

Publication of an application for registration pursuant to Article 6(2) of Council Regulation (EEC) No 2081/92 on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin

(2001/C 51/02)

This publication confers the right to object to the application pursuant to Article 7 of the abovementioned Regulation. Any objection to this application must be submitted via the competent authority in the Member State concerned within a time limit of six months from the date of this publication. The arguments for publication are set out below, in particular under 4.6, and are considered to justify the application within the meaning of Regulation (EEC) No 2081/92.

COUNCIL REGULATION (EEC) No 2081/92 APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION: ARTICLE 5 **PDO (x) PGI ()**

National application No 57

1. Responsible department in the Member State

Name: Subdireccion General de Denominaciones de Calidad — Direccion General de Alimentacion —
Secretarfa General de Agricultura y Alimentacion del Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y
Alimentacion de Espana

Address: Paseo Infanta Isabel, 1, E-28071 Madrid

Tel. (34) 913 47 53 94

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2. Applicant group

2.1. Name: Asociacion para la Defensa y Promocion del Aceite de Oliva del Bajo Aragon (Adaba)

2.2. Address: Plaza Dean, 2, E-44600 Alcaniz (Teruel)

Tel. (34) 978 83 46 00

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2.3. Composition: Producer/processor (x) other ()

3. Type of product: Extra virgin olive oil — Class 1.5 — Oils and fats.

4. Specification

(summary of requirements under Article 4(2))

4.1. **Name:** 'Aceite del Bajo Aragon'.

4.2. **Description:** Extra virgin olive oil produced from the Empeltre, Arbequina and Royal varieties, with Empeltre accounting for at least 80 % of the total, in view of its predominance in the area of production and the fact that the characteristics of the product are historically very closely related to it. In line with tradition the remaining varieties may account for no more than 20 % by volume of the composition of *Aceite del Bajo Aragon*.

Organoleptic characteristics:

Appearance	Clear, with no hint of film, cloudiness or dirt
Colour	Yellow, the hues concerned ranging from golden yellow to old gold
Flavour	Fruity at the beginning of the season, with a slight almondy taste; not bitter, with a hint of sweetness and slightly sharp
Minimum score in the panel test	6,5

Physico-chemical characteristics:

Maximum acidity (% oleic acid)	1,00
Maximum peroxide (meq O ₂ /kg)	20
K270 (maximum number)	0,15
K ₂₃₂ (maximum number)	2,00
Maximum moisture and volatile substances (%)	0,15
Maximum level of impurities (%)	0,10

- 4.3. **Geographical area:** The area of production is a natural region in western Aragon, situated between the provinces of Zaragoza and Teruel. It coincides with the south eastern part of the Ebro basin, comprises 31 560 hectares of olive groves and includes the following municipalities:

Aguaviva	Cinco olivas	Maella
Alacon	Cretas	Mas de las Matas
Albalte del Arzobispo	Crivillen	Mazaleon
Alborge	Escatron	Mequinenza
Alcaniz	Estercuel	Molinos
Alcorisa	Fornoles	Monroyo
Alloza	Fabara	Nonaspe
Almochuel	Fayon	Oliete
Almonacid de la Cuba	Foz-Calanda	Parras de Castellote
Andorra	Fuentes de Ebro	Penarroja de Tastavins
Arens de Lledo	Fuentespalda	Quinto de Ebro
Arino	Gargallo	Sastago
Azaila	Hijar	Rafales
Beceite	Jatiel	Samper de Calanda
Belchite	La Cerollera	Seno
Belmonte de San Jose	La Codonera	Torrecilla de Alcaniz
Berge	La Fresneda	Torre de Arcas
Bordon	La Ginebrosa	Torre de Compte
Calanda	La Mata de los Olmos	Torrevelilla
Calaceite	La Portellada	Urrea de Gaen
Canizar del Olivar	Lagata	Valdealgorfa
Caspe	Letux	Valderrobres
Castelseras	La Puebla de Hajar	Valdeltormo
Castelnou	La Zaida	Valjunquera
Castellote	Lledo	Vinaceite
Chiprana	Los Olmos	

- 4.4. **Proof of origin:** The olives delivered to the mills belong to approved varieties and come from groves registered with, and inspected by, the Regulating Council.

The olives are pressed at registered mills situated in the production area. The oil thus extracted undergoes an evaluation based on the specifications and is stored and packed at registered establishments situated in the demarcated area.

The oil undergoes physico-chemical and organoleptic tests, which it must fully satisfy before being packed and marketed under the designation of origin and with a numbered label supplied by the Regulating Council.

- 4.5. **Method of production:** The olive trees belong to registered groves located on dry or irrigated land. The top layer of soil is broken up — by means of a cultivator — on three separate occasions and is then rolled to prepare it for the harvesting of the olives. The maximum quantity of nitrogen applied each year may not exceed 1 kg per tree. Light pruning takes place during the fruit-formation period and, in the case of adult trees, the leaf to wood ratio must be preserved.

Once the olives have reached the correct degree of ripeness they are picked — with the utmost care — on the tree and are sent to the mills in accordance with the requirements applicable, the latter being designed to prevent damage to the fruit. The olives are picked between the middle of November and the end of March, with oil extraction occurring no more than 48 hours afterwards.

The oil is extracted mechanically from the olives. The process, which takes place at registered mills, involves the following: washing and pressing of the olives, churning of the paste at a temperature not exceeding 35 °C, separation of the phases and storage. Once the oil has been produced and evaluated, it is packed in glass or earthenware bottles or in metal containers of up to five litres.

- 4.6. **Link:** The varieties which may be used in the production of *Aceite del Bajo Aragon* are those traditionally grown in the area of production. *Empeltre* and *Royal* can, on the basis of existing bibliographical references, be regarded as local varieties, while *Arbequina* was introduced in the 19th century from nearby Catalonia. The earliest known reference to oil from the area is to be found in the *Ora maritima*, which was penned by the fourth-century Latin poet Rufo Festo Avieno and is itself based on a text dating back to 550 BC. The *Ora maritima* describes how boats would travel upstream along the Ebro in order to engage in trade with the local population and, in the process, obtain supplies of oil, wine and wheat. The *Ora maritima* refers to the Ebro as an *Oleum flumen* or river of oil. Ignacio de Asso, who in 1798 wrote the 'Historia de la Economia Politica de Aragon', frequently referred to olive trees in Lower Aragon.

The current fame of *Aceite del Bajo Aragon* can be traced back to the end of the 19th century, when a thriving Tortosa, the main market for oil from that part of Aragon, attracted large firms keen to exploit the qualities of the local oil. Soon afterwards, however, a number of firms sprang up in Alcaniz, their aim being to obtain their oil direct from Lower Aragon, bypassing Tortosa and the fierce competition there altogether. Another major bibliographical reference, this time to the fame of *Aceite del Bajo Aragon* in the early years of the 20th century, is a book written in 1918 by Isidro Aguilo y Cortes and entitled 'Elaboracion del Aceite de Oliva'. In the first third of the 20th century *Aceite del Bajo Aragon* was held in high regard by gastronomes such as Teodoro Bardaji and Dionisio Perez. Outside the region, *Aceite del Bajo Aragon* is often said to be simply the best olive oil in the world, a view echoed by Daniel Magrane in his book 'El aceite de oliva en Espana' (Espasa Calpe, 1961).

The area of production is situated in Lower Aragon, i.e. the south-eastern part of the Ebro basin, an area which in essence coincides with the valleys of the Aguavivas, Martin, Regallo, Guadalope and Matarrana rivers. It is characterised by its dryness, its low and irregular rainfall and its extremes of temperature. In effect the terrain protects the area from both Mediterranean and Atlantic maritime influences and produces a continental type of climate. The *cierzo*, the prevailing strong north easterly wind, serves to accentuate the dryness.

The area is flat to undulating, with altitudes ranging from 122 metres at Caspe to 632 metres at Alcorisa. The soil is limy, with some strata of gypsum, this being a characteristic of lake sedimentation and a warm and dry climate during the Miocene.

The average annual rainfall and temperature are 350 mm and 14,8 °C respectively. Appropriate cultivation techniques, upkeep of the soil, fertilisation, pruning and the control of pests and diseases supplement an environment which, by virtue of its geographical characteristics, is suited to the cultivation of olive trees.

4.7. Inspection body:

Name: Consejo Regulador de la denominacion de origen 'Aceite del Bajo Aragon'

Address: Bartolome Esteban, 58, E-44600 Alcaniz (Teruel)

Tel. (34) 978 83 45 47 Fax

(34) 978 83 45 52

The Consejo Regulador de la denominacion de origen 'Aceite del Bajo Aragon' complies with standard EN-45011.

4.8. *Labelling:* *Must* include the words 'Aceite del Bajo Aragon'. The labels must be approved by the Regulating Council. The back labels are numbered and are supplied by the Regulating Council.

4.9. *National requirements:*

- Law No 25/1970 of 2 December 1970 on rules governing viticulture, wine and spirits;
- Decree No 835/1972 of 28 March 1972 on detailed rules for the implementation of Law No 25/1970;
- Order of 25 January 1994 specifying the correlation between Spanish law and Regulation (EEC) No 2081/92 as regards designations of origin and geographical indications for agricultural products and foodstuffs;
- Royal Decree No 1643/1999 of 22 October 1999 on the procedure governing applications for entry into the Community register of protected designations of origin and protected geographical indications.

EC No: G/E/00118/2000.02.01.

Date of receipt of the full application: 26 July 2000.