

## COUNCIL REGULATION (EEC) No 2081/92

APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION: Art. 5 ( ) Art. 17 (X)

PDO (X) PGI ( )

National application No: 1299-GR/95

1. **Responsible department in the Member State:**

Name: Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Angelegenheiten, Referat für den gewerblichen Rechtsschutz

Address: A-1014 Wien, Kohlmarkt 8-10

Tel: 0222/53424-0 Fax: 0222/53424-520

2. **Applicant group:**

(a) Name: Verband der Tiroler Käse- und Molkereifachleute

(b) Address: A-6020 Innsbruck, Brixner Straße 1

Tel: 0043-512/5929-239 Fax: 0043-512/5929-275 or 206

(Contact: Andreas Lettenbichler)

(c) Composition : producer/processor (X) other ( )

3. **Name of product: "Tiroler Almkäse/Tiroler Alpkäse PDO**4. **Type of product: (see list in Annex VI) Hard cheese made from raw cows' milk**5. **Specification:**

(summary of requirements under Art. 4(2))

(a) name: (see 3)

(b) description:

Tiroler Almkäse/Alpkäse is produced in the form of a loaf (never a block) exclusively from raw cheesemaking-quality milk from cows grazed on alpine pastures with lactic acid bacteria and calf rennet. The rind is firm, yellow to brownish in colour, without cracks and is sometimes covered with a thin dry smear. The cheese has a firm to soft texture with a uniform ivory to light-yellow colour and a few well-defined pea-sized to cherry-sized eyes. It is aromatic and piquant. The minimum fat content is 45% fat in DM, the ripening period 4½ to 6 months. The loaves weigh between 30 kg and 60 kg.

(c) geographical area:

Tiroler Almkäse/Tiroler Alpkäse is produced in the Austrian Land of Tyrol (North and East Tyrol) exclusively from milk from cows grazed on alpine pastures in the Land. In the Tyrol uplands to the west of Innsbruck, the cheese is traditionally known as Alpkäse, and in the Tyrol lowlands as Almkäse.

Holdings on the Tyrol alpine pastures are independent cattle and dairy production units either entered in the land

register of the Government of the Land of Tyrol or registered and recognised by the market regulation body *Agrarmarkt Austria (AMA)* (see paragraph 15 of the Regulation on guaranteed quantities for milk (BGBl Nr. 1995/225)). Pastures used for the production of Almkäse lie above the normal habitation altitudes, pastures up to an altitude of around 2 500 m above sea-level being used.

(d) proof of origin:

A document in the Land Archives (Land Register 93/5 1544 Fol. 47 to 49) dating from 1544 attests to the traditional production of cheese of good keeping-quality. In the second half of the nineteenth century, there were already numerous cheese-making dairies in the Tyrol. In his *Geschichte der österreichischen Land- und Forstwirtschaft 1848-1896* (History of Austrian Agriculture and Forestry 1848-96) (Commissionsverlag Moritz Perles, Vienna, 1899, Vol. 3, page 376), Dr Willibald Winkler describes the predominant form of the cheese in the Tyrol as fat cheese. Dr Heinrich Mair-Waldburg, in his *Handbuch der Käse* (Cheese Handbook) (Volkswirtschaftlicher Verlag GmbH Kempten, 1974, p. 298, Annex 5), writes that Alpkäse has been produced for a long time in the Tyrol. In the past, in mountain regions of the Tyrol, turning alpine milk into Almkäse/Alpkäse was the best way of preserving it. Since 1955, official statistics on the quantities of Almkäse/Alpkäse produced in Austria have been gathered by the *Milchwirtschaftsfonds* (Milk Marketing Fund). In 1969, for example, 294 tonnes of Almkäse were produced in the Tyrol.

(e) method of production:

Tiroler Almkäse/Alpkäse is produced exclusively during the 90 to 120 day growing period of alpine pastures. Milk from the evening milking is placed in shallow containers (wooden milk pans) and then skimmed the next morning, normally by hand (in modern alpine cheese dairies, the fat content of the milk is adjusted using a centrifuge). The skimmed milk from the previous evening is then mixed with milk from the morning milking and poured into copper vats for processing into Alm/Alpkäse. For acidification of the milk and ripening of the cheese, the *Bundesanstalt für alpenländische Milchwirtschaft* (Federal Office for the Alpine Dairy Industry Rotholz) produces bacterial cultures which are often further cultured at the cheese dairy with precipitated whey (recuite). The use of additives such as anti-oxidants, preservatives, emulsifiers, stabilisers, thickening agents, gelling agents, colourings, peroxides, nitrates and flavourings is not permitted. The pre-ripened vat milk is heated to a temperature of 31-32°C and coagulated by the addition of rennet (only calf rennet is used, no rennet substitute or genetically produced rennet is used). After initial cutting, the curd is left to thicken for a period (gradual separation of the whey) and then cut into pea-

sized grains using a cheese harp and, typically for Tiroler Alm/Alpkäse, cooked. This involves heating the curd-whey mixture to 50-54°C while stirring regularly and then leaving it to further coagulate for up to 45 minutes. When the desired consistency is achieved, the curd is removed using cloth and a system of rails and placed in cheese moulds. The curd is then pressed by means of heavy stones, hydraulically or using a system of levers (many cheese dairies still use old traditional presses made from wooden beams). The following morning, the cheese is placed in a brine bath for up to two days. The cheese is then ripened, often in a natural cellar with wide temperature variations (10-18°C) and relative humidity of 90-95%, for around 4½ to 6 months. During ripening, the cheese is smeared with brine, to which initially a red culture can be added (*Brevibacterium linens*), producing bacterial flora which makes a considerable contribution to developing flavour. This surface treatment is initially carried out every day, and then less and less frequently. There are also varieties of cheese with a dry smear.

(f) link:

The milk used for the production of Tiroler Alm/Alpkäse imparts a particular flavour due to the alpine vegetation and the altitude of the production region (high-Alp production area) and to the fact that the cattle are exclusively grass-fed. This, together with the traditional hand production method, gives the cheese its particular character. Cheese production makes an essential contribution to maintaining mountain farming in the Tyrol and is vital for the ecological variety and stability of alpine agricultural areas.

(g) inspection body:

Name: The Prime Minister of the Tyrol

Address: A-6020 Innsbruck, Landhaus

(h) labelling:

The words 'Tiroler Almkäse/Tiroler Alpkäse - protected designation of origin' must be printed on the label in legible, indelible characters which clearly stand out from any other markings. The use of names, company names or own marks is allowed provided this does not mislead the purchaser. Loaves from each alpine farm must be numbered consecutively. Most of the cheese is sold cut from the loaf or in the form of ready packaged portions.

(i) national requirements: (if any)

Codex Alimentarius Austriacus (ÖLMB), Third Edition, Chapter B 32 Milk and Milk Products, Section 'Hard Cheeses', Production requirements for 'Milk suitable for the production of hard cheese' - Information Bulletin of the *Milchwirtschaftsfonds* of 29 March 1993, Volume 4, Nr. 37;

Regulation on milk hygiene (BGBl. Nr. 897/1993);

Regulation on guaranteed quantities for milk (BGBl. Nr. 225/1995).

**TO BE COMPLETED BY THE COMMISSION**

EC No: G/AT 01436/95/07/03

Date of receipt of the full application: 14/07/1997