

COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION

of 6 December 2018

on the publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union* of the application for registration of a name referred to in Article 49 of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council

(‘Странджански манов мед’ (Strandzhanski manov med)/‘Манов мед от Странджа’ (Manov med ot Strandzha) (PDO))

(2018/C 449/04)

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) thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) Bulgaria has sent to the Commission an application for protection of the name ‘Странджански манов мед’ (Strandzhanski manov med)/‘Манов мед от Странджа’ (Manov med ot Strandzha) 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 single document and the reference to the publication of the product specification referred to in Article 50(2)(a) of that Regulation for the name ‘Странджански манов мед’ (Strandzhanski manov med)/‘Манов мед от Странджа’ (Manov med ot Strandzha) should be published in the *Official Journal of the European Union*,

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Sole Article

The single document and the reference to the publication of the product specification referred to in Article 50(2)(a) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 for the name ‘Странджански манов мед’ (Strandzhanski manov med)/‘Манов мед от Странджа’ (Manov med ot Strandzha) (PDO) are 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 registration of the name 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, 6 December 2018.

For the Commission

Phil HOGAN

Member of the Commission

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 343, 14.12.2012, p. 1.

ANNEX

SINGLE DOCUMENT

‘СТРАНДЖАНСКИ МАНОВ МЕД’ (STRANDZHANSKI MANOV MED)/‘МАНОВ МЕД ОТ СТРАНДЖА’ (MANOV MED OT STRANDZHA)**EU No: PDO-BG-02306 — 12.4.2017****PDO (X) PGI ()****1. Name(s)**

‘Странджански манов мед’ (Strandzhanski manov med)/‘Манов мед от Странджа’ (Manov med ot Strandzha)

2. Member State or Third Country

Bulgaria

3. Description of the agricultural product or foodstuff**3.1. Type of product**

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

‘Strandzhanski manov med’ is honey produced by honey bees from the secretions of living parts of plants and from the excretions of plant-sucking insects, 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. The product ‘Strandzhanski manov med’ is made from honeydew secreted by certain insects and the sap of oak acorns, which are collected by bees.

Organoleptic characteristics:

Exterior: opaque, slightly opalescent, with no traces of brood or other mechanical pulp and showing no signs of fermentation.

Colour: brown or dark brown to black in colour, with a greenish tint. After crystallisation, the colour may change to light brown or grey.

Consistency: dense, runny, semi-crystallised or crystallised mass.

Flavour: sweet, with slight acidity and bitter notes.

Aroma: roasted fruits and caramel.

*Requirements concerning the composition of the honey:**Physical and chemical characteristics:*

fructose and glucose content	not less than 45 g/100 g
sucrose content	not more than 5 g/100 g
moisture content	not more than 19 %
water-insoluble content	not more than 0,1 g/100 g
electrical conductivity	must exceed 0,95 mS/cm
free acidity	not more than 50 milliequivalents of acid per 1 000 g
diastase activity	above 12 Schade units after obtention
hydroxymethylfurfural (HMF) content	not more than 10 mg/kg after obtention of honey

‘Strandzhanski manov med’ is mainly distinguished from nectar-based honey for its high electrical conductivity due to its higher content of micronutrients: potassium (1 568-1 676 mg/kg), magnesium (149-169 mg/kg), lithium (0,11-0,33 mg/kg) and manganese (34-51 mg/kg) and antioxidants: phenol content (56- 65 mg/kg). It is characterised by high levels of melezitose (4-11 %) and erlose. Another distinctive characteristic is the presence of quercitol and kestose. Another characteristic of ‘Strandzhanski manov med’ is that it contains honeydew elements (HDE), namely fungal spores, conidia, hyphae, etc., which are a result of the specific production and harvesting process.

Pollen characteristics:

‘Strandzhanski manov med’ is honeydew honey with pollen content of diverse botanical origin. The wealth of plant species in Strandzha includes: *Trifolium* (white clover), *Vicia* (common vetch), *Lotus* (*Lotus corniculatus*), *Tilia* (linden), *Echium* (*Boraginaceae* family), *Rubus*, *Matricaria* (*Asteraceae* family), *Daucus* (*Umbelliferae*), *Potentilla* (*Rosaceae*), *Paliurus*, *Dorycnium* (*Fabaceae* family), *Brassicaceae*, *Clematis* (*Clematidis vitalba*), *Cistus* (sage-leaved rockrose, pink rockrose), *Plantago* and *Chenopodiaceae*.

The pollen characteristics of ‘Strandzhanski manov med’ are influenced by specific plants in the Strandzha region not found elsewhere in Bulgaria. These are: *Ophrys reinholdii*, *Verbascum bugulifolium*, *Teucrium lamiifolium*, laurel-leaved rockrose, *Hypericum androsaemum*, *Stachys thracica* and *Epimedium pubigerum*. They are also influenced by Tertiary relict flora — species which were widespread in the Strandzha region during the Tertiary Period — such as *Cicer montbretii*, *Erica arborea*, medlar, common heather, sage-leaved rockrose, *Hypericum calycinum* and others.

The European range of seven of these is limited to the Strandzha region and the Caucasus: *Ilex colchica*, *Daphne pontica*, Caucasian whortleberry, *Rhododendron ponticum*, Strandzha oak, *Veronica turrilliana* and *Quercus polycarpa*.

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

The feeding of bees is not permitted during the period of the honey harvest. The bees may be fed in spring and after the honey is extracted before winter in quantities necessary for the building-up of reserves and ensuring that the colony survives the winter. Colonies may be fed with sugar, sugar cake and sugar syrups. The bees may also be fed honey of their own production. Producers must ensure that winter reserves do not find their way into the surplus honey (‘Strandzhanski manov med’).

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

‘Strandzhanski manov med’ is obtained at apiaries (mainly of the stationary type) in the oak forests of the Strandzha massif, which must be located within the defined geographical area. ‘Strandzhanski manov med’ is obtained during the months of June, July and August. The bee colonies must be located in the defined geographical area throughout the year.

‘Strandzhanski manov med’ is produced in the following manner:

- (1) the transfer of the sealed honey frames to the premises;
- (2) uncapping and centrifugation of the honey comb;
- (3) filtering and pouring in containers intended for the storage;
- (4) transfer of the ready honey containers to the warehouse.

All stages of production must take place in the defined geographical area in order to safeguard the quality of the product and its full traceability.

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

With an objective to guarantee the quality and the full traceability of the product, the honey is packaged in the geographical area defined in point 4, the weight shall not exceed 1 500 gr.

With a view to guarantee the quality and especially to keep the organoleptic and physical and chemical characteristics of 'Strandzhanski manov med', the packaging and the labelling should be carried out in the defined geographical area as during transportation to a new location out of it the quality of the product could be changed by the increased temperatures. All the processes should be carried out in the geographical area in order to avoid the mixing with other honeys not covered by this Protected Designation of Origin as well as for the protection from absorption of extraneous odours. 'Strandzhanski manov med' must not be transported out of the geographical area with the aim of packaging because it is hygroscopic and the protection of the product from the humidity is of an essential importance as it worsens the organoleptic and physical and chemical characteristics.

The sale of 'Strandzhanski manov med' in bulk is prohibited.

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

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

'Strandzhanski manov med' is produced in the following municipalities: Sozopol, Primorsko, Tsarevo, Malko Tarnovo and Sredets.

5. **Link with the geographical area**

5.1. *Specificity of the geographical area*

The geographical area covers the Strandzha massif and has a humid continental or oceanic climate. Also characteristic of the region are mild temperatures; frequent mists in spring and summer, sometimes persisting until late morning; mild temperatures and high air humidity. These conditions facilitate the dissolution of the secreted substances which the insects collect on the surface of foliage. The light mists help ensure that drops of sap are not wasted, as is the event of heavier mists these drops become larger and fall from the leaf. The combination of climatic factors — maritime humidity near mountains, but without heavy rainfall, and a relatively warm climate without extreme temperatures, together with the proximity of the sea and the oak forests, provides excellent conditions for the producers of the honeydew — aphids (*Lachnus roboris*, *L. pallipes*, *Monelliopsis caryae*, *Tuberculatus* (*Tuberculooides*) *querceus* and *T. annulatus*), the acorn weevil (*Curculio Glandium*) and the chestnut tortrix (*Cydia Splendana*).

The particular geographical situation of the mountain massif, with its proximity to three major water basins — the Black, Aegean, and Marmara seas, and the climatic factors thus created — relatively high air humidity and mild temperatures, as well as its paleontological history (absence of ice in the Quaternary Period) create conditions in which floristic elements can be found in combinations that are unique for the continent. The movement of humid air flows from the sea to the interior of the Strandzha region is facilitated by rounded mountain ridges, deep ravines and river valleys. Plant life which was widespread across Europe several million years ago during the Tertiary Period has been preserved here up to the present day.

The flora of the Strandzha region differs from European plant formations and closely resembles the Pontic flora of the Caucasus and Asia Minor, with many Tertiary relicts and endemic species that can be detected upon analysis of the pollen spectrum. The Strandzha region contains many protected areas, nature reserves and natural habitats, resulting in a favourable environment for honeybees and beekeeping. Strandzha is recognised as one of the five priority areas for environmental protection in the EU, and is included in the Pan-European ecological network Natura 2000. The region is dominated by oak and beech forests, with the highest proportion of oak forests consisting of *Quercus petraea* (sessile oak — 47,8 %) and *Q. frainetto* (Italian/Hungarian oak — 41,8 %), which provide sustenance for the aphids and weevils that produce the honeydew.

The poor soils — brown cinnamonic forest and podzolic yellow earth soils — and the absence of industrial activity restrict the cultivation of agricultural crops whose flowering could adversely influence the quality of the honey.

5.2. **Human factors**

Beekeeping has always been a common activity in the Strandzha region. It is an age-old livelihood, as testified by the bee skeps and stumps which date from the end of the 19th century till today. The beekeepers manage the following steps in particular to ensure only the honeydew is produced:

Stage I

The bees collect honeydew, mainly from deciduous oak woods, and process it to produce mature honey: 'Strandzhanski manov med'. During the main foraging period, supers and/or bodies are placed over the brood box to allow the separation of surplus honey.

Stage II

Once the honey in the comb is sufficiently mature, the comb is removed from the hives and transferred to the location where centrifuging takes place.

After centrifuging the honey is filtered, homogenised and clarified in settling tanks for at least 24 hours.

Stage III

The honey is kept in containers intended for the storage of food products. Decanting, packaging and labelling are carried out in clean and suitable premises. Crystallised honey is liquefied by means of heating at a temperature of not more than 42 °C, the temperature reached by the honey in the hive during the honey harvest. Diastatic activity is maintained at this temperature.

5.3. Specificity of the product

The uniqueness of 'Strandzhanski manov med' is mainly due to its physical/chemical, pollen and organoleptic characteristics.

One specific characteristic of 'Strandzhanski manov med' is its particularly high electrical conductivity in comparison with other honeydew honeys — this must exceed 0,95 mS/cm.

The honey is characterised by a high diastase activity (due to the rich enzyme composition as a result of secondary processing done by aphids and weevil) and a low hydroxymethylfurfural (HMF) content.

These characteristics arise due to the extensive oak forests (covering over 70 % of the region) which, combined with mild temperatures and high air humidity, create the conditions for high surface area of foliage, providing a favourable environment for aphids and weevils. It is their excretions and the secretions of living parts of plants that are collected by bees and transformed into this honey.

The pollen spectrum of 'Strandzhanski manov med', including pollen of plants found only in the Strandzha region (see point 3.2), distinguishes it from honey produced elsewhere, which is in itself directly due to the link between the product 'Strandzhanski manov med' and the Strandzha massif. Studies of the pollen spectrum have allowed the determination of geographical markers — endemic and Tertiary relict species, which by their presence or frequency of presence in the pollen spectrum determine its geographical borders in the Strandzha region.

It is of particular importance that the apiaries be located in the defined geographical area throughout the year, i.e. they are of the stationary type.

'Strandzhanski manov med' has an appreciably darker colour, a specific aroma and a slightly acidic and bitter taste than the nectar-based honey.

5.4. 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)

'Strandzhanski manov med' is a product closely linked to its region of origin, as a result of the bioecological interdependence and balance between populations of honeydew-producing aphids and weevils, the presence of extensive oak and beech clusters and a typically mild climate. The local forest vegetation provides food for honeydew producers, and the specific mild climate of the Strandzha region (sufficient air humidity, moderate temperatures, mists in spring and summer) favours the secretion of honeydew and its collection by the bees. In the Strandzha region, the main forage for bees during the months of June, July and August is oak honeydew. During the period when honeydew is collected in Strandzha, there are no other abundantly nectariferous species, e.g. clusters of acacia or lime, which would flower and cause the mixing of nectar-based honey with the honeydew honey. The composition of the honeydew which provides sustenance for the bees leads to a higher content of micronutrients and antioxidants in this honey, in comparison to nectar-based honey. The intensity of the colour and the slight acidity and bitterness of the taste are due to the microflora present in the honeydew and the period when it is collected.

The protected status of the Strandzha natural area rules out intensive farming and contributes to the purity of the product. The phytogeography of the Strandzha region is unique in Europe. The pollen of plants typical of or found only in the Strandzha region distinguish the pollen spectrum of 'Strandzhanski manov med'. Endemic Pontic species, found only along the southern Black Sea coast between Strandzha, the Pontic Mountains and the Caucasus, include *Rhododendron ponticum*, *Daphne pontica*, and *Ilex colchica*, and these contribute to the pollen characteristics of 'Strandzhanski manov med'. This unique vegetation also influences the organoleptic characteristics and aroma of the honey, underpinning the natural connection between the environment and the product.

Reference to publication of the specification

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

<http://www.mzh.government.bg/bg/politiki-i-programi/politiki-i-strategii/politiki-po-agrohranitelnata-veriga/zashiteni-naimenovaniya/zayavlenie-za-znp-strandzhanski-manov-medmanov-med-ot-strandzha/>
