

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 384/16)

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

‘SAINT-MARCELLIN’

EC No: FR-PGI-0005-0832-08.10.2010

PGI (X) PDO ()

1. Name:

‘Saint-Marcellin’

2. Member State or Third Country:

France

3. Description of the agricultural product or foodstuff:

3.1. Type of product:

Class 1.3, cheeses

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

‘Saint-Marcellin’ is a cheese made from raw or thermised whole milk whose fat and protein content has not been standardised. It has a cylindrical shape with rounded edges, is 65 mm to 80 mm in diameter and 20 mm to 25 mm in height, and weighs at least 80 grams. This cheese has a soft lactic paste which is neither kneaded nor pressed, is lightly salted, has no added spices or flavourings, and has a surface flora that can be white, beige to grey-blue. The paste has an even texture when cut.

‘Saint-Marcellin’ contains 40 to 65 grams of fat per 100 grams of cheese after total desiccation.

‘Saint-Marcellin’ comes in two different types depending on the drying process:

- ‘dry’ ‘Saint-Marcellin’ has a dry matter content of more than 44 % and is made in accordance with the local tradition. It undergoes a maturing process that is designed to improve its shelf life by limiting its proteolysis,
- ‘soft’ ‘Saint-Marcellin’ has a dry matter content of more than 40 % due to more moderate drying. It undergoes a maturing process which enables it to develop strong aromas and a supple or even creamy texture. These cheeses of a more regional tradition are often matured for a longer period of time.

‘Saint-Marcellin’ cannot be marketed until at least 10 days after renneting.

‘Saint-Marcellin’ may be packaged or not when marketed.

From a visual point of view, its rind may be slightly wrinkled and must be largely or completely covered in mould of the following colours: white, beige to grey-blue. When cut, its cream-colour paste is smooth and even in texture and may have occasional holes. When eaten, the rind is barely

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 93, 31.3.2006, p. 12.

noticeable. Soft 'Saint-Marcellin' is characterised by a melt-in-the-mouth texture, while that of dry 'Saint-Marcellin' is firm. Its fresh flavour has a balanced aromatic richness (with a fruity, honey-like taste etc.) typical of 'Saint-Marcellin', which is predominantly lactic and moderately salty.

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

Whole cow's milk from the geographical area, whose fat and protein content has not been standardised.

The milk must be used raw or thermised, which rules out any process of pasteurisation. 'Saint-Marcellin' is a local traditional cheese that has developed in an area specialising in dairy cattle farming. The milk used for making the cheese has always come from farms in the geographical area. Its reputation is built on a well-tuned production chain that links producers of quality milk who use the land and its potential to processors who uphold the local know-how.

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

The geographical area of production is characterised by a large forage area. Local farmers have always naturally favoured the use of local resources, which have contributed to the characteristic features of 'Saint-Marcellin'. They use grass and particularly hay as the mainstay in the animal feed and make only limited use of supplementary feeds, in keeping with traditional farming methods.

Therefore, the following criteria apply to dairy cow feed:

- feed autonomy: at least 80 % of the dry matter of the total annual feed ration must come from the geographical area,
- grass in all its forms accounts for at least 50 % of the dry matter of the feed ration on an annual basis,
- hay makes up 15 % of the dry matter of the basic feed ration over the four winter months (December, January, February, March),
- authorised supplementary feeds account for a maximum of 30 % of the dry matter of the total annual ration. Supplementary feeds authorised in that regard are the following: seeds and by-products of cereals, oilseeds and protein crops, ground nut cakes, and dehydrated legumes. The following products are allowed for up to 10 % of the supplements listed above: whey, potatoes and other tubers, dried beet pulp, molasses, and nutritional supplements: minerals, vitamins, trace elements, baking soda, salt.

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

All the stages in the production of the milk and the processing and maturing of 'Saint-Marcellin' must take place in the defined geographical area.

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

None.

3.7. *Specific rules on labelling:*

In addition to the compulsory information required by the regulations on the labelling of cheeses, the label of each cheese features:

- the name 'Saint-Marcellin',
- the details of the production unit,
- the European Union's PGI logo and/or the words 'Indication Géographique Protégée'.

4. **Concise definition of the geographical area:**

The geographical area of production of 'Saint-Marcellin' is located on the east bank of the Rhone river, next to the Massif du Vercors. It is centred in the town of Saint-Marcellin (in Isère), after which the product was named and where 'Saint-Marcellin' was first marketed. It has been defined according to historical criteria (the place where 'Saint-Marcellin' was first produced and marketed) and geographic criteria (consistency of landscape and use of the environment).

The geographical area comprises the following cantons:

in the department of Drôme:

- the entire area of the cantons of (La) Chapelle-en-Vercors, Romans-sur-Isère, first and second cantons, Saint-Donat-sur-l'Herbasse, Saint-Jean-en-Royans,
- canton of Bourg-de-Péage, except for the municipalities of Alixan, Bourg-de-Péage, Châteauneuf-sur-Isère,
- canton of Chabeuil: only the municipalities of (Le) Chaffal, Chateaudouble, Peyrus,
- canton of Crest-Nord: only the municipalities of Omblèze, Plan-de-Baix,
- canton of (Le) Grand-Serre: only the municipalities of Le Grand-Serre, Hauterives, Montrigaud, Saint-Christophe-et-le-Laris, Tersanne,
- canton of Saint-Vallier: only the municipalities of Châteauneuf-de-Galaure, Claveyson, Fay-le-Clos, La-Motte-de-Galaure, Mureils, Ratières, Saint-Avit, Saint-Barthélémy-de-Vals, Saint-Martin-D'Août, Saint-Uze;

in the department of Isère:

- the entire area of the cantons of (La) Côte-Saint-André, (Le) Grand-Lemps, (Le) Pont-Beauvoisin, Pont-en-Royans, Rives, Roybon, Saint-Etienne-de-Saint-Geoirs, Saint-Geoire-en-Valdaine, Saint-Marcellin, Tullins, Vinay, Virieu,
- canton of Saint-Jean-de-Bournay: only the municipalities of Chatonnay, Eclose, Lieudieu, Meyssies, Saint-Anne-sur-Gervonde, Saint-Jean-de-Bournay, Tramole, Villeneuve-de-Marc,
- canton of Saint-Laurent-du-Pont except for the municipalities of Saint-Pierre-d'Entremont, Saint-Pierre-de-Chartreuse,
- canton of Fontaine-Sassenage: only the municipality of Veurey-Voroize,
- canton of (La) Tour-du-Pin: only the municipalities of Montagnieu, Sainte-Blandine, Saint-Victor-de-Cessieu, Torchefelon,
- canton of Villard-de-Lans except for the municipalities of Engins, Saint-Nizier-du-Moucherotte,
- canton of Voiron, except for the municipality of Voreppe;

in the department of Savoie:

- canton of (Le) Pont-de-Beauvoisin: only the municipalities of Belmont-Tramonet, (La) Bridoire, Domessin, (Le) Pont-de-Beauvoisin, Saint-Beron, Verel-de-Montbel,
- canton of Saint-Genix-sur-Guiers, except for the municipalities of Gerbaix, Marcieux, Novalaise.

5. Link with the geographical area:

5.1. Specificity of the geographical area:

Natural factors

The 'Saint-Marcellin' territory is part of the Bas Dauphiné region, which sits between the plains of the Lyon region and the limestone mountains of Chartreuse and western Vercors. It is made up of tertiary hills and plateaus that are cut across by broad valleys and are bordered by mountainous areas to the east. It marks a smooth transition between the mountains and the plains, between the Alps and Provence.

It has a mostly temperate and hilly type of climate, with average temperatures of 9-11 °C and rainfall of 800-1 100 mm.

This region is known for its winds, which typically blow along a north-south line and have marked the history and culture of producers and processors. This wind has been used to dry walnuts and tobacco as well as cheese and has shaped the local architecture. This contributed to the initial establishment and setting up of cheese dairies throughout this territory. The presence of these dairies has not changed over the years.

Human factors

The 'Saint-Marcellin' territory is predominantly rural and markedly agricultural with a high percentage of grassland (the forage area makes up 40 % to 80 % of the utilised agricultural area). Mixed farming sits alongside livestock rearing, mainly represented by arboriculture (especially walnut trees, producing the PDO 'Noix de Grenoble') and milk production respectively.

The cheese, which was originally called 'tomme' and was made on farms, naturally found its identity in the town of Saint-Marcellin, where the main market in the region was held from the 15th century onwards.

The drying of cheeses, walnuts (and tobacco) was facilitated by the winds that are typical of the region, which explains the presence of walnut drying kilns throughout the area. The walnut drying kilns could also be used to dry cheeses in baskets called 'tommiers', which were hung out in the open air.

From 1870, farm produce collectors called 'coquetiers' went round farms to collect produce at regular intervals. They first supplied the cheese to the main cities nearby: Romans, Grenoble, Lyon, Saint-Etienne, Avignon, which have remained major centres of consumption ever since. This encouraged farmers to make more cheeses, which boosted the marketing of 'Saint-Marcellin'.

In the 1920s, the former farm produce collectors further developed the cheese-making process by applying new production techniques inspired by farm methods (curd, use of identical stainers, etc.). This led to the setting up of the first cheese dairies in the region of Saint-Marcellin and the establishment of a first formal definition of 'Saint-Marcellin' cheese.

From very early on, the production chain of 'Saint-Marcellin' has sought to collaborate and to protect the product. First, the Union des Fabricants du 'Saint-Marcellin' (Union of 'Saint-Marcellin' Producers) was set up in 1971. Later, in 1994, the Comité Interprofessionnel du 'Saint-Marcellin' ('Saint-Marcellin' Inter-trade Committee) was established, which also includes milk producers and farm producers. Since that time, the entire industry has been involved in promoting 'Saint-Marcellin', improving its quality and seeking to have its name protected.

5.2. Specificity of the product:

The characteristic features of the cheese

'Saint Marcellin' is a small puck-shaped cheese with rounded edges that is about 7 cm in diameter, weighs at least 80 grams and is about 2 cm in height.

From a visual point of view, its rind may be slightly wrinkled and is largely or completely covered in white, beige to grey-blue mould.

When cut, its cream-colour paste is smooth and even in texture. When eaten, the rind is barely noticeable. Soft 'Saint-Marcellin' is characterised by a melt-in-the-mouth texture, whereas that of dry 'Saint-Marcellin' is firm.

Its fresh flavour has a balanced aromatic richness (fruity, honey-like taste etc.) typical of 'Saint-Marcellin', which is predominantly lactic and moderately salty.

Traditional know-how

Local forage, especially grass, is the mainstay of the dairy herd's feed, as cattle graze over large areas (stocking rate of holdings limited to 1,4 LU/ha) for at least 180 days a year. These measures aim to ensure that the milk used is of a high quality.

The milk undergoes only a limited amount of heat treatment (pasteurisation is not allowed) and is not standardised so as to retain all its original qualities and allow the aromatic richness of 'Saint-Marcellin' to develop.

'Saint-Marcellin' owes its whole identity and character to a specific production process which harks back to ancient methods. The characteristic organoleptic features of 'Saint-Marcellin' are obtained from a 'lactic' type of curd, which is neither pressed nor kneaded, is lightly salted, dried and matured.

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 link to the origin of 'Saint-Marcellin' lies in its reputation, the characteristic features of the cheese and traditional know-how.

The production of 'Saint-Marcellin' is underpinned by traditional farming (mixed farming — livestock rearing) and production practices that are closely linked with the natural environment:

- the importance of grazing and local forage in the animal feed thanks to the large foraging areas in the geographical area,
- the windy character of the geographical area which has spawned the tradition of preserving cheeses by drying and maturing.

All these conditions were beneficial to the production of small cheeses, which, as early as the 15th century, were named 'Saint-Marcellin' after the main market of the time. 'Saint-Marcellin' was first mentioned in the accounting records of Louis XI's administration (15th century).

'Saint-Marcellin' cheese was first officially described in France in 1935 at the request of the producers in the area. The definition was made compulsory in 1942 and has changed several times since. The current specification that cheeses must comply with dates from 1980: 'approximately 70 millimetres in diameter, 20 to 25 millimetres in height, weighing at least 80 grams, made from renneted cow's milk, with a soft paste, neither kneaded nor pressed, lightly salted, without added spices or flavourings, ...'. The definition has enabled the production of 'Saint-Marcellin' to develop under a set of rules.

'Saint-Marcellin' Day, the 'Saint-Marcellin' Museum and the participation of the Saint-Marcellin Committee in local and national farming events have helped to cement the product's reputation.

Its presence on many gourmet menus of restaurants in the Dauphiné and surrounding areas (Lyon, Grenoble, Saint-Étienne) is testimony to the reputation that 'Saint-Marcellin' currently enjoys: it can be presented as part of a cheese platter, heated in salads, cooked in pastry or as a gratin, etc. 'L'inventaire du patrimoine culinaire français' (Inventory of French culinary heritage), Rhône-Alpes edition of 1995, devotes an article to 'Saint-Marcellin', in which this reputation is confirmed.

At present, the name 'Saint-Marcellin' is used extensively by the seven dairies in the area of production, as shown by the examples of labels provided. It enjoys a strong reputation in the region and beyond. In 2008, 35,5 million cheeses were produced under the 'Saint-Marcellin' label.

Thanks to its long-standing history and its early definition, this cheese has gone from strength to strength without losing its identity. Owing to its well-tuned production chain and its identification with the region and the local know-how, 'Saint-Marcellin' has firmly established a national reputation, even though the bulk of its production is still based in its place of origin.

Reference to publication of the specification:

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

<https://www.inao.gouv.fr/fichier/CDCIGPSaint-MarcellinV2.pdf>
