OTHER ACTS

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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

(2017/C 15/05)

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]).

SINGLE DOCUMENT

'WELSH LAVERBREAD'

EC No: UK-PDO-0005-01188 — 17.12.2013

PDO (X) PGI ( )

1. **Name(s)**

'Welsh Laverbread'

2. **Member State or Third Country**

United Kingdom

3. **Description of the agricultural product or foodstuff**

3.1. *Type of product*

Class 1.8. Other products of Annex I to the Treaty (spices, etc.)

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

'Welsh Laverbread' is the name given to a traditional Welsh delicacy made from cooked laver (seaweed) gathered or 'plucked' from the coastline of Wales. The Latin name for laver is *Porphyra umbilicalis*. It is a small red/purple algae up to 20 cm across and up to 50 cm long with an irregularly shaped broad frond. Laver is unique as seaweed as it is the only seaweed which is only one cell thick. The laver is 'raven' black in colour with tints of purple and dark green and has a light silk like texture throughout its growth, which becomes less tender in the summer months.

'Welsh Laverbread' is cooked laver with salt and water, no other ingredient or additive is added and it has the following characteristics:

— appearance and texture: shredded dark green/black. It can be minced to a dense soft gelatinous spinach like puree/paste or chopped for a coarser texture.

— aroma and taste: as 'Welsh Laverbread' is cooked from fresh laver immediately after it has been plucked from the rocky shores and washed, it retains the strong dominant lingering unique saline flavour and the distinctive odour of the salty sea and fresh sea air. Subtle flavour nuances of the laverbread will differ depending on varied conditions along the Welsh coast from where the laver was 'plucked'.

Its nutritional profile, is rich in minerals and vitamins (especially high in iodine and iron) and low in calories.

It can be an acquired taste enjoyed on its own or as a flavour enhancer as an ingredient adding savoury depth and dimension to a recipe.

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

Seaweed/laver — *Porphyra umbilicalis*. The laver used to make 'Welsh Laverbread' comes from the designated geographical area. (The laver is harvested when the fronds of the laver are of a sufficient length that they are practical to 'pluck' from the rocks. Any fronds less than 10 cm would be impractical to collect).

([1]) OJ L 343, 14.12.2012, p. 1.

Salt.

Water.

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

'Welsh Laverbread' must be made from Welsh Laver which is gathered or plucked from the coastline of Wales and must be processed into 'Welsh Laverbread' within the country of Wales. All the specific steps in the production of Welsh Laverbread must take place in the designated area to ensure adequate control on traceability, quality, temperature control and food safety. The specific steps in production include:

— collection of the laver,

— washing and draining of laver,

— cooking of Welsh Laverbread,

— mincing or chopping of cooked Welsh Laverbread,

— chilling for cooling and storage prior to dispatch.

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

To ensure adequate control on traceability and for quality, temperature control, food safety and practical logistical reasons, if packaging is required this must be undertaken within the geographical area.

3.6. *Specific rules concerning labelling*

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

The Country of Wales.

5. **Link with the geographical area**

Specificity of the geographical area

The taste and appearance of 'Welsh Laverbread' is characteristic of its origin and is affected by the quality cleanliness/transparency and seasonal temperature of the sea water in the geographical area as well as the method and skills of the people making it.

The Welsh coastline has an exceptionally diverse intertidal flora and offers habitats for marine algae ranging from open coast to sheltered rock and sediment and from fully saline to estuarine conditions. Laver is highly adaptable to conditions on different parts of the rocky shore and is able to withstand prolonged periods of exposure to the air as well as tolerating a greater degree of wave action than most red algae. On the Welsh coastline, it occurs singly or in dense colonies throughout the intertidal but most frequently at upper levels where the laver is exposed for significant periods of time which is an important factor for its photosynthesis/growth.

Laver and laverbread is also associated with Wales as the majority of the Welsh coastline where laver is collected, tends to have gently sloping intertidal zones and rocky shores which provides ideal habitat for the growth of the laver. As laver is the only sea weed one cell thick, it is relatively fragile and would not survive on areas of high mobility such as mobile steep shingle beeches found in other parts of the UK.

A large proportion of the Welsh coastline is designated a Special Area of Conservation. Many laver collection areas are within Blue Flag beaches where water quality is regularly monitored by Natural Resource Wales who are responsible for ensuring that the water quality is of a good standard. The lack of large cities and industry surrounding the Irish Sea, contributes to its cleanliness which is reflected in the growth, quality and taste of the laver being picked in these areas. 95 % of the Welsh coastline is underdeveloped. Laver requires good light quality and transparency of water for photosynthesis/growth and this is associated with good water quality. Research undertaken by Natural Resources Wales has also shown that seasonal sea temperatures in this area have risen, and this has impacted on the growth of the laver. In addition to the rise in sea temperature being linked to climate change, the Welsh coast also benefits from the North Atlantic Gulf Stream which raises sea temperature off the coast of Wales. In the spring when sea temperatures begin to warm the laver grows quicker. New young laver growth, is tender to cook, requires less cooking time and contributes to 'Welsh Laverbreads' succulent and silk like texture. In addition the increased commercial demand for 'Welsh Laverbread' in the geographical area, also encourages new young fresh growth which contributes to the succulence of 'Welsh Laverbread'.

Specificity of the product

'Welsh Laverbread' is a unique product made by collecting or 'plucking' the laver from the rocks along the coastline of Wales by hand and then cooking the laver with salt and water to make 'Welsh Laverbread'. Other edible seaweed varieties are collected outside of Wales such as from the coasts of Cornwall, Southern Ireland and Brittany which are not from the laver family *Porphyra umbilicalis* (such as *Alaria esculenta, Chondrus crispus, Rhodymenia palmate*, and *Ulva lactucus*). These varieties are distinctly different from *Porphyra umbilicalis*.

There are 60-70 species of the genus *Porphyra* worldwide and 7 *Porphyra* species found in the British Isles, which have subtle differences and are a variety of colours including yellow, olive pink or purple. The principal variety of laver is (*Porphyra umbilicalis*) which is only one cell thick. In cases where *Porphyra umbilicalis* is collected outside Wales it is not cooked, prepared and sold as 'Welsh laverbread' but usually dried or toasted and sold with other sea weeds as salad leaves or used as an ingredient for example in traditional breads. In Japan laver is pickled with soya sauce and vinegar.

'Welsh Laverbread' is the best known native preparation of an edible seaweed and due to the commercial demand for 'Welsh Laverbread' it is regularly 'plucked' which produces young fresh growth contributing to the succulence of this unique product. The term 'plucked' refers to the process of the seaweed being pulled off or out from the laver's place of growth. Laver is a red/purple 'raven' black seaweed which turns dark green/black when processed into 'Welsh Laverbread'

'Welsh Laverbread' is a relatively simple 'processed' product comprising only 3 ingredients, the cooked seaweed, salt and water and is additive free. The addition of the salt acts as a preserver but also compensates for any salt removed during the washing process.

Causal link between the geographical area and the quality or characteristics of the product

'Welsh Laverbread' is a unique product which is intrinsically linked to Welsh culture, Welsh food heritage and due to its commercial demand, it is the best known native preparation of laver *Porphyra umbilicalis*. It is associated with the upper tidal zones and rocky shorelines synonymous with the Welsh coastline.

In 1607 Camden's Britannica recorded laver or 'lhawvan' being eaten as a 'survival food from the sea' by British people forced from their homes during Viking and Roman invasions. Consumption of laver by the Welsh was first recorded in 1865 by George Borrow on his travels through Wales when he mentioned 'moor mutton and piping hot laver sauce' as one of South Wales' great dishes.

Historically 'Welsh Laverbread' was very important as a nutritious high energy food source particularly for hard working pit workers in the South Wales mining valleys where it became a staple breakfast food. Women and children, who also worked underground in the pits were often malnourished and were advised by doctors to eat 'Welsh Laverbread' because it was a very good source of iron.

In 1800-1950 collecting laver to make 'Welsh Laverbread' was a small cottage industry in Pembrokeshire. The laver was thrown over thatched huts to dry before being picked up by a horse and cart and taken to Pembroke station to be sold to businesses in Swansea where it was cooked into 'Welsh Laverbread' and sold at local markets. Although laver was historically sourced on the Pembrokeshire and Gower coastline it is now mainly collected along the coastlines of North and South Wales, but still predominantly brought to Penclawdd in Gower (South West Wales) to be processed.

Historically seaweed was collected and hand washed before being traditionally cooked in boiling pans over coal fires or cured in drying houses. Modern processing plants now use modern equipment and technology, however, 'Welsh Laverbread' making still remains a cottage industry as well and traditional cooking methods are honoured.

The collecting and making of 'Welsh Laverbread' is associated with traditional skills and savoir faire that have been passed down from one generation to the next in the geographical area. Specific skills relate to the recognition of the correct seaweed, when it's ready to 'pluck' and the actual skill of 'plucking' the seaweed from the rocks. In addition skill is required in the cooking process. Cooking time may vary throughout the year depending upon the characteristics of the laver collected. The cooking time, the exact amount of salt and quantity of water to add is a skill base in Wales which has been developed by the Welsh Laverbread processor. Welsh Laverbread is synonymous with Welsh culture and food heritage.

'Welsh Laverbread' is a unique well known Welsh delicacy with a worldwide reputation. It is an acquired taste, traditionally eaten fried either as it is or rolled in oatmeal and usually eaten with bacon and cockles as the traditional cooked Welsh breakfast.

'Welsh Laverbread' has achieved a silver award in the True Taste of Wales awards.

Reference to publication of the specification

(the second subparagraph of Article 6(1) of Regulation (EU) No 668/2014)
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protected-food-name-welsh-laverbread-pdo