C/2026/3909

20.7.2026

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

(C/2026/3909)

Within three months from the date of 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.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

Designations of origin and geographical indications of agricultural products

'Cicoria puntarelle molfettese'

EU No: PGI-IT-03443 – 22.7.2025

1. **Name(s)**

'Cicoria puntarelle molfettese'

2. **Geographical indication type**

PDO ☐ PGI ☒

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

Italy

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*

0705 21 — Witloof chicory (*Cichorium intybus* var. *foliosum*)

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

The protected geographical indication 'Cicoria puntarelle molfettese' refers to the heads and shoots ('puntarelle') of the Cichorium intybus L chicory, of the 'Molfetta', 'Catalogna pugliese' and 'Catalogna puntarelle a foglia stretta' varieties produced in the demarcated area. They must have the following characteristics:

(a) appearance:

head: weight between 500 g and 1 500 g;

structure of the head: compact and rounded base with pointed tip;

structure of the shoots ('puntarelle'): somewhat elongated, tapering to a point, plentiful within the head;

abundance of fronds among the shoots;

[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).

(b) colour: the shoots are a whitish colour with green flecks of varying intensity;

(c) taste: a characteristically crisp vegetable, the shoots have a sweet taste with a slight bitter aftertaste, which gradually increases as the shoots grow;

(d) length of the shoots: ('puntarelle') between 7 cm and 15 cm.

The product is placed on the market fresh or ready for consumption (IV gamma) after undergoing minimal technological processing consisting of selection, sorting, cutting, washing, drying and packaging.

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)*

—

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

All stages of production of 'Cicoria puntarelle molfettese' up to harvest take place within the defined geographical area.

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

The product can be packaged trimmed as a fresh product, or in IV-gamma format:

(a) in the first case, the heads are cleaned and stripped of withered leaves. They can be placed on the market in flow packs, or on plastic or cardboard trays, or in other types of packaging permitted in the relevant legislation, between 500 g and 1 500 g in weight;

(b) in the second case, the shoots can simply be packaged on plastic or cardboard trays, or in other types of packaging permitted in the relevant legislation, between 250 g and 1 000 g in weight. The packaging must be free of all foreign bodies. The packaging process must be done in a way that ensures that the product is properly protected and has enough moisture.

There are no geographical restrictions related to the cleaning, stripping, trimming and packaging conditions.

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

The European PGI symbol and the designation logo appear on the packaging.

The protected geographical indication 'Cicoria puntarelle molfettese' must not be accompanied by any other description not expressly provided for in this product specification. It is permitted to use genuine names, business names and private and/or public trademarks, provided they have no laudatory purport.

A label must be affixed to the packaging with the information required by law in legible, indelible characters, visible from the outside.

Any additional information must not mislead the consumer as to the nature and characteristics of the product.

The logo design features a circle in dark green (Pantone 2424 C), with the words 'CICORIA PUNTARELLE MOLFETTESE' appearing in white in the upper part and 'IGP', also in white, in the lower part. In the centre of the circle is a design representing a stylised chicory plant with three tips and the shape of two towers at the base. Those two towers form the letter 'M' for Molfetta. The logo comprises two shades of green: Pantone 2424 C and Panton 2286 C.

A black and white version of the logo can also be used, with a dark framing and the internal design on a white background.



5. **Concise definition of the geographical area**

The production area of the 'Cicoria puntarelle molfettese' PGI comprises the administrative territory of the municipalities of Bisceglie, Bitonto, Giovinazzo, Molfetta, Terlizzi and Ruvo di Puglia.

6. **Link with the geographical area**

The causal link with the geographical origin is based on

☐ reputation

☐ a given quality

☒ other characteristics

Summary of the link

The application for recognition of 'Cicoria puntarelle molfettese' is based on both the reputation and the distinctive characteristics.

Indeed, 'Cicoria puntarelle molfettese' is recognisable by its appearance (see point 4.2 of the single document), with the whitish green of the head, its consistency and natural crispness, the sweetness of the shoots with the slightly bitter aftertaste, and the resemblance of the shoots to little pikes, hence the nickname 'spiky chicory', referring to the pike-like tips: 'le puntarelle'. (G. de Marco, Molfetta tra passato e presente, [Molfetta past and present] Molfetta – Mezzina, 1982, p. 12).

These characteristics have given rise to the product's reputation and the specificity that distinguishes it from other types of chicory of the Catalogna variety of the Cycorium species.

This distinctiveness was scientifically proven in 2012 by a principal components analysis (PCA) using nuclear magnetic resonance, in a project called 'Biodiversità delle specie Orticole della Puglia (BiodiverSO)' [Biodiversity of vegetable species of Puglia] (2013-2018).

In this case, the PCA showed that the environment is the main cause of variation between 'Cicoria puntarelle molfettese' and other local populations of chicory, such as Galatina. The classification of 'Cicoria puntarelle molfettese' with reference to its geographical origin was therefore substantiated. It was confirmed that this product had developed its own specificity through characteristic adaptation to the environmental conditions of the area of cultivation, with its soil, climate and agricultural factors.

Here is a description of the soil and climate characteristics of the area.

— Soil: the production area is dominated by limestone substrates, thin and well-drained stony soils with karstic features (cracks), which enable rain to percolate rapidly. The availability of surface waters is limited but there are deep underlying aquifers.

— Climate and micro-climate: the production area, especially the coastal strips, is subject to sea breezes and to greater variations in temperature at night. These factors influence the physiology of the plant in the accumulation of sugars, enzyme activity and secondary metabolites.

— Water availability: in the production area, the water available to the soil is regulated by the interaction between precipitations, soil texture and the presence of deep karstic aquifers. This combination limits stagnant water and ensures constant but not excessive water supplies. These conditions encourage the formation of crisp shoots and prevent excess nitrates.

— Temperature range and daylight hours: the greater temperature variation between night and day, and the periods of daylight typical in the latitudes of the production area, influence the metabolism of the tissues. This form of growth is conducive to firm stems and the accumulation of the phenolic compounds and terpenes that characterise the mildly bitter taste of the shoots.

Effect on the characteristics of 'Cicoria puntarelle molfettese':

— Resistance to cold: historically, 'Cicoria puntarelle molfettese' was selected for its tolerance of the occasional winter frosts typical of the Murge coastal strip. This hardiness is reflected in a product that maintains its consistency and crispness even after brief drops in temperature.

— Structure and size of the head: the limestone soils and limited water supply are conducive to compact pyramid-shaped heads, with a large number of long cylindrical internal shoots.

— Colour and chlorophyll content: the partial growth of the shoots when protected by leaves, together with the soil texture, result in shoots of a greenish-white colour.

— Flavour and bitter compounds: temperature variations and crop management modulate the biosynthesis of the bitter compounds (sesquiterpene lactones) and phenolics, producing a balance between the sweetness of the heart and the slightly bitter aftertaste.

Role of growing practices and the farming calendar:

— Planting density and foliage management: the distances between the rows and the plants established in local practice encourage vertical growth and limit the width of the leaf blade, increasing the proportion of internal shoots in the head.

— Sowing and harvest time: the size, crispness and aromatic profile are directly influenced by the timing of the sowing and of harvest at each phenological stage.

— Water management and use of fertilisers: controlled irrigation and limited use of fertilisers contribute to nitrate and polyphenol profiles that differ from other areas of cultivation.

Supporting scientific references:

There is experimental evidence of a causal link between the environment, growing practices and the chemical and sensory profile of 'Cicoria puntarelle molfettese', as set out in international scientific studies. The most relevant studies include:

— D'Acunzo, F., Giannino, D., Longo, V., Ciardi, M., Testone, G., Mele, G.,... & Ursini, O. (2017). 'Influence of cultivation sites on sterol, nitrate, total phenolic contents and antioxidant activity in endive and stem chicory edible products.' International Journal of Food Sciences and Nutrition, 68(1), 52–64.

— Testone, G., Mele, G., Di Giacomo, E., Gonnella, M., Renna, M., Tenore, G. C.,... & Giannino, D. (2016). 'Insights into the sesquiterpenoid pathway by metabolic profiling and de novo transcriptome assembly of stem-chicory (Cichorium intybus cultigroup "Catalogna").' Frontiers in Plant Science, 7, 1676.

The history of producing 'Cicoria puntarelle molfettese' has created strong links with consumers, who still today appreciate its special, distinctive quality.

'Cicoria puntarelle molfettese' has a long history. The written sources date back to the early twentieth century. All the agricultural and culinary literature of the municipalities in the production area, over 100 years' worth, as well as the direct testimonies of older farmers, bear witness to the historical uniqueness of this product. This humble leafy vegetable has attained a specific identity rooted in a set of popular phrases and sayings: 'spigata' [spiky], 'a punte' [pointy], 'puntarelle' [tips], 'campestri' [rustic], from 'Molfetta' and 'molfettese' [Molfettan]. These all clearly designate a 'chicory' typical of that defined and definable area: 'Cicoria puntarelle molfettese'.

Testimonies record and transcribe the 'cries of vendors, street traders and pedlars', a typical scene in rural parts, standing in the main squares of Molfetta, bringing to life echoes of how the product was touted [in the local dialect]: 'uè la cimececorei'à specate' ('come and get the spiky chicory'), G. De Marco, Molfetta tra passato e presente [Molfetta past and present], Molfetta – Mezzina, 1982, p. 12.

In the 1980s, through a process of uniting and the producer organisations, this awareness of the distinctive value of the product became a fundamental factor in the development of full-blown management of production and marketing.

Indeed, in the territory of Molfetta, a unique unifying body was of fundamental importance: the Cooperativa Ortofrutticola San Giacomo Soc. Coop. A R.L. [incorporated fruit and vegetable cooperative of San Giacomo]. Founded on 2 December 1981, it became operational on 5 May 1982 and remained active until the end of the 1990s.

The link between this horticultural product and its culinary uses in the tradition of Molfetta is also clear in testimonies gathered from archives and from private citizens, concerning an event in which it starred: Sagra della 'Cicoria puntarelle molfettese' [Solemnity of the Cicoria puntarelle molfettese]. This event, promoted by the aforementioned fruit and vegetable cooperative of San Giacomo, took place every year between 1985 and the end of the 1990s.

There are also many testimonies to the marketing of 'Cicoria puntarelle molfettese', as shown in the tax-related documentation dating from the 1990s.

The certifications and acknowledgements of 'Cicorie puntarelle molfettese' in the area have also generated interest in the scientific world.

This interest from centres of research has given rise to a series of further studies and explorations of the theme:

— M. Gonnella, M. Renna, D. Giannino, P. Santamaria (2012) developed a procedure for identifying local populations of the Catalogna variety (Cichorium intybus L.) and a processing method to make the product ready for consumption. Proceedings of the IX National Biodiversity Conference, Valanzano (Bari), 5-7 September 2012. Volume 2: 'Biodiversity, food and health', 186-192;

— M. Renna, M. Gonnella, D. Giannino, P. Santamaria (2014). 'Quality evaluation of cook-chilled chicory stems (Cichorium intybus L., Catalogna group) by conventional and sous vide cooking methods.' Journal of the Science of Food Agriculture, 94, 656–665;

— 'Biodiversità delle specie Orticole della Puglia (BiodiverSO)' [Biodiversity of vegetable species of Puglia] project (2013-2018), funded by the region of Puglia, under Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005, Rural Development Programme for Puglia 2007-2013, Measure 214, Action 4, Sub-action a) 'Integrated biodiversity projects', start-up period 2014-2015. The project identified the specific characteristics of the product termed 'Cicoria puntarelle molfettese'.

In all the aforementioned studies, 'Cicoria puntarelle molfettese' is cited and identified.

Today, 'Cicoria puntarelle molfettese' is not just a horticultural product. It has become a true cultural and gastronomic symbol of Puglia. From farmhouse tables to the menus of contemporary restaurants, from local festivals to promotional activities for agri-food and tourism, this chicory has a leading role in a rural renaissance that brings together food, history, economy and community. In the recent past, and in the latest initiatives, rural tourism has been boosted. More and more tourists are choosing an authentic experience, visiting the far-flung fields of 'Cicoria puntarelle molfettese' in the agricultural heartlands of Molfetta, for example with the 'Orti Aperti' [open fields] initiative organised by the Ponte Lama local action group. Together with the association AUSER, the municipality of Molfetta acted as promoter of the 'Colto e mangiato' [grown and eaten] project, including a focus on 'Cicoria puntarelle molfettese'. As a result, a conference was held on 18 April 2024. It received considerable public attention and was a success.

The associations Cuochi Baresi, APCI (Professional Association of Italian Cooks), Cooking Solution, Molfetta Food, Assolocali Bisceglie and many other small organisations have promoted gastronomic events dedicated entirely to 'Cicoria puntarelle molfettese'. These include 'Dalla terra alla tavola': this initiative 'from land to table' focused on 'Cicoria puntarelle molfettese' with the aim of promoting the unique characteristics and history. The promotional activities of the associations have created synergies between academia, associations, producers and restaurateurs, with the basic aim of consolidating the gastronomic value of 'Cicoria puntarelle molfettese', and its widespread promotion. An example is the initiative of the Istituto Professionale Alberghiero [institute of the hotel profession] which organises annual working groups on specific subjects concerning the knowledge and use of 'Cicoria puntarelle

molfettese' in making traditional and creative recipes. All the local associations and institutions involved have therefore become educational and cultural drivers in a process of protecting and boosting agricultural production and agri-food cultivation in which 'Cicoria puntarelle molfettese' is an indisputable symbol of a know-how that derives from the land and arrives on the table.

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

https://www.masaf.gov.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/3335