

OTHER ACTS

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Publication of an amendment application pursuant to Article 6(2) of Council Regulation (EC) No 510/2006 on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs

(2012/C 302/13)

This publication confers the right to object to the application pursuant to Article 7 of Council Regulation (EC) No 510/2006 ⁽¹⁾. Statements of objection must reach the Commission within six months of the date of this publication.

AMENDMENT APPLICATION

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006**AMENDMENT APPLICATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE 9****'MONT D'OR'/'VACHERIN DU HAUT-DOUBS'****EC No: FR-PDO-0217-0124-30.03.2006****PGI () PDO (X)****1. Heading in the specification affected by the amendment:**

- Name of product
- Description of product
- Geographical area
- Proof of origin
- Method of production
- Link
- Labelling
- National requirements
- Other (references to inspection bodies)

2. Type of amendment(s):

- Amendment to single document or summary sheet
- Amendment to specification of registered PDO or PGI for which neither the single document nor the summary sheet has been published
- Amendment to specification that requires no amendment to the published single document (Article 9(3) of Regulation (EC) No 510/2006)
- 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)

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 93, 31.3.2006, p. 12.

3. Amendment(s):

3.1. Competent service in Member State and applicant group:

Updating details.

3.2. Product description:

- The following clarifications have been added: 'whole cream cow's milk that is processed raw and renneted' and 'spruce box'.
- The sentence 'The weight of the cheese, including the box, ranges from 480 grams to 3,2 kilograms' has replaced 'The cheese, including the box, weighs either 480 grams to 1,3 kilograms or 2 to 3,2 kilograms.' The entire range of weights from 480 grams to 3,2 kilograms allows all traditional forms of packaging to be maintained. The characteristic flavour associated with the designation of origin is unchanged between 1,3 and 2 kilograms.
- The paragraph describing the boxes has been completed with respect to the thickness and height of the rim and the size of the lid.
- 'Mont d'Or' cheese must be presented in its traditional box. The characteristics of this box are thus defined in order to avoid any non-traditional presentation.
- New paragraph: '“Mont d'Or” or “Vacherin du Haut-Doubs” cheese, packaged whole, is presented in an individual spruce box with a protective packaging.' 'Mont d'Or' may be wrapped in household film before sale, making it possible to regulate the natural evaporation of the cheese under optimal marketing conditions. This protection allows for better preservation of the product's essential qualities.

3.3. Geographical area:

The definition of the geographical area is unchanged, but two clarifications have been added:

- all operations (milk production, cheese processing and maturation) must take place in the geographical area made up of the parts of the listed municipalities lying at an altitude of over 700 meters,
- as the cheese is placed into spruce boxes during maturation, this process must, for technical reasons, take place in the geographical area.

3.4. Proof of origin:

The amendments requested are linked to reform of the inspection system for designations of origin. In particular, provisions have been included for authorising operators so as to acknowledge their ability to meet the specifications of the designation from which they wish to benefit. Inspection of the PDO specification takes place according to an inspection plan drawn up by an inspection body.

Moreover, this heading contains several new provisions on registers and declaration documents allowing for product traceability.

3.5. Method of production:

Some clarifications have been added in relation to the method of production. These concern:

- maintenance of pastures, in particular manure; measures to limit the impact of manure in order to preserve natural flora,
- authorised and prohibited feedingstuffs, concentrated feed and supplements for dairy cows: measures to preserve the link between feed given to cows and the natural environment,
- milking and the collection and storage of milk: measures taken to ensure optimal milk quality,
- equipment in cheese dairies: a list has been drawn up of minimum equipment required to guarantee the use of traditional production methods,
- preparation of wooden bands surrounding the cheese: stipulated methods for storing and soaking,

- brine: defined characteristics,
- refining cellars: defined characteristics of equipment.

The following amendments have also been made:

Milk production

- Breeds of cows: the following text has been added: 'or cows of certified parentage obtained from crossing these two breeds.' The aim of this amendment is to respond to the special cases of rare animals obtained from the certified crossing of the two breeds included in the designation, as such crossing is part of normal stockbreeding practice, especially since the 'Montbeliarde' and French 'Simmental' breeds are descendants of the same genetic branch — 'Pie Rouge de l'Est'.
- Feed for dairy cows: the following text has been added: 'In exceptional circumstances, mainly as a result of adverse weather conditions, the Institut National des Appellations d'Origine may grant temporary derogations to ensure continued feeding of the herd.' This provision aims to allow proper feeding of animals in such conditions.
- Feed for ruminants: the following text has been added: 'Only plants and supplementary feeding-stuffs derived from non-transgenic products are authorised in animal feed. No transgenic crops may be planted anywhere on a holding producing milk for processing in a "Mont d'Or" or "Vacherin du Haut-Doubs" PDO. This prohibition applies to all types of plant likely to be given as feed to animals on the holding and to any culture likely to contaminate such plants.' This provision makes it possible to preserve the traditional nature of animal feed.

Cheese production

- The words 'and including' have been added in the sentence: 'Cheese is produced in the period from 15 August to and including 15 March'. This clarification as to when production ends has been added in order to avoid divergent interpretation.
- The text 'harmless cultures of bacteria, yeast and mould' has been replaced by 'selected starter and surface flora cultures'. This wording seems more appropriate.
- New paragraph: 'The milk may not be concentrated by partially removing the watery part before coagulation.'
- New paragraph: 'Dairy raw materials, partly finished products, curd [...] may not be conserved at a temperature below 0 °C.'

New techniques, some of which concern treatments and additives, such as microfiltration, partial concentration of milk, or enzymes for the maturing process, have a potential impact on the characteristics of cheeses with designations of origin. In particular, certain enzyme additives appear to be incompatible with preservation of the key characteristics of PDO products. It was therefore necessary for the specifications to define, in point 5, the current practice regarding the use of treatments and additives for milk and for cheese production, in order to prevent future practices not covered by the rules from compromising the characteristics of PDO cheese.

- The following text has been added: 'The band must be placed immediately after production, which includes removal from the mould. The cheese may be brined before or after the band has been placed.' This clarifies the order of placing bands and brining so as to provide a better guarantee of traditional practice.

Maturation

- The text 'The maturation period is 21 days from the day of production' has been replaced by 'The minimum maturation period is 21 days from the day of renneting ...' This clarifies the period of maturation in order to facilitate inspection and to prevent misinterpretation.
- New sentence: 'Before being placed in its box, which must be at least 12 days after renneting, the cheese must be left on a spruce board, where it is turned and rubbed by hand using water, possibly salted.' This provision aims to provide a stronger guarantee that traditional methods will be used.

- New paragraph: 'The placing of protective packaging around the cheese and its box is not authorised until the 19th day after renneting.' The placing of protective packaging requires optimum timing; the minimum period between renneting and packaging has been set at 19 days.
- New paragraph: 'Fresh cheese and cheese undergoing maturation may not be conserved under a modified atmosphere.' It was necessary for the specifications to define current practice in cheese production, in order to prevent future practices not covered by the rules from compromising the characteristics of 'Mont d'Or' or 'Vacherin du Haut-Doubs' cheese.

Placing on the market

- The text 'The cheese is placed on the market between 10 September and 10 May' has been replaced by 'The cheese may only be sold to consumers between 10 September and 10 May'. This clarification aims to distinguish between making the product available to distributors and actual sale to consumers.
- New paragraph: 'Absence of a protective packaging at any stage of placing on the market renders the holder of the goods liable for product quality.' It should be possible to hold retailers liable for removing protective material placed by producers under the designation (in order, for example, to 'over-ripen' the cheese, i.e. to mature it again under unregulated conditions and sometimes outside of the geographical area beyond the legal minimum maturation period).
- The following text has been added: 'The cheese may be cut and wrapped at the point of sale if the period between cutting and sale to the consumer is not longer than the current day plus the two following working days until the closing time of the shop, and provided that all customary health rules are respected.' These clarifications have been added in order to ensure that the cheese may be cut at the point of sale, subject to rules limiting the risk of product deterioration.

3.6. Elements justifying the link with the geographical area:

This chapter has been reorganised into three parts: 'Specificity of the geographical area', 'Specificity of the product' and 'Causal link between specificity of the area and specificity of the product'. Some editorial amendments have been introduced under this heading; these provide additional explanations, without altering the substance of the text.

3.7. References to the inspection body:

References to the Institut National des Appellations d'Origine have been eliminated and replaced with references to an accredited Certifying Body, as provided for in Standard 45011.

3.8. Specific rules on labelling:

- Use of the 'INAO' logo is no longer compulsory, in keeping with national legislation.
- Use of the EU 'PDO' symbol is now compulsory.
- The text 'Other information required under general rules must appear on the rim of the box' has been replaced by 'Other information required under general rules must appear on the fold (rim) of the box'. The term 'fold' (*pliure*) is more customary than 'rim' (*targe*).
- The following text has been added to the 2nd paragraph: 'These markings must be visible until the stage of sale to consumers.' This provision guarantees product traceability and provides additional information to consumers.

3.9. National requirements:

In the light of changes to national legislation and rules, the 'National requirements' heading now contains a table indicating the main items to be checked, their reference values and the evaluation methods to be used.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006**'MONT D'OR'/'VACHERIN DU HAUT-DOUBS'****EC No: FR-PDO-0217-0124-30.03.2006****PGI () PDO (X)****1. Name:**

'Mont d'Or'/'Vacherin du Haut-Doubs'

2. Member State or Third Country:

France

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:

'Mont d'Or' or 'Vacherin du Haut-Doubs' cheese is made exclusively from whole cow's milk that is processed raw and renneted. The milk comes from dairy herds made up solely of cows of the 'Montbeliarde' or French 'Simmental' breeds or cows of certified parentage obtained from crossing these two breeds.

'Mont d'Or' or 'Vacherin du Haut-Doubs' cheese is a soft, uncooked, lightly pressed cheese of creamy consistency in the form of a flat cylinder. The cheese is white to ivory in colour and lightly salted. The rind, which is covered with a faint flowery shape, is yellow to light brown in colour.

It has a minimum fat content of 45 grams per 100 grams of completely desiccated cheese. The water content of the defatted cheese must not exceed 75 %.

'Mont d'Or' or 'Vacherin du Haut-Doubs' cheese is ringed by a spruce band and placed in a spruce box. In the box, the cheese has a wrinkled appearance.

The weight of the cheese, including the box, ranges from 480 grams to 3,2 kilograms.

The size of the box must comply with the following specifications:

— the bottom of the box must be between 11 cm and 33 cm in diameter,

— the entire box must be between 6 cm and 7 cm in height,

— the bottom and the lid must each be less than 7 mm thick,

— the rim of the box and the lid must each be less than 2 mm thick,

— the rim of the lid must be no more than 2,5 cm wide,

— the shape and size of the lid must match those of the box.

'Mont d'Or' or 'Vacherin du Haut-Doubs' cheese is presented whole in an individual spruce box with a protective packaging. It may be placed on the market for sale to consumers only between 10 September and 10 May. 'Mont d'Or' or 'Vacherin du Haut-Doubs' cheese may not be frozen.

3.3. *Raw materials (for processed products only):*

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3.4. *Feed (for products of animal origin only):*

The staple feed of the dairy cows is fodder originating from pastures at an altitude of at least 700 meters in the geographical area. During the growing season, grazing represents at least half of daily feed; green fodder may only be used as a supplement. When the cows are kept indoors, their staple feed is hay and aftermath harvested from pastures in the geographical area. The grazing land actually used on the holding must be at least one hectare per dairy cow.

The amount of concentrated feed given to dairy cows may not exceed 8 kilograms per lactating dairy cow per day. This means that approximately 70 % of daily feed is fodder originating from the geographical area.

Only plants and complementary feedingstuffs derived from non-transgenic products are authorised in the animal feed.

Silage products or other fermented fodder, including bales covered in plastic film, are prohibited on the holding year-round.

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

The milk must be produced and the cheese must be made and matured within the area.

3.6. *Specific rules on slicing, grating, packaging, etc.:*

The cheese must be placed in its box within the defined geographical area, as it must mature inside the box. The cheese may not be cut except at the stage of sale to consumers.

'Mont d'Or' or 'Vacherin du Haut-Doubs' cheese is packaged whole and presented in an individual spruce box with a protective packaging.

3.7. *Specific rules on labelling:*

All cheese with the designation of origin 'Mont d'Or' or 'Vacherin du Haut-Doubs' are marketed with an individual label showing the name of the designation of origin in a font at least two thirds as large as the largest font used on the label. The name 'Mont d'Or' or 'Vacherin du Haut-Doubs', the optional indication 'Protected Designation of Origin', the EU 'PDO' logo, the name of the workshop (clearly indicated) and other information required under general rules are shown on the rim of the box. These markings must be visible until the stage of sale to consumers.

No qualifiers or other indications may be placed next to the designation on the label, in marketing material, on invoices or in commercial documents, except for certain brand names or trademarks and the indication 'made in Haut-Doubs'.

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

The milk must be produced and the cheese made, boxed and matured at an altitude of at least 700 meters in the geographical area covering the following municipalities in the Department of Doubs: Les Alliés, Arc-sous-Cicon, Arçon, Barboux, Le Bélieu, Bians-les-Usiers, Le Bizot, Bonnétagé, La Bosse, Boujailles, Bugny, Bulle, Chapelle-d'Huin, La Chaux, La Chenalotte, Courvières, Dompierre-les-Tilleuls, Evillers, Les Fontenelles, Fournet-Blancheroche, Frambouhans, Frasne, Gilley, Goux-les-Usiers, Grand' Combe-des-Bois, Hauterive-la-Fresse, Levier, La Longeville, Maisons-du-Bois-Lièvreumont, Le Mémont, Montbenoît, Montflovin, Narbief, Noël-Cerneux, Plaimbois-du-Miroir, Le Russey, Saint-Gorgon-Main, Saint-Julien-lès-Russey, Septfontaines, Sombacour, Ville-du-Pont and the cantons of Morteau, Mouthe and Pontarlier.

5. Link with the geographical area:

5.1. Specificity of the geographical area:

'Mont d'Or' or 'Vacherin du Haut-Doubs' cheese is produced in an area including the high plateau zone of the Jura, at an altitude ranging from 700 to 1 200 meters, and the high grasslands covering the ridge of the main Jura range above 1 200 meters.

Geologically, this area was formed during the upper Jurassic period. Some basins in the Haut-Doubs region also show formations dating from the Neocomian stage of the Cretaceous period. The Neocomian terrain is marl rich in iron oxide.

The area is delimited by the end of the Jura plateau zone and a mountainous zone along the border with Switzerland.

The area is bountiful in grasslands and softwood forests, especially spruce, with the land more or less evenly divided between these two types of cover.

The climate is quite rugged, with very low temperatures in the winter and a long period of snow cover, which can make transport difficult.

Although there is little official documentation, cheese production in the region can be dated to the 12th century.

At that time, the high plateau zone of the Jura was brought into agricultural use under the auspices of the big abbeys of Saint-Claude and Montbenoit, thus allowing animal breeding and dairy production. From the 14th century onward, cheese dairies known as 'fruitières' began to appear.

5.2. Specificity of the product:

'Mont d'Or' or 'Vacherin du Haut-Doubs' cheese is made from whole raw cow's milk.

It is a soft, uncooked, lightly pressed and lightly salted cheese of creamy consistency, white to ivory in colour, with a washed, yellow to light brown rind covered with a faint flowery shape; the cheese is ringed with a spruce band immediately after removal from the mould and placed in a spruce box. In the box, the cheese continues to mature and has a wrinkled appearance. The band and the box are an integral part of the production requirements for the designation of origin 'Mont d'Or' or 'Vacherin du Haut-Doubs'. The size of the box must comply with certain rules.

Each cheese is in the form of a flat cylinder. Its weight, including the box, ranges from 480 grams to 3,2 kilograms.

The cheese is made between 15 August and 15 March, and may only be placed on the market between 10 September and 10 May, presented whole in an individual spruce box.

Because of its presentation and very creamy texture, this cheese has always been associated with celebrations.

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 another characteristic of the product (for PGI):

'Mont d'Or' or 'Vacherin du Haut-Doubs' cheese can be made using milk produced late in the season. In autumn and winter, when the grazing season is over, the cows are kept indoors and are generally in the second stage of lactation, giving less milk and producing milk rich in fat.

The milk is also difficult to transport to cheese dairies because of the weather. Local farmers have adapted to these conditions by producing a cheese which is smaller than cooked, pressed cheeses and which is moist, making it easy to conserve in its spruce band and box.

Although now made in cheese dairies rather than on farms, 'Mont d'Or' or 'Vacherin du Haut-Doubs' cheese is still a seasonal product and is not made in the spring or summer.

Traditionally, the milk was quickly curdled with rennet at milking temperature (more than 33 °C). This quick renneting time, together with the high fat content of the milk, resulted in 'soft' curds. Local woodworking expertise led to the production of soft bands made of stretched bark from spruce trees,

traditionally felled in the autumn. This provided a 'single-use' mould for holding the curds. This band gives 'Mont d'Or' or 'Vacherin du Haut-Doubs' cheese its characteristic woody flavour.

Modern production techniques have further reduced renneting time by increasing the renneting temperature. The band still serves to conserve the moist, fatty cheese.

After the cheese is made, it is generally matured at a high temperature, resulting in a creamy consistency because of protein breakdown. This high temperature yields a milky aroma and a slightly bitter taste, so that the cheese has a lingering flavour when eaten. The cheese is washed regularly, resulting in a clean-looking, homogenous rind due to the growth of surface bacteria. This traditional smearing technique has been refined over the ages in the area.

Because of its very soft (nearly runny) consistency, the cheese is matured in a box made of peeled spruce wood. When placed in the box, the cheese is slightly compressed, with a wrinkled surface not unlike the contours of a mountain. To this day, cheese-makers regard the wrinkled appearance of 'Mont d'Or' or 'Vacherin du Haut-Doubs' cheese when it is placed in the box as a hallmark of manufacturing success and quality. In the box, a faint flowery shape comes to cover the surface of the cheese. The box is thus an important part of the maturation process. It also serves as packaging for transport and for presentation at the time of sale. The box bears identification of the product and the producer.

The care taken in raising 'Montbeliarde' and 'Simmental' cows, which are showcased at local farmers' events, reflects local milk producers' expertise, which is based on animal hygiene and welfare.

Strict rules also define the feeding of purebred cows of the 'Montbeliarde' and French 'Simmental' breeds and of cows produced by crossing these two breeds. The staple feed of the dairy cows must be fodder originating from the geographical area. Fodder from outside the geographical area may be used, but only in exceptional circumstances.

The cheese is produced according to very specific expertise and tradition, which is always reflected in the conditions of production: seasonal production and use of spruce boxes and bands.

Reference to publication of the specification:

http://agriculture.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/CDC_Mont_d_Or_cle8515b3.pdf
