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Publication of an application for registration pursuant to Article 15(4) of Regulation (EU) 2024/1143 of the European Parliament and of the Council

(C/2025/6668)

Following this publication, the authorities of a Member State or of a third country, or a natural or legal person having a legitimate interest and established or resident in a third country, may lodge, in accordance with Article 17 of Regulation (EU) 2024/1143 of the European Parliament and of the Council [1], an opposition with the Commission within three months from the date of this publication.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

Designations of origin and geographical indications of agricultural products

'Sapin de Noël du Morvan'

EU No: PGI-FR-03379 – 16.12.2024

1. **Name(s)**

'Sapin de Noël du Morvan'

2. **Geographical indication type**

PDO ☐ PGI ☒

3. **Country to which the defined geographical area belongs**

France

4. **Description of the agricultural product**

4.1. *Classification of the agricultural product in accordance with the Combined Nomenclature heading and code, as referred to in Article 6(1) of Regulation (EU) 2024/1143*

06 – LIVE TREES AND OTHER PLANTS; BULBS, ROOTS AND THE LIKE; CUT FLOWERS AND ORNAMENTAL FOLIAGE

0604 – Foliage, branches and other parts of plants, without flowers or flower buds, and grasses, mosses and lichens, being goods of a kind suitable for bouquets or for ornamental purposes, fresh, dried, dyed, bleached, impregnated or otherwise prepared

4.2. *Description of the agricultural product to which the registered name applies*

The 'Sapin de Noël du Morvan' is an ornamental tree, cut or potted, traditionally used to decorate consumers' homes during the Christmas period.

The 'Sapin de Noël du Morvan' is presented cut or potted. It comes from the species:

— *Abies nordmanniana* (Nordmann fir);

— *Abies procera (syn. nobilis)* (noble fir);

— *Picea abies* (Norway spruce).

[1] Regulation (EU) 2024/1143 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 April 2024 on geographical indications for wine, spirit drinks and agricultural products, as well as traditional specialities guaranteed and optional quality terms for agricultural products, amending Regulations (EU) No 1308/2013, (EU) 2019/787 and (EU) 2019/1753 and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 (OJ L, 2024/1143, 23.4.2024, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1143/oj).

The ‘Sapin de Noël du Morvan’ meets the following aesthetic criteria:

— balanced and symmetrical stance;

— regular and dense branches;

— needles of a ‘deep green’ colour for the spruces and Nordmann firs, and ‘bluish green’ for the noble firs;

— good state of freshness associated with late felling or pulling up.

The size is between 40 cm and 15 m for the cut Christmas trees, and between 60 cm and 2 m for the potted ones.

Trees in soil blocks or which have been flocked, frosted or iced, or treated with a colourant are prohibited.

Definition of aesthetic criteria

A ‘Sapin de Noël du Morvan’ between 40 cm and 3 m has the following characteristics:

Criteria	Target value
Colour	Consistent across the whole tree
Shape	Width/height ratio between 0,5 and 1
Density	The whorls of branches and internodes must be evenly distributed along the whole height of the tree, and be sufficient in number to ensure good density
Trunk	A single trunk in the centre of the tree
Leader	Straight leader [top section], although it can be curved or misshapen as long as the curve does not exceed 20° in relation to the vertical. The length ranges from equal to the length of the branches of the uppermost whorl to double that length
Symmetry	Generally symmetrical appearance with branches distributed around the trunk Minimum 4 branches of the same length in each whorl, unless a number of intermediary branches have the same [visual] effect

For trees over 3 metres and no higher than 15 metres, a ‘Sapin de Noël du Morvan’ has the following characteristics:

Criteria	Target value
Colour	Consistent across the whole tree
Shape	Width/height ratio between 0,4 and 0,9
Density	The whorls of branches and internodes must be evenly distributed along the whole height of the tree, and be sufficient in number to ensure good density
Trunk	A single trunk in the centre of the tree
Symmetry	Generally symmetrical appearance with branches distributed around the trunk

A ‘Sapin de Noël du Morvan’ can have minor damage in a single spot and a single minor defect.

Classification of damage and defects as major or minor is set out below.

For ‘Sapins de Noël du Morvan’ between 40 cm and 3 m:

Criteria	Defects/Damage	Major/Minor
Branches bear lichen and or/moss	Damage	Minor
Needles are not regularly spaced	Damage	Minor
Some branches are broken or dead	Damage	Major
Traces of algae or presence of minor damage caused by insects or animals	Damage	Minor
To ensure regular distribution of branches and nodes, internodes must not be more than twice the length of the previous year’s growth	Defect	Major
Tree an inconsistent colour	Defect	Minor
Width/height ratio between 1 and 1,33 or 0,3 and 0,5	Defect	Minor
Presence of multiple trunks	Defect	Major
The tilt of the leader exceeds 20° from vertical	Defect	Major
The leader does not meet the requirement for length	Defect	Minor
A tree lacks symmetry with fewer than four branches per whorl, where there are insufficient internodal branches to hide the defect	Defect	Major

For ‘Sapins de Noël du Morvan’ over 3 m but no more than 15 m:

Criteria	Defects/Damage	Major/Minor
Tree an inconsistent colour	Defect	Minor
Width/height ratio not between 0,4 and 0,9	Defect	Major
Presence of multiple trunks	Defect	Major
The whorls of branches and internodes are not evenly distributed over the whole height of the tree and not sufficient in number to ensure good density	Defect	Major
The general appearance of the tree is not symmetrical and the branches are not correctly distributed around the trunk	Defect	Major
Some branches are broken as a result of felling and transport	Damage	Minor

4.3. *Derogations on sourcing of feed (for products of animal origin designated by a protected designation of origin only) and restrictions on sourcing of raw materials (for processed products designated by a protected geographical indication only)*

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

Actions related to producing Christmas trees with the PGI label (planting, cultivating, marking, felling or pulling up) take place in the geographical area of the PGI.

4.5. *Specific rules concerning packaging, slicing, grating etc. of the agricultural product the registered name refers to*

Packaging must take place in the geographical area in order to prevent damage to the product during dispatching, thereby maintaining it in an undamaged state. Indeed, packaging makes it possible to arrange the branches along the trunk, thereby preventing them from becoming tangled and spoiling (breakages, needle loss) during transport.

4.6. *Specific rules concerning labelling of the agricultural product the registered name refers to*

'Sapins de Noël du Morvan' are identified by a label including:

— reference to the PGI 'Sapin de Noël du Morvan';

— contact details of the quality body Excellence Végétale;

— the name of the species placed on the market (common and Latin name);

— reference to the producer identity;

— tree height.

5. Concise definition of the geographical area

Municipalities in the following departments:

Côte-d'Or

Aisy-sous-Thil, Bard-le-Régulier, Blanot, Brazey-en-Morvan, Champeau-en-Morvan, Dompierre-en-Morvan, Juillenay, Lacour-d'Arcenay, Liernais, Ménessaire, Molphey, (La) Motte-Ternant, Montigny-Saint-Barthemy, Montlay-en-Auxois, Précy-sous-Thil, (La) Roche-en-Brenil, Rouvray, Saint-Andeux, Saint-Didier, Saint-Germain de Modéon, Saint-Martin-de-la-Mer, Saulieu, Savilly, Sincey-les-Rouvray, Thoisy-la-Berchère, Vianges, Vic-sous-Thil, Villargoix and Villiers-en-Morvan.

Nièvre

Alligny-en-Morvan, Arleuf, Avrée, Bazoches, Blismes, Brassy, Cervon, Chalaux, Château-Chinon (Campagne), Château-Chinon (Ville), Châtin, Chaumard, Chiddes, Corancy, Dommartin, Dun-les-Places, Dun-sur-Grandry, Empury, Fâchin, Fléty, Gâcogne, Gien-sur-Cure, Glux-en-Glenne, Gouloux, Larochemillay, Lavault-de-Frétoy, Lormes, Luzy, Marigny-l'Église, Mhère, Millay, Montigny-en-Morvan, Montreuillon, Montsauche-les-Settons, Moulins-Engilbert, Mouron-sur-Yonne, Moux-en-Morvan, Onlay, Ouroux-en-Morvan, Planchez, Poil, Pouques-Lormes, Préporché, Saint-Agnan, Saint-André-en-Morvan, Saint-Brisson, Saint-Hilaire-en-Morvan, Saint-Honoré-Les-Bains, Saint-Léger-de-Fougeret, Saint-Martin-du-Puy, Saint-Péreuse, Sémelay, Sermages, Vauclaix and Villapourçon.

Saône-et-Loire

Anost, Autun, Barnay, Brion, Broye, (La) Celle-en-Morvan, (La) Chapelle-Sous-Uchon, Charbonnat, Chissey en Morvan, (La) Comelle, Cussy en Morvan, Dettey, Étang-sur-Arroux, (La) Grande-Verrière, Laizy, Lucenay-l'Évêque, Mesvres, (La) Petite-Verrière, Roussillon-en-Morvan, Saint-Didier-sur-Arroux, Saint-Léger-sous-Beuvray, Saint-Nizier-sur-Arroux, Saint-Prix, Sommant, (La) Tagnière, Thil-sur-Arroux and Uchon.

Yonne

Avallon, Beauvilliers, Bussières, Chastellux-sur-Cure, Cussy-les-Forges, Domecy-sur-Cure, Island, Magny, Pontaubert, Quarré-les-Tombes, Saint-Brancher, Saint-Germain-des-Champs, Saint-Léger-Vauban and Sainte-Magnance.

6. Link with the geographical area

The link between 'Sapin de Noël du Morvan' and the geographical area is based on its specific quality linked to the area.

Natural factors

The demarcation of the geographical area of 'Sapin de Noël du Morvan' is based on criteria related to soil, climate and history. The area is the granitic massif of the Morvan, meaning the northerly end of the Massif Central. The elevation of the region gradually increases from north to south, culminating at Haut Folin, the highest point of the Morvan, at 901 metres. The average elevation is 600 metres.

The current soil formation is linked to the development of brown acid soils on granitic sand. These soils are poor in agricultural terms and have the following characteristics:

— loamy-clay-sandy texture;

— acidic, pH: 4 to 5;

— significant chemical deficiencies of phosphoric acid and cations;

— high exchange capacity at the surface of 20 mg/100 g, rapidly decreasing as depth increases, and falling to a few milliequivalents at the sandy level;

— water reserve greater than 1 mm of water per cm of soil.

The Morvan has 'a long and harsh winter, late spring and hot but short summer' (Sirugue (2008), *Le Morvan, inventaire cartographique des paysages et du patrimoine naturel* [The Morvan, mapping of landscapes and natural heritage]). There is significant variation between years. Rainfall is high, with moderate temperatures and frequent risks of frost.

Precipitation in the Morvan can double from one year to the next. The first elevated area able to block clouds proceeding from the Atlantic coast, the Morvan receives an average of 1 000 mm of precipitation per year, distributed over 200 days.

Precipitation increases with elevation: from an average of 800 mm/year between 300 and 400 metres elevation, it exceeds 1 600 mm/year over 900 metres elevation. Its seasonal distribution is also marked, with a drier season from March to October, and a wetter season from November to February.

The average temperatures are mild, owing to maritime influences. They range from − 2 °C to + 4 °C in winter, and from + 10 °C to + 25 °C in summer. However, these averages mask wide ranges, sometimes in excess of 20 °C in a single day. Frost is sometimes intense and very frequent, with an average 100 days of frost per year. It is not unusual to record temperatures slightly below freezing in August on the valley floors.

Human factors

The idea of the 'Christmas tree' historically comes from Protestant culture, especially in Germany and Scandinavia, where it was already widespread in the 16th century. In France, this tradition developed following the Second World War and German occupation, particularly in Paris. With its close trading links with the capital through river transport, the Morvan benefited from this new demand at a time when trees were being produced at an otherwise difficult time for agriculture. Spruce trees from the clearing of forests were sent to the Parisian market.

Demand swiftly increased, and trees from the clearing of forests were no longer sufficient. Cultivation of the Christmas tree, as we know it today, began at that time and rapidly developed. More and more owners of forest parcels took advantage of this opportunity, either to supplement other sources of income, or as their main activity. Farmers in the Morvan also diversified their activity and produced Christmas trees on their most difficult agricultural parcels, which were suitable for growing Christmas trees.

Over sometimes five generations of producers, cultivation techniques have gradually improved. A genuine know-how has gradually been amassed and passed down. Starting with planting, all stages in the production of the Christmas trees take place in the Morvan. Some nurseries have also specialised in the production of young plants, although, to date, it is still not possible for producers in the area to be fully autonomous. An entire sector has been established, and many enterprises are based around the production of Christmas trees, e.g. manufacturers of wooden stands, suppliers of inputs, machines, etc.

Specificity of the product

'Sapin de Noël du Morvan' is characterised by:

— a balanced and symmetrical stance with a single, straight trunk;

— regular and dense branches with a straight and proportionate leader;

— a colour consistent over the whole tree: deep green for the spruces and Nordmann firs, and bluish green for the noble firs;

— a good state of freshness and needle retention after felling.

Causal link

The geographical situation, with the soils and climate, of the Morvan hills provides the trees with ideal growing conditions. The producers have been growing Christmas trees for nearly a century on this granitic massif of Burgundy. Their know-how, combined with the geographical configuration, allows for the production of high-quality trees. The producers' know-how is reflected in the pruning operations throughout the life of the trees: removal of double leaders, thinning out at the base, increasing density by lateral pruning of trees, or even debudding. It is also the skilled eye of the producer that selects trees by individual marking.

Implementing environmentally friendly practices is also a consideration for producers as a result of their location within the Regional Natural Park of the Morvan. In order to preserve the ecosystem of the Morvan, and especially the soils, trees in soil blocks are prohibited. This is to prevent the removal and impoverishment of soil in the Morvan. Compost is used to produce potted trees. Furthermore, this geographical environment is conducive to producing very large trees. A related body of knowledge has developed on the management of the trees, leading to the establishment of parcels for producing very large trees. In the course of years, and felling operations, producers select the trees that will become very large.

The trees grow at a moderate rate due to the relatively poor soils. The trees produced are consistent, with closely spaced whorls. Density can be increased with the appropriate pruning techniques. The quality of 'Sapins de Noël du Morvan' is due especially to their hardiness.

Hardiness against frost is an acclimatisation mechanism caused by days becoming shorter and the drop in autumnal temperatures: below 5 °C. This intensifies when temperatures fall just below freezing. This phenomenon greatly benefits from the harsh climate conditions typical of the Morvan.

These conditions induce the trees to enter dormancy at a very early stage, before felling. This dormancy has an especially beneficial impact on needle retention and maintaining the colour over time. The late felling or pulling up of the trees also allows this state of freshness to be maintained.

Today, the Morvan is the largest producer region in France with 1 500 hectares of plantations. Some 1,2 million Christmas trees are produced every year by around 100 producers who have developed a remarkable know-how and unique synergy by pooling their resources.

Economically, this activity is essential for this disadvantaged rural area. The Sapin Expo tree show takes place every four years in Saulieu, in June. It is now an unmissable meeting for all professionals from the Christmas tree sector, from the Morvan and beyond.

The 'Sapin de Noël du Morvan' has become a powerful symbol of the region. Sapins de Noël du Morvan adorn the most prestigious sites in Paris, such as the Senate and Paris Opera. For many years, the French Association of Natural Christmas Trees (AFSNN) has presented a Nordmann fir to decorate the main courtyard of the Elysée Palace, as a proud ambassador for the Morvan.

Reference to the publication of the product specification of the geographical indication

https://extranet.inao.gouv.fr/fichier/CDCSapinNoelMorvan-250702.pdf