

Publication of an application for approval of a minor amendment in accordance with the second subparagraph of Article 53(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council

(2015/C 310/09)

The European Commission has approved this application for a minor amendment in accordance with the third subparagraph of Article 6(2) of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 664/2014 ⁽¹⁾.

APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF A MINOR AMENDMENT

Application for approval of a minor amendment in accordance with the second subparagraph of Article 53(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽²⁾

‘GOUDA HOLLAND’

EU No: NL-PGI-0105-01335 – 18.5.2015

PDO () PGI (X) TSG ()

1. Applicant group and legitimate interest

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Composition: Producers/processors (X) Other ()

Legitimate interest

The legitimate interest of NZO is based on the fact that it has specifically fulfilled its statutory objectives by submitting, as a ‘group’ within the meaning of Article 8 of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012, an application to register the name ‘Gouda Holland’ as a protected geographical indication (PGI).

NZO has already been recognised by the national authorities and the Commission as a ‘group’ within the meaning of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012. That recognition in itself implies, in the light of the requirements that applicants must meet in order to be classified as a ‘group’, that NZO has a legitimate interest in this application. Also of relevance is the fact that NZO, in its dealings with the national authorities and the Commission, has always represented the interests of the Dutch dairy industry in general and of Dutch cheese producers in particular.

2. Member State or Third Country

The Netherlands

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

— Description of the product

— Proof of origin

— Method of production

— Link

— Labelling

— Other [to be specified]

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 179, 19.6.2014, p. 17.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 343, 14.12.2012, p. 1.

4. Type of amendment(s)

- Amendment to product specification of a registered PDO or PGI to be qualified as minor in accordance with the third subparagraph of Article 53(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 and requiring no amendment to the published single document.
- Amendment to product specification of a registered PDO or PGI to be qualified as minor in accordance with the third subparagraph of Article 53(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 and requiring an amendment to the published single document.
- Amendment to product specification of a registered PDO or PGI to be qualified as minor in accordance with the third subparagraph of Article 53(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012, for which a single document (or equivalent) has not been published.
- Amendment to product specification of a registered TSG to be qualified as minor in accordance with the fourth subparagraph of Article 53(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012.

5. Amendment(s)

5.1. Description of the product

The second paragraph (Composition) under Section 3.2 (Description) of the 'Summary' is worded as follows:

"Gouda Holland" is produced from one or more of the following raw materials:

- milk, cream and skimmed or semi-skimmed cows' milk (exclusively cows' milk) from Dutch dairy farms'.

In order better to reflect amended national legislation, we wish to reword the paragraph as follows:

"Gouda Holland" is produced from one or more of the following raw materials:

- cows' milk or cows' milk products in which the ratio of whey protein to cows' milk casein is not exceeded. The cows' milk comes exclusively from Dutch dairy farms'.

The clarification reflects recent amendments to national legislation. The reference to the whey protein/casein ratio is intended to prevent 'Gouda Holland' from being made with an excessively high whey protein content, which would impair its quality. The purpose of the amendment is therefore to ensure the intrinsic quality of the 'Gouda Holland' PGI. The raw material must fully comply with the requirements concerning Dutch origin laid down in Section 4.5 of Annex II to Regulation (EU) No 1122/2010.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

'GOUDA HOLLAND'

EU No: NL-PGI-0105-01335 – 18.5.2015

PDO () PGI (X) TSG ()

1. Name

'Gouda Holland'

2. Member State or Third Country

The Netherlands

3. Description of the agricultural product or foodstuff

3.1. Type of product

1.3. Cheese

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

'Gouda Holland' is a full-fat (48 % +), naturally matured semi-hard cheese.

It is produced in the Netherlands from cows' milk obtained from Dutch dairy farms and is matured to a consumer-ready product in Dutch maturing rooms.

Composition

'Gouda Holland' is produced from one or more of the following raw materials:

- cows' milk or cows' milk products in which the ratio of whey protein to cows' milk casein is not exceeded. The cows' milk comes exclusively from Dutch dairy farms.

Characteristic properties

The cheese is shaped like a flattened cylinder, a block or a loaf and weighs from 2,5 kg to 20 kg. A flattened cylindrical shape is a shape with convex sides that curve smoothly into a flat top and bottom and a height that is a quarter to a third of the diameter.

The fat content is a minimum of 48,0 % and a maximum of 52,0 % in dry matter. The (maximum) moisture content 12 days after the first day of manufacture is 42,5 % and the salt content in dry matter is a maximum of 4,0 %. The other characteristic properties are as follows:

- Flavour: aromatic, pleasant and mild to strong, depending on its age. Cumin may be added.
- Cross-section: after slicing the cheese, hole formation is visible but may not be evenly distributed. The colour of the cheese varies from ivory to yellow.
- Rind: the rind is firm, smooth, dry, clean and has no fungal flora. It is produced by drying during the maturing stage.
- Texture: the cheese is slightly soft to pliable at an age of four weeks. Once the cheese has matured further, it becomes firmer and tighter in structure. The cheese is easy to cut.
- Maturing period: at least 28 days. 'Gouda Holland' is a naturally matured cheese. Foil maturing is not permitted for 'Gouda Holland'.
- Maturing temperature: a minimum of 12 °C.
- Age: the shelf life varies from a minimum of 28 days after manufacture to more than a year.

Special quality criteria:

- When they reach and are stored by the cheese-maker, the milk, cream or semi-skimmed milk have undergone either no heat treatment at all or a non-pasteurising heat treatment.
- The cream and the skimmed or semi-skimmed milk should undergo pasteurisation immediately before being made into 'Gouda Holland' so as to meet the following criteria:
 - phosphatase activity is undetectable, unless peroxidase activity is undetectable,
 - acidity levels, for cream measured on the basis of the fat-free product, are no higher than 20 mmol NaOH per litre, unless the lactate content is 200 mg per 100 g of fat-free matter or less,
 - no coliform micro-organisms are detectable in 0,1 ml.
- Immediately before being made into 'Gouda Holland', all raw materials must be pasteurised in such a way that the undenatured whey protein content does not deviate or deviates only slightly from that of unpasteurised raw material of a similar type and quality. Only non-genetically-modified cultures of lactic-acid-forming and aroma-forming microorganisms may be added when manufacturing 'Gouda Holland'. These cultures consist of appropriate mesophilic starter cultures for 'Gouda Holland': *Lactococcus* and *Leuconostoc* L or LD, possibly in combination with thermophilic *Lactobacillus* and/or *Lactococcus* cultures. The available cultures are protected. Their use is mandatory in the production of 'Gouda Holland'.

— Rennet: only calf rennet is used to manufacture 'Gouda Holland'. It is only in special circumstances, for example if required as a result of epizootic disease, that it may be necessary to switch to other types of rennet. In that case, the rennet used must comply with the requirements of the *Warenwetbesluit Zuivel* (Dairy Products (Commodities Act) Decree).

— The nitrite content of 'Gouda Holland', in terms of nitrite ions, is no higher than 2 mg per kg of cheese.

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*

Method of production

'Gouda Holland' cheese is made from milk obtained from dairy farms in the Netherlands. The milk is cooled on the farm to a maximum of 6 °C and stored in a cooling tank on the farm. It is transported to the cheese factory within 72 hours. When it arrives at the cheese factory, it is either processed immediately or thermised (a non-pasteurising, light heat treatment) and put into cold storage for a short period of time before being turned into cheese-milk.

The fat content of the milk is standardised so that the fat/protein ratio is such that the cheese eventually produced has a fat content of between 48 % and 52 % fat in dry matter. The cheese-milk is pasteurised at a temperature of at least 72 °C for 15 seconds. It is curdled at a temperature of approximately 30 °C. The separation and coagulation of the milk proteins that occurs during this process is typical of 'Gouda Holland'.

The curds obtained by coagulation are separated from the whey and processed and washed to ensure that the moisture content and pH reach the desired levels.

The curds are pressed into the correct shape and desired weight in vats. The resulting 'cheese' is then immersed in the brine bath.

'Gouda Holland' is only ever matured naturally, i.e. it is left open to the air to mature and is regularly turned and checked. As the cheese matures, a dry rind forms. Time and temperature play an important role in ensuring that the enzymatic and ageing processes are given sufficient opportunity to allow the cheese to develop the physical and organoleptic quality that is so characteristic of 'Gouda Holland'.

It can take more than a year for 'Gouda Holland' to mature, depending on the type of flavour desired.

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

'Gouda Holland' may be cut and pre-packaged either in or outside the Netherlands, provided that the pre-packager has a comprehensive administrative monitoring system to ensure that the cut 'Gouda Holland' can be traced by means of the unique combination of numbers and letters on the mark and that the consumer can be sure of its origin.

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

Labelling

'Gouda Holland' is a European Union Protected Geographical Indication (PGI). This indication must be displayed in a prominent position on all whole cheeses, on the label applied to the flat side of the cheese and/or on the band around the cheese. This is not compulsory if the cheese is sold in pre-cut and pre-packaged form as described in Section 3.5. In that case, 'Gouda Holland' must be displayed on the pre-packaging.

A clear distinguishing mark must be displayed on the packaging to enable consumers to identify 'Gouda Holland' on the shelves. By using the name 'Gouda Holland', developing a separate identity and displaying the EU PGI symbol, it must be made clear to consumers that 'Gouda Holland' is a different product from other 'Gouda' cheeses.

Proof of origin

A mark made from casein is placed on each 'Gouda Holland' cheese before the curds are pressed (see diagram). The mark contains the designation 'Gouda Holland', together with a combination of numbers and letters that is unique for each cheese (in ascending alphabetical and numerical order).



The COKZ (the Dutch dairy inspection institute) keeps a register of these unique numbers, which also contains a record of all test data (including time and place). The indication is easily recognisable to consumers and can be verified by an approval authority on the basis of the casein mark and the COKZ register.

4. Concise definition of the geographical area

Geographical area

The geographical area covered by the application is Holland, i.e. the European part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

5. Link with the geographical area

Link

The geographical component of this product name is 'Holland'. As is common knowledge, 'Holland' is a synonym of the more official name, 'the Netherlands'. During the time of the Republic of the United Netherlands (from the 17th to the 19th century), Holland was the most influential of the seven provinces.

It is largely the geographical position of the Netherlands (mostly below sea level), its climate (a maritime climate) and the composition of the grass that grows there (predominantly on sandy and clay soils) that make the milk so suitable for producing a high-quality cheese that is packed with flavour. The quality assurance systems in place on dairy farms and the intensive quality assessment system (each delivery of milk is tested and assessed according to various quality parameters) together guarantee the quality of the milk. Furthermore, there is an unbroken cold chain until the moment the milk is processed, with the milk being put into cold storage on the farm (maximum 6 °C) and transported to the factory in refrigerated tankers. The relatively short distances involved also help maintain the quality of the milk.

Historical background

'Gouda Holland' is a prime example of the Dutch tradition of cheese making, which stretches back to the Middle Ages and reached maturity as early as the 17th century (the Golden Age).

The cheese sold in Gouda became known as Gouda cheese from the 18th century onwards. Later, the name Gouda came to be associated with all full-fat cheeses produced in Holland and shaped like a flattened cylinder.

From its beginnings in farm-based production, 'Gouda Holland' has developed, by way of production in local factories, to become a nationally produced product with a worldwide reputation and is an important, stable component in optimising the value of farm milk. At the beginning of the 20th century, national laws were introduced for Gouda cheese, and the name 'Gouda Holland' was established in the *Landbouwkwaliteitsbeschikking kaasproducten* (Agricultural Quality (Cheese Products) Decision).

Image of 'Gouda Holland' among European consumers

A large-scale survey carried out in six European countries showed that European consumers see the Netherlands as the most important producer of Gouda and Edam. 'Gouda Holland' (and 'Edam Holland') are symbols of Dutch cultural heritage. European consumers regard 'Gouda Holland' (and 'Edam Holland') cheese as brands. Market research (carried out on a representative sample of 1 250 respondents per Member State, with 97,5 % reliability) in the six Member States where Gouda (and Edam) consumption is highest shows that:

- there is a strong association between Gouda and the Netherlands,
- 'Gouda Holland' is more popular than Gouda produced outside the Netherlands,

- almost half of consumers in the Member States surveyed believe that all Gouda is produced in the Netherlands,
- Gouda from Holland scores significantly higher on the variables ‘excellent quality’, ‘traditionally manufactured’ and ‘the original product’.

‘Gouda Holland’ (and ‘Edam Holland’) are synonymous with Dutch quality products. Over a number of centuries, various measures and laws have been introduced, both by the Dutch Government and by the industry, to ensure that the quality of ‘Gouda Holland’ (and ‘Edam Holland’) is maintained at a very high level. Moreover, the Dutch dairy industry has invested a substantial amount in meeting these high quality standards and opening up, cultivating and maintaining markets. Since 1950, more than NLG 1,4 billion (EUR 635 million) has been invested in advertising, awareness-raising and promotion in Europe (excluding investment in the Netherlands).

Reference to publication of the specification

(the second subparagraph of Article 6(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012)

<http://www.eu-streekproducten.nl/sites/default/files/Productdossier%20BGA%20Gouda%20Holland%20gewijzigd.pdf>
