

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 18/04)

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 ⁽¹⁾.

AMENDMENT APPLICATION

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006

on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs ⁽²⁾

AMENDMENT APPLICATION ACCORDING TO ARTICLE 9

‘PECORINO TOSCANO’

EC No: IT-PDO-0217-01228-16.5.2014

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
- Other (to be specified)

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 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)

3. Amendment(s)

Type of product

Description of product

It is specified that the soft cheese is ‘Pecorino Toscano tenero’ (soft Pecorino Toscano) and the hard cheese is ‘Pecorino Toscano stagionato’ (mature Pecorino Toscano).

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 343, 14.12.2012, p. 1.

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

The following sentence is added: 'In order to limit the amount of processing waste, provided that the above weight and height requirements are complied with, "Pecorino Toscano" may be produced in a shape other than the cylindrical shape, but only when intended for pre-packaging (in slices, cubes or as grated cheese).'

Only if 'Pecorino Toscano' is to be pre-packaged in slices, cubes or as grated cheese may its outer appearance be modified.

Indeed, this does not affect its interior characteristics because the weight/height ratios remain unaltered, as it is only the diameter of its circular shape that changes in respect of the side of the parallelepiped. This does not alter the natural maturation processes, but does considerably limit processing waste linked to cutting.

Method of production

The possibility is added of using vegetable rennet, a long-standing practice in Tuscany for the production of Pecorino (already mentioned in the national registration application submitted in 1985). This practice has been taken up again in the last few years both as practice that is typical of the territory and for the production of Kosher cheeses.

The dry salting option, which had already been provided for in the previous text thanks to the wording 'by directly adding salt' is described in more detail.

In the details on maturation, the word 'rooms' is replaced by 'suitable environment', the maximum temperature is raised from 12 °C to 15 °C, and the maximum relative humidity level is increased from 90 % to 95 %.

The purpose of this amendment is to have a slightly broader range of temperatures and relative humidity levels of the environments intended for the maturation of 'Pecorino Toscano' so as to include those such as cellars and caves, either natural or modified by man, but having no external system for controlling the air temperature and relative humidity. Amongst the numerous caves and cellars considered suitable for the maturation of 'Pecorino Toscano' insomuch as they enable the production of cheeses that fully comply with the product standards, it has been measured that some of these environments may register, in the course of the year, temperatures (15 °C max) and relative humidity (95 % max) that are slightly higher than those provided for by the specification until now. Moreover, the use of cellars and caves for maturation is quite typical of the dairy industry and not exclusive to 'Pecorino Toscano'. The possibility of using such environments increases both the product's potential appeal and energy efficiency.

Labelling

The mark to be affixed on the labels is being modified so that the name 'Pecorino Toscano' stands out more on the actual logo.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006

on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs⁽³⁾

'PECORINO TOSCANO'

EC No: IT-PDO-0217-01228-16.5.2014

PGI () PDO (X)

1. Name

'Pecorino Toscano'

2. Member State or Third Country

Italy

⁽³⁾ Replaced by Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012.

3. Description of agricultural or food product

3.1. Type of product

Class 1.3. Cheeses

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

'Pecorino Toscano' is a soft ('Pecorino Toscano tenero') or semi-hard ('Pecorino Toscano stagionato') cheese made of whole sheep's milk coming from the production area. It has a distinctive texture, is matured for a short or long period depending whether it is intended as table cheese or for grating and has a cylindrical shape with flat faces and a slightly convex heel. Its size varies as follows: face diameter between 15 and 22 cm, heel height between 7 and 11 cm, weight between 0,75 and 3,50 kg. 'Pecorino Toscano' may be produced in shapes other than cylindrical, but only if is to be pre-packaged (in slices, cubes or as grated cheese). The fat content in dry matter is no less than 40 % for semi-hard cheeses and no less than 45 % for soft cheeses. The rind is yellow of varying hues up to deep yellow. The colour of the rind may depend on the treatments the cheese has undergone. The colour of the body of the cheese is white tending slightly towards straw-coloured for the soft type and between light straw-coloured and straw-coloured for the semi-hard type. The latter type has a compact consistency and is firm when cut, possibly with unevenly distributed small eyes. The strong, fragrant flavour is typical of the special production processes used. The minimum maturing period is 20 days for soft cheese and no less than four months for the semi-hard type.

3.3. Raw materials (for processed products only)

'Pecorino Toscano' is produced with whole sheep's milk from the area of origin indicated in the specification, which may either be raw or undergo thermal treatment, including pasteurisation. Only indigenous milk enzymes from the strain collection are allowed.

3.4. Feed (for products of animal origin only)

Sheep must mainly be fed with green or dried fodder from local natural pastures, possibly supplemented with hay and concentrated straight feedingstuffs.

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

All the phases of the production of milk and 'Pecorino Toscano' must take place in the area of origin until the cheese reaches its marketable level of maturation after 20 days for 'Pecorino Toscano tenero' and four months for 'Pecorino Toscano stagionato'.

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

'Pecorino Toscano' may be marketed whole, in portions cut from the wheel or grated.

3.7. Specific rules concerning labelling

Each wheel of 'Pecorino Toscano' must be marked with the PDO identifying logo in ink for 'Pecorino Toscano tenero' and hot-marked for 'Pecorino Toscano stagionato'. The logo consists of the wording 'Pecorino Toscano D.O.P.', a stylised image of a P and a T as well as the identification number of the producing dairy/maturer or authorised packager in the area of origin. If the packager is not active in the area of origin, the number must identify the dairy or the maturer.



The cheeses, cheese portions, slices or grated cheese packages must bear a label with the wording 'Pecorino Toscano D.O.P.' or 'Pecorino Toscano D.O.P. stagionato' standing out in respect of other wording on the label in terms of size, font and position. In accordance with Article 5 of the Product Specification, the mark, in colour, must be affixed one or more times and its diameter measure at least 15 mm.



4. Concise definition of the geographical area

The production area of 'Pecorino Toscano' PDO comprises the whole of the Region of Tuscany, the whole of the municipalities of Alleronia and Castiglione del Lago, in the Region of Umbria, and the whole of the municipalities of Acquapendente, Onano, San Lorenzo Nuovo, Grotte di Castro, Gradoli, Valentano, Farnese, Ischia di Castro, Montefiascone, Bolsena and Capodimonte in the Region of Lazio.

5. Link with the geographical area

5.1. Specificity of the geographical area

As regards natural factors, note should be taken of the special characteristics of the areas used for rearing the sheep, which almost exclusively live freely in the wild, using natural pastures rich in wild plants giving distinctive qualities to the milk used for cheese-making.

As regards human factors, beside their historically proven economic importance, the farms involved play an important social role by using 'marginal' land, which would otherwise be progressively abandoned with the subsequent impoverishment of natural resources.

Alongside the production method, which, from processing temperatures to the maturation method, respects all the qualities of sheep's milk, the rearing method and the plants, either wild or cultivated, that constitute the animals' main fodder, give the milk and the finished product the special characteristics that have always helped defining 'Pecorino Toscano' as a 'mild' cheese.

5.2. Specificity of the product

Yellow rind.

The taste is mild, never salty or strong.

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)

This cheese of ancient origin, whose existence in Etruscan times is the object of extensive historical evidence, has spread over the centuries in the 'Maremma' area, most of which lies in Tuscany. Traditionally, the product was designated by names referring to its geographical origin or by the more general term 'toscano' (Tuscan). Over time, given its largely common features, a single production standard and a designation related in etymological terms to its historical and geographical characteristics were established.

The special characteristics of 'Pecorino Toscano' derive from both sheep's milk and the production method. Fed on pastures almost all year around, the animals get from wild and cultivated plants the flavours and fragrances that are characteristics of the climate of the area of origin, which are both mild and distinctive. The mostly strong flavour of sheep's milk is made milder by the quality of the climate and pastures, which have a positive impact on animals' life and therefore their production. These characteristics are kept during the processing method by using the same temperatures as those of milk inside the sheep's udders, the traditional use of veal's rennet, minimum salting and maturation temperatures respecting the enzymes' natural activity. In line with the Tuscan tradition, the cheese keeps that distinctive albeit not exaggerated flavour, mild and never strong, that enables 'Pecorino Toscano' to please all palates.

Publication reference of the specification

(Article 5(7) of Regulation (EC) No 510/2006 ⁽⁴⁾)

The Ministry has launched the national objection procedure with the publication of the amendment application regarding 'Pecorino Toscano' PDO in Official Gazette of the Italian Republic No 74 of 29 March 2014.

⁽⁴⁾ See footnote 2.

The full text of the product specification is available on the following website:
<http://www.politicheagricole.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/3335>

or alternatively:

by going direct to the home page of the Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policy (www.politicheagricole.it), clicking on 'Prodotti DOP IGP' (at the top right of the screen), then on 'Prodotti DOP IGP STG' (on the left-hand side of the screen) and lastly on 'Disciplinari di Produzione all'esame dell'UE'.
