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⁽¹⁾ Text with EEA relevance.

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II

*(Information)*INFORMATION FROM EUROPEAN UNION INSTITUTIONS, BODIES, OFFICES
AND AGENCIES

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Non-opposition to a notified concentration**(Case M.11078 – CONTARGO / ZIEGLER / SCHMID / JV)****(Text with EEA relevance)**

(2023/C 306/01)

On 28 June 2023, the Commission decided not to oppose the above notified concentration and to declare it compatible with the internal market. This decision is based on Article 6(1)(b) of Council Regulation (EC) No 139/2004 ⁽¹⁾. The full text of the decision is available only in German language 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 policy’ website of the Commission (<https://competition-cases.ec.europa.eu/search>). 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/homepage.html?locale=en>) under document number 32023M11078. EUR-Lex is the online point of access to European Union law.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 24, 29.1.2004, p. 1.

IV

(Notices)

NOTICES FROM EUROPEAN UNION INSTITUTIONS, BODIES, OFFICES AND AGENCIES

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Euro exchange rates ⁽¹⁾

29 August 2023

(2023/C 306/02)

1 euro =

Currency			Exchange rate		
Currency			Exchange rate		
USD	US dollar	1,0803	CAD	Canadian dollar	1,4722
JPY	Japanese yen	158,93	HKD	Hong Kong dollar	8,4770
DKK	Danish krone	7,4529	NZD	New Zealand dollar	1,8307
GBP	Pound sterling	0,85860	SGD	Singapore dollar	1,4649
SEK	Swedish krona	11,8820	KRW	South Korean won	1 432,91
CHF	Swiss franc	0,9558	ZAR	South African rand	20,0496
ISK	Iceland króna	141,90	CNY	Chinese yuan renminbi	7,8800
NOK	Norwegian krone	11,5645	IDR	Indonesian rupiah	16 483,22
BGN	Bulgarian lev	1,9558	MYR	Malaysian ringgit	5,0185
CZK	Czech koruna	24,163	PHP	Philippine peso	61,307
HUF	Hungarian forint	382,25	RUB	Russian rouble	
PLN	Polish zloty	4,4720	THB	Thai baht	38,027
RON	Romanian leu	4,9418	BRL	Brazilian real	5,2762
TRY	Turkish lira	28,7651	MXN	Mexican peso	18,1299
AUD	Australian dollar	1,6832	INR	Indian rupee	89,4335

⁽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.11134 – NOVOFLEET / SHAREHOLDERS OF ANDAMUR / ROAD)****Candidate case for simplified procedure****(Text with EEA relevance)**

(2023/C 306/03)

1. On 23 August 2023, the Commission received notification of a proposed concentration pursuant to Article 4 of Council Regulation (EC) No 139/2004 ⁽¹⁾.

This notification concerns the following undertakings:

- Novofleet Verwaltungsgesellschaft mbH ('Novofleet', Germany), belonging to the DKV Mobility Group (Germany),
- Fondalmanzora Investment, S.L.U. ('Fondalmanzora', Spain),
- 1994 Andamur, S.L.U. ('1994 Andamur', Spain),
- Participaciones Almanzora, S.L.U. ('Almanzora', Spain),
- Miras y Cazorla, S.L.U. ('Miras', Spain),
- Road Solution Pro, S.L. ('Road', Spain).

Novofleet and Fondalmanzora, 1994 Andamur, Almanzora and Miras (together 'Shareholders of Andamur') will acquire within the meaning of Article 3(1)(b) and Article 3(4) of the Merger Regulation joint control of the whole of Road.

The concentration is accomplished by way of purchase of shares.

2. The business activities of the undertakings concerned are the following:

- Novofleet, a part of DKV Mobility Group, is active in the sale of fuel cards for conventional fuel and electric charge cards for electric vehicles. DKV Mobility Group also offers the provision of toll payment solutions, mobility solutions (i.e., parking, rental service, repairing of the vehicle, and innovative digital solutions, among others) and the provision of tax refund services of VAT and other taxes,
- Shareholders of Andamur jointly control GP Límite Andamur, S.L., a Spanish family business active in the provision of integrated transport-related services. They are investment vehicles with a sole activity related to the acquisition, holding, administration, disposal and sale of shareholdings or equity interests in other companies.

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

— Road is a company incorporated in 2022 and consists of the following business units: (i) the issuance of cash free and bank credit card-free refuelling cards that can be used by professional clients; (ii) the rental and management services of toll payment devices; and (iii) the provision of VAT and other fuel-related tax refund services related to certain activities.

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 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 the 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. The following reference should always be specified:

M.11134 – NOVOFLEET / SHAREHOLDERS OF ANDAMUR / ROAD

Observations can be sent to the Commission by email or by post. Please use the contact details below:

Email: COMP-MERGER-REGISTRY@ec.europa.eu

Postal address:

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

⁽²⁾ OJ C 366, 14.12.2013, p. 5.

OTHER ACTS

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Publication of an application for approval of an amendment, which is not minor, to a product specification pursuant to Article 50(2), point (a), of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs

(2023/C 306/04)

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 AN AMENDMENT TO THE PRODUCT SPECIFICATION OF PROTECTED DESIGNATIONS OF ORIGIN/PROTECTED GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS WHICH IS NOT MINOR

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

'Marchfeldspargel'

EU No: PGI-AT-1462-AM04 – 25.5.2022

PDO () PGI (X)

1. Applicant group and legitimate interest

Verein Marchfeldspargel g.g.A.
c/o Mag. Gerhard Sulzmann
2304 Mannsdorf/Donau, Kirchengasse 1
ÖSTERREICH

Tel. +43 6641308521

Email: office@marchfeldspargel.at

Representative/contact person: Mag. Gerhard Sulzmann

The applicant is the legal successor of the association that originally submitted the application and represents all current producers of 'Marchfeldspargel' PGI. It is therefore entitled to make the application.

2. Member State or Third Country

Austria

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

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

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 343, 14.12.2012, p. 1.

- ☒ Method of production
- ☒ Link with the geographical area
- ☒ Labelling
- ☒ Other [name of applicant association, tasks and new address of the control body, type of product, national requirement]

4. **Type of amendment(s)**

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

5. **Amendment(s)**

The current product specification, comprising several separate documents (short specification, various annexes), has been merged, revised and updated into one document in order to provide a clearer description of the requirements, in particular as regards the production process and proof of origin. The remaining annexes referred to in the specification only serve as additional documentation.

Past experience in implementing the current product specification in practice also requires changes to be made to the conditions for the production and marketing of asparagus, but also clarification with regard to production steps (peeling of the asparagus) which must be carried out in the geographical area. The amendments all contribute to maintaining the quality of 'Marchfeldspargel' PGI.

The repeated reference in the current texts to the 'Bund der Marchfelder Spargelgüter' refers to the legal predecessor of the current applicant association; this change has already been approved by Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2015/255 of 13 February 2015 but has not yet been reflected in the texts of the specification. This name was subsequently changed again to 'Verein Marchfeldspargel g.g.A'.

More specifically:

Description of product

Point 5b of the current specification

'The asparagus stalks are the shoots of the varieties grown from asparagus plants (*Asparagus Officinalis* L.) for delivery when fresh. They are classified into four groups according to colour: white, violet, violet-green, green. "Marchfeldspargel" has a typical fine asparagus aroma.'

and Annex 2 in so far as it refers to point 5b of the description, i.e. the sections

'Description of appearance

The asparagus stalks are the young shoots of the varieties grown from asparagus plants (*Asparagus Officinalis* L.) for delivery when fresh.

In all classes, subject to the special provisions for each class and the tolerances allowed, the shoots must be:

- whole
- sound; produce affected by rotting or deterioration such as to make it unfit for consumption is excluded,

- free from damage caused by inappropriate washing (the shoots may be washed but not soaked),
- clean and practically free from any visible foreign matter,
- fresh in appearance and fresh-smelling,
- practically free from pests,
- free from damage from rodents or insects,
- practically free from crushing and bruising,
- free of abnormal external moisture, i.e. adequately “dried” if they have been washed or cooled with cold water,
- free of any foreign smell and/or taste.

The cut at the base of the stalks must be as clean as possible.

In addition, shoots must be neither hollow, split, peeled nor broken. However, small cracks formed after sprouting are permitted, provided that they do not infringe the “quality tolerances” of each class.

The condition of the asparagus must be such as to enable it:

- to withstand transport and handling, and
- to arrive in satisfactory condition at the place of destination.

Provisions concerning presentation:

a) Uniformity:

The contents of each package or bundle within a package must be uniform and contain only asparagus of the same origin, quality, colour group and, where sizing is required, size. The visible part of the contents of the package or bundle must be representative of the entire contents.

b) The asparagus may be presented in the following ways:

i) in firmly bound bundles

Asparagus stalks on the outside of the bundle must correspond in appearance and diameter to the average of the whole bundle. The shoots must be of the same length. Bundles must be arranged regularly in the package and be of equal weight and length; each bundle may be protected by paper.

ii) in unit packages, or arranged but not bundled in the package

c) Packaging:

The asparagus must be packed in such a way as to ensure adequate protection for the produce.

Description regarding its properties

Taste: “Marchfeldspargel” has a typical fine asparagus aroma. This is the fine, delicate taste of fresh asparagus, which varies according to the variety and soil. It must not be bitter or woody. In principle, white asparagus has the finest asparagus aroma. The more violet to green the asparagus is in colour, the more intense the asparagus aroma becomes. In addition to the freshness of the asparagus, it is clear that preparation also has a major influence on the taste.

Asparagus shoots are classified into four groups according to colour:

- 1) white asparagus;
- 2) violet asparagus: tips must be of a colour between pink and violet/purple and must have a partly white stalk;
- 3) violet-green asparagus: Asparagus with a partially violet and green colour;
- 4) green asparagus: tips and most of the stalk must be green.

The length of the shoots must be:

- above 17 cm for long asparagus,
- 12-17 cm for short asparagus (= asparagus tips),
- 12-22 cm for class II asparagus arranged, but not bundled, in packages,
- under 12 cm for asparagus tips.

White and violet asparagus must not exceed 22 cm in length, violet-green and green asparagus must not exceed 25 cm in length.

Sizing by diameter

The diameter of shoots shall be measured at the mid-point of their length. The minimum diameter and sizing shall be:

Colour group	Minimum diameter		Sizing
a) "Extra" Class:			
white and violet	12 mm	12 – 16 mm	16 mm+ with a maximum variation of 8 mm per package
Violet-green and green asparagus	10 mm	10 – 16 mm	16 mm+ with a maximum variation of 8 mm per package
b) Class I:			
white and violet	10 mm	10 – 16 mm	16 mm+ with a maximum variation of 10 mm per package
Violet-green and green asparagus	6 mm	6 – 12 mm	12 mm+ with a maximum variation of 8 mm per package
c) Class II:			
white and violet	8 mm		No provisions as to uniformity
Violet-green and green asparagus	6 mm		No provisions as to uniformity

Description regarding its raw materials

Owing to the specific climatic conditions (= western extension of the Pannonian climate) and the special soil types (riverside, chernozem, colluvial and alluvial soils, all with a high humus content and different proportions of sand and loess), the "Bund der Marchfelder Spargelgüter" recommends only asparagus varieties which are particularly well suited to this growing area.

The following asparagus varieties are currently used or recommended:

German:

Ruhm von Braunschweig, Schwetzingen Meisterschuß, Huchels Auslese, Lukullus, Vulkan, Presto, Merkur, Hermes, Eposs, Ravel, Ramos

Green asparagus varieties (= anthocyanin-free): Spaganiva, Schneewittchen, Schneekopf.

Dutch:

Venlim, Carlim, Gijnlim, Boonlim, Backlim, Thielim, Horlim, Prelim, Grolim.

French:

Larac, Cito, Aneto, Desto, Selection "Darbonne n°4", Selection "Darbonne n°3", Jacq. Ma. 2001, Jacq. Ma. 2002, Andreas, Dariana, Cipres, Viola,

United States:

Mary Washington.

Description of characteristics distinguishing the product from comparable products:

in terms of taste:

"Marchfeldspargel" is characterised by its particularly typical asparagus aroma. Given that only asparagus varieties are used that are well suited to the specific soil conditions in the Marchfeld region, "Marchfeldspargel" contains fewer bitter substances.

It is also less woody. Reason: The longer the asparagus stalks are cut during harvesting, the closer one comes to the woody rootstock. "Marchfeldspargel" is shorter than comparable products.

in terms of the length of the asparagus shoots:

Violet-green asparagus and green asparagus may not exceed 25 cm in length. Similar products are 27 cm.

in terms of production:

The favourable production conditions make it easy to comply with ecological standards. All members of the "Bund der Marchfelder Spargelgüter" operate according to Integrated Production Guidelines (Guidelines for the integrated production of vegetables in Austria) or organically. Production takes place at locations situated at a distance from each other so that epidemiological infestations of diseases and pests can be avoided.

in terms of distribution:

The members of the "Bund der Marchfelder Spargelgüter" are able to supply fresh asparagus products on a daily basis to customers throughout Austria via special transport systems. "Marchfeldspargel" is available anywhere in Austria within 24 hours of harvesting.'

have been replaced with the following text:

'4.2. Description :

1.1.1. General

The asparagus stalks are the shoots of the asparagus plant "Asparagus Officinalis L." and the varieties which have been cultivated from it. "Marchfeldspargel" has a typical fine asparagus aroma. The designation "Marchfeldspargel" refers to fresh asparagus, peeled or unpeeled, in whole stalks or in the form of broken asparagus or asparagus pieces.

1.1.2. Organoleptic properties

In all classes, subject to the special provisions for each class and the tolerances allowed, the shoots must be:

- whole (except in the case of broken asparagus or asparagus pieces)
- sound; produce affected by rotting or deterioration such as to make it unfit for consumption is excluded,
- free from damage caused by unsuitable washing (the shoots may have been washed but not soaked),
- clean, practically free from any visible foreign matter,
- fresh in appearance,
- free from foreign smell or taste
- practically free from pests,
- free from damage from rodents or insects,
- practically free from crushing and bruising,
- free of abnormal external moisture, i.e. adequately “dried” if they have been washed or cooled with cold water,

The cut at the base of the stalks must be clean.

The asparagus stalks must not be hollow, split, stripped of their peel (except where the asparagus is to be marketed as peeled) or broken (except where it is to be marketed as broken asparagus or asparagus pieces).

The fine, delicate taste of fresh asparagus varies according to the variety and soil. White asparagus has the finest asparagus aroma. The stronger the violet to green colour of the asparagus, the more intense the asparagus aroma becomes.

Asparagus shoots are classified into four groups according to colour:

- 1) white asparagus;
- 2) violet asparagus: tips of a colour between pink and violet/purple and a partly white stalk;
- 3) violet-green asparagus: Asparagus with a partially violet and green colour;
- 4) green asparagus: tips and most of the stalk are green in colour.

1.1.3. Size of the asparagus

The length of the shoots must be:

- above 17 cm for long asparagus,
- 12-17 cm for short asparagus (= asparagus tips),
- 12-22 cm for class II asparagus arranged, but not bundled, in packages,
- less than 12 cm for asparagus heads and broken asparagus or asparagus pieces.

White and violet asparagus shall not exceed 22 cm in length, violet-green and green asparagus shall not exceed 25 cm in length. A maximum length deviation of 1 cm is allowed for 10 % of the asparagus shoots contained in the package.

The minimum diameter and sizing are as follows:

Colour group	Minimum diameter	Minimum sorting	Sizing
a) "Extra" Class:			
white and violet	12 mm	12– 16 mm	16 mm+ with a maximum variation of 8 mm per package
violet-green and green asparagus	10 mm	10– 16 mm	16 mm+ with a maximum variation of 8 mm per package
b) Class I:			
white and violet	10 mm	10– 16 mm	16 mm+ with a maximum variation of 10 mm per package
Violet-green and green asparagus	6 mm	6– 12 mm	12 mm+ with a maximum variation of 8 mm per package
c) Class II:			
white and violet	8 mm		no provisions as to uniformity
violet-green and green asparagus	6 mm		no provisions as to uniformity

The diameter of shoots shall be measured at the mid-point of their length.'

Single document:

The sentences "Marchfeldspargel" is marketed fresh, peeled or unpeeled in whole stalks or as broken asparagus or asparagus pieces.' and 'The asparagus stalks may not be hollow, split, stripped of their peel (except where the asparagus is to be marketed as peeled) or broken (broken asparagus or asparagus pieces).' have also been inserted into point 3.2 of the single document. The reference to the asparagus stalks having to be 'whole' has been deleted.

Grounds:

The existing parameters have been summarised and incorporated into the specification as the new product variants 'broken asparagus/asparagus pieces' and 'peeled "Marchfeldspargel"' in view of the fact that there is demand for these products on the market and that asparagus pieces without tips have hitherto not been mentioned in the specification, which lead to uncertainties in the control process. In this regard, see the grounds for the amendments in point 4.5.

The information contained in the current Annex 2 describing the presentation of the asparagus and on distribution have been moved without amendment to point 4.5.3.3, and the description of the raw materials with regard to the list of varieties and cultivated varieties has been moved to point 4.5. The description of the differences in production methods can in future be found in point 4.5.3. The description of soil and climatic conditions can be found in point 4.6.

Geographical area

Point 5c of the product specification

'c) Geographical area The name Marchfeld refers to the fertile plain east of Vienna between the Danube and March rivers. Demarcated to the south by the Danube, to the east by the March, to the north by the Weinviertler Hügelland, to the west by the Vienna city border.'

and Annex 2, in so far as it relates to point 5c ('Geographical area'),

'Specification of the geographical area in words:

The Marchfeld:

The name "Marchfeld" is old; it can be found in a document going back as far as 1058 (Becker, Heimatkunde von Niederösterreich, H.II, p. 52). It refers to the plain to the east of Vienna between the Danube and the March rivers.

The demarcation by municipal areas is as follows:

to the East:	the March von Mannersdorf up to the estuary (= state border);
to the south:	the Danube from Vienna to the March estuary;
to the West:	the boundary of Vienna city, but the old peripheral settlements of Eßling, Breitenlee, Süßenbrunn and Stammersdorf belong to Marchfeld, provided agricultural use is still possible there;
to the North:	the boundary of the Weinviertler Hügelland. Because the communal areas at the northern periphery belong to both the plain and hilly land, the location of the settlement at the foot of the edge of the hill is decisive. The following municipalities at the northern edge are included in Marchfeld: Hagenbrunn, Königsbrunn, Enzersfeld, Großebersdorf, Eibesbrunn, Wolkersdorf, Obersdorf, Pilichsdorf, Großengersdorf, Bockfließ, Auersthal, Raggendorf, Matzen, Prottes, Ollersdorf and Mannersdorf/March.

The breakdown by administrative unit is as follows:

Province:	District:	Area:	Resident population:	Municipalities:
Lower Austria:	Gänserndorf	672 km ²	39 655 inhab.	44
Lower Austria:	Mistelbach	96 km ²	8 882 inhab	7
Lower Austria:	Vienna periphery	186 km ²	11 741 inhab.	18
Vienna:	(former outlying districts)	43 km ²	11 803 inhab.	4
Total		997 km ²	72 081 inhab.	73 municipalities.

— Map of Austria

— Detailed map of current administrative boundaries (1955)'

have been reworded as follows:

'4.3 Geographical area

The name "Marchfeld" is old; it appears in a document from as early as 1058. Marchfeld covers an area of approximately 1 041 km² and refers to the fertile plain to the east of Vienna between the Danube and March rivers. It is demarcated to the south by the Danube, to the east by the March, to the west by the city boundary of Vienna (with the exception of the Vienna cadastral municipalities of Essling, Breitenlee, Süßenbrunn and Stammersdorf, which also form part of the Marchfeld), and to the north by the western and/or northern boundaries of the municipalities of Hagenbrunn, Enzersfeld in Weinviertel, Großebersdorf, Wolkersdorf im Weinviertel, Auersthal, Matzen-Raggendorf, Prottes and Angern an der March.'

Single document

The new delimitation of the Marchfeld has also been adopted in accordance with point 4 of the single document.

Grounds:

The current demarcation of Marchfeld had become contradictory and subject to interpretation as a result of an unclear differentiation between the different types of municipalities (cadastral and local municipalities), the dissolution of the Lower Austrian district of Wien-Umgebung (Vienna periphery) in 2016, other minor changes to administrative boundaries, and a too generous spatial definition of the northern demarcation. The new wording avoids these contradictions and defines the growing area much more precisely, without expanding or restricting it.

The difference compared to the current figure for the total area of Marchfeld can therefore be explained by the fact that the original specification was drawn up using a value mentioned in literature which differs from that calculated on the basis of the current individual data of the Province of Lower Austria, the City of Vienna and Statistik Österreich.

The inclusion of up-to-date data on the area and residential population of the individual administrative units was abandoned because of the irrelevance of these data for area demarcation.

Proof of origin

The text of point 5d ('Proof of origin') of the current product specification

'Since the 19th century, Marchfeld has been important for the growing of asparagus; some farms served the Viennese Court. The Bund der Marchfelder Spargelgüter has existed since 1980. Since then, "Marchfeldspargel" has been marketed with a uniform label.'

has been moved in revised form to point 4.6. ('Link to the geographical area'). It is now replaced by provisions aimed at ensuring traceability:

4.4. Proof of origin

The applicant association keeps a list of farms in which each producer/processor of "Marchfeldspargel" PGI in the geographical area is listed.

This list contains all holdings that produce and package "Marchfeldspargel" PGI in accordance with the provisions of this specification, together with the following details:

- Holding No
- Name of the company
- Address of the site.

In order to track the flow from harvesting and processing to sale of "Marchfeldspargel" PGI, each farm must keep accurate records/documents:

1. Areas under cultivation: Current AMA multiple application from the farm with identification of the asparagus areas. It is used to prove the areas that are covered by the specification.
2. Harvested production: Each holding must keep accurate records of the quantities harvested for each parcel. At the end of the harvest period, the total harvest of each parcel and on the farm and an average yield/ha must be indicated.

3. Volume of sales: Each farm must keep accurate records of the quantities sold. Proof of this is provided by delivery notes, invoices, etc.; It must be possible to consult/check these documents at all times. Delivery notes, invoices, etc., and the label of each unit delivered must indicate the farm and a batch number or the farm and a date. At the end of the season, the flow of the product must be determined, showing the quantities harvested and sold.
4. Purchase of PGI products: If PGI products are purchased from another farm, they must be precisely documented with delivery notes, invoices, etc., and it must be possible to consult/check them at all time.
5. Need to distinguish PGI products from non-PGI products: If non-PGI products are also stored, processed or packaged at the establishment, they must be clearly identified and/or processed or packaged separately in space and time. It must be possible to consult/check the precise documentation of purchases (delivery note, invoice, etc.) and sales (delivery note, invoice, etc.) at all times.'

Grounds:

In the absence of any traceability information in the current specification, requirements are now being laid down to be complied with by all farms producing 'Marchfeldspargel' in accordance with the specification to ensure that the flow and traceability back to the producer of each packaging unit can be verified.

Method of production

Point 5e ('Production method') in the current product specification

'In view of the particular climate/soil conditions, only selected varieties are grown. Carefully harvested by hand, immediately chilled and accurately sorted, the asparagus is marketed throughout Austria within 24 hours.'

and Annex 2, in so far as it relates to point 5e ('Production Method'),

'Production of raw materials:

Owing to the specific climatic conditions (= western extension of the Pannonian climate), the special soil types (riverside, chernozem, colluvial and alluvial soils, all with a high humus content and different proportions of sand and loess), and the asparagus varieties suited (= recommended) only to these specific conditions, the growing conditions offer advantages over other growing areas

This is also because, in the case of new plantations of asparagus, the characteristics of the site are taken into account. (= attention to soil quality, good ventilation of stocks, absence of fog build-up, new plantations oriented in line with wind conditions, etc., i.e. integrated production).

Crop rotation does not pose any problems because the production area for asparagus (105 ha in 1995) is negligible compared to the total area of Marchfeld region (997 km²). Therefore no chemical decontamination of soil, as practised in intensive production areas, is permitted. It also not permitted to plant on land on which asparagus is farmed where it is not possible to ensure a sufficient period of time before the next crop is planted, or where the procedure described above for Marchfeld appears to be pointless.

In principle, land must be left fallow with green cover for 1-2 years before a young crop is planted. As a general rule, subsoiling is carried out before planting.

Seedlings are purchased exclusively from recognised asparagus-breeding businesses, unless they are produced by the farm itself. Planting takes place only if the soil conditions are good.

Production guidelines for integrated asparagus cultivation: (= all members of the Bund der Marchfelder Spargelgüter operate IP production)

1. Soil management and crop rotation - where asparagus is replanted, a rest period of at least 10 years must be observed.

2. Nutrient supply

Nitrogen

- in terms of Nmin — target values
- Nmin balance at the end of vegetation max. 80 kg/ha in 0-90 cm.
- No N-fertiliser use in productive plantations before the end of digging.

Phosphorus and potash fertiliser

- for nutrient content classes B and C, after removal from the field.
- for nutrient content D, reduced fertilisation.
- for nutrient content E, no fertilisation.

3. Crop protection

- Precedence to be given to varieties tolerant to leaf diseases.
- No waterlogging in the root area.
- Regional alerts and stock checks to be complied with.
- Precedence to be given to applying biotechnical measures.
- Precedence to be given to using methods which protect beneficial organisms and work selectively.

4. Harvesting and storage — processing in accordance with market conditions.

Description of the manufacturing/processing process:

In the case of well-developed plantations, digging (harvesting) can take place over 10-14 days in the second year. Normally, harvesting begins only in the third year and must only last until 1 June. From the fourth year, digging may continue until 24 June. In total, however, a plantation should not be harvested for more than 8 years.

Harvesting asparagus is very arduous. Each stem must be dug up manually and cut using an asparagus knife, and the earth bank must then be refilled, again by hand. This also explains the high price of this prized vegetable.

Asparagus is brought to the farm immediately after harvesting and cooled with ice water (1-2 °C), cut (by length) and sorted (by diameter), and then placed in cold storage (1-2 °C).

The length of the asparagus stalks must not exceed 22 cm for the colour group white and violet, 25 cm for the colour group green-violet and for green asparagus (normally 27 cm). This prevents or reduces any woodiness.

It is then sold from the farm or packaged on the same day and dispatched throughout Austria to the catering or vegetable trade.

The members of the Bund der Marchfelder Spargelgüter are able to supply fresh asparagus products on a daily basis to customers throughout Austria via special transport systems. "Marchfeldspargel" is available anywhere in Austria within 24 hours of harvesting.

"Marchfeldspargel" may be packaged only in anti-humidity, light-deflecting materials which can be sealed.'

are summarised and amended as follows:

'4.5. Method of production

4.5.1. Know-how — Site/Soil Requirements

Asparagus cultivation takes place at locations situated at a distance from each other so that epidemiological infestations of diseases and pests can be avoided.

In the case of new plantations, the characteristics of the site should be taken into account. In addition to soil quality, particular attention should be paid to the possibility of a good ventilation of stocks and the prevailing wind conditions.

Where asparagus is replanted, a rest period of at least 10 years must be observed. As the production area of "Marchfeldspargel" is negligible compared to the total area of Marchfeld region, such crop rotation does not pose any problems. Chemical decontamination of soil, as practised in intensive production areas, is therefore not necessary and is also not permitted.

1-2 years before planting a young asparagus crop, a greening crop may be sowed in the field. If necessary, subsoiling is carried out before planting.

4.5.2. Varieties

The choice of varieties is not restricted; however, the applicant group recommends that only those varieties of asparagus which are particularly suitable for cultivation under the particular climatic conditions prevailing in the Marchfeld region (i.e. the western extension of the Pannonian climate) or in the special soil types available (i.e. riverside, chernozem, colluvial and alluvial soils with high humus levels and varying levels of sand and loess) should be cultivated.

The following asparagus varieties are used or, in any event, recommended:

- German: Ruhm von Braunschweig, Schwetzingen Meisterschuß, Huchels Auslese, Lukullus, Vulkan, Presto, Merkur, Hermes, Eposs, Ravel, Ramos, Ramires, Huchels Alpha, Hannibal, Mondeo, Rapsody, Ramada, Raffaello, Violetta 1192
- Specific German green asparagus varieties (=anthozyane-free): Spaganiva, Schneewittchen, Schneekopf, Viridas, Primavera, Ariane, Steiniva, Steineo
- Dutch: Venlim, Carlim, Gijnlim, Boonlim, Backlim, Thielim, Horlim, Prelim, Grolim, Vitalim, Herkolim, Avalim, Cumulus, Magnus, Tallems, Fortems, Primems, Cygnus, Bejo 2827, Portlim, Frühlim, Terralim, Cychus, Prius, Finalus, Sunlim, Erasmus, Atticus, Maxlim, Starlim, Aspalim
- Specific Dutch green asparagus varieties (=anthozyane-free): Xenolim, Vegalim, Bacchus
- French: Larac, Cito, Aneto, Desto, Selection "Darbonne n°4", Selection "Darbonne n°3", Jacq.Ma.2001, Jacq. Ma.2002, Viola, Andreas, Dariana, Cipres, Darsiane, Darlise, Voltaire, Obelisk, Burgundine
- Spanish varieties: Placospes, Dazilla, Darbella
- Italian varieties: Ercole, Franco, Eros, Giove, Violette di Albegna
- United States of America varieties: Mary Washington
- Canadian varieties: Guelph Millennium

Any updated lists of varieties can be obtained from the association managing the specification.

If not produced by the farm itself, planting stock must be obtained exclusively from recognised asparagus-breeding establishments registered as such in an EU Member State.

4.5.3. Production

Organic production (holdings with BIO certification) or the requirements defined in point 4.5.3.1. must be complied with by all farms.

4.5.3.1. Nutrient supply and plant protection

The following values must be complied with as an alternative to the requirements for obtaining organic certification:

Nutrient supply

Nitrogen

- in terms of Nmin — target values
- Nmin balance at the end of vegetation max. 80 kg/ha in 0-90 cm
- No N-fertiliser use in productive plantations before the end of digging

Phosphorus and potash fertiliser

- for nutrient content classes B and C, after removal from the field
- for nutrient content D, reduced fertilisation.
- for nutrient content E, no fertilisation.

Crop protection

In order to ensure optimum conditions for the cultivation of “Marchfeldspargel”, the following parameters must be observed:

- Precedence to be given to varieties tolerant to leaf diseases
- no waterlogging in the root area.
- regional alerts and stock checks to be complied with
- precedence to be given to applying biotechnical measures.
- precedence to be given to using methods which protect beneficial organisms and work selectively.

4.5.3.2. Harvesting/processing:

In the case of well-developed plantations, digging (harvesting) can take place over 10-14 days in the second year. In all other cases, harvesting begins only in the third year and must only last until 1 June. From the fourth year, digging may continue until 24 June. A plantation should not be harvested for more than 8 years in total.

Harvesting asparagus is very arduous. Each individual stem must be dug up and cut away from the using an asparagus knife. The earth bank must then be refilled by hand.

Asparagus is brought to the farm immediately after harvesting and cooled with cold water (1-8 °C), cut (by length) and sorted (by diameter), and then placed in cold storage (1-8 °C).

In the case of peeled “Marchfeldspargel”, freshly harvested stalks are peeled downwards from approximately 2-3 cm below the head of the asparagus using a peeler/knife. No visible remains of peel must be left on the asparagus stalk.

Broken asparagus stalks may also be presented for sale as peeled broken asparagus or peeled asparagus pieces.

Producers of “Marchfeldspargel” PGI must hold a valid GRASP certificate (level of compliance: fully compliant) in order to sell or market “Marchfeldspargel” PGI.

4.5.3.3. Packaging and presentation

“Marchfeldspargel” PGI is either sold fresh from the farm or packaged and dispatched on the same day; all stages of production (including peeling) and subsequent packaging must take place in the geographical area. “Marchfeldspargel” (unpeeled, peeled and broken/in pieces) may be packaged only in anti-humidity, light-deflecting materials which can be sealed. Variations in accordance with customer wishes are, however, permissible.

The contents of each package or bundle in a package must be uniform and contain only asparagus of the same origin, quality, colour group and, where sizing is required, size. The visible part of the contents of the package or bundle must be representative of the entire contents.

Shoots on the outside of the bundle must correspond in appearance and diameter to the average of the whole bundle. The shoots must be of the same length. Bundles must be arranged regularly in the package and be of equal weight and length; each bundle may be protected by paper.

Special transport systems ensure that "Marchfeldspargel" is available anywhere in Austria within 24 hours of harvesting.'

Single document:

The sentences 'The choice of varieties is not restricted, but the applicant group recommends that only varieties of asparagus which have proved to be suitable for the conditions prevailing in Marchfeld be cultivated. The following asparagus varieties are used or are in any case recommended:' have been added to point 3.2 of the single document under the sub-point 'Varieties:'. At the same time, the existing list of recommended varieties is replaced by the updated list in point 4.5.2. of the specification.

The following requirements are inserted, also in accordance with point 3.2.:

- if not produced by the farmer themselves, planting stock must be obtained exclusively from recognised asparagus-breeding establishments, which must be registered as such in an EU Member State.
- the criteria for organic production or, alternatively, the nutrient supply and plant protection criteria defined in point 4.5.3.1 of the specification must be complied with, and
- producers of 'Marchfeldspargel' PGI must hold a valid GRASP certificate (level of compliance: fully compliant) in order to sell or market 'Marchfeldspargel' PGI.

Point 3.4 of the single document states that all stages of production, including any peeling of the asparagus, must take place in the geographical area.

In the first paragraph of point 3.5 of the current single document, the sentence

'Marchfeldspargel' PGI is either sold fresh from the farm or packaged and dispatched on the same day; in view of these timelines, and in order to maintain the quality of the asparagus, particularly its freshness and tenderness, packaging must take place in the geographical area.'

is supplemented and the final sentence

'The asparagus may be packaged only in anti-humidity, light-deflecting materials which can be sealed.'

is replaced by the following:

'The asparagus must be packaged in anti-humidity, light-deflecting materials which can be sealed. Variations in accordance with customer wishes are, however, permissible.'

Grounds:

The current text in the product specification and in Annex 2, insofar as it relates to the production process, have been summarised and restructured. The text in Annex 2 relating to point 5b ('Description concerning differences in production methods') on uniformity and presentation and on distribution is also inserted here. No substantive changes have been made, except as regards the following points:

- Varieties tolerated: In the current version of the specification, the permitted varieties are not listed exhaustively merely as a list of varieties recommended because they are adapted to the area and ensure the desired tenderness and absence of bitterness was given. However, the wording of the various parts of the specification in this respect has repeatedly given rise to different interpretations. In fact, only these varieties were grown in practice. For the sake of clarity in carrying out checks, this list was supplemented in 2002 and should now be adapted again. The following are listed as new varieties:

- Ramires, Huchels Alpha, Hannibal, Mondeo, Rapsody, Ramada, Raffaelo, Violetta 1192, Viridas, Primavera, Ariane, Steiniva, Steineo, Vitalim, Herkolim, Avalim, Cumulus, Magnus, Tallem, Fortems, Primems, Cygnus, Bejo 2827, Portlim, Frühlim, Terralim, Cychus, Prius, Finalus, Sunlim, Erasmus, Atticus, Maxlim, Starlim, Aspalim, Xenolim, Vegalim, Bacchus, Darsiane, Darlise, Voltaire, Obelisk, Burgundine, Placospes, Dazilla, Darbella, Ercole, Franco, Eros, Giove, Violette di Albegna and Guelph Millennium.
- However, in view of the fact that the breeding objectives for all new varieties since the end of the 1990s have been focussed on tenderness and fewer bitter substances, it should at the same time be specified that the choice of varieties is not limited to that list of varieties, but is open. This list contains varieties recommended by the applicant group on the basis of practical experience, but does not exclude the use of other varieties. This is not expected to result in a deterioration in the quality of the product in terms of tenderness and the level of bitter substances. The choice of appropriate varieties is up to the producer. Before being placed on the market, the asparagus is checked by the control body and may only bear the protected name 'Marchfeldspargel' PGI if it meets the declared quality requirements. In addition, given that asparagus is a multiannual crop which cannot be harvested until after the third year, the risk of producers deliberately accepting reductions in quality which might prevent them from marketing their product under the protected name for years can be assessed as low.
- The production guidelines for integrated cultivation (IP) of asparagus have been replaced by the Special Regulation on the Austrian programme for environmentally friendly agriculture (ÖPUL). Consequently, the IPs are no longer valid. It has therefore been necessary to delete the reference to IPs. As the requirements of the IPs on nutrient supply and phosphorus and potash fertilisation still need to be complied with as an alternative to the requirements for organic production, these have now been included separately in point 4.5.3.1. of the specification.
- Compliance with the criteria for organic production or those further defined in 4.5.3.1 with regard to nutrient supply and plant protection guarantees consumers not only the best quality but also environmentally friendly production.
- New market forms: As a result of changes in consumer demand, 'Marchfeldspargel' PGI may also be marketed as broken asparagus or asparagus pieces (i.e. fragments with or without the asparagus head) and in peeled form (whole stalks and pieces may be peeled). The characteristics associated with the designation 'Marchfeldspargel' in the eyes of consumers remain unaffected by peeling or the fact that the stalks are broken. For some dishes, asparagus items offered at lower prices are specifically requested. The inclusion of these pieces under the protected indication of origin increases the certainty for consumers that they are actually receiving high-quality asparagus in this product segment too, and allows producers to sell a greater proportion of their harvest under controlled conditions.
- Producers of 'Marchfeldspargel' PGI are aware of their responsibility towards customers and employees and for the reputation of the product. For this reason, and also in accordance with customer wishes, the welfare and rights of employees (permanent and seasonal workers) are guaranteed by means of certification under GRASP (GlobalGAP Risk Assessment on Social Practice). GRASP is an additional certification module to assess the risk to workers' welfare.
- Packaging: The requirements in this regard are made clearer without imposing any additional requirements. The current strict restriction to the use of anti-humidity, light-deflecting packaging materials which can be sealed has been dropped (deletion of the word 'exclusively'), and it should be possible to diverge from this in the future.
- Cold water at a temperature of 1-8° will in future be stipulated for cooling the asparagus after harvesting instead of ice water (1-2°). Ice water heats up relatively quickly once warm asparagus has been placed in it and remains there for a longer period. A tolerance range for water temperature has consequently been laid down for practical reasons. This also has a positive impact on the quality of 'Marchfeldspargel', as cracks in the asparagus may occur, which have a negative impact on its appearance, if it is left too long at a cold temperature. For the same reasons, the temperature in the cold store has been changed from 1-2 °C to a 1-8 °C.

- The implementation of the production steps solely in the geographical area serves to maintain quality and ensure regional origin. In order to ensure the quality of the asparagus, permanent humidification must be ensured during processing. This can no longer be guaranteed in the case of long journey times. It is therefore essential that cooling and packaging take place in the geographical area. If the transport routes are too long, i. e. beyond the defined area, the product would inevitably become more dried out. This would result in a loss of quality in terms of the typical fresh appearance of the harvested fresh asparagus and the typical asparagus aroma. The freshness of the product also prevents vitamin losses.

Link with the geographical area

Point 5f of the product specification

‘The Marchfeld region is located in the western extension of the Pannonian steppe climate. These climatic conditions, together with the specific soil types (riverside, chernozem, colluvial and alluvial soils with high humus levels and varying levels of loam and loess) form the perfect combination for asparagus cultivation.’

and Annex 2, in so far as it relates to point 5f (‘Link with the geographical area’),

‘The influence of soil, climate and the long experience of regional asparagus farmers on the “Marchfeldspargel” product:

As already mentioned, the Marchfeld region boasts specific soil conditions, with the presence, in particular, of riverside, chernozem, colluvial and alluvial soils, all of which have high humus levels and varying levels of sand and loess.

The region also is also characterised by specific climatic conditions, Marchfeld being part of the western extension of the Pannonian climate. Together with South-East Styria, this region has the highest number of hours of sunshine in all of Austria. Moreover, Marchfeld is one of Austria’s warmest regions. The high average temperatures, with generally sufficient humidity, give rise to very favourable condition for crop production, especially as the growing season in Marchfeld is one of the longest in Austria.

The fact that these conditions are ideal for asparagus plants is also demonstrated by the fact that the wild asparagus is native here.

In addition to these ideal growing conditions, it is the region’s asparagus growers who “ennoble” the product into “Marchfeldspargel”.

Based on long experience (= cultivation trials), only varieties that are most suitable for these specific growing conditions are recommended (see description for raw materials).

All members of the Bund der Marchfelder Spargelgüter produce asparagus in accordance with IP production guidelines and/or organic production. This guarantees that the product harvested is of the best internal quality.

“Marchfeldspargel” is characterised by its particularly typical asparagus aroma.

It contains fewer bitter substances and is particularly tender.

Immediately after harvesting, the asparagus is cooled with ice water, sorted and stored in the cold store.

Specific customised sorting (e.g. Marchfelder Solospargel, designed for the catering industry, with a minimum diameter of 20 mm and a maximum deviation of 6 mm per package; see media reports) and distribution throughout Austria within 24 hours round off the success of “Marchfeldspargel” (see media reports).

The fact that “Marchfeldspargel” is now associated with a certain tradition is also apparent from various recipes for pies, drinks and bakes, etc., containing “Marchfeldspargel” (see media reports).

The opening of the “Marchfeldspargel” season by the Federal President, the crowning of the “Marchfeldspargel” Queen by the Federal Chancellor, the World Asparagus Championship in Marchfeld, the asparagus festival and, last but not least, the asparagus weeks held in restaurants (throughout Austria) demonstrate that “Marchfeldspargel” has become a unique concept. (see media reports).’

are replaced by:

‘4.6 Link with the geographical area

The Marchfeld boasts specific soil conditions ideally suited to growing asparagus. In particular, chernozem, colluvial and alluvial soils, all of which have high humus levels and varying levels of sand and loess, are present in the region. Its climatic conditions are also distinctive. The Marchfeld region is characterised by its situation at the western extension of the Pannonian climate and, together with South-East Styria, has the highest number of hours of sunshine in all of Austria. In addition, Marchfeld is one of Austria’s warmest areas. The high average temperatures, with generally sufficient humidity, give rise to very favourable condition for crop production, especially as the growing season in Marchfeld is one of the longest in Austria.

The fact that these climate and soil conditions are ideal for asparagus plants is also demonstrated by the fact that the wild asparagus is native here.

In addition to these favourable growing conditions, it is the region’s asparagus growers who “ennoble” the product into “Marchfeldspargel”. On the basis of long experience (cultivation trials), only varieties best suited to these specific production conditions which, as a result of their cultivation and the soil and climatic conditions, develop few bitter substances, are recommended. Asparagus growers have also agreed on a shorter length of asparagus stalks, deliberately cutting them further away from the rootstock, which contributes to a comparatively lower woodiness. “Marchfeldspargel” is widely known for its particular tenderness.

‘Since the 19th century, Marchfeld has been very important for the growing of asparagus; some farms served the Viennese Court. A wide range of various recipes for pies, drinks and bakes, etc., containing “Marchfeldspargel” illustrate the long-standing tradition of the product.

Numerous social events, such as the opening of the “Marchfeldspargel” season by the Federal President, the crowning of the “Marchfeldspargel” Queen by the Federal Chancellor, the World Asparagus Championship in Marchfeld, the asparagus festival and, last but not least, the asparagus weeks held in restaurants (throughout Austria) showcasing “Marchfeldspargel” PGI demonstrate that “Marchfeldspargel” PGI is a unique concept with a far-reaching reputation and major sentimental significance.’

Single document:

Point 5 of the single document begins with a clarification of the factors that are vital for the link; then the sentences

‘The long experience of the “Marchfeldspargel” farmers helps to ensure that only varieties best suited to the production conditions are cultivated. Given that the asparagus varieties used are well suited to the specific soil conditions in the Marchfeld region, “Marchfeldspargel” contains fewer bitter substances.’

are replaced by the following:

‘The long experience of the “Marchfeldspargel” farmers helps to ensure that only varieties best suited to the specific production conditions and which, as a result of their cultivation and the soil and climatic conditions, develop few bitter substances, are recommended.’

The explanations on the reputation of 'Marchfeldspargel' are supplemented.

Grounds:

The historical references originally contained in point 5d ('Proof of origin') have now been incorporated into point 4.6. ('Link with the geographical area') and merged with the current text on the relevant climate and soil conditions of the Marchfeld region and human factors affecting the quality of the product into a single text. This does not entail any substantive changes. The reference to the practice of cutting the asparagus stalks further away from the woody rootstock or cutting them shorter than is usual for comparable products has been taken from Annex 2 to point 5b (i.e. the text describing the characteristics distinguishing 'Marchfeldspargel' from comparable products).

Labelling

The original version of point 5h of the product specification reads as follows:

'Protected designation "Marchfeldspargel", manufacturer's name, address, colour group, class, sorting, weight'

This is replaced with the following:

'5. Labelling

In addition to the mandatory markings required by EU law, each unit packed ready for sale must bear, in a clearly legible and indelible manner, the name and address of the producer, the colour group, the class, the grading and weight, in addition to a batch number or date.'

Single document:

The detailed instructions on labelling have also been included in point 3.6 of the single document.

Grounds:

For the sake of clarity and to improve customer information, it is explicitly stipulated that the additional information must be clear and clearly legible and placed in a prominent place for customers on each unit ready for sale.

Other

— The name of the applicant group has been changed to 'Verein Marchfeldspargel g.g.A'.

— In point 6 ('Control body'), the address of the control body is corrected and its tasks are defined as follows:

'Verification of the product characteristics and the documents and evidence of plausibility and compliance with the specification referred to in point 4.4. ("Proof of origin").'

— Type of product

The reference to 'vegetables' in point 4 of the current specification ('Type of product') has been replaced by the following text corresponding to the nomenclature in Annex XI to Implementing Regulation (EU) No 668/2014:

'4.1. Type of product

Class 1.6. Fruit, vegetables and cereals fresh or processed.'

A change to the product is therefore only appropriate in so far as 'Marchfeldspargel' is now partly sold in peeled form.

— The reference to the Alimentarius Austriacus Code in the current point on 'National requirements' has been removed since it must generally be complied with irrespective of whether it is mentioned in the specification, especially in view of the fact that this point is no longer to be regarded as necessary content in a specification.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

'Marchfeldspargel'

EU No: PGI-AT-1462-AM04 – 25.5.2022

PDO () PGI (X)

1. Name(s) [of PDO or PGI]

'Marchfeldspargel'

2. Member State or Third Country

Austria

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 the product to which the name in (1) applies

'Marchfeldspargel' is marketed fresh, peeled or unpeeled, in whole stalks or in the form of broken asparagus or asparagus pieces. The asparagus stalks (= young shoots of the asparagus species 'Asparagus Officinalis L.') must be healthy, free of damage from inappropriate washing, clean, fresh in appearance and smell, pest-free and free of damage from rodents or insects, practically free from crushing, bruising or abnormal external moisture, and free from foreign odours and/or taste. The cut at the base of the stalks must be as clean as possible. The asparagus stalks must not be hollow, split, stripped of their peel (except where the asparagus is to be marketed as peeled) or broken (except where it is to be marketed as broken asparagus or asparagus pieces). Small cracks which have appeared after harvesting are permitted to a limited extent. 'Marchfeldspargel' has a typical, fine asparagus aroma, with few bitter substances. Its taste must not be too bitter or woody.

The asparagus is divided into four categories according to colour:

- white asparagus;
- violet asparagus: tips of a colour between pink and violet/purple and a partly white stalk;
- violet-green asparagus: partly violet and green colouring;
- green asparagus: tips and most of the stalk must be green.

White and violet asparagus must not exceed 22 cm in length, violet-green and green asparagus must not exceed 25 cm in length.

Varieties:

The choice of varieties is not restricted, but the applicant group recommends that only varieties of asparagus which have proved to be suitable for the conditions prevailing in Marchfeld. The following asparagus varieties are used or, in any event, recommended:

- German: Ruhm von Braunschweig, Schwetzingen Meisterschuß, Huchels Auslese, Lukullus, Vulkan, Presto, Merkur, Hermes, Eposs, Ravel, Ramos, Ramires, Huchels Alpha, Hannibal, Mondeo, Rapsody, Ramada, Raffaello, Violetta 1192

- Specific German green asparagus varieties (=anthozyane-free): Spaganiva, Schneewittchen, Schneekopf, Viridas, Primavera, Ariane, Steiniva, Steineo
- Dutch: Venlim, Carlim, Gijnlim, Boonlim, Backlim, Thielim, Horlim, Prelim, Grolim, Vitalim, Herkolim, Avalim, Cumulus, Magnus, Tallem, Fortems, Primems, Cygnus, Bejo 2827, Portlim, Frühlim, Terralim, Cychus, Prius, Finalus, Sunlim, Erasmus, Atticus, Maxlim, Starlim, Aspalim
- Specific Dutch green asparagus varieties (=anthozyane-free): Xenolim, Vegalim, Bacchus
- French varieties: Larac, Cito, Aneto, Desto, Selection 'Darbonne n°4', Selection 'Darbonne n°3', Jacq.Ma.2001, Jacq.Ma.2002, Viola, Andreas, Dariana, Cipres, Darsiane, Darlise, Voltaire, Obelisk, Burgundine
- Spanish varieties: Placospes, Dazilla, Darbella
- Italian varieties: Ercole, Franco, Eros, Giove, Violetto di Albegna
- United States of America varieties: Mary Washington
- Canadian varieties: Guelph Millennium.

If not produced by the farm itself, the planting stock is obtained exclusively from recognised asparagus-breeding establishments registered as such in an EU Member State.

The criteria for organic production or, alternatively, the nutrient supply and plant protection criteria in the specification must be complied with.

Producers of 'Marchfeldspargel' must hold a valid GRASP certificate (level of compliance: fully compliant) in order to sell or market 'Marchfeldspargel' PGI.

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

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

All stages of production, including any peeling of the asparagus, must take place in the defined geographical area.

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

'Marchfeldspargel' PGI is either sold fresh from the farm or packaged and dispatched on the same day; in view of these timelines, and in order to maintain the quality of the asparagus, particularly its freshness and tenderness, packaging must take place in the geographical area. 'Marchfeldspargel' is marketed in firmly bound bundles, stacked in boxes, or in small packs. The asparagus is sorted by size according to the diameters in the specification. The contents of each package or bundle must be uniform and must include only asparagus of the same origin, product category and colour category. The asparagus may be packaged only in anti-humidity, light-deflecting materials which can be sealed. Variations in accordance with customer wishes are, however, permissible.

A special transport system ensures that the day's fresh asparagus is available throughout Austria within 24 hours.

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

In addition to the mandatory markings required by EU law, each unit packed ready for sale shall bear, in a clearly legible and indelible manner, the name and address of the producer, the colour group, the class, the grading and weight, in addition to a batch number or date.

4. Concise definition of the geographical area

Marchfeld: The fertile plain east of Vienna between the Danube and the March rivers. It is demarcated to the south by the Danube, to the east by the March, to the west by the city boundary of Vienna (with the exception of the Vienna cadastral municipalities of Essling, Breitenlee, Süssenbrunn and Stammersdorf, which also form part of the Marchfeld), and to the north by the western and/or northern boundaries of the municipalities of Hagenbrunn, Enzersfeld in Weinviertel, Großebersdorf, Wolkersdorf im Weinviertel, Auersthal, Matzen-Raggendorf, Prottes and Angern an der March.

5. Link with the geographical area

'Marchfeldspargel's PGI status is based firstly on its quality, due to the combination of natural and human factors, and secondly on its reputation and special value as a top-level product.

The Marchfeld region is influenced by the climate of the western extension of the Pannonian Steppes and has specific soil types (riverside, chernozem, colluvial and alluvial soils with high humus levels and varying high levels of loam and loess). Together with south-east Styria, it has the highest number of hours of sunshine per year of any region in Austria and it is one of the warmest areas in the country. The Marchfeld region has been an influential asparagus-producing region since the nineteenth century (at the time of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, individual farms supplied the Viennese Court), so the 'Marchfeldspargel' farmers are very experienced in asparagus cultivation. The favourable production conditions make it easy to comply with ecological standards.

'Marchfeldspargel' is characterised by its particularly specific asparagus aroma; it contains fewer bitter substances than comparable products and is striking on account of its particular tenderness.

The climatic conditions combined with the specific soil types provide the perfect basis for asparagus cultivation. The high mean temperatures and sufficient humidity mean that conditions are very well suited to crop growing. The wild form of asparagus is thus native to the Marchfeld region. The long experience of the 'Marchfeldspargel' asparagus farmers helps to ensure that only varieties best suited to the specific production conditions and which, as a result of their cultivation and the soil and climatic conditions, develop few bitter substances, are recommended. Moreover, 'Marchfeldspargel' shoots are cut shorter on harvesting than comparable products, so they are less woody.

'Marchfeldspargel' also enjoys a good reputation. The Marchfeld region is known as Austria's 'breadbasket' and 'vegetable garden'. 'Marchfeldspargel', the 'king' of the Marchfeld, is the 'brand which gives the entire region its identity' (see the interview on the website [unserespezialitaeten.at/der-marchfeldspargel](https://www.unserespezialitaeten.at/der-marchfeldspargel) in which local organic farmer Markus Brandenstein states: 'When people talk about the Marchfeld today, they think of 'Marchfeldspargel'. 'Trying harvest-fresh Marchfeld asparagus' is one of the 'ten things you have to do when visiting Marchfeld' (see hits when searching for this keyword).

The start and progress of the asparagus season is extensively reported upon in the local media and the Internet (e. g. the 'AbHof' blog - 'Asparagus is finally back: the Marchfeld'; GOURMET Blog entry of 12.4.2020 - 'Earthed! Our asparagus from the Marchfeld'; Ögreissler - 'Asparagus - the royal vegetable from the Marchfeld'; Report by Stefan Havranek in NÖN magazine, 27.3.2020, on the campaign entitled 'Marchfeld asparagus is a YouTube star' - numerous film portraits with the keyword 'Marchfeldspargel'; Article in the Wiener Zeitung newspaper of 20.4.2018 entitled 'Cheap sham asparagus - Austrian farmers complain that imported asparagus is being sold as "Marchfeldspargel"'; Article in Kurier magazine by Ute Brühl and Julia Schrenk, 23.4.2021, entitled 'The taste of spring', and many more).

Several events such as the opulent gala opening of the Marchfeld asparagus season, the crowning of the 'asparagus queen' and special 'Marchfeldspargel' weeks in restaurants across Austria demonstrate that 'Marchfeldspargel' PGI is a unique product with a far-reaching reputation and major sentimental significance (see the countless hits on the Internet for the keywords 'Marchfeld asparagus season', 'Marchfeld asparagus queen' or 'Marchfeld asparagus gala').

Various recipes, for example for Marchfeld asparagus pies, bakes, omelettes or risotto, to name but a few, illustrate the long tradition of using 'Marchfeldspargel' in Austrian cuisine (see also the 1997 book by Ingrid Haslinger entitled 'Der Marchfeldspargel Das Kaisergemüse' [Marchfeld asparagus - the imperial vegetable], published by Verlag Pichler, which goes into great detail about the history and growing methods, and features several recipes, or the 2006 book 'So kocht Österreich' [This is how Austria cooks], containing 150 top recipes from Austria's best chefs, published by Residenz-Verlag. The OTS0010 press release of 19.6.2006 states that: 'Not lobster, caviar or turbot but rather trout, saddle of lamb or "Marchfeldspargel" are the "stars" of this valuable recipe book').

Reference to publication of the specification

<https://www.patentamt.at/herkunftsangaben/marchfeldspargel/> and can also be accessed directly via the Austrian Patent Office's website (www.patentamt.at) by navigating to the following: Trademarks/Apply for Trademarks/Geographical indications. The text appears under the name of the quality designation.

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

(2023/C 306/05)

This publication confers the right to oppose the application pursuant to Article 51 of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽¹⁾ within 3 months from the date of this publication.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

‘Φακή Εγκλουβής / Faki Eglouvis’

EU No: PDO-GR-02646 - 11.11.2020

PDO (X) PGI ()

1. Name(s)

‘Φακή Εγκλουβής / Faki Eglouvis’

2. Member State or Third Country

Greece

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

‘Φακή Εγκλουβής / Faki Eglouvis’ refers to the seeds of plants of the local (unimproved) lentil population (a local landrace) (*Lens culinaris* – *Fabaceae*) which is grown on the Englouvi plateau on the Ionian island of Lefkada. With regard to their physical characteristics, ‘Φακή Εγκλουβής’ lentils are small-seeded and vary in diameter from 2,8 to 6,0 mm. Their appearance is smooth, and they are not as flat as other varieties, as in general, lentils tend to vary between 2 and 9 mm in diameter. The weight of 1 000 lentils varies between 26 and 30 grams.

The pericarp is variegated in colour with pale green, pale yellow and light and dark brown predominating. A large proportion of the lentils (around 30 %) have black or dark stippling or patches on them, which is another characteristic of ‘Φακή Εγκλουβής’, as is the presence of a small proportion (around 4 %) of black lentils.

As regards their chemical composition, ‘Φακή Εγκλουβής’ lentils are richer in nutrient contents such as iron — Fe (100-200 mg/kg), potassium — K (7 100-9 100 mg/kg), phosphorus — P (2 200-3 800 mg/kg) and fat (over 1,7 %), which is a source of fatty acids such as linoleic and oleic acids.

When cooked, the lentils develop specific organoleptic characteristics, for example:

- they soften quickly when boiled and break up, with the result that the cooked product thickens into a smooth, soup-like consistency.
- they become a glossy, thick soup with a particularly creamy appearance.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 343, 14.12.2012, p. 1.

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

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

All the stages in the production process from cultivation (preparing the soil, sowing, irrigation, fertiliser application, weeding, plant protection) to harvesting and sorting the product, as well as collecting seeds for the following year, must take place within the defined geographical area.

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

Packaging – Grading

After being temporarily stored on the producer's premises, the lentils are transported to the packaging facility. They are packaged within the cultivation area, so as to guarantee 100 % product authenticity, for their quality and reputation is such that they command much higher prices than other lentils. For this reason, it is absolutely essential to guarantee their origin. That is the purpose of the traceability system. In the past there have been legal proceedings to stop the sale of other lentil varieties under the name 'Φακή Εγκλουβής'. The product is sold in various packaging weights of up to 30 kg.

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

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

The defined geographical area comprises the Municipal District (local community) of the village of Englouvi, located within the Municipal Unit of Karya in the Municipality of Lefkada, in the Regional Unit of Lefkada, in the Ionian Islands Region.

5. **Link with the geographical area**

The product's link with the geographical area is founded on its quality, as reflected in the minerals that give it high nutritional value, its organoleptic characteristics, good boilability, which means the lentils break down into a creamy soup-like consistency, and also the genetic characteristics of the local unimproved lentil population that is grown in the area of Englouvi (lentil size and colour, fast growth cycle).

Specificity of the geographical area

'Φακή Εγκλουβής' is named after the Englouvi plateau where the product is grown, which is also called Vouni. The plateau is enclosed by the slopes of Mount Elati and consists of a plain covering an overall area of approximately 300 ha, of which approximately 100 ha are cultivated, using crop rotation and letting land lie fallow. The altitude ranges from 750 m to 950 m and the lentils are grown on various areas of the plateau.

The characteristics common to the areas where the 'Φακή Εγκλουβής' lentils are grown are the plateau's microclimate and soil.

a. Climate

Given the local weather conditions, 'Φακή Εγκλουβής' are grown from January (sowing) to June (harvest). The rains and winds that prevail from April until the end of May play a decisive role in the quality and quantity of the lentil crop. This period of rain and west-north-westerly winds that blow from the Ionian sea favours successful pollination and by extension production.

In the predominantly dry farming of the lentils on the Englouvi plateau, the rainfall, relative humidity, morning dew and abovementioned favourable winds are all elements that have for centuries facilitated the cultivation of 'Φακή Εγκλουβής' and contributed most to their quality.

b. Soil

The soil in the area around the village of Englouvi is heterogeneous, shallow in most areas, of average granulometry, made up of sand and clay and rich in carbon bearing material. As a result, it is well drained.

The low levels of calcium carbonate (CaCO_3) in the top soil down to a depth of 30 cm are due to its intense leaching out of those strata. The above clearly help to create favourable conditions for lentil growing.

The extensive soil analyses carried out in different areas of the Englouvi plateau show that:

As regards mechanical composition, there are high percentages (above 60 %) of sand and loam and the soil can be described as sandy clayey loam.

The soil is high in organic matter everywhere and this increases its porosity, which in turn enhances its water retention capacity and creates good aeration conditions. These factors act as catalysts, promoting plant development in the difficult and water-scarce conditions of the Englouvi plateau.

Nitrogen (N) and magnesium (Mg) levels are sufficient or overabundant in 100 % of the soils.

Phosphorus (P) and potassium (K) levels are sufficient or overabundant in 90 % of the soils, which helps the plants to produce strong shoots and promotes flowering and a good crop.

Iron (Fe) levels are also sufficient or overabundant in 75 % of the plateau's soils.

Calcium carbonate (CaCO_3) verges on zero or else is at an absolute minimum in approximately 80 % of the soils.

c. Human factors

Selecting the seed for the following year's crop is done by choosing the lentils that are in the best condition, healthy and have the characteristics described in point 3.2.

The producers' expertise in selecting and using seed from their own plants is of crucial importance for the above.

In general: the sowing is done by hand, manure is used as fertiliser, plant diseases and pests are combated using the ecosystem itself or plant protection preparations where necessary, the crop is dry farmed and some of the fields are very occasionally irrigated where there is accessibility, weeds are removed by weeding or very occasionally, with suitable plant protection preparations, harvesting is done mostly by hand but also by mechanical means, when the producers judge on the basis of their experience that the time is right, final sieving is done with two sizes of sieve and any foreign matter is subsequently removed by hand. All of the above highlights the importance of the human factor in selecting this local (unimproved) lentil population, which has been grown in the region of Englouvi since at least the 18th century, without any cross-breeding with other varieties/populations of lentils. It therefore constitutes a population that is the result of empirical selection by local farmers over many years in a restricted geographical location.

Specificity of the product

'Φακή Εγκλουβής' stands out on account of certain characteristics, which render it distinct from other lentil varieties. These characteristics can be described as follows:

Genetic characteristics: as the lentil is a self-pollinated plant and as the area where it is grown in Englouvi is cut off, it has not suffered any genetic erosion, with the result that the population has adapted to the region's climatic conditions and by extension developed stability and drought and pest resistance, etc.

Lentil characteristics: 'Φακή Εγκλουβής' lentils have a smooth surface and are less flattened than other lentil varieties, which is a characteristic of this specific type of lentil. The lentils are particularly small. It should also be noted that many of the lentils have black or dark stippling or patches on them, which is another characteristic of this type of lentil, as is the presence of a small proportion of black lentils. When cooked, 'Φακή Εγκλουβής', given that they are small lentils, heat up faster than the medium- to large sized varieties, meaning that their nutritional value tends to be better preserved and not destroyed by cooking. The limited loss of nutritional value during boiling is due to the fact that the lentils are not exposed to high temperatures for very long.

Nutritional characteristics: as regards chemical composition, 'Φακή Εγκλουβής' lentils are rich in nutrients and have a high fat content, which gives them nutritional value. With regard to this latter point, it should be noted that the fat content of 'Φακή Εγκλουβής' (1,8 % on average) is clearly higher than that of other lentils on the Greek market (over 0,9 %) and higher than documented levels (U.S. Department of Agriculture - USDA 1,1 %).

Organoleptic characteristics: the use of descriptive terms by the tasting panel, such as creamy appearance and a thick, soup-like consistency, are further confirmation of the product's value.

Causal link between the geographical area and the quality or characteristics of the product (for PDOs)

The combination of the very specific climatic and soil conditions, the local landrace lentil and human factors, all contribute to creating this product, which historical sources confirm has been grown on the Englouvi plateau since the 18th century.

Lentil size – genetic characteristics: the specific physical characteristics of the lentils (size, colour, shape) are those of the local population of 'Φακή Εγκλουβής'. The stability of the local (unimproved) population of 'Φακή Εγκλουβής' is ensured by the fact that lentils are a self-pollinating crop and, above all, that the region where they are grown is geographically isolated and the terrain has specific characteristics. The result is that the genetic characteristics of the local lentil population, such as the fast growth cycle and small size, have remained unaltered over time. It should be noted that the genetic material of 'Φακή Εγκλουβής', the climatic factors, the wider rich natural environment and the long farming history of the Englouvi plateau, have led to it being approved and entered in the Genebank of the National Institute for Agricultural Research, because of the synergy between the forces of natural selection and the specific soil and climatic conditions that prevail in the area where the crop is grown. With these lentils, the natural environment comes together with self-sufficient farming practices, developed in the 18th century, to produce a crop consisting of unimproved genetic material that has adapted to the mountain plateau environment.

'Φακή Εγκλουβής' is to be found in the Larissa Institute of Industrial and Forage crops, and in the genetic archive of the International Centre for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas (ICARDA) in Lebanon, under code ILL 293.

Nutritional characteristics: the well-drained soil, the presence of nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, magnesium and iron throughout virtually the entire plateau contribute to the production of lentils with high levels of iron, potassium and phosphorus and with a high fat content that make them a healthy food with high nutritional value.

Organoleptic characteristics: the boilability of the lentils depends upon:

- the soil's high phosphorus content, which, according to scientific research, increases the levels of phytic acid that in turn binds Ca^{++} and Mg^{++} ions, preventing their dissolution into the pectin. This facilitates the breakdown of the cell walls during cooking;
- the size of the lentils, which remains limited to a certain level (small-seeded);
- the lentils being sown in the right season, being stored in premises where humidity and temperatures are low, and being sent immediately for grading, packaging and consumption.

The above factors help to improve the boilability of 'Φακή Εγκλουβής'.

The human factor has had a significant influence on the local (unimproved) population of 'Φακή Εγκλουβής', with long-standing expertise built up over time, as described below:

- The rigorous selection of healthy seeds that meet the product specification ensures the purity of the local unimproved population.
- 'Φακή Εγκλουβής' / Faki Eglouvis is the only lentil variety in Greece that is sown from winter to spring. Over the centuries, the human factor has thus served to protect the product's specificity.
- Depending on when the lentils are sown, harvesting takes place at the appropriate time, when they are ripe. The colour of the pods and the 'rounding' of the lentils in the pods are essential indicators of ripening.
- As regards drying, it is directly linked to harvesting at the right time. The ripening of the pods is the main criterion for harvesting, so the moisture content is generally low. The fact that the lentils are exposed for some hours to the warm, dry environment during harvesting helps this low moisture content to decrease still further.
- Sorting is done either using the traditional method (threshing - winnowing) or mechanically (in the vast majority of cases); the purpose is to remove foreign matter from the lentils. The human factor plays a significant role here also through double sieving and thorough examination and discarding by hand.

Accounting entries and deeds/wills attest to the fact that lentils have been grown since the 18th century and there are references to domed stone structures (voltoi) for lentil storage.

'Φακή Εγκλουβής' lentils have been mentioned by historians, folklorists and journalists, etc. since the period of Venetian rule in Greece.

Cooking lentils on 6 August is a local tradition that has been celebrated in the village of Englouvi, with its characteristic dome-shaped stone buildings (voltoi), since the beginning of the 20th century.

The well-known gourmet, Ilias Mamalakis, showcased 'Φακή Εγκλουβής' in one of his television programmes, in which he declared: 'In the Bible, Esau sold his birthright for a mess of pottage [i.e. a dish of lentils]. I would give all the delicacies of the world for a plate of lentils from Englouvi!'

Reference to publication of the product specification

http://www.minagric.gr/images/stories/docs/agrotis/POP-PGE/2020/prod_faki_eglouvis201222.pdf

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