

## OTHER ACTS

## EUROPEAN COMMISSION

**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 326/09)

This publication confers the right to object to the amendment application in accordance with Article 51 of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council <sup>(1)</sup>.

## AMENDMENT APPLICATION

## COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006

**on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs <sup>(2)</sup>**

## AMENDMENT APPLICATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE 9

## ‘QUESO DE MURCIA AL VINO’

EC No: ES-PDO-0105-01061-12.11.2012

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 (to be specified)

<sup>(1)</sup> OJ L 343, 14.12.2012, p. 1.

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

## 2. Type of amendment

- Amendment to Single Document or Summary Sheet
- Amendment to Specification of registered PDO or PGI for which neither the Single Document nor the Summary has been published.
- Amendment to Specification that requires no amendment to the published Single Document.
- Temporary amendment to Specification resulting from imposition of obligatory sanitary or phytosanitary measures by public authorities.

## 3. Amendments

### *Introduction*

The specification for the protected denomination of origin 'Queso de Murcia' has been separated from that for the protected denomination of origin 'Queso de Murcia al vino'. The texts that do not relate to the denomination at hand ('Queso de Murcia al vino') have been removed from the new specification.

The amendments made and the reasons for them are given below.

### *Description of product*

- Raw material: milk
  - The requirements for the bacterial load and the presence of pharmacologically active substances are adapted to meet the requirements set out in the applicable legislation.
  - The reference to the constituent properties of the milk 'on the farm' is deleted, given that the requirements defined are those that must be met by the milk as a raw material intended for the production of protected cheeses and these requirements must be met at all times, whether the milk is on the farm or in the cheese dairies.
  - The minimum fat content of the milk is reduced from 5 % to 4,7 %.

The fat content of Murcian goat milk from livestock farms in the Murcia region of Granada decreases gradually during the first six months of the year and reaches its lowest level (4,7 %) in July.

Milk production on the 176 goat farms on the Regulatory Council's register of livestock holdings increased to 17 914 841 litres in 2012. Only 3 127 613 litres of this are made into the PDO cheese, provided that tests show that it has a fat content of at least 5 % as required by the original Specification.

This amendment is proposed on the basis of a future scenario, anticipating that the continued growth in production of these cheeses seen in recent years will require increasing quantities of milk from these livestock farms. Furthermore, we must mention the fact that the original Specification aptly prescribed a 5 % minimum fat content, but this is the average amount for this breed of goat for the whole year. This is a very generic figure and we can affirm that it neither describes nor makes any allowance for the cyclical evolution of the fat content that normally can reach minimum values close to the figure indicated in this request for amendment.

- The acidity is only measured by the pH, as this is more accurate than measuring the degree on the Dornic scale.

— Finished product:

The size of the cheeses is increased to adapt to the new demands of the market. To make this increase, a new analysis was conducted to study the lower and upper extremes of the new range presented (drawn up using the new parameters defined in point E of the new specifications 'Method of production'), which showed that the physical, chemical and organoleptic characteristics required by the original specification are met.

*Physical characteristics*

To adapt to the new sizes allowed, the new specification requires the following:

- Weight: From 300 g to 2,6 kg.
- Maximum diameter: 190 mm.
- Maximum height: 100 mm.
- Diameter/height ratio: 1,5 minimum-2,2 maximum.

These characteristics summarise and simplify the information in the original specification. They establish the maximum diameter and height for the pieces of cheese, introducing the diameter/height ratio to ensure the proportionality of the cheeses.

The diameter/height ration (1,5-2,2) described also comes from the ratio between the minimum and maximum heights (7-9 cm) and the diameter (12-18 cm) of the original specification. This ratio ensures that the cheese retains the shape of the original, regardless of what size mould individual cheese dairies use, provided that it weighs between 300 g and 2 600 g.

We enclose a supporting study from the University of Murcia, 'Appraisal report on the proposed amendments to the physical characteristics of PDO Murcian wine cheese', which concluded that the new formats retain the original chemical and organoleptic characteristics.

*Organoleptic characteristics*

The section on the organoleptic characteristics has been expanded to include a more detailed description of the rind and body.

The new specification is expanded and amended with the following description:

RIND:

- Consistency: firm.
- Colour: Maroon-violet.
- Appearance: smooth rind (without imprints), fine and without cracks, straight or slightly curved sides.

BODY:

- Consistency: firm and elastic.
- Texture: uniform, creamy, unctuous and without any graininess.
- Appearance/Structure: the body may have no holes or sometimes have holes of mechanical origin.

- Colour: matt white with shades ranging from ivory to yellowish-brown in the most cured pieces.
- Aroma: average-to-low intensity. Lactic and animal (goat) notes. The aroma of red wine or wine cellar can be detected in the outer part of the rind.
- Taste: low-to-medium intensity, but persistent. Average acidity and salty base notes. It may have notes of fresh lactic aromas (goat's milk, cream/butter). The acidity diminishes with age, unlike the saltiness and flavour which grow stronger.

*Elements guaranteeing that the product originates in the area*

The following requirement is introduced to preserve the product's origin at all times:

'The cheese dairies must have production systems that prevent crosses with other products'.

Likewise, the maturation and storage rooms are required to keep this product duly labelled and separated from other cheeses not covered by this protected designation of origin.

A reference is made to the quantity of secondary labels used by the cheese-making companies based on the quantity, size of cheese produced and the forms in which it is sold (whole cheese, portions, sliced and grated).

*Description of the method for obtaining the product*

The specification of the protected designation of origin for 'Queso de Murcia al vino' defines, on the basis of the established breed standard, the morphological requirements that must be met by the she-goats of the Murcian breed whose milk is intended for the production of cheeses covered by this designation. Genetic drift was not taken into account at the time of writing the original specification, which makes it necessary to introduce a qualification in the new specification allowing 3 % morphological defects in the Murcian breed due to genetic drift.

*Amendments to describe the method of production in more detail*

- The restriction on the frequency of milking to once a day is removed. This is due to the technological advances that have been made in recent years in the milking equipment and the milk quality control systems which allow these goats to be milked twice a day like any other breed of milk-producing goat or sheep.
- To describe the method of working in more detail, a description of the draining stage is added to the stage on working the curd. The following paragraph is added:

'After working the curd, the resulting whey is drained off, leaving the curd ready for the moulding stage.'

The term 'correct' is deleted from the reference to the consistency of the curd, as it is not a specific requirement.

- The possible ways of putting the curd into the moulds are defined: 'by manual or mechanical means'.
- A section on removing the cheese from the mould is added to describe the process in more detail:

'Removing the cheese from the mould. Once the time needed for pressing the curd has elapsed, the cheeses are removed from the moulds'.

- The maturation phase defines, along with the turning and washing phases, the bathing of the cheese in wine during maturation. It also sets the minimum time for maturation for pieces of 500 g or less at 30 days.
- In the maturation phase of the Murcian wine cheese, the cheese is bathed in red wines produced in the Region of Murcia and covered by some of its recognised geographical indications, including the Monastrell variety which is the most representative and typical of the area. According a review of various literature sources, these wines are characterised by their strong colour, generally an intense red-purple with touches of violet, and their high level of chemical components such as tannins, polyphenols and anthocyanins which are ultimately responsible for giving the cheese rind its characteristic colour and taste. The reference to 'doble pasta' in the specification is removed, because this characteristic is not defined or typified in the relevant legislation. In practice, each cheese dairy regulates the number of wine baths, the time the cheeses spend in the bath and how often the wine is changed, seeking empirically to optimise the combination of these factors to achieve the desired result with regard to the colour and aroma of the rind, according to the requirements defined in the specification.

#### Amendments to the method of production

- The reference to the milk being filtered has been removed as the present milking system includes a filter, so this stage is no longer necessary. The same applies for milk discharged and stored in a tank and subsequently pasteurised, as the tanks and pasteurising equipment have filters to eliminate the impurities in the milk.
- The time for curdling is reduced from 40 to 60 minutes to 30 to 60 minutes. The reason for the change is:
  - The existence of new rennets on the market with different degrees of intensity and more active lactic fermenting agents.
  - The slight changes to the milk's composition (fat and protein content) depend on the point on the lactation curve when the milk was produced.
- At the cutting of the curd stage, the size of the curd grains obtained when the curd is cut is no longer specified, this being considered a criterion which each industry must establish depending on the process it uses. In any case, the end product must meet the requirements set out in the specification.
- The time for pressing is reduced from 2 to 4 hours to 1 to 4 hours. The reason for the change is that the new smaller sizes of cheeses need less time for pressing.
- The requirement for a maximum saline concentration of 20° Bé maximum is removed. The length of time the product is kept in the salty brine is maintained and the concentration of the brine is at the operator's discretion, provided that the end product meets the requirements set out in the specification.
- The relative humidity of the maturation rooms has been adapted to current working methods, moving from a minimum of 80 % to 70-90 %, without this affecting the requirements for the end product set out in the specification.

#### Amendments in line with the applicable legislation

- The storage temperature and systems used for collecting and transporting the milk must comply with the requirements of the relevant legislation (transport in refrigerated bulk tankers and the temperature in the tank must be  $\leq 6$  °C).
- The enzymes used in the curd change from those accepted by the Inspection Body to must comply with the relevant legislation (approval number and certified for food use).

- The different moulds available on the market and allowed by the relevant legislation (approval number and certified for food use) can be used without prior approval of the Inspection Body, provided that they are a suitable size so that the cheeses have the defined shape, dimensions and weight after maturation.

#### Link

Some aspects and sections of the 'Specificity of the geographical area' are clarified and summarised.

Section (a) Historical of the original specification has been updated, with the deletion of some paragraphs that referred only to fresh or cured Murcian cheese, such as:

'The custom of making home-made fresh cheese has existed throughout the entire Region of Murcia, etc.'

Some information that is now obsolete or which simply described the situation in the sector at the time of submitting the first application for registration has also been deleted:

'which is now called Acrimur and has 54 Murcian livestock farmers, is responsible for the herd book for the breed, maintaining the breed and milk inspection through Núcleo (Nucleomur).'

'and by the year 2000, two new cheese dairies, which are currently under construction, with a capacity of 1 000 l/day will be added.'

'The cheeses to which the requested protections refer were regulated by the Order of 11 June 1990 of the Department of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries on the specific regulation of goat's cheeses covered by the designation "Producto de Calidad de Murcia" ("Quality Murcian Product"). In view of the need for a derogation, in accordance with the Commission's advice it was decided to apply for a designation of origin.'

'The sector has recently become better organised through the creation of the Association of Cheese-makers of the Region of Murcia (Asociación de Fabricantes de Queso de la Región de Murcia — Aquemur), which is made up of eight cheese dairies that produce approximately 25 000 litres of goat's milk a day and work not only to preserve the special character of the region's cheeses and to try to prevent the milk from going out to foreign industries, but also to improve the quality and price of this milk and the cheese produced from it.'

The following information, among others, which does not add any value to the link between the production and its environs, has been deleted from section (b) Natural environment:

'The area where the milk of the Murcian goat is produced and made into cheese is characterised by a very varied topography and landscape, etc.'

'The relief is complex, dominated by the high Baetic mountains of the north east. From a geological point of view, etc.'

'The area occupied by crops in 1996, etc.'

The statement that this breed of goats is milked only once a day has been deleted from section (c). Conditions for the breeding and feeding of the original specification. Some reproductive aspects which are irrelevant to this section 'genetic advances, male effect, etc.' are also deleted from this section.

*Specific regulations on the sliced, grated, packaged cheese, etc.*

To adapt to new market trends, the cheese may be sold in portions, sliced or grated, provided that it is packaged and its origin can be identified.

Portioned, sliced and grated cheese may be produced and subsequently packaged, in the same way as the whole cheeses, by companies outside the production area that have accepted and meet the established action protocol to ensure the traceability and origin of the final product. This amendment is made to comply with point 8 of Regulation (EC) No 1898/2006.

*Labelling*

The specification includes the logo for the protected denomination of origin 'Queso de Murcia al vino' for the proper identification of the product.

*Legislation*

National and regional 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<sup>(3)</sup>**

**'QUESO DE MURCIA AL VINO'**

**EC No: ES-PDO-0105-01061-12.11.2012**

**PGI ( ) PDO ( X )**

**1. Name**

'Queso de Murcia al Vino'

**2. Member State or Third Country**

Spain

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

**3.1. Type of product**

Class 1.3. Cheese

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

This is a fatty cheese, with a pressed body, which is washed and not cooked.

<sup>(3)</sup> Replaced by Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012.

After maturation, it has the following characteristics:

— Physical:

Shape: cylindrical with regular, smooth edges and slightly curved sides

Weight: from 300 g to 2,6 kg.

Maximum diameter: 190 mm.

Maximum height: 100 mm.

Diameter/Height ratio: 1,5 minimum-2,2 maximum.

— Chemical:

Fat: minimum 45 % of the dry matter.

Protein: minimum 32 % of the dry matter.

Dry Matter: minimum 55 %.

pH: minimum 5, when taken out of the brine.

— Organoleptic:

RIND:

— Consistency: firm.

— Colour: Maroon violet.

— Appearance: smooth rind (without imprints), fine and without cracks, straight or slightly curved sides.

BODY:

— Consistency: firm and elastic.

— Texture: uniform, creamy, unctuous and without any graininess.

— Appearance/Structure: the body may have no holes or sometimes have holes of mechanical origin.

— Colour: matt white with shades ranging from ivory to yellowish-brown in the most cured pieces.

— Aroma: average-to-low intensity. Lactic and animal (goat) notes. The aroma of red wine or wine cellar can be detected in the outer part of the rind.

— Taste: low-to-medium intensity, but persistent. Average acidity and salty base notes. It may have notes of fresh lactic aromas (goat's milk, cream/butter). The acidity diminishes with age, unlike the saltiness and flavour which grow stronger.

### 3.3. Raw materials (for processed products only)

The milk from which the protected cheeses are made must be the full natural product, obtained from Murcian goats, from livestock farms situated in the geographical area, which have the following characteristics:

— The bacterial load must be  $\leq 1\,500\,000$  plate count per ml.

- No pharmacologically active substances.
- The analytical characteristics of the milk must be:
  - Protein: 3,4 % minimum
  - Fat: 4,7 % minimum
  - Total dry extract: 13,4 % minimum
  - pH: 6,5 % minimum

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

The goats' feed is in keeping with traditional practices and comes directly from the pastures and/or the sub-products of the production area.

Murcian goats' feed is sourced from:

- Seasonal grazing on natural vegetation, predominantly scrubland, of scant nutritional value, but the particular characteristics of which influence the organoleptic properties of the cheese.
- Continuous use of sub-products, particularly cereal straw, vine branches, olive tree branches, almond shells, citrus pulp, beetroot pulp and waste from the canning industry, which is abundant in the Murcia Region.
- Supplement of high-nutritional value, based on seeds and alfalfa hay.

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

The different stages involved in producing the milk and making and maturing the Murcian wine cheese must take place in the defined geographical area.

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

'Queso de Murcia al vino' may be sold in portions, sliced or grated, provided that it is packaged and its origin may be identified.

Portioned, sliced and grated cheese may be produced and subsequently packaged, in the same way as the whole cheeses, by companies outside the production area that have accepted and meet the established action protocol to ensure the traceability and origin of the final product.

#### 3.7. *Specific rules concerning labelling*

Labels and secondary labels must bear the words: Protected designation of origin 'Queso de Murcia al vino' or PDO 'Queso de Murcia al vino'.

Furthermore, all the cheeses must bear a secondary label issued by the Regulatory Council's control body with the PDO logo, attached in such a way that the label cannot be reused.

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

The geographical area comprises all the municipalities of the province of Murcia, situated in the south-east of Spain.

#### 5. Link with the geographical area

##### 5.1. Specificity of the geographical area

###### (a) Historical

With regard to processing Murcian goats' milk into cheese, in the book 'La Cabra Murciana: su explotación, cuidados y mejora' published in 1922, A. Panés wrote that this cheese was produced in Jumilla and Yecla and eaten in the same towns and even exported to Alicante. This cheese was matured by coagulating the milk using kids' rennet macerated in wine and, once the mass had formed, the cheese was placed into small moulds and refined by salting the pieces and humidifying them with wine. This was done multiple times, giving the cheese an excellent taste, which was highly prized on the market.

The manual of cheese, cheese-makers and cheese lovers 'Manual de Quesos, Queseros y Quesómanos' (Canut, 1988) describes the tradition of making goats' cheese in all the goat-keepers' homes in the region of Murcia which was not only for domestic consumption but also sold in the local area.

###### (b) Natural

The region of Murcia is in the most arid part of Europe with its own, very different type of climate due to the scarce precipitation and high temperatures, which make water very scarce, and Mediterranean-style vegetation that is more scrubland in nature and not very grassy.

From the livestock farmer's point of view, there are lots of grasslands rich in esparto, *Labiatae* and *Cistaceae* that are typically used for extensive livestock farming.

###### (c) Conditions for breeding and feeding

Murcian goats are sexually active all year round, which makes milk production less seasonal.

The traditional practices for feeding goats, with the direct supply of seasonal pastures, sub-products and some traditional high-nutritional-value supplements from the production area, provide distinctive characteristics that influence some of the organoleptic aspects of the cheese.

##### 5.2. Specificity of the product

The first characteristic that gives Murcian cheese its specificity is the Murcian goats' milk, which is internationally renowned for its particularly high fat and protein content which, together with the method of production, gives the cheeses a high degree of typicality with regard to their organoleptic characteristics which distinguish them from other cheeses of similar appearance.

The second and no less important factor which makes this cheese so particular is the colour and aroma of its rind, resulting from the red wine bath. This ancient practice, which has been documented in this Region, gives the product a high degree of typicality as regards the natural violet colour of its rind which makes it completely different to other types of cheese produced in Spain.

##### 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 Region of Murcia has throughout its history been a geographical area characterised by a semi-arid climate conducive to raising a rustic and productive breed of goat such as the Murciano-Granadina. The scarcity of food resources favoured the development of a whole local culture of livestock farming and cheese-making in which the human element played a decisive role when it came to developing

strategies for harnessing resources (particularly poor pastureland and agricultural sub-products) and processing a perishable product such as milk into a processed product such as this cheese. There has been an ancestral cheese-making activity in this Region for centuries, using some processes and techniques that clearly distinguish Murcian wine cheese, such as washing the curd or ageing it in red wine baths. This activity, which has been documented, ensured the development and preservation of a set of human factors associated with the former herdsmen and cheese-makers, such as an understanding of the local systems for producing and processing goats' milk which enabled this activity and product to be preserved until now.

**Reference to the publication of the specification**

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

[http://www.carm.es/web/pagina?IDCONTENIDO=895&IDTIPO=11&RASTRO=c214\\$m1185,34701](http://www.carm.es/web/pagina?IDCONTENIDO=895&IDTIPO=11&RASTRO=c214$m1185,34701)

---

<sup>(4)</sup> See footnote 3.