

Publication of an application for registration of a name 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

(2020/C 202/05)

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⁾ within three months from the date of this publication.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

‘Χοιρομέρι Πιτσιλιάς’ (Hiromeri Pitsilias)

EU No: PGI-CY-02368 – 15.9.2017

PDO () PGI (X)

1. Name(s)

‘Χοιρομέρι Πιτσιλιάς’ (Hiromeri Pitsilias)

2. Member State or third country

Cyprus

3. Description of the agricultural product or foodstuff

3.1. Type of product

Class 1.2. Meat products (cooked, salted, smoked, etc.)

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

Χοιρομέρι Πιτσιλιάς/Hiromeri Pitsilias is an aged, dry, salted, smoked meat product marinated in wine. It is produced without the addition of any preservatives (e.g. nitrates, nitrites, polyphosphates), flavour enhancers or any other additives. The raw materials used to prepare the Χοιρομέρι Πιτσιλιάς/Hiromeri Pitsilias also do not contain any additives or preservatives (e.g. nitrates or nitrites).

The raw materials used in its preparation are:

- fresh pork leg (a single piece which may contain only the following bones: the thigh, patella, tibia, fibula and tarsus) from healthy animals that have been slaughtered in accordance with the law (completely bled and immediately refrigerated). It is presented without skin (except from the tip to the tarsus, where the skin may be retained provided that it does not cover meat). Upon receipt, checks are carried out on the colour (characteristic light red), the smell (good), the internal temperature (between 0 °C and 7 °C) and the pH (between 5,3 and 6),
- dry red wine from vineyards which contain grapevines of the local ‘Mavro’ variety and may also contain vines of the ‘Maratheftiko’ variety. Upon receipt of the wine, checks are carried out on the aroma (characteristic of the variety), the alcohol content (between 12 and 15 %) and the sugar content (less than 4 g/litre),
- coarse (sea) salt,
- optionally, crushed coriander (*Coriandrum sativum*).

The characteristics of Χοιρομέρι Πιτσιλιάς/Hiromeri Pitsilias are as follows:

Physical characteristics

Shape: pear-shaped (typical of the whole ham used for its preparation), and pressed (flattened) on one side

Weight: 3–5 kg

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 343, 14.12.2012, p. 1.

Organoleptic characteristics

Colour: intense dark red to black in colour on the outside and red to purple on the inside. Pale streaks (fibres) may be distinguished within.

Taste: salty and smoky, strengthened by the flavour of the wine and the coriander (where added) used in its preparation

Aroma: characteristic of the wine, smoke and coriander (where used)

Texture: compact, cohesive, with no lines separating the muscle fibres, firm to chew

Chemical characteristics

Water content: 40–55 %

Sodium chloride: 5–10 %

'Χοιρομέρι Πιτσιλιάς/Hiromeri Pitsilias' is presented for consumption whole (with or without bone) or sliced. In addition, Χοιρομέρι Πιτσιλιάς/Hiromeri Pitsilias may be marketed with or without the outer surface crust which forms as a result of the production process. The product may be sold packaged or unpackaged.

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

The dry red wine used in the preparation of Χοιρομέρι Πιτσιλιάς/Hiromeri Pitsilias is produced in the defined geographical area from vineyards which contain grapevines of the local 'Mavro' variety that is predominant in the region. These vineyards are located in the area of Pitsilia (wines with Controlled Designation of Origin) and may include vines of the 'Maratheftiko' (Vamvakada) variety.

The Pitsilia region is characterised by special soil morphology and quality, with characteristics beneficial to the cultivation of grapes for wine making, such as high altitude, barren and sloping soils, eroded volcanic rocks and the absence of rainfall while the grapes ripen. All of these climatic and morphological peculiarities of the Pitsilia region give the wine of the region special organoleptic and quality characteristics which are transferred to the Χοιρομέρι Πιτσιλιάς/Hiromeri Pitsilias and influence its organoleptic character, since an important part of the production process is immersion in wine.

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

The steps in the preparation of Χοιρομέρι Πιτσιλιάς/Hiromeri Pitsilias that must take place in the defined geographical area are: the removal of any superfluous parts (as necessary), dry salting for five to seven days, soaking in dry red wine for at least two weeks, smoking for at least one month, pressing, time in the ripening room to dry further and the addition of coriander (where applicable). It is possible to have the smoking phase only or to have smoking combined with time in the ripening room, but in both cases this period must last at least two and a half months. Furthermore, the removal of surface crust (created as a result of the production process) or any other unwanted parts of the Χοιρομέρι Πιτσιλιάς/Hiromeri Pitsilias must be done by the producers themselves in the defined geographical area, in order to prevent any alteration of the physical characteristics of the product.

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

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

In whatever form the product is presented (packaged or unpackaged, whole or sliced), it must bear appropriate labelling stating the registered name and the details of the plant where it was produced and/or sliced and packaged (if slicing and packaging do not take place in the production plant).

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

The defined geographical area, Pitsilia, is known for being mountainous. It comprises those areas which have an altitude of 700 metres or more and are within the administrative boundaries of the following localities:

Nicosia District: Agia Eirini, Alithinou, Alona, Apliki, Askas, Gourri, Kannavia, Kourdali, Lagoudera, Lazanias, Livadia (Nicosia), Palechori, Platanistasa, Polystypos, Saranti, Spilia, Farmakas, Fikardou, Fterikoudi, Kambi

Larnaca District: Odou

Limassol District: Agios Theodoros, Agios Ioannis, Agios Konstantinos, Agios Pavlos, Agridia, Agros, Kato Amiantos, Pano Amiantos, Dymes, Zoopigi, Kato Mylos, Kyperounta, Pelendri, Potamitissa, Sykopetra, Chandria.

5. Link with the geographical area

The application to register the name Χοιρομέρι Πιτσιλιάς/Hiromeri Pitsilias is based on the product's physical, chemical and organoleptic characteristics, which are developed and preserved as a result of a production process which does not require the use of any additives or other auxiliary substances.

The characteristics of Χοιρομέρι Πιτσιλιάς/Hiromeri Pitsilias are a result of its producers' know-how, in particular the following:

The base of the ham is rounded off (where required) by removing superfluous parts to achieve uniform salt absorption, as well as uniform acidification and smoking, throughout the product.

The length of time for which the ham remains in the salt and the quantity of salt used vary slightly depending on the size. Larger-sized hams are left for longer and require slightly more salt to achieve the desired degree of absorption right to the bone and the desired taste of the final product.

The characteristic intense wine flavour and aroma and the characteristic colour of the inside of the Χοιρομέρι Πιτσιλιάς/Hiromeri Pitsilias are influenced by the choice of the appropriate dry red wine (in terms of aroma and chemical characteristics) from vineyards which contain grapevines of the local 'Mavro' variety that is predominant in the area (accounting for around 80 % of the total area planted with vines), and which may also contain vines of the red 'Maratheftiko' variety, and by the length of time the meat is immersed and soaked in the wine.

Smoking and pressing are crucial stages in the preparation of Χοιρομέρι Πιτσιλιάς/Hiromeri Pitsilias and important elements of the producers' know-how. Smoking will determine the outer colour and the smoky flavour and aroma without altering the flavour and aroma of wine and coriander (which may be added) obtained in the previous stages of production. The smoking process is mild, gradual and cold. The intensity of the fire, the distance of the product from the fire and the duration of smoking also depend on climatic conditions. During the summer months the fire is less intense and the time required for the product to reach the desired moisture levels is shorter.

Alternating smoking and pressing will determine the shape of the ham, its water content and its texture and will prevent any deterioration. The number of compressions is determined by the size of the ham and by the climatic conditions. Larger hams require more compressions. In summer, due to higher temperatures, fewer compressions are usually required to prepare the product.

After smoking, if the internal colour and the texture of the product are not considered to be as desired, the producer puts the ham in a shaded, ventilated area to age and to acquire the desired characteristics. The texture of the final product should be such that each slice is cohesive and compact rather than loose.

The climate of the Pitsilia region, which is characterised by cool dry summers and mild winters, combined with sloping land that is relatively infertile, helped to develop the process of producing and preserving processed meat products under ambient room conditions, which made it possible to have meat available to the family throughout the year without the need to store it in fat (as in other regions). Expertise in producing these products has remained unchanged and been handed down from generation to generation; this know-how is still used today by producers in the Pitsilia region in their modern facilities.

The soil and climate of the Pitsilia region have also always contributed to the production of a lesser volume of grapes than other regions, with juice that is richer in polyphenols. Along with other production know-how, the producers of Χοιρομέρι Πιτσιλιάς/Hiromeri Pitsilias also inherited the excellent black wine referred to by N. Jerides, 1903: *Brief History of Cyprus*; this further strengthens the link between the product and the region, giving it the intense aroma and taste characteristic of the local 'Mavro' wine.

It is because of the characteristics of Χοιρομέρι Πιτσιλιάς/Hiromeri Pitsilias, which are the result of the producers' know-how and the use of the region's wine, that the product has acquired such a reputation as to be considered among the most sumptuous appetisers (meze) in Cyprus, according to P. Xioutas, 1978: *Kypriaki Laografia ton Zoon* (Animals in Cypriot Folklore). Indeed, historical references by N. Patapiou and C. Lazarou, 2013: 'Hiromeri: A Specialty Ham of Cyprus – Historical Evidence, Culinary and Cultural Perspectives', mention exports of Χοιρομέρι Πιτσιλιάς/Hiromeri Pitsilia to Syria even as early as during the 18th century AD.

Pitsilia's processed meat products, including Χοιρομέρι Πιτσιλιάς/Hiromeri Pitsilias, are inextricably linked to that region, so that any publications and/or websites with tourist information make specific reference to them. Particular mention is made of processed meat products from the Pitsilia region, including of course Χοιρομέρι Πιτσιλιάς/Hiromeri Pitsilias, also in publications related to the gastronomy of Cyprus, for example the Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment, 2011: *Gastronomikos Chartis tis Kyprou* (Culinary Map of Cyprus), Florentia Kithraiotou, 2009: *Trofi: aformi schesis* (Food: a basis for a relationship), and F. Evangelatou: *Xechasmenes nostimies tou Kypriakou Choriou* (Forgotten tastes of the Cypriot village).

Reference to publication of the product specification

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

<http://www.moa.gov.cy/moa/da/da.nsf/All/FE9A90EB4A75497BC22583A9003E9C46?OpenDocument>
