

OTHER ACTS

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

**Publication of an application for approval of non-minor amendments to a product specification
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 257/04)

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⁾ within three months from the date of this publication.

APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF NON-MINOR AMENDMENTS TO THE PRODUCT SPECIFICATION FOR A PROTECTED
DESIGNATION OF ORIGIN OR PROTECTED GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION

**Application for approval of amendments in accordance with the first subparagraph of Article 53(2) of Regulation
(EU) No 1151/2012**

‘FIGUE DE SOLLIÈS’

EU No: PDO-FR-00544-AM01 – 23.10.2018

PDO (X) PGI ()

1. Applicant group and legitimate interest

Syndicat de défense de la figue de Solliès
345, chemin des Laugiers
83 210 Solliès-Pont
FRANCE
Tel. +33 494289437
Fax +33 494333173
Email: copsol@wanadoo.fr

Composition: producers, packagers and freezing stations

Legal status: The group is a professional syndicate governed by the Labour Code. It is the body officially recognised by the French State to administer the specification for the protected designation of origin ‘Figue de Solliès’. It therefore has a legitimate right to request amendments to the product specification.

2. Member State or third country

France

3. Heading in the product specification affected by the amendment(s)

- ☐ Name of product
- ☒ Description of product
- ☒ Geographical area

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 343, 14.12.2012, p. 1.

- ☒ Proof of origin
- ☒ Method of production
- ☒ Link
- ☒ Labelling
- ☒ Other: inspection body, national requirements, geographical area.

4. Type of amendment(s)

- ☒ Amendments to the product specification of a registered PDO or PGI not to be qualified as minor in accordance with the third subparagraph of Article 53(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012.
- ☐ Amendments to the product specification of a registered PDO or PGI for which a Single Document (or equivalent) has not been published and which cannot be qualified as minor in accordance with the third subparagraph of Article 53(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012

5. Amendment(s)

5.1. 'Description of product' heading

The initial wording of the description of 'Figue de Solliès' has been amended to include the specific features of the fruit intended for processing and the tolerances set for fruit for direct consumption and fruit for processing.

Therefore the following initial wording of the specification and of the single document:

'The "figue de Solliès" is a violet-coloured fig of the Bourjassote Noire variety, with a diameter of 40 mm or more, which is sold fresh as a whole fruit. Its skin is free of insect bites, has not ruptured and bears no trace of leaf rub. The "figue de Solliès" is characterised by a balance of acidulous and sweet flavours and contains a guaranteed 14° Brix or more of sugar at the time of packaging. The fruit is oblate, violet with black veins, dense, firm and supple. The receptacle of the fruit is thin and pale green, its flesh is plump, glossy and juicy and the colour of strawberry jam, containing many fine, beige-coloured grains. It has an elegant, low-intensity bouquet with vegetal and fruity notes of watermelon, honeydew melon, strawberry and other red fruit. It is crunchy at first and then tender, full-bodied in taste and with a characteristic balance of acidulous and sweet flavours, intense vegetal (rhubarb jam, watermelon) and fruity (red fruit) aromas and floral notes. The fruit is packaged and sold in cardboard trays one layer deep or in a punnet whose capacity may not exceed 1 kilogram.'

Has been replaced by the following wording in the specification and in the single document (at point [3.2]):

'The "figue de Solliès" is a violet-coloured fig of the Bourjassote Noire variety, which is sold fresh or frozen. The fresh figs are intended for direct consumption or processing and frozen fruit for processing only.

For all fruit:

- *The fig is oblate, violet with black veins,*
- *dense, firm and supple.*
- *The receptacle of the fruit is thin and pale green.*
- *The flesh is plump, glossy and juicy and the colour of strawberry jam, containing many fine, beige-coloured grains.*
- *The fig is whole and has a diameter of 40 mm or more (before freezing, if applicable).*
- *Its skin is free of insect bites.*
- *On the nose it has an elegant, low-intensity bouquet with vegetal and fruity notes of watermelon, honeydew melon, strawberry and other red fruit.*
- *In the mouth, it has a characteristic balance between acidulous and sweet flavours.*
- *The flesh is crunchy at first and then tender, with intense vegetal (rhubarb jam, watermelon) and fruity (red fruit) aromas and floral notes.*
- *It contains 14° Brix or more of sugar at the time of packaging or freezing.*

For fruit for direct consumption:

The skin of the fig has not ruptured, torn or split and bears no trace of leaf rub. However, there may be a slight trace of the leaf rubbing against the fruit, over not more than 5 % of its surface.

For fruit intended for processing:

The skin may be ruptured, torn, split or bear traces of the leaf rubbing against the fruit.

As regards both fruit for direct consumption and fruit for processing, each lot may have a maximum of 10 % of fruit that do not comply with the criteria above, with the exception of the variety and size, for which no tolerances have been set.

The fruit for direct consumption are packaged and sold in cardboard trays one layer deep or in a punnet whose capacity may not exceed 1 kilogram.

The fruit intended for processing are packaged and marketed in a container of a maximum capacity of 25 kilograms.'

The amendment mainly consists in adding a reference to fruit intended for processing and to freezing (only for fruit for processing).

The description of the product now distinguishes between the common characteristics of 'Figue de Solliès', regardless of its intended use (brought together in the paragraph '*for all fruit*'), which are identical to the description in the current specification (shape, colour, texture, succulence, the fact of being whole, minimum size, organoleptic characteristics, minimum sugar content, etc.), and the specific characteristics of the fig, depending on its intended use (brought together in the paragraphs '*for fruit for direct consumption*' or '*for fruit intended for processing*'). It has also been added that 'diameter' and 'sugar content' are defined 'before freezing', because they are sorting criteria that vary only slightly during the thawing process.

Tolerances (excluding size and variety) have also been added: maximum percentage of non-compliant fruit allowed per lot and maximum percentage of the surface of a fruit that may bear a slight trace of leaf rub.

In addition, the following initial wording of the single document, point [3.5] 'specific rules concerning slicing, grating, packaging':

'The lots offered for sale are homogeneous in terms of both size and colour.'

Has been deleted, because it is a sorting criterion referred to in the 'description of the production method' section of the specification.

The applicant group would like to extend the scope of the PDO specification to cover figs intended for processing (jams, chutney, pastries, vacuum-cooked fruit, etc.), as the current specification only concerns fruit for direct consumption. Demand for processed fruit has been growing since the 1980s, and is now significant. Figs intended for processing account for more than 20 % of the total annual tonnage of Bourjassote Noire produced in the geographical area of the designation, or for nearly 300 tonnes in 2016 (400 tonnes in 2015) out of the total harvested quantity of 1 400 tonnes (1 600 tonnes in 2015).

Fruit intended exclusively for processing may have certain visual defects on their skin and be frozen. Visual defects, often resulting from a high degree of ripeness at the time of harvesting, such as skin that is torn, ruptured, split or bears traces of leaf rub, are not accepted in fruit for direct consumption, which must be nearly unblemished (a slight trace of leaf rub on the fruit is tolerated over a maximum of 5 % of the skin surface). The fact that figs for direct consumption may not be split is specified in this context. On the other hand, these visual defects do not damage the organoleptic quality of the fruit, especially if intended for processing.

Freezing makes it possible to increase the storage life of the fig (up to 1 year), in particular of the ripest fruit, which are the most sought-after by the processors because of their high sugar content. By purchasing frozen figs, processors can stagger their production and ensure the good quality of a product that has a very short storage life when fresh (a few days). Tests carried out by the group over a number of years have demonstrated that freezing makes it possible to preserve the organoleptic (colour, taste, texture) and analytical (sugar content) characteristics of the 'Figue de Solliès'.

Packaging the fruit in punnets or trays is not suitable for the needs of the processors who buy this product. Therefore fruit for processing, which are most often frozen, are packaged in suitable containers (bags or cardboard boxes) not exceeding 25 kg in order to prevent the fruit from being crushed and damaged. Additionally, the fruit are often frozen before marketing and processing.

5.2. 'Proof of origin' heading

In addition to a number of editorial changes, the amendments to the specification consist both of a general update of this section with the national requirements established for products with a designation of origin and of an update related to the introduction of figs for processing, possibly frozen, which are distinguished from figs for direct consumption.

Consequently the following passage describing the system implemented at the national level has been added:

'Implementing documentary monitoring throughout the production and freezing process of "Figues de Solliès", together with on-the-spot checks, as well as a procedure of sensory checks of the product allow guaranteed monitoring of the product, its production and its packaging.'

Any operator wishing to participate under the conditions for producing the designation of origin "figue de Solliès" must make the following declarations to the group and keep the following documents and registers up to date, in accordance with the procedures and time limits set.

The declarations and accompanying certificates are made on the printouts that are supplied by the group and comply with the models approved by the INAO director. All the plant production records, registers, duplicate accompanying certificates and other documents enabling monitoring and verification of the volumes and products are kept at the disposal of the officials responsible for the checks.'

The details of the information in the 'ID declaration' of the operators have been removed, but it has been added that this declaration concerns operators participating in the production, preparation, freezing or packaging process and that it is *'received and registered by the group'*;

The 'annual declaration of non-intent to allocate the means of production' (optional) has been renamed 'annual declaration of full or partial non-intent to produce the designation of origin' and the details of the information provided has been deleted.

The 'production and marketing declaration' initially provided for has been replaced by an 'annual harvest declaration' for fig producers and by an 'annual production declaration' for operators marketing and dispatching figs with the designation of origin.

In the 'annual production declaration' it has been added that the declaration includes *'the quantities of figs packaged and marketed under the designation of origin, with a distinction made between figs for direct consumption and figs for processing, and specifying the quantities of any frozen figs'*.

The 'stock records tracing all the movements of the products and the proceedings for handling the products' have been replaced by information that is now divided into two separate documents: a 'harvest register' for the fig producer that indicates: *'for each orchard identified with the land registry references: the quantities harvested by harvest date, their place of storage, the quantity removed, the removal date and the intended use. The data in the register are kept by the operator during the year to which they relate and the two following years'*, and a 'handling register' for operators sorting, calibrating, marketing and dispatching the figs that indicates: *'the quantities and origin of the figs supplied, including the references of the delivery notes, the dates of completion of the various operations (storage, sorting, calibration, packaging, freezing, dispatching), the quantities sorted and calibrated, frozen, packaged and dispatched, specifying the category (figs for direct consumption or for processing, fresh or frozen). The data in the register are kept by the operator during the year to which they relate and the two following years'*.

A 'packaging unit identification form' has been added, stating that 'Each packaging unit intended for marketing under the designation of origin is identified by means of a form showing at least: the lot reference, the packaging date, the freezing date for the frozen lots, the term 'PDO' and, for the fruit intended for processing, a reference to the lot category ("processed – frozen" or "processed – fresh")'.

A 'pallet record' that states the following has also been added: *'Each pallet that contains several packaging units is accompanied by a record summarising all the information in the packaging unit identification forms'.*

For the purpose of monitoring the cultivation work carried out on the parcels, the operator is given the opportunity to record his operations on a document other than the original production record.

A reference to the analytical and organoleptic examination aimed at ensuring the quality of the product and its consistency with the description has also been added to this section: *'In order to ensure the quality of the product and its consistency with the description, as defined in point II above, this procedure in its entirety is supplemented by sensory examinations carried out by sampling on fig lots ready to be marketed under the designation of origin'.*

5.3. 'Method of production' heading

The most important amendments concern the introduction of figs intended for processing and possibly frozen. The production conditions for this product have been added, and therefore it has occasionally been necessary to rearrange the paragraphs of this section to take account of the various uses of figs harvested for direct consumption or for processing, whether frozen or not. Other amendments have been made, apart from the introduction of figs for processing.

The following introductory paragraph: *'The typical features of the "figue de Solliès" stem from ancestral know-how. These production techniques are adapted to the particular characteristics of the fig tree and its needs and safeguard the specific features of the area and the quality of the fruit produced there. The know-how is applied throughout the product cycle, from the management of the orchard to the harvesting and packaging'* has been deleted, because it relates more to the 'link to the geographical origin of the product' than to the description of the 'method of production'.

The following initial wording of the current specification:

'Planting: each tree must have a minimum surface area of 25 m² available to it. This area is obtained by multiplying the distance between the rows and space between the trees. The minimum distance between the trees must be at least 5 metres.'

Has been supplemented and replaced by the following wording:

'Planting density: Each tree must have a minimum surface area of 25 m² available to it. This area is obtained by multiplying the distance between the rows and space between the trees. The minimum distance between the trees, measured from "centre line to centre line", must be at least 5 metres at the time of planting.'

No changes have been made to the minimum planting distances and areas, but it has been added that the minimum distance between the trees must be measured 'from centre line to centre line at the time of planting' in order to avoid any ambiguity and take account of the growth of the trunks over the years.

The following wording of the current specification:

'The figs are harvested from 15 August to 15 November.'

Has been replaced by the following wording:

'Harvest date: the dates for opening and closing the harvest are set annually by decision of the INAO director on a proposal of the group'.

The fixed harvest dates have been deleted and replaced by an annual procedure for opening and closing the harvest. This is because the harvest period referred to originally is indicative. In practice it may vary slightly depending on the year, because it is important to look at the actual state of maturity and quality of the fruit, which depend on the climatic conditions: delayed maturity due to a lack of sunshine, a rainy end of the harvest season leading to a reduction in the sugar content and the organoleptic qualities of the fruit, etc.

In view of the checks, in particular, the group's proposal will be justified, on a network of parcels, on the basis of the colour of the fruit and their sugar content, in accordance with the criteria defined in the specification (80 % of the figs have a colour of between C2 and C7 on the colour chart, 14 ° Brix or more of sugar).

The following initial wording: *'The figs are harvested and transported from the orchard to the storage place in open boxes whose capacity may not exceed 20 kg'*

has been replaced by the following wording:

'The figs are harvested, transported and delivered in open boxes whose capacity may not exceed 20 kg.'

As regards the harvest method, the obligation to harvest and transport the figs in open boxes of a maximum capacity of 20 kg is supplemented with the obligation to also deliver the figs in those boxes in order to preserve the quality of these delicate fruit. The initial expression: 'from the orchard to the storage place' has been deleted because of its implicit nature.

Purely formal amendments have also been made throughout this section, in particular by replacing all negative expressions of the type 'may not exceed' by the following positive expressions: 'is less than or equal to'.

The details of the amendments made relating to the introduction of figs intended for processing and possibly frozen are described below:

- the following initial wording: *'The time limit between harvesting and dispatching after packaging may not exceed five days. During that period, the figs are stored, without having undergone a transfer, at a temperature not exceeding 8 degrees Celsius in order to prevent any adverse heat effects', has been replaced,* depending on the use of the fig (for direct consumption or processing), *by the following wording so as to maintain the distinction between figs for direct consumption and figs for processing:*

'Storage before preparation: while waiting to be prepared for use as figs for direct consumption or figs for processing, the figs delivered are stored immediately, without having undergone a transfer, at a maximum temperature of 8 degrees Celsius'.

- And, for fruit for direct consumption:

The following initial wording of the current specification:

'After sorting, the packaged figs are free of insect bites and spots, they are not ruptured, their skin is not torn and their colour ranges between C2 and C7 on the above mentioned CTIFL colour chart. They contain 14° Brix or more of sugar.'

Has been supplemented and replaced by the following wording:

'The figs are sorted, calibrated, packaged and dispatched within a maximum of 5 days after harvesting.'

Sorting, calibration and packaging:

They are at least 40 mm in size. They are free of insect bites and spots, they are not ruptured, torn or split and they bear no traces of leaf rub. However, the skin of the fruit may bear a slight trace of leaf rub, over not more than 5 % of its surface. They have a colour of between C2 and C7 on the CTIFL colour chart and contain 14° Brix or more of sugar.

A maximum of 10 % of non-compliant fruit per lot is allowed except as regards the size or variety.

The initial time limit for packaging and dispatching of not more than 5 days after harvesting remains unchanged and has been included in this wording.

The point on the sorting criteria has been reworded and supplemented by introducing tolerance thresholds expressed as a percentage of non-compliant fruit. On the basis of several years' experience producing and inspecting the product bearing the designation of origin, these tolerances correspond to an acceptable rejection rate during sorting, or to a maximum of 3 non-compliant figs on a tray of 27 figs. The obligation to select figs no smaller than 40 mm has been reiterated, as has the fact that the skin may not be torn or split or bear traces of leaf rub.

As regards the method of packaging the figs (in a tray or punnet), the following initial wording of the current specification:

'The fruit is packaged and sold in cardboard trays one layer deep or in a punnet whose capacity may not exceed 1 kilogram.'

Has been supplemented and replaced by the following wording:

'Packaging takes place immediately after sorting and calibration. The fruit is marketed in cardboard trays one layer deep or in a punnet whose capacity is less than or equal to 1 kilogram.'

For greater clarity it has been added that packaging must take place immediately after the sorting and calibration stage in order to preserve the quality of the fruit.

The general rearrangement of the different paragraphs has resulted in the drafting of a specific point called 'storage before dispatch' setting out the following conditions, which are already provided for in the specification for the figs for direct consumption: *'The packaged lots are stored at positive temperatures up to 8 degrees Celsius until their dispatch'*.

— And for figs for processing:

The specification has been supplemented with the conditions for preparing and, if applicable, freezing the figs intended for processing. The following wording has been added:

— *'The figs are sorted, calibrated, packaged and dispatched, or chilled with a view to freezing, within a maximum of 5 days after harvesting.'*

— *'Sorting, calibration':*

'The figs are at least 40 mm in size and have a colour of between C2 and C7 on the CTIFL colour chart referred to above. They contain 14° Brix or more of sugar. The fruit are free of insect bites but may be ruptured, torn, split or bear traces of the leaf rubbing on the skin or fruit. A maximum of 10 % of non-compliant fruit per lot is allowed except as regards the size or variety.'

In other words, these figs meet the same sorting requirements as figs for direct consumption in terms of size, colour, sugar content and the absence of insect bites. On the other hand, unlike figs for direct consumption, they may be ruptured, torn, split or bear traces of leaf rub.

— *'Packaging, storage and time limit before dispatch of the fresh fruit':*

'As soon as they have been sorted and calibrated, the figs are packaged in a container of a maximum capacity of 25 kilograms and sealed using a tamper-proof system that cannot be resealed after it is first opened. They are immediately stored at positive temperatures up to 8 degrees Celsius until their dispatch.'

Owing to its large capacity, this packaging is well suited to the commercial use of the product (processing) but also preserves the quality of the product, as the capacity is limited to 25 kg. Moreover, in order to limit the risk of the product being replaced by non-PDO figs, it has been provided that the packaging used must be equipped with a tamper-proof system that cannot be resealed after it is first opened.

— *'Packaging, storage, freezing and time limit before dispatch of the frozen fruit':*

— *Prior cold storage:*

'As soon as they have been sorted and calibrated, the figs are stored at positive temperatures up to 8 degrees Celsius during 12 to 24 hours, in a container of a maximum capacity of 25 kilograms.'

Figs intended for freezing are also stored in containers of a maximum capacity of 25 kg in order to preserve the quality of the product. After the sorting stage, which may raise the temperature of the fruit, the figs are chilled in a cold room at maximum 8 °Celsius for 12 to 24 hours prior to freezing in order to avoid too great a thermal shock that could adversely affect the quality of the fruit.

— *Freezing:*

'After the prior cold storage, the figs are frozen so that their core temperature drops to -18° Celsius or colder within a maximum of 5 days after the fruit were frozen.'

The operators do not have facilities enabling rapid freezing. However, experience has shown that a maximum time limit for freezing of 5 days was adequate for preserving the characteristics of the 'Figure de Solliés'.

— *Packaging of frozen figs:*

'The figs are packaged in a container of a maximum capacity of 25 kilograms and sealed using a tamper-proof system that cannot be resealed after it is first opened.'

Figs intended for processing are packaged in large containers, unlike figs for direct consumption. However, the capacity is limited to 25 kg in order to prevent too much compression, which might damage the fruit. Moreover, in order to prevent the product from being replaced by figs of other geographical origins, the packaging must be equipped with a system for verifying whether the figs have been tampered with.

— Storage life of frozen figs:

'Frozen figs may bear the designation of origin "figue de Solliès" for up to one year after freezing'.

A maximum storage life for the frozen fruit ensures that the physical and organoleptic characteristics of the product are preserved and prevents fruit from different harvest years from being placed on the market at the same time.

The following wording in the current specification and in point [3.5] of the single document:

'The fruit has to be packaged in the geographical area because of the fragility of the product and so as to preserve the quality and characteristics of the designation. Indeed, the fig is a fruit that generally does not withstand transport and shocks well. That is why it must be handled as little as possible and packaged very rapidly in containers which prevent any risk of crushing (i.e. in a cardboard tray one layer deep or in a punnet with a maximum capacity of 1 kg). This also means that the figs have to be packaged as soon as they are sorted, i.e. in the same place as they are sorted, requiring precisely the expertise held by producers in the geographical area.'

Has been supplemented and replaced by the following wording:

'The packaging and, in the case of figs intended for processing, any freezing must take place in the geographical area. Indeed, the fig is a fragile fruit that generally does not withstand transport, repeated handling and physical and thermal shocks well. Therefore, in order to ensure that their original qualities are preserved, the figs must be packaged or frozen (after chilling at positive temperatures for 12 to 24 hours to avoid too great a thermal shock) immediately after sorting, in containers which prevent any risk of crushing (in a cardboard tray one layer deep or in a punnet with a maximum capacity of 1 kg for figs for direct consumption and in containers of a maximum capacity of 25 kg for figs for processing). This requirement makes it necessary to package and freeze the figs within the geographical production area, because the sorting stage requires precisely the expertise held by producers of "Figues de Solliès". Moreover, packaging and freezing in the geographical area makes it possible to limit the risk of the product being replaced by a non-compliant product, in particular by having the producers use packaging equipped with a tamper-proof system that cannot be resealed after it is first opened'.

The reasons for packaging and freezing in the geographical area figs intended for processing have been added, and they supplement the reasons referred to originally for packaging in the geographical area figs for direct consumption.

5.4. 'Link' heading

This section has been supplemented with details on figs intended for processing and possibly frozen. The group wanted to use the opportunity to summarise the entire section.

Firstly, in the specification and in point [5] of the single document, the following wording has been added, detailing the specific qualities of the 'Figue de Solliès', which are mainly due to the natural and human factors of the geographical environment:

'The "figue de Solliès" is characterised by a rich taste, a plump and juicy fruit of a good size, and a high sugar content linked principally to the natural (soils and hydrographic network, climate) and human (harvesting and sorting practices) factors of the geographical environment.'

As regards the specific features of the area, the many historical details referred to have been deleted or summarised, and data have been added on the market for figs intended for processing. The data show that figs for processing account for more than 20 % of the total annual tonnage of Bourjassote Noire produced in the geographical area of the designation, or for nearly 300 tonnes in 2016.

The historical information has been summarised as follows in the specification, but not in the single document:

'The fig has been present since ancient times all around the Mediterranean rim. While the Marseilles region accounted for a large part of the production in France in the Middle Ages, there was later a shift towards the east of Provence, more specifically towards the Solliès Basin, where conditions are ideal for the development of the fig, in particular the Bourjassote Noire variety, which became commonly known as "figue de Solliès" in 1560. Right at the beginning of the 19th century, Mr Fauche, prefect of the Var, indicated that the Bourjassote Noire was the dominant variety of his department. Its production continued to grow. At the beginning of the 20th century, the Solliès Basin produced approximately 1 100 tonnes of figs. Between 1905 and 1910, the Figue de Solliès benefitted from the railway network and became highly sought after in Paris, which, in season, was the daily destination of 18 tonnes of fresh figs. In the 1950s, orchards composed solely of fig trees started being cultivated. They were managed so that they were easy to harvest on foot. In the 1980s, figs became once and for all the dominant crop in the sector. In 1996, the producers formed the "Syndicat de Défense de la Figue de la Figue de Solliès", which enabled them to protect the name "Figue de Solliès" first with a controlled designation of origin in 2006, and then in 2010 with a protected designation of origin for the fresh fruit for direct consumption. Today the total annual production of figs of all varieties in the geographical area totals about 2 000 tonnes.'

The following details relating to figs for processing have been added to the specification:

'Along with the production of fruit for direct consumption, a market for figs intended for processing – figs that are often frozen to extend their storage life – started developing in the Solliès Basin in 1980. At that time, figs for processing accounted for about sixty tonnes, or 13 % of the total tonnage of Bourjassote Noire figs on the market. They are mostly very ripe figs (C7 on the CTIFL colour chart) sought after by processors for their high sugar content. The skin of these fruit, which have excellent organoleptic characteristics, may be torn or ruptured owing to their ripeness, which prevents them from being transported over long distances and reduces their storage life as a fresh product.. Likewise, the fact that there is some leaf rub on the skin is not disturbing in a fruit intended for processing, because it does not affect the fruit's gustatory qualities.'

Current economic data

In 2016, the production of "figue de Solliès" involved 120 fig producers represented by a cooperative and about twenty producer-dispatchers. France produced 3 200 tonnes of figs of all varieties, more than 1 800 tonnes of which come from the geographical production area of "Figue de Solliès", including 1 400 tonnes of the Bourjassote Noire variety. Nowadays figs intended for processing make up more than 20 % of the total tonnage of Bourjassote Noire produced in the geographical area, or about 300 tonnes in 2016.'

The following corresponding information has been added to point [5] of the single document:

'Figs that are ruptured, torn, split or have traces of leaf rub, in particular because of their high degree of ripeness, but that have excellent gustatory qualities are used for processing (jams, purees, tarts, etc.) and may be frozen so that they keep longer before processing.'

The geographical, geological and climatic characteristics of the geographical area have been summarised more succinctly, and the numerical data on the presence of the Bourjassote Noire variety have been updated.

Below is the updated wording of the specification and of point [5] of the single document (the first paragraph is not included in the single document):

'The geographical production area of "figue de Solliès" is completely contained within the south-western end of the Permian depression, which is bordered to the west and north by Jurassic calcareous formations and to the east by metamorphic phyllites of the Maures Mountains. This area also corresponds to the hydrographic network of the Gapeau-Real-Martin Basin, with a dense system of small streams that irrigate the production area. In addition, the diversions of the River Gapeau have provided water to the agricultural land since the Middle Ages through irrigation canals covering the entire production area.'

The production area, which is open on the Mediterranean Sea, is demarcated by a range of hills and characterised by a specific mesoclimate. The climate is Mediterranean and the temperatures are hot, in particular from April to October. The geographical area is further characterised by very few frost days, rainfall concentrated in the autumn and winter, and average but constant humidity. Geologically speaking, the geographical area is situated in a conflict zone between calcareous Provence and the crystalline Maures Mountains in the west, and this generates a variety of soils. Six types of soil are typical of the production area: brown soils from recent alluvial deposits, brown soils from ancient alluvial deposits with minor leaching, leached brown soils from ancient alluvial deposits, immature brown soils from colluvium or scree, immature brown soils without calciferous reserves, carbonated calci-magnesian soils.'

An almost exclusive dominant variety: The Bourjassote Noire variety, more commonly called "the violet fi g", is produced almost exclusively in this production area. While the Solliès Basin alone accounted for about 57 % of the national production of figs in 2016, with more than 1 800 tonnes of all varieties, most of the Bourjassote Noire variety produced in France comes from this area. The rest of the orchards are distributed to a lesser extent across all the French departments, in particular Vaucluse.'

The details relating to the human factors have been summarised (pruning, irrigation, etc.) and supplemented with information on the introduction of figs for processing, in particular in frozen form.

The wording of the specification and of the single document (point [5]) has been updated as follows:

'The know-how adapted to the geographical environment and developed by the producers of the "figue de Solliès" concerns, in particular, the planting system (in order for the fig tree to grow well, each tree has a minimum of 25 square metres, i.e. 5 metres between two trees and 5 metres between two rows), the pruning method (orchards that can be harvested on foot, with the branches being within arm's reach, and regular pruning in order to obtain good sizes) and the management of irrigation during periods of water stress to prevent the fruit from rupturing and ensure a high-quality production, allowing the figs to be marketed in the best conditions.'

Harvesting, which is carried out exclusively manually by a trained and qualified, mostly local, workforce. In order to determine the best time for harvesting, the producers use the colour codes drawn up by the Centre Technique Interprofessionnel des Fruits et Légumes (Ctifl), which show the different degrees of colouration of the “figue de Solliès” indicating the stage of maturity. The figs are usually picked between 15 August and 15 November, depending on their maturity.’

In the specification only, it is also specified that:

‘the plaques are numbered from C1 for a light-coloured, unripe fig (not used for the designation) to C7 for a very ripe fruit. Traditionally, in order for the figs to have the desired taste properties, the harvest is carried out when the degree of colouration ranges between C2 and C7. C1-coded figs are not sufficiently sweet and juicy. In addition, as the fruit is fragile, the harvest is carried out using open boxes with a capacity of 20 kg or less.

The updated wording of the specification is as follows:

Sorting, packaging and freezing:

Sorting is an important step aiming at selecting fruit with the specific characteristics of the designation of origin. Irrespective of the various uses (figs for direct consumption or for processing), the figs are marketed whole and have a minimum size of 40 mm, a colour of between C2 and C7 and 14° Brix or more of sugar. The fruit is also sorted according to the appearance of the skin. Figs intended for the market for figs for direct consumption have an excellent appearance. They are not ruptured, torn or split and bear no traces of leaf rub. However, a maximum of 10 % of non-compliant fruit per lot is allowed, and a slight trace of leaf rub on the fruit is tolerated over a maximum of 5 % of the skin surface. The figs are marketed in lots that are homogenous in terms of size, ripeness and visual appearance. They are packaged in cardboard trays not more than one layer deep or in a punnet of a maximum of 1 kg, so as to guarantee their integrity and optimal storage conditions.

Figs that are ruptured, torn, split or have traces of leaf rub, in particular because of their high degree of ripeness (C7 on the CTIFL’s colour chart) and have excellent gustatory qualities are used for processing (jams, purees, tarts, etc.). They may be packaged in containers of a maximum capacity of 25 kilograms to prevent crushing. They may be frozen in order to extend their storage life (up to 1 year) before processing. After the sorting stage, which may raise the temperature of the fruit, the figs are chilled in a cold room at maximum 8° Celsius for 12 to 24 hours prior to freezing in order to avoid too great a thermal shock that could adversely affect the quality of the fruit.’

These latter details are summarised as follows in point [5] of the single document:

‘Manual sorting is another important step in selecting the most beautiful fruit on the basis of their integrity, size and sugar content. Figs intended for the market for figs for direct consumption have an excellent appearance. Figs that are ruptured, torn, split or have traces of leaf rub, in particular because of their high degree of ripeness, but that have excellent gustatory qualities are used for processing (jams, purees, tarts, etc.) and may be frozen so that they keep longer before processing.’

As regards the specific nature of the product, the following wording of the current specification:

‘The size of the “figue de Solliès” is characteristically greater than the average for figs on the European market. The controlled designation of origin must be at least 40 mm in size.

It contains 14° Brix or more of sugar at the time of packaging.

The fig is also sought after for how well it keeps; in good conditions it can maintain its appearance (it is not ruptured) and be kept for several days.

The fruit is oblate, violet with black veins (at least 80 % of the skin is violet), dense, firm and supple. The receptacle of the fruit is thin and pale green, its flesh is plump and the colour of strawberry jam, containing many fine, beige-coloured grains. It has an elegant, low-intensity bouquet with vegetal and fruity notes of watermelon, honeydew melon, strawberry and other red fruit. The “figue de Solliès” is crunchy at first and then tender, with intense vegetal (rhubarb jam, watermelon) and fruity (red fruit) aromas and floral notes.

Its distinctive taste is reflected in an excellent balance of acidulous and sweet flavours that is unique in Europe. In fact, Bourjassotte Noire figs from other production areas are characterised by a predominance of acidulous flavours over sweet flavours or by a less rich taste, often because they have been harvested too early. This balance of acidulous and sweet flavours results from the minimum sugar content of 14° Brix, guaranteed at the time of packaging.’

Has been supplemented and replaced by the following wording:

'The following specific characteristics distinguish the "figue de Solliès" from other similar products:

- its oblate shape;
- its violet colour with black veins;
- its dense, firm and supple appearance;
- its plump, glossy and juicy flesh, which is the colour of "strawberry jam", containing many fine, beige-coloured grains;
- its elegant, low-intensity bouquet with "vegetal" and "fruity" notes of watermelon, honeydew melon, strawberry and other red fruit.;
- its texture, which is crunchy at first and then tender, with intense "vegetal" (rhubarb jam, watermelon) and "fruity" (red fruit) aromas and "floral notes".
- its size, which is greater than the average for figs on the European fig market, i.e. not less than 40 mm (before freezing, if any);
- its distinctive taste, which is reflected in an excellent balance of acidulous and sweet flavours that is unique in Europe. In fact, figs of the Bourjassotte Noire variety from other production areas are often characterised by a predominance of acidulous flavours over sweet flavours or by a less rich taste, often because they have been harvested too early. This balance of acidulous and sweet flavours results, in particular, from the minimum sugar content of 14° Brix (within the limits of the tolerance laid down), guaranteed at the time of packaging or freezing, regardless of the intended use of the fruit (fruit for direct consumption or for processing);
- the fruit for direct consumption keeps well, so that it can maintain its appearance (it is not ruptured, torn or split and bears no traces of leaf rub within the limits of the tolerance laid down) until it reaches the consumer and be kept in good conditions for several days.'

The wording has been amended to highlight more clearly the essential characteristics of the 'Figue de Solliès', regardless of its intended use, in a manner consistent with the description of the product.

The information on the reputation of the product has been summarised further and moved to the 'causal link' section, as well as supplemented with details concerning figs intended for processing, in the specification and in point 5 of the single document:

'The "figue de Solliès" is therefore very sought after for these unique organoleptic qualities, as a fruit for direct consumption on local and national markets, in well-known delicatessens and for export, but also in restaurants, by great chefs, who do not hesitate to praise its merits in culinary works (Gui Gedda, April 2004, "La magie de la figue dans la cuisine provençale", edited by Edisud), and also by processors, who make jams, pastries and other preparations from figs. Along with the production of fruit for direct consumption, a market for figs intended for processing – figs that are often frozen to extend their storage life – started developing in 1980. Nowadays Bourjassotte Noire figs intended for processing make up more than 20 % of the total tonnage produced in the geographical area, or about 300 tonnes in 2016.'

In addition to a few editorial changes, the 'causal link' section has also been amended or supplemented with the following details, in the specification and in point [5] of the single document:

The following initial wording of the current specification:

'The relatively low calcium content thus makes it possible to obtain plumper and more aqueous fruit, which results in the typical sizes of the "Figue de Solliès", i.e. larger than 40 mm. The producers' know-how also contributes to the size, namely the way they sort the fruit manually and package it, paying attention to composing trays of a homogenous colour and size.'

Has been supplemented and replaced by the following wording (also in point [5] of the single document):

'The relatively low calcium content of the soil (less than 20 %) makes it possible to obtain plumper and juicier fruit, with sizes larger than 40 millimetres. Other factors contributing to this are the low number of frost days in the geographical area, summer irrigation carried out by the producers and the average but constant humidity in the orchards. The producers' know-how also contributes to the size, namely the way they sort the fruit and package it, paying attention to composing trays of a homogenous colour and size as regards figs for direct consumption. The hot Mediterranean climate with average humidity and generous sunshine allows the "figue de Solliès" to easily reach a minimum sugar content of 14° Brix during the harvest. Harvesting, which is carried out exclusively by hand and combined with rapid and rigorous sorting at the packaging station, makes it possible to obtain fruit that has the optimum physical and organoleptic characteristics (appearance of the fruit, keeping quality, size and optimum ripeness).'

The initial reference to the 'aqueous' character of the fruit has been deleted and replaced by the term 'juicy', which was already used to describe the 'Figue de Solliès' in the 'product description' section. That new term is more appropriate.

There are more specific details on how to obtain good sizes. It has been added that the requirement to compose trays of a homogeneous colour and size only concerns fruit for direct consumption, and that obtaining fruit with the optimum physical and organoleptic characteristics is linked to manual harvesting and also to the producers' know-how, which enables them, for example, to sort the fruit rigorously and rapidly.

5.5. 'Labelling' heading

The following initial wording of the current specification and point [3.6] of the single document:

'Each packaging unit bears:

- the name of the designation of origin "figue de Solliès" written in a font at least as large as the largest font used on the label;*
- until registration as a PDO, the words "appellation d'origine contrôlée"[controlled designation of origin], the acronym or logo "AOC" immediately before or after the name of the designation with no text in between.*

In addition to the label, all accompanying documents and invoices must bear the name of the designation of origin and, until registration as a PDO, the words "appellation d'origine contrôlée"[controlled designation of origin] or "AOC".

- the words "appellation d'origine protégée" [protected designation of origin] immediately before or after the designation, with no text in between.*

In addition to the label, all accompanying documents and invoices must bear the name of the designation of origin and the words "appellation d'origine protégée"[protected designation of origin];

- until registration as a PDO, the logo "AOC 'Figue de Solliès'", lodged by the group;*
- the logo "AOP 'Figue de Solliès'", lodged by the group.'*

Has been supplemented and replaced by the following wording:

'In addition to the mandatory information provided for in the rules on the labelling and presentation of foodstuffs, the labelling of figs entitled to the designation of origin "figue de Solliès" bears the following information on each packaging unit:

- the name of the designation of origin "figue de Solliès" written in a font at least as large as the largest font used on the label;*
- the words "appellation d'origine protégée"[protected designation of origin] immediately before or after the designation, with no text in between.*
- For figs intended for processing, the following additional words: "processed – frozen" or "processed – fresh", depending on the category of the product.*

These details must all be in the same visual field and on the same label.

In addition to the label, all accompanying documents and invoices must bear the name of the designation of origin and the words "appellation d'origine protégée"[protected designation of origin] as well as a reference to the product category ("processed – frozen" or "processed – fresh").'

The amendments consist of:

- a simple update relating to the fact that a PDO has been obtained since the specification was first drafted: all references to 'appellation d'origine contrôlée' [controlled designation of origin] have been deleted;*
- addition of the terms 'processed – frozen' or 'processed – fresh' relating to the extension of the PDO to figs for processing, and possibly frozen, in order to provide correct information to buyers and ensure that figs intended for processing, in particular when they have been frozen, are placed on the market for figs for direct consumption.*
- Removal of the obligation to affix the AOC/PDO logo, lodged by the group. All operators do not want to use it and consider that the European PDO logo is sufficient.*

5.6. 'Other':

'Applicant group' heading:

The following initial wording of the current specification:

*'Syndicat de défense de la figue de Solliès
345, chemin des Laugiers
83 210 Solliès-Pont
FRANCE
Tel. +33 494289437
Fax +33 494333173
Email: copsol@wanadoo.fr*

Composition: Producers, processors.

Legal status: The group is a professional syndicate governed by Articles 2111-1 et seq. of the Labour Code.'

Has been replaced by the following wording:

*'Syndicat de défense de la figue de Solliès
345, chemin des Laugiers
83 210 Solliès-Pont
FRANCE
Tel. +33 494289437
Fax +33 494333173
Email: copsol@wanadoo.fr*

Composition: producers, packagers and freezing stations.

Legal status: The group is a professional syndicate governed by Articles 2111-1 et seq. of the Labour Code.'

The purpose of the amendments made is to add a reference to 'freezing stations' in order to take account of the new category of operators who freeze the figs. Furthermore, the term 'processor' has been replaced by the term 'packagers', which is more appropriate. The term 'processors' refers to operators that use 'Figue de Solliès' to make jams and other processed foods; they are not considered producers of the PDO. On the other hand, 'packagers' are operators that produce, sort and package the PDO figs. Nowadays, the freezing stations are also packagers. The description of the management board of the group has been deleted, because it is not applicable.

'Geographical area' heading of the specification:

The following wording of the current specification:

'The geographical area where the fig designated as "figue de Solliès" is produced and packaged is located in the department of Var in south-eastern France, within the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region'

has been supplemented and replaced by the following wording:

'The steps in production, packaging and freezing of the fig with the designation "figue de Solliès" are carried out in the geographical area approved by the National Institute of Origin and Quality ("INAO") at the meeting of the competent national committee on 12 January 2005. The perimeter of this area, on the date of approval of this specification by the competent national committee, comprises the territory of the following municipalities, based on the 2005 Official Geographic Code'.

The same amendments have been made to points [4] (the date of approval of the boundaries, editorial changes) and [3.4] (the stages carried out in the geographical area) of the single document.

Following the introduction of the frozen fig intended for processing, it has been added that the freezing stage must be carried out in the geographical area of the PDO. The reasons for carrying out the packaging and freezing stages in the geographical area have been detailed in the 'Method of production' section of the specification and in point 3.5 of the Single Document.

The boundaries of the geographical area have not been changed, but the date when the competent national authorities approved the demarcation, as well as the reference year of the Official Geographic Code on which is based the definition of the identified geographical area have been added to provide greater detail.

In addition, amendments have been made to the national procedure in place for identifying parcels suitable for producing the designation of origin:

The following initial wording: ‘The application is registered with the INAO. Registration is tantamount to identification of the parcels, provided that the producer is not found to have defaulted on his or her undertaking. Any parcels for which the above undertaking was not complied with are removed from the list of parcels identified by the INAO following an opinion from the committee of experts.’

has been replaced by the following wording:

‘The list of new parcels identified is approved each year by the competent national committee of the INAO following an opinion from the above-mentioned committee of experts. The identification criteria and the list of parcels identified can be consulted via the INAO and the group concerned.’.

Thus from now on the procedure involves validation by the competent national decision-making body (the INAO national committee) of the list of parcels identified, to be updated annually.

It has also been added that the operator’s application for identification of the parcels is submitted ‘using a form which follows with the template approved by the INAO director’.

In addition, the following information relating to the description of the soil and climatic features and human factors has been deleted from this section, as it is superfluous to the details given in the section ‘Elements justifying the link with the geographical area’:

‘The above-mentioned geographical area is based on criteria that highlight the originality of the production area. The geographical demarcation of the “figue de Solliès” rests on a number of elements.

The demarcation is also based on climatic factors, such as annual rainfall of between 700 and 800 millimetres, low humidity during the production period, a sector classified in climate region IV according to the Winkler index and the absence of significant frost during the year.

The demarcation also depends on geological factors. The Solliès Basin is found in an area where tectonic plates meet, between the metamorphic zone of the Maures Mountains in the east and calcareous Provence in the west. Most of the sector is contained within the south-western end of the Permian depression referred to above, characterised by layers of sandstone and red and wine-lees-coloured pelites which have been altered to a greater or lesser extent. The alteration products of these Permian rocks are for the most part (along the northern edge and in the centre of the area) mixed with significant inputs ranging from sandy loams to loamy sands with a heavy load of calcareous gravel. The eastern edge of this basin has been covered by inputs ranging from sandy loams to loamy sands which to a greater or lesser extent are gravelly and siliceous.

The demarcation is also founded on soil criteria. The soils characteristic of the fig orchards are loamy to loamy-sandy and to a greater or lesser extent gravelly, deep, well-drained, moderately calcareous and have formed on alluvial and colluvial inputs.

The demarcation also takes account of local human practices and know-how: the existence of fig orchards of the Bourjassotte Noire variety, managed according to the traditional practices of the geographical area.

In addition to these limits, the demarcation of the geographical area excludes the heavily forested areas on the edge of the Maures Mountains and the non-typical climate conditions in the Réal-Martin or Réal-Colobrier valleys.’

Similarly, an editorial change has been made to point [4] of the single document.

Consequently, the following wording in the current single document: ‘The area has been demarcated on the basis of geography (between the metamorphic zone of the Maures Mountains to the east and the landforms of calcareous Provence to the west), climate (rainfall, humidity, Winkler index), geology (layers of sandstone and red and wine-lees-coloured pelites which have been altered to a greater or lesser extent), soils (brown, deep and stony) and customary practices (variety and know-how).’

has been replaced by the following wording: ‘This geographical area is completely contained within the south-western end of the Permian depression formed by the northern Maures Mountains and the Toulon region. It coincides with the middle and lower catchments of the Gapeau and the Réal Martin, forming an undulating plain’,

The map of the identified geographical area initially included in the current specification has been replaced by a new map drawn up in accordance with the national charter in force.

Section [3.4] of the single document describing the specific steps in production that must take place in the identified geographical area has also been updated. Therefore the following wording of the single document: ‘Production and packaging must take place in the identified geographical area’, has been supplemented and replaced by the following wording: ‘the steps in production, packaging and freezing must take place in the identified geographical area’.

‘Inspection body’ heading

The initial wording of the specification was as follows:

‘National Institute of Origin and Quality (Institut national de l’Origine et de la Qualité, INAO)
51, rue d’Anjou
75 008 Paris
FRANCE
Tel. +33 153898000
Fax +33 142255797
Email: info@inao.gouv.fr

The Institut National de l’Origine et de la Qualité is a public administrative body with legal personality under the supervisory authority of the Ministry of Agriculture and has been designated as the competent authority within the meaning of Regulation No 882/2004.

It is responsible for monitoring the production conditions for products with a designation of origin.

Name: Directorate-General for Competition, Consumer Affairs and Prevention of Fraud (DGCCRF)
Address: 59 boulevard Vincent Auriol
75703 Paris Cedex 13
FRANCE
Tel. +33 144871717
Fax +33 144973037

The DGCCRF is a department of the Ministry of the Economy, Industry and Employment.’

Has been replaced by the following wording:

‘National Institute of Origin and Quality (Institut national de l’Origine et de la Qualité, INAO)

Address:

Arborial – 12, rue Rol-Tanguy
TSA 30003 – 93555 Montreuil Cedex
FRANCE
Tel. +33 173303800
Fax +33 173303804
Email: info@inao.gouv.fr
Directorate-General for Competition, Consumer Affairs and Prevention of Fraud (DGCCRF)
Address: 59 boulevard Vincent Auriol
75703 Paris Cedex 13
FRANCE
Tel. +33 144871717
Fax +33 144973037

The DGCCRF is a Directorate of the Ministry of the Economy.

In accordance with the provisions of Article 37 of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012, verification of compliance with the specification, before placing the product on the market, is carried out by a product certification body whose name and contact details are available on the INAO’s website and in the European Commission’s database.’

The amendments made consist in updating the contact details of the inspection bodies, INAO and DGCCRF. The following has also been added: ‘In accordance with the provisions of Article 37 of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012, verification of compliance with the specification, before placing the product on the market, is carried out by a product certification body whose name and contact details are available on the INAO’s website and in the European Commission’s database’.

‘National requirements’ heading

The amendments made consist in updating the table on the main points to be checked and their evaluation method in order to take account of the introduction of figs for processing (the fresh fruit are to be dispatched not later than 5 days after harvesting), their freezing, if any (‘storage, freezing and packaging of the figs in the identified geographical area’, ‘freezing not later than 5 days after harvesting’, ‘core temperature of –18 °C within a maximum of 5 days after freezing’, ‘dispatching not later than 1 year after freezing’, ‘free of insect bites’), their packaging (‘in containers of a maximum capacity of 25 kg’), but also in clarifying the monitoring of planting distances (‘at the time of planting, from centre line to centre line’), and changing the harvesting dates (removal of the fixed period of 15 August to 15 November, which has been replaced by opening and closing dates that are set annually).

In addition, the following is proposed on the basis of the review carried out by the group after several years of experience with the PDO:

- deleting, in ‘main points to be checked’, the point on monitoring the management of the orchards, as it is not considered to have a strong impact on the characteristics of the PDO product,
- adding, on the other hand, the point on checking the variety (‘Bourjassotte Noire’) and the colour of the figs harvested, as it indicates the level of ripeness of the fruit (‘80 % are C2 to C7 figs’), but removing the point on checking the harvesting crates, as it is less important.
- updating and supplementing the point on checking the external quality of the fruit by adding checks to verify that fruit for direct consumption is ‘not ruptured or split and bears no traces of leaf rub within the limits of the tolerance laid down’ and that figs for processing are ‘free of insect bites’.
- updating the characteristics of the controlled product in line with the description of the product: removal of the check on the ‘juicy’ character of the product, as this criterion is included in all the descriptive elements of the product. It has been replaced by checks on the conformity of all the ‘organoleptic characteristics’ defined in the description of the product.
- reminding that tolerances are applied when inspecting the finished product.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

‘FIGUE DE SOLLIÈS’

EU No: PDO-FR-00544-AM01 – 23.10.2018

PDO (X) PGI ()

1. Name(s)

‘Figue de Solliès’

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 product to which the name in (1) applies

The ‘Figue de Solliès’ is a violet-coloured fig of the Bourjassotte Noire variety, which is sold fresh or frozen. The fresh figs are intended for direct consumption or processing and frozen fruit for processing only.

For all fruit:

- The fig is oblate, violet with black veins,
- dense, firm and supple.
- The receptacle of the fruit is thin and pale green.
- The flesh is plump, glossy and juicy and the colour of strawberry jam, containing many fine, beige-coloured grains.
- The fig is whole and has a diameter of 40 mm or more (before freezing, if applicable).
- Its skin is free of insect bites.
- On the nose it has an elegant, low-intensity bouquet with vegetal and fruity notes of watermelon, honeydew melon, strawberry and other red fruit.
- In the mouth, it has a characteristic balance between acidulous and sweet flavours.

- The flesh is crunchy at first and then tender, with intense vegetal (rhubarb jam, watermelon) and fruity (red fruit) aromas and floral notes.
- It contains 14° Brix or more of sugar at the time of packaging or freezing.

For fruit for direct consumption:

- The skin of the fig has not ruptured, torn or split and bears no trace of leaf rub. However, there may be a slight trace of the leaf rubbing against the fruit, over not more than 5 % of its surface.

For fruit intended for processing:

- The skin may be ruptured, torn, split or bear traces of the leaf rubbing against the fruit.

As regards both fruit for direct consumption and fruit for processing:

- Each lot may have a maximum of 10 % of fruit that do not comply with the criteria above, with the exception of the variety and size, for which no tolerances have been set.

The fruit for direct consumption are packaged and sold in cardboard trays one layer deep or in a punnet whose capacity is less than or equal to 1 kilogram.

The fruit intended for processing are packaged and marketed in a container of a maximum capacity of 25 kilograms.

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

—

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

The steps in production, packaging and freezing must take place in the identified geographical area.

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

The fruit for direct consumption are packaged and sold in cardboard trays one layer deep or in a punnet whose capacity is less than or equal to 1 kilogram.

The figs intended for processing are packaged and sold in a container of a maximum capacity of 25 kilograms and sealed using a tamper-proof system that cannot be resealed after it is first opened.

The packaging and, in the case of figs intended for processing, any freezing must take place in the geographical area. Indeed, the fig is a fragile fruit that generally does not withstand transport, handling and physical and thermal shocks well. Therefore, in order to ensure that their original qualities are preserved, the figs must be packaged or frozen (after chilling at positive temperatures for 12 to 24 hours to avoid too great a thermal shock) immediately after sorting, in containers which prevent any risk of crushing (in a cardboard tray one layer deep or in a punnet with a maximum capacity of 1 kilogram for figs for direct consumption and in containers of a maximum capacity of 25 kg for figs for processing). This requirement makes it necessary to package and freeze the figs within the geographical production area, because the sorting stage requires precisely the expertise held by producers of 'Figues de Solliès'. Moreover, packaging and freezing in the geographical area makes it possible to limit the risk of the product being replaced by a non-compliant product, in particular by having the producers use packaging equipped with a tamper-proof system that cannot be resealed after it is first opened.

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

In addition to the mandatory information provided for in the rules on the labelling and presentation of foodstuffs, the labelling of figs entitled to the designation of origin 'Figue de Solliès' bears the following information on each packaging unit:

- the name of the designation of origin 'Figue de Solliès' written in a font at least as large as the largest font used on the label;
- the words 'appellation d'origine protégée' [protected designation of origin] immediately before or after the designation, with no text in between.
- for figs intended for processing, the following additional words: 'processed – frozen' or 'processed – fresh', depending on the category of the product.

These details must all be in the same visual field and on the same label.

In addition to the label, all accompanying documents and invoices must bear the name of the designation of origin and the words 'appellation d'origine protégée' [protected designation of origin] as well as a reference to the product category ('processed – frozen' or 'processed – fresh').

4. Concise definition of the geographical area

The identified geographical area of the 'Figue de Solliès' is located in the department of Var in south-eastern France, within the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region. This geographical area is completely contained within the south-western end of the Permian depression formed by the northern Maures Mountains and the Toulon region. It coincides with the middle and lower catchments of the Gapeau and the Réal Martin, which form an undulating plain. The identified geographical area approved by the National Institute of Origin and Quality at the meeting of the relevant national committee of 12 January 2005, on the basis of the 2005 Official Geographic Code, comprises 15 municipalities, two of which are partially covered.

Municipalities completely covered: Belgentier, Carqueiranne, Cuers, La Crau, La Farlède, La Garde, Hyères, La Londeles-Maures, Le Pradet, Solliès-Pont, Solliès-Toucas, Solliès-Ville and La Valette-du-Var.

Municipalities partially covered by the geographical area: Pierrefeu-du-Var (sections A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, B1, B2, B3, B4, C1, C2p, C3, D5p, D6p, E5, E6, E7, E8, E9, E10, E11 and E12);

Puget-Ville (sections A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, A7, A8, A9, B1, B2, B3, B4, C, D1, D2, D3, D4, E1, E2, E3, E4, F10)

A map defining the boundaries of the geographical area has been lodged with the municipal authorities of the partially covered municipalities.

5. Link with the geographical area

The 'Figue de Solliès' is characterised by a rich taste, a plump and juicy fruit of a good size, and a high sugar content linked principally to the natural (soils and hydrographic network, climate) and human (harvesting and sorting practices) factors of the geographical environment.

As regards the natural factors, the production area of the 'Figue de Solliès', which is open on the Mediterranean Sea, is demarcated by a range of hills and characterised by a specific mesoclimate. The climate is Mediterranean and the temperatures are hot, in particular from April to October. The geographical area is further characterised by very few frost days, rainfall concentrated in the autumn and winter, and average but constant humidity. Geologically speaking, the area is situated in a conflict zone between calcareous Provence and the crystalline Maures Mountains in the west, and this generates a variety of soils. Six types of soil are typical of the production area: brown soils from recent alluvial deposits, brown soils from ancient alluvial deposits with minor leaching, leached brown soils from ancient alluvial deposits, immature brown soils from colluvium or scree, immature brown soils without calciferous reserves, carbonated calci-magnesian soils.

The Bourjassote Noire fig variety, more commonly called 'the violet fig', is produced almost exclusively in this production area. While the Solliès Basin alone accounted for about 57 % of the national production of figs in 2016, with more than 1 800 tonnes of all varieties, most of the Bourjassote Noire variety produced in France comes from this area.

As regards the human factors, the specific know-how developed by the producers of the 'Figue de Solliès' concerns, in particular, the planting system (in order for the fig tree to grow well, each tree has a minimum of 25 square metres, i.e. 5 metres between two trees and 5 metres between two rows), the pruning method (orchards that can be harvested on foot, with the branches being within arm's reach for easier harvesting, and regular pruning in order to obtain good sizes), the management of irrigation during periods of water stress to prevent the fruit from rupturing and ensure a high-quality production, allowing the figs to be marketed in the best conditions, and the management of harvesting, which is carried out exclusively manually by a trained and qualified, mostly local, workforce. In order to determine the best time for harvesting, the producers use the colour codes drawn up by the Centre Technique Interprofessionnel des Fruits et Légumes (Ctifl), which show the different degrees of colouration of the 'Figue de Solliès' indicating the stage of maturity. The figs are usually picked between 15 August and 15 November, depending on their maturity. Manual sorting is another important step in selecting the most beautiful fruit on the basis of their integrity, size and sugar content. Figs intended for the market for figs for direct consumption have an excellent appearance. Figs that are ruptured, torn, split or have traces of leaf rub, in particular because of their high degree of ripeness, but that have excellent gustatory qualities are used for processing (jams, purees, tarts, etc.) and may be frozen so that they keep longer before processing.

The following specific characteristics distinguish the 'Figue de Solliès' from other similar products:

- its oblate shape;
- its violet colour with black veins;
- its dense, firm and supple appearance;
- its plump, glossy and juicy flesh, which is the colour of 'strawberry jam', containing many fine, beige-coloured grains;
- its elegant, low-intensity bouquet with 'vegetal' and 'fruity' notes of watermelon, honeydew melon, strawberry and other red fruit;
- its texture, which is crunchy at first and then tender, with intense 'vegetal' (rhubarb jam, watermelon) and 'fruity' (red fruit) aromas and 'floral notes'.
- its size, which is greater than the average for figs on the European fig market, i.e. not less than 40 mm (before freezing, if any);
- its distinctive taste, which is reflected in an excellent balance of acidulous and sweet flavours that is unique in Europe. This balance of acidulous and sweet flavours results, in particular, from the minimum sugar content of 14° Brix (within the limits of the tolerance laid down), guaranteed at the time of packaging or freezing, regardless of the intended use of the fruit (fruit for direct consumption or for processing);
- the fruit for direct consumption keeps well, so that it can maintain its appearance (it is not ruptured, torn or split and bears no traces of leaf rub within the limits of the tolerance laid down) until it reaches the consumer and be kept in good conditions for several days.

The geographical area of the 'Figue de Solliès' has great mineral diversity due to the mixing taking place in the dense hydrographic network, where underground water circulates and brings together these different types of soils. Such mixing is good for the mineral enrichment of the soils, from which the roots of the fig tree benefit. This means that fig trees grow rapidly and develop a significant amount of foliage, which in turn is conducive to the development of the rich taste of the 'Figue de Solliès' and the balance of acidulous and sweet flavours. The relatively low calcium content of the soil (less than 20 %) makes it possible to obtain plumper and juicier fruit, with sizes larger than 40 millimetres. Other factors contributing to this are the low number of frost days in the geographical area, summer irrigation carried out by the producers and the average but constant humidity in the orchards. The producers' know-how also contributes to the size, namely the way they sort the fruit and package it, paying attention to composing trays of a homogenous colour and size as regards figs for direct consumption.

The hot Mediterranean climate with average humidity and generous sunshine allows the 'Figue de Solliès' to easily reach a minimum sugar content of 14° Brix during the harvest. Harvesting, which is carried out exclusively by hand and combined with rapid and rigorous sorting at the packaging station, makes it possible to obtain fruit that has the optimum physical and organoleptic characteristics (appearance of the fruit, keeping quality, size and optimum ripeness).

The 'Figue de Solliès' is therefore very sought after for these unique organoleptic qualities, as a fruit for direct consumption on local and national markets, in well-known delicatessens and for export, but also in restaurants, by great chefs, who do not hesitate to praise its merits in culinary works (Gui Gedda, April 2004, 'La magie de la figue dans la cuisine provençale', edited by Edisud), and also by processors, who make jams, pastries and other preparations from the figs. Along with the production of fruit for direct consumption, a market for figs intended for processing – figs that are often frozen to extend their storage life – started developing in 1980. Nowadays Bourjassote Noire figs intended for processing make up more than 20 % of the total tonnage produced in the geographical area, or about 300 tonnes in 2016.

Reference to publication of the specification

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

<https://extranet.inao.gouv.fr/fichier/CDC-FigueSollies.pdf>
