



C/2025/1722

20.3.2025

Publication of an approved standard amendment to a product specification of a protected designation of origin or protected geographical indication in the sector of agricultural products and foodstuffs, as referred to in Article 6b(2) and (3) of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 664/2014

(C/2025/1722)

This communication is published in accordance with Article 6b(5) of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 664/2014 ⁽¹⁾.

COMMUNICATING THE APPROVAL OF A STANDARD AMENDMENT TO THE PRODUCT SPECIFICATION OF A PROTECTED DESIGNATION OF ORIGIN OR PROTECTED GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION ORIGINATING IN A MEMBER STATE

‘Oliva Ascolana del Piceno’

EU No: PDO-IT-0331-AM01 – 27 December 2024

PDO (X) PGI ()

1. Name of product

‘Oliva Ascolana del Piceno’

2. Member State to which the geographical area belongs

Italy

3. Member State authority communicating the standard amendment

Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry – Promotion of Agri Food Quality (PQA) 1

4. Description of the approved amendment(s)

Explanation of why the amendment(s) fall under the definition of a standard amendment as provided for in Article 24(4) of Regulation (EU) 2024/1143:

The amendments to the product specification and the single document are standard amendments under Article 53 of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 as amended by Regulation (EU) 2021/2117 for the following reasons:

- (a) they do not include a change in the name of the protected designation of origin or protected geographical indication, or in the use of that name;
- (b) they do not risk voiding the link referred to in Article 5(1), point (b), for protected designations of origin, or the link referred to in Article 5(2), point (b), for protected geographical indications;
- (c) they do not concern a traditional speciality guaranteed; and
- (d) they do not entail further restrictions on the marketing of the product.

1. Background

At the time of the amendment, there was no single document available, only a summary sheet drawn up for information purposes. The information in the summary sheet has been used where necessary when drawing up the single document.

The amendment affects the single document.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 179, 19.6.2014, p. 17.

2. Removal of the reference to Regulation (EEC) No 2081/92

The reference to Regulation (EEC) No 2081/92 in Article 1 of the product specification has been removed.

The amendment does not affect the single document.

3. Inclusion of requirements for product intended exclusively for processing

The following requirement has been added to Article 2 of the product specification and point 3.2 of the single document:

— Product intended for processing:

Without prejudice to the other characteristics set out in the product specification, the following may also be used for product intended for processing:

- whole olives in brine with only minor visual defects that do not affect the organoleptic characteristics;
- olives in brine that have undergone mechanical de-stoning by slitting and are no longer suitable for stuffing due to breakage.

These olives may be indicated as PDO 'Oliva Ascolana del Piceno' only if used for processing and may not be marketed to the final consumer in their original form.

The amendment will make it possible to use olives with minor defects that do not affect their organoleptic characteristics and olives damaged during de-stoning exclusively for processing.

These olives could be used, for example, as an ingredient in other traditional products of the region, such as the meat-free sauce eaten on Catholic fast days, the 'Ascolana-style' tomato sauce made with tuna and de-stoned olives of the 'ascolana tenera' variety in brine.

Previously, these olives could not be certified as PDO, which was a serious hindrance to the development and revival of the designation.

The amendment is a response to requests from producers to increase certified production volumes, without, however, changing the characteristics of the product intended for the final consumer.

The amendment affects the single document.

4. Establishment of the new Fermo province

Article 3 of the product specification and point 4 of the single document have been amended to take account of the establishment of Fermo province in 2009. This is a purely administrative change and does not affect the production area. In Article 3, the municipalities already included in the production area have been allocated to the new province and the province is referenced in point 4 of the single document.

The amendment affects the single document.

5. Removal of pH level from soil characteristics

The following text has been removed from Article 4 of the product specification: ', with averagely sub-alkaline pH levels'.

The reference to the pH level of the soil has been removed as it has little influence on the final product and the word 'averagely' is rather generic.

The amendment does not affect the single document.

6. Removal of altitude limit

The following text has been removed from Article 4 of the product specification: '- at an altitude in the production areas of between 20 m and 500 m above sea level'

Climate change has led to the removal of the altitude limit, although the perimeter of the production area remains unchanged.

The amendment does not affect the single document.

7. Removal of plant spacing requirement

The following text has been removed from Article 4 of the product specification: '(plant spacing: 6 × 6);'

The removal of the plant spacing requirement (6 × 6 m) is intended to avoid situations in which this rigid measure prevents olive groves in specific or irregular circumstances from achieving compliance with the product specification even though they comply with the maximum density of 300 plants/ha, which remains unchanged.

The amendment does not affect the single document.

8. Change to the deadline for stopping irrigation before harvesting

In Article 4 of the product specification, the deadline for stopping irrigation before harvesting has been reduced from 20 days to 10 days.

This change is essential for adapting to climate change, which has resulted in a significant reduction in natural water inputs (rainfall) in recent years. This has a particular impact during the phenological phase of drupe maturation, with a negative effect on the development of the olive flesh.

The amendment does not affect the single document.

9. Change to the harvest start date

In Article 4 of the product specification, the harvest start date has been brought forward from 10 September to 1 September, and the words 'each year' have been added.

This change is a consequence of the ongoing change in the climate that is causing fruit to ripen earlier. Bringing the start of the harvest period forward to 1 September each year also reduces the amount of time that the drupe is exposed to pathogen attacks, which brings benefits in terms of environmental sustainability as a result of fewer treatments.

The amendment does not affect the single document.

10. Removal of the minimum sodium hydroxide (NaOH) concentration

The minimum sodium hydroxide (NaOH) concentration has been removed from Article 6 of the product specification.

The phrase in question has thus been amended from:

'removal of bitterness by soaking the olives in a sodium hydroxide solution with a concentration of between 1,5 % and 3 %,'

to

'removal of bitterness by soaking the olives in a sodium hydroxide solution with a concentration of up to 3 %,'

It was decided to leave only the maximum sodium hydroxide (NaOH) concentration, without specifying a minimum value. This allows producers to use even lower concentrations, based on their experience, in order to protect the end product. Moreover, the proposal to remove the minimum salt value does not imply the need to use additives, because pasteurisation is explicitly permitted (Article 8).

The amendment does not affect the single document.

The removal of the lower limit allows producers to use lower concentrations, based on their experience, in order to protect the end product.

The amendment does not affect the single document.

11. Changes to the requirements for washes to reduce residual alkali

In Article 6 of the product specification, point 3 of the processing stages has been changed from:

‘3. Fermentation and preservation in brine, with a sodium chloride (NaCl) concentration of between 8 % and 10 %.

Bitterness may be removed from olives marketed as “al naturale” [natural] by placing them directly in brine with a sodium chloride concentration of between 8 % and 10 %.

The duration of the process, linked to the variety’s degree of ripeness, requires fermentation and storage lasting at least 10 months.’

to

‘3. The fermentation process must be started by adding an initial brine with a maximum sodium chloride concentration of 10 %.

Bitterness may be removed from olives marketed as “al naturale” [natural] by placing them directly in brine with an initial sodium chloride concentration of up to 10 % and gradually adding to it over the course of fermentation until a maximum sodium chloride concentration of 8 % is reached during the preservation stage.

The addition of a lactic acid bacteria starter is allowed.

The duration of the process is linked to the variety’s degree of ripeness and requires fermentation and storage lasting at least 3 (three) months.’

The proposed changes – concerning the production method involving a lactic acid bacteria starter, the minimum sodium chloride concentration and the removal of the minimum fermentation and storage time – are based on the experience acquired by producers under the PDO control system. Under the guidance of the protection association’s consultants, they have been experimenting with these innovative practices, with which it is possible to obtain a product that complies with the characteristics laid down in the product specification, for a number of years now.

See the study by Prof. Leonardo Seghetti et al. published in 2005 in the Journal of the Science of Food and Agriculture.

The amendment does not affect the single document.

12. Change to the description of additional ingredients

In Article 6 of the product specification, the description of additional ingredients has been changed from:

‘Additional ingredients: eggs (2–4, as necessary, per kg of stuffing);’

to

‘Additional ingredients: eggs, fresh or pasteurised. Quantity:

— for fresh eggs: 2–4, as necessary, per kg of stuffing;

— for pasteurised eggs: 1 egg = 50 g of pasteurised egg.’

The equivalence of fresh eggs to pasteurised eggs is made explicit by indicating the quantity of pasteurised egg product in grams that is equivalent to one egg. The use of pasteurised eggs ensures greater food safety and facilitates the work process.

The amendment does not affect the single document.

13. Additional requirements for olives that can be used to make stuffed olives

In Article 6 of the product specification, the following requirements have been added to the description of the processing method for making stuffed olives (point (b)):

‘Whole olives or whole de-stoned olives slit lengthways, in brine or in natural juices, may be used.

Olives in brine may be de-stoned by hand or by mechanical means.

De-stoned olives may be stuffed by hand or by mechanical means.’

These processing methods have been in use for many years, as they are already permitted under the product specification; however, they have now been included explicitly, for the sake of clarity and to ensure consistency with the structure of the product specification. Producers who do not use mechanical means for de-stoning and stuffing may indicate on the label that the product is made by hand.

The amendment does not affect the single document.

14. Additional requirement for the characteristics on consumption

In Article 7 of the product specification and point 3.2 of the single document, the words ‘intended for the final consumer’ have been added and the words ‘up until the shown expiry date’ have been removed.

This change is intended to distinguish these olives from those used for processing and to remove a requirement that is already mandatory under the applicable legislation.

The amendment affects the single document.

15. Change to the descriptive parameters for stuffed olives

In Article 7 of the product specification and point 3.2 of the single document, the following parameters have been changed:

From:

‘Visual: slightly elongated, irregular shape (elliptical); visible patches of green;’

to

‘Visual: rounded, slightly elongated shape;’

This description corresponds more closely to modern production processes; olives stuffed by mechanical means tend to have a more rounded/elongated shape and this addition is intended to ensure that olives produced in this manner can also obtain PDO certification.

From:

‘Taste: the “ascolana tenera” variety of olive gives the product its crunchy and delicate taste with a medium to intensely bitter aftertaste.’

to

‘Taste: the product is crunchy and delicate in flavour with an aftertaste ranging from mildly to intensely bitter.’

The reference to the variety has been removed because it is redundant and because the variety is already indicated in other parts of the product specification. The bitter aftertaste is described more accurately as ‘ranging from mildly to intensely bitter’, as modern methods for removing bitterness can significantly reduce the intensity of the bitterness to a level that is more acceptable to consumers.

From:

‘Physical characteristics

1 kg of stuffed olives must comprise a minimum of 65 and a maximum of 95 units.’

to

‘1 kg of stuffed olives must comprise a minimum of 60 and a maximum of 95 units.’

The minimum number of stuffed olives per kilogram of product has been lowered to 60. This figure is based on the experience of producers that there is a risk of failing to meet the requirement if larger (and therefore superior) olives are selected for use.

The amendment affects the single document.

16. Addition of the possibility of using lactic acid

The following phrase has been added to the first paragraph of Article 8 of the product specification:

‘and lactic acid, with the aim of maintaining the balance of acidity levels to ensure food safety.’

In the experience of producers, adding lactic acid helps to stabilise acidity and to improve food safety.

The amendment does not affect the single document.

17. Addition of methods for preserving olives in brine

The following phrase has been added to Article 8 of the product specification on the preservation of olives in brine:

‘including, optionally, pasteurisation, sterilisation and modified atmosphere.’

The removal of the minimum salt content as a result of the amendments above does not imply the need to use additives because certain product preservation processes have been permitted on an optional basis. These processes extend the product’s shelf life and marketing potential without affecting the characteristics of the product.

The word ‘or’ has been added in the phrase ‘Stuffed olives or [olives] in brine’, and the reference to preservation methods for stuffed olives has been made clearer in an additional paragraph.

The amendment does not affect the single document.

18. Changes to labelling requirements

The following text has been removed from Article 10 of the product specification and point 3.6 of the single document:

‘and at least twice the size of the name of the producer, company etc., so that it can be easily distinguished.’

The requirement that the name of the PDO should be ‘at least twice the size’ has been removed, as it was difficult to apply on small labels while at the same time complying with the size requirements for other indications.

The following sentence has been added:

‘For the indication “oliva ripiena” [stuffed olives], optionally, the following may be added on the label: “denocciolata a mano” [de-stoned by hand] or “denocciolata con mezzi meccanici” [de-stoned using mechanical means], “farcita a mano” [stuffed by hand] or “farcita con mezzi meccanici” [stuffed using mechanical means].’

Specifying the wording that can be used to indicate the manner in which the product was processed ensures greater transparency for consumers.

The amendment affects the single document.

19. **Addition of packaging requirements for product intended for processing**

The following text has been added to Article 10 of the product specification and point 3.5 of the single document:

‘Olives intended for processing may be delivered in packaging or containers complying with the legislation in force. These must be identified by labels bearing the wording “Oliva Ascolana del Piceno DOP destinata alla trasformazione” [Oliva Ascolana del Piceno PDO for processing], for the purposes of product traceability and to ensure correct identification.’

This addition aims to ensure the identification and traceability of product intended for processing and not for the final consumer.

The amendment affects the single document.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

‘Oliva Ascolana del Piceno’

EU No: PDO-IT-0331-AM01 – 27 December 2024

PDO (X) PGI ()

1. **Name(s) (of PDO or PGI)**

‘Oliva Ascolana del Piceno’

2. **Member State or Third Country**

Italy

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

3.1. *Combined Nomenclature code*

- 07 - EDIBLE VEGETABLES AND CERTAIN ROOTS AND TUBERS
- 08 - EDIBLE FRUIT AND NUTS; PEEL OF CITRUS FRUIT OR MELONS
- 10 - CEREALS
- 11 - PRODUCTS OF THE MILLING INDUSTRY; MALT; STARCHES; INULIN; WHEAT GLUTEN
- 20 - PREPARATIONS OF VEGETABLES, FRUIT, NUTS OR OTHER PARTS OF PLANTS

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

The finished product intended for the final consumer must have the following characteristics:

(a) Olives in brine

Organoleptic characteristics

Visual: uniform colour ranging from green to pale yellow;

Aroma: characteristic fermented aroma;

Taste: slightly tart; mildly bitter aftertaste; fragrant and crunchy.

Microbiological characteristics

Consonant with the applicable rules on food safety.

Physical characteristics

Thick, smooth and compact flesh; not shrivelled or grainy.

(b) Stuffed olives

Organoleptic characteristics

Visual: rounded, slightly elongated shape; visible patches of green; when broken, the bread coating remains stuck to the olive and the stuffing appears compact;

Aroma: medium intensity aroma with fruity notes of green olive and spices;

Taste: the product is crunchy and delicate in flavour with an aftertaste ranging from mildly to intensely bitter.

Microbiological characteristics

Consonant with the applicable rules on food safety.

Physical characteristics

1 kg of stuffed olives must comprise a minimum of 60 and a maximum of 95 units.

— Product intended for processing:

Without prejudice to the other characteristics specified, the following may also be used for product intended for processing:

- whole olives in brine with only minor visual defects that do not affect the organoleptic characteristics;
- olives in brine that have undergone mechanical de-stoning by slitting and are no longer suitable for stuffing due to breakage.

These olives may be indicated as PDO 'Oliva Ascolana del Piceno' only if used for processing and may not be marketed to the final consumer in their original form.

3.3. *Feed (for products of animal origin only) and raw materials (for processed products only)*

The protected designation of origin 'Oliva Ascolana del Piceno' denotes the 'ascolana tenera' variety of olive, produced in the defined area, either in brine or stuffed.

In the stuffing:

Fresh meat: mature beef originating in the defined area, mature pork originating in the defined area. The addition of chicken and/or turkey meat originating in the defined area is permitted.

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

Growing, processing and packaging must all be carried out within the identified production area in order to guarantee traceability and control.

3.5. *Specific rules concerning slicing, grating, packaging, etc. of the product the registered name refers to*

Products bearing the name 'Oliva Ascolana del Piceno' presented either in brine or stuffed must be packaged in the production area in containers or wrappers that comply with the applicable rules on food safety.

Packaging must be carried out within the identified production area in order to guarantee traceability and control.

3.6. *Specific rules concerning labelling of the product the registered name refers to*

The name of the protected designation of origin 'Oliva Ascolana del Piceno' must appear on the label in clear, indelible script.

In addition, the label must include the words 'in salamoia' [in brine] or 'olive ripiene' [stuffed olives], according to the type of product in question.

For the indication 'oliva ripiena' [stuffed olives], optionally, the following may be added on the label: 'denocciolata a mano' [de-stoned by hand] or 'denocciolata con mezzi meccanici' [de-stoned using mechanical means], 'farcita a mano' [stuffed by hand] or 'farcita con mezzi meccanici' [stuffed using mechanical means].

Olives intended for processing may be delivered in packaging or containers complying with the legislation in force. These must be identified by labels bearing the wording 'Oliva Ascolana del Piceno DOP destinata alla trasformazione' [Oliva Ascolana del Piceno PDO for processing], for the purposes of product traceability and to ensure correct identification.

The designation 'Oliva Ascolana del Piceno' is identified by the following logo:



It is forbidden to add any indication to the designation in Article 1 that is not specifically set out in this product specification. This includes adjectives such as excellent, fine, superior, selected, genuine, traditional etc.

4. Concise definition of the geographical area

The PDO production area covers certain municipalities in the provinces of Ascoli Piceno, Fermo and Teramo, as indicated in the product specification, located in the Marche and Abruzzo regions. The production area is defined by the relevant map.

5. Link with the geographical area

The Piceno area is an ancient region stretching from the province of Ancona to Atri in Abruzzo. At present, the area lies within two different administrative regions, Marche and Abruzzo, and more specifically within certain municipalities in the Ascoli Piceno, Fermo and Teramo provinces. The historical centre and birthplace of the tradition and cultivation lies in the city of Ascoli Piceno and its surroundings.

The production area is particularly mountainous, with the Apennines to the west, specifically the Sibillini mountain range, which slopes eastward down to the Adriatic coast. The climate is affected by the morphology of the area and the length of the coastline, where the warm and humid Sirocco winds blow in. Precipitation gradually increases from the coast to the inland hilly areas where recorded rainfall levels fluctuate due to the concentration of rainfall during the autumn and towards the end of winter/beginning of spring. The sea affects the climate of the whole area devoted to ascolana table olives, which grow best with an average annual rainfall of no less than 900 mm and in calcium-rich soil. The combination of production factors in the small and specific area defined above gives rise to the optimal conditions needed to give the product its characteristic features of soft flesh and the typical scents and aromas that make this method of production unique in its field. The origin of this crop can be traced back to the municipality of Ascoli Piceno and its surroundings, where ascolana olive growing is still a matter of cultural – as well as economic – importance. This variety typically produces robust, large trees with dense foliage and an

ellipsoidal drupe weighing on average 8 grams, 1/9th of which is the stone, weighing less than 1 gram. The distinctive qualities of the ascolana olive have been recognised and enjoyed by numerous historical figures, including Pope Sixtus V (who brought it to the tables of the Vatican), Rossini, Garibaldi and Puccini. Some bibliographical studies trace the origins of the tradition of stuffing and frying table olives back to the 19th century according to methods and recipes that are still in use today. Popular tradition holds that the practice of stuffing and frying olives was born of the need to use up the various types of meat left over at the banquets and lunch spreads of prosperous families. The original recipe for the stuffing can be traced back to the time of the unification of the Kingdom of Italy (1859-61). The Oliva Ascolana del Piceno is a product underpinned by quality and a natural reputation due to its long history and deeply-rooted tradition.

Reference to publication of the product specification

<https://www.politicheagricole.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeAttachment.php/L/IT/D/1%252Fd%252F7%252FD.e59d369ae7d2247560ef/P/BLOB%3AID%3D3343/E/pdf?mode=download>
