C/2024/3977

25.6.2024

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

(C/2024/3977)

Following this publication, the authorities of a Member State or of a third country, or a natural or legal person having a legitimate interest and established or resident in a third country, may lodge, in accordance with Article 17 of Regulation (EU) 2024/1143 of the European Parliament and of the Council ([1]), an opposition with the Commission within 3 months from the date of this publication.

PRODUCT SPECIFICATION OF A TRADITIONAL SPECIALITY GUARANTEED

'SENENO MESO'

EU No: TSG-SI-02988 – 23.8.2023

Member State or Third Country: Slovenia

1. Name(s) to be registered

'Seneno meso'

2. Type of product

Class 1.1 Fresh meat (and offal)

3. Grounds for registration

3.1. *Whether the product*

☒ results from a mode of production, processing or composition corresponding to traditional practice for that product or foodstuff

☐ is produced from raw materials or ingredients that are those traditionally used.

The method of production of 'seneno meso' [hay meat] of herbivorous animals is the oldest form of meat production. It is based on the earliest rearing method and represents a return to traditional feeding. In the past, animals were grazed during the vegetation period, and in the winter were fed hay obtained on the meadows during the summer period. The only way to store the feed was in a dry state, and not fermented as with some present-day feed-preservation processes. Meat production did not involve genetically modified feed or animals.

3.2. *Whether the name*

☐ has been traditionally used to refer to the specific product

☒ identifies the traditional character or specific character of the product.

The key to the production of 'seneno meso' is, and always has been, good feed, i.e. hay. The hay is dried on permanent and arable grassland, but it can also be dried on dryers to achieve better quality or reduce weather-related risks. The oldest dryer is probably the hayrack (Slovenian *kozolec*), as it was mentioned as early as 1558. A key reference to a hayrack being used to dry hay for feeding farm animals dates back to 1822. These references confirm the use of hay as traditional feed and the prevalence of this type of technology across much of Europe.

([1]) Regulation (EU) 2024/1143 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 April 2024 on geographical indications for wine, spirit drinks and agricultural products, as well as traditional specialities guaranteed and optional quality terms for agricultural products, amending Regulations (EU) No 1308/2013, (EU) 2019/787 and (EU) 2019/1753 and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 (OJ L, 2024/1143, 23.4.2024, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1143/oj).

4. **Description**

4.1. *Description of the product to which the name under point 1 applies, including its main physical, chemical, microbiological or organoleptic characteristics showing the product's specific character*

The meat of cattle, small ruminants and equine animals in accordance with the legislation in force.

4.2. *Description of the production method of the product to which the name under point 1 applies that the producers must follow including, where appropriate, the nature and characteristics of the raw materials or ingredients used, and the method by which the product is prepared*

The 'seneno meso' meat of cattle, small ruminants and equine animals differs from the standard meat of cattle, small ruminants and equine animals in terms of the specific production process described under this point.

The 'seneno meso' meat of cattle, small ruminants and equine animals is produced using traditional production processes. It is characterised by a prohibition on the use of fermented feed (such as fodder plant silage, ensiled cereal grains or round bales in film) and on the use of animals and feed which are identified as 'genetically modified' under prevailing legislation.

The production of 'seneno meso' requires the pasture grazing of all animals in the herd wherever conditions permit. Grazing must last a minimum of 120 days per year during the vegetation period.

If the conditions for grazing are not met, the mandatory grazing requirement may be waived. Reasons must be given for the abandonment of grazing. These may include excessive fragmentation of the land, the size, inclination or remoteness of the land, a prohibition on grazing due to the location of the farm where grazing is not permitted, or a combination of those reasons. Where grazing is not possible, the animals must be kept untethered, under conditions that allow the animals to move freely. For unrestricted movement, the indoor space specified in Table 1 must be taken into account.

Table 1

	Indoor surface area (net area available to the animals)	
Cattle	Minimum live weight (kg)	m^2/head
	up to 100	1,5
	up to 200	2,5
	up to 350	4,0
	above 350	5
Dairy cows		6
Bulls for breeding		10
Sheep		1,5
Lambs		0,35
Goats		1,5
Kids		0,35
Breeding and fattening equine animals	up to 100	1,5
	up to 200	2,5
	up to 350	4,0
	above 350	5

Before being slaughtered, the animals may be kept in housing for not more than 30 days during the grazing period.

The dry matter content of the roughage must exceed 70 % on an annual basis. The dry matter content of the roughage is calculated on an annual basis for each agricultural holding.

On the holding, all animals of the same category (cattle, small ruminants, equine animals) must be reared in accordance with the requirements of this specification.

a) Where other animal species are not or cannot be reared in compliance with the rules for 'seneno meso' because they are not listed in the specification, the animals and feed on the holding must be kept separate and recorded properly. The prohibition on the storage and production of bales in film, silage and fermented fodder applies to the entire holding, even in cases where not all animal species are reared in accordance with the rules for 'seneno meso'.

b) If a certified plant for processing 'seneno meso' also produces other products, it must ensure that the certified raw materials are received and stored separately from the other raw materials. In this case, the production of foodstuffs using 'seneno meso' must be separated in space or time, with all measures taken to prevent the mixing or switching of raw materials.

c) Where some or all of the processing activity is carried out by a subcontractor that is not certified, a written agreement must be concluded. It is necessary to ensure the traceability of the certified animals or raw materials and enable supervision over the implementation of the activity. The scope of supervision is determined by the certification body in relation to the scope of activities delegated. Where the subcontractor has been certified in keeping with this specification, no supervision over the subcontractor's activities is required.

Permitted feed

— dry roughage: hay, dried lucerne, dried clover, etc.

— green roughage: pasture, grass, lucerne, clover, rapeseed, cereals, maize, sugar beet leaves, etc.

— root crops: fodder beet, turnip, swede, fodder carrot, etc.

— straw of various crops (raw or cut).

— fresh meadow fodder.

— dried cereals (maize, barley, oats, triticale, wheat, rye, etc.), dry beet pulp, dry brewers' grains, dried by-products of the sugar industry and cereal processing, and other dry feed in commercially available form (such as bran or lucerne pellets).

The animals graze during the vegetation period and are fed mainly on dry roughage in the winter.

Supplementary feed may include fresh cruciferous plants, maize, cereals and roots such as fresh rapeseed, fresh oats, fresh maize or fodder beet.

Fodder legumes (broad beans, peas, lupins, etc.), oil plants (rapeseed, soya, sunflowers, etc.) and protein concentrates (oilseeds and oilmeals, e.g. soybeans, rapeseed, sunflowers, pumpkins, etc.) may be used in the feed ration.

It is permitted to give supplementary feed to animals on the grazing areas. The quantity of supplementary feed counts towards the annual total.

Prohibited feed

— fodder plant silage as well as ensiled cereal grain and other feedstuffs.

— fermented feed of any kind.

— by-products of breweries or distilleries, residues from pressing juice or wine (pomace) and other leftovers from the food industry, such as fresh or ensiled beet pulp, fresh or ensiled brewers' grains, fresh or ensiled fruit pomace, etc.

— feed and feedstuffs, including by-products in a wet state (soaking).

— feed of animal origin (milk, whey, meat-and-bone meal, etc.), with the exception of breast milk until weaning. It is permitted to feed young animals with milk substitute until weaning, or up to the age of 90 days for cattle, 45 days for small ruminants and 150 days for equine animals.

— urea.

Feed not listed in this specification is subject to EU rules on the Catalogue of feed materials.

If the actual measured dry matter content in per cent is not available for a feed material, the values set out in Table 2 will be taken into account to calculate the dry matter content of the feed material. For feed which is permitted but not listed in the table, the values set out in the scientific literature available will be used.

Table 2

The dry matter content of feed where this has not been established through analysis

Feed	% of dry matter
hay, straw, lucerne	86
dry molasses	77
various dry clovers	89
fresh green fodder (grass, lucerne)	20
average mixed feedstuffs	88
broad beans, peas (dry)	87
cereals (grains)	88
various meals/cakes	88
brewer's yeast (dry)	90
beet pulp (dry)	88
fodder beet (fresh)	15

To calculate the requirement for the minimum daily feed intake for the purpose of calculating the dry matter content of the roughage for each holding, the values given in Table 3 are taken as the daily dry matter intake per animal species and category.

Table 3

Minimum daily consumption (kg d.b./day)

Animal species, age or milk yield	Body weight (kg)	Daily intake (kg d.b./day)
CATTLE		
Calves aged 5-6 months	150	3-4
Young cattle for further rearing	200-300	4
	300-400	6
	400-500	8
	500-650	9
Young cattle for fattening	200-300	7

	300-400	8,5
	400-500	10
	500-650	10,5
COWS (dairy)		
up to 2 000 kg/year	650	11,4
up to 4 000 kg/year **Equivalent to sucklers**	650	14,9
up to 6 000 kg/year	650	17,6
up to 8 000 kg/year	650	19,7
>8 000 kg/year	650	>20,6
HORSES		
Light work	500	7-9
Medium-heavy work	500	8-9
Heavy work	500	10
SHEEP		
Dairy	70	3
Sucklers (1-2 lambs)	70	1,8
Young sheep	40-70	1,2
Lambs for fattening	20-45	0,8-1,6
GOATS		
Dairy	70	up to 3,5
Sucklers with kids	70	1,8

Producers of 'seneno meso' must keep all the required records and supporting documents in such a form as to enable the inspection body to check all the requirements laid down in this specification at any point during an inspection.

Fertilisation

— The use of digestate from urban wastewater treatment plants with a capacity exceeding 50 p.e. (population equivalent – the water load unit corresponding to the pollution caused by one adult per day) is prohibited.

— Areas fertilised with digestate from urban wastewater treatment plants with a capacity of less than 50 p.e. are suitable for grazing after 3 weeks have passed since the last fertilisation.

Chemical auxiliary substances

Spraying agents for flying insects may be used in animal breeding houses only when no animals are present.

Prohibition on the sale of animals

— In order to obtain a certificate for 'seneno meso', the period for the conversion of the holding or animals to hay production must be taken into account for animals that were not reared in accordance with this specification from birth. The conversion period for the marketing of live animals or meat is two thirds of the age of animals up to 9 months of age and 6 months for older animals. The sale of live animals and the labelling of meat as 'seneno meso' are prohibited before the end of the conversion period.

— If an inspection reveals a case of non-compliance affecting the status of 'seneno meso' (e.g. feeding with fermented feed), a new conversion period for the animals in question must be taken into account.

Processing

— 'Seneno meso' may be labelled as such if fresh, chilled, frozen or processed. Only additives that are not identified as 'genetically modified' under prevailing legislation may be used in the processing of the meat.

— In meat products and preparations, 'seneno meso' must account for at least 60 % of the ingredients of the finished product.

— Game meat may be added to meat products and meat preparations provided that the hunted game originates in areas where the sowing of genetically modified plants is not permitted.

The name 'seneno meso' or the indication 'made from seneno meso' may be used only if the composition of the product complies with the requirements of the specification for 'seneno meso'.

Where a product is made from several types of meat, not all of which are 'seneno meso', there must be a clear indication on the product declaration as to which meat is 'seneno meso' and an indication of all the proportions of each meat in the product.

4.3. *Description of the key elements establishing the product's traditional character*

Until 1827, the Slovenian Alps were predominantly forest. Pasture land was the second largest category, covering 27,5 % of the area, which indicates the significance of agriculture or pastoral livestock farming at the time. Meadow land accounted for 12,6 %, arable land 4,8 % and other categories 9 % (Petek, 2005). By 1929, the forage farming system was predominant in the western half of the Slovenian Alps, with a slightly lower share of forage crops and a larger share of cereals and root crops in the eastern half. The situation remained largely unchanged as late as 1960 (Petek, 2005).

Of the roughly 4 440 agricultural holdings in the Slovenian Alps recorded in the agricultural census in 2000, fully 88 % were devoted to livestock production, either livestock grazing (59 %) or mixed livestock production (29 %) (Petek, 2005).

The production of 'seneno meso' is the oldest form of meat production, as it was the earliest method of rearing herbivorous animals (cattle, sheep, goats and equine animals) based on grazing and feeding with hay in the winter time. The key to the production of 'seneno meso' is, and always has been, good feed. On the farms, cattle, sheep, goats and equine animals often grazed on mountain pastures with rugged terrain and on mountains at a great distance from the farms. In the winter, they were fed hay, which was dried on permanent and arable grassland, though it could also be dried on dryers to achieve better quality or reduce weather-related risks. The hayrack (Slovenian *kozolec*) can be said to be the oldest dryer. It was mentioned by Professor Oskar Moser as early as 1558 (Juvanec, 2007, *Kozolec*, p. 24). A key reference to a hayrack being used to dry hay for feeding farm animals was made by Joseph Pseiner in 1822 (Juvanec, 2007, *Kozolec*, p. 26). These references confirm the use of hay as traditional feed and the prevalence of this type of technology across much of Europe.

The meat of grazing animals contains half as much fat and significantly fewer calories than that of animals fed with maize silage or a diet containing a higher proportion of concentrated feed. According to scientific research, the meat of pasture-raised cattle contains 10 times more beta-carotene, up to 30 % more vitamin C and up to 54 % more alpha-tocopherol (vitamin E) (*Kmečki glas*, 20.5.2021). The meat of pasture-raised sheep contains twice as much lutein as that of feed-fed sheep. The meat of pasture-raised animals is similar in quality to game meat and has roughly the same fat content. The ratio of omega-6 to omega-3 fatty acids is much narrower than in the meat of animals fed with maize (Robinson, 2000).

Feeding animals with pasture and meadow fodder has a beneficial effect in reducing total fat content and increasing the share of beta-carotene, vitamin E (alpha-tocopherol), vitamin B, thiamine and riboflavin, the minerals calcium, magnesium and potassium, and total omega-3 fatty acids, as well as providing a healthier ratio of omega-6 to omega-3 fatty acids, a higher CLA content (cis-9 trans-11), a higher vaccenic acid content (which can be converted into CLA) and a lower saturated fat content (S. K. Duckett et al., 2009).

Pasture-raised cows are more resistant to disease and stress. The beneficial effect of this resistance can also be passed on to people consuming the milk and meat of these animals (Robinson, 2000). Maize and other concentrated feed in the diet of animals used to produce 'seneno meso' is limited in quantity, as the excessive use of maize in the diet of ruminants stimulates an increase in the resistance of the bacterium *Escherichia coli* to an acid reaction, which is associated with an increased risk of the spread of this bacterium.

The production of 'seneno meso' is locally oriented and, owing to a high proportion of meadow fodder (pasture and hay), makes for a sustainable form of livestock farming. Pasture grazing is the best way to rear animals in a sustainable manner and, in combination with hay feeding, also represents a traditional approach to animal rearing. The combination of extensive and traditional use helps to preserve biodiversity (*Večer* daily, 2021). However, in order to preserve biodiversity in nature, an approach combining grazing and mowing is the most effective way of using meadow land.

The production of 'seneno meso' is extremely sustainable, as it protects the climate and soil and encourages biodiversity. Preserving grassland is vital for the production of 'seneno meso', as meadows and pastures store around one third more carbon per hectare than arable land (149 t C/ha) thanks to their high humus content in the upper layers of the soil. In deeper soil layers, grassland (196 t C/ha) stores a similar amount of carbon to the average forest soil (191 t C/ha) (ARGE Heumilch, 2021). Carbon sequestration in the soil improves soil structure and quality, while contributing to sustainable agriculture and natural resource management.