

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

(2013/C 157/05)

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⁾

‘SLOVENSKI MED’

EC No: SL-PGI-0005-0801-10.03.2010

PGI (X) PDO ()

1. Name

‘Slovenski med’

2. Member State or third country

Slovenia

3. Description of the agricultural product or foodstuff

3.1. Type of product

Class 1.4. Other products of animal origin (eggs, honey, various dairy products except butter, etc.)

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

‘Slovenski med’ is produced in the Republic of Slovenia. The following may be sold under the name ‘Slovenski med’:

- acacia honey,
- lime honey,
- chestnut honey,
- fir honey,
- spruce honey,
- floral honey or nectar honey,
- forest honey or honeydew honey.

Organoleptic properties of ‘Slovenski med’:

Acacia honey is produced mainly from nectar collected from the robinia tree (*Robinia pseudoacacia*), also known as false acacia. It ranges in colour from virtually colourless to straw yellow. This honey has a very light and neutral fragrance and smells of acacia blossom. It has a medium-sweet to very sweet taste which is fairly to very long-lasting. Its aroma is of short to medium duration. It often has an aroma of virgin comb, fresh wax, acacia blossom, the blossom of fruit-bearing plants, a fruity aroma of apples and pears and possibly vanilla, creamy sweets, fresh butter and fresh straw. It rarely crystallises.

Lime honey is produced from nectar or honeydew collected mainly from the broad-leaved or small-leaved lime (*Tilia platyphyllos* or *Tilia cordata*). Lime honey is light yellow to light amber in colour, with a green tint. It smells of lime blossom and has a fresh menthol fragrance which is of medium to strong intensity. It has a moderate to strong taste of menthol. Its aroma is very distinctive and fresh. It has an aroma of menthol, fresh walnuts, herbs and cooked lime blossom and a mild aroma of flowers which is fairly to very long-lasting.

⁽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.

Chestnut honey is produced mainly from nectar or honeydew collected from the sweet chestnut (*Castanea sativa*). It is dark brown or amber in colour, with a red tint. Its fragrance is very intense, as is its taste. Chestnut honey is characterised by a moderately to very intense bitter taste. Its aroma is very distinctive, being sharp and acrid like burnt sugar, sugar syrup, smoke, herbs and wormwood and is exceptionally long-lasting, with a bitter aftertaste. It rarely crystallises.

Fir honey is produced mainly from honeydew collected from the silver fir (*Abies alba*). It is dark greyish-brown in colour, with a green sheen. Its fragrance is of medium to strong intensity. It smells of powdered milk and resin. Its taste is fairly long-lasting, as is its aroma, which is very distinctive. The aroma is reminiscent of powdered milk, caramel, burnt sugar, resin, fresh coniferous wood, spruce-tip syrup, smoke, black tea with milk and herb sweets. It usually crystallises slowly.

Spruce honey is produced mainly from honeydew collected from the spruce (*Picea abies*). It is orangey-brown to reddish-brown in colour, with a shiny surface. It is usually clear. It is highly stretchable and sticks to the tongue and palate. Its fragrance is fairly long-lasting and its taste is of short to medium duration. Its aroma is fairly long-lasting. The aroma is reminiscent of spruce-tip syrup, resin, herb sweets, herb tea, roasted coffee, dried fruit and coffee sweets.

Floral honey or nectar honey is produced mainly from nectar from more than one plant and is therefore very varied. Its colour varies from straw yellow to brown. Its fragrance is fairly to very long-lasting, as is its taste. It has a powerful, sweet aftertaste. Its aroma is freshly fruity, floral and fairly to very long-lasting. The aroma is reminiscent of flowers, fresh fruit, compote, cooked fruit, caramel and milky sweets, brown sugar, caramel, molasses. It crystallises rapidly.

Forest or honeydew honey is produced mainly from honeydew collected from a number of plants. It is light to dark brown, with a red or green tint. Its fragrance is of short to medium duration and its taste is of medium duration to long-lasting. Likewise its aroma, which is reminiscent of resin, walnuts, hazelnuts, herbs, wormwood, caramel, molasses, herb sweets, dried fruit and dried pears, is also of medium duration to long-lasting.

Physico-chemical properties of 'Slovenski med'

Type of honey Parameter	Acacia	Lime	Chestnut	Fir	Spruce	Floral	Forest
Water content	< 18,6 %	< 18,6 %	< 18,6 %	< 18,6 %	< 18,6 %	< 18,6 %	< 18,6 %
HMF content	< 15 mg/kg	< 15 mg/kg	< 15 mg/kg	< 15 mg/kg	< 15 mg/kg	< 15 mg/kg	< 15 mg/kg
Electrical conductivity	≤ 0,3 mS/cm	0,5-1,3 mS/cm	≥ 0,9 mS/cm	> 0,8 mS/cm	≥ 0,9 mS/cm	≤ 0,8 mS/cm	≥ 0,8 mS/cm
pH	3,5-4,6	4,1-6,1	4,7-6,2	4,7-5,8	4,3-5,6	3,8-5,3	4,3-5,6
Sucrose content	< 10 g/100 g	< 5 g/100 g	< 5 g/100 g	< 5 g/100 g	< 5 g/100 g	< 5 g/100 g	< 5 g/100 g

Pollen content of 'Slovenski med'

Type of honey Pollen	Acacia	Lime	Chestnut	Fir	Spruce	Floral	Forest
Proportion of specific pollen variety	> 7 % robinia pollen (<i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i> — false acacia)	> 1 % lime pollen (<i>Tilia</i> sp.)	> 86 % sweet chestnut pollen (<i>Castanea sativa</i>)	—	—	Often contains the pollen of fruit trees, <i>Castanea sativa</i> , <i>Acer</i> sp., <i>Trifolium repens</i> and plants of the <i>Asteraceae</i> family	—

3.3. Raw materials

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3.4. Feed

The bees are not fed immediately before or during foraging. During the winter period, the bees are fed only with sugar or honey.

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

All stages in the production of 'Slovenski med' must take place in the defined geographical area. The production of 'Slovenski med' comprises the production of the honey in stationary hives, or with the aid of mobile hives moving within the geographical area, and its extraction by means of centrifugation. Beekeeping follows the principles of good beekeeping practice (Guidelines on good hygiene practice in beekeeping based on the principles of the HACCP system). The use of chemical repellents to pacify bees is not permitted, owing to the risk of chemical residues transferring to the honey. Extraction from brood combs is not permitted. Honey which contains less than 18,6 % water is extracted. The extracted honey is strained and, a few days after extraction, it is also collected. Strainers which do not remove pollen are used for straining. The drying of the honey is prohibited. Crystallised honey is liquefied by means of heating, albeit to a temperature not exceeding 40 °C so as not to damage the honey's heat-sensitive constituents (enzymes, hormones). The liquefaction of honey by means of microwave heating is not permitted as microwaves destroy its biologically active constituents.

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

'Slovenski med' may be bottled and packaged only within the defined geographical area. Only in this way it is possible to preserve the high quality of the honey and prevent changes in its physico-chemical and organoleptic properties which could occur if it is transported over long distances. Immediately after the honey is bottled, the lid and jar are fastened together with a uniform label in such a way that the jar cannot be opened without breaking the label.

3.7. Specific rules concerning labelling

The labelling of 'Slovenski med' which meets the requirements of the specification must include the protected name and the words 'protected geographical indication' and indicate the type of honey and the batch.

4. Concise definition of the geographical area

The area where 'Slovenski med' is produced is the territory of the Republic of Slovenia.

5. Link with the geographical area

5.1. Specificity of the geographical area

Slovenia is situated in Central Europe, where four major European geographical zones meet, namely the Alps, the Pannonian Basin, the Dinaric Highlands and the Mediterranean. The geological diversity, variations in relief and the fact that the country straddles the boundaries of four biogeographical regions give rise to a great diversity of flora and fauna, which in turn has also resulted in a wide range of honey types. The interplay of sub-Mediterranean, continental and alpine climates and the variation in relief between the lowlands and the high mountains mean that, for certain plants, pasture occurs at different times in different parts of Slovenia. These characteristics are reflected in the diversity of Slovenia's flora.

The sweet chestnut (*Castanea sativa* Mill.) grows in all warmer hilly areas of Slovenia. Trees of this species are present throughout Slovenia, in large stands or as individual specimens. They are often found close to fields, orchards, vineyards and houses. They grow at elevations of up to about 800 m above sea level. In addition to their timber and fruit, they are also very important as bee pasture. They blossom in June and July, usually over a period of three weeks. The bees take chestnut pollen to their hives, where it provides welcome sustenance when there is no pasture later in the year.

Over thousands of years, the Carniolan honey bee (*Apis mellifera carnica*), which is indigenous to Slovenia, has become specially adapted to the climatic and pasture conditions that are typical of Slovenia. Slovenia is the only EU Member State to have declared in a Treaty of Accession, with the aim of preserving the indigenous genetic material of the Carniolan honey bee and having regard to the need to preserve this indigenous honey bee population, its intention to continue applying all appropriate measures necessary to ensure the preservation of this indigenous bee in Slovenia.

More is known about the history of Slovenian beekeeping from the 18th century onwards. During that period, three great men in particular — Anton Janša, Peter Pavel Glavar and Janez Anton Scopoli — left their mark on Slovenian beekeeping. Anton Janša (1734-1773) is known as the founder of modern beekeeping. He wrote two important books in German: *Abhandlung von Schwärmen der Bienen* (*Treatise on the Swarming of Bees*) (1771) and *Vollständige Lehre von der Bienenzucht* (*A Complete Guide to Beekeeping*) (1775). He was the first imperially appointed teacher of apiculture for most of the Austrian lands. At the school of apiculture in Vienna he also introduced the technique of moving bees to pasture, thereby obtaining larger amounts of honey. It was Peter Pavel Glavar (1721-1784) who first established that young virgin queen bees mate with several, and not just one, drone, and it was Janez Anton Scopoli (1723-1788) who first made this known to the beekeeping world. In 1763, an article on the bee, along with an illustration, also appeared in his *Entomologia Carniolica*, a comprehensive book written in Latin and published in Vienna.

Later, Anton Žnideršič (1874-1947) combined the experience of foreign beekeeping experts and practitioners, in particular Albertti, Gerstung and Preuss, with his own experience and in so doing developed the AŽ hive (the Albertti-Žnideršičev hive), which is still used in the vast majority of cases for beekeeping in Slovenia.

The tradition of moving bees to different locations is still maintained in Slovenia to this day. Those beekeepers who transport bees to pastures usually obtain more honey, thus also ensuring a greater varietal diversity of their honey.

Slovenian beekeepers organised themselves into associations at an early date; the first beekeeping fraternity was formed in Rodine pri Žirovnici in 1781 and was the forerunner of subsequently established beekeeping associations. The Slovenian Central Beekeepers' Association for Kranjska (Carniola), Štajerska (Styria), Koroška (Carinthia) and Primorska was established in Ljubljana in 1898 and immediately began publishing its journal, *Slovenski čebelar*. The journal is still published today.

The associations have always had the task of educating beekeepers and introducing good beekeeping practice, as beekeepers have to adhere to specific production processes in order to ensure the specific characteristics of 'Slovenski med'. Slovenian beekeepers have consequently amassed the relevant specific knowledge and practice, which make it possible to achieve the high quality of 'Slovenski med'.

5.2. Specificity of the product

The specificity of 'Slovenski med' stems from the pollen spectrum, which reflects the characteristic features of the flora in the area where 'Slovenski med' is produced, and includes pollen from the sweet chestnut (*Castanea sativa*), which is present in most samples of 'Slovenski med'. These properties distinguish 'Slovenski med' from other honeys that are produced outside Slovenia.

More than half of all samples of 'Slovenski med' also contain the pollen of *Trifolium repens*, *Acer* sp., *Plantago* sp., *Fraxinus ornus*, *Salix* sp., *Tilia* sp., plants of the *Poaceae* family, *Filipendula* sp. and plants of the *Asteraceae* and *Apiaceae* families.

A low water content and low levels of HMF are also specific properties of 'Slovenski med'. 'Slovenski med' has a water content of less than 18,6 % and an HMF content of less than 15 mg/kg, and herein lies its specificity. These two quality parameters demonstrably distinguish 'Slovenski med' from other honeys produced in Slovenia.

Slovenia is the region of origin of the Carniolan honey bee, and one of the specific features of 'Slovenski med' is therefore that it all comes from an area where beekeeping is based exclusively on the use of the Carniolan honey bee.

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)

Slovenia is a country with a rich tradition of breeding bees and producing high-quality honey, as is clear from point 5.1. Successful beekeeping in Slovenia has always been based on a good knowledge of bees and imaginative beekeeping techniques. It is also dependent on the pastures that are available, which in Slovenia are varied owing to the diversity of the flora. The experience of breeding bees and producing honey that has been built up over many years is passed down from generation to generation.

Because the sweet chestnut tree (*Castanea sativa*) is so widespread in Slovenia, sweet chestnut pollen is present in most samples of 'Slovenski med'. To take advantage of the variety of pastures in Slovenia, beekeepers move their bees around the country, further increasing the possibility of sweet chestnut pollen being present in the honey.

Over thousands of years, the Carniolan honey bee (*Apis mellifera carnica*), so-named by August Pollmann in 1879, has become specially adapted to the climatic and pasture conditions that are typical of Slovenia. The Carniolan honey bee is indigenous to Slovenia and is protected under the Livestock Breeding Act (*Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia* No 18/02), which in Article 68 defines the Carniolan honey bee as an indigenous breed and, in Article 70, provides for special protection for this indigenous breed. Owing to its excellent characteristics and its adaptation to temperate climatic conditions, the Carniolan honey bee has been a much-traded commodity. In other countries, other breeds of bee exist alongside the Carniolan honey bee, but only in Slovenia is the Carniolan honey bee the only bee which may be used in beekeeping.

The restrictions which apply to the production of 'Slovenski med' also contribute to its specific properties. The beekeepers' skills also manifest themselves in judging when the time is right to extract honey, since, based on practice and experience passed down from generation to generation, beekeepers extract honey when its water content is less than 18,6 %.

Honey produced in Slovenia has always been highly prized by consumers, as it provides them with high-quality food from a known source. It was precisely because of the desire to provide consumers with high-quality honey that Slovenian beekeepers introduced controlled honey production in 1999. This requires a great deal of expertise on the part of beekeepers because, when it comes to ensuring high-quality honey, they are a very important link in the honey production process, and the quality of the honey could suffer if their work is not done properly.

The high profile and good standing of 'Slovenski med' is due to its presence at various international and national congresses, exhibitions, fairs, honey days and children's bazaars, the fact that it features in television and radio broadcasts and, last but not least, the fact that it is mentioned in various articles, for instance at Ruralia Gorizia, a congress organised by three countries (Slovenia, Italy and Austria) in Italy in 2002, at Apimondia, the biggest international beekeeping event (Ljubljana, 2003), at the international honeydew honey congress in Chania (Crete, 2009), and at the Apimedita & Apiquality forum (Slovenia, 2010), etc.

The high quality of 'Slovenski med', which is world-class, is evidenced by the various awards it has received in various global, international and national competitions; for instance two medals and numerous gold medal awards at the Apimedita & Apiquality world honey competition. 'Slovenski med' received one of its most recent awards at the BiolMiel 2011 international organic honey competition in Italy, where the acacia and forest honey won gold medals and the chestnut honey came joint fourth out of 170 samples of honey.

Reference to publication of the specification

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

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

⁽³⁾ See footnote 2.