

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

(2012/C 125/06)

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 of the date of this publication.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006

‘SPARGEL AUS FRANKEN’/‘FRÄNKISCHER SPARGEL’/‘FRANKEN-SPARGEL’

EC No: DE-PGI-0005-0804-17.03.2010

PGI (X) PDO ()

1. Name:

‘Spargel aus Franken’/‘Fränkischer Spargel’/‘Franken-Spargel’

2. Member State or Third Country:

Germany

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 the product to which the name in point applies:

The designation ‘Spargel aus Franken’ refers exclusively to edible spears of the *Asparagus officinalis* L shrub grown and picked in the geographical area of Franconia as white asparagus, with the subcategory violet asparagus, and green asparagus, with the subcategory violet-green asparagus.

White asparagus is grown in earth embankments. The spears stay pale as a result of being protected from sunlight. Differences between varieties and the fact that the soil lets in some light mean that the heads of white asparagus spears can be a pink to violet/purple colour. The white and violet varieties are also known as ‘Bleichspargel’.

The green asparagus spears are grown in the ground. Photosynthesis resulting from exposure to sunlight produces the chlorophyll that gives the spears their green colour. Differences between varieties mean that some green asparagus has a violet colouring.

In order to meet the quality standards and ensure the special properties of ‘fränkischer Spargel’, the product is produced according to the rules of good farming practice and, after preparation and packaging, sold in compliance with the relevant EU marketing standards.

‘Fränkischer Spargel’ is distinguishable from asparagus of other origins by virtue of the fact that, apart from its outer characteristics (to meet marketing standards), it has inner qualities (delicate fibres, a mildly aromatic flavour and a low tendency to acidity) and is grown and picked only in the geographical area of Franconia.

To ensure the inner quality, the producers base their selection of varieties corresponding particularly closely to this specification on the official Bavarian variety tests. Growers are informed each year which varieties are recommended. In addition, the freshness of the asparagus is ensured, regardless of what distribution channel is used, by ongoing picking geared to prevailing weather conditions and appropriate handling after picking.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 93, 31.3.2006, p. 12.

3.3. *Raw materials (for processed products only):*

—

3.4. *Feed (for products of animal origin only):*

—

3.5. *Specific steps in production that must take place in the defined geographical area:*

Production of the asparagus, from growing to picking, must take place in the geographical area of Franconia.

3.6. *Specific rules concerning slicing, grating, packaging, etc.:*

—

3.7. *Specific rules concerning labelling:*

—

4. Concise definition of the geographical area:

The geographical area of Franconia comprises all asparagus-growing areas in the districts of Lower, Middle and Upper Franconia in the Land of Bavaria in the Federal Republic of Germany.

5. Link with the geographical area:

5.1. *Specificity of the geographical area:*

'Fränkischer Spargel' is produced in the areas of clayey ground that are typical of Franconia and in the sandy soils of the Jura, the hills and Keuper rock strata of Northern Bavaria, the Franconian Plain, the Spessart and the area around the Rhön at an average height of 200 to 300 metres above sea level. Growing conditions are characterised by an average of 1 500 hours of sunshine a year, an average temperature of 10 °C and 600 mm annual precipitation. The sunshine and average temperatures make for an early warming of the ground. The precipitation is distributed evenly, with 40 mm to 60 mm each month, so that the asparagus grows at an even rate. The growing conditions in Franconia can be monitored thanks to the measurements taken by the Spargel-Temperaturservice Project of the temperature in the earth embankments.

Because of these geographical particularities, the districts of Lower, Middle and Upper Franconia are traditionally known for their highly developed asparagus production. 'Cutting off', for example, is an old way of harvesting white asparagus that is still in use. This involves separating just part of the asparagus spear from the plant with a long knife without severing the whole spear below the soil.

References to the tradition of growing asparagus go back as far as Florinus in 1702 to 1722 (Bavarian State Library, Munich). The origins of asparagus production in Franconia are also documented in historical sources dating from 1799 to 1858 for the Bamberg (Upper Franconia) area and 1860 for the Kitzingen (Lower Franconia) district. A history of Markt Eggolsheim (Upper Franconia) from 1876 refers to asparagus being produced in the region in 1670.

Over the centuries, asparagus production has become an important factor in the Franconian economy, as well as taking on culinary and cultural significance. In 2000, asparagus growing in Franconia accounted for 670 ha (Upper Franconia: 77,18 ha; Middle Franconia: 264,62 ha; Lower Franconia: 327,61 ha), which represents 41 % of all asparagus production areas in Bavaria.

5.2. *Specificity of the product:*

Franconian asparagus is appreciated above all for its delicate fibres, mildly aromatic flavour and low tendency to acidity. An 1858 edition of the journal *Die Gartenlaube* (reproduced in Elyane Werner, *Fränkisches Leben — fränkischer Brauch*, W. Ludwig Press, 1992) refers to the asparagus as 'traditionally celebrated'.

Franconian asparagus enjoys considerable renown and a good reputation throughout the region and beyond. This is clear, inter alia, from the fact that it is presented in the media as a much sought-after delicacy. Since 1998, a vote has been held every two years to elect the official Franconian Asparagus Queen. The Queen and her regional Franconian Asparagus Princesses attract a lot of attention. Many asparagus festivals are held in Franconia, of which Nuremberg's 'Spargelmarkt' is the most famous. Not

only the regional newspapers, but also the media in other parts of Bavaria, report every year on the start of the asparagus season in Franconia, when often the Bavarian Agriculture Minister symbolically presents the first spear. Traditionally, the asparagus harvest ends every year on 24 June (St John's Day).

5.3. *Causal link between the geographical area and the quality or characteristics of the product (for PDO) or a specific quality, the reputation or other characteristic of the product (for PGI):*

The special quality and taste of asparagus from Franconia stem from the region's unique combination of soil conditions, climate and the special know-how developed over time by the Franconian asparagus producers.

The producers' experience has been passed on from one generation to the next. This extraordinarily high level of expertise about asparagus is combined with modern research (by the Bayerische Landesanstalt für Weinbau und Gartenbau and the Bayerische Landesanstalt für Landwirtschaft), growing trials in the region (Albertshofen and Eckental), training (asparagus days) and information (asparagus circulars from the Spargel-Erzeugerverband Franken e.V. and information from the Agriculture Offices in Kitzingen and Fürth) for growers. This experience and expertise are reflected in the quality of the product.

Reference to the publication of the specification:

(Article 5(7) of Regulation (EC) No 510/2006)

Markenblatt (Trademark Gazette) Vol. 12 of 20 March 2009, Part 7a-aa, p. 4

<http://register.dpma.de/DPMAregister/geo/detail.pdfdownload/1200>
