

Official Journal

of the European Union

C 312



English edition

Information and Notices

Volume 53

17 November 2010

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EN

Price:
EUR 3

⁽¹⁾ Text with EEA relevance, except for products falling under Annex I to the Treaty
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II

(Information)

INFORMATION FROM EUROPEAN UNION INSTITUTIONS, BODIES, OFFICES
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EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Authorisation for State aid pursuant to Articles 107 and 108 of the TFEU**Cases where the Commission raises no objections**

(Text with EEA relevance, except for products falling under Annex I to the Treaty)

(2010/C 312/01)

Date of adoption of the decision	23.6.2010
Reference number of State Aid	NN 12b/06
Member State	Belgium
Region	Flanders
Title (and/or name of the beneficiary)	„Promotie van akkerbouwproducten”
Legal basis	Besluit van de Vlaamse regering van 4 februari 1997 betreffende de verplichte bijdragen bestemd voor de promotie en afzetbevordering van de Vlaamse producten van de sectoren landbouw, tuinbouw en visserij zoals gewijzigd op 26 september 2008.
Type of measure	Aid scheme
Objective	Promotion of arable products
Form of aid	Parafiscal charges
Budget	EUR 7 560 000
Intensity	Up to 100 %
Duration (period)	2000-2013
Economic sectors	Agricultural sector; processing and marketing sector
Name and address of the granting authority	VLAM Elipsegebouw, 1 ^e verdieping Koning Albert II laan 35 1030 Bruxelles/Brussel BELGIQUE/BELGIË
Other information	—

The authentic text(s) of the decision, from which all confidential information has been removed, can be found at:

http://ec.europa.eu/community_law/state_aids/state_aids_texts_en.htm

Date of adoption of the decision	23.6.2010
Reference number of State Aid	NN 12c/06
Member State	Belgium
Region	Flanders
Title (and/or name of the beneficiary)	„Promotie van pluimvee, eieren en konijnen”
Legal basis	Besluit van de Vlaamse regering van 4 februari 1997 betreffende de verplichte bijdragen bestemd voor de promotie en afzetbevordering van de Vlaamse producten van de sectoren landbouw, tuinbouw en visserij zoals gewijzigd op 26 september 2008.
Type of measure	Aid scheme
Objective	Promotion of poultry, eggs and rabbits
Form of aid	Parafiscal charges
Budget	EUR 4 643 044
Intensity	Up to 100 %
Duration (period)	2002-2013
Economic sectors	Agricultural sector; processing and marketing sector
Name and address of the granting authority	VLAM Ellipsgebouw, 1 ^e verdieping Koning Albert II laan 35 1030 Bruxelles/Brussel BELGIQUE/BELGIË
Other information	—

The authentic text(s) of the decision, from which all confidential information has been removed, can be found at:

http://ec.europa.eu/community_law/state_aids/state_aids_texts_en.htm

Date of adoption of the decision	23.6.2010
Reference number of State Aid	NN 12d/06
Member State	Belgium

Region	Flanders
Title (and/or name of the beneficiary)	„Promotie van niet-eetbare tuinbouwprodukten”
Legal basis	Besluit van de Vlaamse regering van 4 februari 1997 betreffende de verplichte bijdragen bestemd voor de promotie en afzetbevordering van de Vlaamse producten van de sectoren landbouw, tuinbouw en visserij zoals gewijzigd op 26 september 2008.
Type of measure	Aid scheme
Objective	Promotion of non-edible horticultural products
Form of aid	Parafiscal charges
Budget	EUR 12 162 308
Intensity	Up to 100 %
Duration (period)	2003-2013
Economic sectors	Agricultural sector; processing and marketing sector
Name and address of the granting authority	VLAM Ellipsgebouw, 1 ^e verdieping Koning Albert II laan 35 1030 Bruxelles/Brussel BELGIQUE/BELGIË
Other information	—

The authentic text(s) of the decision, from which all confidential information has been removed, can be found at:

http://ec.europa.eu/community_law/state_aids/state_aids_texts_en.htm

Date of adoption of the decision	23.6.2010
Reference number of State Aid	NN 12e/06
Member State	Belgium
Region	Flanders
Title (and/or name of the beneficiary)	„Promotie van groenten en fruit, brood en biolandbouw”
Legal basis	Besluit van de Vlaamse regering van 4 februari 1997 betreffende de verplichte bijdragen bestemd voor de promotie en afzetbevordering van de Vlaamse producten van de sectoren landbouw, tuinbouw en visserij zoals gewijzigd op 26 september 2008.
Type of measure	Aid scheme
Objective	Promotion of fruits and vegetables, bread and organic products
Form of aid	Parafiscal charges

Budget	EUR 33 217 732
Intensity	Up to 100 %
Duration (period)	2000-2013
Economic sectors	Agricultural sector; processing and marketing sector
Name and address of the granting authority	VLAM Ellipsgebouw, 1 ^e verdieping Koning Albert II laan 35 1030 Bruxelles/Brussel BELGIQUE/BELGIË
Other information	—

The authentic text(s) of the decision, from which all confidential information has been removed, can be found at:

http://ec.europa.eu/community_law/state_aids/state_aids_texts_en.htm

Authorisation for State aid pursuant to Articles 107 and 108 of the TFEU

Cases where the Commission raises no objections

(Text with EEA relevance)

(2010/C 312/02)

Date of adoption of the decision	15.9.2010
Reference number of State Aid	N 221/09
Member State	Germany
Region	Nünchritz
Title (and/or name of the beneficiary)	Wacker Chemie GmbH
Legal basis	XR 31/07, XR 6/07, X 167/08
Type of measure	Individual aid
Objective	Regional development
Form of aid	Direct grant
Budget	Overall budget: EUR 97,5 million
Intensity	11,72 %
Duration (period)	2010-2013
Economic sectors	Chemical and pharmaceutical industry
Name and address of the granting authority	Sächsisches Staatsministerium für Wirtschaft und Arbeit Referat 31 Wilhelm-Buck-Straße 2 01097 Dresden DEUTSCHLAND
Other information	—

The authentic text(s) of the decision, from which all confidential information has been removed, can be found at:

http://ec.europa.eu/community_law/state_aids/state_aids_texts_en.htm

Date of adoption of the decision	12.10.2010
Reference number of State Aid	N 135/10
Member State	Austria
Region	Linz-Wels
Title (and/or name of the beneficiary)	Aid for the Remediation of a Contaminated Site in Linz (AT)
Legal basis	Umweltförderungsgesetz, BGBl. Nr. 185/1993, zuletzt geändert durch BGBl. I Nr. 52/2009 Altlastensanierungsgesetz, BGBl. Nr. 299/1989, zuletzt geändert durch BGBl. I Nr. 52/2009 Förderungsrichtlinien 2008 für die Altlastensanierung oder -sicherung

Type of measure	Individual aid
Objective	Environmental protection
Form of aid	Direct grant
Budget	Overall budget: EUR 146,27 million
Intensity	100 %
Duration (period)	1.1.2011-31.12.2020
Economic sectors	Steel
Name and address of the granting authority	Bundesministerium für Land- und Forstwirtschaft, Umwelt und Wasserwirtschaft Stubenbastei 5 1010 Wien ÖSTERREICH
Other information	—

The authentic text(s) of the decision, from which all confidential information has been removed, can be found at:

http://ec.europa.eu/community_law/state_aids/state_aids_texts_en.htm

Date of adoption of the decision	29.9.2010
Reference number of State Aid	N 178/10
Member State	Spain
Region	—
Title (and/or name of the beneficiary)	Compensación por servicio público asociada a un mecanismo de entrada en funcionamiento preferente para las centrales de carbón autóctono
Legal basis	Real Decreto 134/2010, de 23 de febrero, por el que se establece el procedimiento de resolución de restricciones por garantía de suministro y se modifica el Real Decreto 2019/1997, de 26 de diciembre, por el que se organiza y regula el mercado de producción de energía eléctrica. Borrador de Real Decreto por el que se modifica el Real Decreto 134/2010, de 23 de febrero, por el que se establece el procedimiento de resolución de restricciones por garantía de suministro y se modifica el Real Decreto 2019/1997, de 26 de diciembre, por el que se organiza y regula el mercado de producción de energía eléctrica.
Type of measure	Aid scheme
Objective	Services of general economic interest
Form of aid	Direct grant
Budget	Annual budget: EUR 400 million
Intensity	—
Duration (period)	Until 31.12.2014

Economic sectors	Electricity, gas and water supply, Coal
Name and address of the granting authority	Dirección General de Política Energética y Minas Ministerio de Industria, Turismo y Comercio Paseo de la Castellana, 160 28071 Madrid ESPAÑA
Other information	—

The authentic text(s) of the decision, from which all confidential information has been removed, can be found at:

http://ec.europa.eu/community_law/state_aids/state_aids_texts_en.htm

Date of adoption of the decision	28.6.2010
Reference number of State Aid	N 257/10
Member State	Denmark
Region	—
Title (and/or name of the beneficiary)	Third extension of the Danish guarantee scheme on new debt
Legal basis	Lov nr. 1003 af 10. oktober 2008 om finansiel stabilitet som ændret ved lov nr. 68 af 3. februar 2009 om ændring af lov om finansiel stabilitet.
Type of measure	Aid scheme
Objective	Aid to remedy serious disturbances in the economy
Form of aid	Guarantee
Budget	Overall budget: Around DKK 600 000 million
Intensity	—
Duration (period)	1.7.2010-31.12.2010
Economic sectors	Financial intermediation
Name and address of the granting authority	Finansiel Stabilitet A/S Amaliegade 3-5, 5 1256 København K DANMARK
Other information	—

The authentic text(s) of the decision, from which all confidential information has been removed, can be found at:

http://ec.europa.eu/community_law/state_aids/state_aids_texts_en.htm

Date of adoption of the decision	30.9.2010
Reference number of State Aid	N 407/10

Member State	Denmark
Region	—
Title (and/or name of the beneficiary)	Danish winding-up scheme
Legal basis	Lov om håndtering af nødlidende pengeinstitutter (lov nr. 721 af 25. juni 2010)
Type of measure	Aid scheme
Objective	Aid to remedy serious disturbances in the economy
Form of aid	Other forms of equity intervention, Soft loan, Guarantee
Budget	—
Intensity	—
Duration (period)	1.10.2010-31.12.2010
Economic sectors	Financial intermediation
Name and address of the granting authority	Økonomi- og Erhvervsministeriet Slotholmsgade 12 1216 København K DANMARK
Other information	—

The authentic text(s) of the decision, from which all confidential information has been removed, can be found at:

http://ec.europa.eu/community_law/state_aids/state_aids_texts_en.htm

Non-opposition to a notified concentration**(Case COMP/M.5963 — Econocom/ECS)****(Text with EEA relevance)**

(2010/C 312/03)

On 22 October 2010, the Commission decided not to oppose the above notified concentration and to declare it compatible with the common market. This decision is based on Article 6(1)(b) of Council Regulation (EC) No 139/2004. The full text of the decision is available only in French and will be made public after it is cleared of any business secrets it may contain. It will be available:

- in the merger section of the Competition website of the Commission (<http://ec.europa.eu/competition/mergers/cases/>). This website provides various facilities to help locate individual merger decisions, including company, case number, date and sectoral indexes,
- in electronic form on the EUR-Lex website (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/index.htm>) under document number 32010M5963. EUR-Lex is the on-line access to the European law.

Non-opposition to a notified concentration**(Case COMP/M.6001 — Aker/Lindsay Goldberg/EPAX Holding)****(Text with EEA relevance)**

(2010/C 312/04)

On 12 November 2010, the Commission decided not to oppose the above notified concentration and to declare it compatible with the common market. This decision is based on Article 6(1)(b) of Council Regulation (EC) No 139/2004. The full text of the decision is available only in English and will be made public after it is cleared of any business secrets it may contain. It will be available:

- in the merger section of the Competition website of the Commission (<http://ec.europa.eu/competition/mergers/cases/>). This website provides various facilities to help locate individual merger decisions, including company, case number, date and sectoral indexes,
- in electronic form on the EUR-Lex website (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/index.htm>) under document number 32010M6001. EUR-Lex is the on-line access to the European law.

Non-opposition to a notified concentration
(Case COMP/M.5936 — EADS DS/ATLAS/JV)

(Text with EEA relevance)

(2010/C 312/05)

On 28 October 2010, the Commission decided not to oppose the above notified concentration and to declare it compatible with the common market. This decision is based on Article 6(1)(b) of Council Regulation (EC) No 139/2004. The full text of the decision is available only in English and will be made public after it is cleared of any business secrets it may contain. It will be available:

- in the merger section of the Competition website of the Commission (<http://ec.europa.eu/competition/mergers/cases/>). This website provides various facilities to help locate individual merger decisions, including company, case number, date and sectoral indexes,
 - in electronic form on the EUR-Lex website (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/index.htm>) under document number 32010M5936. EUR-Lex is the on-line access to the European law.
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IV

(Notices)

NOTICES FROM EUROPEAN UNION INSTITUTIONS, BODIES, OFFICES AND AGENCIES

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Euro exchange rates ⁽¹⁾

16 November 2010

(2010/C 312/06)

1 euro =

Currency	Exchange rate	Currency	Exchange rate		
USD	US dollar	1,3612	AUD	Australian dollar	1,3874
JPY	Japanese yen	113,21	CAD	Canadian dollar	1,3817
DKK	Danish krone	7,4547	HKD	Hong Kong dollar	10,5546
GBP	Pound sterling	0,85100	NZD	New Zealand dollar	1,7655
SEK	Swedish krona	9,3753	SGD	Singapore dollar	1,7682
CHF	Swiss franc	1,3408	KRW	South Korean won	1 539,11
ISK	Iceland króna		ZAR	South African rand	9,5426
NOK	Norwegian krone	8,1670	CNY	Chinese yuan renminbi	9,0355
BGN	Bulgarian lev	1,9558	HRK	Croatian kuna	7,3941
CZK	Czech koruna	24,607	IDR	Indonesian rupiah	12 197,34
EEK	Estonian kroon	15,6466	MYR	Malaysian ringgit	4,2612
HUF	Hungarian forint	276,95	PHP	Philippine peso	59,566
LTL	Lithuanian litas	3,4528	RUB	Russian rouble	42,3215
LVL	Latvian lats	0,7092	THB	Thai baht	40,652
PLN	Polish zloty	3,9372	BRL	Brazilian real	2,3504
RON	Romanian leu	4,2925	MXN	Mexican peso	16,7370
TRY	Turkish lira	1,9801	INR	Indian rupee	61,6800

⁽¹⁾ Source: reference exchange rate published by the ECB.

NOTICES FROM MEMBER STATES

Information communicated by Member States regarding closure of fisheries

(2010/C 312/07)

In accordance with Article 35(3) of Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 of 20 November 2009 establishing a Community control system for ensuring compliance with the rules of the common fisheries policy ⁽¹⁾, a decision has been taken to close the fishery as set down in the following table:

Date and time of closure	21.8.2010
Duration	21.8.2010-31.12.2010
Member State	Denmark
Stock or Group of stocks	LIN/03.
Species	Ling (<i>Molva molva</i>)
Zone	IIIa; EU waters of IIIb, IIIc and IIId
Type(s) of fishing vessels	—
Reference number	552777

Web link to the decision of the Member State:

http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/fishing_rules/tacs/index_en.htm

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 343, 22.12.2009, p. 1.

Information communicated by Member States regarding closure of fisheries

(2010/C 312/08)

In accordance with Article 35(3) of Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 of 20 November 2009 establishing a Community control system for ensuring compliance with the rules of the common fisheries policy ⁽¹⁾, a decision has been taken to close the fishery as set down in the following table:

Date and time of closure	30.9.2010
Duration	30.9.2010-31.12.2010
Member State	France
Stock or Group of stocks	GFB/89-
Species	Forkbeards (<i>Phycis blennoides</i>)
Zone	Community waters and waters not under the sovereignty or jurisdiction of third countries of VIII and IX
Type(s) of fishing vessels	—
Reference number	664718

Web link to the decision of the Member State:

http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/fishing_rules/tacs/index_en.htm

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 343, 22.12.2009, p. 1.

Information communicated by Member States regarding closure of fisheries

(2010/C 312/09)

In accordance with Article 35(3) of Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 of 20 November 2009 establishing a Community control system for ensuring compliance with the rules of the common fisheries policy ⁽¹⁾, a decision has been taken to close the fishery as set down in the following table:

Date and time of closure	11.8.2010
Duration	11.8.2010-31.12.2010
Member State	Portugal
Stock or Group of stocks	ALF/3X14-
Species	Alfonsinos (<i>Beryx</i> spp.)
Zone	Community waters and waters not under the sovereignty or jurisdiction of third countries of III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX, X, XII and XIV
Type(s) of fishing vessels	—
Reference number	562857

Web link to the decision of the Member State:

http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/fishing_rules/tacs/index_en.htm

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 343, 22.12.2009, p. 1.

Information communicated by Member States regarding closure of fisheries

(2010/C 312/10)

In accordance with Article 35(3) of Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 of 20 November 2009 establishing a Community control system for ensuring compliance with the rules of the common fisheries policy ⁽¹⁾, a decision has been taken to close the fishery as set down in the following table:

Date and time of closure	30.9.2010
Duration	30.9.2010-31.12.2010
Member State	France
Stock or Group of stocks	HER/5B6ANB
Species	Herring (<i>Clupea harengus</i>)
Zone	EU and international waters of Vb, VIb and VIaN
Type(s) of fishing vessels	—
Reference number	664718

Web link to the decision of the Member State:

http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/fishing_rules/tacs/index_en.htm

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 343, 22.12.2009, p. 1.

Information communicated by Member States regarding closure of fisheries

(2010/C 312/11)

In accordance with Article 35(3) of Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 of 20 November 2009 establishing a Community control system for ensuring compliance with the rules of the common fisheries policy ⁽¹⁾, a decision has been taken to close the fishery as set down in the following table:

Date and time of closure	6.10.2010
Duration	6.10.2010-31.12.2010
Member State	Portugal
Stock or Group of stocks	ANF/8C3411
Species	Anglerfish (<i>Lophiidae</i>)
Zone	VIIIc, IX and X; EU waters of CECAF 34.1.1
Type(s) of fishing vessels	—
Reference number	656215

Web link to the decision of the Member State:

http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/fishing_rules/tacs/index_en.htm

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 343, 22.12.2009, p. 1.

Information communicated by Member States regarding closure of fisheries

(2010/C 312/12)

In accordance with Article 35(3) of Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 of 20 November 2009 establishing a Community control system for ensuring compliance with the rules of the common fisheries policy ⁽¹⁾, a decision has been taken to close the fishery as set down in the following table:

Date and time of closure	28.9.2010
Duration	28.9.2010-31.12.2010
Member State	The Netherlands
Stock or Group of stocks	BLI/245-
Species	Blue ling (<i>Molva dypterygia</i>)
Zone	Community waters and waters not under the sovereignty or jurisdiction of third countries of II, IV and V
Type(s) of fishing vessels	—
Reference number	634062

Web link to the decision of the Member State:

http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/fishing_rules/tacs/index_en.htm

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 343, 22.12.2009, p. 1.

V

(Announcements)

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

EUROPEAN PERSONNEL SELECTION OFFICE (EPSO)

NOTICE OF OPEN COMPETITION

(2010/C 312/13)

The European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO) is organising the following open competition:

EPSO/AST/111/10 — Assistants (AST 1) in the secretarial field in the following languages: (DA) Danish, (DE) German, (EN) English, (ES) Spanish, (FR) French, (MT) Maltese, (NL) Dutch, (PT) Portuguese, (SV) Swedish.

The competition notice is published in Official Journal C 312 A of 17 November 2010 in Danish, German, English, Spanish, French, Maltese, Dutch, Portuguese and Swedish only.

Further details can be found on the EPSO website: <http://eu-careers.eu>

OTHER ACTS

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Publication of an application pursuant to Article 6(2) of Council Regulation (EC) No 510/2006 on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs

(2010/C 312/14)

This publication confers the right to object to the application pursuant to Article 7 of Council Regulation (EC) No 510/2006 ⁽¹⁾. Statements of objection must reach the Commission within six months from the date of this publication.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006**'BŒUF DE VENDÉE'****EC No: FR-PGI-0005-0592-08.03.2007****PGI (X) PDO ()****1. Name:**

'Bœuf de Vendée'

2. Member State or third country:

France

3. Description of the agricultural product or foodstuff:**3.1. Type of product:**

Class 1.1: Fresh meat (and offal)

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

The animals in question are heifers, young cows or castrated males with a minimum carcass weight of 380 kg, conformation (S) EUR, degree of fat cover 2 or 3, and the age of which at slaughter must be between 30 and 96 months.

Animals selected to produce 'Bœuf de Vendée' are thoroughbred or crossbred beef breeds, or crossbreeds of mixed breed mothers with beef breed fathers.

The application relates to fresh meat sold in the form of carcasses, quarters or cuts.

'Bœuf de Vendée' meat is characterised by a pure red colour, a tender and soft texture and a refined and pleasant beef taste.

pH and temperature are measured 24 hours after slaughter, and must be below pH 6 and 6 °C respectively. The pH and temperature criteria are essential for beginning a long maturation period. If they are not complied with, the meat preserves badly and has an unpleasant taste.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 93, 31.3.2006, p. 12.

Each 'Bœuf de Vendée' carcass or part-carcass is accompanied as far as the butcher's counter by a guarantee of origin certificate (Certificat de Garantie d'Origine, CGO) informing the consumer of the category to which the animal belongs: heifer, cow or castrated male.

3.3. *Raw materials (for processed products only):*

N.A.

3.4. *Feed (for products of animal origin only):*

Natural breastfeeding is mandatory from birth to weaning. Calves are weaned at between six and nine months. After weaning, the animals can graze in pastures depending on forage availability.

During the summer, use of supplements based on forage and concentrates is possible.

The origin of the forage is strictly regulated: at least 80 % comes from the holding, the rest must come from the PGI area. This has arisen as a result of local and traditional practices and as a result of the particular quality of vendéen forage. The gentle influence of the oceanic climate combined with very high levels of sunlight allows more forage to be harvested, at an earlier stage and of good quality in terms of energy and protein content. The supply of the most suitable forage for the requirements of 'Bœuf de Vendée' is thus guaranteed.

Cycles alternating between pastures and sheds are mandatory, and there must be a minimum of two in the lifecycle of the animal. The cycle is as follows: sheds in the winter and pastures in the summer from April to October. Time spent in pastures is equal to at least four months.

The annual average overall stocking rate must not be in excess of two livestock units per hectare of principal forage area (HASFP) for the animals, and forage areas reserved exclusively for breeding cattle.

3.5. *Specific steps in production that must take place in the identified geographical area:*

Calving, rearing and fattening must take place on a single holding.

3.6. *Specific rules concerning slicing, grating, packaging, etc.:*

N.A.

3.7. *Specific rules concerning labelling:*

Product sold under the name 'Bœuf de Vendée'. The PGI logo will appear on the label, as well as the words 'Indication Géographique Protégée'. The category (castrated male, cow or heifer) must appear on the guarantee of origin certificates which accompany the carcass or cuts to the butcher's counter.

4. Concise definition of the geographical area:

The geographical area of 'Bœuf de Vendée' PGI comprises the whole of the Vendée department, as well as the small natural regions neighbouring the department which have very similar agricultural, geographical, historical, social and cultural characteristics.

The geographical area in question is as follows:

— department of Vendée in its entirety,

— department of Loire Atlantique, all the municipalities in the following cantons: Aigrefeuille, Bouaye, Bourgneuf en Retz, Clisson, Légé, Le Loroux Bottereau, Le Pellerin, Machecoul, Paimboeuf, Pornic, Rezé, Saint Père en Retz, Saint Philbert de Grand Lieu, Vallet, Vertou, Vertou-vignoble,

- department of Maine et Loire, all the municipalities in the following cantons: Beaupréau, Chalonnes sur Loire, Champtoceaux, Chemillé, Cholet, Cholet 1, Cholet 2, Cholet 3, Doué La Fontaine, Gennes, Les Ponts de Cé, Montfaucon, Montreuil Bellay, Montrevault, Saint Florent le Vieil, Thouarcé, Vihiers,

- department of Deux-Sèvres, all the municipalities in the following cantons: Cerisay, Coulonges, Mauléon, Moncoutant.

5. **Link with geographical area:**

5.1. *Specificity of the geographical area:*

(a) Natural factors

The Vendée benefits from particular climatic and geological conditions: its climate is characterised by a marked oceanic influence and an average annual sun exposure rate which, at 2 100 hours per year, is well above the national average, very conducive to forage production, and ensures that animals can graze in pastures for long periods. Forming the southern border of the American Massif, the Vendée's geology is characterised by relatively deep, loamy soils, which are also very favourable for forage production.

(b) Agronomic factors

The Vendée is characterised in particular by its forage production capacity, as a result of its specific climate and geological conditions. The early rise in temperature, in late April to early May, as well as plenty of sun in spring, enable the production of wilted silage regularly comprising more than 30 % dry matter, and of early hay at the beginning of June with excellent nutritional qualities (energy and nitrogen content). The first yields of these annual forage crops are often in excess of five tonnes of dry matter per hectare. These same conditions also enable fodder maize to be planted in the spring under excellent conditions to ensure a good, regular crop. Lastly, as a result of its latitude, the Vendée regularly enjoys overall temperatures which are sufficient to ensure a good maturation of maize for silage, i.e. with a dry matter rate in excess of 33 % at harvest and a good grain content of over 50 %. Yields are regularly around 11 tonnes of dry matter per hectare for dry crops and 15 tonnes for irrigated crops.

This guaranteed production of a large yield of energy- and protein-rich crops is sufficient to meet animals' requirements from birth to slaughter. It is this availability which has enabled the vendéen breeder-fattener system, characterised by extensive forage consumption, to develop better than elsewhere.

(c) Historical and human factors

'Bœuf de Vendée' has been part of the vendéen farmer's life since the earliest times. Among the first domestic species, it was first used for its meat and milk, then to pull carts.

'Bœuf de Vendée' formed part of the history of sharecropping, then of tenant farming, and was one of the basic components of all agricultural leases for the assessment of rents. Cattle rearing is thus an intrinsic part of vendéen agriculture. The expertise of vendéen farmers, and particularly their competence with the breeder-fattener system, constitute an essential element of the link between 'Bœuf de Vendée' and its origin, as described in paragraph 5.2(b).

The presence of 'Bœuf de Vendée' at the region's numerous fairs from the end of the 19th century resulted in trade connections developing with all the major consumer centres in western France, extending as far as Paris.

Intrinsically linked to the historical presence of the breeder-fattener cattle rearing system in the Vendée, the extensive network of abattoir facilities located very close to holdings is a specific feature of the Vendée.

5.2. Specificity of the product:

The specificity of the product is based on a quality determined by a particular expertise, as well as on the reputation of 'Bœuf de Vendée'.

(a) A distinctive quality

'Bœuf de Vendée' takes the form after slaughter of very heavy and very homogenous carcasses, typical of the region. The carcasses are, on average, 120 kg heavier than those produced in all other beef-producing regions in France.

The animals are born, reared and fattened on a single holding in the PGI area. The finishing period for the animals is a minimum of four months, enabling optimum fat cover to be achieved: grades 2 and 3. The degree of fat cover is managed by appropriate dosage of the energy and protein supplies in feed rations during the finishing period, which lasts at least four months. To this end, each animal is graded depending on its degree of fat cover at the beginning of the finishing period. The animals are slaughtered when they reach grade 2 or 3.

Heavy carcasses (more than 450 kg on average) of at least 380 kg provide thick and tender cuts which are particularly sought after by traditional butchers and beef connoisseurs.

(b) Another characteristic: human expertise

Farmers' expertise is an essential element of the link between 'Bœuf de Vendée' and its origin.

Systematically ensuring that control is retained over the entire production process from breeding to slaughter, breeder-fatteners typify the production systems which are so specific to the Vendée. 'All animals born in the Vendée are fattened there' is a common maxim. Cattle rearing is at the heart of an entire tradition in this area, giving rise to a technique which is now known and revered well beyond France's borders. The vendéen system is thus characterised by the fattening of animals on the holding on which they were born with forage produced on that holding. Today, a vendéen breeder-fattener holding comprises an average of 60 suckler cows over 70 ha.

Combining the breeding and fattening processes on the same site offers technical, sanitary, economic and commercial advantages, which have beneficial repercussions on the quality of the finished product.

Farmers exclusively use animals bred from beef breeds (sucklers) or from beef breed crossbreeds. These animals would in no way fulfil their potential without an abundant supply of high-quality (energy and nitrogen content) feedstuffs. The climate and soil quality guarantee a high quantity and quality of forage with extensive autonomy on the part of holdings. Farmers' expertise in producing forage and cereals, combining them depending on their nutritional value and the physiological development of the animals, from birth to slaughter, is the embodiment of the 'Bœuf de Vendée' technique.

Calves are raised on their mothers' milk until they are weaned at around eight months. Thereafter, for at least two years, they follow a cycle where the winter is spent in sheds and the summer from April to November in pastures. Food rations essentially comprise pasture grass and roughage. The finishing period is spent either grazing or trough-fed.

Depending on the condition of the animal at the beginning of the fattening period, the farmer chooses a feed duration and method which will result in the best possible product, with the desired, but not an excessive, level of fat. Every fortnight, the farmer examines the animal to assess the progress of the process and, ultimately, to decide on the optimum slaughter date.

The breeder-fattener system used in the region is a local practice which results in high carcass weights and an optimum carcass result in terms of fat quantity.

(c) Reputation

In 1878, the Batiot brothers introduced the Charolais breed to the Vendée for its beneficial impact on carcass quality and haulage capacity. The development of the cities of Nantes, Angers and Paris created a trade network and the reputation of the 'Vendée fattening technique' significantly improved the reputation of this beef breed.

With more than 167 000 suckler cows, the Vendée is one of Europe's three leading production regions. In France, the Vendée is now the leading beef-producing department. The Vendée alone accounts for more than 5 % of national production with less than 1 % of agricultural surface area.

Artisanal butchers, veritable connoisseurs, choose this type of product to satisfy their most demanding customers. This type of carcass provides them with tender, juicy, thick and flavoursome pieces (particularly rib and fore-rib) for the enjoyment of their customers.

5.3. *Causal link between the geographical area and the quality or characteristics of the product (for PDO) or a specific quality, the reputation or other characteristic of the product (for PGI):*

The combination of all the natural, climatic and agronomic characteristics of the Vendée resulting in an abundant and high-quality forage production, combined with the expertise of farmers, gives rise to the production of heavy carcasses, which are the great speciality of the Vendée.

The specificity of the product in relation to its geographical origin lies in the combination of the agronomic, soil and climatic conditions which characterise the Vendée. These characteristics enable full advantage to be taken of the pastures, as suckler herds can graze until calves are weaned at eight months, and also enable the cultivation of forage and cereals which are high in energy and protein in deep, loamy soils thanks to a sunny and warm climate favourable to the photosynthesis required for full maturity of grasses and forage maize in particular. This abundant supply of forage and its high quality constitutes the specific feature of the feeding of 'Bœuf de Vendée', and, combined with the selection by vendéen farmers of the best animals, slaughtered in abattoirs close to holdings, results in the production of heavy carcasses with an optimum degree of fat cover.

The tender, juicy and flavoursome meat of 'Bœuf de Vendée' is obtained as a result of the attention devoted to each production stage.

Drawing on their expertise, farmers select females or castrated males. Uncastrated males and young bovines are excluded, as well as all animals which are less than 30 months old. The fattening of the animals over a relatively long period is conducive to the development of fat infiltrations in muscular tissues (intramuscular fat) which give the meat its marbled character and prevent it from drying out during cooking, unlike 'dry' lean meats. The tender, juicy and melt-in-the-mouth nature of the meat is obtained in this way.

After slaughter, only the best carcasses are selected for the 'Bœuf de Vendée' scheme. Carcass quality, degree of fat cover and meat colour are examined (visual and manual inspection) by a registered inspector. This selection stage is an essential step in ensuring that a tender, juicy and flavoursome meat is obtained. Carcasses which meet all the criteria are eligible as 'Bœuf de Vendée', and a guarantee of origin certificate is issued.

The minimum maturation time of 10 days guarantees the tenderness of the meat.

These important criteria are decisive for artisanal butchers and consumers. They are the basis on which 'Bœuf de Vendée' has acquired a solid reputation among the beef products available in the region.

As a result of the tender, juicy and flavoursome nature of 'Bœuf de Vendée', butchers and consumers consistently source regular supplies from the scheme's distributors. This loyalty is borne out in statistical terms: 60 % of the group's outlets have remain unchanged since the scheme was launched in the early 2000s.

'Bœuf de Vendée' is therefore a veritable chain of expertise where the success of all stages is indispensable: production (forage production, rearing and selection), slaughter, cutting process and distribution, in the service of quality and in testament to its origins.

Reference to publication of the specification:

(Article 5(7) of Regulation (EC) No 510/2006)

<http://www.inao.gouv.fr/repository/editeur/pdf/CDC-IGP/boeuf-de-vendee.pdf>

Publication of an application pursuant to Article 6(2) of Council Regulation (EC) No 510/2006 on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs

(2010/C 312/15)

This publication confers the right to object to the application pursuant to Article 7 of Council Regulation (EC) No 510/2006 ⁽¹⁾. Statements of objection must reach the Commission within six months from the date of this publication.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006

‘ΞΥΓΑΛΟ ΣΗΤΕΙΑΣ’ (XYGALO SITEIAS)/‘ΞΙΓΑΛΟ ΣΗΤΕΙΑΣ’ (XIGALO SITEIAS)

EC No: EL-PDO-0005-0731-24.11.2008

PGI () PDO (X)

1. Name:

‘Ξύγαλο Σητείας’ (Xygalos Siteias)/‘Ξίγαλο Σητείας’ (Xigalos Siteias)

2. Member State or third country:

Greece

3. Description of the agricultural product or foodstuff:

3.1. Type of product:

Class 1.3. Cheese

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

Xygalos Siteias is a product of milk acidification. It is white, pasty and/or granular in texture and skinless. It tastes fresh, sourish, slightly salty and has a pleasant characteristic aroma. It has a maximum moisture content of 75 % and a maximum salt content of 1,5 %, whilst its fat in dry matter ranges from 33 % to 46 % and it has a minimum protein content of 31,5 %.

Xygalos Siteias is produced from goat's milk or sheep's milk, or a mixture of both if the quantity of goat's milk is insufficient, with the fat content of the sheep's milk adjusted, so that the fat content of the final product remains under 46 % (in dry matter). The milk mixture is then pasteurised (optional) and cooled to 25 °C. Salt (NaCl) is added to a maximum of 2 % by weight, as are harmless acidic bacterial cultures and small amounts of natural rennet from animals' stomachs (mainly if the milk has been pasteurised). Then the milk is left to ferment naturally in food-grade containers that are kept stationary and covered, but not hermetically sealed, for seven to ten days at a temperature of 15-20 °C. The excess fat and butter are removed from the surface of the curd. Ripening continues in these containers for approximately one month at a temperature of 10-15 °C, with no stirring of the curds for the entire duration of the acidification-ripening process. Finally the product is separated from the whey that is concentrated at the bottom of the containers, placed in food-grade casks and refrigerated at a temperature of under 4 °C. If the milk has not been pasteurised, Xygalos Siteias should remain refrigerated for at least two months before it is released for consumption so that checks can be carried out to ensure that the product is free from any undesirable micro-organisms.

3.3. Raw materials (for processed products only):

The raw material used to prepare Xygalos Siteias is fresh milk from healthy sheep and goats that are reared in the traditional manner within the (former) District of Siteia, are entirely suited to the particular climate and flora of the region and stem exclusively from goat breeds indigenous to Greece and local sheep breeds (Siteia breed mainly, Psiloriti and Sfakia breeds and any cross-breeds thereof).

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 93, 31.3.2006, p. 12.

The milk should be the product of milking at least ten days after the animal has given birth, after which either the farmer transports the milk to the cheese dairy or it is refrigerated in milk chillers and collected frequently (usually under the cheese dairy's responsibility) in a suitable vehicle or refrigerated tank.

3.4. *Feed (for products of animal origin only):*

The sheep and goats are reared extensively or, at most, semi-intensively in the traditional manner, in the lowlands and middle-mountain areas not exceeding 1 000 metres. In October and November (when the newborns are suckled), due to the sparsity of natural vegetation and the animals' increased feeding needs, olive leaves and dried fodder (e.g. clover, hay, maize) are used at a rate of 30-40 % depending on the year.

From December to around April (higher milk production, after the newborns have been weaned), they feed on the local wild flora (grasses and bushes, mostly aromatic and indigenous), which is more abundant during winter and spring rainfall (sage (*Salvia fruticosa* & *Salvia pomifera*), rock-rose ('aladania' — *Cistus creticus*), heather (*Erica manipuliflora*), Jerusalem sage (*Phlomis lanata*), spiny broom (*Calycotome villosa*), oak (*Quercus coccifera*) and others). Right up to the beginning of March, these are supplemented by branches and leaves left over from the annual pruning and cleaning-up of olive trees. During this winter period, dried fodder is also supplied in quantities usually not exceeding 20 % in total so that the animals' needs are covered during the days of heavy rainfall, snow and frost.

From May onwards and throughout the summer (reduced milk production), most flocks feed on various dried cereals originating in the area's fields, sown specifically for this purpose by the farmers, and graze on grasslands covered with local flora. Depending on the year, dried fodder from other areas (e.g. hay, clover, maize) may be given by way of supplement, at a rate of 30-40 %.

3.5. *Specific steps in production that must take place in the identified geographical area:*

Both the production and the processing of the milk, and the production of the Xygalo Siteias, must take place within the defined geographical area.

3.6. *Specific rules concerning slicing, grating, packaging, etc.:*

Packaging is required to take place within the defined area in order to safeguard the quality of the product (which deteriorates when transported unpacked), because of the greatly increased risk of the bulk product being exposed to the ambient air, which results in contamination by undesirable micro-organisms that diminish its organoleptic characteristics and considerably reduce its, already limited, shelf-life (maximum of six months after production).

Xygalo Siteias is packaged for sale in food-grade containers with a maximum capacity of 5 kg. The relatively large 5 kg containers are intended for the catering industry, where larger quantities are consumed immediately, so the product does not deteriorate.

The capacity has to be restricted so that the product is consumed by the final purchaser within a reasonable period of time after the packaging has been opened and none of its particular organoleptic qualities is lost. Being a soft spreadable cheese, Xygalo Siteias does not have its own protective coating in the same way as hard cheeses.

3.7. *Specific rules concerning labelling:*

The labelling of the product on the packaging must show in clearly visible and legible type:

- the product name 'ΞΥΓΑΛΟ ΣΗΤΕΙΑΣ' or 'ΞΙΓΑΛΟ ΣΗΤΕΙΑΣ' (and/or in Latin characters 'XYGALO SITEIAS' or 'XIGALO SITEIAS') followed by the words 'Protected Designation of Origin', or the equivalent in (an)other language(s) using the Latin or other script;
- the name and address of both the production and packaging enterprises.

Where raw (non-pasteurised) milk is used in the production process, the packaging should also bear the special marking prescribed in the relevant national and Community legislation.

4. Concise definition of the geographical area:

The region in which Xygalos cheese is produced comprises the territories of the former (pre-1997) district of Siteia in the Prefecture of Lassithi in Crete, which now (since 2008) correspond to the Municipalities of Siteia, Makry Yialos, Itanos, Lefki and all their municipal districts. This is essentially a peninsula comprising the whole of the eastern end of Crete, which has been isolated by nature from the rest of the island by the Thrypti and Orno mountains to the west, and is lapped by three areas of sea to the north, south and east.

5. Link with the geographical area:

5.1. Specificity of the geographical area:

Geological relief — Climate

Siteia district covers an area of 786 km². It comprises mostly middle-mountain terrain (altitude of 300-1 000 m with small plateaux), with less than 20 % of lowland (under 300 m) and few upland areas (1 000-1 500 m); the relief is devoid of the sudden projections seen in western and central Crete and this allows sheep and goats to be reared in most places (mainly in the middle-mountain areas and so to a lesser extent in the lowlands).

The Siteia region has lower rainfall, stronger winds and higher temperatures than elsewhere in Crete at the same altitude.

The average annual rainfall never exceeds 1 100 mm anywhere; in the middle-mountain and central areas it ranges from 500 mm to 800 mm, in the north-east and south from 300 mm to 500 mm and on the south-eastern side it is less than 300 mm.

The annual average temperature on the north coast is 18,67 °C and it is at least 1 °C higher in the south, with an annual temperature span of 17 °C. In the middle-mountain livestock-rearing areas at an altitude of some 600 m, the expected annual average temperature is around 16,50 °C, with a temperature span of around 20 °C. The average temperatures at the same altitude in western Crete are 1 °C to 1,5 °C lower.

The prevailing winds are north-westerly and they are stronger in July and August, thus preventing very high temperatures during midday hours. Southerlies blow occasionally in the winter months and spring, making the climate milder and warmer.

The number of hours of sunshine is particularly high, ranging from 2 700 hours per annum in the north to over 3 000 hours in the south (highest in Greece).

Flora — Pastures

This particular relief and climate also give rise to special flora. Olives (*Olea europaea*) are cultivated extensively up to an altitude of around 600 m and vines (*Vitis vinifera*) are cultivated up to some 1 000 m. More than 700 plant species have been reported in the Siteia area to date, compared with around 1 800 species for the whole of Crete, which is over 10 times larger in area.

Brushwood is the main type of vegetation in non-cultivated areas, with large areas covered with bushy plants, such as thorny burnet (*Sarcopoterium spinosum*), broom (*Genista acanthoclada*), thyme (*Thymus capitatus*), sage (*Salvia fruticosa* & *Salvia pomifera*) and Cretan ebony (the indigenous *Ebenus cretica*).

The areas with the greatest concentration of indigenous plants are precisely those with the most, essentially free-range, sheep and goats, which feed on the rich and varied indigenous and aromatic plants, and bushy and herbaceous vegetation.

Tall bushy vegetation (maquis) predominates on rocky slopes, accessible primarily to goats and to a lesser extent to sheep, and includes lentisc (*Pistacia lentiscus*), Kermes Oak ('prinos' — *Quercus coccifera*), wild olive ('argoulida' — *Olea europaea sylvestris*), wild carob (*Ceratonia siliqua*) and spiny broom (*Calycotome villosa*).

Sheep and goat breeds — rearing method — the milk produced

There is a distinct local breed, the 'Siteia sheep', which is a subphylum of the Aegean Islands' small mountain-breed sheep. It is suited to areas with limited vegetation and rainfall, like Siteia, and is not reared for milk alone, but also for meat and wool.

Siteia sheep comprise the majority of the sheep reared in the Siteia area (28 000-30 000 animals in 1995-2000). Over the past 30 years, a smaller number of the Psiloriti and Sfakia breeds have also been reared; they are also suited to middle-mountain conditions. These breeds are also cross-bred with Siteia sheep to increase the latter's milk yield. Siteia sheep are perfectly suited to their rearing environment; this is demonstrated by their resistance to the outbreak of piroplasmiasis (affecting nearly one in 1 000 animals per year, of which only 25 % of cases are fatal). According to recent studies, Siteia sheep yield a relatively smaller quantity of milk per animal, i.e. 106-115 kg per annum per ewe on semi-intensive farms and 72-80 kg on extensive farms in Siteia, whereas the average yield for the whole of Crete is 110-150 kg and 78-98 kg per annum per ewe respectively.

The goats in the Siteia region (18 000-20 000 animals) are breeds indigenous to Greece that are perfectly adapted to inaccessible areas with limited shrub-like vegetation.

The sheep and goats in the Siteia area are reared in the traditional manner on extensive or, at most, semi-intensive farms, less on lowlands and more in middle-mountain areas (altitude of 300 m-1 000 m), on the basis of a repeated annual rearing cycle (see also paragraph 3.4) and on grasslands with a multitude of indigenous and aromatic plants that give the milk particularly tasty characteristics. Sheep and goat reproduction occurs by natural mating within the flocks, meaning that the characteristics of the local breeds are maintained.

Extensive farming means farming where the sheep and goats graze in open 'extended' pastures, feeding on the area's vegetation (self-seeded or sown following human intervention). A number of herds change pastures with the seasons and are brought down to lower altitudes during the winter months (November to April). A number of herds change pastures with the seasons and are brought down to lower altitudes during the winter months (November to April). To protect and monitor the animals, traditional enclosures are used which are usually fenced off with stone walls and roofless. Semi-intensive farming is where there are roofed areas where the sheep and goats can stay and be fed and milked, whenever necessary during the cold winter months; for the best part of the year, however, they graze in open pastures owing to the mild climate of the Siteia area. Over the past 20 years, many farmers have built housing and milking installations, moving towards semi-intensive farming, combining the positive elements of extensive and intensive farming methods.

The Siteia region's tradition in livestock-rearing and cheese-making

From a historical point of view, since as early as Minoan times the Siteia region has always been and still is associated with its inhabitants' developed livestock-rearing and cheese-making tradition. The following evidence and testimony are cited by way of indication:

- ceramic vessels for cheese preparation, perforated near the base, excavated from a Minoan house in Palaiokastro (capital of the present-day Municipality of Itanos) in Siteia;
- coins from Praissos, the most powerful town in the region in classical and Hellenistic times, portraying a she-goat, which is an indication of its value to the region's economy;
- written agreements, at least for the years from 1347 up to and including 1450, relating to the frequent loading in Siteia harbour of cheeses bound for Venice, Egypt (Alexandria), Cyprus and elsewhere;
- reference to Siteia as one of the seven regions in Crete in which sheep and goat-rearing flourished in the 13th to 14th century;
- reference to 'good cheese' being the main product of the Siteia region in the 19th century;
- the Siteia district's constant position as one of Crete's eight livestock-rearing districts in the 19th and 20th centuries and the production, in absolute terms, of the greatest quantity of cheese and wool out of all Crete's districts in both 1847 and 1929;
- reference to production of hard and soft cheese, butter and wool in statistical data on the Prefecture of Lassithi (whose largest district is Siteia) for the years 1937 to 1938;
- production of Xygalo in Siteia, mainly in the hot summer months from the small quantity of low-fat sheep's and goat's milk by both housewives in the home and livestock farmers in stone huts

called *mitat*. They used special ceramic vessels, small earthenware jars (called *kouroupia*), which had a hole in the lower part so that the whey could be removed without breaking the supernatant curd:

- the written reference to Xygalos as being a product of Siteia from as early as 1957 and being produced in at least one of the middle-mountain farming settlements (Mysirgio in the former commune of Mitato, *mitato* meaning cheese dairy in the Cretan dialect);
- the setting-up in the 1970s of the first modern milk-processing unit in the Siteia area;
- the fact that there are now two units operating in the Siteia area that have a code number as Approved Installations for the Production of Milk and Dairy Products and produce traditional dairy and cheese products on the basis of a long-established tradition and the special milk-processing methods applied by the region's livestock farmers and cheese-makers.

5.2. Specificity of the product:

Xygalos Siteias is a special product prepared on the basis of the long-established tradition of livestock farming and cheese-making in the geographical region of Siteia, using special manufacturing technology and milk with special characteristics attributable to local breeds of goat and sheep, the traditional rearing method, and the climate and flora.

Xygalos Siteias is described by well-known Greek tasting experts as 'a nice little cheese with a pasty texture produced exclusively in Siteia; it has a rich and slightly sour flavour and is fresh'. It found its place on supermarket shelves and restaurant menus in Eastern Crete as early as the beginning of the 1990s, whilst since at least 1999 it has been specifically described as a special dish in (traditional, but also gourmet) restaurants in Athens and Thessaloniki.

On the internet, CONCREDED (Conserving Cretan Diet — an initiative backed by the Regional Authorities of Crete), which certifies restaurants that offer dishes in line with the Cretan diet, recommends Xygalos as an excellent hors d'oeuvre going by the name of 'Xygalos Steiako'.

Differentiation from other spreadable cheeses

The density of Xygalos (75 % moisture) is the same as that of Galotyri cheese from Epirus and Western Greece and Katiki cheese from Domokos, but it is less salty. Kopanisti cheese from the Cyclades and Anevato cheese are denser (maximum moisture content of 56 % and 60 % respectively) and also have more salt than Xygalos. The density of Pihtogalos cheese from Hania lies between the above (maximum moisture content of 65 %).

The salt in Xygalos is added and dissolves in the milk prior to its acidification, which results in the final drained product having a milder, less salty taste. In the case of the other products (Kopanisti, Anevato, Pihtogalos, Katiki), the salt is added to the drained cheese curd after the whey has been strained. Only in the case of Galotyri is the salt added to the milk, but 24 hours after it has started to acidify.

The feature that greatly distinguishes Xygalos from other similar products is its lower fat content, which (in dry matter) must be a minimum of 33 % and a maximum of 46 % by weight.

In contrast, in the case of Hania's Pihtogalos, the minimum fat content is much higher (50 % by weight) and it is 40 %, 43 % or even 45 % in the case of the other cheeses. The low fat content is achieved by using a high proportion of goat's milk and/or removing/skimming fat from the milk or the actual Xygalos during its production. There is no equivalent skimming stage in the methods used to produce the other, similar, cheeses, which undergo stages of homogenisation instead.

5.3. Causal link between the geographical area and the quality or characteristics of the product (for PDO) or a specific quality, the reputation or other characteristic of the product (for PGI):

In summary, there are four main points that are crucial to the quality and characteristics of Xygalos Siteias that bind the product to the geographical area (environment and people) and, at the same time, differentiate it from other similar products:

- the use of high-quality milk produced exclusively from local breeds (Siteia sheep and, to a lesser extent, Psiloriti and Sfakia sheep or crosses between them, and goats indigenous to Greece) reared using traditional livestock-farming methods (extensive or, at most, semi-intensive) within the

defined area and suited to its particular climate (low rainfall, large number of hours of sunshine, relatively high average temperature, but without significant fluctuations in the day, strong winds, etc.);

- existence of a population of indigenous and aromatic plants on natural grasslands in the designated area which livestock farmers use to feed sheep and goats, making optimum use on the basis of their experience of the geology of the terrain in all seasons of the year, the special climatic features, and the particular flora of the region, which contributes to the milk production and imparts a special quality and pleasant organoleptic characteristics to Xygalo Siteias;
- use of special technology to produce Xygalo Siteias, the main features of which are as follows:
 - control of fat content by skimming either the milk at the outset or the product after the first acidification stage, so that the product is kept as 'light' as possible;
 - addition of salt to all the milk prior to acidification, resulting in its minimally salty taste;
 - not stirring the curd at any point during the acidification/ripening process, which takes place in the natural environment, so that the microflora required for natural fermentation develop; and
 - separation of the Xygalo Siteias from the whey performed successfully (in terms of time and quality) after ripening, so that the curd splits as little as possible;
- survival of the ancient name of the basic product of natural milk acidification 'Οξύγαλα' (Oxygala or acid milk), slightly corrupted in the local dialect of Siteia to 'Ξύγαλο' (Xygalo), whose production method is extraordinarily close to that in Hellenistic and Roman times. Similar products now have names that are quite different, whilst other dairy products have a far shorter history in the geographical area of Crete, and Greece in general.

Reference to publication of the specification:

(Article 5(7) of Regulation (EC) No 510/2006)

<http://www.minagric.gr/greek/data/Προδιαγραφές%20προϊόντος%20ΞΥΓΑΛΟ%20ΣΗΤΕΙΑΣ.doc>

OTHER ACTS

European Commission

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