

## 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**

(2007/C 127/06)

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

#### AMENDMENT APPLICATION

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

#### Amendment application pursuant to Article 9 and Article 17(2)

#### 'QUEIJO SERRA DA ESTRELA'

EC No: PT/PDO/117/0213/16.05.2002

PDO ( X ) PGI ( )

#### **Amendment(s) requested**

*Heading(s) in the specification:*

- Name of product
- X Description of product
- Geographical area
- Proof of origin
- X Method of production
- Link
- X Labelling
- National requirements

#### **Amendment(s):**

*Description of product:* Since time immemorial, production of Queijo Serra da Estrela has followed one of two patterns: cheese for immediate consumption, usually referred to as Serra da Estrela, and cheese to be consumed over a period, the Queijo Serra da Estrela Velho. The latter is identical to the former as regards the breeds from which the milk is obtained, the way in which the animals are fed and reared, the milk produced and transported, the cheese manufactured, etc; the only difference concerns ripening, which requires more time. Serra da Estrela Velho cheese clearly presents different sensorial characteristics, being smaller, darker and having a sharper taste and aroma than the Serra da Estrela.

<sup>(1)</sup> OJL 93, 31.3.2006, p. 12.

The intention of the producers is therefore also to market Serra da Estrela Velho, not least because they consider it advantageous to reintroduce smaller cheeses — approximately 0,7 kg, as was traditional practice.

*Method of production:* As with most traditional Portuguese cheese, production of Queijo Serra da Estrela is highly seasonal. In view of this and in order to meet new consumer habits — with peaks in sales in summer and at Christmas — and to allow regular, lower-income habitual consumers to continue to consume this cheese — which is expensive — the producers plan to extend the shelf-life of the Serra da Estrela while preventing it spoiling or ripening. Furthermore, they also plan to market both the normal and mature varieties in portions.

Serra da Estrela cheese is a live product which continues to develop even after it is preserved, cut and packaged. These operations can therefore only take place in the region of origin, in view of the need to:

- guarantee the product's authenticity and physical, chemical and organoleptic characteristics which define the special quality of these cheeses — attributes which only the producers, local population and habitual consumers are capable of recognising;
- assess the quality of each cheese individually before subjecting it to any of the abovementioned operations;
- allow the cheese, including when cut, to present its characteristic butteriness, so that selecting the cheese which presents the proper degree of maturity at the moment of the operation is decisive;
- ensure that, in the case of the mature cheese, the slices have the requisite consistency and do not crumble, so that selecting the cheeses which have the appropriate taste and consistency at the precise moment when it is cut during the ripening process is decisive;
- guarantee the traditional reputation of the product is maintained and has not been superseded and that the consumer is not misled;
- guarantee that the health and hygiene conditions of the product are constantly maintained throughout the various operations;
- make it possible to monitor the operations properly and as required;
- guarantee that each unit or portion is traceable to a production facility and an agricultural holding, thus ensuring the geographical origin of the product.

*Labelling:* Amendments to the labelling are a direct consequence of the requirement to include the term 'Velho' for cheese which has ripened for more than 120 days.

#### SUMMARY

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

#### 'QUEIJO SERRA DA ESTRELA'

EC No: PT/PDO/117/0213/16.05.2002

PDO ( X ) PGI ( )

This summary sets out the main elements of the product specification for information purposes.

1. *Responsible department in the Member State:*

Name: Instituto de Desenvolvimento Rural e Hidráulica

Address: Av. Afonso Costa, 3  
P-1949-002 Lisboa

Tel: (351-21) 844 22 00

Fax: (351-21) 844 22 02

E-mail: idrha@idrha.min-agricultura.pt

2. *group:*

Name: Estrelacoop — Coop. Produtores de Queijo Serra da Estrela, CRL  
 Address: R. Miguel Bombarda, 20  
 P-6360-344 Celorico da Beira  
 Tel: (351-271) 74 13 21  
 Fax: (351-271) 74 13 21  
 E-mail: estrelacoopqse@oninet.pt  
 Composition: Producers/processors ( X ) Other ( )

3. *Type of product:*

Class 1.3: Cheeses

4. *Specification:*

(summary of the requirements under article 4(2) of regulation (EC) no 510/2006)

## 4.1. Name: 'Queijo Serra da Estrela'

4.2. Description: Cheese obtained by slow draining of the curds, following coagulation of unadulterated raw ewe's milk obtained from Bordaleira Serra da Estrela or Churra Mondegueira ewes, using the cardoon flower (*Cynara cardunculus*, L) as rennet. The minimum ripening time for Serra da Estrela cheese is 30 days. Where the cheese has ripened for at least 120 days, it may be referred to as 'Serra da Estrela Velho'.

The main characteristics are as follows:

	Queijo Serra da Estrela	Queijo Serra da Estrela Velho.
Shape and consistency	short (flat) regular cylinder with bulging sides and some bulging on the top and no defined edge	short (flat) regular cylinder with little or no bulging on sides; no edges
Rind	Smooth and semi-soft	Smooth, slightly wrinkled and hard or extra hard.
Weight	Between 0,7 and 1,7 kg.	0,7 to 1,2 kg
Diameter	11 to 20 cm	11 to 20 cm
Height	3 to 6 cm.	3 to 6 cm.
Texture	closed, slightly buttery, loses its shape on cutting, well bound, creamy and smooth, with few or no eyes	closed or with some eyes, slightly dry crumbly body, smooth
Colour	white or light yellow	yellowish to orange/brown, becoming darker from the outside towards the centre
Sensory characteristics	smooth, clean and slightly acidic bouquet	pleasant, lingering, clean, strong to slightly strong and slightly spicy/salty bouquet
Protein	26 to 33 %	36 to 43 %
Fat	45 to 60 %	> 60 %
Moisture	61 to 69 %	49 to 56 %
Ash	5 to 6,5 %	7 to 8 %

- 4.3. Geographical area: In view of the interdependent nature of the region's eco-system, the centuries-old knowledge of animal husbandry, the climate necessary for the processing and ageing of the cheese, the special micro-climate, the age-old know-how, the existence of local methods which have been faithfully and constantly followed, the obligation to protect the consumer against fraud and being misled, the need to monitor all the operations and the obligation to guarantee the traceability of the product throughout the production process, the geographical area where production, the processing of the raw materials and ageing, extended storage, cutting and packaging of the cheese take place is to be restricted to the administrative districts of Carregal do Sal, Celorico da Beira, Fornos de Algodres, Gouveia, Mangualde, Manteigas, Nelas, Oliveira do Hospital, Penalva do Castelo and Seia and to the parishes of Carapito, Cortiçada, Dornelas, Eirado, Forninhos, Penaverde and Valverde, in the administrative district of Aguiar da Beira, the parishes of Anceriz, Barril do Alva, Cerdeira, Coja, Pomares and Vila Cova do Alva, in the administrative district of Arganil, the parishes of Aldeia de Carvalho, Cortes do Meio, Erada, Paul, Sarzedo, Unhais da Serra and Verdelhos, in the administrative district of Covilhã, the parishes of Aldeia Viçosa, Cavadoude, Corujeira, Fala, Famalicão, Fernão Joanes, Maçainhas de Baixo, Mizarela, Pero Soares, Porto da Carne, São Vicente, Sé Seixo Amarelo, Trinta, Vale de Estrelas, Valhelhas, Videmonte, Vila Cortez do Mondego and Vila Soeiro, in the administrative district of Guarda, the parishes of Midões, Póvoa de Midões and Vila Nova de Oliveirinha, in the administrative district of Tábua, the parishes of Canas de Santa Maria, Ferreirós do Dão, Lobão da Beira, Molelos, Mosteiro de Fráguas, Nandufe, Parada de Gonta, Sabugosa, São Miguel do Outeiro, Tonda and Tondela, in the administrative district of Tondela, the parishes of Aldeia Nova, Carnicães, Feital, Fiães, Freches, Santa Maria, São Pedro, Tamanho, Torres, Vila Franca das Naves and Vilares, in the administrative district of Trancoso and the parishes of Fragosela, Loureiro de Silgueiros, Povolide and São João de Lourosa, in the administrative district of Viseu.
- 4.4. Proof of origin: Milk from the ewes of the abovementioned breeds may only be obtained from the holdings within the geographical area and the latter must be registered with the Group and inspected. The livestock must be entered in the relevant Register. The cheese production, ageing, cutting and packaging facilities must be properly licensed and registered with the Group and also subject to inspections. In addition to the labelling, a numbered certification mark must be affixed to each unit or portion in order to make the product entirely traceable. The entire production line must be monitored by the specifically recognised body, in particular with regard to the location of the holdings and the processing facilities, the feeding and rearing of the flocks, milking and milk handling circuit and its processing right through to the marketing stage.
- 4.5. Method of production: The livestock must be farmed extensively or semi-extensively. Only milk which meets the highest health and hygiene standards is acceptable. The cheese is produced by the addition of salt and cardoon flower heads to the unadulterated raw milk, followed by gentle mixing and coagulation. The curds are cut with a wireframe or any other appropriate instrument; they are then transferred to a cloth, placed in open adjustable moulds and squeezed to extract the whey. The curds are divided and pressed; they are then turned for the first time and pressed to extract as much whey as possible. The adjustable mould is opened and the contents divided; the cloth is then changed for a fresh one and the whole returned to the adjustable mould, where it is tightened to its final diameter and turned for the second time and pressure applied manually or mechanically. The cheese may be salted externally before ripening. Ripening may take place under natural conditions or in a controlled atmosphere. Ripening consists of two separate stages: first, a fresh white cloth ribbon is wound round the cheese in humidity and temperature conditions such as to encourage lactic fermentation or the formation of 'reima' (surface smear), after which it is washed and transferred to the soaking stage in temperature and humidity conditions different to the former. The ripening time is decisive with regard to the cheese's classification as either Serra da Estrela or Serra da Estrela Velho

Since Serra da Estrela is a live product which continues to develop even after it is preserved, cut and packaged, these operations may only take place in the region of origin in view of the need to:

- guarantee the product's authenticity and physical, chemical and organoleptic characteristics which define the special quality of these cheeses — attributes which only the producers, local population and habitual consumers are capable of recognising;
- assess the quality of each cheese individually before subjecting it to any of the abovementioned operations;
- allow the cheese, including when cut, to present its characteristic butteriness, so that selecting the cheese which presents the proper degree of maturity at the moment of the operation is decisive;

- ensure that, in the case of the mature cheese, the slices have the requisite consistency and do not crumble, so that selecting the cheeses which have the appropriate taste and consistency at the precise moment when it is cut during the ageing process is decisive;
  - guarantee the traditional reputation of the product is maintained and has not been superseded and that the consumer is not misled;
  - guarantee that the health and hygiene conditions of the product are constantly maintained throughout the various operations;
  - make it possible to monitor the operations properly and as required;
  - guarantee that each unit or portion is traceable to its production facilities and on to its agricultural holding, thereby ensuring the geographical origin of the product.
- 4.6. Link: The entire region is located on the Beira uplands, having agro-climactic conditions characterised by long cold rainy winters with occasional snow and hot dry summers. The natural pasture consists of wild perennial grasses and the cultivated pasture of white clover and subterranean clover, which confer on the ewes' milk, and therefore on the cheese, its unique flavour. The region and the cheese produced within it were mentioned by Roman authors and were also described as the food of choice on board ship during the Age of Discovery; they were also mentioned in sixteenth-century plays. The link with the origin is further strengthened by the fact that the milk comes exclusively from local breeds of sheep (Bordaleira Serra da Estrela and Churra Mondegueira).
- 4.7. Inspection body:
- Name: Beira Tradição — Certificação de Produtos da Beira, L.DA  
Address: Urbanização Auto Mecânica, 8 r/c  
P-6000 Castelo Branco  
Tel: (351-272) 32 98 43  
Fax: (351-272) 32 98 43  
E-mail: celestino.almeida@netvisao.pt
- Beira Tradição-Certificação de Produtos da Beira, Lda meets standard 45011:2001
- 4.8. Labelling: In addition to the mandatory wording required by the law, the following are also mandatory:
- the words 'Queijo Serra da Estrela — Denominação de Origem Protegida' or 'Queijo Serra da Estrela Velho— Denominação de Origem Protegida';
  - the Community PDO logo;
  - the certification mark bearing the name of the product, the name of the monitoring and certification body and a serial number rendering the product traceable.
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