

Publication of an amendment application pursuant to Article 50(2)(b) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs

(2016/C 388/07)

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⁾.

APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF AN AMENDMENT TO THE PRODUCT SPECIFICATION OF TRADITIONAL SPECIALITIES GUARANTEED 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

‘OVČÍ SALAŠNÍCKY ÚDENÝ SYR’

EU No: TSG-SK-02134 – 14.4.2016

1. Applicant group and legitimate interest

Name of the group Družstvo – Cech výrobcov ovčieho syra v Turci
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The group applying for the amendment is the same group that submitted the application for registration of ‘Ovčí salašnícky údený syr’.

2. Member State or Third Country

Slovak Republic

3. Heading in the product specification affected by the amendment

- Product name
- Product description
- Method of production
- Other [to be specified]

Registration of traditional speciality guaranteed without reservation of the name to be replaced by registration of traditional speciality guaranteed with reservation of the name.

4. Type of amendment(s)

- Amendment to product specification of registered TSG not to be qualified as minor in accordance with the fourth subparagraph of Article 53(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012.

5. Amendment(s)

1. Registration of traditional speciality guaranteed without reservation of the name to be replaced by registration of traditional speciality guaranteed with reservation of the name.

This amendment is being proposed in order to safeguard the registration of the product name concerned, as the option of registering names of agricultural products and foodstuffs as traditional specialities guaranteed without reservation of the name has been abolished and, under Article 25(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012, names registered in accordance with Article 13(1) of Council Regulation (EC) No 509/2006 ⁽²⁾, including those registered pursuant to the second subparagraph of Article 58(1) of that Regulation (guaranteed traditional specialities without reservation of the name) may continue to be used under the conditions provided for in Regulation (EC) No 509/2006 only until 4 January 2023.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 343, 14.12.2012, p. 1.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 93, 31.3.2006, p. 1.

PRODUCT SPECIFICATION OF A TRADITIONAL SPECIALITY GUARANTEED

‘OVČÍ SALAŠNÍCKY ÚDENÝ SYR’**EU No: TSG-SK-02134 – 14.4.2016****Slovak Republic****1. Name(s) to be registered**

‘Ovčí salašnícky údený syr’

2. Type of product (as in Annex XI)

1.3. Cheeses

3. Grounds for the registration**3.1. Product**

- results from a mode of production, processing or composition corresponding to traditional practice for that product or foodstuff
- is produced from raw materials or ingredients that are those traditionally used

This product has been produced for decades, even centuries, the cheese being smoked to extend the life of the product until winter, when cheese was not made. The product is made by hand, using traditional techniques (manual processing of curds); it is made in a shepherd’s hut (*salaš*), not industrially, with the possibility of also using wooden appliances, instruments and devices (e.g. a wooden vessel, wooden mixers and wood moulds). The product is smoked using hardwood smoke produced by a fire.

3.2. Name

- has been traditionally used to refer to the specific product
- identifies the traditional character or specific character of the product

The specific character is determined by the nature of the raw material, i.e. raw sheep’s milk, by the traditional method of processing in shepherds’ huts, and by smoking. The term ‘*salašnícky*’ in the name expresses the product’s specific nature and is derived from the word ‘*salaš*’, denoting a shepherd’s hut, where the cheese is made, and hence also expresses a link to the place of production.

4. Description**4.1. Description of the product to which the name under point 1 applies, including its main physical, chemical, microbiological or organoleptic characteristics showing the product’s specific character (Article 7(2) of this Regulation)**

‘Ovčí salašnícky údený syr’ is produced from fresh sheep’s milk, processed in shepherds’ huts, smoked and often formed into specific shapes (hearts, cockerels or other animals, hemispheres).

Physical properties:

- comes in various shapes, most often a lump, or if a mould was used in production, in the shape of the mould: hemispherical, or in the shape of different animals or in the shape of a heart,
- weight: varies from 0,1 kg to 1 kg.

Chemical properties:

- dry matter: at least 40 % by weight,
- fat in dry matter: at least 50 % by weight,
- NaCl: max. 25 000 mg/kg.

Microbiological criteria:

Contains a range of micro-organisms, including in particular: Acidogenic microorganisms — *Streptococcus lactis*, *Leuconostoc mesenteroides*, *Lactobacillus casei*, *Lactobacillus plantarum*, yeasts and moulds — *Torulopsis candida*, *Geotrichum candidum*, *Geotrichum casei*.

Organoleptic properties:

- external appearance: dry, firm, intact surface, with a crust, possibly also with small smoke stains, free of tar residue,
- colour: yellowish to yellow in cross-section; brownish to slightly chestnut on the surface,

- odour and taste: smoky aroma, with a mild, slightly acidic taste,
- consistency: firm and solid when cut, with small holes and small cracks here and there.

4.2. *Description of the production method of the product to which the name under point 1 applies that the producers must follow including, where appropriate, the nature and characteristics of the raw materials or ingredients used, and the method by which the product is prepared (Article 7(2) of this Regulation)*

Collection of sheep's milk:

- milk for the production of the cheese is obtained from healthy sheep (grazed sheep of races reared in mountain and foothill areas) by hand-milking in a milking pen (*strunga*) located in natural conditions. The milk is collected in a rust-proof milking pail with a filtering device (traditionally the milk was collected in a wooden pail). When the pail (*geleta*) is full, its contents are strained into a milk can through a sieve containing a cotton-wool filter (the milk may also be collected mechanically in a mobile or stationary milking parlour),
- the milk collected is transferred in the milk cans to the production area — a shepherd's hut.

Processing the milk into cheese — production of 'ovčí salašnický údený syr':

- The freshly collected milk is processed immediately after milking, after being transferred to the production area in the shepherd's hut, where it is poured from the can into a *putera*, a vessel used for cheese production; during this process, it is re-filtered through a cotton-wool filter. A wooden vessel (*putera*) or stainless steel double-bottomed vessel is used for the production of the cheese.
- The temperature of the milk is raised to 30-32 °C by adding two to three litres of hot drinking water (at a temperature of 50 °C) per 50 litres of milk directly to the milk or by heating it with the aid of hot drinking water in a jacketed vessel (*putera*) or boiled sour sheep's milk whey.
- After the temperature has been raised to 30-32 °C, microbial liquid rennet (based on the salt-stabilised fungus *Rhizomucor miehei*) is added, with continuous stirring, at a quantity of 40 ml of rennet per 100 l of milk. The amount of rennet used also depends on the milking period (the quality of the milk, which changes during the milking period).

The milk curdles approximately 30-45 minutes after the rennet is added (the amount of rennet is determined by the producer).

- The curds thus produced are stirred and cut with a curd-harp until a grain size of 0,5-1 cm is obtained.
- Boiled drinking water, cooled to 65 °C, is added to the cut curds in order to heat them to 32-35 °C, thus improving the release of whey from the grains. The curds are stirred well and left to rest. Throughout the production of the sheep's milk lump cheese, the temperature of the milk and whey must not fall below 29 °C.
- The traditional method of shaping the cheese consists in compressing the settled curds by hand after about ten minutes and working them into the shape of a ball, which is then removed with the aid of a cheesecloth, hung on a hook and formed into a lump, or else the pressed curds are placed by hand into moulds, which gives them their shape. Manual processing gives the lump cheese its characteristic elasticity.
- Shaping of cheese in moulds: small pieces (depending on the size of the mould) are cut from the prepared lump. These pieces are compressed by hand and placed into moulds (hearts, cockerels or other animals, hemispheres) and lightly pressed so as to obtain the particular shape. If two-part moulds are used, the procedure is the same, the cheese being compressed by hand and pressed into the mould so that it fills both parts of the mould. The mould is then closed.
- The lump or shaped cheese is left to drain for about two hours. Lumps of cheese are hung on hooks and cheeses in moulds are placed on shelves to drain.
- After draining, the cheese is transferred to a warm storage area, the ripening room, where the fermentation process takes place. Cheese shaped in cheesecloth is hung on a hook, and small shaped cheeses are removed from their moulds and left to ripen on wooden shelves designed in such a way as to allow whey to drain off.
- The temperature of the room during fermentation must not fall below 18–22 °C. The cheese ferments in two or, at most, three days under such conditions. The temperature during fermentation is monitored.
- Lumps of cheese are then cut into pieces and placed in a cold brine solution for 1-10 hours (depending on their weight). Once salted, the cheese takes on a solid and firm consistency. The brine solution (10-15 % salt concentration) is prepared by boiling drinking water with salt. Cheese that has been shaped in moulds is salted in a similar manner.

- After salting, the cheese is removed from the solution and placed on wooden shelves to dry and to drain off residual brine solution.
- This is followed by smoking: the cheese is placed on wooden or stainless steel grids (or hung on holders made from bast) and cold-smoked with hardwood smoke which must not contain ash or dust. The cheese is smoked until it is pale brown with a hint of light chestnut colour, which takes 12, 16 or as much as 24 hours.
- Once smoked, the cheese is placed on wooden shelves in a cold store-room where the temperature is 13-15 °C.
- After packaging it is prepared for dispatch and sale.

4.3. Description of the key elements establishing the product's traditional character (Article 7(2) of this Regulation)

The 'salašnícky' element of the cheese's name is derived from the traditional production site, which was a shepherd's hut (*salaš*). Its traditional character stems from its traditional composition, production method and processing.

As P. Huba stated in the book entitled *Zázrivá*, 'Small-scale highland sheep-farming in Zázrivá was focused on the production of sheep's milk, which was always processed in the shepherd's home, where "ovčí hrudkový syr – salašnícky" was offered as a delicacy to people visiting the shepherd.' (Martin: Osveta. 1988)

Traditional 'ovčí hrudkový syr – salašnícky' was produced from fresh sheep's milk by curdling it in a vessel (*putera*) with the aid of natural rennet (*kl'ag*) at an average temperature (32 °C) for 10-30 minutes. The coagulated milk was first shaken, then left to settle, and finally the curds were placed into a cheesecloth and pressed into a compact lump. The curd-filled cheesecloth was hung on a cleat, where it was left for the whey to drain off.

After draining, the lump of cheese was removed from the cloth and placed upside down onto a wooden shelf (*podšiar*), where it was left for several days to dry and ripen. Once ripened, the lumps of cheese were taken from the shepherd's hut to the homes of the people who owned the sheep (Podolák Ján: *Slovenský národopis* 25, 1977).

In the 20th century, the production of 'ovčí hrudkový syr – salašnícky' and 'ovčí salašnícky údený syr' spread throughout the mountainous areas of Slovakia where sheep were reared.

Sheep's milk lump cheese was one of the dairy products of traditional Wallachian sheep-farming, and its production was the main reason for sheep rearing in the mountainous regions of Slovakia. As a culinary speciality, it was used fresh (succulent — sweet) or fermented or dried, or preserved by smoking, i.e. smoked. (Podolák Ján: *Slovenský národopis* 25, 1977).

In an article entitled 'Z histórie Ovčieho mliekárstva na Slovensku', Prokop wrote as follows: 'Wallachian culture is still kept alive in these parts by the carving skills of our shepherds; its influences are still to be seen in exquisitely carved bowls (*črpáky*) which shepherds used and in moulds (hearts, ducks, etc.) for oštiepok cheese and similar products.' (*Čítanie o správnej výžive* 1970, Slovenská spoločnosť pre racionálnu výživu, Bratislava, 1969). Heart- or duck-shaped moulds are used for 'ovčí salašnícky údený syr'.

Dr Ján Balko, the author of *Bryndziarsky priemysel na Slovensku*, published by Osveta in 1968, wrote as follows: 'We have no precise evidence showing who produced the first sheep's milk lump cheese here, or when they did so. However, we can safely assume that it was many centuries ago, given that, right up to 1914, the way sheep were farmed for milk did not differ much from the farming practices that existed at the time of the migration of the peoples.'

A passage from *Druhy najznámejších slovenských syrov* reads as follows: Of greatest renown here and abroad are our cheese specialities made from sheep's milk, and these specialities also include 'ovčí salašnícky údený syr'. (1992).

The name and traditional production method of 'ovčí hrudkový syr – salašnícky' and 'ovčí salašnícky údený syr' were also used by shepherds from the municipality of Priečod, who worked in shepherds' huts in the 1960s and 1970s in the Turiec region (Lamper and Ivanič, shepherds from Priečod).

P. Jasenský, a shepherd from Dolná Jaseň, recalls: 'Ovčí hrudkový syr – salašnícky' and 'ovčí salašnícky údený syr' have been made since time immemorial, but only in small quantities, and they were used for direct consumption in shepherds' huts or were, and are, sold to people visiting shepherds' huts. They are traditional delicacies enjoyed by Slovaks living in mountain and foothill regions'. (*Prehlásenie pána Jasenského*, 1999).