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(Announcements)

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

(2012/C 288/08)

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

'HOLSTEINER TILSITER'

EC No: DE-PGI-0005-0807-26.04.2010

PGI (X) PDO ()

1. Name:

'Holsteiner Tilsiter'

2. Member State or Third Country:

Germany

3. Description of the agricultural product or foodstuff:

3.1. Type of product:

Class 1.3. Cheese

3.2. Description of the product to which the name in point 1 applies:

'Holsteiner Tilsiter' is a traditionally produced semi-hard cheese made from cow's milk that is continuously worked with *Brevibacterium linens* during the ripening phase and has between 30 % and 60 % fat in the dry matter. 'Holsteiner Tilsiter' can be made from either raw milk or pasteurised milk. Other than the classic wheel shape, the cheese is being made increasingly in a loaf shape. It has a thin, yellow-brown, natural rind that is processed with a mixture of *Brevibacterium linens*, whey and skimmed milk or brine during the ripening phase, which is at least five weeks long. The light yellow cheese is semi-hard, springy and very supple. As a result of the special production method, 'Holsteiner Tilsiter' features the eyes and cracks that are typical for Tilsiter. The flavour ranges from mild and lightly aromatic to strong and spicy, depending on how long the cheese is stored. The cheese is produced in a loaf or box shape weighing from 3,5 kg to 5,0 kg.

'Holsteiner Tilsiter' is produced with three different fat contents: from 30 % fat in the dry matter, from 45 % fat in the dry matter and from 60 % fat in the dry matter. The minimum fat content is 30 % fat

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 93, 31.3.2006, p. 12.

in the dry matter. Spices are generally not added during the production of 'Holsteiner Tilsiter'. Where the cheese is spiced, caraway is the only ingredient used for this purpose. No other spices are used.

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

The milk to be used does not have to originate in the above geographical area.

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

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

All steps in the cheese-making process from receiving the raw materials to the minimum five week-long storage and ripening process must take place in the defined geographical area.

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

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3.7. *Specific rules concerning labelling:*

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4. Concise definition of the geographical area:

Schleswig-Holstein in the Federal Republic of Germany. The historically documented production area for 'Holsteiner Tilsiter' has covered Schleswig-Holstein in its present day borders since the first half of the 20th century (around 1920).

5. Link with the geographical area:

5.1. *Specificity of the geographical area:*

The special manufacturing process, the particular quality resulting from it and the appearance of 'Holsteiner Tilsiter' have only been able to develop in this way here due to the interaction of the following particular conditions:

The climate in Schleswig-Holstein is heavily influenced by the sea as it is situated between the North Sea and the Baltic Sea. The geographical location and the soil characteristics have led to the development of special plant associations and as a result particular feed properties. This was to the benefit of both milk production and cheese-making and is reflected not least in the spicy, aromatic character of 'Holsteiner Tilsiter'.

There is a long tradition of milk production in Schleswig-Holstein as Schleswig-Holstein offers excellent conditions. At the end of the 16th century the dairy industry in Schleswig and Holstein started to produce a greater volume of products than the two duchies themselves required. At that time Dutch refugees brought with them knowledge of professional milk production. The structure of cooperative dairy farming developed at the end of the 19th century. 251 new farms were founded in 1888 alone. Both the structure of milk-producing holdings and the excellent level of training together with the favourable climatic and soil conditions make Schleswig-Holstein one of Europe's favoured milk production locations. So it is not without good reason that the world-renowned breed of dairy cattle is named 'Holstein-Friesian' (also commonly referred to as 'Schwarzbunte', or Black and White Holsteins, in Germany). The availability of milk and calf rennet allowed the art of cheese-making to flourish in the *Land*. However, milk from outside the geographical area is nowadays also used in cheese made in Schleswig-Holstein.

5.2. *Specificity of the product:*

'Holsteiner Tilsiter' has had an excellent reputation as a high-quality, local cheese speciality for about 120 years. Old documents show that there was a comparable cheese in the Holsteinische Schweiz at Gut Behl as early as the 16th century. The Tilsiter recipe was described for the first time in 1840 by Mrs Westpfahl who lived on a farm in the town of Tilsit in East Prussia as it was at the time. The cheese was given its name on this basis. This recipe made it to what is today Schleswig-Holstein, where it quickly became the most popular cheese as it still is today, at the end of the 19th century.

'Käsebereitung und Käsespeisen in Deutschland seit 1800' (Frank Roeb, Mainz 1976) states: 'In Schleswig-Holstein Tilsit was not produced until even later. Reports suggest that this cheese was not made there much before 1900. Later it would even receive funding from the state (from 1929, see Middelhauve)'.

Today, Schleswig-Holstein is a centre for the production of Tilsit (see 'Dr. Oetker Lebensmittel-Lexikon', 2004, p. 812; C. Dumont, 'Kulinarisches Lexikon', 1998, p. 516; 'Essen & Trinken im Detail' article — 'mein coop magazin': 'Holsteiner Tilsiter und Beaujolais AOC'). The article entitled 'Tilsiter — Käse der Ostsee' from the 'Hamburg Slow Food Convivium' (Burchard Bösch, 2005) declares that 'Schleswig-Holstein, the *Land* between the seas, is now the undisputed hub of Tilsit production'.

Statements from institutions in the sector confirm that 'Holsteiner Tilsiter' has become a well-known and loved regional speciality and is also the name most closely associated with Tilsit cheese produced in Schleswig-Holstein. This is supported by the mention of it as a regional cheese speciality in 'Kulturgeschichte der deutschen Küche' by Peter Peter (2005, p. 135), where it says 'Holsteiner Tilsiter, Würchwtizer Milbenkäse, Allgäuer Bergkäse, (...) in comparison to France and Italy and even to England or Ireland, the selection of high-ranking German cheeses is rather modest'. A number of websites also allude to the special reputation enjoyed by 'Holsteiner Tilsiter'. The 'Alles Käse — das Infoportal' site (<http://www.walserstolz.de>) states that 'Tilsit cheese has a long tradition, especially in northern Germany and also all along the Baltic coast. The main *Land* in which this cheese is produced is Schleswig-Holstein, where the words "Tilsit" and "semi-hard cheese" are still used more or less as synonyms'. <http://www.germanfoods.org>, a guide to German food products in the USA, explains that '... the areas of Schleswig-Holstein (...) in the northern part of Germany also produce some of Germany's more famous cheeses such as (...) Tilsit (...)'. Other references are found on websites such as the Paulsen site (<http://www.party-paulsen.de>), which refers to 'Holsteiner Tilsiter — Schleswig-Holstein's best cheese'.

The special, natural bacteria cultures in the ripening cellars that have developed over generations and are only native here give 'Holsteiner Tilsiter' its incomparable nutty flavour which clearly separates it from Tilsit cheeses from other geographical regions.

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 reputation of 'Holsteiner Tilsiter' and the high regard in which it is held are based partly on Schleswig-Holstein's long tradition as milk and cheese country, but mainly on the skill and expertise of the local dairy farmers. A preferred method of milk production formed the basis for the cheese that has for centuries been produced by local farmers. Old recipes and experience of cheese-making as a local craft were handed down from generation to generation, inspiring the cheese specialities of the *Land*. One of the most important of these is 'Holsteiner Tilsiter' — a regional speciality, the various forms of which are well known outside the region and highly regarded.

The distinctive, tangy flavour of 'Holsteiner Tilsiter' and the holes that it conventionally contains had become a part of the Schleswig-Holstein cheese-making tradition long before the name 'Tilsit' was widely used for this type of cheese. Only at the end of the 19th century was this term imported from East Prussia to Schleswig-Holstein and also used for the type of cheese produced there using a similar recipe. Since then the names 'Tilsit from Schleswig-Holstein' and 'Holsteiner Tilsiter' have therefore been used.

The rural tradition of cheese-making has to this day continued to develop in Schleswig-Holstein. The excellent reputation of dairy technology training for farmers, the main centre of which is now the Lehr- und Versuchsanstalt für Milchwirtschaft in the town of Bad Malente, also extends well beyond the borders of the *Land*.

A sign of the excellent reputation of 'Holsteiner Tilsiter' is its very specific aroma and its particular flavour, which is characterised by the special way in which it is spiced with caraway. Both properties can only be achieved through the special bacteria cultures, which can only exist in type and combination in the climatic area between the North Sea and the Baltic Sea.

The plants producing 'Holsteiner Tilsiter' are also at the centre of the 'Käsestraße Schleswig-Holstein', whose renown extends well beyond the borders of the *Land*. In this association some 40 cheese-makers form a group promoting the tradition of cheese-making in Schleswig-Holstein and represent about 120 different types of cheese. The association was founded following the cheese market held in 1999 at the 'Kiekeberg' open-air museum in Hamburg on the initiative of the Slow Food movement. At this market the Schleswig-Holstein dairy farmers were dubbed the 'wine growers of the north' on account of the wide range of Schleswig-Holstein cheeses displayed at the event. In particular, the various variants of 'Holsteiner Tilsiter' were exhibited at the market as exemplary specimens from 'Schleswig-Holstein cheese country'.

Reference to the publication of the specification:

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

Full specification published in:

Markenblatt Vol. 30 of 24 July 2009, Part 7a-aa, p. 13378

<http://register.dpma.de/DPMAreger/geo/detail.pdfdownload/7201>
