

**SUMMARY TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS  
FOR REGISTRATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS**

**NAME OF THE GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION:**

Stilton Cheese

**CATEGORY OF THE PRODUCT FOR WHICH THE NAME IS PROTECTED**

Cheese Class 1.3

**APPLICANT:**

**Name:** Stilton Cheese Makers Association  
**Address:** PO Box 384A Surbiton Surrey KT5 9LQ  
**Tel:** 020 8255 1334  
**Website:** [www.stiltoncheese.com](http://www.stiltoncheese.com)  
**Email:** [enquiries@stiltoncheese.com](mailto:enquiries@stiltoncheese.com)

**PROTECTION IN EU MEMBER STATE OF ORIGIN**

21<sup>st</sup> June 1996

(<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:1996:148:0001:0010:EN:PDF>)

**DESCRIPTION OF THE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT OR FOODSTUFF**

Stilton cheese is made in three varieties, White Stilton, Blue Stilton, Mature Blue and/or Vintage Blue Stilton. Each variety can be made only from pasteurised cow's milk.

White Stilton

White Stilton is a white cheese made in cylindrical form from full cream pasteurised cows milk (which can be standardised according to season) produced by dairy herds from the three counties of Leicestershire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire (in times of shortage milk may also be sourced from the surrounding counties of Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire, Warwickshire, Staffordshire, Greater Manchester, Cheshire, Yorkshire and Lincolnshire), with no applied pressure and forming its own crust or coat.

White Stilton

**Flavour:** A fresh, clean, acidic flavour.  
**Body:** Internal: A uniform white colour, with a flaky or crumbly open moist

**External:** A smooth, moist, white exterior coat, free from surface mould, blemishes or mites.

**Shape:** Regular and uniform in circumference.

**Texture:** Free from discolouration, gas holes and chalkiness.

**Fat:** Minimum 48 % milk fat in the dry matter.

### Blue Stilton

As Blue Stilton matures so its characteristics change in terms of taste and texture. Two distinct varieties of Blue Stilton are produced and sold – Blue Stilton and Mature/Vintage Blue Stilton. Typically, Blue Stilton is graded around 6 weeks of age. Each cheese is assessed as for its flavour, texture, body, degree of veining, shape and coat condition. Cheeses which do not meet the required standards are rejected.

Cheeses which meet the required standards are either selected for sale as Blue Stilton shortly after the initial grading, or the cheese is allowed to mature further. Cheeses which mature further are re-graded to assess their suitability for sale as Mature Blue Stilton and/or Vintage Blue Stilton. The grade applied to the Stilton will thus depend on the length of time during which the cheese has been matured. Typically the following ages will apply:

Blue Stilton	6 to 12 weeks
Mature Blue Stilton	10 to 15 weeks
Vintage Blue Stilton	more than 15 weeks

Actual length of maturing will vary from season to season depending on natural variations in milk composition, the size of the cheese, storage temperature and according to individual manufacturer methods. Categorisation will therefore be based primarily on flavour and texture subject to the above guidelines on age.

Blue Stilton has a white coloured curd, a slightly crumbly texture and a slightly sharp flavour with a milky background.

Mature Blue Stilton has an “off white” to yellowy coloured curd, a softer, creamy texture and a mellow, full flavoured, creamy taste.

Vintage Blue Stilton has an "off white" to yellowy coloured curd, a drier texture than the Mature and a stronger more complex flavour with a creamy background.

#### Blue Stilton

Blue Stilton is a blue moulded cheese made in cylindrical form from full cream pasteurised cows milk (which can be standardised according to season) produced by dairy herds from the three counties of Leicestershire, Derbyshire, and Nottinghamshire (in times of shortage milk may also be sourced from the surrounding counties of, Northamptonshire, Warwickshire, Staffordshire, Greater Manchester, Cheshire, Yorkshire and Lincolnshire), with no applied pressure and forming its own crust or coat.

The Blue Stilton cheese has the following characteristics:

- Flavour:** A clean subtle flavour.
- Body:** Internal: A uniform creamy white colour except for blue/green mould radiating from the centre with a velvety or flaky open texture free from gas holes and chalkiness.  
External: Forms a slightly wrinkled crust or coat. Colour variable
- Colour:** Variable.
- Shape:** Regular and uniform in circumference.
- Fat:** Minimum 48 % milk fat in the dry matter.

#### Mature Blue and/or Vintage Blue Stilton

Mature Blue and/or Vintage Blue Stilton is a fully mature blue moulded cheese made in cylindrical form from full cream pasteurised cows milk (which can be standardised according to season) produced by dairy herds from the three counties of Leicestershire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire (in times of shortage milk may also be sourced from the surrounding counties of Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire, Warwickshire, Staffordshire, Greater Manchester, Cheshire, Yorkshire and Lincolnshire), with no applied pressure and forming its own crust or coat.

The Mature Blue and/or Vintage Blue Stilton has the following characteristics:

- Flavour:** A mellow mature flavour

- Body:** Internal: A uniform creamy yellow white colour except for blue/green mould radiating from the centre with a creamy/velvety texture, free from gas holes and chalkiness.  
External: Forms a slightly wrinkled crust or coat. Colour variable
- Colour:** Variable.
- Shape:** Regular and uniform in circumference.
- Fat:** Minimum 48 % milk fat in the dry matter.

#### **CONCISE DEFINITION OF THE GEOGRAPHICAL AREA**

The Counties of Leicestershire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire

#### **LINK WITH THE GEOGRAPHICAL AREA**

Stilton cheese, a unique product known and respected worldwide, has been made in the three counties of Leicestershire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire for generations. The cheese became known as Stilton because it was at the Bell Inn in this village that the cheese was first sold to the public. A coaching stop on the road between London and York, the Bell Inn would have had many customers from far and wide. The first literary reference to Stilton is in Daniel Defoe's "Tour through England and Wales" published in 1727 where he notes that he "passed through Stilton, a town famous for cheese". From the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards virtually all of the cheese would have been made on farms in Leicestershire and in later years in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire as well. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as a result of a continually expanding demand for Stilton, twelve pioneering farmers met in 1911 in the village of Long Clawson, near Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire and formed a company to make Stilton cheese. This was the start of one of several cooperatives set up to improve the quality of Stilton by making the cheese in better conditions, and in larger quantities than were possible on the farm.

At this stage, the process for making Stilton was defined. This required that the cheese is made in cylindrical form from full cream milk from dairy herds. Be made with no applied pressure and allowed to form its own crust or coat. Made in the District of Melton Mowbray and surrounding areas falling within the counties of Leicestershire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, the word Stilton has, for nearly the last 100 years, been used in connection with cheese made in this area and according to the process defined.

Originally, milk for the manufacture of Stilton cheese was drawn exclusively from local farms near the producing plants. But as production has grown and in particular as demand for Stilton cheese has increased around the Christmas period, at times of the year milk will be drawn from further afield and outside the three counties. However, even today the vast majority of milk used for the manufacture of Stilton cheese still comes from within the three counties.

The processes by which Stilton cheeses are made have been established and evolved over the last 250 years. The knowledge has been handed down through generations of families and there is a unique pool of local knowledge and expertise.

The process involves a unique recipe using the basic ingredients of milk, rennet, starter and salt combined with local expertise in the control of temperature and humidity as the cheese is taken through its various stages of ripening.

In the case of Blue Stilton and Mature Blue and/or Vintage Blue Stilton, expertise is also required in terms of the addition of the *penicillium roqueforti* blue mould and in the timing and method of piercing the cheese.

In addition, Stilton cheese has to be selected to suit precise needs of individual customers both within and outside the European Community. In all of these activities there is a high degree of skilled labour requiring not only standard food hygiene skills but also the unique knowledge of how to produce a consistently high standard of Stilton cheese regardless of seasonal fluctuations in the normal composition of the milk and in ambient temperatures. These skills are unique to the defined area.

The climatic conditions existing in the counties of Leicestershire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire play a great part in the production of Stilton cheese. The counties of Leicestershire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire are situated in the East Midlands, in the central part of England, and experience a temperate climate. The temperature rarely reaches extremes and the humidity is less than in the rest of England. These moderate conditions are essential for producing Stilton cheese.

In addition, the East Midlands offer particular geographical conditions which give Stilton cheese its distinctive taste. Thanks to the high level of the water table, the counties of Leicestershire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire provide a very rich soil most appropriate for dairy farming.

Consequently, because the cows feed on grass growing on a rich soil, they produce rich high quality milk, necessary for making Stilton cheese. Evidence suggests that Stilton cheeses have been made in the defined area for more than 250 years and indeed the area is famed for its Stilton cheese. Any cheese made under a similar process but in a different geographical area could not bear the name Stilton.

**SPECIFIC RULES CONCERNING LABELLING (IF ANY)**

STILTON labels will bear the European Community logotype as well as the word STILTON in order to inform the public that the product has been granted a Protected Designation of Origin (PDO).

i) Third party cheese packaging establishments may use the indications given above on pre-packaged portions of STILTON cheese provided that:

a) Up to date records are maintained to show:

- The quantities of STILTON cheese that have been delivered to the establishment  
And
- The quantities of the said cheese that have been despatched from the establishment

b) The records are made available for inspection by duly authorised persons

ii) Manufacturers of processed foods may use the indications given above provided that the foods in question actually contain STILTON cheese which meets the aforementioned requirements. STILTON cheese may have been processed prior to its use for manufacture.

**CONTROL AUTHORITY/CONTROL BODY**

**Name:** Product Authentication inspectorate (PAI)  
**Address:** Rowland House  
65 High Street  
Worthing  
West Sussex  
BN11 1DN  
**Tel:** 01903 237799  
**Fax:** 01903 204445  
**Email:** [enquiries@thepaigroup.com](mailto:enquiries@thepaigroup.com)

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White Stilton

**Flavour:** A fresh, clean, acidic flavour.  
**Body:** Internal: A uniform white colour, with a flaky or crumbly open moist

**External:** A smooth, moist, white exterior coat, free from surface mould, blemishes or mites.

**Shape:** Regular and uniform in circumference.

**Texture:** Free from discolouration, gas holes and chalkiness.

**Fat:** Minimum 48 % milk fat in the dry matter.

### Blue Stilton

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The Blue Stilton cheese has the following characteristics:

- Flavour:** A clean subtle flavour.
- Body:** Internal: A uniform creamy white colour except for blue/green mould radiating from the centre with a velvety or flaky open texture free from gas holes and chalkiness.  
External: Forms a slightly wrinkled crust or coat. Colour variable
- Colour:** Variable.
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The Mature Blue and/or Vintage Blue Stilton has the following characteristics:

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**CONTROL AUTHORITY/CONTROL BODY**

**Name:** Product Authentication Inspectorate (PAI)  
**Address:** Rowland House  
65 High Street  
Worthing  
West Sussex  
BN11 1DN  
**Tel:** 01903 237799  
**Fax:** 01903 204445  
**Email:** [enquiries@thepaigroup.com](mailto:enquiries@thepaigroup.com)