product. It is compact in texture with irregularly distributed tiny eyes.

The taste, which is initially mild and delicate, becomes slightly pungent by the end of the minimum ripening period — it then becomes progressively stronger.

The percentage of fat in dry matter may not be less than 30 %.

Weight ranges from 2,5 to 5 kg, the diameter from 15 to 30 cm and the height of the heel from 8 to 18 cm.

The product is put on sale after no less than 180 days of ripening.

- 4.3. Geographical area: The production of the milk, its processing and ripening take place in the area set out in the product specification, comprising 30 municipalities in the province of Potenza (Region of Basilicata), located in the Apennines between Monte Vulture and the high mountain of Muro Lucano: this is a volcanic area of natural pastureland rich in wild aromatic plants.
- 4.4. Proof of origin: The area has always produced pecorino cheese and sheep were kept at the time of the Roman conquest, particularly close to the Appian Way, which linked a dense network of 'tratturi', tracks used by shepherds during transhumance.

Subsequently the production of pecorino cheese played an important part in the economy of the Kingdom of Naples, whose capital became its natural market outlet.

The Doria family, who became lords following the grant in 1530 by the Emperor Charles V of the area around Monte Vulture largely corresponding to that of Pecorino di Filiano, organised structures for the production and processing of milk and wool: the records of the family holding show that Filiano, which in 1952 secured its administrative autonomy from Avigliano, of which it had been a part, had as many as 10 000 sheep, which in summer moved from the plain of the Ofanto river to higher land in the Vitalba valley.

The sheep feed on the excellent pastureland comprising mainly rye-grass, clover, meadowgrass, fescue, wild oats, sulla, thyme and wild fennel, with fresh water laden with mineral salts from the volcanic slopes of Monte Vulture. Only milk fulfilling these criteria may enter the processing plants.

The rennet used to coagulate the milk is taken from the stomachs of kids and lambs strictly in accordance with the rules set out in the product specification.

Maturation, and in many instances the cheese-making itself in the case of small production units, takes place in natural tufa caves or underground to give the product its freshness and highly prized organoleptic characteristics.

Proof of origin is further confirmed by the specific requirements imposed on milk producers, cheese producers, ripeners and cutters, if they are not also the ripeners: this means that at any time the product may be traced through documentary checks and inspections by the authorised body.

- 4.5. Method of production: The milk used to produce Pecorino di Filiano comes from sheep of the breeds Gentile di Puglia and Gentile di Lucania, Leccese, Comisana, Sarda and their crosses.

The raw milk is filtered and heated, traditionally in vats, up to a maximum of 40 °C; when the product reaches a temperature of 36 to 40 °C the non-industrial rennet as described in the product specification is added.

The curds are vigorously broken up with a wooden pestle with a knob at the end to produce pieces of the size of a grain of rice.

After they have been under the whey for a few minutes, the curds are extracted and placed in containers made of rush or other rush-like material suitable for food products.

They are then lightly pressed by hand to expel the whey. The cheeses are then immersed for 15 minutes in the whey at a temperature of not more than 90°C.

The cheese is dry-salted or immersed in saturated brine.

It is then put to mature in the characteristic tufa caves or suitable underground locations at a constant temperature of 12 to 14 °C and a relative humidity of 70 to 85 % for at least 180 days. From the 20th day, its surface may be treated with extra virgin olive oil and wine vinegar.

Pecorino di Filiano is produced all year round.

- 4.6. Link: This sheep's cheese takes its name from Filiano, a municipality in the province of Potenza, in the Region of Basilicata, formerly Lucania.

Production peaks in spring and early summer, to allow the sheep to feed off the excellent spring pastureland in the mountains, to meet the higher demand for lambs at Eastertime and as a result of the planned births. This allows the animals to produce the largest quantity of milk just at the time when the fodder plants in the natural pastureland (rye-grass, clover, meadowgrass, fescue, cocksfoot, vetch, wild oats, sulla, thyme, mallow and wild fennel) are most abundant.

The milk is normally processed in small-scale cheese-making centres, each of which makes its own rennet using the traditional method described in the product specification; this too is subject to conformity checks. The production method preserves the qualities of the raw material, bringing out all its sensory characteristics. Note the use of raw milk, the fact that processing of the milk must start within 24 hours of first milking and the use of traditional-style rennet to coagulate the milk.

A further link to the local environment is the ripening of the cheese in natural tufo caves or, failing that, in structures that reproduce the same conditions of temperature and humidity. Stockfarmers and makers of Pecorino di Filiano use these special structures to confer on the product its distinctive freshness and sensory characteristics.

The cheese's popularity over the last century is demonstrated by the successful sagra (festival) of Pecorino di Filiano, which has been held without interruption for the last thirty years, attracting, producers, specialists and consumers.

- 4.7. Inspection body:

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- 4.8. Labelling: When placed on the market, Pecorino di Filiano must be identified by a brand-mark in the form of an oval containing the letter 'F', a star, and the words 'PECORINO di FILIANO' and 'denominazione di origine protetta' or the abbreviation 'D.O.P.'.

The product may be marketed in halves or quarters of the certified whole cheese.



Denominazione di Origine Protetta
