

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

(2009/C 108/10)

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.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006

'FORMAGGIO DI FOSSA DI SOGLIANO'

EC No: IT-PDO-0005-0580-22.12.2006

PGI () PDO (X)

1. Name:

'Formaggio di Fossa di Sogliano'

2. Member State or third country:

Italy

3. Description of the agricultural product or foodstuff:

3.1. Type of product (Annex II):

Class 1.3. Cheeses

3.2. Description of the product to which the name in 1 applies:

When placed on the market, the 'Formaggio di Fossa di Sogliano' PDO cheese has the following characteristics: the exterior of the finished product varies in colour from ivory white to amber yellow.

At the end of the aging process the weight of individual 'Formaggio di Fossa di Sogliano' PDO cheeses varies from 500 (five hundred) grams to 1 900 (one thousand nine hundred) grams. The cheeses are irregular in shape, with typical bumps and depressions, and the surface is primarily wet and greasy and in some cases may be covered by butterfat and mould which can be easily scraped off. Small cracks and possible yellow ochre stains of varying intensity on the surface are also typical of the product. There is no or minimal rind. The interior consistency is semi-hard and crumbles easily, and the colour is amber white or slightly yellowish. The smell is typical and lingering, and at times full and pungent, with aromas recalling woodland undergrowth with hints of mould and truffles.

The flavour varies, depending on the composition of the aged cheese, in accordance with the following characteristics:

— the ewes' milk cheese has an aromatic aftertaste and a fragrant, full and pleasant flavour, slightly tangy to a greater or lesser extent,

— the cows' milk cheese is subtle and delicate, with a moderately salty and slightly acidic taste with a hint of bitterness,

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 93, 31.3.2006, p. 12.

- the mixed cheese has a pleasant flavour between salty and sweet, with a slightly bitter taste.

There is little difference in the 'Formaggio di Fossa di Sogliano' PDO cheese between the rind and the cheese itself and all of it can therefore be eaten without removing the outer part of the rind, although stains or butterfat may be scraped off if they are present.

The fat content of the dry matter exceeds 32 %.

3.3. Raw materials (only for processed products):

The raw material for the production of 'Formaggio di Fossa di Sogliano' PDO cheese consists of ewes' or cows' milk from herds located in the defined geographical area. The bovine species used to produce the milk are Italian Friesian, Alpine Brown, Italian Red Pied and cross-breeds; the ovine species are Sarda, Comisana, Massese, Vissana, Cornella White, Fabrianese, delle Langhe and Pinzirita and cross-breeds.

The milk used comes from two daily milkings. The cheese must be produced using only the following types of milk:

- whole ovine milk: EWES' MILK
- whole bovine milk: COWS' MILK
- mixture of whole cows' milk (maximum 80 %) and whole ewes' milk (minimum 20 %): MIXED.

The properties of the milk are:

COWS' MILK

Fat % by volume = > 3,4

Protein % by volume = > 3,0

Bacterial count UF/ml = < 100 000

Somatic cells/ml = < 350 000

Anaerobic sporigens/litre absent

Inhibitors absent

Cryoscopic point °C = < 0,520

EWES' MILK

Fat % by volume = > 6,0

Protein % by volume = > 5,4

Bacterial count UF/ml = < 1 400 000

Somatic cells/ml = < 1 400 000

Inhibitors absent

Raw milk is used but the use of pasteurised milk is permitted. The use of additives is prohibited.

3.4. *Feed (for products of animal origin only):*

The animals may be housed or grazed. The basic feed for housed animals consists of fodder comprising grasses and legumes collected from monophyte, oligophyte and polyphite meadows in the regional territories indicated in paragraph 4, which because of the climate and soil properties determine the quality of the milk production. Grazed animals use the same fodder crops used for haymaking and spontaneous polyphite meadows which are rich in flora with grass, shrub and tree species. Green or hay fodder and grazing can be supplemented by straight feedingstuffs (a single type of grain) or compound feedingstuffs (several types of grain) with the possible addition of mineral/vitamin products. The feedingstuffs used to supplement the diet must not exceed 30 % of the total daily ration. The use of silage is not permitted.

3.5. *Specific steps in production that must take place in the identified geographical area:*

The operations of milk production, cheese-making and underground aging which are involved in the production of 'Formaggio di Fossa di Sogliano' PDO cheese must take place in the geographic area indicated in paragraph 4.

3.6. *Specific rules concerning slicing, grating, packaging, etc.:*

The 'Formaggio di Fossa di Sogliano' PDO cheese is packaged for distribution to preserve the characteristics of the product in accordance with the following packaging procedures:

- A. sold in the aging bags;
- B. sold vacuum-packed as whole cheeses or in portions;
- C. sold as whole cheeses or in portions in film-wrapped trays;
- D. sold as whole cheeses or in portions wrapped in food-grade paper.

'Formaggio di Fossa di Sogliano' PDO cheese packaged in these ways may be contained in packs made of cloth sacking or wrapping or wooden or cardboard boxes.

The operations of portioning for packaging must take place in the area indicated in paragraph 4 since after the cheeses have been in the pit there is no clear distinction between the rind and the cheese itself as a result of the anaerobic fermentation which occurs during this stage of the processing, and the cheeses are wet and greasy and liable to become dry or hard. The product must therefore be packaged before commercial distribution in order to avoid the formation of cracks and fissures and to preserve the characteristics of the product.

3.7. *Specific rules concerning labelling:*

In addition to the product logo, the Community mark and references (in accordance with the requirements of Regulation (EC) No 1898/2006 and subsequent amendments) and legally required information, the labels must be clearly and legibly printed with:

the type of milk used (ewes' milk, cows' milk, mixed);

the wording 'da latte crudo' for cheeses produced with unpasteurised milk;

the name or trade name or trademark and the location of the cheese-maker or cheese-pit and the location of the packager if different from the previous categories;

the identity number of the cheese-pit establishment, with PRM indicating spring (primavera) and EST summer (estate).

No description which is not explicitly permitted may be added. Use is however permitted of brand names provided these have no laudatory purport and are not such as to mislead the consumer.

The logo of 'Formaggio di Fossa di Sogliano' PDO cheese consists of a stylised drawing of a pit, the outline of which takes the form of an isosceles triangle and represents sandstone while the inner shape represents the cheeses emerging from the open base of the triangle. In the centre of the pit is the heraldic sign of the Malatesta domain, an elephant. The drawing is in red on a yellowish background. Below the base of the triangle there are two lines of print, the first of which is FORMAGGIO DI FOSSA and the second DI SOGLIANO D.O.P. Around the semicircular upper part of the logo are the words 'Sogliano al Rubicone, Talamello e Terre Malatestiane', indicating the historical continuity and link with the territory.

The area covered by the identification logo must not be more than 25 % of the total label area.



4. Concise definition of the geographical area:

The area of production of the 'Formaggio di Fossa di Sogliano' PDO cheese comprises the whole territory of the provinces of Forli-Cesena, Rimini, Ravenna, Pesaro-Urbino, Ancona, Macerata, Ascoli Piceno and part of the territory of the province of Bologna consisting of the municipalities of Borgo Tossignano, Casalfiumanese, Castel San Pietro Terme, Castel del Rio, Dozza, Fontanelice, Imola, Loiano, Monghidoro, Monterenzio and Pianoro.

5. Link with the geographical area:

5.1. Specificity of the geographical area:

The area of production of the 'Formaggio di Fossa di Sogliano' PDO cheese lies on the slopes of ridges along the Apennines between the Romagna and Marche regions. The geomorphologic characteristics are clay and sand soils, sometimes alternating, resulting from the lower Pliocene and present Quaternary periods. At the cheese-pit sites, the holes are dug in a shape comprising a series of micaceous-feldspathic pits, generally with little cement, of yellow-brown or yellowish colour, in layers varying between 30–40 cm and about a metre thick, with thin alternating layers of grey and blue-grey shaley clay.

5.2. Specificity of the product:

The 'Formaggio di Fossa di Sogliano' PDO cheese is different from other products in the same category for its typical and lingering smell, which is occasionally strong and is rich in flavours suggesting woodland undergrowth with hints of mould and truffles. These characteristics are closely linked to the method of production, in which aging in pits is certainly a specific feature. Before the cheeses are placed in the pits, the latter are suitably prepared using the following method: when not in use the pits are kept closed by means of wooden covers with the addition of sand or rocks. When they are to be used, they are opened, aired and then sanitised by fire and smoke by burning small quantities of wheat-straw. When the fire is out, the pits are cleaned to ensure that no ash remains. A raised platform made of untreated wooden planks is placed at the bottom of each pit. This allows the fatty liquid produced during the fermentation of the cheese as it ages to drain away. The walls of the pit are lined with a layer of at least 10 cm of wheat-straw supported by vertical reed fencing. The pit is filled to the top with bags of cheese. After a period to allow settling, never more than ten days, more bags can be added to fill the pit. When the pit is full, the top is covered by uncoloured cloths suitable for use with foodstuffs, and/or straw, to prevent transpiration. The pit is then closed by means of a wooden cover which is sealed using plaster or lime sandstone mortar. Further covering using rocks, sandstone powder, sand and/or planks is permitted. This is when the aging starts. The pits may not be opened during the aging process. The cheeses remain in the pits from at least 80 to at most 100 days.

5.3. Causal link between the geographical area and the quality or characteristics of the product (for PDO) or a specific quality, the reputation or other characteristic of the product (for PGI):

The application for the registration of the 'Formaggio di Fossa di Sogliano' PDO cheese is justified by the unique features of its production, which are indissolubly linked to its specific geographic environment and climate and the very local tradition which has remained unchanging and unbroken over the centuries, and which has been handed down from generation to generation of cheese-pit operators who have retained the traditional knowledge and expertise. The tradition of aging the cheese in pits began in the Middle Ages and it quickly became an integral part of country life in the territory between the Rubicon and Marecchia valleys and as far as the river Esino, overlapping the Romagna and Marche regions. The use of pits was naturally linked to the need to preserve the product, as well as to the desire to protect it from raids by the tribes and armies which over the centuries endeavoured to occupy the territory. The pits were dug out of the living sandstone rock and left rough. This activity became so common that it was eventually governed by precise regulations. The first documents concerning the pits and the techniques for using them date back to the 14th century and come from the archives of the Malatesta family, the owners of the land. Some time after 1350 the Malatesta domain founded the Compagnia dell'Abbondanza within walled areas, estates and 'tumbae', farmhouses scattered throughout the territory. The pits were used to store, conceal and preserve cereals and various types of food and to age cheese, as a precaution against siege, epidemic or famine and to get round the severe terms of the contracts which governed tenant farms. Throughout the centuries the custom continued, unchanging and unbroken, in accordance with the rules laid down by the Malatesta.

Reference to publication of the specification:

The full text of the product specification is available on the following website:

www.politicheagricole.it/DocumentiPubblicazioni/Search_Documenti_Elenco.htm?txtTipoDocumento=Disciplinare%20in%20esame%20UE&txtDocArgomento=Prodotti%20di%20Qualit%E0>Prodotti%20Dop%20Igp%20e%20Stg

or

by going directly to the home page of the Ministry (www.politicheagricole.it) and clicking on 'Prodotti di Qualità' (on the left of the display) and then on 'Disciplinari di Produzione all'esame dell'UE (Reg CE 510/2006)'.
