

Publication of an application pursuant to Article 50(2)(a) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs

(2013/C 77/10)

This publication confers the right to oppose the application pursuant to Article 51 of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽¹⁾.

AMENDMENT APPLICATION

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006

on protected geographical indications and protected designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs ⁽²⁾

AMENDMENT APPLICATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE 9

‘STELVIO’/‘STILFSER’

EC No: IT-PDO-0105-0939-18.01.2012

PGI () PDO (X)

1. Heading in the product specification affected by the amendment:

- Name of product
- Description of product
- Geographical area
- Proof of origin
- Method of production
- Link
- Labelling
- National requirements
- Other (to be specified)

2. Type of amendment(s):

- Amendment to Single Document or Summary Sheet
- Amendment to Specification of registered PDO or PGI for which neither the Single Document nor the Summary have been published
- Amendment to Specification that requires no amendment to the published Single Document (Article 9(3) of Regulation (EC) No 510/2006)
- Temporary amendment to Specification resulting from imposition of obligatory sanitary or phytosanitary measures by public authorities (Article 9(4) of Regulation (EC) No 510/2006)

3. Amendment(s):

Article 3 — Description of the production process

3.3.2. The original ban on use in the cattle's diet of products containing corn silage is being removed. This rule was probably the result of a misunderstanding, as corn silage has been used and appreciated for decades in the identified area as it is particularly stable. The provision that

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 343, 14.12.2012, p. 1.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 93, 31.3.2006, p. 12. Replaced by Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 November 2012 on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs.

'products containing corn silage are not allowed' is thus being replaced with 'products containing corn silage obtained outside the area identified in Article 2 are not allowed'.

Article 4 — Characteristics of processing

- 4.1. During the initial storage stage, the cooling temperature for the milk intended for processing was given as a range 'up to a temperature of around 6,0-9,0 °C', the application of which was unclear. The cooling limit has been brought into line with current best practice and is to be changed to 'a temperature of not less than 4,0 °C', a much clearer instruction.

The original rules also stated that the maximum duration of this preliminary cooling process was 25 hours. Under the conditions referred to above, this duration has been redefined as 'a maximum of 48 hours'. In this context, it appears necessary to make additional time available essentially because milk collected at weekends also needs to be processed (the duration is not particularly relevant to the temperature conditions specified).

Lastly, the current specification states that the milk must be sent for cheese-making within 48 hours after milking takes place. In view of the earlier adjustments proposed for this stage, and taking account once again of current best practice, the deadline for sending milk for cheese-making is to be amended to a more realistic 'within 72 hours of collection'. Another factor here is that it is only theoretically possible for cheese-makers to comply with the requirements of documenting and checking the original deadline, beginning 'after milking takes place', as they cannot know the exact time of milking.

- 4.2.1. The description of the process for reducing fat using a separator remains in place, but has been supplemented through the addition of the possibility of carrying out a preliminary bacto-fugation process. This process is relevant only for product safety and is commonly carried out prior to separation in order to eliminate somatic cells, which are well known as an obstacle to correct maturation. The amendment thus entails supplementing the description of the reduction process with the clause 'possibly cleaned by means of bacto-fugation' relating to the milk in question.
- 4.2.2. The heat treatment of the milk has been described better and more precisely. Therefore, while the temperature conditions already indicated (72 °C) are not being changed, the reference to duration has been changed to 'not less than three seconds' rather than 'a period not exceeding two-three seconds' as originally laid down in a manner unsuited to the process generally used.
- 4.2.5. The timescale within which the rennet must be added was originally specified as 50-60 minutes after inoculation with milk enzymes. This has been amended to a more appropriate 'within 85 minutes' after inoculation with milk enzymes. Accordingly, the timescale for carrying out this step will be more clearly defined and will be more in line with best practice and with the processing requirements, which are subject to seasonal variations in the maturity/activity of the milk.

On the subject of rennet, the original requirement that '[t]he rennet shall be produced in the area following a traditional method' has been changed to '[t]he rennet shall be produced following a traditional method'. This amendment became necessary for technical reasons linked to the difficulty for producers to obtain the rennet needed to produce 'Stelvio/Stilfser' within the districts of the Province of Bolzano. This amendment enlarges the rennet production area and ensures compliance with the rennet characteristics that have always been laid down in the specification.

The sentence reading 'This heating [i.e. of the mixture being processed] is carried out by adding hot water (50-70 °C) in the volume required...' needed to be clarified in several ways in the light of the actual methods, both traditional and contemporary, for regulating temperature at this stage. Accordingly, it has been improved and made more detailed as follows: 'This heating is carried out by adding hot water (kept at 45-70 °C after having reached at least 50 °C) in the volume required'. This rule is clearer and more consistent.

Lastly, the provision on the duration of the cheese-making process, namely that '[t]he duration of processing, from addition of the rennet to unloading onto the table or into the vat, shall be around 80-90 minutes on average' has been amended in a similar manner so as to better specify its binding nature. It has now been clarified as follows: 'The duration of processing, from addition of the rennet to unloading onto the table or into the vat, shall normally be around 80-90 minutes and must not exceed 110 minutes'.

4.2.6. The duration of salting used to be regulated as follows: 'The treatment shall last 36-48 hours'. In order to better define the traditional process and make the associated parameters more precise, and also because of the ongoing objective of generally reducing the amount of salt in food, this provision is being amended to read 'The treatment [i.e. salting] shall last for no more than 48 hours', with the rest being unchanged. The removal of the minimum duration of salting makes it possible to come into line with the ongoing evolution of the process in the light of changing health objectives. It abolishes the requirement to observe a minimum duration — the timescale affects the outcome of the process — and allows the duration to be further reduced in future without altering the organoleptic characteristics of the product.

4.2.7. An external patina of varying colour is produced on the cheese as it matures owing to the proliferation of the bacteria strains that characterise the local microflora of the specially grown crops. In this connection, it has been deemed necessary to elaborate on the description of the interacting factors by making provision for the addition of natural yeast, which is conducive to deacidification in the rind, a process traditionally needed for the desired proliferation to occur. Accordingly, a sentence reading 'Natural yeast may be added to encourage deacidification in the rind' is added after '...proliferation of these local strains'.

The duration of the maturing period used to have a subjective, rather approximate definition, namely 'the product's 60th day of age, starting from completion of the salting stage'. In order to better specify the duration of this period, a clearer definition that is more in line with practice has been preferred, namely '... starting from when the cheese is placed in the mould', which gives an unambiguous, well defined reference.

Article 5 — Characteristics of the finished product

The following non-substantive amendments have been made to the description of the finished product:

The original 'age: at least 60 days of maturation' has been replaced with the clearer, more correct 'maturation: at least 60 days' (except in linguistic terms this is not actually an amendment).

The percentage limit of fat in dry matter was incorrect in the original text owing to a clear typographical error as compared to other published texts and has been corrected as follows:

fat in dry matter: '> 50 %' (instead of '< 50 %')

The diameter and height ranges of the cheese are different, as follows:

Descriptor	Original measurements	Amended measurements
Diameter	36-38 cm	34-38 cm
Height	8-10 cm	8-11 cm

The purpose of it is to take better account of the limited but inevitable variation that may affect the dimensions of an individual cheese at the end of a proper, compliant natural maturing process, owing to constriction by the mould because of a possible different configuration and to insufficient settling of the heel and sides.

Article 8 — Monitoring

In accordance with the instructions in force, this article has been supplemented with all the identification and contact details of the monitoring body.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006**on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs⁽³⁾****'STELVIO'/'STILFSER'****EC No: IT-PDO-0105-0939-18.01.2012****PGI () PDO (X)****1. Name:**

The name 'Stelvio'/'Stilfser' was entered as a protected designation of origin (PDO) in the 'Register of protected designations of origin and protected geographical indications' by means of Commission Regulation (EC) No 148/2007 of 15 February 2007, published in Official Journal L 46/2007.

2. Member State or Third Country:

Italy

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 (1) applies:

When ready for consumption, 'Stelvio' or 'Stilfser' cheese, having matured for a minimum of 60 days, is cylindrical with flat or almost flat sides and a straight or slightly concave heel. A cheese measures as follows: between 8 and 10 kg in weight, with a diameter of between 34 and 38 cm and a height of between 8 and 11 cm. The fat content in dry matter is at least 50 % and the moisture content does not exceed 44 %. The rind must be of a yellow-orange to orange-brown colour. The texture of the cheese is compact, pliable and springy. It is a pale, straw yellow colour, with irregular, small to medium-sized eyes.

'Stelvio' or 'Stilfser' cheese is sold either in whole rounds or in portions and is released for consumption bearing the designation of origin label.

3.3. Raw materials (for processed products only):

'Stelvio' or 'Stilfser' cheese is produced using cow's milk that is obtained in the identified geographical area from cattle fed mainly on fodder harvested in that area and has a protein content in excess of 3,10 %. The milk may be lightly skimmed to regulate the fat content to between 3,45 % and 3,6 %.

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

During any grazing in Alpine pastures, the cows must be fed mainly on fresh grass, and when stabled, their basic diet, on which they feed freely, is composed of hay and silage from grass harvested in the identified area up to a maximum of 15 kg per head. It is permitted to use corn silage obtained in the identified geographical area; dried fodder; barley, rye, triticale, wheat, oats and maize, in the form of the products themselves, by-products or, for the first five, straw. It is also possible to use oil seeds and the products and by-products thereof as follows: non-genetically modified soya, rape, linseed and

⁽³⁾ See footnote 2.

sunflower, including where decorticated or partially decorticated; dried beet pulp; brewer's grains and dried apple residues; beet; potatoes; brewer's yeast; molasses; locust beans; powdered dairy products; amino acids and noble proteins not derived from proteolysis; vegetable fats.

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

All the operations described in the specification and in this document must take place in the geographical area identified in point 4 below, from the rearing of the cattle to milking, collecting and processing the milk, cheese-making and maturation.

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

Whole rounds of cheese are cut into portions only after having being labelled with the designation of origin label. 'Stelvio' or 'Stilfser' cheese may also be packaged into portions outside the identified geographical area. Portions of 'Stelvio' or 'Stilfser' cheese are sold with a label identifying the designation of origin, or with an adhesive label affixed to the packaging and/or with a pre-printed wrapping bearing the 'Stelvio' or 'Stilfser' protected designation of origin.

3.7. *Specific rules concerning labelling:*

'Stelvio' or 'Stilfser' cheese sold in whole rounds bears the designation of origin label — which is affixed only after it has matured for 60 days — and the stamp indicating the batch, date of production and producer code.

Products for sale bear the specific label denoting the designation of origin.

The designation of origin label is made up of the words 'Stilfser-Stelvio' in red lettering.

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

The identified geographical area for 'Stelvio' or 'Stilfser' cheese, where all steps in rearing and milking the cattle, collecting and processing the milk, cheese-making and maturation must take place, is composed of the following districts in the Autonomous Province of Bolzano: Val Venosta, Burgaviato, Salto-Sciliar, Val Pusteria, Val d'Isarco and the whole municipality of Bolzano. These districts incorporate the census and administrative territory of 84 municipalities.

5. **Link with the geographical area:**

5.1. *Specificity of the geographical area:*

'Stelvio' or 'Stilfser' cheese, traditionally produced within the area defined in the product specification, has retained over time the specific traits shaped by the Alpine environment in the Stelvio-Stilfser mountain park, which is the main production area and thus gave the cheese its name. The climate conditions and even soils of the Alto-Adige Alpine area influence the nature of the fodder mainly used in the cattle's diet and thus the cheese produced in the area from their milk.

Some historical texts describe the Alpine pasture grasses (marbl and madaun) that helped improve the quality of the milk produced. The specific environmental and climatic conditions in the identified geographical area are linked to its mountainous nature, which has always been characterised by livestock holdings (*masi*) located at an altitude of between 500 and 2 000 metres. These conditions interact with the action of the local microflora during the maturation process. These exclusive, one-off environmental factors and the evolution over time of the production tradition help to give 'Stelvio' or 'Stilfser' protected designated of origin cheese specific characteristics that make it a unique, stand-alone product that is indelibly marked by its local traits.

5.2. *Specificity of the product:*

Other than those indicated in point 3.2, the product has certain particularly unique specific characteristics that can be summed up as follows:

— rind colour: varying from yellow-orange to orange-brown,

- flavour: aromatic and marked, at times pungent,
- fat in dry matter: 50 % or more.

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):*

When in Alpine pasture the cattle feed on fresh grass and when stabled their diet is primarily based on fodder and silage from grass obtained in the identified geographical area; moreover, only milk produced in that area is used. The mountainous nature and soil characteristics of the area, together with the traits of the specific Alpine grasses and the local microflora with its various bacteria strains that are used in the processing, give the maturation process of the cheese certain unique distinctive features that help to give it an unmistakable taste. These factors play a decisive role both in giving the rind its colour and in contributing to the product's unmistakable flavour and aroma. Moreover, the overall diet of the cattle contributes to the rather high level of fat compared to dry matter.

The above factors can be traced over time in sources dating back to the Late Middle Ages and became consolidated through custom and by traditional local institutions including *maso* farms, as illustrated by a description of the product and its production process at a cheese factory in Stilf (Stelvio) in 1914. All of this gave rise to significant economic benefits throughout the geographic area. The specification makes these factors compulsory by imposing requirements on both cattle farmers and processors that must be documented by means of specific entries and records, identification systems for each individual operator in the area and the keeping of specific documentation concerning processing, production and allocation of the designation.

Reference to publication of the specification:

(Article 5(7) of Regulation (EC) No 510/2006 ⁽⁴⁾)

The Ministry launched the national objection procedure with the publication of the proposal to amend 'Stelvio'/'Stilfser' in *Official Gazette of the Italian Republic* No 218 of 19 September 2011.

The full text of the product specification is available on the following web site:

<http://www.politicheagricole.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/3335>

or

by going directly to the home page of the Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policy (<http://www.politicheagricole.it>) and clicking on 'Qualità e sicurezza' (in the top right-hand corner of the screen) and then on 'Disciplinari di Produzione all'esame dell'UE'.

⁽⁴⁾ See footnote 2.