

OTHER ACTS

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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

(2013/C 109/08)

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⁾.

AMENDMENT APPLICATION

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006**on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs ⁽²⁾****AMENDMENT APPLICATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE 9****'RASCHERA'****EC No: IT-PDO-0217-0023-31.05.2011****PDO (X) PGI ()****1. Heading in the product specification affected by the amendment**

- ☐ Name of product
- ☒ Description of product
- ☒ Geographical area
- ☐ Proof of origin
- ☒ Method of production
- ☐ Link
- ☒ Labelling
- ☐ National requirements
- ☐ Other (to be specified)

2. Type of amendment(s)

- ☐ Amendment to Single Document or Summary Sheet
- ☒ Amendment to Specification of registered PDO or PGI for which neither the Single Document nor the Summary Sheet has been published
- ☐ Amendment to Specification that requires no amendment to the published Single Document (Article 9(3) of Regulation (EC) No 510/2006)
- ☐ Temporary amendment to Specification resulting from imposition of obligatory sanitary or phytosanitary measures by public authorities (Article 9(4) of Regulation (EC) No 510/2006)

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 343, 14.12.2012, p. 1.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 93, 31.3.2006, p. 12. Replaced by Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012.

3. Amendment(s)

3.1. Description

To improve information provision to consumers, the word 'semi-fat' has been removed because partial skimming is optional under the current specification, thus potentially misleading consumers as to the true nature of the product.

In the current specification, the weight of the cheese is given as 7-9 kg for round 'Raschera' and 8-10 kg for square 'Raschera'.

The dimensions are currently given as follows:

- round 'Raschera': diameter 35-40 cm, slightly convex heel of 7-9 cm, with variations in the minimum and maximum figures for both characteristics in line with the technical conditions of production,
- square 'Raschera': length of all sides 40 cm, irregular heel of 12-15 cm.

The minimum weight has been reduced to 5 kg for round 'Raschera' and 6 kg for square 'Raschera'. As a result, the diameter of round 'Raschera' is now 30-40 cm and its heel is 6-9 cm, while the length of each side of square 'Raschera' is now 28-40 cm and its heel is 7-15 cm.

This change is necessary in order to meet the explicit demand of both consumers and traders, who mainly ask for smaller pieces as the cheese is mainly consumed in a family setting and families are now smaller. This does not affect the final qualities of the cheese.

Moreover, the dimensions and weights refer to the product after the minimum maturation period, since very long maturation periods can lead to further significant reductions.

It is considered appropriate to explicitly state that the rind is not edible. Also, so as to provide unambiguous information to consumers and give a better description of the outer appearance of the product, the fact that the reddish blotches on the heel are not always present has been made clearer.

3.2. Method of production

The current specification does not clarify the proportion of the animals' diet that must come from the defined production area. In order to highlight the link to the area, it is thus being made clear that most of the animals' diet must come from the production area and that the daily ration should be predominantly made up of fodder.

Moreover, because of the need to preserve the link to the defined area even during periods when it is difficult to provide the animals with fresh fodder produced in that area, and as technological innovation means that there are techniques for conserving fodder for long periods of time, it has been deemed appropriate to allow the use of conserved fodder.

Again in order to preserve the link with the production area, it has also been made clear that livestock holdings without land may not produce the cheese.

Since the current specification gives no indication as to whether the milk must be raw or heat-treated, it has been considered appropriate to specify (including so as to allow proper monitoring) that the milk used may be either raw or heat-treated, as has always been the case in 'Raschera' production.

The general improvement in the microbiological characteristics of the milk obtained in recent years has led to a significant decrease in the bacteria present, which, in some cases, has caused problems in the coagulation and maturation stages. In order to overcome these potential problems, it is being stated in the specification that lactic acid enzymes and/or natural inocula may be used.

Furthermore, the maximum coagulation temperature has been raised from 30 °C to 36 °C.

The use of lactic acid enzymes and/or natural inocula as starter cultures facilitates the creation of the openings in the paste that allow the cheese's distinctive eyes to be formed.

Years of careful monitoring have shown that, in some cases, it is necessary to use higher coagulation temperatures in order to help the development of the lactic acid bacteria present and obtain enough acidification to ensure sufficient coagulation and maturation.

In order to make clear how long the cheese may be worked before salting begins, it has been deemed appropriate to indicate that the maximum period of working is 7 days.

The cheese has traditionally been dry-salted, generally in two rounds of salting, but it has been ascertained that salting in brine before dry-salting helps the rind to form in a more uniform manner and take on a more pleasant appearance that is preferred by consumers and traders.

3.3. *Geographical area*

It has been considered appropriate to specify that, in order to be able to use the term 'di Alpeggio' (Alpine), cheese produced at an altitude of more than 900 m above sea level must also be matured in the municipalities indicated. This is order to provide better information to consumers, maintain the strict link with this small area of land and make this element clearer for the purposes of monitoring activity.

3.4. *Labelling*

In order to ensure authenticity and make it possible for 'Raschera' that has been placed on the market to be correctly identified, it has been deemed necessary for a conformity mark to be affixed, at the time of marketing, in the form of a paper label and a brand in the centre of one of the flat sides.

3.5. *Other*

Clarifications are also provided on the ways in which the product is sold for consumption and on cutting and pre-packaging, which may take place outside the geographical production area.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006

on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs ⁽³⁾

'RASCHERA'

EC No: IT-PDO-0217-0023-31.05.2011

PDO (X) PGI ()

1. **Name**

'Raschera'

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 the product to which the name in (1) applies*

Description: 'Raschera' is a full-fat pressed cheese made from cows' milk, with the possible addition of small quantities of sheeps' and/or goats' milk.

The finished product must have the following characteristics.

— Shape: cylindrical with flat faces or quadrangular with flat faces.

⁽³⁾ Replaced by Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012.

- Dimensions:
 - round 'Raschera': diameter 30-40 cm, slightly convex heel 6-9 cm,
 - square 'Raschera': length of all sides 28-40 cm, irregular heel of 7-15 cm.
- Weight:
 - round 'Raschera': 5-9 kg,
 - square 'Raschera': 6-10 kg.
- Rind: thin, grey and/or reddish in colour sometimes with yellowish elements, elastic, smooth and regular, sometimes with reddish blotches on the heels that are accentuated with maturation, not edible.
- Texture of the body of the cheese: rather firm and springy with very small eyes distributed sparsely and irregularly.
- Colour of the body of the cheese: white or ivory.
- Flavour: subtle, delicate with a distinct aroma, moderately piquant and full-flavoured if mature.
- Fat in dry matter: at least 32 %.

The measurements and weights refer to the cheese after the minimum maturation period.

The cheese may be sold whole, sliced, in portions or pre-packaged. Cutting and pre-packaging may take place outside the geographical production area.

3.3. *Raw materials (for processed products only)*

Cows' milk, with the possible addition of small quantities of sheeps' and/or goats' milk, salt, liquid rennet.

The milk comes from animals reared in the defined geographical area.

The cheese may not be produced on holdings without land.

3.4. *Feed (for products of animal origin only)*

The cattle and, where relevant, the sheep and goats must be fed mainly on green or conserved fodder or on hay fodder from meadows, pasture land or meadow-pasture land or hay from mixed-grass meadows. The majority of this feed material must come from the defined geographical area.

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

Holdings rearing the animals whose milk is used to produce 'Raschera' must be located within the defined geographical area.

The milk must be produced and processed within the defined geographical area.

The milk from two or more daily milkings may undergo heat treatment to sanitise it and may be inoculated with lactic acid enzymes and/or natural inocula. Liquid rennet is added to the milk, which is coagulated at a temperature between 27 °C and 36 °C.

The cheese must be produced using traditional characteristic methods and worked for a maximum of 7 days. The cheese must be pressed properly and suitable cylindrical or quadrangular moulds used.

The cheese obtained is dry-salted (normally twice). The dry-salting may be preceded by salting in brine. The minimum maturation period is one month.

3.6. *Specific rules concerning slicing, grating, packaging, etc.*

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3.7. *Specific rules concerning labelling*

The conformity mark is constituted by affixing, at the time of marketing, a paper label (25 cm in diameter for round cheeses, or with a side of 25 cm for square cheeses, with a green halftone background for the normal cheese and a yellow halftone background for that using the term 'd'Alpeggio' (Alpine) and a brand in the centre of one of the flat faces. The product may be marketed with the 'Raschera' protected designation of origin only after such marking and labelling.

Food glue may be used to affix the paper label.

The logo of 'Raschera' PDO cheese is a stylised letter 'r'. For that using the term 'd'Alpeggio' (Alpine) the letter 'a' is included inside the stylised 'r'.

These logos are reproduced on brass plates for the branding equipment. An integral and important part of these logos is the three-digit identification number of the dairy or maturer placed under the stylised 'r' for the normal cheese or that for cheese using the term 'd'Alpeggio' (Alpine). The logo (without the identification number) is also shown on the paper labels and must be included in the authorisation reference for the portioned product.



4. Concise definition of the geographical area

The area in which 'Raschera' is produced and matured comprises the Province of Cuneo in its entirety.

Round or square 'Raschera' produced and matured at an altitude higher than 900 m above sea level in the following municipalities:

- Frabosa Soprana, Frabosa Sottana, Garessio (only the Valcasotto area), Magliano Alpi (only the part bordering the municipality of Ormea), Montaldo Mondovì, Ormea, Pamparato, Roburent, Roccaforte Mondovì

from milk originating in the same areas may use the term 'di Alpeggio' (Alpine).

5. Link with the geographical area

5.1. Specificity of the geographical area

Owing to their geographical location between the Ligurian Sea and the Po Valley, the pastures of the Maritime Alps have a rather rainy climate. This characteristic, together with the fact that the proximity to the sea makes temperatures somewhat milder, means that the vegetation is very rich and that these pastures are of great botanical interest owing to the variety of grasses present (more than a hundred endemic species). The richness and variety of these grasses means that the milk of the animals concerned also takes on typical characteristic flavours and aromas that are exclusive to this area. The foothill area and the Cuneo plain adjacent to it on the landward side still come under this maritime influence which, together with the characteristics of the alluvial plain, make the soil loose and naturally highly fertile, thus allowing the production of good, nutrient-rich grasses and hay. Similarly, the optimal solar radiation, which is already of the Mediterranean type, together with the temperature range of a continental climate with the aforementioned maritime influence making it milder, make the silage and cereals used in rearing the livestock very nutritionally rich, leading to the production of milk that is ideally suited for cheesemaking. The Province of Cuneo has always been characterised by these climate and soil characteristics, the long-standing cheesemaking expertise of the mountain herders (malgari) and the cheesemakers in the many small and medium-sized dairies dotted throughout the Cuneo plain, and the knowledgeable consumers who seek out traditional produce such as 'Raschera' cheese.

5.2. Specificity of the product

The specific characteristics of 'Raschera' cheese are its thin, elastic rind which is grey or grey-yellowish in colour and, particularly in the 'd'Alpeggio' (Alpine) type, occasionally takes on a reddish colour owing to the presence of certain types of mould; the texture of the cheese, which is rather firm and

springy with small eyes distributed sparsely and irregularly; the flavour which is subtle and delicate with a distinct aroma (with notes of mountain grasses in the 'd'Alpeggio' (Alpine) type), slightly piquant and full-flavoured if mature. Last but not least, there is also its square shape which is supplanting the round variety (which accounts for less than 3 % of total output) and makes the cheese immediately recognisable to consumers.

5.3. *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)*

The specific characteristics of the cheese stem from the high quality of the milk collected only in the Province of Cuneo and the local technique of processing and maturing the cheese in natural cave cellars or in climate-controlled rooms that properly reproduce the humidity and temperature of natural caves. These characteristics have a significant impact on the quality of the finished product.

The high quality of the milk gives the cheese its flavour. The milk used to produce 'Raschera' reflects the richness of the grass species present in the area, some of which are endemic to it, which are used to feed the livestock and thus influence the milk.

The elements associated with the processing techniques are an expression of the human factor in the area, namely the use of liquid rennet of animal origin, which has traditionally been used by local producers to coagulate the milk, and the long-established ability of cheesemakers to work on and break the curds. The curds are worked on until they are broken into granules the size of a grain of corn. Correctly carrying out this stage helps the cheese to develop its springy texture and eyes during maturation.

The cheese is matured in natural cave cellars or in climate-controlled rooms that correctly reproduce the humidity and temperature of natural caves. These conditions have a substantial impact on the development of mould on the rind and on the rind's thickness and elasticity.

For more than a century 'Raschera' has been the typical cheese product of the pastures around Mondovì, with production extending over time to the adjacent Cuneo plain owing to the fact that many herds would move to the plain in periods of bad weather to eat the hay produced there. As a result, and particularly in rural areas, people have always described a very high quality cheese as a 'raschera'.

All of this has meant that 'Raschera' cheese is sought after on the market all year round and has won over consumers not only in Piedmont but across northern Italy.

Reference to publication of the specification

(Article 5(7) of Regulation (EC) No 510/2006 ⁽⁴⁾)

The Ministry launched the national opposition procedure with the publication of the amendment application regarding 'Raschera' PDO in *Official Gazette of the Italian Republic* No 280 of 30 November 2010.

The full text of the product specification is available on the following website:

<http://www.politicheagricole.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/3335>

or by going directly to the home page of the Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policy (<http://www.politicheagricole.it>) and clicking on 'Qualità e sicurezza' (in the top right-hand corner of the screen) and then on 'Disciplinari di Produzione all'esame dell'UE'.

⁽⁴⁾ See footnote 3.