

COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION

of 26 November 2018

on the publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union* of the application for approval of an amendment, which is not minor, to a product specification referred to in Article 53 of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council for the name 'Lechazo de Castilla y León' (PGI)

(2018/C 432/03)

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 November 2012 on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs⁽¹⁾, and in particular Article 50(2)(a) in conjunction with Article 53(2) thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) Spain has sent an application for approval of an amendment, which is not minor, to the product specification of 'Lechazo de Castilla y León' (PGI) in accordance with Article 49(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012.
- (2) In accordance with Article 50 of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 the Commission has examined that application and concluded that it fulfils the conditions laid down in that Regulation.
- (3) In order to allow for the submission of notices of opposition in accordance with Article 51 of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012, the application for approval of an amendment, which is not minor, to the product specification as referred to in the first subparagraph of Article 10(1) of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 668/2014⁽²⁾, including the amended single document and the reference to the publication of the relevant product specification, for the registered name 'Lechazo de Castilla y León' (PGI) should be published in the *Official Journal of the European Union*,

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Sole Article

The application for approval of an amendment, which is not minor, to the product specification referred to in the first subparagraph of Article 10(1) of Implementing Regulation (EU) No 668/2014, including the amended single document and the reference to the publication of the relevant product specification, for the registered name 'Lechazo de Castilla y León' (PGI) is contained in the Annex to this Decision.

In accordance with Article 51 of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012, the publication of this Decision shall confer the right to oppose to the amendment referred to in the first paragraph of this Article within three months from the date of publication of this Decision in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

Done at Brussels, 26 November 2018.

For the Commission

Phil HOGAN

Member of the Commission

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 343, 14.12.2012, p. 1.

⁽²⁾ Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 668/2014 of 13 June 2014 laying down rules for the application of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs (OJ L 179, 19.6.2014, p. 36).

ANNEX

APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF AN AMENDMENT TO THE PRODUCT SPECIFICATION OF PROTECTED DESIGNATIONS OF ORIGIN/PROTECTED GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS WHICH 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 of the European Parliament and of the Council

‘Lechazo de Castilla y León’

EU No: PGI-ES-02188 — 26.9.2016

PDO () PGI (X)

1. Applicant group and legitimate interest

Name: Consejo Regulador de la Indicación Geográfica Protegida Lechazo de Castilla y León (Regulatory Board for the Protected Geographical Indication Lechazo de Castilla y León)

Address: Ctra. La Aldehuela, No 23
49029 Zamora
Zamora
ESPAÑA

Tel. +34 980525340/616007356

Email: info@lechazodecastillayleon.es

The applicant group represents the collective interests of the producers of ‘Lechazo de Castilla y León’ and is the legitimate interested party in the amendment application for the Specification of the Protected Geographical Indication ‘Lechazo de Castilla y León’ and is also responsible for its protection.

2. Member State or Third Country

Spain

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

- ☐ Name of product
- ☒ Description of product
- ☒ Geographical area
- ☒ Proof of origin
- ☒ Method of production
- ☐ Link
- ☒ Labelling
- ☒ Other [inspection body]

4. Type of amendment(s)

- ☐ Amendment to product specification of a 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)

Amendment 1

Description of product: removal of the requirement to check the live weight of suckling lambs at the time of slaughter in the slaughterhouse.

The removal of the requirement to check the live weight at the time of slaughter in the slaughterhouse is requested, because it is a duplication of the carcass weight check, which is more precise and objective and to which there is a direct correlation.

By performing the carcass weight check and ensuring compliance with the requirements that are most important in determining the quality of the suckling lamb carcasses (i.e. type of feed, colour, conformation and fat cover; all of which are covered in the product specification for the 'Lechazo de Castilla y León' PGI), the product will continue to comply with the quality criteria that apply to the meat of suckling lambs covered by the PGI.

The process of classification and labelling of the carcasses of suckling lambs covered by the 'Lechazo de Castilla y León' PGI also implies that they are checked one by one. If the carcass is outside the weight ranges laid down in the Specification, it is automatically rejected. For carcasses whose weight is compliant with the Specification, other parameters are then checked (conformation, flesh colour, colour of external fat, amount of fat on kidneys, presence of the omentum, etc.).

Text deleted

Live weight at the time of slaughter in the slaughterhouse: from 9 kg to 12 kg.

Amendment 2

Description of product: removal of the check on the animal's age at the time of slaughter.

The term 'suckling lamb' means that the sheep offspring are still feeding on their mothers' milk. It is therefore a direct link to the type of diet rather than the age. The age is a consequence that depends on when they are naturally weaned.

This removal seeks to avoid duplication of checks, given that this parameter is directly related to others which are accounted for in the product specification and are therefore checked, such as carcass weight, colour and fat cover.

It is proposed that the check on the age of slaughter be removed because individual checks of carcasses guarantee compliance with the quality parameters laid down in the Specification.

The criteria used to define the quality of the carcasses of this kind of young animals that are fed on their mothers' milk are mainly colour, fat and weight.

Carcass weight is closely related to age at the time of slaughter; the older the lamb, the greater the carcass weight.

The checks laid down in the Specification offer sufficient guarantees that the animal is fed exclusively on its mother's milk until the time of slaughter, which is the essential element that makes this product so specific. There are also checks designed to guarantee that the suckling lambs are only fed on their mothers' milk:

- A register is kept of the holdings that feed their suckling lambs exclusively on their mothers' milk and regular inspections are conducted on them.
- Checks are conducted on the carcass colour, which ranges from pale pink to pearly white (colour derived from diet of milk).
- Checks are conducted on external fat, the omentum and kidney fat (waxy-white in colour; at least 50 % of the surface of the kidneys must be covered).
- Organoleptic analysis of the final product.

The process of classification and labelling of the carcasses of suckling lambs covered by the 'Lechazo de Castilla y León' PGI involves an individual check on each carcass to verify the aforementioned parameters. Therefore, checking suckling lambs' carcass weight, colour and fat cover guarantees that the animals are not more than 35 days old and that they are fed on their mothers' milk. If an animal older than 35 days were presented for classification, having had a normal and harmonious development, it would exceed the maximum carcass weight and be rejected. If the animal is older than 35 days and its carcass does not exceed the maximum weight specified (very exceptional cases), this classification would be rejected because the proportions would not be harmonious, there would not be enough fat on the kidneys and the colour would be darker.

Therefore, checking suckling lambs' carcass weight, colour and fat cover guarantees that the animals are not more than 35 days old and that they are fed on their mothers' milk. This amendment does not affect the method of production or the quality of the final product.

Text deleted

Age at time of slaughter: up to and including 35 days.

Amendment 3

Description of product:

In this section the text has been modified in order to avoid confusion between the carcass weight and the presentation of the product, and the origin of the localism 'lechazo' (suckling lamb) has been expanded upon. The ways of presenting the product now also include the option to present it as a half carcass and primary cuts, due to the fact that the eating habits of consumers have altered as a result of socio-demographic changes to the population, which have led to a change in consumption patterns. One of the patterns which has changed is the demand for food in smaller formats, due to the decrease in family sizes, while retaining the quality of the food.

Wording in current specification:

'Lechazo' (suckling lamb) means sheep offspring that is still suckling; this word is used to refer to either male or female animals and it is a localism used in the geographic area of the Duero basin.

The type of livestock suitable for the production of 'Lechazo de Castilla y León' constitutes the following breeds:

- Churra
- Castellana
- Ojalada

Crossbreeding is permitted solely between the breeds indicated.

Castile and Leon suckling lambs must meet the following requirements:

- Lamb with no distinction made between genders.
- Live weight at the time of slaughter in the slaughterhouse: from 9 kg to 12 kg.
- Age at time of slaughter: up to and including 35 days.

Carcasses from the 'Extra' class and Class I, defined in the current quality standard, will be covered by the Protected Geographical Indication 'Lechazo de Castilla y León'. They must display the following characteristics:

- Carcass weight: Two forms of presentation:
 - (a) Headless, without the pluck and with the omentum: from 4,5 kg to 7 kg.
 - (b) With the head, the pluck and the omentum: from 5,5 kg to 8 kg
- Characteristics of the fat: External fat, waxy white in colour. The omentum covers the carcass. The kidneys appear covered in fat, at least over half of the surface.
- Conformation: Rectilinear profile with subconvex tendency.

Harmonious proportions.

Slightly rounded contours.

- Flesh colour: Pearly-white or pale pink.
- Characteristics of the meat: Very tender meat, with little infiltration of intramuscular fat, very juicy and with a very smooth texture.

The suckling lambs are exclusively fed on their mothers' milk.

The Specification should read:

The product consists of sheep offspring, both male and female, born and reared in the Autonomous Community of Castile and Leon, coming from the Churra, Castellana and Ojalada breeds or crosses between those breeds, which have been exclusively fed on their mothers' milk.

The word 'lechazo' (suckling lamb) is a localism having its origin in the word 'leche' (milk) and which defines both male and female sheep offspring fed on their mothers' milk.

Carcasses covered by the Protected Geographical Indication 'Lechazo de Castilla y León' display the following characteristics:

- Carcass weight: between 4,5 kg and 7 kg. If a suckling lamb is presented with the head and the pluck, the carcass weight is increased by 1 kg.
- Carcass classification: category A, first quality, pursuant to the European standard for the classification of carcasses of ovine animals in force.
- Types of presentation: carcass with the head and the pluck, headless carcass without the pluck, half carcass and primary cuts.
- Conformation: rectilinear profile with subconvex tendency, harmonious proportions and slightly rounded contours.
- Characteristics of the fat: external fat, waxy white in colour. The omentum covers the carcass. The kidneys appear covered in fat, at least over half of the surface.
- Flesh colour: pearly-white or pale pink.
- Characteristics of the meat: very tender meat, with little infiltration of intramuscular fat, very juicy and with a very smooth texture.

Amendment 4

Geographical area:

The geographical production area, previously restricted to specific districts where cereal crops are predominantly grown, has been extended to include the entire Autonomous Community of Castile and Leon. This extension is based on data concerning the surface area covered by cereal crops included in the CAP declaration in recent years corresponding to all municipalities in Castile and Leon and to the historical existence of farms with the local sheep breeds Churra, Castellana and Ojalada throughout the Autonomous Community of Castile and Leon. An analysis of the data shows that 94,57 % of the municipalities in Castile and Leon are cereal production areas and therefore comply with the link established in the specification between the local sheep-cereal production areas, bringing together and linking the final product with its geographical roots. It was therefore considered reasonable to extend the production area to the entire Autonomous Community of Castile and Leon, as the number of municipalities that could be excluded is negligible.

This allows for production in the region's peripheral areas, which also contain abundant natural pastures that are important for feeding the livestock.

The proposed geographical area for the PGI 'Lechazo de Castilla y León' represents an increase of 36 443 km² on top of the 57 784 km² which appears in the version of the product specification currently registered.

Wording in current specification:

Production area: districts in Castile and Leon corresponding to the natural distribution of the Churra, Castellana and Ojalada breeds (the product specification details each municipality included in the geographic area. There is therefore no need to reproduce them in this document).

Slaughtering and processing area: Autonomous Community of Castile and Leon.

The Specification should read:

The geographical area of production, slaughter and processing of the suckling lambs covered by the PGI is the entire Autonomous Community of Castile and Leon.

Amendment 5

Proof of origin:

This section has been completely restructured to improve its readability and adapt it to the current regulations.

It includes clarifications to ensure the purity of the breeds of animal on the holdings, and in terms of the suckling lambs being fed exclusively on their mothers' milk, this guarantees some of the essential elements that give this product its specific characteristics.

Changes have been made to the way the animals are identified on the holding. The product specification currently states that there must be a tag on their left ear displaying two upper-case letters (initials identifying the farm), followed by the serial number and date of birth. This identification is not the one set out under the legislation in force, and means the animal would have to wear two ear tags.

This has been amended to state that the identification of the suckling lambs may take place before they leave the holding, and not at birth as indicated in the current product specification. This is in accordance with the legislation in force, Article 4(6) of Royal Decree 685/2013 of 16 September 2013 establishing a system for the identification and registration of ovine and caprine animals.

Animal transportation checks, which are important in terms of animal welfare and the characteristics of the meat, have been incorporated.

The subparagraph mentioning the actions of the carcass classification committee has been removed as it was not in line with the certification process.

The content regarding the physical media that accompany the dispatched product has been deleted, as these are specified in the section on labelling; it states that this identification must take place in the slaughterhouse.

The provisions of Article 4(2) of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 668/2014 have been included.

Checks on production, transport, the slaughter and preparation of the suckling lambs and the classification of the carcasses have been included.

Checks on the final product have also been included, involving organoleptic analysis in a laboratory with the expertise, equipment, infrastructure and personnel to perform this task.

References to the Regulatory Board have been deleted so as not to restrict the free movement of goods and the freedom to provide services.

Wording in current specification:

Checks and certification:

Suckling lambs suitable for producing meat protected by the PGI come from registered holdings.

Sheep holdings are located in the production area indicated in point C and the suckling lambs covered are born and reared on these holdings.

The suckling lambs are identified at birth with a tag on their left ear displaying two upper-case letters (initials identifying the farm), followed by the serial number and date of birth, in accordance with the birth register.

Slaughter and processing takes place in slaughterhouses and cutting and packing plants listed in the Regulatory Board's plant registers.

The Regulatory Board, through the carcass classification committee, determines whether carcasses are eligible for protection under the Protected Geographical Indication, in accordance with paragraph (B), and attaches a 'Lechazo de Castilla y León' identification tag to them to identify the protected product.

All carcasses with the Protected Geographical Indication released for consumption have to bear the tag that in all cases contains the Regulatory Board logo, the date of slaughter and the identification number; they cannot be marketed under the PGI in the absence of this requirement.

Irrespective of the type of packaging in which the suckling lambs are released for consumption, they must bear a numbered seal of guarantee issued by the Regulatory Board, which must be affixed at the plant, in accordance with the standards set by the Regulatory Board, and in such a way that it cannot be re-used.

In all cases, the tags, labels and control elements of the Regulatory Board should match each other.

Carcasses covered by the Protected Geographical Indication are only dispatched by plants registered by the Regulatory Board in a form that does not undermine their quality or bring disrepute to the Protected Geographical Indication.

The Specification should read:

Suckling lambs covered by the PGI may only be produced by sheep holdings which are registered in the corresponding official register and which can always guarantee the purity of their breeds of animal.

Sheep holdings are located in the defined area and the suckling lambs must be born and reared on these holdings and may only be fed on their mothers' milk.

The suckling lambs are tagged before leaving the holding pursuant to the current regulations; the tag includes the PGI logo.

The suckling lambs are transported to the slaughterhouse in duly authorised vehicles, accompanied by their supporting documents.

The slaughter, processing, cutting, packing and distribution of the protected meat is exclusively carried out at the facilities of operators included in the inspection body registers.

The product released for consumption must be tagged at all times, and the tags, labels and other control elements should match each other. This identification must take place in the slaughterhouse.

Meat covered by the Protected Geographical Indication is dispatched only by registered operators in a way that does not undermine its quality and does not bring disrepute to the Protected Geographical Indication.

All operators must be able to identify:

- (a) the supplier, quantity and origin of all batches of suckling lambs received,
- (b) the recipient, quantity and destination of labelled suckling lamb carcasses,
- (c) the correlations between each batch of live suckling lambs referred to in letter (a) and each batch of labelled suckling lamb carcasses referred to in letter (b).

The production, transportation, slaughter and processing of suckling lambs and carcass classification will be subject to checks.

The organoleptic characteristics of the meat are checked by way of analysis in a laboratory with the expertise, equipment, infrastructure and personnel to perform this task.

Amendment 6

Method of production:

An in-depth revision has been made to this section. Aspects which are repeated in other paragraphs or which are already laid down or prohibited in existing legislation have been taken out.

The reference to transporting the animals to the slaughterhouse in the morning has been removed, as slaughterhouses currently slaughter the animals on a continual basis.

The reference to slaughtering animals within 10 hours of entering the slaughterhouse has been removed, and reference is now made to the times laid down in existing legislation.

Lastly, temperatures for preserving meat have been established in accordance with the limits laid down in existing legislation for this type of product. Furthermore, the labelled meat can be marketed more than eight days after slaughter if it is packaged in conditions that extend its shelf life.

References to authorisation or inspection by the Regulatory Board have also been deleted so as not to restrict the free movement of goods and the freedom to provide services.

Wording in current specification:

Carcasses protected by the PGI originate from suckling lambs obtained from the breeds indicated in point (b) and their crossbreeds, exclusively fed on their mothers' milk.

The Regulatory Board may lay down mandatory rules on farming practices and livestock management and on the quality of feed used for feeding the mothers.

Under no circumstances may the mothers receive growth promoters or adjuvants.

The area of slaughter and processing of the carcasses is the Autonomous Community of Castile and Leon.

Livestock is transported to the slaughterhouse in duly authorised vehicles in such a way that the animals do not experience any distress or discomfort that may affect their physical state or wellbeing.

Animals are not to be grabbed by their skin, struck or heaped together during transportation. Transportation takes place in the morning, preferably in the early hours, and long trips are to be avoided.

If there are both sheep protected under the PGI and non-PGI sheep in the same pick-up area, they must be transported in separate cages in the vehicle and rest in separate areas.

The resting period is the minimum required and, in any event, in accordance with the technical facilities of the Regulatory Board.

All PGI animals are slaughtered on the same day that they enter the slaughterhouse and always within 10 hours of entry.

All PGI animals are slaughtered separately from the rest.

Animals whose carcasses fall under the Protected Geographical Indication are slaughtered and/or handled in plants that are duly registered for this purpose in the corresponding registers and authorised in accordance with the current provisions for the national and EU markets.

In all cases, the head is severed at the atlanto-occipital joint.

The carcasses are left to chill in chambers at 4 °C until the day following the slaughter. From that moment the carcasses are preserved in storage chillers at 1 °C for a maximum period of five days.

The marketing period must not exceed eight days from slaughter.

The Specification should read:

The suckling lambs must be born and reared in registered sheep holdings and they must not be able to leave those holdings until they are placed on the market.

The suckling lambs are exclusively fed on their mothers' milk.

The suckling lambs' journey time to the slaughterhouse complies with the legislation in force or standard that replaces such legislation.

If there are both sheep protected under the PGI and non-PGI sheep in the same pick-up area, they must be transported in such a way as to avoid confusion.

All PGI animals are slaughtered within the time period laid down in the current legislation and separately from the rest.

The slaughter, processing and/or cutting of the animals is carried out in plants duly registered to this effect in the corresponding registers.

The head is severed, where appropriate, at the atlanto-occipital joint.

After slaughter the carcasses are refrigerated in the slaughterhouse at a temperature of between 1 and 7 °C until they are placed on the market.

In accordance with the specification, the maximum marketing period for the meat is eight days following slaughter. If the marketed meat is packaged or preserved in conditions that extend its shelf life, the marketing period may be longer, provided that the characteristics described in the Product Description section are maintained.

Amendment 7

Labelling:

The minimum content that should appear on the labels has been expanded on. It includes the new logo for the PGI 'Lechazo de Castilla y León', which was introduced in 2011, and references to authorisation or inspection by the Regulatory Board have been removed so as not to restrict the free movement of goods and the freedom to provide services.

Wording in current specification:

All 'Lechazo de Castilla y León' carcasses released for consumption must bear a tag displaying, in all cases, the Regulatory Board's logo, the slaughter date and identification number; they cannot be marketed under the PGI in the absence of this requirement.

Irrespective of the type of packing in which the suckling lambs are released for consumption, they must bear a numbered seal of guarantee issued by the Regulatory Board, affixed in such a way that it cannot be re-used.

The labels used to market 'Lechazo de Castilla y León' must be pre-approved by the Regulatory Board.

The Specification should read:

All carcasses and/or packages containing 'Lechazo de Castilla y León' meat released for consumption must bear a seal of guarantee containing, as a minimum, the logo of the designation, the slaughter date and identification number, affixed in such a way that it cannot be re-used; they cannot be marketed under the PGI in the absence of this requirement.

The designation's logo is:



Amendment 8

Inspection body:

The inspection body is now the *Instituto Tecnológico Agrario de Castilla y León* (Castile and Leon Institute of Agricultural Technology), which is the competent authority.

Wording in current specification:

Constitution:

The inspection body for the Protected Geographical Indication 'Lechazo de Castilla y León' is the Regulatory Board, which is a professional body made up of representatives of producers and processors.

It consists of:

- a president,
- a vice-president,
- five members representing the livestock sector,
- five members representing the industrial sector,
- a technical member representing the Administration.

The members are democratically elected every four years.

Scope of responsibility:

- (a) In terms of territory: the areas in which the product is produced and processed.
- (b) With regard to the producers: products covered by the Protected Geographical Indication, at all stages of production, processing, circulation and marketing.
- (c) With regard to persons: persons entered in the various registers.

Duties:

- Drawing up and checking the various registers.
- Providing guidelines for, overseeing and monitoring the production, packaging and quality of the protected meat. Inspection and monitoring are carried out by inspectors authorised by the relevant authorities, acting impartially with respect to the producers and processors.
- Assessing the product.
- Promoting and defending the Protected Geographical Indication.
- Acting with full legal responsibility and capacity to enter into obligations and be a party in legal proceedings, taking action befitting its role of representing and defending the general interests of the specific designation.

The Specification should read:

Instituto Tecnológico Agrario de Castilla y León
Ctra. de Burgos Km 119. Finca Zamadueñas
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Valladolid
ESPAÑA

Tel. +34 983412034

Fax +34 983412040

Email: controloficial@itacyl.es

The *Instituto Tecnológico Agrario de Castilla y León* (the Castile and Leon Institute of Agricultural Technology), through the *Subdirección de Calidad y Promoción Alimentaria* (Subdirectorate-General for Food Quality and Promotion), is the competent authority in verifying fulfilment of the specification, as well as in applying the penalty system laid down in Law 1/2014 of 19 March 2014, the Castile and Leon Agriculture Act.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

‘Lechazo de Castilla y León’**EU No: PGI-ES-02188 — 26.9.2016****PDO () PGI (X)****1. Name**

‘Lechazo de Castilla y León’

2. Member State or Third Country

Spain

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

The product consists of sheep offspring, both male and female, born and reared in the Autonomous Community of Castile and Leon, coming from the Churra, Castellana and Ojalada breeds or crosses between those breeds, which have been exclusively fed on their mothers’ milk.

Carcasses covered by the Protected Geographical Indication ‘Lechazo de Castilla y León’ display the following characteristics:

- Carcass weight: between 4,5 kg and 7 kg. If a suckling lamb is presented with the head and the pluck, the carcass weight is increased by 1 kg.
- Carcass classification: category A, first quality, pursuant to the European standard for the classification of carcasses of ovine animals in force.
- Types of presentation: carcass with the head and the pluck, headless carcass without the pluck, half carcass and primary cuts.
- Conformation: rectilinear profile with subconvex tendency, harmonious proportions and slightly rounded contours.
- Characteristics of the fat: external fat, waxy white in colour. The omentum covers the carcass. The kidneys appear covered in fat, at least over half of the surface.
- Flesh colour: pearly-white or pale pink.
- Characteristics of the meat: very tender meat, with little infiltration of intramuscular fat, very juicy and with a very smooth texture.

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

Mothers are fed through grazing, benefiting from the stubble fields and natural pastureland of the designated area. Stubble fields are used during the summer in the period between the cereal harvest and tilling of the land at the start of autumn.

Other pastureland typical of the vegetation of the Autonomous Community of Castile and Leon is used from the start of spring right up until the start of winter.

During the winter dormant period, during the periods of maximum need (birth and lactation) and when feed is scarce because of adverse weather conditions, the basic ration may be supplemented with feed composed of cereals, legumes and fodder in accordance with Community legislation.

Animals from which meat for the Protected Geographical Indication is to be produced remain with their mothers and are exclusively fed on their mothers' milk until slaughter.

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

Animals are born, reared, slaughtered and processed in the defined geographical area.

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

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

All carcasses and/or packages containing 'Lechazo de Castilla y León' meat released for consumption must bear a seal of guarantee containing, as a minimum, the logo of the designation, the slaughter date and identification number, affixed in such a way that it cannot be re-used; they cannot be marketed under the PGI in the absence of this requirement.

The designation's logo is:



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

The defined geographical area comprises the entire Autonomous Community of Castile and Leon.

5. **Link with the geographical area**

The link between the geographical area and the product 'Lechazo de Castilla y León' is based on the reputation of the name and on the traditional production method, in which the young are fed exclusively on their mothers' milk. This, together with the use of the Churra, Castellana and Ojalada breeds, gives the meat certain specific characteristics.

The entire Autonomous Community of Castile and Leon constitutes the production area for sheep from the three native breeds (Churra, Castellana and Ojalada) for obtaining carcasses covered by the Protected Geographical Indication. The area's climate is characterised by a harsh and extended winter during which thick fog abounds, as well as late and early frosts. During the short and irregular summers, dry and torrid periods alternate with cold spells. There is low rainfall on most of the grasslands and stark differences between the relative uniformity of the grasslands and the marked climatic contrasts of the mountains.

Castile and Leon is the Spanish region that produces especially large amounts of cereals, and there are no major opportunities to change this traditional type of production due to the region's limited infrastructure. A total of 66,5 % of the surface of the defined area (flat and high-altitude) is located in the centre and interior of the autonomous community and is basically used for producing cereal. The peripheral area, higher in altitude and with more rainfall, also contains stubble fields for cereal production and abundant natural pastureland. This pastureland is composed of grass that grows spontaneously in uncultivated and fallow land and of food supplies offered up by the various shrub species, such as heather or Erica, rockrose (*Cistus ladeniferus* and *Laurifolius*), which is the dominant species in most of the region's scrublands, labiate and leguminous plants (*Genista*, *Sarothamus*, *Cystus*, *Ulex*), thyme (*Thymus*) and other characteristic plants such as restharrow (*Ononis tridentata*). Matgrass (*Nardus Stricta*) and fescue (*Festucas*) are characteristic of the extensive subalpine pasturelands.

The topography and climate have conditioned the development of the agricultural sector, both in terms of its limitations and the possibilities it offers for production. Due to the thermal variations there is a limited choice of crops that can withstand the wide range of temperatures (cereal, corn, sunflower, dry alfalfa, etc.), and the summer water shortage resulting from the drop in rainfall during the summer months means a dependency on irrigation. Therefore, in many areas, given the environmental conditions, cereal crops are the only growing option open to farmers and sheep are the best tool for making the most of the stubble fields and ephemeral dry pastureland; the Churra, Castellana and Ojalada breeds are the best adapted to these conditions due to their robust character.

For many years, the scarcity of fertile pastureland covering an adequate spread of land during the year, which may be used to feed the regular production of heavy lambs, led to the herds being used for milk production and, therefore, the sheep's offspring being slaughtered at a very young age.

Cave paintings dating to the time of the Celtic invasion found in Las Batuecas in the district of Salamanca are the oldest record bearing witness to the existence and farming of sheep in what now makes up Castile and Leon. However, all of the farms underwent a strong development thanks to the prominence of the Honourable Council of Livestock Farmers (*Honrado Concejo de la Mesta de Pastores*), recognised by Alfonso X, the Wise, as 'an association of farmers who planned the division of pastureland, calendar of use, etc.'

These physical characteristics of the area, and the natural, human and historical factors of the Autonomous Community of Castile and Leon, define a traditional, extensive and semi-intensive production system, characterised by the agricultural use of pastureland and natural resources, where sheep holdings rear breeding animals under mixed grazing and non-grazing systems, their lambs being exclusively fed on their mothers' milk. The local Churra, Castellana and Ojalada breeds or crosses between those breeds are the best adapted to this system of production, giving rise to a product of excellent quality, characterised by having very white, tender meat with very little fat from intramuscular infiltration, owing to the lambs being exclusively fed on their mothers' milk.

The production system and young slaughter age of these animals are greatly conditioned by the harsh environment, specific characteristics of the small, local breeds sustaining the system and by strong handling traditions. This all means that the slaughter age and weight of the animals influence the level of fat cover, the meat's colour, the fat consistency and the taste and aroma of the meat.

Slaughter at a young age and the lambs' feeding on their mothers' milk give the 'Lechazo de Castilla y León' its characteristically pearly-white or pale pink meat. The characteristically very tender and juicy meat is due to the lambs' low slaughter weight and the fact that they are fed on their mothers' milk. Both of these factors influence the fact that the collagen in the meat is less stable in the presence of heat during cooking, giving a very smooth texture.

Furthermore, the suckling lamb carcasses have a high percentage of bone in relation to muscle, because they are very young animals whose muscles have not fully developed. This is also the reason for the low infiltration of intramuscular fat.

Despite the tender age of Castile and Leon suckling lambs, they have relatively high internal and external fat cover. This is because the animals' limitless milk consumption produces a surplus of energy, which, when combined with the not very high growth rate of these breeds, builds up in the form of fat. At least half of the surface area of the kidneys of these animals appears covered in fat, which is evidence that the animals are fed exclusively on their mothers' milk. This external fat is waxy white, giving the suckling lambs their very characteristic 'bouquet'.

Castile and Leon suckling lambs satisfy consumers' high demand for ultra-light carcasses, with light fat cover and very pale muscle colour, helping them reach very high prices on the market.

Traditional roast suckling lamb has endured for centuries as the signature dish of Castile and Leon cuisine. Enjoying an exquisite roast suckling lamb has for centuries been the best way of celebrating with family or friends.

Suckling lamb also features in cookery books (*Secretos de los Chefs: técnicas y trucos de 50 estrellas Michelin* (Secrets of the Chefs, tricks and techniques of 50 Michelin stars) published by Bon Vivant (2008), prologue by Ferrán Adrià) and cookery magazines (*De Origen*, *Carnicas 2000*, *Eurocarne*, *Siburitas*, *Argi*, *la guía de Turismo gastronómico de España 2009* (The 2009 Gourmet Tourist Guide to Spain) published by Anaya, et al.), and the *Manual Gastronómico del Lechazo Asado de la Asociación de Asadores de Lechazo de Castilla y León* (Culinary Manual for Roast Suckling Lamb of the Association of Roasters of Castile-Leon Suckling Lamb).

We can also find references to its quality in studies, for example, a study entitled '*Identificación y adecuación de la calidad y la composición de la carne de diferentes tipos de ovinos europeos. Adaptación a las preferencias de los consumidores*' (Identification and adequacy of the quality and composition of meat from different types of European sheep. Adaptation to consumer preferences) at the Veterinary Faculty of the University of Zaragoza, with the suckling lamb being the most highly regarded by Spanish consumers.

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/2017_05_10_Pliego_Lechazo_I_G_P.pdf
