

Publication of an application for registration of a name 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

(2019/C 359/05)

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⁾ within three months of the date of this publication.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

'QUESO CASTELLANO'

EU No: PGI-ES-02307 – 20.4.2017

PDO () PGI (X)

1. Name

'Queso Castellano'

2. Member State or third country

Spain

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

'Queso Castellano' is a full-fat to extra full-fat cheese with a long shelf life that is obtained by enzymatic coagulation and intense pressing. It is made from raw or pasteurised sheep's milk produced on farms located in Castile and Leon and the minimum maturation period is 30 days for cheeses weighing up to 1,5 kg and 60 days for other formats. After maturing, 'Queso Castellano' has the following characteristics:

- A well-defined rind, with no mould but possibly with marks (from rope, the cheese mould or cloth), varying in colour from pale yellow to brown. The rind can be natural or be coated with authorised products.
- The paste is firm, compact and very light, ranging from pale off-white or yellowish to beige in colour. It features a small number of pores or holes of small diameter, which are characteristically round, irregular in distribution and have the following physical-chemical characteristics:
 - Fat in dry matter: at least 45 %
 - dry matter: at least 45 %
 - Proteins in dry matter: at least 25 %
 - Sodium chloride in dry matter: no more than 3,26 %
 - pH: between 4,7 and 5,7
- Odour: Moderately intense but with quite a broad range of variation, the predominant smells being lactic acid, the dairy animal species and caramel. Butter, fruit and vegetable smells feature to a lesser extent and there is a slight hint of nuttiness. These smells gain in intensity as the cheese matures.
- Olfactory-gustatory sensation: High taste intensity, both acidic and salty. Aroma moderately reminiscent of the animal and of caramel. Notes of nuts and a slight aroma of fruit and vegetables. These cheeses are slightly spicy, with moderately to highly persistent flavours and a limited final aftertaste. All of these sensations are intensified as the cheese matures.
- consistency: these cheeses are firm and moderately soluble, slightly adhesive, elastic, crumbly and granular.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 343, 14.12.2012, p. 1.

'Queso Castellano' is cylindrical in shape, with a maximum diameter and height of 25 cm and 15 cm, respectively, and a maximum weight of 3,8 kg.

'Queso Castellano' may be put up for sale either whole, in portions, sliced or grated.

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

'Queso Castellano' is made from sheep's milk produced on farms located in Castile and Leon.

Sheep farms in Castile and Leon are either extensive, semi-extensive or intensive, with the majority falling into the latter category.

In extensive or semi-extensive systems, the sheep are put out to graze in the designated areas, where they feed directly on part of the forage and, in particular, crop stubble, as well as other elements. During the dormant winter period, when needs are greatest, when feed is in short supply due to adverse weather conditions and on intensive farms, animals are fed forage-based diets in which vetch, oats and alfalfa feature prominently. The most common conservation methods for this forage are haymaking, dehydration and silage. Other types of forage that are used on a routine basis for animal feed are straw from cereals and protein crops. This forage is supplemented to a variable extent with compound feed so as to ensure a constant supply in terms of nutrient quantity and quality for the animals.

At least 50 % of the total feed supplied to the animals must be sourced from within the Autonomous Community of Castile and Leon.

The milk must come from the full and uninterrupted milking of healthy, well-fed animals and be collected and transported in good hygienic conditions. The milk is whole and clean and must not contain contaminants, preservatives, antibiotics or any product that could have a negative impact on the production, maturation or conservation of the cheese.

At the start of the production procedure, the milk must have the following analytical characteristics:

- Fat: at least 5,2 %
- Proteins: at least 4,6 %
- Total dry extract: at least 15,9 %

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

Milk production and cheese preparation and maturation.

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

—

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

'Queso Castellano' may be put up for sale either whole, in portions, sliced or grated, as long as it is perfectly packaged and labelled so that its origin is unequivocal.

Products intended for consumption must carry secondary labels identifying the PGI, which should be affixed in such a manner that they cannot be reused.

The commercial labels, which are specific to each plant, must include the words 'Queso Castellano' Protected Geographical Indication, the EU symbol and the product name logo.

The product name logo is:



4. Concise definition of the geographical area

The Autonomous Community of Castile and Leon.

5. Link with the geographical area

The protection for 'Queso Castellano' as a Protected Indication is based on tradition, specificity and its reputation.

In the 16th and 17th centuries, sheep-rearing was extremely important in the Community of Castile and Leon. Sheep's milk was extremely perishable and very much dependent on the changeable weather in this region. The extreme climate meant it was difficult for it to be transported over long distances in good condition, which meant that cheese was not made on any great scale but instead on an artisanal basis by the shepherds or the owners of the sheep. The rennet used was taken from the last lamb slaughtered on the farm and cheeses of an excellent standard were achieved thanks to the experience and know-how of the cheesemakers. Those that made a greater quantity of cheese used to sell the surplus at local markets or in the main towns, such as the Villalón and Medina fairs, to supplement their family income.

The leading centres for traditional artisanal production emerged in the early 20th century. The milk was gathered from the nearby areas, where the sheep were milked in the mornings, and the milk was then transferred to the artisanal centre to be made into cheese. That is how the fledgling 'Queso Castellano' cheesemaking industry emerged in the Autonomous Community of Castile and Leon. It has continued to evolve in terms of size and there has been a certain degree of development as regards technology, hygiene standards and testing of raw materials and finished products, but it still retains its artisanal character.

Castile and Leon now boasts an abundance of raw materials of the highest quality, as it is the leading region in Spain in terms of both the dairy sheep population and the amount of sheep's cheese produced.

'Queso Castellano' is expressly mentioned in some historical and literary documents, the most important of these being the one cited by Carlos García del Cerro in his book *España. El país de los cien quesos* (Spain. Land of a hundred cheeses) (1996) in the chapter titled 'De Tartessos a la Mesta y algo más' (From Tartessus to La Mesta and elsewhere), where he mentions a document dating from 14 December 1442 by Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, attorney in several towns in northern Spain, including Santander, assigning value and prices to all of the goods that were marketed and sold in the area, under orders from King Alfonso V of Aragon: 'A pound and a quarter of queso castellano, equivalent to twenty ounces, would have been worth five *blancas*. A pound of cheese from Holland or Flanders weighing 10 ounces, twenty *cuartos*. A pound of cheese for baking or of 'Pasio' cheese (i.e. from the Pas Valley) weighing the relevant number of ounces, six *cuartos*'.

It was from the second half of the 20th century onwards, when the process was industrialised, that 'Queso Castellano' went beyond the provincial borders and became well-known throughout Spain, with more frequent mentions and descriptions of 'Queso Castellano' appearing, particularly in catalogues, tourist guides and cooking publications. This confirms that this product is one of the typical specialities of Castile and Leon. These include:

- *Guía práctica de los Quesos de España* (Practical Guide to the Cheeses of Spain) (1985), *Los Quesos de Castilla y León* (The Cheeses of Castile and Leon) (1983), *Guía práctica de los quesos de España* (Practical Guide to the Cheeses of Spain) (1989) and *Los Quesos de Valladolid* (The Cheeses of Valladolid) (1992), all by Carlos Moro González.
- *Queso Españoles* (Spanish Cheeses) by Simone Ortega, published by Alianza, 1987.
- *Los Quesos* (Cheeses) Cenzano, I. Published by Antonio Madrid Vicente, 1992
- *Catálogo de Queso de España* (Catalogue of Spanish Cheeses). Canut, E., Navarro, E., published by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. Madrid 1990.
- *La enciclopedia mundial del queso* (The World Encyclopedia of Cheese) by Juliet Harbutt with recipes by Roz Denny. Buenos Aires, 1999.
- *Manual del Gourmet del Queso* (Gourmet's Guide to Cheese) by Brigitte Engelmann and Peter Holler. Published by Ullmann, 2009.
- *El libro del Queso. La mejor selección. Notas de Cata. Más de 750 quesos. Como disfrutarlo* (World Cheese Book. The Finest Selection. Tasting Notes. Over 750 Cheeses. How to Enjoy) by Juliet Harbutt, published by H. BLUME, 2009.

Due to its climatic and soil conditions, Castile and Leon has always been especially well-suited to agriculture and livestock farming, in particular sheep-breeding. It enjoys a continental Mediterranean climate and its contrasting relief, with mountainous contours and flat interior, encourages the growth of diverse vegetation.

Dairy sheep farming in Castile and Leon used to be extensive, with the animals feeding partially or wholly on grassland (rain-fed or irrigated, depending on the area) and crop stubble. In recent decades, as a consequence of general rural depopulation, the sector has evolved towards a situation where livestock are increasingly fed in the fold rather than left to graze and farms have undergone resizing and restructuring (with natural resources available locally being used to feed the animals). Pigments and unsaturated fatty acids feature less prominently in the animals' diet and this is evident in the milk, which has a lower content of fat (with lower stearic, oleic and rumenic acid concentrations), dry matter and pigments, giving it a less oily consistency and less yellow colouring. This milk produces a cheese with a characteristic fatty acid profile. Together with the humidity and acidity of the 'Queso Castellano' paste, this has an effect on its characteristic, distinctive colour.

'Queso Castellano' is a cheese with a compact, blind paste that is devoid of holes or which features small air cavities. Its taste is full-bodied and intense but more acidic on the palate than other similar cheeses, due to its higher humidity and slightly lower pH value, as a result of the pressing and maturing stages in the traditional cheesemaking process.

'Queso Castellano' is hugely popular at rural markets and in shops, large retail outlets and specialised establishments. The high esteem in which 'Queso Castellano' is held is also apparent from the fact that it is featured on the regional cheese boards at local restaurants and included in their recipes. The reputation that 'Queso Castellano' enjoys in Spain and elsewhere in the world is backed by the numerous prizes won by producers in highly prestigious competitions, such as the World Cheese Awards or the Cincho Awards.

Reference to publication of the specification

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

http://www.itacyl.es/opencms_wf/opencms/system/modules/es.jcyl.ita.extranet/elements/galleries/galeria_downloads/registros/2018_09_25_Q_CASTELLANO_Pliego_de_Condiciones.pdf
