

COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION**of 8 March 2019****on the publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union* of the application for registration of a name referred to in Article 49 of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council****‘Ayrshire New Potatoes’/‘Ayrshire Earlies’ (PGI)**

(2019/C 94/05)

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs⁽¹⁾, and in particular Article 50(2)(a) thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) The United Kingdom has sent to the Commission an application for protection of the name ‘Ayrshire New Potatoes’/‘Ayrshire Earlies’ in accordance with Article 49(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012.
- (2) In accordance with Article 50 of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 the Commission has examined that application and concluded that it fulfils the conditions laid down in that Regulation.
- (3) In order to allow for the submission of notices of opposition in accordance with Article 51 of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012, the single document and the reference to the publication of the product specification referred to in Article 50(2)(a) of that Regulation for the name ‘Ayrshire New Potatoes’/‘Ayrshire Earlies’ should be published in the *Official Journal of the European Union*,

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Sole Article

The single document and the reference to the publication of the product specification referred to in Article 50(2)(a) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 for the name ‘Ayrshire New Potatoes’/‘Ayrshire Earlies’ (PGI) are contained in the Annex to this Decision.

In accordance with Article 51 of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012, the publication of this Decision shall confer the right to oppose to the registration of the name referred to in the first paragraph of this Article within three months from the date of publication of this Decision in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

Done at Brussels, 8 March 2019.

For the Commission

Phil HOGAN

Member of the Commission

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 343, 14.12.2012, p. 1.

ANNEX

SINGLE DOCUMENT

'AYRSHIRE NEW POTATOES'/'AYRSHIRE EARLIES'

EU No: PGI-GB-02286 – 31.1.2017

PDO () PGI (X)

1. Name(s)

'Ayrshire New Potatoes'/'Ayrshire Earlies'

2. Member State or Third Country

United Kingdom

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

'Ayrshire New Potatoes'/'Ayrshire Earlies' is the name given to immature potatoes of the *Solanum tuberosum* species of the *Solanaceae* family grown in the county of Ayrshire, South West of Scotland. They must be planted, grown and harvested within the defined geographical area.

'Ayrshire New Potatoes'/'Ayrshire Earlies' are grown from the basic seed varieties catalogued in the national registers of varieties of the Member States of the EU. The main varieties used and their estimated share of the market are presently Epicure (8 %), Casablanca (40 %), Isle of Jura (12 %) and Maris Peer (40 %). Varieties may change as breeding characteristics adapt but their inclusion in the variety base for 'Ayrshire New Potatoes'/'Ayrshire Earlies' will be highly determined by their characteristics as described below as well as their ability to be ready for harvest between May and July.

'Ayrshire New Potatoes'/'Ayrshire Earlies' have a relatively low dry matter of up to 20 %. The dry matter will vary depending on variety, maturity and the season.

The 'Ayrshire New Potatoes'/'Ayrshire Earlies' potato is small in size (15-65 mm in diameter), round or oval in shape with a soft skin. It has a distinctive strong earthy nutty flavour and aroma. It has a creamy, firm texture as a result of a low starch content of 10-15 %. The starch range will be determined by varietal and seasonal variances. This low starch content makes these the 'Ayrshire New Potatoes'/'Ayrshire Earlies' ideal for boiling and for use where shape retention is required (i.e. in salads). The colour of the flesh varies between white and cream, determined by the variety, and will be consistent throughout the potato.

'Ayrshire New Potatoes'/'Ayrshire Earlies' are harvested from the beginning of May until the end of July before the lifting of maincrop potatoes. The first crop harvested in May is sold unwashed in order to protect the soft skin of the potatoes. The soil content is maximum of 1 % by weight of tubers. As the season progresses the skin hardens sufficiently to allow washing.

'Ayrshire New Potatoes'/'Ayrshire Earlies' are sold either loose by weight or packaged in a range of weights with the latest date for sales of the product to final consumers being the last day of July.

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

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

'Ayrshire New Potatoes'/'Ayrshire Earlies' must be planted, grown and harvested in the designated area.

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

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

Labelling must include either the term 'Ayrshire New Potatoes' or 'Ayrshire Earlies'.

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

The region of Ayrshire in the West of Scotland within the geographic Local Authority boundaries of North, East and South Ayrshire Councils. The county of Ayrshire is bordered on the west side by the Firth of Clyde and extends from the coastal locations of Skelmorlie in the north to Ballantrae in the south, and to Glenbuck in the east. The county also includes the Isle of Arran and the Cumbrae Isles.

5. **Link with the geographical area**

The link of 'Ayrshire New Potatoes'/'Ayrshire Earlies' with the geographical area is based on product's quality and reputation. 'Ayrshire New Potatoes'/'Ayrshire Earlies' have the long-standing reputation of marking the start of supply of new Scottish season potatoes. Many factors are said to have influenced the flavour of the 'Ayrshire New Potatoes'/'Ayrshire Earlies' including light soil, mild climate, fertilisers, earliness of harvest and speed of delivery to markets.

'Ayrshire New Potatoes'/'Ayrshire Earlies' distinctive flavour is influenced by its short growing season. The mild climate and unique soils of Ayrshire enables 'Ayrshire New Potatoes'/'Ayrshire Earlies' to be planted, grown and harvested early in the year, earlier than in other parts of Scotland.

Ayrshire has been at the heart of the Scottish (and indeed UK) potato industry since the cultivation of the crop was first reported in Scotland in a commercial basis in 1793. The area provides the first commercially produced potatoes of the year grown in Scotland and 'Ayrshire New Potatoes'/'Ayrshire Earlies' are renowned across the country for their quality, flavour, and as a symbol of the new season. In historical and current press coverage, and other publications this product has also been known as 'South West Earlies' and 'Early Ayrshires'.

Due to light sandy soil and early warming by the Gulf Stream, farms in Ayrshire, particularly those along the Ayrshire coast have always been able to plant their potato crop a few weeks earlier than in other parts of Scotland. The original potato crop cycle was planting in June and lifting in mid-autumn.

In the book 'A Corner of Carrick' by James A. Guthrie, there is a chapter called 'The Early Ayrshires'. This chapter provides information about the commercialism of the early potato and how in 1857 two Ayrshire farmers (Dunlop and Hannah), visited the Channel Islands (where farmers had been planting early crops for many years) to study how they managed to grow potatoes so early in the year.

In 1881 a new method to help cultivate potatoes earlier called sprouting, was pioneered and this was taken up and implemented in the area by many Ayrshire farmers. With this new crop husbandry the planting cycle commences early February. This allows the first lifting of 'Ayrshire New Potatoes'/'Ayrshire Earlies' in the second half of May on the coastal areas of Ayrshire, with lifting gradually moving inland as the season progresses.

Press coverage relating to early potatoes grown in Ayrshire has been recorded as early as 1857 when the North British Agriculturalist and Edinburgh Evening News mentioned potato production being 'extensively practiced along the coast on the light and early soils'. Nearly 100 years later, an article entitled 'South-West Earlies Win The Race' from The Glasgow Herald Agriculture Survey, (February 1, 1956) said 'For almost a century the early potato crop has played a most important part in the farming economy of South-West Scotland'.

In the Ayrshire parish of Maybole, growing 'Ayrshire New Potatoes'/'Ayrshire Earlies' was said to be the 'main occupation' in 1951 according to John Strawhorn and William Boyd's The Statistical Account of Scotland. Heather Holmes in her book 'Tattie howkers' (2005) quoted that 'crops of early potatoes, or earlies, became synonymous with the county of Ayrshire, as were the terms "Ayrshires" and "Ayrshire potatoes"' and their production was a 'specialised and intensive branch of Ayrshire farming'. In 1901, it was reported in the North British Agriculturalist that in Girvan, the potato was 'a most important one (product) in the district'. The book 'Old West Kilbride' by Molly Blyth has the subtitle 'The Tattie Toon' because of the connection of this coastal Ayrshire town with the growing of potatoes and specifically 'Ayrshire New Potatoes'/'Ayrshire Earlies'.

There was also an internet article on the Farming UK website which said 'Synonymous with summer Ayrshire new potatoes are widely regarded as being one of the finest tasting potatoes available and is highly sought after during its eight week season'.

There are many internet sites providing recipes that use 'Ayrshire New Potatoes'/'Ayrshire Earlies'. Red Book Recipes states that 'The early new potatoes that come from Ayrshire are some of the best in Britain'. The website provides detail on the early potato product as well as instructions on how to cook the perfect potato.

Reference to publication of the specification

(the second subparagraph of Article 6(1) of this Regulation)

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/641216/protected-food-name-ayrshire-earlies-spec.pdf
