

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

(2015/C 29/07)

This publication confers the right to oppose the amendment 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 ACCORDING TO ARTICLE 9

'WELSH BEEF'

EC No: UK-PGI-0205-01136 – 30.7.2013

PGI (X) PDO ()

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 [Inspection body details]

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 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)

Hybu Cig Cymru — Meat Promotion Wales (HCC) is the industry-led organisation responsible for the development, promotion and marketing of Welsh red meat. HCC has legal responsibility to act as guardian of the PGI Welsh Beef designation.

The proposed amendments seek to change the age of cattle at slaughter in order to accommodate younger animals.

⁽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.

It is proposed that the specification is amended to re-define the slaughter age range for cattle to qualify for use of the Welsh Beef PGI. The age range defined in the current specification is deemed to be too prescriptive as it prevents younger cattle (which meet the specification in all other aspects) from qualifying for the PGI. The proposed amendment seeks to amend the lower age of cattle which can qualify for PGI Welsh Beef; all other requirements within the specification would remain unchanged. In order to ensure the continued supply of quality Welsh Beef, reflect the shift in market influences and have a positive impact on the environment, it is proposed that the age range is lowered from 24 to 12 months, allowing younger animals to qualify whilst also avoiding any overlap with products marketed as veal.

The proposed amendment seeks to add the following text to the product description and Method of Production sections of the registered specification:

‘Cattle are slaughtered at between 12-48 months of age and must not have bred’.

This amendment would result in a specification which:

- Positively impacts on the eating quality of Welsh Beef

Considerable research has been undertaken to investigate the link between age at slaughter and eating quality; and the general conclusion is that younger animals have more tender meat than older animals because of the qualities of the collagen in the meat.

Amending the Welsh Beef specification in terms of age at slaughter, to allow younger animals to qualify would therefore positively impact on the eating quality of Welsh Beef.

- Positively impacts on the environmental footprint of Welsh Beef

One important contributor to reducing greenhouse gas emissions from cattle, is to finish (and slaughter) cattle earlier. By taking fewer days to finish an animal for slaughter, less methane is produced by the animal through its normal digestive processes, which leads to reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

Amending the Welsh Beef specification in terms of age at slaughter, to allow younger animals to qualify would therefore positively impact on the environmental footprint of Welsh Beef.

- Addresses the growing demand from consumers for quality Welsh Beef from consumers, retailers and the export market

Research clearly shows that there is a positive relationship between tenderness and consumer eating experiences with beef produced from animals below 24 months of age. As such, in response to market requirements, beef is being produced in Wales more efficiently and being slaughtered at a younger age to ensure Welsh Beef is a quality product which tastes good and is tender to eat.

Amending the Welsh Beef specification in terms of age at slaughter, to allow younger animals to qualify would therefore address the growing demand from consumers for quality Welsh Beef.

The purchasing patterns of multiple retailers (which represented approximately 90 percent of red meat sales in GB in 2011) have moved towards sourcing cattle at younger ages. Current sourcing policies for premium beef products of the seven largest retailers in the UK all require cattle to be slaughtered at under 30 months of age, and the largest retailer amongst them requires cattle to be slaughtered at under 24 months of age for their premium range. This trend of sourcing younger beef animals is expected to continue amongst retailers, as they increasingly seek to meet the demands of consumers for beef with high eating quality and which is environmentally friendly.

Other amendments:

Changes to the inspection body details: these are required to provide an update to the information for the nominated inspection body for Welsh Beef PGI.

The details for the relevant inspection body have been added to replace those of the previously named 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⁾

'WELSH BEEF'

EC No: UK-PGI-0205-01136 – 30.7.2013

PGI (X) PDO ()

1. Name

'Welsh Beef'

2. Member State or Third Country

United Kingdom

3. Description of the agricultural product or foodstuff

3.1. Type of product

Class 1.1. Fresh meat (and offal)

3.2. Description of product to which the name in (1) applies

Welsh beef is the name given to carcasses or cuts of meat taken from prime cattle (cattle that have not bred), which are born and reared in Wales. Producers of Welsh beef aim to meet a target carcass classification of R conformation or better and 4L fat content or leaner. See the table below.

Target Carcass EUROP Classification Grid for Welsh beef

		Fat class						
		1	2	3	4L	4H	5L	5H
Conformation	E	x	x	x	x			
	U+	x	x	x	x			
	-U	x	x	x	x			
	R	x	x	x	x			
	O+							
	-O							
	P+							
	-P							

x indicates the target carcass classifications for Welsh beef

Historically the traditional cattle breeds of Wales were predominately the Welsh Black and Hereford. These breeds remain at the foundation of the Welsh beef industry today. Welsh beef is derived from the traditional breeds of Wales and these crossed with each other or with any other recognised breed.

Cattle are slaughtered at between 12-48 months of age and must not have bred. Cattle are slaughtered and processed in Hybu Cig Cymru – Meat Promotion Wales (HCC) verification scheme approved abattoirs/cutting plants to ensure the PGI Welsh beef brand and integrity is protected. This scheme ensures that any beef branded as 'Welsh Beef' meets the specifications. All abattoirs and cutting plants that wish to use the Welsh beef designation must demonstrate to HCC's appointed inspection body on an annual basis that the beef meets the PGI specifications and that the plant is operating to best practice guidelines. HCC also undertake random spot checks to verify abattoir/cutting plant approval and licence use of the PGI Welsh beef brand.

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

After slaughter and dressing the beef may be marketed as a whole body, as a whole side, as part sides (hindquarter/forequarter) or as cuts of beef (including minced beef).

Meat profiles on the whole are convex, with very good muscle development and a wide, thick back, up to a well-rounded shoulder. Solid to the touch, with a loose and consistent texture, the well-developed muscles are generally of a deep red colour with fat that is yellowish white. In general meat from younger animals will be more tender than meat from older animals because of the qualities of the collagen in the meat. The meat is commonly well marbled.

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

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

Cattle are raised extensively on grassland within the geographical area, according to traditional husbandry practices of Welsh cattle farming.

On occasions where feed is utilised to supplement grass pasture, the feed will be sourced from within the geographical area where possible.

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

Each producer controls their own herd of beef animals which are reared extensively on natural grass pastures. Animals are sold either deadweight to abattoirs or at livestock markets. The meat must come from cattle which are born and reared in Wales and slaughtered/processed in HCC verification scheme approved abattoirs/cutting plants. The animals are slaughtered and dressed at the abattoir in accordance with recognised industry specifications or to meet legislative or customer requirements.

Abattoirs and cutting plants eligible for the HCC verification scheme approval are not restricted to the defined geographical area — Wales.

At all stages of the production process records are kept to ensure traceability of the product. At the abattoirs the slaughter number, the date of slaughter, the classification details and the cold carcase weight are recorded. This information is attached on a label to the carcase and is available for inspection by HCC.

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

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3.7. *Specific rules concerning labelling*

The geographical indication 'Welsh Beef' must appear on carcasses, parts of carcasses or cuts in combination with the HCC registered trademark for Welsh beef and the PGI symbol.

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

The whole of Wales.

5. **Link with the geographical area**

5.1. *Specificity of the geographical area*

The Welsh cattle industry is richly documented for its importance from the Celts, the Romans, the Normans and up to the present day. There are numerous historical references to Welsh cattle production given in 'The Drovers' Roads of Wales' and 'Medieval Wales' by Hewitt.

A distinctive characteristic of Welsh beef is that cattle feed on the abundant natural grassland in Wales, which flourishes as a result of the wet and mild Welsh climate and topography.

A 1 200 kilometre coastline surrounds Wales and inland there is a sweeping and soaring landscape that seamlessly merges mountains, hills, valleys and lakes. Supported by the typical high rainfall of the area, Wales is perfectly adapted to the production of natural pasture. This sprawling emerald tapestry woven by acre after acre of lush green grass, combined with heathers and indigenous fragrant wild herbs, contribute to the distinctive flavour of Welsh beef.

5.2. *Specificity of the product*

To be branded as 'Welsh Beef', only cattle which are born and reared in Wales are eligible, linking the product directly to the geographical area in which it is produced.

In order to ensure consistency in quality for the consumer, cattle must be prime cattle (cattle that have not bred) and should be slaughtered at between 12-48 months of age. Producers of Welsh beef aim to meet a target carcass classification of R conformation or better and 4L fat content or leaner.

A distinctive characteristic of Welsh beef is due to the influence of the traditional breeds which remain at the foundation of the Welsh beef industry, from which Welsh beef is derived.

The meat must come from cattle which are slaughtered/processed in approved abattoirs/cutting plants. The animals are slaughtered and dressed at the abattoir in accordance with recognised industry specifications or to meet legislative or customer requirements.

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)*

Welsh beef enjoys a number of competitive production advantages. Traditional breeds are reared in an ideal environment, using tried and tested traditional farming techniques, supplemented by contemporary breeding methods. This results in the unique character and distinctiveness of Welsh beef.

Year after year, generation after generation, the singular husbandry and grassland management skills of the Welsh beef farmer are practised across Wales, predominately on small family farms, utilising the benefits of the natural landscape to produce beef of the highest calibre. Over the centuries their dedication and hard work has delivered consistently high standards of quality production in the most efficient and environmentally sensitive way whilst shaping the landscape, culture and identity of Wales.

The farms of the region are typically family farms having a mixed holding of sheep and cattle. Holdings in Wales are on average smaller than the UK as a whole. The smaller average holding size is reflected in smaller herd sizes for beef as well as the structure of the workforce. The husbandry skills of the Welsh livestock farmer have been passed down from one generation to the next. Each producer controls their own herd of beef animals, which are reared extensively on natural grass pastures. Animals are sold either deadweight to abattoirs or at livestock markets. At all stages of the production process records are kept to ensure traceability of the product.

The efficient production and use of grass is central to the well being of Welsh beef production. The grass leys in many of the regions of Wales are interspersed with heathers and indigenous fragrant wild herbs, all of which contribute to the distinctiveness of Welsh beef. The grassland management skills of the Welsh farmer are noted worldwide with Welsh farmers regularly winning awards for their grassland management.

Reference to publication of the specification

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

The current product specification for Welsh Beef PGI can be found at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/278748/welsh-beef-pgi.pdf

(*) See footnote 3.