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(Announcements)

OTHER ACTS

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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 218/06)

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

‘ECHALOTE D’ANJOU’**EU No: FR-PGI-0005-01253 — 25.8.2014****PDO () PGI (X)****1. Name**

‘Echalote d’Anjou’

2. Member State or Third Country

France

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 the product to which the name in 1 applies

The ‘Echalote d’Anjou’ is a monocot belonging to the *Liliaceae* family of the *Alium cepa* species and falling exclusively within the *Aggregatum* group.

It is a pinkish-coloured ‘traditional’ shallot (resulting from vegetative propagation) of the Jersey varietal type which is sold fresh.

It is produced from varieties registered on the list of varieties recognised by the producer group, which the latter keeps up-to-date. New varieties are registered in accordance with a procedure enabling both technical criteria (in particular yield, rate of division, conservability, cultivation method, adaptability to environment, resistance to pathogens, nutritional requirements, rate of waste, suitability for mechanisation, picking and transportation on chains to the collection point) and the main characteristics of the ‘Echalote d’Anjou’ (size, shape, appearance, length, skin colour, dry-matter content) to be checked.

The list of authorised varieties is distributed to producers, the inspection body and the competent inspection authorities each time it is amended.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 343, 14.12.2012, p. 1.

Physical characteristics

- (a) The bulbs must be: firm and compact, free of hollow or tough stems, and virtually free of root tufts. However, the following minor defects may be allowed provided they do not affect the general appearance, quality, conservability and presentation of the product: a slight defect in shape, surface cracks on the outer skins, provided the flesh is protected.
- (b) shape: the 'Echalote d'Anjou' is of a regular and slightly long, thin shape with a diameter of between 20 and 55 mm and a ratio of length to average diameter (*) of more than 1.2.
(*) average diameter = (large equatorial diameter + small equatorial diameter)/2.
- (c) the skins of the bulbs are thin and shiny; they are light red/yellow or pale yellow in colour, with an increasingly copper-coloured appearance depending on their maturity, the extent to which they have dried out and how long they are stored before being dispatched.

Chemical property

The high dry-matter content is equal to or greater than 16 %.

Organoleptic properties

The 'Echalote d'Anjou' has the following organoleptic properties: it is firm to the touch, and its flesh is pinkish in colour and of soft consistency. It takes on a distinctive aromatic intensity with a significant sharpness in smell and taste.

Presentation of the product

The 'Echalote d'Anjou' comes in two forms:

- the early or half-dry shallot dispatched at the very beginning of the season,
- the preserved or dry shallot dispatched throughout the rest of the year, characterised by the dry appearance of the root collar.

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

The bulbs are planted, harvested and dried in the geographical area.

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

Initial storage, preparation, sorting, final sizing and approval of the 'Echalote d'Anjou' take place within the geographical area.

These operations allow the physical and chemical properties and appearance to be checked and, therefore, the specific characteristics of the 'Echalote d'Anjou' to be maintained.

The know-how of operators in carrying out these operations follows a well-established process involving manual preparation, sorting and final sizing before the product is eventually approved. This allows the shallots to be handled in optimum fashion so as to ensure the best possible management throughout the year of the process of drying the products intended for marketing or export. This know-how is an additional guarantee of quality, ensuring that the characteristics of the 'Echalote d'Anjou' are maintained. This requires these operations to be carried out in the geographical area in which the 'Echalote d'Anjou' is produced.

The 'Echalote d'Anjou' is marketed throughout the year in 250 g to 20 kg nets in which the product is visible through the mesh, or in 5 to 15 kg protected packages.

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

All individual packaging must display the following:

- the 'Echalote d'Anjou' PGI,
- the commercial category,
- the certifying body,
- the date of packing; the following statement:
 - 'A consommé de préférence dans le mois' (best eaten within a month) (for the early shallot),
 - 'A consommé de préférence dans les deux mois' (best eaten within 2 months) (for the preserved shallot).

4. Concise definition of the geographical area

The geographical area comprises the territory of the following areas of the Department of Maine-et-Loire (49):

the municipalities of Denezé-sous-Doué, Les Ulmes, Louresse-Rochemenier, Meigné, Blaison Gohier, La Daguenière, La Bohalle, Saint-Mathurin-sur-Loire, Saint-Rémy-la-Varenne, Saint-Saturnin-sur-Loire, Saint-Sulpice-sur-Loire, Blou, Longué-jumelles, Saint-Philbert-du-Peuple, Vernantes, Brézé, Epied, Saint-Cyr-en-Bourg, Bauné, Chaumont d'Anjou, Cornillé-les-Caves, Fontaine-Milon, Jarzé, Lué-en-Baugeois, Sermaise, Brissac-Quincé, Charcé-Saint-Ellier-sur-Aubance, Les Alleuds and Saulgé-l'Hôpital.

The canton of Allonnes, excluding the municipality of Breille-les-Pins, the canton of Angers-Trélazé, excluding the municipalities of Angers et Trélazé, and all of the territory of the cantons of Beaufort-en-Vallée, Gennes, Saumur nord and Saumur sud.

5. Link with the geographical area

Specificity of the geographical area

The geographical area of the 'Echalote d'Anjou' is situated on the edge of the Paris basin and is crossed from east to west by the Loire Valley, where clay-limestone alluvial deposits and sedimentary soils predominate. These soils are relatively light and are made up of fine particles. Subsoils provide a large water reserve.

The Anjou region has a maritime climate. The common expression 'douceur angevine' (mild Anjou climate) is often used to describe it. It is characterised by moderate temperatures, a narrow temperature range over the year (of about 15 °C), regular and moderate rainfall (approximately 650 mm) and low wind speeds. The cultivation of shallots in the Department was mentioned in the 'Statistique horticole du Maine-et-Loire' (Horticultural Statistics for Maine-et-Loire) in 1842.

In 1962, producers in the region of Mazé became organised and gradually developed the production of Jersey-type shallots.

From 1975-1980 onwards, the cultivation of long shallots grew significantly. As a result, a specific typology of farms producing shallots emerged in Anjou. These are characterised by a fairly large land area, allowing shallots to be cultivated over 3 to 4 ha on average, together with other specialised crops.

The methods currently used are based on traditional labour-intensive practices and methods, including: selection of the varieties used and plant propagation (systematic warm-water treatment), crop rotation, mulching of the soil, manual planting and harvesting, transport from drying in the field to storage, preparation of batches of shallots (tailing), sorting (visual checking), and sizing before approval. These steps allow a high-quality product to be sold for almost a year until the following harvest.

Specificity of the product

The 'Echalote d'Anjou' is more specifically characterised by the following:

- its longer and thinner shape, which presents customers and consumers with a more appealing external appearance; its red/yellow colouring, which becomes more of a pale yellow when it is presented whole,
- its chemical profile; its high dry-matter content of at least 16 %,
- its organoleptic profile: firm to the touch, with a pinkish flesh and soft consistency, it takes on a distinctive aromatic intensity with a significant sharpness in smell and taste, which distinguishes it from shallots grown in other regions, thereby making it more appealing for cooking,
- its conservability; the fact that it is harvested when fully mature means that it can be stored for several months in proper conditions and that the bulbs remain very firm while minimising weight loss,
- its regular composition; since they are produced from vegetative propagation, all of the bulbs harvested are completely identical genetically, which is not the case for plants obtained by sexual propagation (echalion and shallot seedlings).

Its morphology, texture and colour distinguish it from the same product grown in other regions. The 'Echalote d'Anjou' also benefits from a high reputation which extends well beyond the region and indeed France.

Causal link

The link between the 'Echalote d'Anjou' and its area of origin is based on its specific quality and reputation.

The definition of the geographical area is based on an interaction between natural and human factors determining the specific characteristics of the 'Echalote d'Anjou' (long shape, high dry-matter content, organoleptic profile, conservability and regularity) and allows it to be distinguished from other shallot products.

The soils are made up of fine, regular particles, enabling easy and deep rooting of the shallots and, ultimately, the harmonious development of a bulb characterised by its regularity and shape.

The abundance of water in the geographical area ensures that the plant receives a regular supply; the slightly higher rainfall in May coincides perfectly with the needs of the 'Echalote d'Anjou' during its bulbing phase.

The mildness of the Anjou climate is well-suited to the 'Echalote d'Anjou' and protects it from physiological burning, which might affect its organoleptic quality.

The specific characteristics of the 'Echalote d'Anjou' also stem from the know-how of producers resulting from long-standing local practices going back to the 19th century, which gradually became regulated and developed from the 1960s.

The selection of varieties and plants on specialised farms has always been the focus of particular attention and technical monitoring. Warm-water treatment before planting allows the bulbs to be protected against parasites in the soil.

After the soil has been painstakingly prepared, the bulbs are planted manually so as to ensure, in particular, that they are planted at the correct depth. This allows for the most harmonious development possible of the 'Echalote d'Anjou'. Manual harvesting draws on the know-how of producers, who are able to assess the appropriate maturity of the plants.

Finally, natural drying in the field allows a high dry-matter content to be obtained and the aromas of the 'Echalote d'Anjou' to be concentrated, thus giving it its characteristic sharpness.

The 'Echalote d'Anjou' enjoys a national reputation which has now extended beyond France. Almost 40 % of current production of the 'Echalote d'Anjou' is in fact sold in certain northern European countries or exported to the United States, Canada and South-East Asia.

Geared as it is toward sale in large retail outlets, the 'Echalote d'Anjou' reaches a broad specialised clientele that has long held the product in high esteem, in particular for its regularity and keeping qualities. Popular events such as the 'Grande fête de l'Echalote' shallot festival organised in Chemellier by the 'Confrérie des amis de l'Echalote d'Anjou' (Friends of the 'Echalote d'Anjou') also help to foster and develop the product's reputation with the public at large.

Reference to publication of the specification

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

https://info.agriculture.gouv.fr/gedei/site/bo-agri/document_administratif-61e29c33-f813-43ef-9624-835de5798a87
