OTHER ACTS

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Publication of an application 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

(2011/C 70/06)

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 from the date of this publication.

SUMMARY

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006

'KOČEVSKI GOZDNI MED'

EC No: SI-PDO-0005-0425-29.10.2004

PDO (X) PGI ( )

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

1. **Responsible department in the Member State:**

Name:	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food of the Republic of Slovenia
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2. **Applicant:**

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Composition:	Producers/processors (X) Other ( )

3. **Type of product:**

Group 1.4. Other products of animal origin (eggs, honey, various dairy products except butter, etc.)

4. **Specification:**

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

([1]) OJ L 93, 31.3.2006, p. 12.

4.1. *Name:*

'Kočevski gozdni med'

4.2. *Description:*

The types of Kočevski gozdni med are as follows:

(a) Forest honey

This type of honey is of mixed honeydew origin and has a high mineral content. It is light to dark brown in colour with a red or green tint, can be opaque or transparent and has an aroma of resin, walnuts and spruce tip syrup. Its electrolytic conductivity is at least 0,85 mS/cm.

(b) Spruce honey

This type of honey is reddish brown and fairly viscous in its liquid state. It has a flavour of resin, spruce tip syrup, herb sweets, green tea, roasted coffee, dried fruit, figs and coffee sweets, is elastic and sticks to the tongue and the palate. It has an electrolytic conductivity of at least 0,95 mS/cm.

(c) Fir honey

This type of honey is dark grey-brown in colour with a green sheen. It tastes of caramel, burnt sugar, resin, fresh coniferous wood and spruce tip syrup, smoke, black tea with milk and herb sweets. It has an electrolytic conductivity of at least 0,95 mS/cm.

(d) Lime honey

This type of honey is light to medium yellow or amber in colour. It has a highly intense aroma of menthol, lime infusion and lime blossom. It has an electrolytic conductivity of at least 0,8 mS/cm.

Kočevski gozdni med must also comply with the following parameters:

— maximum water content of 18,6 %,

— HMF of no more than 10,

— it may not be heated to more than 40 °C,

— it may not originate from fed sugar or honey from outside the geographical region,

— it may not be strained through a sieve with holes of a diameter of less than 0,2 mm,

— total fructose and glucose content must be at least 45 g/100 g of honey,

— the specific gravity of the honey must range from 1,40 to 1,45 g/cm^3,

— in the sensory evaluation the honey must obtain a sufficient number of points for appearance, scent and flavour (at least 9,5 points out of a total of 12 points).

4.3. *Geographical area:*

To the north-west the boundary of the region runs along the border of the municipality of Loški potok and along the foothills of Racna gora. It then continues to the north past Lužarje, Krvava peč, Rob and, after the Raščica valley, turns towards Ponikve, before running to the south-west along the foothills of Mala gora. It then turns eastwards to the Krka river, along the foothills of the Rog and Poljanska gora mountains to the river Kolpa. The larger communities along the eastern boundary are: Dvor, Soteska and Črmošnjice. To the south-west and south the boundary of the region runs parallel to the border between Slovenia and Croatia along the Čabranka and Kolpa rivers. The larger communities along this boundary are: Čabar, Osilnica, Brod na Kolpi and Stari trg ob Kolpi.

All these settlements lie within the defined geographical area.

4.4. *Proof of origin:*

The beehives for the production of Kočevski gozdni med must be located in the defined geographical area.

Control of the origin of Kočevski gozdni med takes place in several stages by beekeepers, Združenje Kočevski med (Kočevje Honey Association), inspectors and, in the final phase, also by an independent certification body.

Beekeepers must keep various records, such as a daily record of bee foraging (location, number of hives, time of foraging, quantity of honey yielded, series, etc.), a record of steps taken for bee health protection and honey analyses. Združenje Kočevski med keeps a register of beekeepers who produce Kočevski gozdni med (bee house locations, the number of hives, yield of honey per hive), a register of numbered sealing labels issued with the designation 'Kočevski gozdni med', a register of honey bottlers that bottle Kočevski gozdni med and a register of inspectors. The inspector (a specially trained person who has been awarded a licence) must carry out an inspection of the beekeeper who wishes to bottle Kočevski gozdni med in order to ensure that beekeeping, honey production and honey storage and bottling are carried out in an appropriate manner. If the honey meets the requirements, the inspector grants the beekeeper approval for the requested number of sealing labels for 'Kočevski gozdni med', depending on the amount of honey declared. The inspector must keep records of the appropriateness of beekeepers' apicultural practices and of field analyses of honey.

4.5. *Method of production:*

Beehives must be located within the geographical area defined in point 4.3. Beekeepers must keep bees in accordance with good beekeeping practices. Honey is produced under strict hygiene conditions that guarantee the production of high-quality honey.

Comb intended for obtaining honey may not be exposed to chemical agents for suppressing bee diseases and pests. Bee colonies are not fed during the period of foraging. The methods used to drive bees away are sweeping, blowing and as little smoking as possible; the use of chemical repellents is prohibited. A start is made on bottling honey when it is ripe and the water content does not exceed 18,6 %. Honey is never extracted from comb which still contains brood. Honey is never bottled directly from the extractor into jars.

The drying of honey is prohibited. The honey is always filtered, but the sieve used must not filter out particles of less than 0,2 mm in size. Crystallised honey may be liquefied by heating, but only up to a maximum of 40 °C at the point of contact between the heating element and honey. Liquefying honey by means of microwave heating is not permitted.

Kočevski gozdni med is bottled within the geographical area, since this is the only way of guaranteeing and preserving the high quality of the honey and preventing any change in its physico-chemical and organoleptic properties. Before the honey is bottled and labelled with the name Kočevski gozdni med, each batch has to be examined and assessed. This check is carried out by inspectors (see point 4.4.), but additional checks are carried out at the same time by the inspection body referred to in point 4.7 as well. Kočevski gozdni med is packaged in various retail-size packages. Immediately after bottling the lid and jar are fastened together with a sealing label in such a way that the jar cannot be opened without breaking the sealing label. The strict control of all phases of production and the traceability check also reduce the risk of the honey being mixed with other honeys or of other types of honey being labelled with the name Kočevski gozdni med.

4.6. *Link:*

The wooded country around Kočevje has an outstandingly well-preserved natural environment that makes it one of the best conserved regions of Europe. The geographical area in which Kočevski gozdni med is produced overlaps almost completely with the Kočevska-Kolpa area, which is a Natura 2000 nature conservation area. These nature conservation areas are one of the main strands of the implementation of the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive. The Kočevsko-Kolpa area is one of the largest uninterrupted areas of forest in Slovenia. Here, the Dinaric region is covered with Illyrian beech stands, which belong to the protected habitats of Europe.

The bee pastures are found in the particularly wooded central part of the region measuring 800 km^2, 95 % of which is covered with forest trees. The area has a very varied flora, which is further enhanced by the vegetation of the forest margins, meadows and wetland vegetation. Individual areas differ in respect of the appearance of melliferous plant associations, differences in individual growth areas, climatic conditions and altitude zones. Beekeepers know how to reap the benefits of the varied flora and the various plant-growing periods. Accordingly, the fir produces nectar in June and often in July and August, the spruce produces nectar sometimes at the end of May, but otherwise in June, and lime honeydew appears with the blooming in June, reaching its peak approximately fourteen days after the end of flowering. In order to make optimum use of foraging conditions, beekeepers transport their bees to various forage grounds within the geographical area. They keep a close watch on the reports from the nectar forecasting service. This kind of beekeeping results in the production of the various kinds of Kočevski gozdni med mentioned above.

The existence of a centuries-old tradition of beekeeping in the geographical area is shown by the choice of the patron saint of bees — Saint Ambrose. All we know is that he lived in the 4th century AD, and that he was a bishop and church teacher. In his honour and praise, beekeepers still today ask for healthy bees and a good honey yield. On the altar of the parish church of Stari Trg ob Kolpi there is a large statue of St. Ambrose, who has a beehive woven around his legs.

In the chapel of the village of Laza ob Kolpi, a fresco dating from 1557 that was uncovered some years ago depicts St. Ambrose in the company of three other saints. Both depictions thus bear witness to the fact that beekeeping had long been pursued in the wider Kočevje area.

The spread of beekeeping in the Kočevje area was encouraged by a number of educated patriots, who were also capable of writing about their work with bees. They include the parish priest, judge and mayor Jurij Jonke, born in 1777 in Svetli Potok near Kočevje. He was also an excellent beekeeper who contributed to promoting domestic beekeeping. He reported on this in the German apicultural periodical Bienenzeitung, and he also wrote for Ljubljanske Novice and Ilirischer Blatt. In 1836 he wrote the beekeeping booklet entitled *Anleitung zur praktischen Behandlung der Bienenzucht*.

Another great beekeeper was the writer Fran Levstik, who was born in Retje near Velike Lašče. He wrote the book *Bučelstvo* (beekeeping), which was published in 1853.

Beekeeping only came into full swing in a noticeable way after the First World War (1914-1918), when affiliated apicultural groups started to be formed.

One of the leading lights was the progressive beekeeper Josip Kajfež (1881-1944) from Nova Sela ob Kolpi, who had 100 bee colonies even in 1918. He was not only a good beekeeper and founder of organised beekeeping in the Kostelska valley, but also a well-known breeder of queens. He wrote for the magazine *Slovenski čebelar* (Slovenian Beekeeper) and other similar publications.

4.7. *Inspection body:*

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4.8. *Labelling:*

Honey that meets the conditions in the specification is labelled with the name Kočevski gozdni med, the indication 'Protected Designation of Origin', the corresponding Community mark and the national quality symbol.