

Publication of an amendment 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 177/09)

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

AMENDMENT APPLICATION

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006

on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs ⁽²⁾

AMENDMENT APPLICATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE 9

‘PERAS DE RINCÓN DE SOTO’

EC No: ES-PDO-0105-0251-05.10.2010

PGI () PDO (X)

1. Heading in the specification affected by the amendment

- Name of product
- Description of product
- Geographical area
- Proof of origin
- Method of production
- Link
- Labelling
- National requirements
- Other (Inspection body, legal requirements)

2. Type of amendment(s)

- Amendment to Single Document or Summary Sheet.
- Amendment to specification of registered PDO or PGI for which neither the Single Document nor the Summary Sheet have been published.
- Amendment to specification that requires no amendment to the published Single Document (Article 9(3) of Regulation (EC) No 510/2006).
- Temporary amendment to specification resulting from imposition of obligatory sanitary or phytosanitary measures by public authorities (Article 9(4) of Regulation (EC) No 510/2006).

3. Amendment(s)

3.1. Description

Section B.3 ‘Distinctive characteristics’ has been amended and divided into the following subsections: B.3.1. Physical/chemical characteristics, B.3.2. Organoleptic characteristics and B.3.3. Physical characteristics.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 343, 14.12.2012, p. 1.

⁽²⁾ Replaced by Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012.

In subsection B.3.1 'Physical and chemical characteristics' (to be measured on dispatch and not on harvesting) the following have been deleted: maximum soluble solids content, as there is no need to set a limit for this as the sweetness of our product is one of its distinctive characteristics, and minimum hardness, as this varies depending on the ripeness of the fruit, which is climacteric and so continues ripening after harvest — becoming sweeter and softer —, for greater adaptability to market needs and consumer preferences. In addition, in the light of past experience, the minimum size may be reduced by 5 mm, if the destination market so requires. In subsection B.3.3. 'Physical characteristics', the reference to Regulation (EC) No 1619/2001 has been deleted, as compliance therewith is a mandatory in any case.

3.2. Geographical area

The geographical area, which was originally incorrectly defined, has been extended to include the following municipalities in the Ebro valley: Albelda, Alberite, Alcanadre, Agoncillo, Arrubal, Ausejo, Azofra, Cenicero, Entrena, Fuenmayor, Hormilla, Hormilleja, Huércanos, Lardero, Logroño, Murillo, Nalda, Nájera, Navarrete, Pradejón, San Asensio, Torremontalbo, Uruñuela and Villamediana de Iregua.

This area, located entirely within the Ebro valley and at a distance from the mountains, shares common, characteristic human and natural factors with the area originally defined and they form a single, indivisible whole.

3.3. Proof of origin

This section has been redrafted in a more succinct, concise manner and revised to include the new nomenclature of the *Instituto de Calidad Agroalimentaria de La Rioja* and the new structure of the register of operators. In addition 'Asociación para la Promoción de la Pera de Rincón de Soto' (Association for the Promotion of Rincón de Soto pears) has been replaced by 'Consejo Regulador' (Regulatory Council).

3.4. Method of production

This has been redrafted in a more succinct, concise manner, taking account of technological developments that do not impair the quality of the fruit and the new private quality standards. There are no longer any references to operations that can only be carried out by hand or to the requirement that only wooden crates be used.

3.5. Other

Section G — 'Inspection body' gives the new name of the inspection body and, in section I — 'legal requirements', the applicable legislation has been updated.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006

on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs⁽³⁾

'PERAS DE RINCÓN DE SOTO'

EC No: ES-PDO-0105-0251-05.10.2010

PGI () PDO (X)

1. Name

'Peras de Rincón de Soto'

2. Member State or Third Country

Spain

⁽³⁾ See footnote 2.

3. Description of the agricultural product or foodstuff

3.1. Type of product

Class 1.6. Fruit, vegetables and cereals fresh or processed.

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

Fruit of the species *Pyrus Communis* L., of the Blanquilla and Conference varieties, classes 'Extra' and 'I', intended for consumption fresh.

On dispatch, the pears must meet the following requirements:

Hardness: maximum 6,12 kg/cm²

Soluble solids: minimum soluble solids content 13 °Brix

Minimum size: The size determined by the maximum transverse diameter is 58 mm for Blanquilla and 60 mm for Conference. These minimum sizes may be reduced by 5 mm if the market so requires.

Natural russeting, without the use of abrasive chemical products.

Stalk, visible.

3.2.1. Organoleptic characteristics

The Blanquilla pears grown in the defined area are characterised by their flavour, which is intense and has the right balance between acidity and sweetness. The Conference pears have a woody texture and intense flavour, with an excellent balance between acidity and sweetness. Both varieties are very juicy and have a high sugar content, which contributes enormously to the flavour of the fruit.

3.3. Raw materials (for processed products only)

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3.4. Feed (for products of animal origin only)

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

The pears are grown, stored and finally selected within the defined area.

PDO Rincón de Soto pears must not only reach the consumer in perfect condition but also meet all the specific requirements every step of the way.

Thus, in addition to being properly stored, Rincón de Soto pears must undergo thorough final selection before they are dispatched. It is at this stage that defective pears and those that have deteriorated during storage are removed, along with all those which do not meet the quality requirements that distinguish them from other pears.

As final selection can only take place just before the product is dispatched from the collection centre, when the pears are removed from the crates in which they are harvested and stored, this operation is considered part of the production process and must therefore be carried out within the defined geographical area.

If the pears are grown, stored and finally selected within the defined geographical area, this guarantees both the origin of the product and optimal control thereof, safeguarding its physical and organoleptic qualities.

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

As the PDO Rincón de Soto pears are also packed during the process of final selection, when the pears which meet the specification are removed from the crates and placed in the boxes in which they are dispatched, this packing also has to take place within the defined geographical area.

At the collection centre the fruit must be packed in boxes that hold one layer only and are designed to immobilise the contents, thus preventing possible damage during transport and distribution.

However, this is not considered to be packaging as such, as it is not necessarily the final packaging in which it is presented to the consumer.

3.7. *Specific rules concerning labelling*

The labels must bear the words 'Denominación de Origen Protegida' and 'Peras de Rincón de Soto'. It is not permitted to use labels which for any reason could mislead the consumer.

4. **Concise definition of the geographical area**

The municipalities of Albelda, Alberite, Alcanadre, Aldeanueva de Ebro, Alfaro, Agoncillo, Arrubal, Ausejo, Azofra, Calahorra, Cenicero, Entrena, Fuenmayor, Hormilla, Hormilleja, Huércanos, Lardero, Logroño, Murillo, Nalda, Nájera, Navarrete, Pradejón, Rincón de Soto, San Asensio, Torremontalbo, Uruñuela and Villamediana de Iregua, located all the way along the Ebro valley.

5. **Link with the geographical area**

5.1. *Specificity of the geographical area*

Natural factors

La Rioja is very strongly influenced by the topography of the terrain, and the mountains in the south serve as a clear, natural separation between the Ebro valley and the rest, creating a sharp rainfall and temperature curve.

The geographical area, located entirely within the Ebro valley and at a distance from the mountains, has a characteristic shared climate and soil which makes it particularly well suited to growing pears with specific, highly valued organoleptic and quality characteristics. This, together with a deeply rooted pear-growing tradition, defines the area as a single, indivisible whole.

Orography: in terms of frosts, solar irradiation and evaporation, the location of the defined geographical area, close to the Ebro valley, is ideal for the correct development of pears of exceptional quality, as these areas are flat, open, clear of obstacles, well ventilated and humid, ensuring a high level of solar irradiation and preventing frost by evaporation.

Soil: given the demands of the fruit, the pear orchards are concentrated within the defined geographical area on the large plains near the rivers, which are well ventilated, the soil consisting of loam and clayey chert, healthy, homogeneous, deep, free of active lime, as too much would predispose the trees to chlorosis, and permeable, as the pear orchards are irrigated and pear trees are very sensitive to waterlogging.

Climate: as the defined geographical area lies in the Ebro valley and at a distance from the mountains, it has a temperate Mediterranean climate with certain continental features, characterised by mild winters, long summers and only slight fluctuations in temperature between day and night (except during the summer), which makes it an ideal climate for optimal pear growing.

As regards humidity, duration, intensity and timing of the dry period, the climate is dry Mediterranean.

Human factors

Growing and/or production conditions: The growers ensure that the trees have the right fruit-to-wood ratio and perform manual thinning at the correct time to achieve this.

By pruning manually, they have also always ensured that their trees are balanced and well shaped, so that sufficient light and air can penetrate, favouring photosynthesis, respiration and regular production.

To ensure proper fruiting and prevent shrivelling in summer, given the Mediterranean climate, the growers also have to provide water in the form of irrigation. They have learned from experience and knowledge of the specific climatic characteristics of the region that the trees need to be irrigated most often from the time when the buds appear to when the fruit set, and from the onset of ripening throughout the summer, as it is when the crop most needs water that there is the least rainfall.

All the growers know that correct harvesting is critical for obtaining high quality fruit and for this reason it is always done carefully and when the fruit are at just the right stage of ripeness. The stage of ripeness is fundamental for obtaining fruit that are not only high quality but also keep perfectly for a long time. The pears are removed from the tree just at the point where the stalk joins the branch, thus ensuring that it remains intact. Especial care has to be taken with the Blanquilla pears, which are more difficult to pick, as their skin is much more delicate than that of the Conference pears and their stalk much more fragile.

5.2. *Specificity of the product*

The pears grown in the defined geographical area are bigger, more elongated, sweeter, somewhat harder and have greener skin than those grown in neighbouring areas, and thus they have more value on the market. In addition, the altitude and the nearby rivers favour natural russetting, with no need to use chemicals.

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)*

Reputation

The earliest historical references to the production and marketing of fruit in the area date from 1747, when Blanquilla pears were described as an 'exquisite fruit' eaten at the court of Philip V, and then a number of manuscripts from 1752 refer to the growing and harvesting of pears in the Municipality of Rincón de Soto. In the 19th century, with the Ecclesiastical Confiscations of Mendizabal, agricultural activity began to be liberalised in the region and fresh fruit started being sold. Alfaro (the centre of a judicial district which did not acquire the status of town until the 19th century but which, with Calahorra, shared the history and traditions of Rincon de Soto) exported its excellent fruit, including its exceptional Blanquilla pears, throughout Spain and abroad. The production of Conference pears also began to assume importance. Thus, agriculture became the region's sole source of wealth, and pears were the jewel in the crown, already highly prized in those days.

Natural factors

Orography: Owing to the altitude and the proximity of rivers there is a morning mist, which suddenly lifts after a few hours, leaving a clear shining sun. The evaporation of the moisture deposited by the mist on the surface of the Conference pears, in the presence of the constant shining sun, favours natural russetting, so there is no need to use chemicals which burn the surface of the skin artificially. This natural russetting is a highly valued characteristic which distinguishes the product from pears grown in neighbouring areas.

Climate

The climate of the defined geographical area has a clear influence on 'Peras de Rincón de Soto', giving them their specific colour, aroma, size, acidity, texture and high soluble solids content. The high average temperature in June, which does not fall sharply at night, and the absence of spring frosts promote the rapid growth of the fruit. During ripening, however, the shortening of the days, the fall in night-time temperatures, the long hours of sunshine and high solar radiation are the direct cause of a higher soluble solids content than in neighbouring areas, the sugar content being the principle measure of the quality of the flesh, since it is this, together with acidity, that determines flavour.

The contrast between high daytime temperatures in summer and the cool night-time temperatures around harvest time give the fruit its characteristic hardness and texture. High temperatures during ripening cause the release of volatile substances, mainly ethylene and aromatic substances, which contribute to the characteristic aroma of 'Peras de Rincón de Soto'.

Human factors

The traditional, specific practices are also part of the link between the specific characteristics of 'Peras de Rincón de Soto' and the human and geographical environment.

The growers take care to ensure the correct fruit-to-wood ratio on their trees and to this end they have always performed manual thinning and pruning operations. With the appropriate number of fruit per tree, the better their size and sweetness. In order to ensure proper fruiting and prevent shrivelling in summer, the growers, on the basis of their knowledge of the area's specific climatic characteristics, provide water in the form of the appropriate irrigation whenever needed, thus preventing a reduction in the size of the fruit, organoleptic losses, shrivelling or massive fruit drop. Except in adverse climatic conditions, the trees are not irrigated just before harvest as this would result in fruit with a lower soluble solids content, reducing its value and making it more difficult to store.

The expertise acquired in determining almost exactly when the fruit should be harvested by monitoring its development in the orchard (colour, colour of the seeds, resistance to pulling and hardness of the flesh), by testing the soluble solids content and by penetromy allows 'Peras de Rincón de Soto' to be harvested when they are at just the right stage of ripeness, neither too green nor too ripe.

It is also in the defined geographical area that the collection centres have many years' experience in handling, storing and selecting pears and extensive knowledge of the specific characteristics of Rincón de Soto pears, knowing how to store them until they are dispatched, detecting at a glance fruit which is unsuitable or has deteriorated.

Publication reference of the specification

(Article 5(7) of Regulation (EC) No 510/2006 ⁽⁴⁾)

http://www.larioja.org/upload/documents/733015_Pliego_y_documento_unico_peras_de_rincon.pdf?idtab=438497

⁽⁴⁾ See footnote 2.