

Publication of an 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

(2015/C 189/06)

This publication confers the right to oppose the application pursuant to Article 51 of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽¹⁾.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

‘CIPOLLA BIANCA DI MARGHERITA’

EU No: IT-PGI-0005-01231 — 21.5.2014

PDO () PGI (X)

1. Name

‘Cipolla bianca di Margherita’

2. Member State or Third Country

Italy

3. Description of the agricultural product or foodstuff

3.1. Type of product

Class 1.6 Fruit, vegetables and cereals, fresh or processed

3.2. Description of product to which the name in (1) applies

‘Cipolla bianca di Margherita’ refers to the local population of *Allium cepa* L. bulbs produced in the identified area. This is a fresh product, noted for its white, succulent bulbs with a high sugar content. There are four different local ecotypes, based on the growing period: ‘Marzaiola’ or ‘Aprilatica’, ‘Maggiola’, ‘Giugnese’ and ‘Lugliatica’.

Specifically, the characteristics of the different types are as follows:

- ‘Marzaiola’ or ‘Aprilatica’: early onions (harvested from mid-March onwards), flattened at the top and bottom,
- ‘Maggiola’: later than the first type, and the shape is less flattened (harvested in May),
- ‘Giugnese’ and ‘Lugliatica’: later onions (harvested from June to mid-July), with a rounder shape.

When harvested, the onions must meet the following measurable requirements:

- soluble solids: 6,4-9,2 mg/100 g fresh weight,
- dry matter: 6,2-8,9 g/100 g fresh weight,
- size: varying between a minimum of 20 mm and a maximum of 100 mm,
- physical properties: white in colour,
- taste: sweet and juicy. Total reducing sugar content must be more than 3,8 g/100 g fresh weight,
- texture: tender and crisp.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 343, 14.12.2012, p. 1.

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

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

All production and packaging steps for 'Cipolla bianca di Margherita' must take place in the identified geographical area.

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

Packaging must take place immediately after harvesting in the area defined in point 4 and repackaging the product outside the identified geographical area is not allowed to avoid the risk of transportation and excessive handling of the loose product resulting in damage such as bruising or cuts, which create the ideal conditions for the development of mould and a deterioration in the onion's texture and quality.

The product can be packed in 10 kg or 5 kg crates, in 0,5 kg or 1,0 kg nets, in 1,0 kg packs or in strings of varying weight comprising a minimum of five onions.

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

The containers have to bear the wording 'Cipolla bianca di Margherita' P.G.I. accompanied by the designation logo and the EU PGI symbol. The containers have to bear the producer's and the packager's name, business name and address.

It is prohibited to add to the designation any description not expressly provided for in the production specification.

However, the use of names, company names and private brands is authorised, provided they do not mislead the consumer.



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

The production area for 'Cipolla bianca di Margherita' is located along the Adriatic coast comprising the following administrative areas (listed from south to north):

- the territory of the municipality of Margherita di Savoia,
- the territory of the municipality of Zapponeta,
- the territory of the municipality of Manfredonia.

5. **Link with the geographical area**

In pedological terms, the soils of the production area are mostly sandy, with no stones, derived from the reclamation of a saltwater swamp using sand from the adjacent sea dunes. The presence of a very shallow groundwater level also allows the cultivation of horticultural crops even without the use of irrigation.

The geographical area has a distinct climate, given the presence of the Saline salt pans to the west and the Gargano promontory to the north, different from that of the Apulia region in general and from that of the neighbouring land: '[...] this is a clearly arid climate, almost that of a steppe, characterised by very hot summers and very mild winters. It is similar to areas in the tropics [...] In the Mediterranean basin, similar climatic conditions can be seen along the southern shore between the Sirte peninsula and the city of Tel Aviv.' (BONIFICA, 1993. M. CALDARA, D. CAPOLOGNO, C. DAPOTE, L. PENNETTA).

'Cipolla bianca di Margherita' ecotypes are highly adapted to the specific soil and climatic conditions and are able to fulfil their potential as a crop in terms of quality and yield in these areas alone. They have a specific ability to adapt to these particular soil and climatic conditions, for example that of developing an adequate root system able to extend deep into sandy soil. Other onion cultivars and/or hybrids planted in this area have proved to be far from satisfactory in terms of yield.

Thanks to the specific genetic characteristics of the populations that have been selected and propagated over centuries by the local farmers and to the specific soil and climatic conditions, the 'Cipolla bianca di Margherita' has distinct characteristics. The most significant differences that emerged from a study carried out by the University of Foggia that compared the 'Cipolla bianca di Margherita' with other white onion cultivars grown outside the geographical area described in point 4 are:

- the low level of dry matter and soluble solids, making the onion crunchier and more succulent,
- its lack of sharpness,
- high quantities of reducing sugars that make these onions sweeter than the other genotypes covered by the study carried out by the University of Foggia,
- the onions are harvested earlier than in other growing areas.

Furthermore, thanks to the looseness of the sandy soil where the onions are grown, the bulbs can develop the typical shape of this ecotype, free of defects. The percentage of onions that are green around the shoot is very low, given that the cultivation technique involves manual transplanting at a depth that tends to produce a product that is totally white.

The area's particularly mild coastal climate during the winter and spring warms the sandy soil quickly, which allows a quality product to be grown much earlier than in other agricultural areas.

The sandy soil with a water table very close to the surface allows the plants to be subjected to controlled water stress, which promotes somewhat stunted growth and low dry matter content.

The bulb therefore grows in a 'self-mulching' layer of dry sandy soil, which is conducive to its health.

As stated above, the special organoleptic characteristics cannot be found outside the production area, as confirmed by the longstanding reputation 'Cipolla bianca di Margherita' enjoys in the main national markets, as well as by the results of quality analyses carried out in July 2012 by University of Foggia, which revealed that 'Cipolla bianca di Margherita' has sensory quality attributes which clearly distinguish it from other white onion varieties.

Publication reference of the specification

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

The Ministry launched the national objection procedure with the publication of the proposal for recognising 'Cipolla bianca di Margherita' PGI in the Official Gazette of the Italian Republic No 78 of 3 April 2014.

^(?) See footnote 1.

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 alternatively:

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