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

(2014/C 28/11)

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]

'CHAROLAIS'

EC No: FR-PDO-0005-0838-15.11.2010

PGI ( ) PDO (X)

1. **Name**

'Charolais'

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 the product to which the name in (1) applies*

'Charolais' cheeses are made from raw, full-fat, lightly renneted goat's milk.

The cheese is obtained from a lactic curd and has a vertical cylindrical shape, slightly convex, with a cream-coloured, firm and smooth paste. It is covered mainly with *geotrichum* mould. Marks of blue *penicillium* in particular may appear during the ripening process.

Its weight at the end of the minimum ripening period (16 days after renneting) is between 250 and 310 grams, and its dimensions are as follows:

— diameter in the centre, between 60 and 70 mm;

— a height of 70 mm or more but not more than 85 mm.

'Charolais' cheese contains at least 45 grams of dry matter per 100 grams of cheese.

[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)*

Not applicable.

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

The feeding of the goats is based on a grazing system with fodder sourced exclusively from the geographical area.

The fodder consists of fresh grass (from grazing areas or provided in troughs) or hay. No fodder from monospecific pastures or annual crops may be used.

The forage area to be grazed only by the goat herd consists of a minimum 60 % of permanent and/or temporary pastures of more than 4 years old.

The minimum annual grazing and/or green feeding period is 150 consecutive or non-consecutive days, including change of fodder:

Grazing:

During a minimum grazing period of 120 days, the minimum share of fresh grass from grazing areas is one third of the daily forage consumption per goat, with additional hay not exceeding 1,2 kilograms of raw material.

Green feeding:

During a minimum green feeding period of 120 days, the minimum share of fresh grass from troughs is two thirds of the daily forage consumption per goat, with additional hay not exceeding 1 kilogram of raw material. The grass is consumed within 24 hours. All grass not consumed within 24 hours is removed from the troughs.

Complementary feed is composed of authorised raw materials in accordance with a positive list. The whey from the farm may be fed to the goats, but it is not included in the feed calculation. The annual quantity of complementary feed may not exceed one third of the annual quantity consumed per goat (including lucerne), calculated in kilograms of dry matter, and 600 grams per litre of milk produced per goat per year.

Only plants, by-products and supplementary feed derived from non-transgenic products are authorised in the goat feed. The planting of transgenic crops is prohibited in all areas of farms producing milk intended for processing into cheese with the protected designation of origin 'Charolais'. This prohibition extends to all plant species which may be included in animal feed and the cultivation of all species which may contaminate the latter.

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

The milk is produced and the cheese manufactured and ripened in the geographical area.

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

Not applicable.

3.7. *Specific rules concerning labelling*

In addition to the regulatory information requirements applicable to all cheeses, every 'Charolais' cheese is marketed with a label. This label has a personalised part showing the operator's name and address and a part common to all operators showing:

— the name 'Charolais' written in letters at least two thirds of the size of the largest characters appearing on the label;

— the European Union PDO logo.

— The labelling may also include the words 'Appellation d'origine protégée' (protected designation of origin).

However, in case of direct sales by the producer or any person under their direct responsibility, on farms or at markets, individual labelling is not mandatory; the corresponding information must simply appear on a sign.

The models to be used for labels and signs are produced by the group responsible for their distribution.

The name 'Charolais' followed by the words 'Appellation d'origine protégée' or 'AOP' must appear on invoices and commercial documents, as from the time of registration by the European Union.

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

The milk is produced and the cheese manufactured and ripened in the geographical area comprising the following municipalities:

Department of Allier (03):

The municipalities or part of the municipalities of the cantons of:

— Le Donjon: Avrilly, Chassenard, Le Bouchaud, Le Donjon, Lenax, Loddes, Luneau, Montaiguët-en-Forez, Neuilly-en-Donjon, Le Pin, Saint-Didier-en-Donjon, Saint-Léger-sur-Vouzance.

— Dompierre-sur-Besbre: Coulanges, Molinet, Monétay-sur-Loire.

— Jaligny-sur-Besbre: Liernolles.

Department of Loire (42):

The cantons of Belmont-de-la-Loire, Charlieu.

The municipalities or part of the municipalities of the cantons of:

— La Pacaudière: Changy, La Pacaudière, Sail-les-Bains, Urbise, Vivans.

— Perreux: Coutouvre, Montagny, Perreux.

Department of Rhône (69):

The canton of Monsols.

The municipalities or part of the municipalities of the cantons of:

— Beaujeu: Les Ardillats, Avenas, Saint-Didier-sur-Beaujeu, Vernay.

— Lamure-sur-Azergues: Chenelette, Claveisolles, Poule-les-Echarmeaux, Saint-Nizier-d'Azergues.

Department of Saône-et-Loire (71):

The cantons of Charolles, Chauffailles, Digoin, Gueugnon, Issy-l'Evêque, La Clayette, La Guiche, Le Creusot-Est, Marcigny, Matour, Montcenis, Montchanin, Palinges, Paray-le-Monial, Saint-Bonnet-de-Joux, Semur-en-Brionnais, Toulon-sur-Arroux.

The municipalities or part of the municipalities of the cantons of:

— Bourbon-Lancy: Bourbon-Lancy, Chalmoux, Gilly-sur-Loire, Maltat, Mont, Perrigny-sur-Loire, Saint-Aubin-sur-Loire.

— Buxy: Bissy-sur-Fley, Cersot, Chenôves, Culles-les-Roches, Fley, Germagny, Marcilly-lès-Buxy, Saint-Boil, Saint-Martin-d'Auxy, Saint-Martin-du-Tartre, Saint-Maurice-des-Champs, Saint-Privé, Saint-Vallerin, Saules, Savianges, Villeneuve-en-Montagne.

— Cluny: Bergesserin, Buffières, Chérizet, Curtil-sous-Buffières, Donzy-le-National, Saint-André-le-Désert, Sainte-Cécile, Saint-Vincent-des-Prés.

— Couches: Essertenne, Saint-Pierre-de-Varennes.

— Mesvres: La Boulaye, La Chapelle-sous-Uchon, Charbonnat, Dettey, Saint-Eugène, Saint-Nizier-sur-Arroux, La Tagnière, Uchon.

— Montceau-les-Mines: Montceau-les-Mines, Saint-Vallier.

— Mont-Saint-Vincent: Genouilly, Gourdon, Marigny, Mary, Mont-Saint-Vincent, Le Puley, Saint-Micaud, Saint-Romain-sous-Gourdon.

— Saint-Gengoux-Le-National: Sailly.

— Saint-Léger-sous-Beuvray: Etang-sur-Arroux, Saint-Didier-sur-Arroux, Thil-sur-Arroux.

— Tramayes: Clermain, Germolles-sur-Grosnes, Saint-Léger-sous-la-Bussière, Saint-Pierre-le-Vieux, Tramayes.

5. **Link with the geographical area**

5.1. *Specificity of the geographical area*

Surrounding the town of Charolles, the geographical area of 'Charolais' cheese is a region of hills which forms the transition between the Auvergne mountains to the south and the Morvan massif to the north. Its terrain is undulating, varying from 200 metres to around 900 metres.

The region has a cool oceanic climate characterised by annual rainfall of 750-900 mm throughout the year, and a moderate annual temperature variation. However, the climate is also influenced by the geography, the highest areas being subject to a mountain climate (cold winters).

The subsoil is mainly composed of granites and acidic rocks. Sedimentary soils, sometimes calcareous but more often clayey or sandy, occur locally on the eastern and western edges of the Charolles massif. Acid soils, often leached and deep, have formed on the mainly silicate rocks (granites, clays, sands).

The countryside is mainly characterised by hedgerows. This area is special in that it has not been affected by the trend towards replacing grasslands with large fields of crops; as a result almost 90 % of the fields in the geographical area are used for foraging, as opposed to less than 50 % in the rest of France. The pastures are characterised by a great variety of flora, with many acidophilous species; the eastern part is classified as a Natura 2000 site (Site of Community Interest 'Bocage, forêts et milieux humides du bassin de la Grosne et du Clunysois'). This floral diversity is also encouraged in the temporary pastures by the ban on single crop pastures and the obligation for them to be at least 4 years old; this allows various trample-resistant, grassland and pasture species to colonise the pastures.

At the end of the 19th century goatkeeping was common in the Saône-et-Loire region (40 000 goats in 1892) and the production of goat's milk cheeses was highly developed. These cheeses were 'very popular among the Charolles people' (*La fortune agricole du Charolais* — Raymond Boivin — 1924).

The production of 'Charolais' cheese has traditionally been carried out as a subsidiary activity to cattle farming, to which it is strongly linked. The quality of the cheese is a source of pride to the women who produce it. The lactic technology was the most appropriate way of using the milk, allowing more cheese to be produced. The dairy was next to the house so that in particular rennet could be injected into the cheese at intervals; this was necessary in order to produce this large-sized cheese.

This cheese is sought after because of its size, texture and keeping qualities. In the 1950s, for example, these cheeses were very popular with the local miners who worked on the land during the season. They bought the cheeses fresh and kept them in special containers called 'tsézires' or 'chazères'; these are still used by lovers of 'Charolais' cheese.

During the 1960s goat's milk cheese production increased due to the creation of specialised goat-keepers who did not have a herd of suckling or milk cattle.

The commercialisation of 'Charolais' cheese developed thanks to maturers or collectors, who bought the cheeses from the farmers to sell on to the dairies, butchers and grocers in the nearby cities of Lyon and Roanne. Finally, in the 1970s, 'Charolais' cheese, which had until then been limited to the Burgundy region and the northern Rhône-Alpes region, became more widely known as it was now sold in the major Parisian markets. It therefore progressed from a local cheese sold in the countryside to one sold in urban shops.

Today's production methods are much like those used in the past. Indeed, the enzymes used to make 'Charolais' cheese are special in that they are mostly those used to make the previous batch of 'Charolais' cheese. Moreover, the milk for cheese-making is kept raw and whole without any physical treatment. The curd is moulded using a ladle into Charolais containers which are tall and have a large diameter. The cheeses are salted on all sides and turned by hand. Ripening takes place in a cool and humid location to encourage the growth of *geotrichum* and sometimes of *penicillium*.

5.2. *Specificity of the product*

The 'Charolais' cheese is characterised by its complex aromas, the density of its cream-coloured paste, and its soft, fine and smooth texture. Its flavour is strong, with hints of vegetation (grass, hay, fresh straw, mushrooms, etc.), dry fruit (hazelnuts) and butter which become clear during the minimum of 16 days in which 'Charolais' cheese is made and matured.

During ripening, which takes place in a cool and humid location, its rind, which at the beginning is a beige-ivory colour, above all because of *geotrichum* mould, may become blue mainly due to the development of *penicillium* mould. It is large for a goat's milk cheese, and its shape is that of a vertical cylinder, slightly convex, like a small barrel.

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)*

Due to its cool oceanic climate without dry summers, its moderate altitude and its deep soils on silicate subsoils, the geographical area favours the growth of high-quality grazing land with a rich flora. Its regular rainfall and fertile soils mean that pasture grass grows uniformly from spring until autumn. Haymaking and, in some sectors, second harvesting, lead to abundant grazing. The Charolles countryside is thus characterised by a network of parcels with hedgerows and mainly permanent pastures.

These pastures make up the vast majority of the grazing land producing the fodder eaten, either fresh or dried, by the goats. These characteristics make the geographical area a farming region, where goats graze alongside the cattle herd being fattened. The 'Charolais' is also the product of local farming history, its farm structure coming about as a result of the opposition between large cattle farms (mostly owned by regional industrialists) and a great number of small farms, whose owners have become specialised in goatkeeping in order to use the small area available.

The traditional, artisan production techniques have continued because of the producers' wealth of experience in making the best use of both the natural conditions and the raw material. In this process the inoculation of the cheese with lactic bacteria is best carried out using whey from a previous batch. The large amount of microbial flora which thus develops naturally on the surface of the cheeses is spread evenly thanks to the various tasks done by hand during ripening. These tasks also help create the typical barrel shape of the 'Charolais' cheese.

The Charolais cheese's large size allows it to be kept for a long period under good conditions. The ripening period, which is long for a goat's milk cheese, means that a slightly wrinkled rind can develop; this protects the large cheese from drying out and gives it a fine, soft texture and strong taste. During ripening, which takes place in a cool and humid location, its rind, which at the beginning is a beige-ivory colour, above all because of *geotrichum* mould, may become blue due to patches of *penicillium* mould.

The fact that the goats are fed on grass and fodder from pastures with a wide diversity of plant species, situated within the geographical area, contributes to the rich aromas and the colour of 'Charolais' cheese.

Reference to publication of the specification

https://www.inao.gouv.fr/fichier/CDCCharolais.pdf