

Publication of an application for registration pursuant to 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

(2010/C 42/05)

This publication confers the right to object to the application pursuant to Article 7 of Council Regulation (EC) No 510/2006 ⁽¹⁾. Statements of objection must reach the Commission within six months of the date of this publication.

SUMMARY

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006

'LAPIN PORON KUIVALIHA'

EC No: FI-PDO-0005-0384-19.10.2004

PDO (X) PGI ()

This summary sets out the main elements of the product specification for information purposes.

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Composition: Producers/processors (X) other ()

3. Type of product:

Class 1.2: Meat products (cooked, salted, smoked)

4. Specification:

(Summary of requirements under Article 4(2) of Regulation (EC) No 510/2006)

4.1. Name:

'Lapin Poron kuivaliha'

4.2. Description:

'Lapin Poron kuivaliha' (dried Lapland reindeer meat) is made from whole muscle (muscle groups) and pieces of muscle. The connective tissues between the muscles are visible, but hardly any fat can be seen in them with the naked eye. The meat is very fine-grained and dense, and the fibres cannot be distinguished on the cut surface. It is finer-grained than other dried meats. Depending on the dryness of the product, the structure of the cut surface is dull matt and smooth. The cut surface is darker than in other types of meat; a brown tinge is another distinguishing feature.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 93, 31.3.2006, p. 12.

The finished products are different-shaped pieces or slices 1-5 cm thick and 10-20 cm long. The weight ranges from one hundred to a few hundred grams.

Due to the drying, 'Lapin Poron kuivaliha' has a low water content and very high protein content. It has a low fat content, taking into account the fact that it has been dried. The pH value is normal for meat. The protein content of the connective tissues is relatively low. The salt content has to be sufficiently high to ensure that it can be preserved safely. The average values and standard deviations for five typical samples are listed below:

Water content (%): 40,6 (2,8)

Protein content (%): 43,6 (2,3)

of which in connective tissue (%): 3,1 (0,9)

Fat content (%): 4,7 (1,6)

Salt content (%): 5,4 (2,0)

pH value: 5,69 (0,19)

The dried meat has a relatively strong flavour. It has the typical strong aroma of reindeer meat, in both taste and smell. The aroma is not particularly gamey, but typical of reindeer. The salty taste is typically light due to the particularly high protein content. The colour varies from dark red and brown to almost black. The edges are darker due to the drying.

The structure is hard on the surface and softer inside. The product contains connective tissues between the muscles, which are felt on the palate, but the internal connective tissue is not. Although the product is soft inside, it does not separate easily when bent, but does separate when chewed, and the effect is delicate and not stringy. The ease with which it separates is a characteristic feature, and the connective tissues between the muscles also separate easily and are easy to swallow.

4.3. *Geographical area:*

'Lapin Poron kuivaliha' is produced, processed and packed in the Finnish reindeer husbandry area, which is located between latitudes 65 °N and 70 °N. Under the Finnish Reindeer Husbandry Act (No 848/1990), the area includes the Province of Lapland (excluding the cities of Kemi and Tornio and the municipality of Keminmaa), the municipalities of Hyrynsalmi, Kuivaniemi, Kuusamo, Pudasjärvi, Suomussalmi, Taivalkoski and Yli-Ii in the Province of Oulu, and the areas north of the River Kiimin-kijoki and the Puolanka-Hyrynsalmi road in the municipalities of Puolanka, Utajärvi and Ylikiiminki.

4.4. *Proof of origin:*

Under Finnish reindeer husbandry legislation, to monitor the meat's origin, a reindeer owner ear-tags the animal either immediately after its birth or at least no later than its arrival for slaughter. When the reindeer have been sorted for slaughter and separated from those animals to be kept alive, they are marked during sorting on the pastureland with a slaughter tag attached to the ear, so giving a number to the slaughter animal. The number stays with the carcass until cutting. Cut meats are given a cutting and processing batch number, which follows the product as far as the consumer. Meat cutting rooms and meat product plants must record the carcasses and other meat entering the establishment as well as the meat sent out from it. Meat cutting rooms and meat product plants are supervised by the municipal supervisory authorities. Moreover, the sale of dried reindeer meat direct to the consumer from the place of primary production is permitted (EU Commission derogation of 21 April 2006).

Monitoring of the entire production chain is carried out by the Finnish Food Safety Authority (Evira) and the provincial governments under the authority of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. The monitoring is carried out by the local food authorities.

4.5. Method of production:

'Lapin Poron kuivaliha' is produced from reindeer that are born, raised and slaughtered in the Finnish reindeer husbandry area and graze freely on natural pastures during the spring, summer, autumn and early winter before slaughter. During this period, they obtain nearly all their feed from natural sources in the defined geographical area. They feed principally on grasses, fungi and lichens. About 70-75 % of the slaughter animals are calves aged five to eight months, with a slaughter weight of about 22 kg. The average weight of the slaughtered adult female reindeer is about 35 kg, and the slaughter weight of the largest male reindeer can be 70-80 kg.

The raw material used for 'Lapin Poron kuivaliha' is fillet, topside, shoulder, back, side and belly cuts, which are mainly from P0-type meat, the basic type used for dried meat (the letter stands for 'reindeer' in Finnish and the number for the classification). PE-type — or 'extra' — meat (e.g. topside and fillet) can also be used, as can P1-type meat (e.g. neck, side and belly cuts) to some extent. The differences in the properties and intended use of the meat types for sale are shown in the Reindeer Herders' Association reindeer meat classification (2005) drawn up for the reindeer industry. The differences in the types are based on the fat and membrane content of the meat.

Surface and cavity fat, thick connective tissue membranes and any clotted blood and stamps are removed from the reindeer meat to be used as a raw material for 'Lapin Poron kuivaliha'. Product preparation begins by cutting and usually boning tougher meats, topsides, chucks, fillets and cervical muscle. The boned meat is cut into shapes around 5 cm thick in different sizes for preparation. Other parts of the carcass are left with the bone in and also cut into appropriate-sized shapes for preparation.

The meat is processed as quickly as possible and in small batches to prevent it from warming up too much. In approved cutting plants, the temperature of the meat during cutting may not exceed + 7 °C.

The meat is salted in meat salting tubs or on salting racks. Salting may be done by rubbing, in which case the amount of salt is about 3 % of the fresh meat weight. If the meat is salted in brine, the salt content of the water is about 6 % or 7 %. Salting and pre-maturation takes between 3 and 14 days.

After salting, the meat is hung up for air-drying outside. Drying takes place at a sufficient height above the ground in a covered space built or designated for the drying of meat, which vermin are prevented from entering by sufficiently solid flooring and netting. Clean hooks of metal or other non-porous material, such as plastic rope, are used for hanging the meat on the drying beam.

The drying is done in February-April and lasts three to six weeks, depending on weather conditions. As the meat tenderises and matures it becomes highly flavoured through the evaporation of 40-60 % of its fresh meat weight. The preparation of the meat is monitored by repeatedly checking the degree of dryness and tasting the meat. If the meat is kept drying for too long time, it turns grey in colour and becomes tasteless.

'Lapin Poron kuivaliha' products are packed in approved food packaging whose size varies from one hundred grams to several hundred grams.

The reindeer meat to which the 'Lapin Poron kuivaliha' designation will be applied must be packed in the defined geographical area, i.e. the Finnish reindeer husbandry area, in order to safeguard product quality and prevent deterioration of quality, especially of the organoleptic characteristics. Drying takes place outdoors and as a result of meteorological conditions (wind, frost, heat of the sun). The drying process is monitored carefully in order to attain the right degree of maturity and to retain the organoleptic characteristics of the meat. A crucial factor in the production of 'Lapin Poron kuivaliha' is determining the right time to remove the meat from air-drying outside. This requires the specific skills of the area's experts. Even though 'Lapin Poron kuivaliha' is lean, the fat may alter the taste and organoleptic characteristics of the meat if it is processed in the wrong manner or comes into extended contact with the air. Furthermore, the objective is to ensure the complete traceability of the product, that consumers are not misled, that the product they are offered has actually been obtained and prepared in the region of origin and that monitoring is made possible throughout the production chain.

4.6. *Link with geographical origin:*

The reindeer meat is produced by professional reindeer herders living in the Finnish reindeer husbandry area, nearly 20 % of whom are Sámi, a native people of the European Union. The work of the reindeer herders is based on information collected over the centuries on reindeer and its meat. The oldest information on dried meat is found in 16th century account books and in the descriptions of Finland contained in the History of the Northern Peoples by Olaus Magnus, a book dating from 1555. After him, the earliest references to dried reindeer meat are mainly from explorers in the 17th and 18th centuries.

The reindeer meat is dried using traditional skills; for example, most reindeer meat processing plants are owned by reindeer-owning families. All of the above reindeer meat processors form a unique network of expertise in the reindeer husbandry area, with the skills and capacity to process into 'Lapin Poron kuivaliha' some of the reindeer meat produced in the reindeer husbandry area using traditional methods.

'Lapin Poron kuivaliha' is air-dried outside according to centuries-old traditional methods. Drying takes place in February-April at a sufficient height above the ground in a covered space built or designated for the drying of meat, which vermin are prevented from entering by sufficiently solid flooring and netting. The preparation of dried reindeer meat is successful only in the northern regions, where temperature variations in late winter are sufficiently great. The significant late-winter temperature fluctuations in northern climes, from -30°C to $+7^{\circ}\text{C}$, tenderise the meat and give it a natural flavour. Other natural characteristics of the region, such as distinct seasons, the reindeer diet and the traditional skills for selecting and preparing raw material for reindeer meat make dried reindeer meat what it is: a reindeer product with its own distinctive flavour.

4.7. *Inspection body:*

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4.8. *Labelling:*

'Lapin Poron kuivaliha' products are stored or sold packed in approved food packaging of different sizes. The outer surface of the packs is marked with the 'Lapin Poron kuivaliha' mark (e.g. a stamp or sticker) followed by the words 'suojattu alkuperänimitys' (protected designation of origin) or the corresponding official Community symbol. Whether the meat has come from an adult animal or a calf is also indicated. Similar markings are required for meat sold direct.
