

Publication of an amendment 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 179/09)

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 the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs ⁽²⁾

AMENDMENT APPLICATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE 9

‘SELLES-SUR-CHER’

EC No: FR-PDO-0117-0976-26.01.2012

PGI () PDO (X)

1. Heading in the 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 Sheet has 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)

3.1. Chapter 2: Description of product

- Following a change in the regulations on additives, the term ‘vegetable ash’ has been replaced by ‘vegetable carbon’.
- Change in the size of the cheese: the shape of the cheese has been specified (approximately 10 cm to 9 cm), which is more in line with the size of the mould.

⁽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.

Additions have been made to the description of the cheese. The predominant colour of the cheese is a more or less uniform ash grey. The ivory-white paste of the cheese is matt, smooth and homogenous, with a solid, thin, even rind. As the cheese matures, the scents of fresh goat's cheese take on a hint of mushroom and goat. It has a fresh, melt-in-the-mouth texture. Its taste strikes a balance between salty, acid and bitter flavours. The term 'soft cheese' has been deleted as it is not suited to the production of goat's cheese (lactic production is involved here). The phrase 'more or less blue surface mould' refers to farmhouse cheese matured beyond its minimum maturity period. Nowadays this accounts for only a tiny fraction of production, so this phrase has also been deleted.

The total weight of dry matter has been specified: 55 grams per cheese.

3.2. *Chapter 4: Evidence that the product originates in the geographical area*

- Traceability: to provide a firmer guarantee of origin, all producers must declare the volumes produced and ensure that the product can be traced from production to marketing.

3.3. *Chapter 5: Method of production*

To firmly anchor the product in its region, changes have been made to a number of points of the specifications:

5.1: Milk production

- 80 % of the renewal kids are reared in the geographical area in order to limit health risks and to foster genetics suited to the environment;
- the goats are of the Alpine or Saanen breed or a cross of the two breeds, which adapted to the region a long time ago;
- out-of-season breeding of flocks makes it possible to spread the production period more evenly without compromising the product's quality;
- the minimum surface area in goat sheds is 1,5m² per goat;
- at least 75 % of feed originates from the region, accounting for an average of 825 kg of dry matter per year;
- a ration consists of at least 550 kg of dry matter of coarse fodder: to ensure this ration, the forage area must be at least 1 000 m² per goat;
- to control the types of feed that may be used, a list of authorised fodder originating from the geographical area has been added;
- the use of wrapping is limited to 350 kg of dry matter per goat per year, and the rate of dry matter of wrapped feed must be higher than 50 %;
- the use of grass silage and maize silage is allowed until 31 December 2014;
- clarifications have been made to the section on supplementary rations;
- GMOs are prohibited.

5.2: Processing

- Milk is allowed to mature prior to renneting: this improves the milk's ability to be processed into cheese and thus reach its aromatic potential;
- curding time is 18-48 hours, at a temperature lower than 25 °C in order to guarantee the curd's lactic character;
- slicing is allowed;
- serum is drained either manually or by pumping (pre-draining through a cloth is prohibited);
- the conditions for reincorporating frozen curd have been specified;

- the ingredients that may be used are rennet, vegetable carbon, ferments, calcium chloride and salt;
- the cheese must be removed from the mould 18-48 hours after moulding;
- the definition of the size of the mould specifies the dimensions and the angles (the mould has not been changed);
- removal from the mould must occur between 44 and 72 hours after renneting;
- a reference to the farm may be made provided the milk used is less than 24 hours old since the first milking and no frozen curd has been added;
- the cheese must be transported by the maturer at a positive temperature lower than 10 °C.

3.4. *Chapter 6: Evidence of the link with the geographical origin*

The section on links has been revised in order to divide the text into three parts:

Chapter 6.1: Specificities of the geographical area

Additions have been made to this chapter in order to establish or support the following elements:

- the development of efficient goat production in an agronomically poor environment;
- the region's diversity, which allows for varied fodder production;
- the historical bases of lactic technology;
- the role of maturers in the standardisation of the cheese's format.

Chapter 6.2: Specificities of the product

The key characteristics of 'Selles-sur-Cher' cheese are set out here.

Chapter 6.3: Interaction between the area and the specificities of the product

This chapter sets out the links between the natural factors of the area and the cheese's originality.

3.5. *Chapter 7: References to the inspection body*

This chapter has been updated again to take account of the reform of the INAO. Under the reform, the group opted for a certifying body, Qualisud.

3.6. *Chapter 8: Labelling*

The PDO symbol of the European Union must be affixed to the label.

3.7. *Chapter 9: National requirements*

This chapter contains a table setting out the key elements of the inspection plan.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006

on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs ⁽³⁾

'SELLES-SUR-CHER'

EC No: FR-PDO-0117-0976-26.01.2012

PGI () PDO (X)

1. Name

'Selles-sur-Cher'

⁽³⁾ Replaced by Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012.

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 (1) applies

The cheese has the shape of a slightly truncated, flattened disk with bevelled edges. It is roughly 9 cm in diameter and 3 cm thick. The cheese has a lactic quality and is coated in vegetable carbon.

The rind is more or less uniform ash grey in colour. The ivory-white paste is matt, smooth and homogenous, with a solid, thin, even rind. The scents of fresh goat's cheese early on in its life take on a hint of mushroom and goat towards the end of maturity. It has a fresh, melt-in-the-mouth, very slightly pasty texture. Its taste is a balance of salty, acid and bitter flavours.

The cheese has a minimum fat content of 45 grams per 100 grams of cheese after complete desiccation. The total weight of dry matter must be no lower than 55 grams.

The minimum maturity period is 10 days after renneting.

3.3. Raw materials (for processed products only)

'Selles-sur-Cher' is made exclusively using raw, whole goat's milk of the Alpine or Saanen breed or a cross of the two breeds. At least 80 % of the renewal kids originate from the geographical area.

3.4. Feed (for products of animal origin only)

To ensure that there is a close link between the region and the product, an annual average of at least 75 % of the total ration of milk goats (or 825 kg of dry matter) consists of feed originating from the geographical area.

The total annual ration of a milk goat consists of at least 550 kg of dry matter of coarse fodder. The types of fodder allowed are set out in a positive list.

The forage area represents a minimum surface area of 1 000 m² per milk goat, corresponding to the surface areas of the holding and/or the corresponding surface areas for the bought-in fodder.

Wrapping is allowed, provided it does not exceed 350 kg of dry matter per milk goat per year. The rate of dry matter of wrapped fodder must be higher than 50 %.

The supplementary ration, consisting of concentrated feed (rich in nitrogen and/or energy) and/or dehydrated fodder, accounts for at most 550 kg of dry matter distributed to each goat each year. At least 275 kg must be produced in the geographical area set out in point 4. The feeds which may make up the supplementary ration are set out in a positive list.

The feed system based on concentrated straw and the use of grass silage and maize silage are prohibited.

The use of grass silage and maize silage is allowed until 31 December 2014.

The planting of transgenic crops is prohibited in all areas of holdings producing milk intended for processing into cheese with the protected designation of origin 'Selles-sur-Cher'. Only plants and supplementary feed derived from non-transgenic products are allowed in the animal feed.

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

The milk is produced, and the cheese is manufactured and matured in the geographical area set out in point 4.

3.6. *Specific rules on slicing, grating, packaging, etc.*

None

3.7. *Specific rules concerning labelling*

All 'Selles-sur-Cher' cheeses sold must be labelled. The labelling for the cheese must contain the name of the designation of origin ('Selles-sur-Cher') in characters at least two-thirds the size of the largest characters on the label. The label also features the European Union PDO logo.

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

The geographical area comprises the following cantons:

Cher (18): Graçay, Lury-sur-Arnon, Vierzon II (the municipalities of Massay, Méry-sur-Cher, Saint-Hilaire-de-Court, Thénieux, Vignoux-sur-Barangeon).

Indre (36): Valançay, Issoudin Nord, Saint-Christophe-en-Bazelle, Vatan.

Loir-et-Cher (41): Contres, Montrichard, Saint-Aignan, Mennetou-sur-Cher, Romorantin-Lanthenay Nord, Romorantin-Lanthenay Sud, Selles-sur-Cher.

5. **Link with the geographical area**

5.1. *Specificity of the geographical area*

Natural factors

Located to the west of the Sologne forest, at the junction of the Touraine, Berry and Sologne regions, the geographical area of 'Selles-sur-Cher' extends over a vast plateau dissected in an east-west direction by the Cher River Valley.

On the south bank of the river lies the region of Boischaut, on the north bank the southern section of the Gâtine tourangelle.

The terraces of the Gâtine tourangelle hold vast deposits of silts, which developed on a substratum formed from the limestone of the Beauce region. The largely open landscapes give way to areas of wooded pasture or 'bocages', where livestock farming predominates.

The Cher Valley is characterised by the yellow tufa of the Touraine (Turonian). On these slopes and in the secondary valleys, agricultural activity is dominated by wine-growing.

The Boischaut region lies on cherty limestone deposits, where the silt of the plateaux also appears on the surface. Agriculture is mostly geared towards livestock farming and mixed farming.

On the poor, rough fringes of these various regions, goat-farming, which is long-established here, is now one of the few ways to develop the land, left relatively untouched by wine- or cereal-growing.

Goat farming also developed as a result of the Cher Valley's role as a major east-west corridor in terms of flows of people (bringing with them cheese-making customs and know-how) and trade (along the Nantes-Lyon trade route).

The production area is characterised by a modified oceanic climate, whose continental influence can be gradually felt along a west-east gradient. Average precipitation ranges from 650 to 750 mm/year and is evenly spread over the year. Temperatures are mild, with fairly marked differences between winter and summer temperatures (average temperature of 4,8 °C in January and 18,9 °C in July). The mild winters and rarely dry summers allow numerous cereal and fodder plants on which goats feed to grow.

Human factors

In the beginning, 'Selles-sur-Cher' cheese was traditionally made at home, mostly by women, who adopted lactic technology with a flexible production schedule, compatible with the other obligations of the farm and family.

The cheese was stored and matured in a storehouse adjoining the farm and often located to the north. The use of ash and then charcoal powder mixed with salt secured the cheese's quality as it matured.

At the end of the 19th century, collectors of farmyard products, known as *coquetiers*, would pass by the farm to collect eggs and chickens but also cheese. Some came to specialise in this activity, collecting fresh cheeses in order to coat them in ash and mature them before selling them on.

The main centre for the collection and resale of these cheeses was the town of Selles-sur-Cher. The cheeses came to be known by the name of the town in which they were matured.

At the beginning of the 20th century, there was a steady increase in the production of goat's cheese in order to supply the industrial towns: Tours, Blois, Vierzon, Châteauroux, Paris, Lyon, etc. The increase in the production of goat products coincided with the development of farming techniques (loose housing, milking machines, introduction of Alpine and Saanen breeds to improve local flocks) and prophylactic and veterinary means (antiparasitics, antibiotics). This was swiftly followed by specialisation among goat producers, both dairy operators and animal farmers (direct vendors or vendors delivering to maturers) and the creation of cooperative dairies.

The PDO 'Selles-sur-Cher' was then recognised as a protected designation of origin by decree of 21 April 1975.

5.2. Specificity of the product

'Selles-sur-Cher' is a cheese made from raw, whole goat's milk, with a small amount of rennet added, obtained from a lactic curd.

It is salted on the surface and coated in vegetable carbon. The minimum maturity period is 10 days after renneting.

The distinctive features of 'Selles-sur-Cher' are:

its characteristic, slightly truncated shape;

its ivory-white, matt, smooth and homogenous paste;

its lactic character, which diminishes gradually as the cheese matures;

its ash coating, which endows the rind with a colour that changes from ash grey to grey blue as the cheese matures. The rind consists mainly of *Geotrichum* and yeast.

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)

In the various sectors with low agronomic potential, the goat quickly became known as the 'poor man's cow', allowing poor-quality soil to be developed.

The sandy and sandy-clay land of the western Sologne and the Cher Valley, as well as the climate of this region, called for particular feed systems based on the production of dried fodder, which formed the basis of the goats' feed ration. The need to produce dried fodder was accompanied by the development of meadowland with little agronomic potential (e.g. the wet plains of the Fouzon), thus firmly rooting a dynamic form of goat farming in areas that did not lend themselves to other types of farming. To this day, goat holdings dominate this area, which has failed to attract other agricultural activities such as wine- or cereal-growing.

The feed-autonomy requirements laid down in the specifications perpetuate the tradition of feeding flocks based on grass crops. By selecting goats which are suited to the environment and feeding conditions and are capable of providing milk of good cheese-making quality, breeders allow cheese-makers to express the particular characteristics brought to bear by the diet and the microflora of the milk. In that respect, feed autonomy, adherence to a minimum level of fibrousness of the ration (cellulose level) and the breeding of renewal kids (genetic control) in the geographical area guarantee the maintenance of this know-how.

The standardisation of the cheese's format is the result of relations with maturers. 'Selles-sur-Cher' is relatively large for a lactic cheese. The type of mould traditionally used (a mould with a base), the curdling time (18-48 hours at a temperature lower than 25 °C) and the draining time in the moulds means the curd is relatively humid when maturing begins.

Originally, coating the cheese in ash helped preserve it in the storehouse and then in the maturing room. Today, however, the vegetable carbon and the salt together with the flora of the surface of the rind form a complex that regulates exchanges with the maturing cellar, which is kept at a relatively high, constant temperature. This technique helps give the paste its texture and allows the flavours to develop.

Reference to publication of the specification

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

<https://inao.gouv.fr/fichier/CDCSelles-sur-Cher.pdf>

⁽⁴⁾ See footnote 3.