

ANNEX I

COUNCIL REGULATION (EEC) No 2081/92

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

PDO (X) PGI ()

National application No: 1192-GR/95

1. **Responsible department in the Member State:**
Name: Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs, Industrial Property Department
Address: A-1014 Wien, Kohlmarkt 8-10.
Tel: 0222/53424-0 Fax: 0222/53424-520

2. **Applicant group:**
(a) Name: Vorarlberger Sennerverband
(b) Address: A-6900 Bregenz, Montfortstraße 9-11.
Tel:+43/5574/42044-28 Fax:+43/5574/47107
(c) Composition : producer/processor () other (X) Representation of interests

3. **Name of product:** Vorarlberger Bergkäse g.U.

4. **Type of product:** (see list in Annex VI) Hard cheese made from raw cow's milk

5. **Specification:**
(summary of requirements under Art. 4(2))

(a) name: (see 3)

(b) description: Vorarlberger Bergkäse is made from natural raw milk (cow's milk), contains about 50% fat in dry matter and has a smeared-on or dried-on grainy rind ranging from yellowish-brown to brown in colour. The wheels weigh between 8 to 35 kg and are 10 to 12 cm high. The round, roughly pea-size eyes, are matt to shiny and evenly distributed throughout. The body ranges from firm to more supple and is ivory-coloured to light yellow in colour. The flavour ranges from aromatic to piquant. The raw material is Alpine or valley milk suitable for making hard cheese obtained from herds that are not fed any silage fodder. Only natural rennet is used.

(c) geographical area: Vorarlberger Bergkäse is manufactured exclusively by producers, or processors, and farmers in the Bregenzerwald, Kleinwalsertal, Großwalsertal, Laiblachtal (Pfänderstock) and Rheintal from raw milk produced in Vorarlberg.

(d) proof of origin: Due to the population increase in the 14th century, milk production began which was then followed by cheese production. In the middle of the 18th century too much fat cheese was being produced in Vorarlberg to be sold locally, which meant that it was,

with professional organization, sold principally to Italy. In 1921 the Vorarlberg Alpine dairies and farmers founded a marketing co-operative, which still markets Vorarlberger Bergkäse both nationally and internationally to this day.

(e) method of production: Vorarlberger Bergkäse is a typical traditionally produced product. An essential feature of the production is the compliance with certain strict milk production criteria (Quality guidelines for milk producers).

In particular:

- only holdings with extensive grassland farming - without silage production and feeding - are approved for milk supply, that is only milk from that type of holding may be used in the production of Vorarlberger Bergkäse;
- the milk must be delivered at least once daily to the cheese dairy and immediately processed on-site (no further transport from one cheese dairy to another).

Actual production:

- the raw milk (which has not undergone thermization, pasteurization or bactofugation) is partially skimmed (leaving a fat content of around 3.3%),
- then coagulated with calf-rennet and a whey culture, or lactic acid culture, produced by the cheesemaker (with the evaluation and growth of this culture being dependent on the cheesemaker's experience). It is the addition of these whey cultures which makes Vorarlberger Bergkäse so distinct from other similar products.
- the curd is then heated to between approximately 51 and 52.5°C and pressed.
- afterwards the cheese is soaked in brine for 2-3 days (around 20% sodium chloride) and then ripened in cellars at a temperature of between 12 and 15°C and relative humidity of between 90 and 95%. During this time the wheels are regularly treated with brine so that a typical rind and taste develop (i.e. brushed, or rubbed with brine twice a week (around 20% sodium chloride, pH-value around 5.25).
- Vorarlberger Bergkäse is, at the earliest, ready to be consumed when it is 3 to 6 months old (depending on the degree of ripeness its characteristics may vary somewhat: small slits in the body (0.5 - 1 cm), fewer eyes, sharper taste).

Constant controls and quality assurance ensure that high raw milk and Vorarlberger Bergkäse production standards are guaranteed. Compliance with quality assurance requirements is checked by the Quality Management Association for Foodstuffs from Vorarlberg. Checks on production and staff hygiene and animal health are required by law.

(f) link: The Vorarlberger Bergkäse owes its distinctive characteristics to the milk used to produce it, the ingredients, flavour and consistency of which are considerably influenced by the Vorarlberg Alpine flora, to the weather conditions and to the fact that the cheese is produced by hand using traditional methods. Since production is small-scale, artisanal production and traditional handling and storage methods have been retained to this day. The Vorarlberger Bergkäse's particularly good quality and long shelf life are a direct result of this. The production of this cheese plays a key role in preserving Vorarlberg's family farming concerns. It is difficult to imagine life without Vorarlberger Bergkäse which is a typical Vorarlberger regional speciality. Bergkäse accounts for twenty percent of the entire cheese production in Vorarlberg.

(g) inspection body: Name: Der Landeshauptmann von Vorarlberg (Head of the Vorarlberg provincial government)

Address: A-6900 Bregenz, Landhaus

(h) labelling: Cheeses are marked with the date of production (the day on which the cheese is made), the number of the producer and the health mark (pressed into the cheese in the form of a casein roundel or printed on the packaging) which is issued by the inspection authority appointed by the Landeshauptmann (=Veterinary authority in Bregenz). The health mark must be indelible and legible and either on the whole cheese or parts of the packaging. When sold by marketing organizations, the latter's health mark must appear on the packaging with the designation "Vorarlberger Bergkäse". Own brand names are allowed, as long as they do not mislead the buyer.

(i) national requirements: (if any) The legal provisions applicable to the production of "Vorarlberger Bergkäse g.U." are found in the third edition of the "Codex Alimentarius Austriacus", chapter B 32, paragraph 3 "Milk and milk products: hard cheese". Milk hygiene Order, Section 7, 1993.

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE COMMISSION

EC No: G/AT/01454/95/0703

Date of receipt of the full application: 07/03/97