

OTHER ACTS

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Publication of an application pursuant to Article 50(2)(a) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs

(2013/C 130/11)

This publication confers the right to oppose the application pursuant to Article 51 of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽¹⁾.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006**on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs ⁽²⁾****'RIGOTTE DE CONDRIEU'**

EC No: FR-PDO-0005-0782-07.07.2009

PGI () PDO (X)

1. Name

'Rigotte de Condrieu'

2. Member State or Third Country

France

3. Description of the agricultural product or foodstuff**3.1. Type of product**

Class 1.3. Cheeses

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

'Rigotte de Condrieu' is a small non-standardised cheese made from raw, full-fat goat's milk. It is made from curdled goat's milk. It is an unpressed soft cheese.

At the end of the minimum maturation period (eight days from the day of removal from the mould), it is shaped like a small round puck of between 4,2 cm and 5 cm in diameter and 1,9 cm and 2,4 cm in height. Its weight even after a longer maturation process must not fall below 30 grams.

The surface flora is made up of ivory-coloured, white and blue mould. The cheese paste is white or ivory-coloured, firm and smooth. It contains at least 40 g fat per 100 g of cheese after total desiccation and it must contain 40 g of dry matter per 100 g of cheese.

When tasted, it has a mix of flavours reminiscent of hazelnut, vegetation and whey, and it is moderately salty.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 343, 14.12.2012, p. 1.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 93, 31.3.2006, p. 12 Replaced by Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012.

3.3. Raw materials (for processed products only)

It is made from the milk of Alpine or Saanen goats, either from the 'Massif Central breed' or a cross-breed of the two, in the defined geographical area and it is raw, full-fat and non-standardised.

3.4. Feed (for products of animal origin only)

The staple feed over the year for the goats is made up mainly of coarse fodder grown in the defined geographical area.

This coarse fodder includes fresh grass, dry hay from permanent or temporary pasture and, in general, any plants eaten when grazing, dried alfalfa with a protein content of less than 20 % and any other unfermented fodder which does not turn the milk sour, e.g. cereals which are not yet ripe, protein crops, oilseeds, tubers and pulses, which may be used for fodder.

In addition, bale grass may be used as feed for the goats, as long as it contains at least 55 % dry matter and was cut fresh from the pastureland of the farm.

The goats graze or are fed with green fodder grown in the defined geographical area, local weather conditions permitting, for a minimum of 120 days per year.

The annual amount of supplementary feed distributed to the goats may not exceed 350 kg of raw matter per goat. There is a set list of authorised supplementary feed. Only plants, by-products and supplementary feed derived from non-transgenic products are authorised in the goat feed.

Preference is given to fodder and supplementary feed grown in the defined geographical area.

Fodder or supplementary feed grown outside the defined geographical area cannot make up more than 40 % in total of the dry matter consumed by the goats. This amount will be reduced to 20 % from 1 January 2014.

3.5. Specific steps in production that must take place in the defined geographical area

The milk must be produced and processed, and the cheese must be matured, within the defined geographical area.

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

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3.7. Specific rules concerning labelling

In addition to the regulatory information requirements applicable to all cheeses, each cheese with the protected designation of origin 'Rigotte de Condrieu', or at least each unit for sale to the consumer, is marketed under an individual label bearing the name of the protected designation of origin in characters at least two-thirds of the size of the largest characters on the label, as well as bearing the EU PDO logo.

4. Concise definition of the geographical area

'Rigotte de Condrieu' is made in the Massif du Pilat, an area south-west of Lyon. This massif straddles two *départements*: the Rhône and the Loire. It is part of the Rhône-Alpes region.

The milk may only be produced and turned into cheese, which is then matured, in the following municipalities:

Municipalities belonging to the Rhône *département*:

Municipalities completely covered: Ampuis, Condrieu, Echalas, Les Haies, Loire-sur-Rhône, Longes, Sainte-Colombe, Saint-Cyr-sur-Rhône, Saint-Romain-en-Gal, Trèves and Tupin-et-Semons.

Municipalities covered in part, excluding urban areas: Givors and Saint-Romain-en-Gier.

Municipalities belonging to the Loire *département*:

Municipalities completely covered: Le Bessat, Bessey, Bourg-Argental, Burdignes, La Chapelle-Villars, Châteauneuf, Chavanay, Chuyer, Colombier, Doizieux, Farnay, Graix, Lupe, Maclas, Malleval, Pavezin, Pelussin, Planfoy, Roisey, Saint-Appolinard, Sainte-Croix-en-Jarez, Saint-Julien-Molin-Molette, Saint-Michel-Sur-Rhône, Saint-Paul-en-Jarez, Saint-Pierre-de-Boeuf, Saint-Sauveur-en-Rue, Tarentaise, La Terrasse-sur-Dorlay, Thélis-la-Combe, La Valla-en-Gier, Veranne, Verin and La Versanne.

Municipalities covered in part, excluding urban areas: Saint-Chamond and Saint-Etienne.

5. Link with the geographical area

5.1. Specificity of the geographical area

The geographical area where 'Rigotte de Condrieu' is produced is characterised by specific geographical and human factors. As it is a massif, the area has a very varied climate, slopes are the most common land form, the soil is brown, acidic and shallow, and there is a great deal of biodiversity.

This has led to different types of farming with goat breeding playing an important role both traditionally and in today's economy.

Geographical factors

The Massif du Pilat is a mid-mountain area whose natural borders are made up by valleys to the north-west and east (the Gier, Ondaine and Rhône valleys) and the Eteize hills to the south. It is part of the Massif Central but it is not typical of it with its complex geology, its acidic and light soil and its very mountainous landscape with its extreme slopes. The Massif du Pilat is characterised by its ancient igneous and metamorphic rocks. It is marked by *chirats*, rare geological formations made up of characteristic rock piles cemented together. The chemical composition of its soil is fairly homogeneous: it has a high silica content and a low iron content. This mix is conducive to the build-up of acidic soil.

The Pilat is at a climatic crossroads where Atlantic, Mediterranean and continental climatic conditions meet. The temperature and rainfall levels are greatly influenced by the mountainous terrain. The rainfall levels are moderate (between 580 mm and 1 000 mm) but are distributed unevenly throughout the year: the summer tends to be very dry. The climate of the Pilat is also affected by frequent and strong winds.

The natural vegetation is normal for hilly and mountainous areas. Despite the moderate altitudes and its continental and southern location, the vegetation in the Pilat is normal for mountain areas.

The landscape is dominated by the peak. The villages huddle together on the promontories between its *crêts* or ridges, which are covered in mountain moorland, mixed pine forest and steep-sided valleys.

Half of the area is covered in trees and 80 % of the usable agricultural area (UAA), which represents only 36 % of the total area, is used for growing fodder. Two-thirds of the fodder comes from natural pastureland.

The floral diversity of the Massif du Pilat is remarkable (40 to 60 species per type of pasture) and this has led to the designation of many of these pastures as 'natural habitats' of Community interest under Directive 92/43/EEC.

The flora mainly consists of the acidophilic and acidocline species. The most common of these are grass species such as oatgrass, leguminous plants such as trefoil or other plants from the *succisa* and *knautia* genera.

Human factors

The Massif du Pilat does have a strong goat breeding tradition in its mixed farms where keeping goats, initially a woman's job, led to diversification.

Since the 18th century, goat breeding has become particularly popular in the driest parts of the Massif du Pilat, as these are not suited to cattle breeding. Traditionally, farms in these areas made cheese from both cow's and goat's milk. Cheese made from cow's milk tended to be for private use so that the cheese made from goat's milk could be sold, as it fetched higher prices.

In areas where production was limited, goats made economic sense, as they could be bred on land not suited to cattle. It was efficient as more milk could be produced for the same surface area.

As this cheese was traded nearby (in Lyon and Saint-Étienne), it tended to be small as its small size was ideal for rapid drying and maturing. The use of small strainers of about 7 cm in diameter helped distinguish the goat's cheese from the cow's cheese which was strained in larger moulds. The choice of a small strainer was also based on the fact that most farms did not produce much goat's milk as they only had small herds.

Traditionally, the milk used is raw, full-fat and non-standardised. Production processes have been adapted to making curdled goat's milk, so that the milk is matured and becomes more acidic. If possible, whey from previous curdling stages containing lactic bacteria is injected. The mould must suit the structure of the curd, so that it does not need to be sliced, pre-drained or mixed. The cheese is turned over once within 12 hours of being placed in the mould and is dry salted on both sides at the same time.

After eight days, on removal from the mould, 'Rigotte de Condrieu' has developed its specific characteristics.

5.2. Specificity of the product

'Rigotte de Condrieu' is characterised by:

- its small size (small round puck weighing slightly over 30 g),
- its delicate surface flora is made up of ivory-coloured, white and blue mould,
- its paste is firm and smooth in texture, without holes and soft when tasted,
- its mix of flavours, hazelnut, vegetation and whey, and its moderate saltiness.

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 acidic, sandy and shallow soil typical of this area and the specific local climate, as well as local breeding practices, have led to the planting and cultivation of pastures with a very varied flora which thrives on acidic soil.

The diversity and botanical composition of the flora in this area have influenced the content and composition of fat-soluble compounds in the milk. They have also led to the growth of microbial flora which is injected via the whey before curdling, thus helping to mature the cheese and develop its flavour.

The breeding methods employed to produce 'Rigotte de Condrieu' make the best use of the special characteristics of the area by exploiting local resources, producing local fodder, green pasture and feeding and outdoor grazing.

The processing of full-fat, raw milk and, if possible, the injection of bacteria via whey from previous curdling stages also preserve the milk's flora.

The curdling process using a mould which respects the structure of the curd results in a paste with a homogenous and smooth texture which is characteristic of 'Rigotte de Condrieu'. Turning over the cheese once it has been placed in the mould and dry salting both sides at the same time means that the salt is well distributed. These processing techniques help produce a cheese with a firm and homogeneous paste which is soft when tasted.

The geographical location of the Pilat near major trading centres, its windy climate (in the past, 'Rigotte de Condrieu' was dried in a *chasière*, a sort of cupboard with bars in the open air) and the organisation of its farms has led to the making of a small goat's cheese. The small size of the cheese means that it lends itself to fairly rapid drying, followed by maturing.

The characteristics of the natural habitat, along with the significant amount of local fodder in the animal feed and the local know-how on how best to drain the cheese and preserve the flora in the milk, result in a small cheese (4,2 cm to 5 cm in diameter) with a delicate surface flora in various colours, which is typical of this type of cheese which can be sold at different maturing stages, and with its mix of flavours, i.e. hazelnut, vegetation and whey, and its moderate saltiness.

Due to these special characteristics, this small cheese, which has been produced in the Massif du Pilat since the end of the 18th century, has gradually built up its regional reputation. It was first called 'Rigotte' then 'Rigotte de Condrieu' after the canton of Condrieu which, until steam boats were developed in the mid-19th century, was a thriving trading centre for the Rhône region. Guicherd and Ponsart's study on 'L'Agriculture du Rhône en 1926' ('Agriculture in the Rhône in 1926') published in 1927 already referred to 'Rigotte de Condrieu' as one of the best two goat cheeses of the Rhône *département*.

Reference to publication of the specification

(Article 5(7) of Regulation (EC) No 510/2006 ⁽³⁾)

<https://www.inao.gouv.fr/fichier/CDCRigottedeCondrieu.pdf>

⁽³⁾ See footnote 2.