

OTHER ACTS

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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

(2017/C 292/09)

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⁾.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

'SLAVONSKI MED'

EU No: PDO-HR-02187 – 26.9.2016

PDO (X) PGI ()

1. Title

'Slavonski med'

2. Member State or Third Country

Croatia

3. Description of the agricultural product or foodstuff**3.1. Product type**

Class 1.4. Other products of animal origin (eggs, honey, various dairy products except butter, etc.)

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

'Slavonski med' is honey produced by native grey honeybees (*Apis mellifera carnica*, Pannonian subtype) from the nectar of melliferous plants or the secretions of living parts of plants or excretions of plant-sucking insects on the living parts of plants, which the bees collect, combine with specific substances of their own, store, dehydrate, and deposit in honeycomb cells to mature within the geographical area referred to in point 4.

According to its mode of production, 'Slavonski med' is comb honey, chunk honey or cut comb in honey and extracted honey. 'Slavonski med' is:

1. black locust honey;
2. linden honey;
3. rapeseed honey;
4. sunflower honey;
5. chestnut honey;
6. blossom honey;
7. Hungarian Oak honeydew honey

The common characteristic properties of 'Slavonski med' having an influence on the quality of the product are percentage water content and quantity of hydroxymethylfurfurals (HMFs). 'Slavonski med' is at most 18,3 % water and the maximum amount of HMFs is 16,5 mg/kg. Another specific feature of 'Slavonski med' is the presence in it of pollen from plant species in the *Brassicaceae* family, *Robinia* spp. and the *Rosaceae* family, as either secondary pollen (at least 16 %) or minor pollen (up to 15 %). The amount of sucrose in 'Slavonski med' is less than the prescribed values.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 343, 14.12.2012, p. 1.

Physicochemical, organoleptic and pollen characteristics for various types of honey are shown in the following tables:

| Honey | Water [%] | HMF [mg/kg] | Pollen characteristics [%] | Electrical conductivity [mS/cm] | Diastase activity (Schade scale) | Sucrose content g/100g |
|------------------------------|-----------|-------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| BLACK LOCUST | 18,3 max. | 16,5 max. | 20 min. | 0,2 max. | 8 min. | 9 max. |
| LINDEN | 18,3 max. | 16,5 max. | 25 min. | 0,5 min. | 8 min. | 4 max. |
| RAPESEED | 18,3 max. | 16,5 max. | 61 min. | 0,3 max. | 8 min. | 4 max. |
| SUNFLOWER | 18,3 max. | 16,5 max. | 45 min. | 0,6 max. | 8 min. | 4 max. |
| CHESTNUT | 18,3 max. | 16,5 max. | 86 min. | 0,8 min. | 8 min. | 4 max. |
| BLOSSOM | 18,3 max. | 16,5 max. | x | 0,8 max. | 8 min. | 4 max. |
| HUNGARIAN OAK HONEYDEW HONEY | 18,3 max. | 16,5 max. | x | 0,8 min. | 8 min. | 4 max. |

| Honey | ORGANOLEPTIC CHARACTERISTICS OF HONEY | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| | Colour | Taste | Smell |
| BLACK LOCUST | yellow to light yellow | pleasant taste of black locust | unpronounced, weak smell |
| LINDEN | light yellow to faintly greenish | pleasant, slightly bitter taste | pronounced taste of linden blossoms |
| RAPESEED | light yellow to straw yellow | medium sweet to faintly sour | herbal, pronounced |
| SUNFLOWER | amber | sweet to slightly astringent | slight smell of sunflowers |
| CHESTNUT | brown colour | bitter, faintly sour | strong penetrating smell of overripe apples |
| BLOSSOM | yellow with reddish to darker shades | pleasantly sweet, a little bitter | weak to intense smell |
| HUNGARIAN OAK HONEYDEW HONEY | pronouncedly dark, nearly black | medium sweet, markedly sour | smell of forest honey |

| Honey | Species of plant (dominant, secondary and minor pollen) |
|--------------|---|
| Black locust | <i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i> (black locust) min. 20 %, <i>Brassicaceae</i> , <i>Rosaceae</i> |
| Linden | <i>Tilia</i> (linden) min. 25 %, <i>Robinia</i> spp. (locust) |
| Rapeseed | <i>Brassica napus</i> (rapeseed) min. 61 %, <i>Rosaceae</i> , <i>Salix</i> spp. (willow) |
| Sunflower | <i>Helianthus annuus</i> (sunflower) min. 45 %, <i>Brassicaceae</i> |

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Honey | Species of plant (dominant, secondary and minor pollen) |
| Chestnut | <i>Castanea sativa</i> (sweet chestnut) min. 86 % |
| Blossom | <i>Brassicaceae</i> , <i>Rosaceae</i> , <i>Salix</i> spp. (willow) |
| Hungarian Oak honeydew honey | elements of honeydew (spores and hyphae), <i>Castanea sativa</i> (sweet chestnut) |

3.3. *Feed (for products of animal origin only) and raw materials (for processed products only)*

Bees may be artificially fed during the non-foraging period (early in the spring and late in the autumn, depending on weather conditions). The bees may be fed sugar, but this must have been produced in the defined geographical area referred to in point 4. The honey may not be placed on the market as 'Slavonski med' if the conditions relating to artificial feeding have not been met and if artificial feeding constitutes the bees' source of food.

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

All steps in the production and extraction of 'Slavonski med' must take place within the identified geographical area referred to under point 4.

3.5. *Specific rules concerning slicing, grating, packaging, etc. of the product the registered name refers to*

'Slavonski med' must be packaged in the defined geographical area referred to in point 4 so as to better protect the authenticity and quality of 'Slavonski med' and ensure the traceability of and controls on the product.

Only in this way can quality be preserved and any changes to the physico-chemical and organoleptic characteristics be averted. Transporting the goods to a new location leads to changes in temperature, humidity and the absorption of extraneous odours, and an increase in the quantity of HMFs and diastases.

Packaging 'Slavonski med' in the defined area reduces the risk of it mixing with honey outside the area defined in point 4.

3.6. *Specific rules concerning labelling of the product the registered name refers to*

Each item of packaging placed on the market must be marked with the logo displayed in the figure. All users of the brand who place the product on the market in accordance with its specification have the right to use the logo under the same conditions. The logo is brown and black in colour, trimmed with Croatian interlace, and has a bee depicted in its upper left corner. On the left of the logo is a map of Croatia, and on the right is the year '1879' and the old coat of arms of Slavonia. In the middle of the logo is a wicker beehive. In the upper part of the logo is the name 'Slavonski med', and three oak leaves are depicted in the lower part.

Figure: Logo of 'Slavonski med'



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

'Slavonski med' is produced in Slavonia, within the administrative boundaries of towns and municipalities in the following counties: all of Vukovar-Syrmia County, Osijek-Baranja County, Brod-Posavina County, Požega-Slavonia County, Bjelovar-Bilogora County and Virovitica-Podravina County and the towns and villages of Novska, Lipovljani and Jasenovac in Sisak-Moslavina County.

5. **Link with the geographical area**

5.1. *Details of the geographical area of origin*

Natural factors

The region of Slavonia is bounded by the watercourses of three large lowland rivers: the Drava to the north, Danube to the east and Sava to the south. The key environmental determinant in this region is the difference in terrain and geomorphological features between the mountainous west and the predominantly flat east of the area. The lowest point (78 metres above sea level) is located in the far southeastern corner of the region, in Spačva.

Arable land accounts for 52 % (655 468 hectares) of Slavonia's 1 248 600 hectares of surface area, forests 29 % (359 605 hectares), meadowlands 4,2 % and pasturelands 1,2 %.

Given such a land use arrangement and pronounced differences in climatic conditions, the shape of the terrain and the features of its vegetation, conditions in Slavonia are ideal for the production of 'Slavonski med', which can derive from black locust honey, linden honey, rapeseed honey, sunflower honey, chestnut honey, blossom honey and Hungarian oak honeydew honey.

In recognition of the uniqueness of Slavonia's specific climatic, soil and water characteristics and the richness of its flora and fauna, the Republic of Croatia has placed three areas within its boundaries under protection, i.e. created three nature parks. These are Kopački Rit, Papuk and Lonjsko Polje.

Slavonia's low altitude, being situated on the Pannonian Plain and exposed to the interior of the European continent, are the factors having the greatest influence on its climatic and weather conditions. For most of the winter, the area lies under a mass of cold air, but heats up considerably in summer. The temperature in summer rises the further east one travels, with a concomitant decline in the amount of precipitation.

Temperatures conducive to the growth and development of melliferous plants persist throughout all four seasons. The average spring temperature is 11,8 °C, the average summer temperature is 21,1 °C, the average autumn temperature is 11,3 °C and the average winter temperature is 1,0 °C. The average temperature in the growing season (from April to September) is 18,3 °C.

The annual pattern and distribution of precipitation is favourable for plant production and beekeeping. Precipitation falls between 104 and 160 days a year.

The mean monthly wind speed is greatest in the months of spring (March and April) and lowest in late summer and at the start of autumn (August and September). Winds blow most often from the northwest and southeast, with winds from the southwest and northeast the next most common.

Melliferous plants that grow in the defined area of Slavonia flower at different times (between March and November), thus giving bees a broad choice of sources of nectar and pollen.

Human factors

Beekeepers in Slavonia have been carrying on the tradition of making honey for as long as 130 years. Most common is the small-scale production of honey as a means of supplementing family income on family farms in rural areas. Many years of keeping bees in Slavonia has also led to the development and transfer of beekeeping know-how in the form of people's practices, skills, capabilities and knowledge.

The bee-keeping practices that beekeepers have inherited from their ancestors with regard to the production of 'Slavonski med' are as follows:

- most beehives are made of wood;
- beekeepers take great care to use smokers employing dry plant residue as fuel, which generates a mild form of smoke;
- the bees must never be artificially fed during the foraging period;
- honeycomb is uncapped in the traditional way, using a comb, a knife or brush;
- the honey is extracted from the frame without heating by centrifugation;
- the honey is not pasteurised;
- the maximum temperature at which the honey may be decrystallised is 43 °C.

5.2. Details of the quality and characteristics of the product

'Slavonski med' is distinguished by having a maximum HMF value of 16,5 mg/kg and a maximum water content of 18,3 % when fresh. 'Slavonski med' has a pollen spectrum; in other words, it contains pollen from plant species in the *Brassicaceae* and *Rosaceae* families, and from *Robinia* spp., in most monofloral and polyfloral honeys. This distinguishes it from honey produced in other areas. The amount of sucrose in 'Slavonski med' is less than the prescribed values.

The characteristics of 'Slavonski med' are reflected in its physical, chemical, pollen and organoleptic characteristics. The product may be decrystallised at a maximum temperature of 43 °C, which ensures that its properties, derived from the flora specific to the defined area and the bees, remain unchanged.

The name 'Slavonski med' is used both on the market and in common parlance (receipt (2014); note of thanks for a donation (2015); letter of thanks (2015); stamp on the packaging).

5.3. Causal link between the area and the product's characteristics

Because of favourable climatic and soil conditions and the abundance of melliferous plant species in Slavonia's pastures, meadows, fields and extensive forests, and the alluvial bogs and marshlands along the Sava, Drava and Danube Rivers, native grey bees (*Apis mellifera carnica*, of the Pannonian subtype) have been able to find abundant nectar and pollen pasture for thousands of years. A unique agroecological area has been created, enabling 'Slavonski med' to stand out as a pure varietal honey. It is recognised and respected as such on the market.

Apiary work and conditions determining honey yields are directly linked to the climate, which in Slavonia is conducive to the production of 'Slavonski med'.

Spring temperatures enable the early and abundant growth of spring-flowering plants, fruit trees and meadows, while summer temperatures are favourable for the ripening of agricultural crops, some of which are melliferous and vital for 'Slavonski med'.

The climatic conditions in autumn are suitable for bees as they prepare for hibernation, whereas climatic conditions in winter are good for hibernation and give the bees a good start to the new season.

The optimal spring and summer temperatures are conducive for the secretion of nectar from most plants. Spring-flowering plants secrete nectar at lower temperatures, whereas summer-flowering plants require a higher nocturnal temperature in order for secretion not to diminish or cease.

Precipitation falls on less than a third of the days in a year (but on at least 104 days), meaning that there are enough days in the year without precipitation during which bees can collect nectar.

Bees have a larger amount of nectar available to them in spring. From this they derive energy and are able to resist air currents more easily. In late summer wind strength and the amount of nectar decline, the bees expend less energy in resisting wind and retain it more easily to prepare for hibernation.

A report of the Đakovo subsidiary published in 1845 in the *List mesečni horvatsko-slavonskog Gospodarskoga društva* [Monthly Journal of the Croatian and Slavonian Commercial Enterprise] states that 'there is not one town or municipality in Slavonia which does not produce good-quality honey'. The Slavonian Beekeeping Association was established in Osijek in 1879, the first and oldest association of its kind in southeastern Europe, and the journal *Slavonska Pčela* [Slavonian Bee] was founded as the bulletin of the Slavonian Beekeeping Association as early as March 1881. Branches of the Association began to establish themselves very rapidly after the journal was founded. The Slavonian Beekeeping Association has been actively involved in the advancement of beekeeping in Slavonia and improving the quality of 'Slavonski med', encouraging the involvement of primary-school teachers in the development of beekeeping, raising awareness of advances in beekeeping, disseminating the latest news on beekeeping and bee forage calendars, etc. The importance of its contribution to the development of beekeeping in Slavonia, and in Croatia more generally, is attested to by the fact that Bogdan Penjić (1852-1918), founder and long-standing secretary of this oldest of associations and, at the same time, editor of *Slavonska pčela*, is referred to as the father of modern beekeeping in Croatia. He was responsible for the introduction of the first beehives with adjustable combs (in 1871), the first honey extractors and the adoption of artificial wax foundation (in 1879). The first beekeeping exhibition was organised in Osijek in 1889, and in 1903 the Beekeeping Association of Vukovar published an initiative in the newspaper *Gospodarski list* to organise a honey market.

The mutual interaction of specific soil and climatic conditions, the local population's centuries-long experience of beekeeping, and the mutual interaction between the two influence 'Slavonski med' in such a way that it has a specific physicochemical composition and specific organoleptic properties which make it a renowned and appreciated honey among consumers.

Reference to publication of the specification

(the second subparagraph of Article 6(1) of this Regulation)

<http://www.mps.hr/UserDocsImages/HRANA/SLAVONSKI%20MED/Izmijenjena%20specifikacija%20proizvoda-Slavonski%20med%20.pdf>
