C/2025/5254

26.9.2025

Publication of the communication of an approved standard amendment to a product specification of a geographical indication in accordance with Article 5(4) of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2025/27 [1]

(C/2025/5254)

COMMUNICATION OF A STANDARD AMENDMENT TO THE SINGLE DOCUMENT

'Cassis de Bourgogne'

EU No: PGI-FR-02075-AM01 – 3.7.2025

1. **Name of product**

'Cassis de Bourgogne'

2. **Geographical indication type**

☐ Protected designation of origin (PDO)

☐ Protected geographical indication (PGI)

☒ Geographical indication (GI)

3. **Sector**

☐ Agricultural products

☐ Wines

☒ Spirit drinks

4. **Country to which the geographical area belongs**

France

5. **Member State authority communicating the standard amendment**

Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty, Directorate-General for the Economic and Environmental Performance of Enterprises, Office for Wines and Other Drinks

6. **Qualification as standard amendment**

The application for amendment to the 'Cassis de Bourgogne' GI does not involve any of the three situations constituting a Union amendment, specifically it does not:

(a) include a change in the name or any part of the name of the product, in the use of the name, or in the category of product or products designated by the geographical indication;

(b) risk voiding the link to the geographical area;

(c) entail further restrictions on the marketing of the product.

The French authorities therefore consider that the application is for a standard amendment.

[1] Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2025/27 of 30 October 2024 supplementing Regulation (EU) 2024/1143 of the European Parliament and of the Council with rules concerning the registration and the protection of geographical indications, traditional specialities guaranteed and optional quality terms and repealing Delegated Regulation (EU) No 664/2014 (OJ L, 2025/27, 15.1.2025, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_del/2025/27/oj).

7. **Description of the approved standard amendments**

1. ***Specific characteristics (compared to spirit drinks of the same category)***

Description

In Part I, section 2 of the product specification, paragraph 2.3 'Specific characteristics (compared to spirit drinks of the same category)' has been added in order to explain how the physical, chemical and/or organoleptic characteristics of 'Cassis de Bourgogne' affect the specific characteristics of the product by demonstrating how it differs from other spirit drinks of the same category.

A summary of the reasons for which the amendment is required

The paragraph was added to the product specification following the European Commission's request for additional information dated 10 February 2017, as part of the submission of the technical file in accordance with Article 20(1) of Regulation (EC) No 110/2008.

The additional information presented in this paragraph enables the content of the product specification to be aligned with the content of the single document registered with the application.

The amendment affects the single document.

2. ***Definition of the geographical area***

Description

In Part I, section 3 of the product specification, the words 'geographical area' are now followed by 'approved by the National Institute of Origin and Quality at the meeting of the relevant national committee on 6 February 2025. The perimeter of this area, on the date of approval of this specification by the relevant national committee, comprises the territory of the following municipalities, based on the 2024 Official Geographic Code:'.

The approval date of the amended geographical area has been added following the extension of the initial area to include nine neighbouring municipalities, thus enabling a berry grower and a liqueur producer to be incorporated.

Excluding the aforementioned additional municipalities, the list of municipalities comprising the geographical area has been updated in accordance with the 2024 Official Geographic Code.

It has also been clarified that maps of the geographical area can be found on the website of the National Institute of Origin and Quality.

A summary of the reasons for which the amendment is required

The date of approval of the area was added in order to indicate that a new perimeter has been officially validated.

The geographical area was extended in line with information bearing out the product's link with its geographical surroundings.

By incorporating these municipalities and the operators based there, the producer group is able to develop production.

The amendment affects the single document.

3. ***Identification of parcels***

Description

In Part I, section 3 of the product specification, the words 'As of the 2015 harvest' have been deleted.

A summary of the reasons for which the amendment is required

As of the 2015 harvest, it has been a requirement for all blackcurrants to be produced on identified parcels. The deleted information therefore represents a rule which is no longer relevant.

The amendment does not affect the single document.

4. ***Planting density***

Description

In Part I, paragraph 4.2 of the product specification, a paragraph has been added authorising planting densities and spacing between rows which are above or below the authorised values, up to a limit of 10 % of the identified areas of the holding, covered by an evaluation protocol approved by the relevant national committee.

A summary of the reasons for which the amendment is required

The aim of the evaluation is to enable operators to find an alternative form of weed control due to the prospect of a glyphosate ban, either through mechanical means for lower densities, or through competition with blackcurrant plants for higher densities.

The amendment affects the single document.

5. ***Fruit load***

Description

In Part I, paragraph 4.8 of the product specification, the maximum proportion of the additional varieties 'Blackdown', 'Andega' and 'Andorine' has been changed from 30 % of the quantity of the main varieties used, to 200 g of blackcurrant berries per litre of crème de cassis obtained.

A summary of the reasons for which the amendment is required

By increasing the proportion of additional varieties, the aim is that major liqueur producers will be able to produce 'Cassis de Bourgogne' according to their own formula with a particularly high fruit load.

The amendment affects the single document.

6. ***Causal link between the geographical area and the quality or characteristics of the product***

Description

In Part I, paragraph 5.4 of the product specification, the proportion of the two main varieties grown in Burgundy has been updated compared to the first version of the product specification. In the first version, the proportion was indicated by a percentage, which has now been replaced by the word 'most'.

A summary of the reasons for which the amendment is required

This amendment reflects how the farmed areas have changed since the first version of the product specification was approved.

The amendment affects the single document.

7. ***Applicant group***

Description

The contact details of the applicant group have been updated.

A summary of the reasons for which the amendment is required

To bring the contact details up to date.

The amendment does not affect the single document.

8. ***References to the inspection bodies***

Description

In Part III of the product specification, the contact details of the responsible private inspection body have been deleted. Moreover, the previous wording has been replaced by a new paragraph explaining the general inspection process.

The contact details of the National Institute of Origin and Quality have been updated.

A summary of the reasons for which the amendment is required

New drafting rules were introduced for this part of the product specification.

The amendment does not affect the single document.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

1. **Name(s)**

'Cassis de Bourgogne'

2. **Applicant country**

France

3. **Geographical indication type**

Geographical indication (GI)

4. **Category or categories of the spirit drink**

34. Crème de (supplemented by the name of a fruit or other raw material used)

4.1. *Combined Nomenclature code*

22 – BEVERAGES, SPIRITS AND VINEGAR

2208 – Undenatured ethyl alcohol of an alcoholic strength by volume of less than 80 % vol; spirits, liqueurs and other spirituous beverages

5. **Description of the spirit drink**

Organoleptic characteristics

'Cassis de Bourgogne' has an opaque dark red colour, a sign of its high fruit content, with a purple upper surface in the bottle With its dense tears, it shows a sustained viscosity against the walls of the bottle, i.e. it 'sticks to the glass'. Its gloss is a sign of the freshness of the cream.

Its distinguished fruity aroma is characteristic of the blackcurrant berries of the main varieties used, the 'Noir de Bourgogne' and the 'Royal de Naples'. It reveals the purity of the fruit picked at full ripeness, as well as its elegance and finesse: an intense aroma is released before tasting.

In the mouth, 'Cassis de Bourgogne' is characterised by a strong attack and a full, velvety texture. It brings out the best from the sweet taste of the 'Noir de Bourgogne' and 'Royal de Naples' berries and their concentration.

The perfectly controlled traditional maceration method and the correct sugar dosage underpin the aromas, which express all the authenticity of the blackcurrant. This results in an overall harmonious balance in which the controlled liveliness of the fruit gives rise to an exceptional aftertaste.

Main physical and chemical characteristics

When placed on the market for sale to the consumer, 'Cassis de Bourgogne' has:

— an invert sugar content of not less than 450 g/l;

— an alcoholic strength by volume of between 15 % and 25 %.

Specific characteristics (compared to spirit drinks of the same category)

'Cassis de Bourgogne' is produced from fruit that has undergone a lengthy maceration at low temperature (at least three weeks), which preserves the freshness of the aromas. The use of neither flavouring substances nor flavouring preparations, but of berries with a high minimum fruit load, allows a concentration of the aromas present in the fruit. The optimum ripeness of the fruit harvested in the area guarantees more developed blackcurrant aromas. The use of white sugar, not sugar syrup, helps give the product its aromatic power and velvety texture. The specific viscosity of the product is linked to the required sugar content exceeding the minimum standard for the category, which balances the high acidity of the 'Noir de Bourgogne' variety. No other ingredients than blackcurrants, ethyl alcohol and granulated sugar may be used, which brings out the specific aromas of the two blackcurrant varieties 'Noir de Bourgogne' and 'Royal de Naples'. These two varieties, which account for most of the farmed areas in Burgundy where the product comes from, bring their specific characteristics to this spirit drink: the 'Noir de Bourgogne' variety has its fine and powerful aromas, while the 'Royal de Naples' brings the intensity of colour. These different characteristics of the fruit give the crème de cassis its aftertaste.

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

The production of blackcurrant berries, their maceration, the extraction of the infusion and the production of the cream are carried out within the geographical area approved by the National Institute of Origin and Quality at the meeting of the relevant national committee on 6 February 2025. The perimeter of this area, on the date of approval of this specification by the relevant national committee, comprises the territory of the following municipalities, based on the 2024 Official Geographic Code:

Department of Côte-d'Or:

Agencourt, Agey, Ahuy, Aloxe-Corton, Ancey, Antheuil, Arcenant, Arcey, Argilly, Asnières-lès-Dijon, Aubaine, Aubigny-en-Plaine, Auvillars-sur-Saône, Auxey-Duresses, Avelanges, Avot, Bagnot, Barbirey-sur-Ouche, Barges, Barjon, Baubigny, Baulme-la-Roche, Beaune, Bellefond, Bessey-en-Chaume, Bévy, Bligny-lès-Beaune, Bligny-sur-Ouche, Boncourt-le-Bois, Bonnencontre, Bouilland, Bousselange, Boussenois, Bouze-lès-Beaune, Brochon, Broin, Broindon, Busserotte-et-Montenaille, Bussières, La Bussière-sur-Ouche, Chaignay, Chamblanc, Chamboeuf, Chambolle-Musigny, Charrey-sur-Saône, Chassagne-Montrachet, Chaume-et-Courchamp, Chaux, Chazeuil, Chenôve, Chevannes, Chevigny-en-Valière, Chivres, Chorey-les-Beaune, Collonges-lès-Bévy, Colombier, Combertault, Comblanchien, Corberon, Corcelles-les-Arts, Corcelles-lès-Cîteaux, Corcelles-les-Monts, Corgengoux, Corgoloin, Cormot-Vauchignon, Corpeau, Couchey, Courlon, Crécey-sur-Tille, Crugey, Curley, Curtil-Vergy, Cussey-les-Forges, Daix, Détain-et-Bruant, Diénay, Dijon, Ébaty, Échevannes, Échevronne, Épagny, Épernay-sous-Gevrey, Esbarres, L'Étang-Vergy, Fénay, Fixin, Flagey-Echézeaux, Flavignerot, Fleurey-sur-Ouche, Foncegrive, Fontaine-lès-Dijon, Fraignot-et-Vesvrotte, Franxault, Fussey, Gemeaux, Gergueil, Gerland, Gevrey-Chambertin, Gilly-lès-Cîteaux, Gissey-sur-Ouche, Glanon, Grancey-le-Château-Neuvelle, Grenant-lès-Sombernon, Grosbois-lès-Tichey, Hauteville-lès-Dijon, Is-sur-Tille, Jallanges, Labergement-lès-Seurre, Labruyère, Lantenay, Lanthes, Lechâtelet, Levernois, Losne, Lux, Magny-lès-Aubigny, Magny-lès-Villers, Mâlain, Marcilly-sur-Tille, Marey-lès-Fussey, Marey-sur-Tille, Marigny-lès-Reullée, Marsannay-la-Côte, Marsannay-le-Bois, Mavilly-Mandelot, Le Meix, Meloisey, Merceuil, Mesmont, Messanges, Messigny-et-Vantoux, Meuilley, Meursanges, Meursault, Montagny-lès-Beaune, Montagny-lès-Seurre, Monthelie, Montmain, Morey-Saint-Denis, Nantoux, Noiron-sous-Gevrey, Norges-la-Ville, Nuits-Saint-Georges, Orville, Pagny-la-Ville, Pagny-le-Château, Pernand-Vergelesses, Perrigny-lès-Dijon, Pichanges, Plombières-lès-Dijon,

Poiseul-lès-Saulx, Pommard, Pouilly-sur-Saône, Prâlon, Premeaux-Prissey, Puligny-Montrachet, Quincey, Remilly-en-Montagne, Reulle-Vergy, La Rochepot, Ruffey-lès-Beaune, Ruffey-lès-Echirey, Sacquenay, Saint-Aubin, Saint-Bernard, Saint-Jean-de-Boeuf, Sainte-Marie-la-Blanche, Sainte-Marie-sur-Ouche, Saint-Maurice-sur-Vingeanne, Saint-Nicolas-lès-Cîteaux, Saint-Philibert, Saint-Romain, Saint-Symphorien-sur-Saône, Saint-Victor-sur-Ouche, Salives, Santenay, Saulon-la-Chapelle, Saulon-la-Rue, Saulx-le-Duc, Savigny-lès-Beaune, Savigny-le-Sec, Savigny-sous-Mâlain, Savouges, Segrois, Selongey, Semezanges, Ladoix-Serrigny, Seurre, Spoy, Tailly, Talant, Ternant, Thorey-sur-Ouche, Tichey, Til-Châtel, Trugny, Urcy, Valforêt, Velars-sur-Ouche, Vernois-lès-Vesvres, Véronnes, Veuvey-sur-Ouche, Vignoles, Villars-Fontaine, Villebichot, Villers-la-Faye, Villey-sur-Tille, Villy-le-Moutier, Volnay, Vosne-Romanée, Vougeot.

Department of Saône-et-Loire:

L'Abergement-Sainte-Colombe, Allerey-sur-Saône, Allériot, Aluze, Ameugny, Azé, Beaumont-sur-Grosne, Berzé-la-Ville, Berzé-le-Châtel, Bey, Bissey-sous-Cruchaud, Bissy-la-Mâconnaise, Bissy-sous-Uxelles, Bissy-sur-Fley, Blanot, Bonnay-Saint-Ythaire, Les Bordes, Bouzeron, Boyer, Bragny-sur-Saône, Bray, Bresse-sur-Grosne, Burgy, Burnand, Bussières, Buxy, Cersot, Chagny, Chaintré, Chalon-sur-Saône, Chamilly, Champagny-sous-Uxelles, Champforgeuil, Chânes, Change, Chapaize, La Chapelle-de-Bragny, La Chapelle-de-Guinchay, La Chapelle-sous-Brancion, Charbonnières, Chardonnay, Charette-Varennes, La Charmée, Charnay-lès-Chalon, Charnay-lès-Mâcon, Chasselas, Chassey-le-Camp, Châtenoy-en-Bresse, Châtenoy-le-Royal, Chaudenay, Cheilly-lès-Maranges, Chenôves, Chevagny-les-Chevrières, Chissey-lès-Mâcon, Ciel, Clessé, Cluny, Clux-Villeneuve, Cormatin, Cortambert, Cortevaix, Crêches-sur-Saône, Créot, Crissey, Cruzille, Culles-les-Roches, Curtil-sous-Burnand, Damerey, Dampierre-en-Bresse, Davayé, Demigny, Dennevy, Dezize-lès-Maranges, Diconne, Donzy-le-Pertuis, Dracy-le-Fort, Écuelles, Épervans, Étrigny, Farges-lès-Chalon, Farges-lès-Mâcon, Flagy, Fleurville, Fley, Fontaines, Fragnes-La Loyère, Frontenard, Fuissé, Gergy, Gigny-sur-Saône, Givry, Granges, Grevilly, Guerfand, Hurigny, Igé, Jambles, Jugy, Jully-lès-Buxy, Laives, Laizé, Lalheue, Lans, Lessard-le-National, Leynes, Longepierre, Lournand, Lugny, Lux, Mâcon, Malay, Mancey, Marnay, Martailly-lès-Brancion, Massilly, Mellecey, Mercurey, Mervans, Messey-sur-Grosne, Milly-Lamartine, Mont-lès-Seurre, Montagny-lès-Buxy, Montbellet, Montceaux-Ragny, Montcoy, Moroges, Nanton, Navilly, Oslon, Ouroux-sur-Saône, Ozenay, Palleau, Paris-l'Hôpital, Péronne, Plottes, Pontoux, Prissé, Pruzilly, La Racineuse, Remigny, La Roche-Vineuse, Romanèche-Thorins, Rosey, Royer, Rully, Saint-Albain, Saint-Ambreuil, Saint-Amour-Bellevue, Saint-Boil, Saint-Bonnet-en-Bresse, Saint-Christophe-en-Bresse, Saint-Clément-sur-Guye, Saint-Cyr, Saint-Denis-de-Vaux, Saint-Désert, Saint-Didier-en-Bresse, Saint-Gengoux-de-Scissé, Saint-Gengoux-le-National, Saint-Germain-lès-Buxy, Saint-Gervais-en-Vallière, Saint-Gilles, Saint-Jean-de-Vaux, Saint-Loup-de-Varennes, Saint-Loup-Géanges, Saint-Marcel, Saint-Martin-Belle-Roche, Saint-Martin-du-Tartre, Saint-Martin-en-Bresse, Saint-Martin-en-Gâtinois, Saint-Martin-sous-Montaigu, Saint-Maurice-de-Satonnay, Saint-Maurice-des-Champs, Saint-Maurice-en-Rivière, Saint-Rémy, Saint-Sernin-du-Plain, Saint-Symphorien-d'Ancelles, Saint-Vallerin, Saint-Vérand, La Salle, Sampigny-lès-Maranges, Sancé, Santilly, Sassangy, Sassenay, Saules, Saunières, Savigny-sur-Grosne, Sennecey-le-Grand, Senozan, Sercy, Serley, Sermesse, Serrigny-en-Bresse, Sevrey, Sologny, Solutré-Pouilly, Taizé, Tournus, Toutenant, Uchizy, Varennes-le-Grand, Varennes-lès-Mâcon, Vaux-en-Pré, Verdun-sur-le-Doubs, Vergisson, Verjux, Vers, Verzé, Le Villars, Villegaudin, Vinzelles, Viré, Virey-le-Grand.

Maps of the geographical area can be found on the website of the National Institute of Origin and Quality.

Blackcurrant berries are grown in orchards which have been the subject of an identification procedure based on parcel identification criteria linked to their location.

7. **Method of production of the spirit drink**

Varieties

The only authorised varieties are:

— main varieties: 'Noir de Bourgogne' and 'Royal de Naples';

— additional varieties: 'Blackdown', 'Andega' and 'Andorine'.

It is authorised to mix the two main varieties in the same row.

Any other mixture of varieties in the same row is prohibited.

Planting density

The planting density must be between 5 500 and 7 000 plants per hectare.

The spacing between rows ranges from 2,85 to 3,70 m.

Parcels which do not comply with the above planting density or spacing rules are nevertheless permitted upon evaluation, up to a limit of 10 % of the identified areas of the holding, subject to the signing of an agreement by the National Institute of Origin and Quality, the protection and management body and the authorised operator in line with the agreement approved by the relevant national committee on 6 February 2025.

Soil maintenance

The producer must maintain the areas between the rows by one of the following means:

— permanent grass cover, sown or spontaneous;

— tillage, except where there is a risk of erosion.

Fertilisation

A chemical soil analysis is required before each new planting.

Nitrogen fertilisation must not exceed 80 units per hectare per year. If it exceeds 50 units, it must be applied at intervals.

Yield

The average yield per plant at each holding must be strictly lower than:

— 1 000 g per plant, with a limit of 6 tonnes/ha for the main varieties;

— 1 700 g per plant, with a limit of 10 tonnes/ha for the additional varieties;

Harvesting

Apart from the two main varieties, which may be harvested together, each of the varieties must be harvested separately.

During harvesting, the refractive index of blackcurrant berries must exceed:

— 15° Brix for the 'Noir de Bourgogne', 'Royal de Naples', 'Andega' and 'Andorine' varieties;

— 17° Brix for the 'Blackdown' variety.

Processing of the fruit

The blackcurrant berries are:

— either macerated as described below;

— or frozen for later maceration.

Fruit maceration

The soluble components of the fruit are extracted by means of maceration at low temperature of the blackcurrant berries in the appropriate quantity of premium ethyl alcohol of agricultural origin, possibly with the addition of water.

In accordance with the proportions laid down in these specifications, the authorised varieties are mixed:

— either directly in the maceration vat;

— or by separately macerating the main varieties, on the one hand, and the additional varieties, on the other.

One or two macerations are possible with the same fruit load. In the case of two macerations, at the end of the first maceration and after extraction, alcohol and water are added to the vat and then the second maceration is carried out.

Each maceration lasts at least three weeks.

The infusion is obtained:

— either with free-run juice;

— by mixing the free-run juice with the press juice from the same maceration;

— or by pressing the maceration directly.

The alcoholic strength by volume of the infusion obtained must be no less than 25 %.

Production of crème de cassis

'Cassis de Bourgogne' is produced from the first infusion or a mixture of first and second infusions, in which granulated sugar is dissolved at room temperature.

The alcoholic strength by volume may be adjusted whenever necessary by adding premium ethyl alcohol of agricultural origin or water.

No other ingredients may be added, in particular blackcurrant, redcurrant or raspberry buds.

Fruit load

The minimum fruit load for the main varieties is 250 g of blackcurrant berries per litre of crème de cassis obtained.

Above this minimum, the fruit load may be increased by fruit:

— of the main varieties:

— of the additional varieties, up to a maximum of 200 g of blackcurrant berries per litre of crème de cassis obtained.

The fruit load is determined in two stages:

— calculation of the average fruit load of the infusions;

— then calculation of the fruit load by batch of crème de cassis produced, taking into account the volume of each infusion used.

Where only one maceration is carried out, the fruit load is determined in relation to the volume of the infusion extracted.

When two macerations are carried out, three quarters of the fruit load is regarded as having been absorbed by the first maceration, with the remaining quarter having been absorbed by the second maceration.

8. **Specific rules concerning packaging**

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9. **Specific labelling rules**

Additional indications

The geographical indication 'Cassis de Bourgogne' may not be supplemented by any additional indications.

10. **Description of the link between the spirit drink and its geographical origin, including, where appropriate, the specific elements of the product description or production method justifying the link**

The physical factors of the link

The geographical area of production of 'Cassis de Bourgogne' is situated in the eastern parts of the departments of Côte d'Or and Saône-et-Loire. It corresponds to the following main natural regions:

— the Burgundy limestone plateaux at the east of the Burgundy sill, the Hautes-Côtes and the Côte viticole, extending to the south via the Côte Chalonnaise, the Clunisois and finally the Mâconnais. Altitudes range between 400 and 600 m, while the plateaux are traversed by numerous valleys, giving them a rugged terrain;

— to the east are the farmed marly substrate plains of the Saône and its tributary the Dheune. Altitudes range between 200 and 250 m, with a gentle terrain where the higher land is covered with forests such as the Cîteaux Forest.

In the plateau regions, the substrates are largely formed from hard or argillaceous limestone from the (secondary) Jurassic era. The soils are generally stony, calcareous and well-drained.

The soils of the Saône plain are predominantly clay-loam, usually leached on the surface. On the slopes of the valleys, the marly substrate of the Tertiary era is closer to the surface. Here soils may be slightly calcareous deeper down and well-drained.

The blackcurrant orchards are planted on soils composed of limestone or marly substrate soils which are moderately deep and well-drained, with the exception of soils on the alluvial plain and the skeletal soils on hard limestone. Frost is avoided.

The whole of Burgundy is subject to an oceanic climate, characterised by moderate and regular rainfall, and no summer drought. Temperatures are typical of a cool climate (annual average: 11 °C). The oceanic atmosphere is, however, mitigated in the south of the region as a result of the Morvan-Charolais terrain which creates a Foehn effect producing decreased humidity and a higher temperature at lower levels. The oceanic climate also displays some continental features channelled through the Saône valley and the Besançon corridor. Owing to the effect of north-easterly winds, winter temperatures are relatively low, with periods of frost that can be long and intense, but also sometimes very sunny late seasons. Summers are hot and relatively dry.

The human factors of the link

Before the 19th century, blackcurrants were mainly grown and consumed in Burgundy by families, although the plant was renowned for its medicinal properties.

It was in 1841 that Lagoutte and Joly launched the first production of 4 hectolitres of blackcurrant liqueur in Dijon. It was an immediate success and three years later, in 1844, production rose to 250 hectolitres and then grew even further. Many liqueur producers started up operations in the region, and blackcurrant cultivation grew in order to meet demand. In 1875, 2 300 000 plants were recorded in Côte d'Or.

In the early days, blackcurrants were cultivated by wine growers alongside their vines. Originally, blackcurrant growing benefited from the know-how and equipment of winegrowers: annual pruning, tillage, etc. Moreover, harvesting took place during the traditional off-season for vines. The production of crème de cassis then became more stable and widespread, and owners devoted entire plots of land to blackcurrants. Initially located in the wine-growing municipalities of Côte and Hautes Côtes, blackcurrant growing then spread to Chalonnais and the Dijon plain, and eventually to the Saône valley.

Paradoxically, the outbreak of phylloxera at the end of the 19th century reinforced the presence of blackcurrants in Burgundy through a redistribution of planting. Blackcurrants would temporarily occupy the most prestigious wine-growing slopes of Burgundy. Hence the appearance of crème de cassis from such locations as Vougeot, Chambertin, Aloxe-Corton and Chambolle Musigny.

In the 20th century, regional blackcurrant producers started to organise themselves:

— from 1900, village producer associations were set up, mainly in the Hautes Côtes. In 1912, the Union of Associations of Blackcurrant Producers came into being, bringing together some 50 local associations;

— the first contracts for the purchase of blackcurrant berries between growers and liqueur producers appeared in 1904, with terms ranging from six to twelve years. This practice of concluding multi-annual contracts continues to this day;

— liqueur producers and growers have since grouped together into cross-industry trade associations: the Comité Interprofessionnel du Cassis de Dijon in 1955, followed by the Syndicat Interprofessionnel de Défense du Cassis en Bourgogne in 1997.

In Dijon, J. Vercier, senior professor of horticulture, contributed over many decades to the development and organisation of blackcurrant growing in Burgundy. Between 1903 and 1930, he edited five successive editions of a reference work on the cultivation of blackcurrants. He contributed to the definition of a regional blackcurrant strain which, from the 1920s onwards, was named 'Noir de Bourgogne'. In the 1960s, the Dijon centre of the National Institute of Agricultural Research (INRA) carried out research on the blackcurrant and, in particular, created a certified clone for this local variety.

'Crème de cassis de Bourgogne' is now produced by specialist liqueur producers for whom it is their flagship product. However, it is also produced by small-scale berry growers.

The dominant variety is the 'Noir de Bourgogne', which has certain phenological characteristics revealing how it has adapted to the conditions in Burgundy. Late budding and flowering reduce the risks posed by spring frost and improve pollination conditions (presence of insects). Its short growing season allows for early harvesting outside of dry summer periods. However, this variety is sensitive to powdery mildew, produces a low yield and self-pollinates poorly, which makes it liable to not bearing fruit. It is therefore necessary to plant it together with a pollinator variety with the same date of flowering. The most commonly used variety is 'Royal de Naples', which is also traditional in Burgundy. Both varieties produce berries with an exceptionally powerful aroma, while the 'Royal de Naples' also has strong colour intensity.

Specificity of the product

Blackcurrants and 'crème de cassis de Bourgogne' have been hallmarks of Burgundy since the second half of the 19th century. The region produces more than 80 % of the 'crèmes de cassis' sold in France and throughout the world. Each year, 12 million litres leave the storehouses of liqueur producers in Burgundy. This liqueur is closely associated with a clergyman by the name of Kir, who was the Mayor and Member of Parliament for Dijon in the 1950s and who gave his name to the famous cocktail. The Cassissium world blackcurrant museum has been established in Nuits-St-Georges since 2001 and receives 30 000 visitors every year.

The first reference to 'Cassis de Bourgogne' dates back to 1856 and the Lagoutte brothers, who were liqueur producers in Dijon. With its growing reputation, the name was commonly used by liqueur producers in Burgundy and even in Lyon at the beginning of the 20th century.

The wine traders of Burgundy would often present 'Cassis de Bourgogne' alongside their range of fine wines.

'Cassis de Bourgogne' is characterised by an exceptionally powerful aroma that combines finesse, a velvety texture and an aftertaste. Its concentration of fruit is also clear from its very dense dark red colour and its high viscosity, owing to which it 'sticks to the glass'.

Causal link between the geographical area and the quality or characteristics of the product

Starting in the mid-19th century following the development of liqueur production in Burgundy, blackcurrant growing has since become firmly established in the east of Burgundy, in the limestone plateaux and the plains of the Saône. The blackcurrant is a northern plant which likes dry cold and cool climates. It is ideally situated in the heart of the Burgundy region.

The two main varieties, which account for most of the areas cultivated in Burgundy while being very much in the minority in other regions, are the 'Noir de Bourgogne' and its pollinator the 'Royal de Naples'. These two native varieties are suited to the land and climate of Burgundy.

Cultivating the 'Noir de Bourgogne', a variety which is fragile and delicate, calls for special care and know-how in view of its agronomic limitations. However, its limitations and low yield are largely compensated for by its unmatched aromatic qualities. The 'Royal de Naples' is also a very aromatic variety.

With more than 150 years' experience in this field, the know-how of Burgundy's liqueur producers specialised in processing blackcurrants (production of liqueur by maceration, use of local varieties, high fruit load, exclusive use of blackcurrant berries) make 'Cassis de Bourgogne' a typical product. The 'Noir de Bourgogne' blackcurrant variety, with its fine, powerful flavour, gives 'Cassis de Bourgogne' an exceptional aromatic richness. The 'Royal de Naples' variety, for its part, provides the intensity of the colour. Finally, the early ripening of the main varieties makes for well-ripened berries and gives the liqueur its velvety texture.

Since the raw material is found adjacent to the liqueur producers' storehouses, there has traditionally and constantly been an exchange of information between producers and processors of the fruit, as the cross-industry association demonstrates. It is therefore possible to speak of an osmosis between the raw material, the fruit, the production and the processing, and between the blackcurrant growers and local liqueur producers, resulting in an emblematic product of Burgundy.

Link to the product specification

https://info.agriculture.gouv.fr/boagri/document_administratif-39e49079-18b1-464b-8c3d-71733800209f