C/2024/7445

16.12.2024

Publication of a communication of approval of a standard amendment to a product specification for a name in the wine sector, as referred to in Article 17(2) and (3) of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/33

(C/2024/7445)

This communication is published in accordance with Article 17(5) of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/33 ([1]).

COMMUNICATING THE APPROVAL OF A STANDARD AMENDMENT

'Champagne'

PDO-FR-A1359-AM05

Date of communication: 1.10.2024

DESCRIPTION OF AND REASONS FOR THE APPROVED AMENDMENT

1. Vine varieties

In point (2)(b) of Section V of Chapter I of the product specification, the following paragraph is added:

'To encourage lower use of plant protection products in areas adjacent to inhabited/urban locations, areas planted with the Voltis B variety which are less than 20 m away from the places referred to in Article L253-7-1, Section I of Article L253-7 and Section III of Article L253-8 of the Rural and Maritime Fishing Code, are not taken into account when calculating areas cultivated with varieties "of interest for adaptation purposes" subject to the 5 % limit applicable to the area of the holding declared as corresponding to the controlled designation of origin.'

The competent national committee of the National Institute of Origin and Quality (INAO) has decided to authorise the option, for designations that submit an application, of introducing varieties of interest to adapt to climate change or to societal expectations regarding the use of crop protection products.

The inclusion of such varieties in a specification is accompanied by certain rules, in particular a maximum share of their cultivation. Plantings of varieties resistant to the main vine diseases in areas adjacent to inhabited/urban locations are not taken into account when calculating that share.

The single document is not affected by this amendment.

2. Setting aside part of the harvest

In point (3) of Section VIII of Chapter I of the product specification, the first paragraph is amended as follows: the number '8 000' is replaced by '10 000'.

The maximum volume of base wine which the operator may set aside has been increased to 10 000 kilograms of grapes per hectare of production area.

By increasing the volume, the consequences of fluctuations in yield between years and regions can be softened. On account of climate change but also the downward trend in agronomic yield as vineyards age and methods change (green cover, input restrictions, etc.), such fluctuations are occurring with growing frequency.

The single document is not affected by this amendment.

([1]) OJ L 9, 11.1.2019, p. 2.

3. **Provisions on packaging**

Point (3)(a) of Section IX of Chapter I of the product specification is amended as follows:

— The words 'which may be transferred from one vessel to another' have been added to the first paragraph to make it absolutely clear that wines in bottles with a volume of less than 75 cl or greater than 150 cl may also be sold in the bottles within which the secondary fermentation took place.

Point 9 of the single document has been amended.

— The second paragraph is amended by the addition of the words 'in the demarcated area' to achieve consistency with the wording used for the steps which must be carried out in the demarcated geographical area.

The single document is not affected by this amendment.

— A third paragraph containing the following rules is added in order to set out the rules on transferring wine:

'Any facility for transferring wine must meet the following requirements:

— The facility must be equipped with an isobaric system enabling wine to be transferred by counter pressure. The operator must have a food-grade certificate for the counter-pressure gas(es).

— The facility must put in place the necessary mechanisms for ensuring the traceability of transfer operations.

— The facility must be equipped with a cooling system (or systems) so that wines are poured into their final container at a temperature not exceeding 5 °C.'

The single document is not affected by this amendment.

4. **Monitoring and inspection of wine transfer operations**

In Section I of Chapter II of the product specification, the following requirement to submit a declaration is added:

'(6) Wine transfer declaration:

Holders of consignments of transferred wine must submit a wine transfer declaration to the protection and management body no later than 48 hours after the transfer is complete.

The declaration must indicate the volume before and after transfer, the vessel type and any specific claims in relation to the products transferred.'

This requirement to submit a declaration enables wine transfer operations to be monitored and inspected.

The single document is not affected by this amendment.

In Section II of Chapter II of the product specification, the following requirement is added:

'(3) Wine transfer register:

Operators who carry out wine transfer operations must keep a register. It must be completed when operations are carried out.

For each operation the register must detail the following:

— starting date and time of the transfer operation;

— temperature control throughout the process;

— isobaric bottling control;

— the volume before and after transfer;

— the vessel type;

— specific claims in relation to the products transferred.'

The purpose of this mandatory register is to enable wine transfer operations to be monitored and inspected.

The single document is not affected by this amendment.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

1. **Name(s)**

Champagne

2. **Type of geographical indication**

PDO – Protected Designation of Origin

3. **Categories of grapevine products**

5. Quality sparkling wine

3.1. *Combined Nomenclature Code*

— 22 - BEVERAGES, SPIRITS AND VINEGAR

2204 – Wine of fresh grapes, including fortified wines; grape must other than that of heading 2009

4. **Description of the wine(s)**

BRIEF WRITTEN DESCRIPTION

These wines are white and rosé quality sparkling wines. Their natural alcoholic strength by volume is at least 9 %. After enrichment and secondary fermentation, total alcoholic strength by volume may not exceed 13 %. The other analytical criteria comply with the values established in European legislation.

These wines may be either white (made from a blend of white and black grapes, made only from white grapes [*blanc de blancs*], or made only from black grapes [*blanc de noirs*]) or rosé (made by blending in some red wine or through skin contact during fermentation). They are made using grapes grown in one or more municipalities and may be vintage or non-vintage wines. All of the wines have one thing in common: acidity, guaranteeing freshness and suitability for ageing. In the youngest wines, the notes are decidedly fresh: white fruit and flowers, citrus fruit and mineral notes. Mature wines offer a more rounded palette, with aromas of yellow fruit, cooked fruit and spices, while deep tertiary aromas of candied fruit, forest undergrowth and roasting come to the fore in the most developed wines (known as *de plénitude*). The bubbles – the hallmark of 'Champagne' – are sustained and persistent in young wines, becoming more delicate and more creamy with age.

General analytical characteristics

— Maximum total alcoholic strength (in % volume) —

— Minimum actual alcoholic strength (in % volume) —

— Minimum total acidity in milliequivalents per litre

— Maximum volatile acidity (in milliequivalents per litre) —

— Maximum total sulphur dioxide (in milligrams per litre) —

5. **Winemaking practices**

5.1. *Specific oenological practices*

1. Vine density – general rules

Cultivation method

The vines are planted so that the spacing between rows does not exceed 2,00 metres.

The spacing between plants in the same row is between 0,70 metres and 1,50 metres.

The sum of the spacing between rows and the spacing between plants in the same row must not exceed 3,00 metres.

Any transformation of parcels resulting in a change in planting density is prohibited until the parcels have been grubbed up.

2. Vine density – special rules

Cultivation method

So that specialist machinery can pass, on parcels with:

— a slope gradient of more than 35 %

— or a slope gradient of more than 25 % combined with a cross-slope gradient of more than 10 %,

a path, 1,50 to 3 metres wide, may be left free at a maximum frequency of one out of every six rows. In this case, the sum of the spacing between the other rows and the spacing between plants in the same row must not exceed 2,30 metres.

3. Pruning rules

Cultivation method

There must be no overlap between different vines and fruiting canes should not touch. There should be no more than 18 buds per square metre. The vines must be pruned before they reach the 'four leaves unfolded' phenological stage (stage F, or stage 12 on the Lorenz scale).

The following vine pruning techniques are permitted:

— *Chablis* pruning;

— Cordon de Royat pruning;

— *Vallée de la Marne* pruning;

— *Guyot* pruning (single, double or asymmetric).

Practices that prevent grape bunches from being harvested whole are not permitted.

4. Specific oenological practice

Specific oenological practice

The use of wood chips is not permitted.

The amount by which the volume of grape must in fermentation is increased in the enrichment process is capped at 1,12 % for every 1 % increase in alcoholic strength.

The winemaking practices used must comply with EU rules and the Rural Code as well as the above provisions.

The wines are made exclusively by secondary fermentation in glass bottles.

5.2. *Maximum yields*

Upper yield limit

15 500 kilograms of grapes per hectare

6. **Demarcated geographical area**

The geographical area established in Article 17 of the Act of 6 May 1919 must be where the grapes are harvested, where the wines are made and developed – including all winemaking processes between fermentation and bottling – and where the wines are bottled.

7. **Wine grape variety(ies)**

Arbane B

Chardonnay B

Meunier N

Petit Meslier B

Pinot Blanc B

Pinot Gris G

Pinot Noir N

Voltis B

8. **Description of the link(s)**

8.1. *Details of the geographical area – Natural factors*

— Description of the natural factors relevant to the link

The geographical area is located in north-eastern France, covering municipalities in the departments of Aisne, Aube, Haute-Marne, Marne and Seine-et-Marne.

The parcels whose crop can be used to make the wines are precisely demarcated and set amid hillside vineyards resting on striking geomorphological structures to the east of the Paris Basin known as cuestas:

— Côte d'Ile-de-France in the department of Marne and the slopes of the connected valleys, the most representative sectors being, from north to south, 'Montagne de Reims', 'Vallée de la Marne' (extending into the south of the department of Aisne and into Seine-et-Marne), 'Côte des Blancs' and 'Côte de Sézanne';

— Côte de Champagne, with the 'Vitryat' sector in the department of Marne and the 'Montgueux' sector in the department of Aube;

— Côte des Bar, intersected by multiple valleys, comprising the eastern 'Bar-sur-Aubois' sector and the western 'Bar Séquanais' sector, spanning the departments of Aube and Haute-Marne.

This typical cuesta ridge terrain, with the adjacent valleys, has east- and south-facing slopes and sometimes also north-facing ones such as those in the northern part of the 'Montagne de Reims' and the left bank of the 'Vallée de la Marne'.

Hard layers of limestone or chalk make up the front slopes, while the back slopes are chalky, marly or sandy, and softer, left bare by erosion and then covered over again with colluvium from the front slope of the adjacent ridge.

The 'Champagne' region is a northern winegrowing area, influenced by two different climates:

— an oceanic climate supplying regular rainfall, with limited temperature differences between seasons, and

— a continental climate, bringing frosts – sometimes damaging ones – and beneficial summer sunshine.

8.2. *Details of the geographical area – Human factors*

Vines have been grown in the 'Champagne' region since ancient times, becoming properly established in the ninth century after monastic winemaking developed. Experimentation with naturally sparkling white wines and secondary fermentation followed towards the end of the seventeenth century. In the late nineteenth century, a well-known oenologist by the name of Weinmann wrote: 'The wine from Champagne is highly fermentable. It produces its second fermentation much more easily, more regularly and better than any other ferment'.

While the first references to this wine, known as *saute-bouchon* or 'cork-popper', appear in the poems of the *abbé* Chaulieu in 1700, the method was not put down in writing until the publication of a work entitled *Manière de cultiver la vigne et de faire le vin de Champagne* ['How to grow the vines and make the wine of Champagne'], presumed to be the work of a clergyman by the name of Godinot, in 1718. Here it stated that the white wines, which must be 'clear as teardrops [...] are made from black grapes. The sooner the grapes are pressed after they are cut down from the vine, the whiter the wine will be.' Winegrowers thus endeavour to avoid any damage to the grapes during harvesting, take great care when transporting and storing them, and ensure they are intact when placed in the press. Pressing must be gentle and gradually increase in pressure, with the juices separated during the different pressing stages (the first, best juice known as the *cuvée* and the juice from the subsequent pressing known as the *taille*) to be made into wine separately. Pressing facilities must therefore comply with strict rules and are subject to tightly controlled authorisation.

The precise techniques were honed in abbeys. In 1866, Jules Guyot noted the importance of blending different varieties of grape or grapes grown on different parcels of land. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, three grape varieties have been selected for their sugar-to-acidity balance and their suitability for secondary fermentation: the black grapes Pinot Noir and Meunier and the white variety Chardonnay. The winemaker puts together a blend by tasting the various base wines. The blend is then bottled for secondary fermentation and for the lees contact stage – a necessarily long one, particularly for vintage wines.

The development of this second fermentation process has been influenced by the ideal natural temperature and humidity conditions afforded by Champagne's chalk-walled cellars. Once the lees contact stage is complete, the lees are gradually shifted into the bottleneck in a process known as riddling, then removed from the bottle during disgorgement. Disgorgement is followed by dosage, a process which will determine which of the several types of 'Champagne' the wine is going to be.

Once the process of secondary fermentation in the bottle had been mastered, the 'champagne method' was exported and, very soon, the name 'Champagne' was being used beyond the area of production. The Champagne houses first formed an association (the *Union des Maisons de Champagne* or 'Union of Champagne Houses') to take legal action in 1882 and, just prior to the passing of the Fraud and Falsification Act of 1 August 1905, a French court ruled that only wines made in the Champagne region from grapes harvested there could be called 'Champagne', protecting a designation of origin for the very first time. The process of demarcating the geographical area then began in 1908. Champagne producers were united, practising solidarity through important professional organisations.

8.3. *Information on the quality and characteristics of the product*

These wines may be either white (made from a blend of white and black grapes, made only from white grapes [*blanc de blancs*], or made only from black grapes [*blanc de noirs*]) or rosé (made by blending in some red wine or through skin contact during fermentation). They are made using grapes grown in one or more municipalities and may be vintage or non-vintage wines.

All of the wines have one thing in common: acidity, guaranteeing freshness and suitability for ageing.

In the youngest wines, the notes are decidedly fresh: white fruit and flowers, citrus fruit and mineral notes. Mature wines offer a more rounded palette, with aromas of yellow fruit, cooked fruit and spices, while deep tertiary aromas of candied fruit, forest undergrowth and roasting come to the fore in the most developed wines (known as *de plénitude*).

The bubbles – the hallmark of 'Champagne' – are sustained and persistent in young wines, becoming more delicate and more creamy with age.

8.4. *Causal interactions*

The fact that the landscapes formed by the three cuestas, both on the plains and in the valleys, are so open and exposed ensures that the vines receive enough sunlight for the berries to ripen properly, even in north-facing vineyards. It also prevents cold air from stagnating, reducing the risk of frosts.

The slope of the hillside vineyards ensures optimum natural drainage which the various layers of the soil profile also guarantee, regulating the vines' water supply. The porosity and permeability of chalk eliminates excess water, while capillary action ensures that the soil is rehydrated in dry weather. The other types of substrata found in the area combine marly layers, which provide a water reserve, with either calcareous layers or carbonate sands, which allow excess water from wet periods to permeate the soil. This type of substratum and the delicate climate conditions have influenced the choice of vine varieties planted in the different regions of the winegrowing area.

The unique climate of the Champagne region gives the grapes, and the must obtained from them, a natural acidity level ideal for making the very best sparkling wines. The balance between this acidity — which gives an indispensable freshness — and the ripeness of the grapes produces the best vintages and wines with good ageing potential.

All the different natural factors form a veritable 'mosaic', utilised at parcel level by the grower, an expert in all the growing practices needed to really bring out the grapes' specific character.

Preventing any damage to the grapes from the moment they are harvested, pressing them gently and keeping the juices from the different pressing stages separate prevents the juice from becoming coloured and keeps it clear, which is essential for foam quality. Separating the juices from the different pressing stages also adds another level of aromatic complexity.

The *cuvée* or juice from the first pressing, which is rich in acidity, gives fresh and lively aromas. Adding it to blends makes it possible to fully bring out the tertiary aromas that develop during ageing on the lees.

The *taille* or juice from the subsequent pressing is fruitier and much richer in tannins.

'Reserve wine' set aside in previous years brings the more mature characteristics of developed wines to the blend (reserve wine is not used in vintage wines). The winemaker's craft in selecting the wines for the desired blend is expressed throughout ageing on lees to result in the final 'Champagne'. This continuous ageing process can, for the most prestigious wines, continue for many decades in the Champagne cellars, with their relatively cool temperature ensuring good secondary fermentation.

The fact that the 'Champagne' production process is so highly technical means that specific and costly infrastructure is needed. The winemaking, handling and packaging facilities are located close to the vineyards.

While the Champagne winegrowing area dates back to the beginning of our era, the reputation of the name 'Champagne' as a high-class beverage was formed particularly in the seventeenth century, as the technique of secondary bottle fermentation was gradually mastered. By the end of that same century, 'Champagne' producers were bottling their wines rather than transporting them in barrels in order to preserve their quality and characteristics in full.

The foam and fine bubbles trapped in the bottles were transferred to drinkers' glasses and the wine was an immediate success. Young aristocrats – keen adopters of the latest innovations – praised 'Champagne', poets sang its praises and writers made a place for it in their works. It became the drink of choice at the court of the Regency, of Louis XV and Madame de Pompadour. Financiers and town officials imitated the aristocracy; the provinces copied the capital. Under Louis XV and Louis XVI, the wine industry flourished and Champagne's reputation grew considerably, both in France and abroad. Sparkling wine came into vogue anywhere that French fashion was aspired to, and throughout eighteenth-century Europe, 'Champagne' adorned parties and feasts. It continues to enjoy this reputation today. Winegrowers, cooperatives and Champagne houses continue their efforts to improve the collective rules in order to promote the 'Champagne' controlled designation of origin – their shared heritage – aiming for excellence and striving to ensure that the name and character are respected.

9. **Essential further conditions (packaging, labelling, other requirements)**

Labelling

Legal framework:

In national legislation

Type of further condition:

Additional provisions relating to labelling

Description of the condition:

No bottle may be transported – except between two sites of the same operator or between two operators – until it is finished, dressed with the foil covering the cork, and labelled in accordance with the pertinent rules.

The bottles containing the wines must be closed with a cork displaying the name of the controlled designation of origin on the part within the bottleneck. For bottles with a nominal content of 0,20 litres or less the name may be displayed on another internal part of the closure.

Labels and commercial paperwork must include the registration information identifying the operator as required by the *Comité Interprofessionnel du Vin de Champagne* ('Interprofessional Committee for Champagne Wine').

The winemaker's full name must appear on the label in clear and legible print, accompanied by the name of the municipality in which the wine was made if the winemaker's headquarters are located outside the production area.

Wines covered by this controlled designation of origin may be labelled with one of the following smaller geographical units under the conditions described below:

— a place-name listed on the land registry;

— the name of a municipality.

The place-name or municipality name denoted must appear on the harvest declaration.

All of the grapes used to make the base wine must have come from the municipality or place in question.

The words '*Premier Cru*' or '*Grand Cru*' [a title held by certain areas recognised as having vineyards of superior quality] may appear with the municipality name under the conditions laid down in Section II(b) and (c) of Chapter I of the product specification.

Other than in the case of the municipalities covered by the previous point, reference to the name of the municipality must appear with the words '*Vigne de*' or '*Vignoble de*' ['vines from…'].

The characters used to display place-names and municipality names must be no taller or wider than the characters used for the controlled designation of origin.

When a wine is labelled with a municipality name in accordance with the above rules, the municipality name may be repeated in the name of the *cuvée* [blend or batch].

Stating the grape variety

Legal framework:

In national legislation

Type of further condition:

Additional provisions relating to labelling

Description of the condition:

The grape variety may be stated in characters no more than 3 mm tall, no more than 3 mm wide, and no more than half the size of the characters used to display the designation of origin. The grape variety may only be stated if all the grapes used to make the base wines were of that variety.

Stating the vintage

Legal framework:

In national legislation

Type of further condition:

Additional provisions relating to labelling

Description of the condition:

If a vintage is stated, it must be displayed on the cork – or another suitable closure in the case of bottles with a nominal content of 0,20 litres or less – and on the label. The vintage must also be stated on invoices and accompanying documents.

Packaging

Legal framework:

In national legislation

Type of further condition:

Packaging within the demarcated geographical area

Description of the condition:

The wines must be made and sold in the bottles within which the secondary fermentation has taken place, with the exception of wines sold in bottles with a volume of less than 75 cl or greater than 150 cl, which may be transferred from one vessel to another.

The wines must be aged for at least 15 months from the bottling date, or 36 months for vintage wines, before they can be marketed to consumers.

Link to the product specification

http://info.agriculture.gouv.fr/gedei/site/bo-agri/document_administratif-16eefac7-c1d0-4801-8db9-3536157e402b