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(Announcements)

OTHER ACTS

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Publication of an application pursuant to Article 6(2) of Council Regulation (EC) No 510/2006 on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs

(2010/C 3/03)

This publication confers the right to object to the application pursuant to Article 7 of Council Regulation (EC) No 510/2006. Statements of objection must reach the Commission within six months of the date of this publication.

SUMMARY

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006**‘LOS PEDROCHES’****EC No: ES-PDO-005-0506-09.11.2005****PDO (X) PGI ()**

This summary sets out the main elements of the product specification for information purposes.

1. Responsible department in the Member State:

Name: Subdirección General de Calidad y Promoción Agroalimentaria — Dirección General de Industria Agroalimentaria y Alimentación — Secretaría General de Agricultura y Alimentación del Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación de España

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2. Group:

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Composition: Producers/processors (X) Other ()

3. Kind of product:

Class 1.2: Meat products

4. Specification:

(summary of requirements under Article 4(2) of Regulation (EC) No 510/2006)

4.1. Name:

'Los Pedroches'

4.2. Description:

The kind of animal suitable for providing parts for the manufacture of hams and shoulder hams protected by the designation of origin is the Iberian breed of pig, of all strains, which is at least 75 % Iberian pig and a maximum 25 % Duroc or Duroc Jersey, provided the dam is pure Iberian as required by Royal Decree No 1469 of 2 November 2007 and has spent every stage of its life in the geographical area defined and delimited in the present document from birth to final fattening on holdings registered for the 'Los Pedroches' designation of origin.

The parts are those from the various kinds of pig, classified according to the type of feed the pigs have been given during their final fattening stage, in accordance with Royal Decree No 1469 of 2 November 2007, divided into three grades:

- 'Bellota' hams and shoulders: from pigs fattened in the final stage under the free-range 'montanero' (mast-feeding) system in dehesa oak forests and fed exclusively on acorn and grass, whose fatty acid values for subcutaneous fat according to gas chromatography are within the parameters for 'Bellota'. In order to ensure a sufficient supply of acorns, the density for pigs under the 'Bellota' category of the 'Los Pedroches' designation of origin will not exceed 1 Iberian pig per hectare,
- 'Recebo' hams and shoulders: from pigs which, after a period under the free-range mast-feeding system in Spanish dehesa oak forests and fed exclusively on acorn and grass, have gained a minimum additional weight of 8,75 kg and for which it is necessary, while maintaining the same grazing system, to supplement the diet with a daily ration of cereal and legume-based feed checked and authorised by the Regulatory Board, whose fatty acid values for subcutaneous fat according to gas chromatography are within the parameters for 'Recebo'. In order to ensure a sufficient supply of acorns, the density for pigs under the 'Bellota' category of the 'Los Pedroches' designation of origin will not exceed 2 Iberian pigs per hectare,
- 'Cebo de Campo' hams and shoulders: from pigs which have grazed in Spanish dehesa oak forests, basically on natural resources from the dehesa, such as grass, pastureland or stubble according to the season, supplemented if necessary by a daily ration of cereal and legume-based feed checked and authorised by the Regulatory Board. In order to ensure a sufficient supply of natural resources in the dehesa, the density for pigs under the 'Cebo de Campo' category of the 'Los Pedroches' designation of origin will not exceed 12 Iberian pigs per hectare.

Minimum curing time is 12 months for the shoulders and 18 months for the hams.

The characteristics of the hams and shoulders at the end of the production process are as follows:

- long, slender shape with the typical 'corte serrano' V-cut. The hoof is kept on to aid identification,
- characteristic colour ranging from pink to purplish-red and appearance on cutting of marbling fat throughout the flesh,

- the meat is very slightly salty or sweet in flavour. A meat is dry in flavour. The aroma is pleasant and intense, with a hint of roasted or dry nut, which is typical of this kind of product,
- the texture is not very fibrous,
- the fat is glossy and pinkish-white or with yellowish tinges; it is aromatic, with a pleasant taste; and its consistency varies according to the proportion of acorns in the diet.

4.3. *Geographical area:*

The area in which the pigs whose cuts are used in the preparation of hams and shoulders covered by the 'Los Pedroches' designation of origin are born, reared and fattened and the entire production, slaughtering and butchering of the Iberian pigs and the salting, curing, drying and ageing of the cuts takes place consists of the following municipalities in the Cordoba province: Alcaracejos, Añora, Belalcázar, Bélmez, Los Blázquez, Cardeña, Conquista, Dos Torres, Espiel, Fuente La Lancha, Fuente Obejuna, La Granjuela, El Guijo, Hinojosa del Duque, Pedroche, Peñarroya-Pueblonuevo, Pozoblanco, Santa Eufemia, Torrecampo, Valsequillo, Villanueva de Córdoba, Villanueva del Duque, Villanueva del Rey, Villaralto and El Viso, and at altitudes above 300 metres in the municipalities of Adamuz, Hornachuelos, Montoro, Obejo, Posadas, Villaharta and Villaviciosa.

4.4. *Proof of origin:*

Proof that the product has originated in the area covered by the 'Los Pedroches' designation of origin is provided by the documents showing the checks carried out by the Regulatory Board in respect of: the livestock holdings, ranges, registered pigs, slaughterhouses and cutting plants, drying sheds and cellars and the product covered by the designation.

Every stage of the life of the pigs, from birth and rearing to final fattening, takes place within the area described in the preceding point in holdings registered under the Los Pedroches Designation of Origin, subject to inspection by the Regulatory Board.

Each animal registered under the 'Los Pedroches' designation of origin must be identified before it enters the final fattening stage by a numbered metal ear-tag attached to the right ear, bearing the words 'Consejo Regulador de la Denominación de Origen "Los Pedroches" '.

Likewise, all the processing stages for Iberian pig hams and shoulder, slaughtering and butchering and subsequent salting, curing and final ageing in cellars must be carried out in plants entered in the Registers of the 'Los Pedroches' designation of origin registers and located in the production area covered by the Regulatory Board as described in the preceding point of this document.

Each cut covered by the 'Los Pedroches' designation of origin has an indelible, tamper-proof seal attached to it before the pig is butchered in order to assure the consumer of the traceability of the cuts. The seals show the designation of origin, the grade to which the cut belongs and the individual identification number.

All these operations are supervised by the Regulatory Board.

4.5. *Method of production:*

The animals registered under the designation of origin will conform to traditional practice and be reared in free-range systems following mast and pasture feeding systems and feeding on other natural products of the dehesas from holm, cork and gall-oak, within the geographical area, and to the genetic conditions laid down in the designation of origin.

The key factors when determining the quality of Iberian pigs from Los Pedroches and thus the subsequent organoleptic quality of the Iberian pig hams and shoulders are: the breed, the age of the animals and the feeding and rearing under a free-range system in their final fattening stage. The last stage is essential in so far as it is the key factor in the final quality of the products. In respect of this final fattening stage, there are three grades of protected hams and shoulders:

- 'Bellota': final feeding diet based exclusively on acorns and grass in the dehesas in the holdings registered under this designation of origin. Thus, the feed is fully sourced in the defined geographical area described in this document,
- 'Recebo': during the final fattening, there is a stage where the diet is exclusively acorn and grass and a subsequent stage in which the pigs follow a free-range system of grazing in the dehesas of the holdings registered under this designation of origin on a diet of grass supplemented as necessary with feed authorised and monitored by the Regulatory Board. The proportion of the feed originating in the geographical area described in this document is at least 85 %,
- 'Cebo de Campo': in their final fattening stage the pigs are reared in a free-range system in dehesas in the holdings registered under the designation of origin and fed essentially on natural products from the dehesa such as acorn remains, grass or cereal stubble according to the season and this is supplemented as necessary with feed authorised and monitored by the Regulatory Board. The proportion of the feed originating in the geographical area described in this document is at least 65 %.

Before they reach the final fattening stage, Iberian pigs are fed free-range in the dehesas in the holdings registered under this designation of origin with natural products from the dehesa such as grass, pasture and cereal stubble according to the season and this is supplemented with very small amounts of feed authorised and monitored by the Regulatory Board; the proportion of the feed originating in the geographical area described in this document is at least 65 %.

The feed on which the pigs covered by this designation of origin are fed is produced entirely within the geographical area described in this document.

The Regulatory Board has a positive list of feed authorised for use in the final fattening stage for the 'Recebo' and 'Cebo de Campo' grades based on their composition, which must be mainly cereals and legumes, processed in the geographical area described and defined in this document.

When the Servicio de Control y Vigilancia has checked the breed and age of the pigs and the final fattening process, they are taken for slaughter. Subsequently, at the cutting plant, the limbs are removed and subjected to a curing process which makes full use of the natural climate of the abovementioned geographical area, acquiring the colour, flavour and aroma typical of the hams and shoulder cuts protected under the designation of origin.

The process involves the following steps:

Salting: The purpose is to add common salt to the flesh to encourage drying and conservation of the cuts. This process takes place at temperatures of between 0 °C and 5 °C and humidity greater than 80 %. The salting time varies according to the weight of the cuts and must be between 0,7 and 1,2 days per kilogram.

Washing: This consists in removing of surface salt from the cuts by washing in water and allowing to drain.

Rest: In this stage, the salt is spread through the cuts until it is distributed throughout its tissues. The moisture reduces slowly and steadily and the cuts acquire greater consistency. This process is carried out in chambers at temperatures between 0 °C and 6 °C and relative humidity between 75 and 85 %. How long the cuts remain in the chambers depends on their weight and may be between 30 and 90 days.

Drying/maturation: During this stage, the steady dehydration continues and the product 'sweats', allowing the dispersal of the fats between the muscle fibres which, once they become impregnated, retain the aroma. It takes place in natural dryers making the most of the climate typical of the geographical area in question, which will be decisive for the final gastronomical qualities of the product. This process lasts approximately six months.

Ageing in stores: It takes place in every case in natural stores, making the most of the climate typical of the geographical area in question, which will be decisive for the final gastronomical qualities of the Iberian pig hams and shoulders. The cuts will age in these installations for a minimum of 18 months for the hams and 12 months for the shoulder cuts. During this process, the hams and shoulders will have acquired the organoleptic characteristics, the aromas and the flavours typical of the microclimate and the microflora of the Los Pedroches area.

4.6. *Link:*

There are 300 000 hectares of holm oak dehesa in the north of the province of Cordoba. As part of this system of agriculture, forestry and grazing livestock have been reared free-range since ancient times, the most outstanding example of which, in particular, is the rearing and farming of Iberian pigs, making the most of the nutritional potential of the acorn, and without the presence of the pig, this ecosystem would appear destined to disappear. The average acorn crop in the Los Pedroches area is some 1 000 kg/ha.

These dehesa lands were bought from the Crown in the sixteenth Century and were mostly auctioned off for exploitation under various systems, including mast feeding. Subsequently, in the nineteenth century, the lands were taken out of the ownership of the church or the nobility and put on the market; however, their cultivation remained supervised which, together with subsequent legislation governing the felling of trees and the stewardship of oak woods, has enabled the latter to survive until today.

The salient feature of livestock management is mast-feeding as the final fattening stage prior to the slaughter of the pigs; this ensures the laying-down of fat whose melting point is lower the greater the amount of acorns consumed, which gives the cuts their much sought-after aroma and succulence and the physical exercise taken by the free-range animals gives it a denser muscular texture through which the fat is more evident.

The extraordinary sensory quality of the hams and shoulder cuts protected under the designation of origin is associated with a system of exploitation which is unique and exclusive in the world — free range mast feeding — using to good effect the natural resources of the dehesa for the final fattening stage, basically acorn, the grass, the pastureland or the stubble, according to the season, which is the essential factor endowing the protected product with fat of a type which it is impossible to imitate by any other production method.

The dehesas in the north of the province of Cordoba contain the greatest proportion of holm oak by comparison to other species of the genus 'Quercus' of the whole Iberian Peninsula, with all that entails in respect of the type of acorn which will be consumed by the pigs in the geographical area covered by the present designation of origin; moreover, it is the only part of the country in which the gall-oak acorn ripens significantly, which happens some 20 days earlier than in the rest of the 'Quercus' genus, thus bringing the mast-feeding period forward for the Iberian pig. This is hugely significant for the characteristics of the products covered by the designation of origin.

The importance of the dehesa pasturelands in the diet of the Iberian pigs raised free-range on the dehesas should be emphasised as a factor which characterises and differentiates the protected product and thus the link of the product with the geographical area. This has been scientifically fully proven.

Since the 1980s, in addition to this farming tradition, undertakings for the processing and marketing of Iberian pig products have begun to establish themselves and owe their success not only to the culinary qualities of the better cuts of the pig, but also to the craft techniques used in their production, the average altitude of the region at approximately 700 metres above sea level and to the cold and dry continental climate which prevails in the area during the production season.

4.7. *Inspection body:*

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The Regulatory Board complies with standard EN-45011.

4.8. *Labelling:*

The Regulatory Board affixes to each cut, in an entirely visible manner and in such a way as to render re-use impossible, a label which must bear the words 'Denominación de Origen "Los Pedroches"' and show the grade to which the cut belongs.
