

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

(2014/C 387/09)

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 IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE 9

'REBLOCHON'/'REBLOCHON DE SAVOIE'

EC No: FR-PDO-0217-01003-11.6.2012

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: packaging, details of the inspection bodies, Member State competent authority, contact information and composition of the producer group

2. Type of amendments

- Amendment to the 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 the product specification resulting from the adoption of obligatory sanitary or phytosanitary measures by the public authorities (Article 9(4) of Regulation (EC) No 510/2006)

3. Amendment(s)

Product description: point 2 of the specification

Further details have been added to the description of the cheese and the rind, elaborating on the aspects described in the original application.

The weight range of the small 'Reblochon'/'Reblochon de Savoie' has been expanded slightly (230-280 g instead of 240-280 g).

Packaging of the cheese in portion-sized pieces is introduced. According to the producer group, this will allow operators to cater for the trend towards individual consumption of the product.

⁽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 quality of the packing materials and cutting techniques make it possible to preserve the quality of the product during these processes.

The indication of the presence of a false bottom has been moved to the packaging section under point 5.7 of the specification.

Geographical area: processes performed in the area: point 3 of the specification

The processes which take place in the geographical area are indicated.

The concept of milking within the geographical area was introduced to clarify the way in which the holdings situated in this area operate. It is also made clear that packaging, already included in the registered specification, is initial packaging so as to take account of pre-packing processes.

The transitional provision concerning the possibility of maturing in two municipalities bordering the geographical area has been deleted, since the companies concerned have relocated to the geographical area.

A municipality formed from the separation of formerly amalgamated municipalities has been added (no change to the perimeter of the geographical area).

Proof of origin (traceability): point 4 of the specification

These changes are linked to the reform of the system for inspecting designations of origin resulting from changes made to the regulations at national level. In particular, operators must now furnish a statement of identity before their ability to meet the specification of the designation from which they wish to benefit is acknowledged.

A description is also given of the contents of the statements necessary for recognition and monitoring of the products and how to submit those statements.

Details of the documents and registrations required for monitoring traceability and inspecting production conditions are given, along with the methods for inspecting the product's characteristics.

With regard to the cheese markings, the means of distributing and removing identification plates are specified.

Dairy cow breeds: point 5.1 of the specification

The definition of the dairy herd as including all the lactating and dry dairy cows and heifers over six months old on the holding makes it possible to stipulate the types of animals to which the inspections apply.

Clarifications have been made to the breeds of animals allowed, corresponding to codes 12, 46 and 31, to strengthen inspections.

Some producers may use the animals for purposes other than producing milk intended for the production of 'Reblochon'/Reblochon de Savoie'; this option is available and regulated.

Dairy cows' feed: point 5.2 of the specification

(a) Basic feed ration and feed supplements

The new provisions essentially consolidate the fodder-based feed system (grass and hay) to strengthen the link with the area of the PDO and to preserve a method of making cheese from raw milk (fermented fodder excluded).

To achieve this objective, a stocking density of 1,5 livestock units per hectare of agricultural land has been introduced. In the summer period, lactating cows must be put out to pasture for a period of at least 150 days.

The supply of external feed to lactating cows is regulated in order to take into account the differences in working methods observed between the holdings within the geographical area. Thus, fodder from outside the geographical area may be used on holdings at an altitude of 600 m and on alpine holdings where the lactating cows graze at an altitude above 600 m for up to 25 % (expressed in dry matter) of the animals' basic feed ration.

The only type of fodder that may be bought in from outside the geographical area is hay.

Green feeding is allowed, but is limited to one meal a day during the 150-day grazing period. However, outside of the grazing period, green feeding for two meals a day is allowed, but this must be from two cuttings and given as two feeds. In order to avoid any problem of contamination with undesirable bacteria, the green feed must be fresh when distributed and the feeders must be cleaned of all waste before being refilled.

However, in the aim of preserving the link with the area and because short fibres do not have the same effect on rumination as hay made from grass or alfalfa, the distribution of dried alfalfa pellets is limited to supplementary feed.

The definition of a list of permitted concentrates facilitates inspections and prevents the use of inadequately developed technological innovations. In order to preserve the link between the product and the area where it is produced, the total amount of supplementary feed in the ration is restricted to 1 800 kg per dairy cow per year and 500 kg per heifer.

Finally, it is stipulated that the lactoserum produced on the holding may only be added to the animals' drinking water and for no more than 24 hours.

(b) Means of distributing the feed.

To prevent health and technological problems, preference is given to the distribution of dry feed in the winter period. To facilitate rumination, the distribution of fodder that is physically whole is mandatory. These elements have led to a ban on the use of mixer-feeders for distributing feed.

(c) Fermented fodder

The current provisions ban the use of fermented fodder in dairy cows' feed. The possibility of feeding another clearly separated herd with this type of fodder is, however, envisaged and is subject to specific conditions on production, storage and use.

Farming system: points 5.3 and 5.4 of the specification

(a) GMO ban (crops and fodder)

This ban on the presence of GMOs in the specification enhances the traditional nature of the feed.

(b) Authorised use of mineral fertilisers

In order to promote grazing, biodiversity and natural flora and to preserve the environment, the use of mineral fertilisers is restricted. A distinction is made between the municipalities according to their topography, in line with the breakdown into 'disadvantaged areas' used by the authorities. The threshold values set in the specification are average values applicable for the parcel area of each holding.

(c) Authorised use of organic fertilisers

The conditions for spreading organic fertilisers are defined in order to protect the cows' feed against any risk of contamination from pollutants.

The general introduction of a logbook on the use of fertiliser will facilitate fair inspections in this area.

Milking conditions: point 5.5 of the specification

The milking conditions are specified to allow new milking techniques to be used while respecting all the conditions concerning the management of the herd and the preservation of the characteristics of the milk used.

Inspections of the milking facilities are made mandatory to preserve the quality of the milk used.

Refrigeration temperature at the cheese dairy:

The temperature for conserving the milk at the farm or for storing it at the cheese dairy is increased from 8 °C to 10 °C to promote the growth of useful bacteria in the milk.

Production: point 5.6 of the specification

Point 5.6.1 General provisions

The milk used, production aids and additives

In order to preserve the characteristics of the raw material processed into raw milk, the processing steps which are not allowed are listed.

The paragraph concerning the use of production aids and additives is expanded to support current practices for using processes and additives in cheese-making and to prevent new, previously unregulated practices from adversely affecting the characteristics of the cheese.

Production stages

A description of the characteristics of the vats used to produce the cheese has been added: these must be open and their capacity may not exceed 6 000 l.

Keeping track of how the curd develops in the vat by visual checks and by touch remains an important element in making cheese from raw milk collected every day and not subject to any processing before the cheese-making.

Production control is also enhanced if the volume used does not significantly extend the cheese moulding phase. An overly long moulding phase would create too much variability in the characteristics of the cheeses.

Clarifications have been made to the description of the phases from working in the vats to salting the cheese, in order to take account of several adaptations: size of moulds, mass of weights used for pressing the small cheeses, density of the brine reduced from 1 140 to 1 130.

The salting process may only take place in the vats used to produce the cheese.

The total duration of production, pre-ageing and ageing is at least 15 days as from the date of renneting. Thus, the cheese cannot leave the workshop where it is produced or aged until at least the 16th day.

Pre-ageing and ageing

The wording of the description of the pre-ageing phase was amended to take greater account of the expertise of the cheese-makers and to preserve the quality of the cheeses.

The ageing methods are supplemented by the introduction of an option to package the cheese as of the 12th day of ageing and to continue the ageing at a lower temperature for a longer period.

This is to adapt to the faster ageing of the rinds, whose appearance in the cellar is optimum around 12 days then degenerates, which could lead to optical flaws at the time of sale.

The following provisions are added:

— A first stage in the cellar up to at least the 12th day after the date of production is mandatory.

The cellar temperature must be between 10 and 15 °C and the humidity above 90 %.

— As of the 12th day, the cheeses can be packaged individually and are then aged until at least the 18th day at a minimum temperature of 6 °C.

— If the cheeses are not packaged, they continue ageing in the cellar until at least the 16th day at a temperature between 10 and 15 °C and humidity above 90 %.

It is stipulated that the cheese may be placed on planed or unplaned wooden boards for ageing. This stipulation takes account of the importance of the growth of bacteria on the surface because of the positive biofilms on the boards.

Point 5.6.2 Specific provisions concerning production in cheese dairies

The end time for renneting is clarified in order to specify the length of renneting.

The dose of lactic fermenting agents is stipulated.

The option of using acidification moulds is indicated. These moulds help shape the products and replace the cheesecloth without altering the intrinsic characteristics of the product. They also make it possible to keep the cheese longer in this 'cheesecloth' stage and allow for better control of the drainage, more regular-shaped cheeses and have beneficial effects on the development of the cheese rind.

The possibility of reusing the volume of milk that remains at the end of production is clarified in order to prevent the farmer being obliged to start with an incomplete vat; this facilitates the work in the vat and control of the process.

Point 5.6.3 Specific provisions concerning farm production

The following provisions are added to the conditions for farm production:

- The introduction of a micro-perforated laminated cheesecloth for drainage makes it possible to enhance the flavours typical of farmhouse cheese, because the cloth is a ground on which cheese cultures develop well.
- To safeguard the slow process used to make the farm-produced cheeses which gives them a more intense flavour, the dose of lactic fermenting agents used is capped at 0,5 % (0,5 l of yeast cultures (1) for 100 l of milk) of the total amount of milk used for the production of farm-produced 'Reblochon'/'Reblochon de Savoie'.
- The use of acidification moulds or any other mould or corset to hold the cheese during the drying period is forbidden in order to preserve the use of the cheesecloth traditionally used in farm production. The duration of the cheesecloth stage is set at six hours as from the start of moulding.

Details have been provided on the methods of pressing, turning the cheeses, pre-ageing, washing and treatment in a humid environment before being placed in the maturing cellar.

These provisions help better codify practices and reinforce the special nature of the farm-produced cheeses.

To allow the maturers to give the cheese specific treatments at a later stage of production if they wish, the retention period on the holding is reduced from the 10 days originally provided for to six.

The production, ageing and pre-ageing conditions for the small farm-produced 'Reblochon'/'Reblochon de Savoie' cheeses are introduced and clarify certain provisions in accordance with practices.

Details bearing out the link with the geographical area: point 6 of the specification

This section is broken down into the following subsections: 'Specificity of the geographical area: natural and human factors', 'Specificity of the product', 'Causal link'.

This restructuring is accompanied by improved wording and more details, where necessary.

Specific labelling details: point 8 of the specification

The details on the labelling of the cheeses are moved to section 4: Proofs of origin.

The obligation to affix the 'INAO' logo is replaced by the obligation to affix the European Union's 'PDO' symbol.

It is specified that, irrespective of the regulatory references applicable to all cheeses and the term 'petit' (small), the use of any term or other reference accompanying the of origin is prohibited on the labelling, advertising, invoices or commercial documents, with the exception of specific trademarks.

National requirements: point 9 of the specification

A table is added showing the main points for inspection from the specification, their target values and the methods of assessing them.

Other changes

(1) Packaging: point 5.7 of the specification

The cheeses are packaged in the form of whole cheeses, half cheeses or in portions.

To preserve the quality of the rind, to prevent its drying out and the development of undesirable mould, the cheese must be properly wrapped before leaving the geographical area. The cheese should remain in this packing until it is sold to the end consumer, but it may be repackaged.

This packaging must include a false wooden bottom, for which the diameter is indicated. This false bottom must be retained throughout the cutting process.

All these provisions help preserve the qualities of the rind, the texture of the cheese and the pungency of the cheese. Furthermore, given the fact that the rind of 'Reblochon'/'Reblochon de Savoie' is fragile and susceptible to drying out, the false bottom and packing play a role in regulating humidity. The packing used protects the specific fungal flora in the 'Reblochon'/'Reblochon de Savoie' rinds.

However, cheese supplied to the food industry for further processing does not need to be individually packaged or have a false bottom.

(2) Responsible department in the Member State: change of address of the National Institute for Origin and Quality;

(3) Composition of the applicant group: details have been added on its composition;

Contact details of the inspection bodies: these have been updated.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006**on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs⁽³⁾****'REBLOCHON'/'REBLOCHON DE SAVOIE'**

EC No: FR-PDO-0217-01003-11.6.2012

PGI () PDO (X)

1. Name

'Reblochon'/'Reblochon de Savoie'

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 the product to which the name in 1 applies

'Reblochon'/'Reblochon de Savoie' is a cheese made from raw, whole milk from cows from the Abondance, Montbéliarde and Tarentaise breeds. The cheese is pressed in the form of a flattened, slightly tapered cylinder approximately 14 cm in diameter, 3,5 cm in height and 450 to 550 g in weight.

It contains a minimum of 45 g of fat per 100 g after total desiccation and its dry matter must not be less than 45 g per 100 g of cheese.

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

It has a fine, regular and uniform rind, which is washed during the maturing process. The rind is yellow to yellowy-orange in colour and may be fully or partly covered in a fine, short white bloom.

The cheese itself is not very firm and it is homogeneous, supple and smooth. Cream to yellowish ivory in colour, it is lightly salted and may have small perforations.

The PDO also covers the smaller cheese, which has the same organoleptic characteristics but is approximately 9 cm in diameter, 3 cm in height and between 230 and 280 g in weight.

'Reblochon'/'Reblochon de Savoie' may be presented as a whole cheese or in portions.

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

The milk used for producing 'Reblochon'/'Reblochon de Savoie' must come from dairy herds consisting of cows from the dairy breeds Abondance, Montbéliarde or Tarentaise (also known as Tarine).

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

To safeguard the link to the area, the herd's feed must mainly consist of fodder from the geographical area of origin. The basic feed ration consists of fodder comprising:

- at least 50 % of grass grazed during the summer period and hay distributed daily during the winter period
- green fodder (green corn, grass distributed in fresh condition, fodder beet). Straw may only be included in the basic feed ration for the heifers.

During the summer period, the cows must be put out to pasture for at least 150 days.

The fodder from the area must be 100 %, expressed as dry matter, of the basic feed ration of the lactating cows. For holdings at an altitude of over 600 m and on alpine holdings where the lactating cows graze at an altitude above 600 m, the fodder from the area should make up at least 75 %, expressed as dry matter, of the animals' basic feed ration. The only fodder that may be bought in from outside the geographical area of origin is hay.

The basic feed ration may be complemented with the distribution of supplementary feed, including concentrated feedstuffs and dehydrated fodder. The total supplementary feed that may be distributed to lactating cows is 1 800 kg per dairy cow per year.

The dairy herd's feed may not include silage products, fermented fodder, tied bales or feed that could have an unfavourable influence on the odour or taste of the milk or cheese or which present a risk of bacteriological contamination.

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

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

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

The cheese is initially packaged in the geographical area before leaving the maturing cellar, which constitutes the last stage in the production of 'Reblochon'/'Reblochon de Savoie'. This provision preserves the quality of the rind by preventing its desiccation and the growth of undesirable moulds. This initial packaging does not prevent the product from being repackaged elsewhere at a later stage.

This packaging, in an appropriate means of packing, includes a false bottom made of spruce wood which is in contact with at least one of the sides of the cheese, which is presented in the form of a whole or half cheese. Three sides of each portion must have a rind.

The products supplied to the food industry may not be packaged individually but must nevertheless be packed before leaving the geographical area.

3.7. *Specific rules on labelling*

The labelling for the cheese must bear the name of the designation of origin 'Reblochon'/'Reblochon de Savoie' in characters at least two thirds of the size of the largest characters on the label. Furthermore, the labelling may bear the name of the designation of origin accompanied by the term 'petit' (small) for the smaller cheese defined in point 3.2.

Irrespective of the regulatory references applicable to all the cheeses and the aforementioned term, the use of any qualifier or other reference accompanying the aforementioned designation of origin is prohibited on the labelling, advertising, invoices or commercial documents, with the exception of specific trademarks.

The labelling must include the European Union's PDO symbol. It may also include the words 'appellation d'origine protégée' ('protected designation of origin').

4. Concise definition of the geographical area

The geographical area covers two thirds of the department of Haute-Savoie (all the part east of Annecy above 500 m in altitude) and several municipalities or parts of municipalities of the department of Savoie.

Department of Haute-Savoie

Abondance, Alex, Allinges, Amancy, Andilly, Annecy-le-Vieux, Arâches-la-Frasse, Arbusigny, Arenthon, Armoiy, Arthaz-Pont-Notre-Dame, Aviernoz, Ayse, Ballaison, Beaumont, Bellevaux, Bernex, Bluffy, Boège, Bogève, Bonne, Bonnevaux, Bonneville, Bons-en-Chablais, Brenthonne, Brizon, Burdignin, Cervens, Chamonix-Mont-Blanc, Charvonnex, Châtel, Châtillon-sur-Cluses, Chevaline, Chevenoz, Cluses, Collonges-sous-Salève, Combloux, Cons-Sainte-Colombe, Contamine-sur-Arve, Copponex, Cordon, Cornier, Cranves-Sales, Cruseilles, Demi-Quartier, Dingy-Saint-Clair, Domancy, Doussard, Draillant, Duingt, Entremont, Entrevernes, Essert-Romand, Etaux, Evires, Faucigny, Faverges, Fessy, Féternes, Fillinges, Giez, Groisy, Habère-Lullin, Habère-Poche, Juvigny, La Balme-de-Thuy, La Baume, La Chapelle-d'Abondance, La Chapelle-Rambaud, La Chapelle-Saint-Maurice, La Clusaz, La Côte-d'Arbroz, La Forclaz, La Muraz, La Rivière-Enverse, La Roche-sur-Foron, Lathuile, La Tour, La Vernaz, Le Biot, Le Bouchet, Le Lyaud, Le Grand-Bornand, Le Petit-Bornand-Les-Glières, Le Reposoir, Le Sappey, Leschaux, Les Clefs, Les Contamines-Montjoie, Les Gets, Les Houches, Les Ollières, Les Villards-sur-Thônes, Lucinges, Lullin, Lully, Manigod, Marcellaz-en-Faucigny, Marlens, Machilly, Magland, Margencel, Marignier, Marnaz, Megève, Mégevette, Menthonnex-en-Bornes, Menthon-Saint-Bernard, Mieussy, Monnetier-Mornex, Montmin, Montriond, Mont-Saxonnex, Morillon, Morzine, Nancy-sur-Cluses, Nangy, Nâves-Parmelan, Novel, Onnion, Orcier, Passy, Peillonex, Perrignier, Pers-Jussy, Praz-sur-Arly, Présilly, Quintal, Reignier, Reyvroz, Saint-André-de-Boège, Saint-Blaise, Saint-Cergues, Saint-Eustache, Saint-Ferréol, Saint-Gervais-les-Bains, Saint-Jean-d'Aulps, Saint-Jean-de-Sixt, Saint-Jean-de-Tholome, Saint-Jeoire, Saint-Jorioz, Saint-Laurent, Saint-Martin-Bellevue, Saint-Pierre-en-Faucigny, Saint-Sigismond, Saint-Sixt, Sallanches, Samoëns, Saxel, Scientrier, Scionzier, Serraval, Servoz, Sevrier, Seythenex, Seytroux, Sixt-Fer-A-Cheval, Talloires, Taninges, Thônes, Thorens-Glières, Theyez, Vailly, Vacheresse, Vallorcine, Verchaix, Vétraz-Monthoux, Veyrier-du-Lac, Villard, Villaz, Ville-en-Sallaz, Villy-le-Bouveret, Villy-le-Pelloux, Vinzier, Viuz-en-Sallaz, Vougy, Vovray-en-Bornes.

Department of Savoie

Cohennoz, Crest-Voland, Flumet, La Giétaz, Mercury (Section G1 and G2), Notre-Dame-de-Bellecombe, Plancherine (Section A1, A2, A3), Saint-Nicolas-La-Chapelle, Ugine.

5. Link with the geographical area

5.1. Specificity of the geographical area

Geographical factors

The geographical area is situated in the northern Alps and includes the mountainous regions between Lake Geneva and the Mont Blanc massif. It extends to the Swiss border in the east and the most westerly foothills of the Alps in the west. It does not include the Beaufortain massif in the south, though it does include the northern part of the Bauges massif.

The topography is particularly dramatic, with ever higher massifs ranging from west to east (1 000 m for the western foothills, over 2 000 m for the peaks of the limestone massif, over 4 000 m for the Mont Blanc massif), separated by wide valleys at altitudes of over 500 m (Dranse, Giffre, Arve, Arly).

The geographical area includes regions with very diverse geological substrates. Limestone-dominated massifs span the area from the north-east to the south-west. Some particularly erosion-resistant strata form striking cliffs such as the Aravis chain. To the west, a clay-limestone molasse substrate underlies dramatic limestone mountains (the Salève). To the east, the crystalline massif of Mont-Blanc and the Aiguilles Rouges are the highest points in the region. The rocks there are acidic (granite, gneiss, mica schists). To the north, the Chablais range is composed of a mixture of limestone and acid rocks.

The climate is mountainous, directly exposed to the winds from the west. It is characterised by abundant precipitation (over 900 mm per year), without seasonal drought, which often exceeds 1 500 to 2 000 mm per year in the heart of the massifs. The mountainous environment means that the winters are cold with abundant snowfall. The topography and altitude have a strong influence on the local climatic conditions.

Most of the agricultural land is farmed as pasture land. The region is characterised by particularly highly developed high-altitude permanent grassland, the alpine pastures. There is a lot of plant diversity in the pastures due to the variety of environmental conditions (sun, irrigation and drainage, exposure, altitude, etc.) and the land use (pastoral practices). 90 % of the grass-covered areas is permanent grassland dominated by cocksfoot grass, considered to be a very good fodder grass, white clover and red clover. There are hayfields thick with wild sorrel, average pastures or hayfields with burnet saxifrage, and hayfields or dry or rough grazing with meadow sage and oregano. The vegetation used for grazing extends from the bottom of the valleys to altitudes of over 2 500 m.

Human factors

One of the characteristics of the dairy farms in the geographical area is the use of the alpine pastures in summer. The herds' life is heavily influenced by the seasons: leaving their barns to graze in the valleys at the beginning of May, then being led up to the alpine pastures at the start of June where they remain until the beginning of October. This is followed by winter, which is the longest period, with several months of snow and storms. This means that in summer the farmers must gather the fodder the herd will need from November to April (around 2 000 kg of hay per cow for winter).

To cope with these conditions, the milk producers favour cows from dairy breeds native to mountain regions, adapted to the physical and climate constraints of the environment (body type adapted to grazing on sloping pastures; temperature tolerance; capacity to thrive on grazing in the summer and dry fodder in the winter), while regularly producing quality milk.

The dairy cows' feed mainly consists of pasture grass in summer and dry fodder in winter. The supplementary feed is limited in quantity, to safeguard the low-intensity nature of the farming. It does not include fermented feed which could adversely influence the odour or taste of the milk and, consequently, the cheese.

The name 'Reblochon de Savoie' comes from the French word 'reblâche' which means 'to milk a second time'. This practice originated in the 13th century, when farmers who leased alpine pastures had to pay a tax to the landowners. Cows that were not fully milked at the time when the tax was charged gave a little but very creamy milk on the second milking, because the end of milking produces milk with a high fat content. Thus the cheesemakers used this small amount of high-fat milk to make little rounds of creamy cheese. In the 18th century the monetisation of trade helped to move Reblochon away from its clandestine origins onto the tables of the bourgeois, the clergy and the nobility.

The cheesemaker's labour, founded on expertise and experience handed down through the generations, plays an essential role in unlocking the flavour of 'Reblochon'/'Reblochon de Savoie'. The raw milk, which is not pre-treated, is processed at a low temperature to best develop the flavour. The twice-daily milking means that the milk has to be used quickly and precisely. Using raw milk makes it necessary to work in open vats where the cheesemaker can note any variations in the milk and adapt the process accordingly.

The ageing initially takes place on the alpine farm and is then continued in the valley, where the relative ease of access led to the emergence of the profession of cheese maturer. The cheese maturer's tasks notably include monitoring the maturing temperature, which plays an important role in the development of the fungal flora (which gives the rind its characteristic appearance). The surface of the cheese is occupied by a succession of multiple, co-existing microbial groups. This succession is essentially due to the changing pH level and the level of salt in the rind. These microflora, particularly the *Geotrichum candidum* in particular, give 'Reblochon'/'Reblochon de Savoie' its characteristic fine white bloom and also contribute to the development of the texture and flavour of the cheese.

As a commercial product 'Reblochon' took off in the 19th century, when dealers specifically trading in it are first found. This was facilitated by the development of roads. The first half of the 20th century saw the production of 'Reblochon' expand beyond its cradle of origin, which led producers to protect their product and define special production methods back in 1953.

5.2. Specificity of the product

'Reblochon'/'Reblochon de Savoie' is a pressed, uncooked cheese made from raw, whole cow's milk, which is not processed before production.

It is small in size, light in weight and can be produced in a smaller format. It is presented in the form of a flat, slightly tapered cylinder.

It is a creamy cheese, smooth, supple and ivory in colour, lightly salted, which may reveal lactic and roasted aromas. Its washed fine rind, saffron in colour, is covered in a fine white bloom (fungal flora).

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 very wet mountain environment which accounts for the whole of the geographical area promotes strong grass growth in spring and summer. The diversity of the conditions of the environment, such as the altitude and the exposure of the alpine pastures and the type of rocks, gives the grasslands a great botanical wealth, with each habitat characterised by a distinctive community of flora.

Within these communities, numerous species have strong aromas which contribute to the characteristics of 'Reblochon'/'Reblochon de Savoie'. Differences in sensory characteristics can be traced to the different types of hays and pastures found in the geographical area.

This harsh environment is very restrictive for the herds and only the mountain breeds are capable of supporting a way of life that combines winters spent in barns in the valley and extensive grazing every day in the alpine pastures in summer with roaming in areas that may vary by several hundred metres in altitude.

These breeds are capable of producing protein-rich milk very suitable for making cheese: the curd obtained after the rennet is added is firm and the cheese yield is high.

Obtained initially from production using small quantities of high-fat milk, 'Reblochon'/'Reblochon de Savoie' cheese is the result of the use of a simple method (low heating, rapid renneting, no drying out in the vat) with short maturing periods.

Thus, the organoleptic characteristics of 'Reblochon'/'Reblochon de Savoie' are closely linked to the dairy cows' feed (pasture, fodder), which is obtained from flora that has adapted to the climatic conditions described above, and to the preservation of the cheesemakers' and maturers' skills.

Reference to publication of the specification

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

<https://www.inao.gouv.fr/fichier/CDCReblochon.pdf>

(*) See footnote 3.