

OTHER ACTS

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Publication of an 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

(2015/C 186/08)

This publication confers the right to oppose the application pursuant to Article 51 of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽¹⁾.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006**on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs ⁽²⁾****‘ISTARSKI PRŠUT’/‘ISTRSKI PRŠUT’****EC No: MULTI-PDO-0005-01041 — 04.10.2012****PGI () PDO (X)****1. Name**

‘Istarski pršut’/‘Istrski pršut’

2. Member State or Third Country

Republic of Croatia/Republic of Slovenia

3. Description of the agricultural product or foodstuff**3.1. Product type**

Class 1.2. Meat products (cooked, salted, smoked, etc.).

3.2. Description of the product to which the name in (1) applies

‘Istarski pršut’/‘Istrski pršut’ is a preserved dry-cured meat product made of a pig’s ham without the foot, the skin and the subcutaneous fat but with the pelvic bones, which is dry-brined with sea salt and spices, air-dried without smoking and then dried and matured for at least 12 months.

‘Istarski pršut’/‘Istrski pršut’ is elongated in shape because it also contains the pelvic bones. The foot is removed from the ham at the tarsal joint, and the skin and the subcutaneous tissue are also removed apart from the section under the tarsal joint (10–15 cm). ‘Istarski pršut’/‘Istrski pršut’ has evenly rounded edges and flat surfaces that are clean or covered with a thin layer of mould. The cross-section of the muscle tissue is of a uniform pink-red colour without any pronounced discolouring, and the fat must be white. ‘Istarski pršut’/‘Istrski pršut’ has a distinctive, pronounced aroma of dried ripe pork and herbs and a moderately salty taste.

When the product is ready for sale it has the following physico-chemical properties: the sodium chloride content is less than 8 % and the water activity (aw) is under 0,93.

⁽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.

'Istarski pršut'/'Istrski pršut' must weigh at least 7 kg when it is placed on the market.

3.3. Raw materials (for processed products only)

'Istarski pršut'/'Istrski pršut' is produced from the hams of pigs that are the offspring of pure breeds and their cross-breeds, with the exception of the Piétrain breed and its cross-breeds.

At the time of slaughter, the average live weight of pigs per group must exceed 160 kg, and the pigs must be at least nine months old. The hams are trimmed so as to leave the bones of the pelvic joint (ilium, ischium and pubis), while removing the sacrum and the tail vertebrae. The sacrum is removed by cutting the sacro-iliac joint. Trimmed hams must weigh more than 13 kg.

3.4. Feed (for products of animal origin only)

Pigs that are to be used for the production of 'Istarski pršut'/'Istrski pršut' are fed with compound feed in the fattening phase. All the ingredients of the compound feed, except minerals, vitamins and other additives, must originate from the area in which the raw materials may be produced and which is described in section 4. The origin of all ingredients has to be traceable from the place of production to the sty.

Apart from compound feed, pigs may be fed with wheat or wheat bran, fresh clover and alfalfa, pumpkins, cabbages, fodder beet, sugar beet pulp, whey and boiled potatoes, which must also originate from the same area. It is forbidden to use spent brewer's grain, swill and slaughterhouse waste for fattening the pigs.

Feed which originates from outside the production area of the raw materials may be added in accordance with the rules on the feeding of animals that apply to DOs for products of animal origin.

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

All production phases of 'Istarski pršut'/'Istrski pršut' must take place within the geographical area specified in section 4.

3.6. Specific rules concerning slicing, grating, packaging, etc.

'Istarski pršut'/'Istrski pršut' may be marketed in one piece (whole) or in the form of packages that may contain de-boned cured ham, large or small chunks of cured ham or sliced cured ham. These forms of cured ham must be packed in a vacuum or modified atmosphere.

The process of de-boning the cured ham, cutting it into pieces or slicing it for portioning and packaging with a view to further sale, has to take place exclusively in the production area of 'Istarski pršut'/'Istrski pršut'. The fact that the product is portioned and packaged only in the area in which it is produced considerably simplifies the monitoring of this process, facilitates the application of the system of traceability, minimises the risk of fraud and abuse of labels and guarantees the required quality of the product for consumers. Keeping the operations of cutting and packaging in the area of production also means that this process can be carried out by the very producers or other people who have the necessary skill and who are familiar with the specific characteristics and quality of 'Istarski pršut'/'Istrski pršut'. This ensures that the original quality of the product is preserved even after it has been cut and packaged.

3.7. Specific rules concerning labelling

Upon completion of the maturing phase, all hams are hot-branded with a common brand mark, which is the same for the entire area of production of 'Istarski pršut'/'Istrski pršut', and with the producer's numerical code. The common brand mark is shown below.



When the whole product or packages of any kind are put on the market, the product must be labelled with the common brand mark and the inscription 'Istarski pršut'/Istrski pršut'.

The inscription 'Istarski pršut'/Istrski pršut' must be clearly legible and indelible, and its characters must be sufficiently large and highlighted through type and colour to stand out more clearly than any other indication.

4. Concise definition of the geographical area

The production area of the raw material for 'Istarski pršut'/Istrski pršut' is limited to the production area of the product and the following Croatian counties: Primorje-Gorski Kotar (only the mainland), Karlovac, Sisak-Moslavina, Zagreb, Bjelovar-Bilogora, Koprivnica-Križevci, Međimurje, Virovitica-Podravina, Požega-Slavonia, Slavonski Brod-Posavina, Osijek-Baranja and Vukovar-Syrmia.

The production area of 'Istarski pršut'/Istrski pršut' comprises part of the Istrian Peninsula without the islands.

The boundary of the geographical area of production of 'Istarski pršut'/Istrski pršut' begins at Stupova Cove, at the boundary between the counties of Istria and Primorje-Gorski Kotar, and continues northwards along that boundary up to the border with the Republic of Slovenia.

The boundary then runs westwards, entering the territory of the Republic of Slovenia, passing south of Ravni Kot, turning north-westwards over Vincarija, before reaching as far south as Glavičorka where it turns briefly westwards and then north-westwards again to Lipica, reaching Mala Vrata. Here the boundary turns westward to Jelovščina, then to the south-west as far as Blažinov Vrh, where it sharply turns westward, passing to the north of Stružnjak and Gnoj in before turning to the south-west and reaching the Jelovice-Podgorje road. It then follows that road north-westwards through Podgorje, past Praproče and Črnotiče to the south. It continues to follow the road to the north of Kastelec, turning towards the Slovenian/Italian border before Sočerb.

The boundary then traces the border westwards, reaching the coast at San Bartolomeo, and then follows the coast to the south-east to the point of origin at Stupova Cove.

5. Link with the geographical area

5.1. Specificity of the geographical area

The climate of the Istrian peninsula is mainly Mediterranean, gradually changing further inland into a continental climate, with both climates being characterised by frequent winds, which in the winter blow from the north and east. These types of winter winds are conducive to the production of ham, which begins at precisely that time of year (salting and drying). The bora, a strong north-easterly wind which blows from the mainland towards the sea from the direction of Mt Učka, is particularly favourable. It makes it possible to dry 'Istarski pršut'/Istrski pršut' by using air only, without any smoke, which has a considerable impact on its quality and uniqueness in relation to other cured hams.

The famous and distinctive taste of 'Istarski pršut'/Istrski pršut' stems not only from the climate, but also from the experience and skill of many generations of Istrian farmers.

Traditionally, the pigs were raised for more than one year and fed with various feedstuffs that were available on the farm at different times of the year: clover and alfalfa, pumpkins, cabbages, fodder beet, whey, boiled potatoes, etc. One of the particularities of the long-standing Istrian method is the composition of the dry brine prepared from salt and one or more spices (black pepper, garlic, laurel, rosemary). Another particularity is the way the hind leg is separated from the half carcass and the way the ham is shaped and prepared. For instance, the traditional and quite unique way of trimming hams has been preserved from the time when rural households needed to melt as much adipose tissue as possible into fat and preserve it for later use. Therefore, according to the traditional recipe, in the first stage of preparation of 'Istarski pršut'/Istrski pršut', all the skin and subcutaneous fat is removed from the fresh ham, which is rare, in fact almost unique, compared to the way that cured ham is produced in other areas. Another peculiarity in the trimming process is that the pelvic bones are not removed, which means that more meat remains on the ham, making it bigger.

The art of ham production in Istria dates back several centuries, over which the traditional methods of production have been improved. So far the earliest record from Istria which explicitly mentions the cured ham dates back to 1580, when in the Glagolitic records of Roč municipality it was documented that the foods ordered for the prefect's wedding ceremony included cured ham (Dražen Vlahov: *'Knjiga računa općine Roč'* (1566–1628), State Archive in Pazin, Pazin, 2009, pp. 102–103). Also in Roč, but a few years later, in 1594, cured ham was ordered and served for lunch to the Rašpor captain (the governor of the Venetian part of northern Istria) and his entourage, to celebrate St. Marina's day (ibid., pp. 110–111). One record from 1612 states that 'four hundred Uskoks crossed Učka ... The Uskoks stole a lot of cattle and large quantities of cheese, cured ham, wine and other foods' (Miroslav Bertoša: *'Istra: doba Venecije'*, Zavičajna naklada Žakan Juri, Pula, 1995, p. 318). One document from 1810 states that the most expensive meat of all was salted pork – ham and bacon (Nevio Šettó: *'Napoleon u Istri'*, IKK Grozd, Pula, 1989, pp. 54, 100, 112, 116, 139, 141).

The tradition of producing 'Istarski pršut'/'Istrski pršut' at farms in the towns of Manžan, Nova Vas and Bertoki is described by Stanislav Renčelj in his book *'Suhe mesnine narodne posebnosti'* (Kmečki glas, Ljubljana, 1990, pp. 169, 209, 211).

5.2. Specificity of the product

The specificity of 'Istarski pršut'/'Istrski pršut' is mainly due to three factors: the raw material, the production technology based on tradition and the product's organoleptic properties.

The specific characteristics of the raw material are the result of controlled rearing of pigs from pure breeds which are fed according to special requirements in an extended fattening phase until their average weight exceeds 160 kg. The pigs must be heavy at the time of slaughter in order to obtain heavy fresh hams, which lose a considerable amount of water in the drying and maturing stages due to the particularities of the production process.

In the traditional production method, hams have to be trimmed so as to keep the pelvic bones (os ilium, os pubis and os ischii), which is not common in the production of cured ham in other regions. Specifically, after hams have been trimmed and rounded off, the femur head (caput femoris – the end of the femur) is hidden, while in other types of cured ham it can be seen well from the inner, medial side and is one of their main visual features. In 'Istarski pršut'/'Istrski pršut' this head is hidden because it is inside the pelvic bone (acetabulum).

The removal of the skin and the subcutaneous fat from the entire surface, i.e. right down to the meat, is also a highly unusual technique for trimming the ham. The trimmed hams are dry-brined with sea salt plus pepper, garlic, laurel and rosemary. The addition of so many spices during salting is yet another distinguishing feature of the production of 'Istarski pršut'/'Istrski pršut'. The removal of the skin not only causes slightly more drying (weight loss) than is the case with other hams, but also produces one more distinguishing feature, which is the growth of mould on the external surface of the ham.

The specific organoleptic properties of 'Istarski pršut'/'Istrski pršut' can be seen first of all in its external appearance, since it has no skin or subcutaneous fat, contains the pelvic bones, which give it an unusually elongated shape, and often has accumulations of mould of various sizes on the surface.

The final product is characterized by a particular aroma, a mild, slightly salty taste, a uniform pink-red colour and a desirable consistency of the muscle tissue. It contains no additives because it is produced in the traditional way.

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 link between 'Istarski pršut'/'Istrski pršut' and the area of Istria can be attributed to the existence of favourable natural conditions: there are no extremely low temperatures in winter, when the air is cooled and dried by frequent winds which provide ideal conditions for the natural drying of ham. An initial low temperature and a gradual decrease in relative humidity ensure a regular process of drying for the hams. For that reason, the phase of salting hams (the initial phase of production) may take place only in the period from 15 October to 20 March. This is one of the mainstays of the traditional method of production.

These climatic conditions provide an ideal environment for the production of traditional 'Istarski pršut'/'Istrski pršut' that is only air-dried, without the use of smoke, thereby significantly influencing its quality and specificity compared to other cured hams.

The characteristic features of 'Istarski pršut'/'Istrski pršut' also stem from the cultural heritage of Istrian rural communities, i.e. from the experience and skills of many generations of Istrian farmers. They traditionally produced cured hams using only very heavy pigs (weighing over 160 kg), which were fed with clover, alfalfa, pumpkins, cabbages, fodder beet, whey, boiled potatoes, etc.

The way of trimming hams for producing 'Istarski pršut'/'Istrski pršut' has remained unchanged ever since rural households needed to obtain as much lard as possible and preserve it for later use. Therefore, according to the traditional recipe, in the first stage of preparation of 'Istarski pršut'/'Istrski pršut', all skin and subcutaneous fat is removed from the fresh ham, leaving the bare meat; this is rare, in fact almost unique, compared to the way that cured ham is produced in other areas where hams are generally dried with the skin on. Another feature of 'Istarski pršut'/'Istrski pršut' is the traditional trimming of hams so as to keep the pelvic bones, which means that the hams are always somewhat larger and heavier than cured hams produced in other regions.

The drying of the hams without the skin and the subcutaneous fat, which means that the whole surface of the muscle tissue is directly exposed to the air and that the surface becomes covered with mould during the maturing phase, certainly makes the ripening process slightly different and subsequently produces the distinctive organoleptic properties of 'Istarski pršut'/'Istrski pršut'.

The specificity of the aroma and taste of 'Istarski pršut'/'Istrski pršut' is also the result of the various spices that are added to the dry brine. The spices have a great influence on the aroma of 'Istarski pršut'/'Istrski pršut' because, unlike other types of cured ham, the entire surface of the ham is in contact with the spices, which means that their flavour can penetrate more easily and more deeply into all parts of the ham.

Reference to publication of the specification

(Article 5(7) of Regulation (EC) No 510/2006 ⁽³⁾)

<http://www.mps.hr/UserDocsImages/HRANA/ISTARSKI%20PRŠUT/Izmijenjena%20Specifikacija%20proizvoda%20Istarski%20pršut-Istrski%20pršut.pdf>

http://www.mko.gov.si/fileadmin/mko.gov.si/pageuploads/podrocja/Varna_in_kakovostna_hrana_in_krma/zasciteni_kmetijski_pridelki/Specifikacije/Istrski_prsut_specifikacija.pdf

⁽³⁾ See footnote 2.