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⁽¹⁾ Text with EEA relevance

IV

(Notices)

NOTICES FROM EUROPEAN UNION INSTITUTIONS, BODIES, OFFICES AND AGENCIES

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

DECISION OF THE BUREAU OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

of 15 December 2014

amending the Implementing Measures for the Statute for Members of the European Parliament

(2014/C 466/01)

THE BUREAU OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 223(2) thereof,

Having regard to the Statute for Members of the European Parliament ⁽¹⁾ ('the Statute'),

Having regard to Rules 10 and 25 of the Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament,

Whereas:

- (1) Article 20 of the Statute states, in paragraph 1, that 'Members shall be entitled to reimbursement of expenses incurred in the exercise of their mandate' and, in paragraph 4, that 'Parliament shall lay down the conditions for the exercise of this right'. Those conditions are set out, inter alia, in Articles 22, 24 and 66 of the Implementing Measures for the Statute for Members of the European Parliament ⁽²⁾ ('the Implementing Measures').
- (2) Similarly, Article 4 of the Implementing Measures obliges Members to submit the original supporting documents when requesting reimbursement of medical expenses. The effect of this is that Members are required, at frequent intervals, to fill out by hand long and complex forms and to append to them the originals of invoices and other supporting documents, in order to obtain reimbursement for the expenses they incur.
- (3) In order to make the procedure less bureaucratic, Members should be offered the possibility of submitting reimbursement or defrayal requests electronically. It will be the responsibility of Members to keep the original supporting documents on file for a reasonable period of time, i.e. until 31 December of the calendar year following that in which the application for reimbursement or defrayal was submitted. The relevant Parliament departments should implement a system of spot checks based on standard audit practice to ensure that scanned copies of supporting documents match the originals thereof.
- (4) Therefore, the Implementing Measures should be amended so as to: permit Members to submit applications for reimbursement or defrayal of expenses in electronic form; permit Members to submit scanned copies of original supporting documents, accompanied by a declaration on their honour that these are true copies; and lay down the period of time for which Members are required to keep original supporting documents, and during which Parliament's administration can check scanned copies of supporting documents against the originals thereof.

⁽¹⁾ Decision 2005/684/EC, Euratom of the European Parliament of 28 September 2005 adopting the Statute for Members of the European Parliament (OJ L 262, 7.10.2005, p. 1).

⁽²⁾ Decision of the Bureau of the European Parliament of 19 May and 9 July 2008 concerning implementing measures for the Statute for Members of the European Parliament (OJ C 159, 13.7.2009, p. 1).

- (5) Moreover, in accordance with Article 69(1) of the Implementing Measures, the amounts of the reimbursable travel expenses, daily subsistence allowance and general expenditure allowance may be index-linked annually by the Bureau, up to a maximum increase equal to the annual inflation rate in the European Union in October of the previous year, as published by Eurostat.
- (6) The inflation rate for the period from 1 November 2013 to 31 October 2014, as notified by Eurostat on 14 November 2014, stands at 0,5 %. The new amounts resulting from the adjustment needed in order to take that inflation rate into account should apply from 1 January 2015 and the Implementing Measures should be amended accordingly,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

The Implementing Measures are amended as follows:

1. Article 4 is replaced by the following:

'Article 4

Procedure

Applications for reimbursement shall be submitted to the relevant Parliament department or directly to the Settlements Office of the Commission, using standard forms accompanied by supporting documents.'

2. In Article 20(1), point (a) is replaced by the following:

'(a) for the part of the journey between 0 and 50 km: EUR 22,62;'

3. Article 22 is amended as follows:

- (a) paragraph 1 is replaced by the following:

'1. The maximum annual amount which may be reimbursed in respect of travel expenses incurred in the cases referred to in Article 10(1), point (b) shall be EUR 4 264;'

- (b) the first subparagraph of paragraph 3 is replaced by the following:

'The maximum annual amount which may be reimbursed in respect of the travel expenses actually incurred by committee or subcommittee chairs travelling to attend conferences or events which deal with a matter of European interest falling within the sphere of responsibility of their committee or subcommittee and which have a parliamentary dimension shall be EUR 4 264. Such participation shall require prior authorisation from the President of Parliament, following verification that appropriations up to the maximum amount indicated above are available.'

4. In Article 24, paragraph 2 is replaced by the following:

'2. If the official activity takes place on the territory of the Union, a Member shall receive a lump-sum allowance of EUR 306.'

5. In Article 26, paragraph 2 is replaced by the following:

'2. The monthly amount of the allowance under Article 25 shall be EUR 4 320.'

6. Article 66 is replaced by the following:

'Article 66

Alternative supporting documents

In the event of loss of the requisite supporting documents, a Member must submit a declaration of loss accompanied by alternative supporting documents consistent with the requirements laid down in these Implementing Measures.'

7. The following article is inserted:

'Article 72a

Electronically scanned supporting documents

1. Where these Implementing Measures refer to the submission of applications for reimbursement or defrayal, such applications may be submitted in electronic form together with a digital signature.

2. Where these Implementing Measures require the submission of supporting documents, such documents may be submitted in the form of scanned copies, provided that the Member declares on his or her honour that the documents submitted match the originals thereof.

3. In order that checks may be carried out to match scanned copies of supporting documents with the originals thereof, Members shall keep the originals until 31 December of the calendar year following that in which the application for reimbursement or defrayal was submitted.

The relevant Parliament departments shall implement a system of spot checks to ensure that scanned copies of supporting documents match the originals thereof.

Article 2

This Decision shall enter into force on the day following that of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

This Decision shall apply from the same date, with the exception of Article 1(2) to (5), which shall apply from 1 January 2015.

COUNCIL

COUNCIL DECISION

of 15 December 2014

appointing and replacing members of the Governing Board of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training

(2014/C 466/02)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to Council Regulation (EEC) No 337/75 of 10 February 1975 establishing the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, and in particular Article 4 thereof ⁽¹⁾,

Having regard to the nomination submitted by the Latvian government,

Whereas:

- (1) By its Decision of 16 July 2012 ⁽²⁾, the Council appointed the members of the Governing Board of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training for the period from 18 September 2012 to 17 September 2015.
- (2) A member's seat is available for Latvia on the Governing Board of the Centre in the category of Government representatives as a result of the resignation of Ms Sanda LIEPINA.
- (3) The members of the Governing Board of the aforementioned Centre should be appointed for the remainder of the current term of office, which expires on 17 September 2015,

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Sole Article

The following person is hereby appointed as a member of the Governing Board of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training for the remainder of the term of office, which runs until 17 September 2015:

GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES:

LATVIA

Ms Inta ŠUSTA

Done at Brussels, 15 December 2014.

For the Council

The President

M. MARTINA

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 39, 13.2.1975, p. 1.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 228, 31.7.2012, p. 3.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Euro exchange rates ⁽¹⁾

24 December 2014

(2014/C 466/03)

1 euro =

| Currency | Exchange rate | Currency | Exchange rate | | |
|----------|-------------------|----------|---------------|-----------------------|-----------|
| USD | US dollar | 1,2219 | CAD | Canadian dollar | 1,4164 |
| JPY | Japanese yen | 147,07 | HKD | Hong Kong dollar | 9,4844 |
| DKK | Danish krone | 7,4396 | NZD | New Zealand dollar | 1,5807 |
| GBP | Pound sterling | 0,78650 | SGD | Singapore dollar | 1,6160 |
| SEK | Swedish krona | 9,5400 | KRW | South Korean won | 1 347,55 |
| CHF | Swiss franc | 1,2025 | ZAR | South African rand | 14,2498 |
| ISK | Iceland króna | | CNY | Chinese yuan renminbi | 7,5969 |
| NOK | Norwegian krone | 9,1511 | HRK | Croatian kuna | 7,6630 |
| BGN | Bulgarian lev | 1,9558 | IDR | Indonesian rupiah | 15 214,50 |
| CZK | Czech koruna | 27,777 | MYR | Malaysian ringgit | 4,2729 |
| HUF | Hungarian forint | 316,08 | PHP | Philippine peso | 54,596 |
| LTL | Lithuanian litas | 3,45280 | RUB | Russian rouble | 66,8863 |
| PLN | Polish zloty | 4,3078 | THB | Thai baht | 40,169 |
| RON | Romanian leu | 4,4628 | BRL | Brazilian real | 3,2921 |
| TRY | Turkish lira | 2,8410 | MXN | Mexican peso | 18,0123 |
| AUD | Australian dollar | 1,5053 | INR | Indian rupee | 77,5589 |

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

Euro exchange rates ⁽¹⁾**29 December 2014**

(2014/C 466/04)

1 euro =

| Currency | Exchange rate | Currency | Exchange rate | | |
|----------|-------------------|----------|---------------|-----------------------|-----------|
| USD | US dollar | 1,2197 | CAD | Canadian dollar | 1,4183 |
| JPY | Japanese yen | 146,96 | HKD | Hong Kong dollar | 9,4632 |
| DKK | Danish krone | 7,4404 | NZD | New Zealand dollar | 1,5644 |
| GBP | Pound sterling | 0,78420 | SGD | Singapore dollar | 1,6134 |
| SEK | Swedish krona | 9,6234 | KRW | South Korean won | 1 341,07 |
| CHF | Swiss franc | 1,2028 | ZAR | South African rand | 14,1557 |
| ISK | Iceland króna | | CNY | Chinese yuan renminbi | 7,5920 |
| NOK | Norwegian krone | 9,0475 | HRK | Croatian kuna | 7,6580 |
| BGN | Bulgarian lev | 1,9558 | IDR | Indonesian rupiah | 15 128,58 |
| CZK | Czech koruna | 27,717 | MYR | Malaysian ringgit | 4,2659 |
| HUF | Hungarian forint | 314,68 | PHP | Philippine peso | 54,558 |
| LTL | Lithuanian litas | 3,45280 | RUB | Russian rouble | 68,0650 |
| PLN | Polish zloty | 4,3023 | THB | Thai baht | 40,223 |
| RON | Romanian leu | 4,4741 | BRL | Brazilian real | 3,2602 |
| TRY | Turkish lira | 2,8313 | MXN | Mexican peso | 17,9281 |
| AUD | Australian dollar | 1,4964 | INR | Indian rupee | 77,6660 |

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

V

(Announcements)

PROCEDURES RELATING TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COMPETITION
POLICY

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Prior notification of a concentration

(Case M.7475 — Edenred/Hermes/Eckstein/UTA)

Candidate case for simplified procedure

(Text with EEA relevance)

(2014/C 466/05)

1. On 19 December 2014, the Commission received a notification of a proposed concentration pursuant to Article 4 of Council Regulation (EC) No 139/2004⁽¹⁾ by which the undertakings Edenred SA (France), Hermes Mineralol-GmbH ('Hermes', Germany) and Familien-Gesellschaft Eckstein mbH Verwaltungs-KG ('Eckstein', Germany) acquire within the meaning of Article 3(1)(b) and 3(4) of the Merger Regulation joint control of UNION TANK Eckstein GmbH & Co. KG and UNION TANK Eckstein GmbH (together 'UTA', Germany), by way of purchase of shares.
2. The business activities of the undertakings concerned are:
 - Edenred: provision of prepaid corporate services, design and management of solutions related to employee benefits, expense management, incentive reward and management of public social programs,
 - UTA: issuance and management of fuel and service cards for customers active in commercial goods and passenger transport,
 - Hermes and Eckstein: family-owned holding companies without business operations.
3. On preliminary examination, the Commission finds that the notified transaction could fall within the scope of the Merger Regulation. However, the final decision on this point is reserved. Pursuant to the Commission Notice on a simplified procedure for treatment of certain concentrations under the Council Regulation (EC) No 139/2004⁽²⁾ it should be noted that this case is a candidate for treatment under the procedure set out in this Notice.
4. The Commission invites interested third parties to submit their possible observations on the proposed operation to the Commission.

Observations must reach the Commission not later than 10 days following the date of this publication. Observations can be sent to the Commission by fax (+32 22964301), by e-mail to COMP-MERGER-REGISTRY@ec.europa.eu or by post, under reference number M.7475 — Edenred/Hermes/Eckstein/UTA to the following address:

European Commission
Directorate-General for Competition
Merger Registry
1049 Bruxelles/Brussel
BELGIQUE/BELGIË

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 24, 29.1.2004, p. 1 (the 'Merger Regulation').

⁽²⁾ OJ C 366, 14.12.2013, p. 5.

OTHER ACTS

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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

(2014/C 466/06)

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⁾.

AMENDMENT APPLICATION

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006**on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs ⁽²⁾****AMENDMENT APPLICATION ACCORDING TO ARTICLE 9****‘AGNELLO DI SARDEGNA’****EC No: IT-PGI-0205-01227-6.5.2014****PGI (X) PDO ()****1. Heading in the product specification affected by the amendment**

- Name of the product
- Description of product
- Geographical area
- Proof of origin
- Production method
- Link
- Labelling
- National requirements
- Other [Packaging]

2. Type of amendment

- Amendment to Single Document or Summary Sheet
- Amendment to Specification of registered PDO or PGI for which neither the Single Document nor the Summary has been published
- Amendment to Specification that requires no amendment to the published Single Document (Article 9(3) of Regulation (EC) No 510/2006)
- Temporary amendment to Specification resulting from imposition of obligatory sanitary or phytosanitary measures by public authorities (Article 9(4) of Regulation (EC) No 510/2006)

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 343, 14.12.2012, p. 1.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 93, 31.3.2006, p. 12. Replaced by Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012.

3. Amendment(s)

Description of product

- The maximum protein content has been deleted. The new wording allows the consumer to purchase 'Agnello di Sardegna' meat with a higher protein content than at present.
- The figure for the ether extract indicated in the Specification has been changed from 'less than 3 %' to 'less than 3,5 %'. As the animals in question graze free-range and semi-free-range in a completely natural environment, particular climatic and environmental conditions may cause this figure to vary in the carcass; it is therefore necessary to take account of this fact so as not to risk the unjustified exclusion from the market of 'Agnello di Sardegna' meat raised using the method defined in the Specification.

Production method

- The weight range for the 'suckling' and 'light' categories has been broadened. The 'suckling' category has changed from '5-7 kg' to '4,5-8,5 kg'. The decrease in the minimum weight has been requested by farmers who raise sheep in mountainous and/or rugged areas, as these tend to be smaller than sheep raised on the plains. The increase in the maximum weight, however, is necessary due to genetic improvements in the breeds, as well as to improved sheep rearing techniques/farming practices and health which has led to suckling lambs that are slightly heavier than those indicated in the Specification. As a result, the minimum weight for the 'light' category has also changed from '7' to '8,5' kg.

Conditioning

- So as to better meet the demands of major supermarket chains which ever more frequently wish to process products on their own retail premises, all geographical links to the preparation and conditioning of Agnello di Sardegna cuts within the Sardinia Region have been removed.
- The 'short-forequarters' cut, obtained when the head and pluck are removed, has been inserted. Adding this cut better describes the cuts that can be produced after removal of the head and the pluck.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006

on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs ⁽³⁾

'AGNELLO DI SARDEGNA'

EC No: IT-PGI-0205-01227-6.5.2014

PGI (X) PDO ()

1. Name

'Agnello di Sardegna'

2. Member State or Third Country

Italy

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

On release for consumption, 'Agnello di Sardegna' PGI has the following appearance: white, fine-textured and firm meat that is tender when cooked and slightly veined with fat. The carcass does not have excessive muscle mass and has the right balance between bone and muscle.

Organoleptic analysis must reveal properties such as tenderness, succulence, a delicate aroma and the presence of odours typical of young, fresh meat.

⁽³⁾ Replaced by Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012.

The meat must also have the following physico-chemical properties:

| | |
|--------------------------------|---------|
| pH | > 6 |
| Proteins (on a wet basis) | ≥ 13 % |
| Ether extract (on a wet basis) | < 3,5 % |

'Agnello di Sardegna' PGI meat is from lambs born and reared in Sardinia, obtained from sheep of the Sarda breed or first generation crosses with the Ile De France and Berrichon Du Cher meat breeds or other highly specialised and well-tested meat breeds.

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

—

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

'Suckling' lambs (4,5-8,5 kg) must be fed exclusively with their mother's milk (suckled) and 'light' lambs (8,5-10 kg) and lambs 'for cutting' (10-13 kg) with mother's milk complemented with fresh or dried natural feed (fodder and cereals) and wild plants characteristic of the island of Sardinia.

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

The 'Agnello di Sardegna' Protected Geographical Indication is reserved exclusively for lambs born, reared and slaughtered in Sardinia.

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

No special form of packaging is proposed for the sale of whole lamb carcasses, in principle in the production area, and they may be marketed in accordance with health and hygiene rules, using suitable refrigerated transport.

'Agnello di Sardegna' PGI may be released for consumption as a whole carcass or in the following cuts:

a) 'Suckling' Agnello di Sardegna (4,5-8,5 kg):

1. whole;
2. half-carcass (obtained by sagittal sectioning into two symmetrical parts);
3. foresaddle and hindsaddle (whole or sliced);
4. head and pluck;
5. short-forequarters, obtained when the head and pluck are removed;
6. shoulder, haunch, loin (whole anatomical parts or sliced);
7. assorted pack (assortment of the anatomical parts described above).

b) 'Light' Agnello di Sardegna (8,5-10 kg) and Agnello di Sardegna 'for cutting' (10-13 kg):

1. whole;
2. half-carcass (obtained by sagittal sectioning into two symmetrical parts);
3. foresaddle and hindsaddle (whole or sliced);
4. head and pluck;
5. short-forequarters, obtained when the head and pluck are removed;
6. hindsaddle: the two whole haunches including the saddle (left and right);

7. English saddle: the upper dorsal part with the final two ribs and the belly flaps;
8. loin: the upper fore — dorsal part;
9. rump: the two fillets;
10. foresaddle: the shoulders, scrag and neck and upper chops of the forepart;
11. outer shoulder pair: the two shoulders attached to the neck;
12. leg chump-on: the leg, haunch, ilium and sacrum and the hind parts of the loins;
13. leg chump-off: the hind parts of the region of the ilium and sacrum and the hind parts of the loins.

Other cuts:

14. saddle: the ilium and sacrum, either with or without the final lumbar vertebra;
15. fillet: the lumbar region;
16. rack: the upper dorsal part including the first and second ribs;
17. uncovered loin: the fore parts comprising the first five dorsal vertebrae;
18. shoulder: whole;
19. neck: the neck area;
20. upper chops: the lower thoracic area;
21. shoulder, haunch, loin (whole anatomical parts or sliced);
22. assorted pack (assortment of the anatomical parts described above).

3.7. Specific rules concerning labelling

'Agnello di Sardegna' PGI must be marketed whole and/or in portions and the packages of the whole or cut carcasses bearing the PGI or the labels affixed thereto must bear the information laid down in the relevant rules in clear and indelible lettering.

In particular, vacuum packs and other forms of packaging allowed by law must bear details of:

- a) the 'Agnello di Sardegna' PGI, together with the logo;
- b) the type of meat;
- c) the cut.

The logo, consisting of a stylised lamb, shows a head and hoof. The outline is in the shape of Sardinia. The type-face used for the words 'Agnello di Sardegna' is Block.

The outline of the mark and of the lamb is in Pantone 350 (cyan 63 %, yellow 90 % and black 63 %); the background of the mark is in Pantone 5763 (cyan 14 %, yellow 54 % and black 50 %).



It is prohibited to add to the protected designation any other description not expressly provided for in the product specification, including the adjectives fine (fine), scelto (selected), selezionato (selected), superiore (superior) or genuino (genuine).

However, additional authentic place names may be used, such as historical/geographical names or the names of municipalities, undertakings, holdings and estates, with reference to the rearing, slaughtering and packing of the product, provided these are not of a laudatory nature and are not likely to mislead the consumer. Such wordings on the label must be in characters a third of the size of those used for the abbreviation PGI.

4. Concise definition of the geographical area

Agnello di Sardegna is reared throughout the Region of Sardinia.

5. Link with the geographical area

5.1. Specificity of the geographical area

The island of Sardinia enjoys an essentially Mediterranean climate with mild, relatively wet winters and dry, hot summers.

The influence of the sea is felt almost everywhere on the island and produces fairly mild average temperatures, with an annual average ranging from 14 °C to 18 °C. Rainfall is concentrated in November and December, whereas July and August see almost none, and during the rest of the year it is very erratic. Overall, rainfall is not scant (average of 500-800 mm/year).

One of the most striking features of the Sardinian climate is the wind: the maestrale, a cold north-west wind, blows with great violence, mainly in winter but also from time to time in other seasons. At the end of autumn temperate, moist winds from the Atlantic predominate, while in early spring hot, dry winds blow from Africa (i.e. from the south).

Partly because of its sparse population and its island nature, which have favoured separation from the surrounding areas, Sardinia has preserved intact to this day many of its original natural features, many of which are peculiar to the region: the landscape is often wild, harsh and deserted and in certain places has a beauty and charm rare in the Mediterranean. This has meant that Sardinia has maintained almost undisturbed a number of ancient plant species, which have elsewhere either changed or disappeared. Most of the island, where migratory livestock herding in open pasture has traditionally been the dominant activity, is covered by pasture land, both grassland steppe and scrubland. The richest, most extensive and vigorous flora is clearly the maquis that characterises the Sardinian landscape up to around 800 m above sea level, sometimes forming isolated, picturesque thickets on the bare coastal cliffs. The maquis comprises the typical combination of evergreen shrubs, which can reach heights of 4-5 m in deeper, moister soils, where it is known as high maquis. Here the species are primarily oleasters (wild olives), mastic trees, carob trees, myrtles, laurels, junipers and rockrose trees. Oleasters often grow thickly along the shores of streams. Elsewhere the maquis is impoverished, with shrubs around 50 cm high, commonly called 'garriga', including sage, rosemary, heather, thyme, broom etc. Also interesting to note are thickets of dwarf palm.

5.2. Specificity of the product

'Agnello di Sardegna' PGI is distinguished above all by its small size: meat covered by the 'Agnello di Sardegna' PGI clearly differs from that from other, heavier, multi-purpose breeds, which often has a pronounced flavour that consumers do not always appreciate. 'Agnello di Sardegna' PGI, on the other hand, always has a pleasant taste because of the low levels of saturated fats in its fat cover, which are conversely rich in tastier and more easily digestible unsaturated chains (because the lambs are fed on milk on natural pastures).

The fat in the carcase is the natural complement to the meat and most of it is lost during cooking, leaving the meat perfectly juicy and pleasant, but in particular more tender and succulent on the palate. 'Agnello di Sardegna' PGI is distinguished by its tender, white meat, intense aroma and outstanding digestibility and leanness.

'Agnello di Sardegna' PGI is an ideal food, not only because of its taste but also in terms of its nutritional value, being rich in complete proteins. This makes the meat particularly suitable for those requiring a light but high-energy diet.

'Agnello di Sardegna' PGI is biologically healthy and totally free of any chemical or biotic contamination. Sarda lambs, because of their young age, are not subject to force feeding, environmental stress or hormonal treatments, being reared in the open air in a completely natural environment.

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 characteristic features of 'Agnello di Sardegna' are entirely attributable to the region of origin.

Its distinctive wild flavour is a direct result of the lambs being fed on their mother's milk and natural feed and reared in the open air. 'Agnello di Sardegna' lambs are reared extensively in open housing and thus in a totally natural environment characterised by large open areas constantly exposed to the strong sunshine, the winds and other weather conditions prevailing in Sardinia.

Rearing 'Agnello di Sardegna' in the open air means that its feed is almost unique: suckling lambs are reared only on their mother's milk and then, when they grow, follow their mother to pasture where their diet is supplemented with natural feed, grasses and wild and aromatic plants characteristic of the island's habitat. Over the years, the biological and reproductive cycles of the Sarda breed have adapted to their environment; the ewes therefore usually lamb in late autumn, when the first rains arrive and the vegetation starts to grow again. For these reasons, the meat is particularly prized for its organoleptic properties. In addition, the diet of mother's milk determines not only the quantity of fat but also its quality. The fats ingested during suckling determine the composition of body fats throughout the growth period. Furthermore, rearing in the open air guarantees that the lambs are healthy and have adequate exercise, particularly in a natural environment such as that of Sardinia with its wide open spaces and a landscape unaffected by industrial and human activities. The Sardinian landscape shares a feature that gives it a remarkable degree of uniformity, its bareness, caused by a lack of cultivated trees, constantly recalling the prevalence of livestock grazing. This impression reflects reality: Sardinia is an island of shepherds and sheep-farming is by far the most important economic activity on the island. With 3 294 044 sheep on its 16 410 holdings distributed throughout the island, Sardinia has 40 % of the total Italian sheep population.

Thus Sardinia continues to be an island of shepherds, as it has been for centuries. Sheep-farming dates back to the pre-nuraghi era and remains of the first implements used to process milk have been found in nuraghi. Documents from Roman times also make frequent references to sheep-farming. The 'Sarda' sheep breed has become established on the island over the centuries through constant adaptation in response to selective breeding by the sheep-farmers. Essentially, it is the result of a long process of interaction between people and the land or in other words between people, the land and animal breeds.

Farmers today provide the same care and attention to their flocks as they have for centuries and by preserving the ancient practices they have ensured that 'Agnello di Sardegna' today has the same unique unadulterated quality and goodness that it has always had.

Reference to publication of the specification

(Article 5(7) of Regulation (EC) No 510/2006 ⁽⁴⁾)

The Ministry launched the national opposition procedure with the publication of the amendment application regarding 'Agnello di Sardegna' Protected Geographical Indication in the Official Gazette of the Italian Republic No 61 of 14 March 2014.

The full text of the product specification is available on the following website: <http://www.politicheagricole.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/3335>

or alternatively:

by going direct to the home page of the Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policy (www.politicheagricole.it) and clicking on 'Qualità e sicurezza' (at the top right of the screen), and then on 'Disciplinari di Produzione all'esame dell'UE'.

⁽⁴⁾ See footnote 3.

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