

Publication of an application in accordance with Article 6(2) of Council Regulation (EC) No 510/2006 on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs

(2006/C 180/09)

This publication enables an objection to be lodged against the application, in accordance with Article 7 of Council Regulation (EC) No 510/2006. The Commission must receive a statement of any such objection within six months of the date of publication.

SUMMARY

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006

Application for registration in accordance with Articles 5 and 17(2)

'OSCYPEK'

No EC: PL/0451/21.02.2005

PDO (X) PGI ()

This document has been drawn up for information purposes only. For full details, interested parties are invited to consult the full version of the product specification obtainable from the national authorities referred to in point 1 or from the European Commission ⁽¹⁾.

1. *Responsible department in the Member State:*

Name: Ministerstwo Rolnictwa i Rozwoju Wsi
(Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development)

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PL-00-930 Warszawa

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2. *Group:*

Name: *Regionalny Związek Hodowców Owiec i Kóz* (Regional Union of Sheep and Goat Breeders)

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PL-34-400 Nowy Targ

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Composition: Producers/processors (X) Other ()

3. *Type of product:*

Class: 1.3 Cheese

⁽¹⁾ European Commission — Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development - Department for agricultural product quality policy, B-1049 Brussels.

4. Specification

(summary of requirements set out in Article 4(2))

4.1 Name: 'Oscypek'

The name 'Oscypek' fulfils the conditions set out in Article 2(2) of Council Regulation (EC) No 510/2006. Etymologically connected with the production process, the name 'Oscypek' can be derived from two words — from the verb *oszcypywać*, meaning 'to pinch repeatedly' in the sense of beating (stage 6 of the production process) and from *oszcypek*, a diminutive form of *oszczep*, meaning 'javelin', in reference to the characteristic shape of the cheese. 'Oscypek' is closely linked to the area described in point 4.3. This is confirmed by numerous references in the literature, the natural ties to the area and the skills of the local producers.

4.2 Description:

'Oscypek' has the shape of a double cone or spindle. It is between 17 and 23 cm in length, between 6 and 10 cm in width at its widest point and weighs between 0.6 — 0.8 kg. When cut it has a light cream colour, darker at the rind, but a shade closer to white is also permissible. The rind has a straw-coloured gleam, light brown, and a soft shine. 'Oscypek' is produced exclusively in the period May to September and may only be sold whole.

The chemical composition of the cheese depends on the duration of smoking and also varies depending on the season: water content is no greater than 44 %, dry mass content not less than 56 %, and fat content in the dry mass not less than 38 %.

4.3 Geographical area:

In the Śląsk voivodship the area includes:

- Municipalities (*gminy*) in the Cieszyn district (*powiat*): Istebna
- Municipalities in the Żywiec district: Milówka, Węgierska Górka, Rajcze, Ujsoły, Jeleśnia and Koszarawa

In the Małopolska voivodship the area includes:

- The entire Nowy Targ district and the entire Tatrzański district
- Municipalities in the Sucha district: Zawoja and Bystra Sidzina.
- Municipalities in the Limanowa district: Niedźwiedź and part of the Kamienica municipality, which is situated within the boundary of the Gorczańskiego National Park or south of the Kamienica river and the following *sołectwa* (municipal subdivision) in Mszana Dolna municipality: Olszówka, Raba Niżna, Łostówka, Łętowe and Lubomierz
- Municipalities in the Nowy Sącz district: Piwniczna, Muszyna and Krynica

4.4 Proof of origin:

Checks on the authenticity and quality of 'Oscypek' cheese are carried out at several stages, from milk production through to the finished product on the market. This multi-stage monitoring makes for a coherent supervisory system designed to ensure that the end product is of the proper quality.

A list is kept of entities engaged in production. Producers are entered on it before they commence manufacture. At the place of production, each producer keeps a register in which they enter information relating to the production process. This enables the history of a product to be recreated, so that cheeses can be traced.

The monitoring body checks that actual production methods are in accordance with specifications. All producers and the union of producers' associations are subject to monitoring in accordance with the monitoring plan which the monitoring body holds and approves.

4.5 Method of production:

Stage 1 — Sourcing raw materials — the milk used in the production of 'Oscypek' comes from the breed 'Polish Mountain Sheep'. Cow's milk, if used at all for production, comes from the 'Polish Red Cow'.

Stage 2 — Cold maturation (acidification) — the milk is kept at room temperature so as to increase its acidity.

Stage 3 — Warm maturation (acidification) — involves mixing soured milk with sweet milk. The proportion of sheep's milk used in 'Oscypek' production must not be less than 60 %.

Stage 4 — Adding rennet — rennet is added to the milk.

Stage 5 — Coagulation — formation of coagulum.

Stage 6 — Beating of the coagulum — using traditional tools, e.g. a 'ferula'.

Stage 7 — Settling — lumps of cheese settle on the bottom of the container.

Stage 8 — Removal of whey — up to 50 % of the whole.

Stage 9 — Removal of cheese — pressing of grains and removal of cheese.

Stage 10 — Grinding — the mass of cheese is ground by hand, a ball is formed and placed in a container with whey.

Stage 11 — Pressing of the ball — the ball is shaped and then pierced (opened) with a skewer.

Stage 12 — Shaping — the ball is pressed along the skewer until it takes on the shape of a double cone. A ring is placed round the cheese at its widest point.

Stage 13 — Final smoothing — the ring is removed and the cheese is squeezed and smoothed by hand. It is then placed in cold water in order to preserve the shape obtained.

Stage 14 — Soaking in brine — for up to 24 hours.

Stage 15 — Drying — the cheeses are dried over a period of between 12 and 24 hours.

Stage 16 — Smoking — maturation — smoking is carried out using cold smoke and lasts between 3 and 7 days.

4.6 Link:

The 'Polish Mountain Sheep' from which the milk used to make 'Oscypek' is obtained is an upgraded variety of the primitive *cakiel* sheep found in the Eastern Carpathians and Balkans. The breed is closely linked with the history and tradition of the Podhale region and the local population. It is extremely well adapted to the climatic conditions and traditional methods of breeding in mountain areas. Moreover, the Polish Mountain Sheep pastured in Podhale feed on very diverse and unique vegetation, which affects the composition and taste of the milk, and consequently gives the product processed from such milk its particular taste and aroma.

Insofar as cow's milk is used in production, it may only be milk from 'Polish Red Cows', the oldest Polish breed of cattle. For centuries the breed has been associated with the Slavs, and until the end of the 18th century the Polish Red Cow was the most common breed found on Polish soil. The first red cattle herds were established in 1876 at Stróża in the Limanowa district. The year 1895 saw the foundation of the Polish Union of Polish Red Cow Breeders, attached to the Cracow Agricultural Society. This marked the beginning of systematic husbandry and consequently led to the formation and improvement of the breed between 1884 and 1934. The cattle became recognised as the only indigenous breed of cattle reared on Polish soil.

The particular vegetation found in the area of 'Oscypek' production also has a major influence on the end taste of the sheep's milk used in the production of the cheese. The endemic species of vegetation concerned are found only in Podhale, where they make up meadows, pastures and mountain pastures.

'Oscypek' is an ancient product of the Wallachian shepherds who tended their sheep in upland meadows. The cheese was brought to the Podhale region together with the Wallachians' culture, their way of organising pasturage, their traditional *bacówka* log hut and their way of processing the milk. The first evidence of cheese making in Podhale and the neighbouring areas is found in the charter of Ochotnica village in Gorce. In 1416 Dawid Wołoch (David Valachi) received the right of charter.

The first exact description of how cheese was to be made in the log huts comes from the rules of the 'Słemieński State'. They were drawn up in 1748, and in 1773 they were rewritten and prescribed for use. In 1830, Ambroży Grabowski, in his description of the highlanders, mentioned that they built log huts for the whole summer in the mountains, 'to which they bring their sheep from all around, and make their cheese (*oszczypek*)'. A more detailed description of sheep pasturage, the log huts' equipment and cheese (including *oszczypek*) production is given by Maria Steczkowska (1858). This was also the first such detailed description of the vessels used by shepherds in the Tatras to make cheese.

The production of '*Oscypek*' cheese is also tied to the specific and exceptional skills of the producers. Their experience and knowledge passed down from one generation to the next enable them to carry out the entire production process in the appropriate manner.

4.7 Inspection body:

Name: Inspekcja Jakości Handlowej Artykułów Rolno — Spożywczych
(Inspectorate for the Commercial Quality of Agricultural and Food Products)

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4.8 Labelling:

On the packaging of the product intended for sale, the name '*OSCYPEK*' may be replaced or supplemented by the dialect word: '*OSZCZYPEK*'.

The packaging will feature the logo or the logo plus the words *Chroniona Nazwa Pochodzenia* (Protected Designation of Origin). Use of the abbreviation 'Ch.N.P' (PDO) on the packaging will be permitted. The name must be given in Polish. Sale without packaging will be permitted.

4.9 National requirements: —
