

OTHER ACTS

COMMISSION

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 105/07)

This publication confers the right to object to the application pursuant to Article 7 of Council Regulation (EC) No 510/2006 ⁽¹⁾. Statements of objection must reach the Commission within six months from the date of this publication.

SUMMARY

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006**'ACEITE DEL BAIX EBRE — MONTSIÀ' OR 'OLI DEL BAIX EBRE — MONTSIÀ'****EC No: ES/PDO/005/0274/23.01.2003****PDO (X) PGI ()**

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

1. *Responsible department in the Member State:*

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

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2. *group:*

Name: Josep Antoni Curto Fumado, D.N.I. nº 40909857-X, au nom et pour le compte de l'associació de cooperatives productores d'oli d'oliva del Baix Ebre i Montsià (ACOBEM), C. I.F. nº G43577055, ayant son siège à carretera Raval de Crist s/n Tortosa et al.

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Composition: Producers/processors (X) Other categories ()

⁽¹⁾ OJL 93, 31.3.2006, p. 12.

3. *Type of product:*

Class 1.5 — Oils and fats.

4. *specification:*

(summary of the requirements in accordance with article 4 (2) of regulation (EC) no 510/2006)

4.1. Name: 'Aceite del Baix Ebre — Montsià' or 'Oli del Baix Ebre — Montsià'.

4.2. Description: Extra virgin olive oil obtained from olives of the species *Olea Europea* L., from three native varieties: Morruda or Morrut, Sevillenca and Farga, using mechanical procedures or other physical means that do not modify the oil, but preserve the flavour, fragrance and features of the fruit.

The features of the oil are as follows:

Organoleptic properties:

Appearance	Clear, transparent, with no cloudiness or turbidity
Colour	Varies, according to the time of harvesting and the geographical situation within the production area, from greenish yellow to golden yellow.
Flavour	Strong oils (moderately bitter, spicy and astringent) and very aromatic (rich in secondary, green flavourings), fruity flavour at the beginning of the crop year and becoming slightly sweet in the course of the year.
Minimum number of points awarded by tasting panel	6,5

Chemical and physical properties:

Maximum acidity (% of oleic acid)	0,80
Maximum peroxide index (meq. O ₂ /kg)	18
K ₂₇₀ maximum	0,20
K ₂₃₂ maximum	2,00
Maximum humidity and volatile compounds (%)	0,20
Maximum impurities (%)	0,10

4.3. Geographical area: The production area comprises the districts of Baix Ebre and Montsià, in the province of Tarragona, in the south of the Autonomous Community of Catalonia, bordering on the districts of Baix Maestrat (province of Castellón) and Matarranya (province of Teruel).

The municipalities that cover this geographical zone are the following:

Baix Ebre		Montsià	
Aldea	Deltebre	Alcanar	Masdenverge
Aldover	Paüls	Amposta	Sant Carles de la Ràpita
Alfara de Carles	Perelló	Freginals	Sant Jaume d'Enveja
Ametlla de Mar	Roquetes	La Galera	Santa Bàrbara
Ampolla	Tivenys	Godall	La Sénia
Benifallet	Tortosa	Mas de Barberans	Ulldecona
Camarles	Xerta		

The area of preparation and packing is the same as the area of production.

4.4. Proof of origin:: The olives arriving at extraction plants are from olive groves in the production area, and are selected, prepared and packaged in industrial plants in the same area, listed in the register of the Regulatory Council. The oils obtained which pass all the tests throughout the production and preparation process and the physical, chemical and sensory analyses are put on the market under the designation of origin and with the label, back label or, where applicable, numbered quality seal awarded by the Regulatory Council.

4.5. Method of production:

Growing conditions:

- Planting distances: as a rule, trees are planted to a density of 70 to 90 per hectare.
- Soil preparation and pruning: soil preparation is that typical of the area of production. Pruning removes older wood, giving the tree a rounded shape, which encourages fruit production and facilitates harvesting.
- Pest and disease control: in addition to the compulsory requirements governing the application of products and specific safety periods, treatment and control of olive pests and diseases, especially the olive fly *Bracocera oleae* and the Prays oleae moth, involves fulfilling specific control standards in accordance with the plant defence authority of Baix Ebre and Montsià.
- Irrigation: about 96 % of the crop is on dry soil, with 4 % on irrigated land.
- Harvesting: Having reached the optimum level of ripeness, the olives are collected directly from the tree, discarding those that have fallen on the ground. The harvesting is traditionally carried out using a method known as 'milking' that involves hand-picking the olives direct from the tree when the olives are at their best in terms of ripeness. In the last few years, a method involving the use of vibrating machines has been progressively introduced as it is the most suitable means of obtaining a quality product because of minimal damage caused to the tree and fruits. Harvesting begins in mid-November and lasts until the end of February. The use of abscission products is not authorised.
- Transport and storage of olives at the oil mill: olives are transported to the oil mill in plastic crates or loose in the farm trailer, in accordance with the conditions laid down in the quality manual to ensure that the fruit does not get damaged.
- Once the olives have been transported to the oil mills, they are washed and cleaned. Then they are weighed and a representative sample is taken to assess oil yield or fat yield and acidity.
- Time elapsing between harvesting and crushing of the olives: no more than 48 hours.

Method of production and packaging

Afterwards, the mechanical extraction processes are carried out, involving washing and pressing, refining of the paste, separation and storage.

The manufacturing companies listed in this Protected Designation of Origin currently operate using continuous systems involving two phases in all the oil mills.

The olive oil is then packaged in containers of up to five litres and labelled in accordance with point 4.8. The use of talc is authorised where required due to the special condition of the olives.

The packaging of the oil with Protected Designation of Origin must be carried out in packing plants situated in the geographical area defined in point 4.3 of the summary file. The aim is to guarantee the origin and inherent quality of this oil, avoiding bulk transport outside the production area.

Guarantee of origin: the oil protected under the PDO may be mixed with other non-protected oil of similar characteristics and as, analytically, this is very difficult or impossible to detect, tracing systems at the origin are the only means of effectively keeping this fraud under control. In this way, the authenticity of the product is guaranteed.

Quality Assurance: extra virgin olive oils are highly sensitive to external agents, which can cause all kinds of transformations and changes such as oxidation. Bulk transport means subjecting the oil to inadequate environmental conditions that can affect its sensory characteristics and would therefore alter its inherent features, which determine the Protected Designation of Origin.

In view of the foregoing, it is essential that packaging of this type of oil is carried out in the same geographical area.

4.6. Link:

Historical: the introduction of olive growing in Catalonia and in particular in the Baix Ebre and Montsià regions can be attributed to the Arabs. Even today, the olive oil mills are still known as 'almazaras', which is a clear reference to this Arab origin.

In the fourteenth century, olives and vines were the basic agricultural products in the districts of Baix Ebre and Montsià. In his 'Historia de Tortosa y su comarca' ('A history of Tortosa and its district', 1958) the prolific historian Enric Bayerri mentions an official inventory of assets returned in 1353 by the villagers of the area 'where most declared an olive grove, a vineyard, or both'. Vines, carob and especially olives groves, often in combination, provided the main activity in the area and covered virtually all of the land.

According to Enric Bayerri (op. cit.), at the beginning of 1931, there were 1 135 oil mills in Tortosa and the villages of the district, crushing 83 626 042 kg of olives, with an average of 126 323 kg per mill. This is equivalent to 16.6 tonnes of oil altogether, with an average of 25 000 kg per mill.

In 'El aceite de oliva de España' (The olive oil of Spain, 1961) and 'Problema del aceite virgen de oliva' (The problem of virgin olive oil, 1967), Daniel Mangrané praises the quality of oil from the district of Baix Ebre, which contributed to the vast oil trade of Tortosa, which was the first area to produce and market fine olive oils, and where there were nineteen established traders dealing exclusively in oil, which was sold both to the Spanish and to the French. On the basis of this quality, the master oil-makers formed a school, advising other towns in the art of oil-making since the best oil was from this area, they taught the method of production in Toledo, lower Aragon and the province of Lerida.

The Estación Olivarera (olive centre) and the technical centre for olive-growing and oil producing in Tortosa date from this period. The Director of these centres, Isidro Aguiló, draws attention in the foreword to a published work on olive oil production to the world-wide reputation of oils from Baix Ebre, the district where progress was first made on oil-production techniques at low temperatures, and to the long tradition of oil production which forms a background for widespread olive-growing, especially around Tortosa, Roquetes and adjoining areas. These centres were world-famous in the olive sector at the time, thanks to the many reports and studies they produced, and to participation in congresses (e.g. the international olive-growing congress in Rome).

Natural: the features of the natural environment of the area together with the local varieties of the geographic area defined in the PDO, Morruda or Morrut, Sevilenca and Farga, affect the oil in the following way: the soil characteristics, in particular the lack of nutrients, along with the climate of the area, especially the wind, which is a distinguishing climatic factor (the dry and persistent 'mistral' or 'dalt' winds that are strong in autumn and winter, channelled by the Ebro depression and accelerated by the relief of the area), puts strain on the growth of the olive trees, causing an increased percentage of polyphenols in the fruit, which results in a typical oil that is rich in secondary flavourings of a green rate with a moderately astringent, bitter and spicy taste.

4.7. Inspection body:

Name: Consejo Regulador de la Denominación de Origen Protegida 'Aceite del Baix Ebre-Montsià' u 'Oli del Baix Ebre-Montsià'

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The Regulatory Council for 'Aceite del Baix Ebre — Montsià' or 'Oli del Baix Ebre — Montsià' PDO meets the requirements of standard EN-45011 in accordance with the current Community PDO and PGI Regulation.

4.8. Labelling: The label will show clearly and compulsorily, the PDO name 'Aceite del Baix Ebre — Montsià' or 'Oli del Baix Ebre — Montsià' along with their own logo and the Community logo, plus any other information required under the current legislation.
