



C/2026/2612

7.5.2026

**Publication of an application for registration of a geographical indication pursuant to Article 15(4) of
Regulation (EU) 2024/1143 of the European Parliament and of the Council**

(C/2026/2612)

Within three months from the date of this publication, the authorities of a Member State or of a third country, or a natural or legal person having a legitimate interest and established or resident in a third country, may lodge, in accordance with Article 17 of Regulation (EU) 2024/1143 of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽¹⁾ an opposition with the Commission.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

Designations of origin and geographical indications of agricultural products

‘Vlaams roodbruin bier / Flanders Red Ale’

EU No: PGI-BE-03417 – 14.4.2025

1. Name(s)

‘Vlaams roodbruin bier / Flanders Red Ale’

2. Geographical indication type

PDO ☐ PGI ☒

3. Country to which the defined geographical area belongs

Belgium

4. Description of the agricultural product

4.1. Classification of the agricultural product in accordance with the Combined Nomenclature heading and code, as referred to in Article 6(1) of Regulation (EU) 2024/1143

22 – BEVERAGES, SPIRITS AND VINEGAR

2203 – Beer made from malt

4.2. Description of the agricultural product to which the registered name applies

‘Vlaams roodbruin bier / Flanders Red Ale’ is a mixed fermentation beer matured entirely or partly in upright oak vats traditionally known as ‘foeders’. ‘Vlaams roodbruin bier / Flanders Red Ale’ has a minimum alcohol content of 3 % alc. vol.

‘Vlaams roodbruin bier / Flanders Red Ale’ is brewed with barley malt, yeast, raw and other malted grains or fermentable sugars, local brewing water, hops, herbs, red fruit and natural sugars. The use of herbs and red fruit is optional and left to the brewers’ discretion depending on the desired flavour profile and the notes they wish to add.

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EU) 2024/1143 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 April 2024 on geographical indications for wine, spirit drinks and agricultural products, as well as traditional specialties guaranteed and optional quality terms for agricultural products, amending Regulations (EU) No 1308/2013, (EU) 2019/787 and (EU) 2019/1753 and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 (OJ L, 2024/1143, 23.4.2024, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1143/oj>).

The brewing and first fermentation processes are the same as those of top-fermented beers. ‘Vlaams roodbruin bier / Flanders Red Ale’ is characterised by mixed fermentation through partial or full maturation from the base beer after the first fermentation in the vats. During the mixed fermentation process, different micro-organisms, including *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*, *Lactobacillus spec.* and *Brettanomyces spec.*, work in symbiosis to ensure the fermentation and/or the maturation of the beer and determine its taste.

This maturation method is unique in Belgian brewery culture and gives the beer its typical mildly acidic taste.

‘Vlaams roodbruin bier / Flanders Red Ale’ benefits from partial or full maturation in wood, which means it keeps better and for longer. The fruity, matured and slightly acidic beer may be blended at the end of the maturation process with young fermented beer or young matured beer. Blended beer must have matured in vats for an average of 4.5 months. The purpose of blending old matured beer with young fermented beer, or sometimes only with young matured beer, is to ensure that the resulting beer attains a pH level comparable to that of wine. Blending old and fruity matured beer adds flavour to young fermented beer or young matured beer. As hoppy bitterness does not work well in lightly acidic beers, hops are used only to a limited extent.

The kilned or lightly roasted barley malts used give ‘Vlaams roodbruin bier / Flanders Red Ale’ a red-brown colour, while the mixed fermentation gives it a unique flavour. The beer is often both sweet and sour, with a complex aroma.

Organoleptic properties

Aroma:

complex malic acidic fruitiness; red fruit; vinous; caramel to slightly burnt notes; hints of oak.

Taste:

mildly to sharply sour taste; offset by the sweetness required to balance the flavour of the beer; vinous; little to no hoppy bitterness; light dryness to aid drinkability.

Mouthfeel:

only slightly astringent to slightly drying; mildly to sharply sour; limited CO₂ tingle.

After-taste: refreshing; highly thirst-quenching; medium to long after-taste.

Quality parameters

Original density	> 7 °PL
Colour	> 50 EBC < 80 EBC
Alcohol	≥ 3 % vol.
Bitterness	< 15 EBU
CO ₂ content	> 4,0 g/l < 7,0 g/l
Acidity	total acidity: > 40 milli-equivalent NaOH/l volatile acids: > 10 milli-equivalent NaOH/l
esters:	> 50 ppm ethyl acetate
Black malt	At least 70 % of the malt used has a colour grading of at least 7-8 EBC and at most 160 EBC.
Maturation of beer	entirely or partly in upright oak vats known as ‘foeders’ with a net holding capacity of between 50 hectolitres and 700 hectolitres, the most commonly used vats holding between 100 and 700 hectolitres.

Blending	In the case of blending, i.e. the mixing of matured beer with young beer, at most 75 % of the end product may be lagered young beer;
	— the blend must comply with the following requirements:
	X = volume of beer matured in a wooden vat; $X \geq 25$ % of the blend
	Y = volume of young lagered beer in the blend; $Y \leq 75$ % of the blend
	m = number of months for which the beer matures in a wooden vat
	<i>Basic formula:</i>
	$(m * X)/(X+Y) \geq 4,5$
	If a blend of vats is being used, the formula is as follows:
	$(m1 * X1 + m2 * X2 + m3 * X3 + \dots + mz * Xz)/(X1 + X2 + X3 + \dots + Xz + Y) \geq 4,5$
	<i>Note:</i> If wooden vats with a capacity of less than 100 hl are used, the average maturation time of the beer is reduced for those vats to at least four months.

4.3. *Derogations on sourcing of feed (for products of animal origin designated by a Protected Designation of Origin only) and restrictions on sourcing of raw materials (for processed products designated by a Protected Geographical Indication only)*

The following raw materials are permitted:

- mineral-rich brewing water from the brewer's own spring or well, or conditioned tap water;
- barley malt accounts for at least 60 % of the total starch and sugar-containing raw materials in the brewing area;
- unprocessed grains (such as wheat, spelt, rye, maize or others), other malted grains or fermentable sugars up to a maximum of 40 % of the total raw materials in the brewing area;
- hop cones, possibly in processed form (such as hop extracts, hop pellets or hop derivatives);
- herbs such as: liquorice, gale, sage, rosemary, coriander, yarrow, juniper, cinnamon, anise, saffron, bay, orange, lemon peel and others allowed by law;
- red fruit: whole fruits, juice or fruit concentrates of cherry, raspberry, blackberry, blueberry, redcurrant, strawberry, cranberry, blackcurrant or others;
- yeast culture consisting of top-fermenting yeasts possibly combined with lactic acid bacteria;
- sweeteners: natural sugars

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

The entire brewing process, the maturation in vats and the blending are carried out within the defined geographical area.

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

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

It is permitted to include the name of the specific blend on the label alongside the registered name

5. Concise definition of the geographical area

The production area of 'Vlaams roodbruin bier / Flanders Red Ale' is the Belgian province of West Flanders, more specifically the administrative districts of Roeselare, Tielt and Kortrijk, augmented by the municipalities of Kortemark and Ichtegem.

6. Link with the geographical area

The link between 'Vlaams roodbruin bier / Flanders Red Ale' and the defined geographical area rests largely on a very long brewery tradition and the know-how of the local brewers. Its reputation is inextricably linked to the specific qualities of the product.

Tradition

The oldest known description of red ale from the geographical area can be found in a book by Georges Lacambre dating from 1851 (Lacambre G., *Traité complet de la fabrication de bières et de la distillation des grains, pommes de terre, vins, betteraves, mélasses, etc.*, Brussels, 1851). However, the tradition of this beer stretches much further back in time, to the Middle Ages (Verdonck E., De Raedemaeker L., *Het Belgisch Bierboek*, 2016, Lannoo, p. 342).

Until the end of the 19th century most beers brewed in Belgium were spontaneously fermented (in Brussels and the Pajottenland), mixed-fermented (in East and West Flanders, west of the River Scheldt) and, above all, top-fermented. Certain regions preserved their old traditions. Local brewers continued to brew their local speciality as well as the fashionable new beers.

Unlike the areas under the sphere of influence of the Holy Roman Empire, in the county of Flanders a mixture known as 'gruut' was used to give beer flavour. Gruut is a mixture of different herbs and spices, at first without hops and later with a limited quantity of hops to ensure the stability and adhesion of the foam. This is also the origin of the modern 'Vlaams roodbruin bier / Flanders Red Ale' west of the River Scheldt.

Brewers of 'Vlaams roodbruin bier / Flanders Red Ale' are, along with lambic brewers, the only ones still to mature their beers in wooden vats. In the province of West Flanders, this unique red-brown mixed fermentation beer, matured in upright oat vats, has survived.

Local expertise

The fact that the beer has been able to survive in a very small area is due to the expertise of the local brewers. The brewing and fermentation processes are the same as those of top-fermented beers: they are followed by a process of maturation or vinification characterised by deliberate acidification with a long phase of complete or partial maturation in wooden barrels lasting from at least four and a half months to over two years. The beer is matured and acidified under the watchful eye of the cellar master in upright oak vats traditionally known as 'foeders': the pride of the brewers of 'Vlaams roodbruin bier / Flanders Red Ale'.

The duration of the maturation process is determined in part by the size and shape of the vats. The ratio of the surface area of the inner wall to the volume of the vat is very important in this regard. The maturation process can take over two years, depending on the size of the barrel and the temperature of the cellar in which the beer is matured. The cellar master regularly checks the vats. Each vat matures at its own rate and develops its own flavour. The cellar master monitors the maturation process and selects the most mature vats.

The secret of the maturation lies in the oak wood, which lets in just enough air to give any anaerobic micro-organisms present on the inner wall of the vat exactly the right quantity of oxygen to convert the organic acids into fruity esters. When wine is vinified in wooden barrels, the tannin imparts a reducing power to compensate for oxygen ingress. The lightly roasted coloured barley malts used in beers of the 'Vlaams roodbruin bier / Flanders Red Ale' variety have the same effect. This process is essential for the production of authentic 'Vlaams roodbruin bier / Flanders Red Ale'.

Once matured, the beer from various oak vats is blended, lagered young beer sometimes being added. The brewers have mastered the art of blending and produce a uniform, high-quality end product.

National and international reputation

To begin with, the thirst-quenching nature, good drinkability and relatively long shelf life of this beer made it popular with local farmers and allowed it to be exported to the burgeoning industrial areas nearby in French Flanders (and parts of the historical county of Flanders) and Hainaut.

Although it continued to be produced only in a small area, 'Vlaams roodbruin bier / Flanders Red Ale' nevertheless succeeded in conquering the Belgian beer market. Although precise historical distribution data is limited, a number of sources indicate that 'Vlaams roodbruin bier / Flanders Red Ale' has been widely available in bars and beer shops since the 1950s, in particular in West Flanders. Nowadays, the beer is widely available in Flanders and beyond, underlining its continued popularity and reputation as a traditional regional product.

In 2005, 'Vlaams roodbruin bier / Flanders Red Ale' was recognised by the Flemish Agricultural Marketing Board (VLAM) as an authentic traditional regional product. The rich and complex flavour profiles of this beer remain a source of inspiration for renowned chefs. During the KOOKSLAG jam session organised by VLAM, 'Vlaams roodbruin bier / Flanders Red Ale' was given a prominent place in the preparation of classic Flemish dishes, highlighting the versatility and contemporary use of this beer in the kitchen (<https://streekproduct.be/zoeken?tekst=Vlaams%20roodbruin%20bier>, accessed on 20 February 2024). The refreshing brew, already long in use as the ideal thirst-quencher for curious tourists, enjoys widespread attention thanks to the enthusiastic efforts of '100 % West-Vlaams', an initiative by the Service for the Economy and European and International Cooperation (Dienst EES), Economy and Education Department of the province of West Flanders ('Vlaams roodbruin bier', <https://www.100procentwest-vlaams.be/proeven/vlaams-roodbruin-bier>, viewed on 20 February 2024).

The reputation of 'Vlaams roodbruin bier / Flanders Red Ale' has spread far beyond the borders of Belgium. For many years, this traditional Belgian beer has enjoyed international recognition. It recently won prizes in 2023 and 2024 at the World Beer Awards – a prestigious competition with entries from more than 50 countries. In addition, 'Vlaams roodbruin bier / Flanders Red Ale' is regularly entered into leading competitions such as the World Beer Cup and the Brussels Beer Challenge in the categories for sour or wood-aged beers.

The international beer press continues to take an interest: Flemish brewers are regularly interviewed or invited to international conferences, including Belgium Beer Week USA (2023-2024) and trade fairs within Europe (such as the Rolling Pin Convention in Berlin and the Heimbrau Convention in Romrod, Germany).

As an export product, 'Vlaams roodbruin bier / Flanders Red Ale' has made its way to both northern and southern Europe and overseas. This international appreciation underlines the exceptional character of 'Vlaams roodbruin bier / Flanders Red Ale' as a heritage product that is also appreciated worldwide.

Reference to the publication of the product specification of the geographical indication

<https://lv.vlaanderen.be/media/9279/download>