

# SINGLE DOCUMENT

Council Regulation (EC) No 510/2006 on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs\*

**‘REBLOCHON’/‘REBLOCHON DE SAVOIE’**

EC No: FR-PDO-0217-01003-11.06.2012

**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.

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).

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\* Replaced by Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 November 2012 on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs.

### **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-Ia-Frasse, Arbusigny, Arenthon, Armoy, 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, Digny-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-Férréol, 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-Ie-Bouveret, Villy-Ie-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 cheese-makers 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>

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\* Replaced by Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 November 2012 on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs.