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

(2017/C 368/09)

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].

APPLICATION FOR THE APPROVAL OF AN AMENDMENT TO THE PRODUCT SPECIFICATION OF A PROTECTED DESIGNATION OF ORIGIN/PROTECTED GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION THAT IS NOT MINOR

Application for approval of an amendment in accordance with the first subparagraph of Article 53(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012

'SQUACQUERONE DI ROMAGNA'

EU No: PDO-IT-02292 — 22.2.2017

PDO (X) PGI ( )

1. **Applicant group and legitimate interest**

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Associazione Squacquerone di Romagna, an association of 'Squacquerone di Romagna' producers, is entitled to submit an amendment application pursuant to Article 13(1) of Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policy Decree No 12511 of 14 October 2013.

2. **Member State or Third Country**

Italy

3. **Heading in the product specification affected by the amendment(s)**

— ☐ Name of product

— ☒ Description of product

— ☐ Geographical area

— ☐ Proof of origin

— ☒ Production method

— ☐ Link

— ☐ Labelling

— ☒ Other: Legal references updated; typing errors corrected; name of inspection body updated.

4. **Type of amendment(s)**

— ☒ Amendment to product specification of registered PDO or PGI not to be qualified as minor in accordance with the third subparagraph of Article 53(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012.

— ☐ Amendment to product specification of registered PDO or PGI for which a Single Document (or equivalent) has not been published not to be qualified as minor in accordance with the third subparagraph of Article 53(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012.

5. **Amendment(s)**

Description of product

A typographical error is corrected in the Italian text in the sentence regarding weight, but the value 'from 0,1 kg to 2 kg' remains unchanged.

[1] OJ L 343, 14.12.2012, p. 1.

Physical and chemical characteristics: the permitted ranges for fat content (of dry matter), moisture and pH are increased by a few percentage points as set out below.

Fat content (of dry matter): the range changes from 'between 46 and 55 %' to 'between 46 and 59 %' to allow a higher maximum content.

The need for an update has become apparent as a result of applying the product specification on a daily basis in the years since it came into force. The fat content (of dry matter) parameter is influenced by the properties of the raw material, and the limit is sometimes exceeded as during the winter milk has a higher fat content for entirely natural reasons. This is especially true of dairies where milk from just one or a few farms is processed, meaning that they do not benefit from an averaging out of values for milk delivered by several producers.

Moisture content: the values change from 'between 58 and 65 %' to 'between 58 and 69 %', and

pH: the values change from 'between 4,95 and 5,30' to 'between 4,75 and 5,35'.

The moisture and pH values of the finished product are also subject to variations in the course of a season that are not fully controllable. Variations recorded in the annual distribution of pH and moisture values, as observed during checks carried out over the past few years, have revealed that the range of values identified at the time of drawing up the specification was too limited.

Moreover, the subtitle 'microbiological characteristics' before the pH value was incorrect and has been deleted.

Method of production

Raw materials

The sentence

'The milk used to produce "Squacquerone di Romagna" PDO cheese comes from cattle breeds reared in the area, namely Italian Friesian, Alpine Brown and Romagnola' has been deleted.

The diversity of livestock farms in the area seems to have been underestimated at the time of applying for registration of the PDO. As it is a well-known fact that the organoleptic characteristics of cheese are mainly influenced by the cows' feed and the physiological and biochemical characteristics of the cultures used, the reference to mandatory breeds should be deleted.

A typing error has been corrected so that the words 'dehydrated dried' now read 'dehydrated and dried'.

The sentence: 'The feed of the dairy cows whose milk is used to produce "Squacquerone di Romagna" PDO cheese may not include cabbage and fodder beet processing residues' has been moved up two rows to the part relating to feed, in order to make the specification more coherent and improve its readability.

Processing stages

Acidification

It has been specified that the bacterial species mentioned in the specification is used to start fermentation.

Therefore, the sentence:

'The bacterial species used is the *Streptococcus thermophilus*'

now reads

'The bacterial species used to start fermentation is the *Streptococcus thermophilus*'.

This amendment has proved necessary because the presence, however minimal, of other strains found during checks has given rise to disputes.

Coagulation

A typing error, '1:10 000; 1:40 000', has been corrected to '1:10 000 and 1:40 000'.

The quantity range for rennet has been changed

from 'in a quantity of between 30 and 50 ml per hectolitre of milk'

to 'in a quantity of between 15 and 50 ml per hectolitre of milk'.

This amendment corrects an error in the current specification, as a rennet ratio of 1:40 000 is sufficient in a quantity of 15 ml or more of rennet per hectolitre.

Salting

Provision is made for using both, or combining the two, curing methods mentioned in the specification. The text is therefore amended by adding the following words, as a link between the two curing methods:

'… in addition to or instead of the aforementioned'.

If brining is used not only for salting but also to lower the temperature of the product to slow its fermentation, adding a portion of salt to the cauldron allows the brining period to be shortened, thereby improving the texture of the finished product.

Other

In Article 1 of the specification on the name of the product,

the reference to 'Regulation (EC) No 510/2006' has been replaced with a reference to 'Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012'.

In Article 7 of the specification on checks,

the reference to 'Regulation (EC) No 510/2006' has been replaced with a reference to 'Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012'. The business name of the inspection body has been updated as follows: 'The inspection body responsible for verifying the product specification is the single-member company, Kiwa Cermet Italia SpA, Via Cadriano 23, 40057 Cadriano Granarolo dell'Emilia (BO), ITALIA. Tel. +39 514593303. Fax +39 51763382.'

SINGLE DOCUMENT

'SQUACQUERONE DI ROMAGNA'

EU No: PDO-IT-02292 — 22.2.2017

PDO (X) PGI ( )

1. **Name**

'Squacquerone di Romagna'

2. **Member State or Third Country**

Italy

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*

'Squacquerone di Romagna' PDO is a soft cheese that matures rapidly, produced from cow's milk from the defined geographical area set out in point 4. When released for consumption 'Squacquerone di Romagna' PDO cheese must have the following characteristics:

Morphological characteristics:

Weight: 'Squacquerone di Romagna' PDO cheese weighs from 0,1 kg to 2 kg.

Appearance: 'Squacquerone di Romagna' PDO cheese is mother-of-pearl white in colour and without any rind or crust.

Shape: depends on the container in which it is placed, as its very creamy texture means that it does not have a distinct shape.

Physical and chemical characteristics: Fat content (of dry matter): between 46 and 59 %; water content: between 58 and 69 %; pH: between 4,75 and 5,35.

Organoleptic characteristics:

Taste: pleasant, sweet, slightly acidic and subtly salty.

Aroma: delicate, distinctive milk taste, with a grassy note.

Consistency: soft, creamy, sticky, runny, highly spreadable.

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

At least 60 % of the dry mater of the cattle's total ration must consist of forage and silage, supplemented with feed.

The forage and silage is composed of legumes and grasses grown exclusively in the geographic area defined in point 4.

The wide variety of grass species grown also includes various medicinal plants, among which the main varieties used are Pomposa, Classe, Garisenda, Delta and Prosementi.

The feed serves as a source of concentrated, high-energy nutrition and may include:

(1) proteins: whole seeds and pul.ses such as soya, beans, sunflower and peas, and also soya and sunflower flours;

(2) fibres such as dry soya pulp, bran and hulls;

(3) energy: maize grain, barley, sorghum, wheat, oats, vegetable oils, soya oil, extruded whole flax seed.

Squacquerone di Romagna PDO is a soft cheese made from whole cow's milk from breeds of cattle reared in the geographical area specified in point 4.

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

The production phases that must take place in the identified geographical area of origin are: milk production and processing.

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

'Squacquerone di Romagna' must be packaged within the identified geographical area, since lacking a rind and therefore being 100 % edible it is particularly subject to the risk of contamination after production, and therefore to deterioration, through an increase in its level of environmental bacteria, which could enter into contact with the surface of the product during the various stages. Furthermore, as 'Squacquerone di Romagna' is a fresh product, all microbial growth must be avoided during the shelf-life period. In order to avoid the risk of deterioration, the product should be packaged inside the certified production facility. The primary packaging for 'Squacquerone di Romagna' PDO is food-grade paper or other appropriate containers suitable for this product, the specificity of which is its soft and creamy texture.

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

The cheese produced in accordance with these specifications bears on the packaging the words 'Squacquerone di Romagna — Denominazione d'Origine Protetta (Protected Designation of Origin)' or 'Squacquerone di Romagna – DOP (PDO)', accompanied by the EU logo. The label must also bear the name, business name and address of the producer/packager. The product must be maintained at a temperature of between 0 °C and +6 °C. The maximum storage temperature must be indicated on the label. The following label must be affixed to the external protective wrapping of the cheese: 'Squacquerone di Romagna' in Sari Extra Bold Italic font, in the authorised colours Pantone No 2747 blue and white and of a size proportional to the package. It is forbidden to include any description that is not specifically set out in the production specification.

4. Concise definition of the geographical area

The production area for 'Squacquerone di Romagna' PDO cheese includes the following provinces of the Region of Emilia-Romagna: Ravenna, Forlì-Cesena, Rimini, Bologna; and part of the province of Ferrara, bordered on the west by trunk road No 64 (Porrettana) and on the north by the River Po.

5. Link with the geographical area

'Squacquerone di Romagna' PDO cheese is produced on land situated above the flood plain. Cereals, fodder crops and specialised intensive crops are farmed on this land. The area where 'Squacquerone di Romagna' PDO cheese is produced has a temperate sub-continental climate. From time immemorial, this area of origin has witnessed the presence of farms primarily involved in crop production, with limited stock breeding with a dual purpose of milk production and for ploughing, etc. Part of the milk used for human consumption was processed into 'Squacquerone di Romagna' and was intended to supplement the farmer's income through bartering.

Studies carried out on 'Squacquerone di Romagna' PDO cheese have demonstrated the characteristics of the natural cultures used, revealing a definite uniformity among the species of bacteria it contains, namely native *Streptococcus thermophilus* biotypes. These natural cultures are developed in fermenters within the geographical area indicated in point 4, always using only milk from the identified geographical area.

Production techniques have remained very similar to historic methods and must take account of the fact that cheese-making times vary according to the season: longer in winter and shorter in summer. The producers' skill and experience plays a key role in obtaining the right consistency of the cheese.

The salient characteristics of 'Squacquerone di Romagna' cheese that distinguish it from other fast maturing soft cheeses are its mother-of-pearl white colour and its delicate, distinctive milky aroma, with a grassy note.

Its principal characteristic, which has significantly contributed to the reputation of 'Squacquerone di Romagna', is its creamy-gelatinous texture and its high spreadability because of its soft consistency.

The characteristics of Squacquerone cheese, in particular its creaminess and high spreadability because of its soft consistency, are the result of the type of milk used to produce the cheese, a milk with specific properties that is low in protein and fat because of how the cattle are fed, which is principally determined by the identified geographical area in question.

To be more precise, the specific qualities of the forage cultivated entirely in the geographical area defined in point 4, which is rich in sugars and highly digestible fibre, provide the cattle with a characteristic diet, notable for its low fat and starch inputs, compensated for by the energy provided by the forage typical of this area. This is how milk low in protein and fats is produced, which determines the typical characteristics of Squacquerone cheese, namely its soft consistency. The milk used produces the cheese's organoleptic properties described in point 3.2, namely its soft and creamy texture, sweet, slightly acidic taste and delicate aroma with a grassy note. Furthermore, it is thanks to the experience of the producers, who successfully adapt the cheese-making times to the seasons, that they are able to avoid the cheese becoming chalky or overly compact.

Another important link between 'Squacquerone di Romagna' and the identified geographical area is the use of native culture strains. Taxonomically, *Streptococcus thermophilus* is the species identified in all the natural cultures studied and that characterises the milk microflora typical of 'Squacquerone di Romagna' PDO. The various biotypes isolated show particular physiological and biochemical characteristics that are not found in the selected strains in international collections, demonstrating once again the uniqueness and specificity of the bacterial spectrum used to produce 'Squacquerone di Romagna'. Native *Streptococcus thermophilus* biotypes have been isolated from various raw milk samples taken from several dairies in the traditional production area for this cheese; these biotypes can therefore be considered native and, taken as a whole, constitute a characteristic signature of associated microbes that is the result of natural and human selection in the specific ecological niche that distinguishes this particular area of Italy.

Reference to publication of the specification

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

The consolidated text of the product specification can be consulted on the following website:
http://www.politicheagricole.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/3335

or alternatively:

by going directly to the homepage of the Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policy (www.politicheagricole.it) and clicking on 'Qualità e sicurezza' (at the top right-hand side of the screen) and then on 'Disciplinari di Produzione all'esame dell'UE'.