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*(Announcements)*

## OTHER ACTS

## EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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

(2015/C 70/07)

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 <sup>(1)</sup>.

AMENDMENT APPLICATION

**COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006****on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs <sup>(2)</sup>****AMENDMENT APPLICATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE 9****'IDIAZABAL'****EC No: ES-PDO-0217-01160 – 20.9.2013****PGI ( ) PDO ( X )****1. Heading in the product specification affected by the amendment**

- Name of product
- Description of product
- Geographical area
- Proof of origin
- Method of production
- Link
- Labelling
- National requirements
- Others: packaging, correction of errors and verifications

**2. Type of Amendment**

- Amendment to Single Document or Summary Sheet.
- Amendment to Specification of registered PDO or PGI for which neither the Single Document nor the Summary has been published.
- Amendment to Specification that requires no amendment to the published Single Document (Article 9(3) of Regulation (EC) No 510/2006).

<sup>(1)</sup> OJ L 343, 14.12.2012, p. 1.

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

- Temporary amendment to Specification resulting from imposition of obligatory sanitary or phytosanitary measures by public authorities (Article 9(4) of Regulation (EC) No 510/2006).

### 3. Amendments

#### 3.1. Name of product

The acute accent on the second 'a' of the name 'Idiazabal' is removed to bring the spelling in line with the official name of the municipality. Idiazabal is a Basque name and there are no such accents in the Basque language.

#### 3.2. Description of product

The maximum weight of the cheese is increased from 3 kg to 3,5 kg. The minimum weight of the cheese is kept at 1 kg, but a tolerance of 10 % in either direction is introduced. The height of the cheese remains 8 to 12 cm, but a tolerance of 0,5 cm in either direction is introduced.

The need to increase the maximum weight of the product and introduce a degree of tolerance as regards height and minimum weight is a consequence of the traditional method of making this cheese: in specific terms the procedures of kneading of the curd and the subsequent slicing of the mass so that it will fit into the moulds – and compacting before pressing – are carried out entirely by hand which means that it is difficult to know in advance the exact weight and final height of the product.

Furthermore, these weight and height values can vary with shrinkage as the cheese matures.

A detailed organoleptic description of the appearance, texture, smell and taste of the product is added.

#### 3.3. Proof of origin

In this section more details are given of the various elements that prove that the cheese originates from the production area. In the first point there is a description of the registers of operators and of the requirements that all operators intervening in the production of 'Idiazabal' cheese must meet: cattle farms, milk collection centres and dairies. In the second point there is a description of traceability, from the production of the milk up to the maturing period of the cheese, so guaranteeing the origin of the product.

#### 3.4. Method of production

The raw material used to produce 'Idiazabal' cheese is raw sheep's milk from the Latxa and Carranzana breeds, which is not treated in any way. Neither standardisation nor alteration of the composition of the raw material has ever been a practice used in producing 'Idiazabal' cheese. Nonetheless, because of technological advances, these are practices that are becoming increasingly common in the dairy industry and so an explicit reference has been added to the effect that treating the milk is not allowed. Also, in order to preserve the quality of the product and its natural characteristics, it is not possible to use any additive other than dairy ferments, lysozyme, rennet and salt.

As regards the conditions in which the cheese is produced, the period in which the mass is drained and heated has been clearly defined, although the references to its duration have been removed since any such figure can only be given for guidance. For the very same reason, the references to the duration of the pressing and minimum and maximum pressing figures have been deleted. These figures cannot be defined in an abstract manner since they depend on a number of variables such as the characteristics of the press, the size of the cheese, the room temperature and the pH of the cheese at the time of pressing.

Following on from the restrictions in the use of additives it is mentioned that everyday salt is the only type that can be used for salting. This means that additives helping to preserve the brine are not permitted. The purpose of this rule is to maintain the product's natural character.

Years of practice in cheese-making and the knowledge that this brings show that setting precise conditions for dripping may be counter-productive. The need for the cheese to drip, or for the liquid to just 'drain off' instead, together with the duration of the dripping and the temperature and humidity, depend on very many variables such as the time of year, the temperature of the dairy at the pressing stage, the weight of the cheese in the maturing rooms, and so on. For this reason dripping has been deleted from the product's mandatory processes.

A better understanding of how maturing rooms are used (which was very limited when the original specification was drafted) has helped arrive at the conclusion that the temperature and humidity ranges in the dairies and in the maturing rooms were excessive and restrictive without good reason. The relative humidity range has therefore been increased to 80 % – 95 % and the temperature range to 8 °C – 14 °C.

Where the product is smoked, this may only be done by exposing it to smoke from burning natural wood. This will prevent, for instance, the use of wood treated with varnish that might make the cheese unhealthy.

### 3.5. Labelling

A more detailed description is given of the characteristics of the labels and secondary labels identifying 'Idiazabal' cheese, both when sold as whole cheeses or in slices. A new feature is added to ensure the authenticity and proper identification of the cheese: a casein label with a unique serial number affixed to each cheese.

National requirements:

This part of the specification is deleted in accordance with the provisions of Article 7 of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012.

### 3.6. Others

It is indicated that slicing and packaging must be carried out in the production area for reasons of quality and traceability, as described in paragraph 3.6 of the Single Document.

Also, the following errors that were contained in the original specification of the PDO 'Idiazabal' are corrected:

In the paragraph on the production area, an error in the coordinates to do with a reference to the Greenwich Meridian has been corrected. The production area lies between 43° 27' and 41° 54' North, and 1° 05' and 3° 37' West. The specification wrongly indicated East instead of West.

In the final sentence of paragraph 2.c) of the link, the term 'Latxa' was left out. This has been corrected as follows: 'Rioja Alavesa and Ribera Navarra have an inland Mediterranean climate where there is little Latxa sheep farming.'

Meanwhile, the term 'Latxa' is used to replace the term 'Lacha' which appeared in the earlier specification to refer to one of the breeds of sheep that produces the raw material. The reason for this is that the term 'Latxa', which comes from the Basque, is the official name for this breed according to the Official Catalogue of Livestock Breeds of Spain (Annex 1 to Royal Decree 2129/2008 of 26 December 2008 setting up a national programme for the conservation, improvement and support of livestock breeds).

Concerning point (f) of the specification on authorities or bodies responsible for verifying compliance with the provisions of the specification:

The following wording is proposed:

'The verification of compliance with the conditions set out in this specification of the protected designation of origin "Idiazabal" is the responsibility of the Directorate-General for the Food Industry of the Ministry for Agriculture, Food and the Environment.'

Reason: the authority made responsible for verifications is the Directorate-General for the Food Industry of the Ministry for Agriculture, Food and the Environment.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

**COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006**

**on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs<sup>(?)</sup>**

**'IDIAZABAL'**

**EC No: ES-PDO-0217-01160 – 20.9.2013**

**PGI ( ) PDO ( X )**

#### 1. Name

'Idiazabal'

<sup>(?)</sup> Replaced by Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012.

## 2. Member State or Third Country

Spain

## 3. Description of the agricultural product or foodstuff

### 3.1. Type of product

Class 1.3. Cheeses

### 3.2. Description of product to which the name in point 1 applies

'Idiazabal' cheese is made exclusively from raw sheep's milk from the Latxa and Carranzana breeds. It is pressed, uncooked and matures for a minimum of 60 days. It has a minimum weight of 1 kg (with a leeway of 10 % up or down), a height of between 8 and 12 cm (with a leeway of 0,5 cm), and a diameter of between 10 and 30 cm. The cheese may be smoked.

The cheese has a cylindrical shape, a hard rind, is smooth and has a pale yellow colour, or a dark brown colour in the case of smoked cheese. The cut (colour and holes) of the cheese is homogeneous, running from an ivory colour to a straw-yellow colour, with small holes of varying shapes that are few in number. The texture of the cheese is rather springy, firm and has a certain amount of graininess. As far as its smell and taste are concerned, it typically has a strong smell that brings to mind sheep's milk and rennet, and a taste which is balanced and intense on the palate, with delicate spicy, acid and, where relevant, smoky notes. Its strong smell remains for a long time after it has been swallowed.

Its fat content must not be less than 45 % of a dry extract; total protein must be at least 25 % of a dry extract and the dry extract itself must be a minimum of 55 %. The pH of the product must be between 4,9 and 5,5.

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

Raw sheep's milk from Latxa and Carranzana breeds in the defined geographical area.

No substances may be added to the milk other than dairy ferments, lysozyme, rennet and salt.

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

The Latxa and Carranzana breeds of sheep are normally put out to graze for almost the whole year. The flocks are moved periodically to and from the valley floors to the upper slopes of the mountains, according to the season. Since they live practically the whole year in a natural environment, the sheep basically feed on spontaneous vegetation in the woods lower down the slopes in winter, and in the high grasslands in summer. They are fed in the fold, when conditions in the grasslands are difficult or when this is recommended for a number of physiological reasons (lactation).

### 3.5. Specific steps in production that must take place in the defined geographical area

Both the production of the milk and the production and maturing of the cheese must take place in the defined geographical area, meaning that all the stages of production are carried out in the defined area.

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

'Idiazabal' cheese may be put up for sale whole or in slices (pieces).

Packaging of 'Idiazabal' cheese or its slices, as applicable, must always be carried out following the cheese's minimum maturing period of 60 days.

The slicing of the cheese, except when the product is sold retail, and when it is packed, as appropriate, must be carried out in the defined geographical area. There are two reasons for this:

Firstly, when the cheese is sliced, at least two sides of the wedges lose the protective rind. Thus, to ensure that the organoleptic characteristics of 'Idiazabal' cheese are maintained, when the product is cut, the resulting slices must be packaged very quickly after the slicing.

Secondly, a consequence of the slicing may be that the identifiers of the authenticity and origin of the product may disappear or no longer be visible. In order not to compromise the authenticity of the cut product, therefore, it is necessary to cut and package it at origin.

### 3.7. *Specific rules concerning labelling*

'Idiazabal' cheese must carry the following three identifiers:

- A casein label with a unique serial number must be affixed to each cheese in the moulding or pressing stage. The label shall be supplied by the managing body.
- The labels used to market the cheese must include the name and logo of the Protected Designation of Origin.
- The labels used for the cheese, whether marketed whole or in slices, must be affixed in the dairy where the cheese has been produced and has matured, in accordance with Spanish law.
- The cheese must carry a secondary label, each with its own serial number, codified according to the size and format of the cheese that it is certifying. The secondary label must contain the name 'Idiazabal' and the logo of the Protected Designation of Origin. The secondary labels shall be supplied and checked by the managing body and shall be made available, in a non-discriminatory way, to all operators requesting them which meet the terms of the specification.

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

The geographical area includes the natural environments of the Latxa and Carranzana breeds of sheep in Álava, Vizcaya, Guipúzcoa and Navarre, except the municipalities of the Valle del Roncal. The production area lies in the north of the Iberian Peninsula, between 43° 27' and 41° 54' North, and 1° 05' and 3° 37' West, based on the Greenwich Meridian.

## 5. **Link with the geographical area**

### 5.1. *Specificity of the geographical area*

There is evidence in this area of sheep farming with the Latxa and Carranzana breeds since around 2200 BC. The specific characteristics of the area are essential to the correct development and management of these breeds as they have become used to this area after so many years. The area of production is a highly indented and complex mountainous region which makes communication difficult. This has contributed to the continued existence of sheep farming in many of the valleys and uplands. The soils are rich in basic and other nutrients, with the eroding effects attenuated by the natural features of the rock and on occasions by the presence of carbonate rock in the soil profile which makes for excellent pasture land. The topographical features of the area produce a varied climate which ranges from an Atlantic to a Mediterranean climate, with transitional zones caused by the barrier effect of the mountain ranges. The network of water courses is extensive and rich, given that there are many hills and mountains and a lot of precipitation. There are two catchment basins: The Cantabrian, into which flows water from Vizcaya, Guipúzcoa and the northern valleys of Álava and Navarre; and the Mediterranean, which takes in Álava, Navarra Media and La Ribera. As regards flora, there are many natural meadows and grasslands. The favourable climatic and soil conditions have encouraged the growth of hygrophilous and sub-hygrophilous plants which derive from the oceanic character of the Basque Country and the north of Navarre.

### 5.2. *Specificity of the product*

'Idiazabal' cheese has its own sensory characteristics that set it apart from other cheeses. These can be experienced in the product's wealth of nuances of smell and taste; it also has a very little to medium springiness and graininess, and medium to high levels of firmness. The cheese has an intense taste which stays long on the palate, with a perfect balance between the milky aromas, rennet and 'roasted' smell that are its fundamental sensory characteristics, and which are complemented by a vast number of nuances of taste and smell that give the cheese real personality.

### 5.3. *Causal link between the geographical area and the quality or characteristics of the product (for PDO) or a specific quality, the reputation or other characteristic of the product (for PGI)*

The specific characteristics of the production of the milk used to make 'Idiazabal' cheese are essentially due to the breeds that are authorised to provide it (Laxa and Carranzana). The adaptation of these sheep to the defined geographical area and the historical relationship between the environment, the sheep and the shepherds, creates a permanent bond that goes a long way to explaining the specific characteristics of 'Idiazabal' cheese. Laxa and Carranzana are breeds of sheep which are very well suited to providing milk, are hardy and adapted to the mountains, and are at one with the Basque sheep-farming culture, the topography and the 'green' environmental features of their home turf.

The reason, too, why all these characteristics that come from the natural environment, that changes with the seasons, types of pasture, climate, and so on, find their expression in 'Idiazabal' cheese is thanks to its use of raw, unheated milk, since heating would cancel out or diminish the sensory nuances that make the product tasty to eat and are part of the longstanding traditions of the area.

**Reference to publication of the specification**

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

[http://www.magrama.gob.es/es/alimentacion/temas/calidad-agroalimentaria/PLIEGO\\_incluidas\\_modif\\_Idi\\_v6-5-14\\_tcm7-326642.pdf](http://www.magrama.gob.es/es/alimentacion/temas/calidad-agroalimentaria/PLIEGO_incluidas_modif_Idi_v6-5-14_tcm7-326642.pdf)

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(\*) See footnote 3.