C/2024/2257

20.3.2024

Publication of an application for registration of a name pursuant to Article 50(2)(a) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs

(C/2024/2257)

This publication confers the right to oppose the application pursuant to Article 51 of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council [1] within three months from the date of this publication.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

'Dithmarscher Gans'

EU No: PGI-DE-02964 — 14.6.2023

PDO ( ) PGI (X)

1. **Name(s) [of PGI]**

'Dithmarscher Gans'

2. **Member State or Third Country**

Germany

3. **Description of the agricultural product or foodstuff**

3.1. *Type of product*

Class 1.1. Fresh meat (and offal)

3.2. *Description of the product to which the name in (1) applies*

Dithmarscher Gans is a traditional variety of landrace goose, first bred around 150 years ago on a small, narrow area of land between the Elbe and Eider rivers, namely the region of Dithmarschen. The Dithmarscher Gans is a robust goose that benefits from free-range rearing in the vast wet meadows and marshes of the region of Dithmarschen, at least at the initial chick stage up until 21 days old and in the keeping of the parent birds. It is a relatively heavy goose with an average fattened weight of 6 kg to 8 kg. It is known for its high grazing capability and well-rounded and firm carcass. When ready for slaughter, the goose is generally 75 cm to 95 cm long. The origins of this traditional variety of landrace goose, crossed with other landrace geese of Danish origin around 150 years ago, have led over the decades to a particularly tasty and robust variety, which in the relevant consumer circles is very much associated with the Dithmarschen region. Dithmarscher Gans is characterised above all by a high proportion of unsaturated fatty acids, reflected in a specific flavour for consumers, because, in the animal world, fat is the substance that imparts flavour. In addition to the high final fattened weight and the balanced proportion of high-value meat, Dithmarscher Gans is characterised in particular by a level of unsaturated fatty acids of around 17 g per 100 g of meat product. Dithmarscher Gans has a relatively intense aromatic, slightly oily taste due to the high proportion of unsaturated fatty acids. The meat is comparatively dark and delicate, and very succulent.

Dithmarscher Gans is characterised by firm muscle meat with a very low fat content (an average of about 31 g of fat per goose, including skin, at slaughter age) due to its geographical origin in the region of Dithmarschen and its specific form. It has a higher proportion of unsaturated fatty acids than other geese. The ratio of unsaturated to saturated fatty acids is approximately 2:1. Dithmarscher Gans has a more favourable meat/fat/bone ratio than other geese and is well proportioned on the breast and thigh, with an average of approximately 16 % breast meat and around 14 % thigh meat. Dithmarscher Gans is sold fresh and frozen in the form of a whole goose, a whole carcass, goose breast, goose legs and giblets. Other products made from Dithmarscher Gans include preprepared drumsticks (fresh and frozen).

[1] OJ L 343, 14.12.2012, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2012/1151/oj

The fact that these geese are reared under free-range conditions in a traditional way, i.e. with a relatively long grazing period of at least 16 weeks depending on the age at slaughter, and from the 22nd day of life (fourth week) possibly also outside the region of Dithmarschen, leads to a particularly aromatic and natural taste, which is clearly different from that of other types of goose.

3.3. *Feed (for products of animal origin only) and raw materials (for processed products only)*

In the first stage of production, i.e. from the hatching of the eggs in a hatchery to the 21st day of life (three weeks), only feed containing at least 70 % cereal or green fodder from the Dithmarschen area is used for the parent animals and the goslings.

In the second stage of production, i.e. from the 22nd day of life (fourth week), cereals or green fodder (at least 70 % of the total feed mix) mainly from the Dithmarschen region are fed to the goslings. The remaining 30 % of the feed is 100 % plant-based, with the addition of minerals and vitamins if necessary, but without growth enhancers or prophylactic veterinary products.

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

The Dithmarscher Gans and its associated meat products originate in the Dithmarschen region. The goslings are reared in the Dithmarschen region in an initial stage from hatching until the 21st day of life. The parent birds used are kept free-range in Dithmarschen.

In the second production stage, as of the 22nd day of life (fourth week), the goslings are reared either in the region of Dithmarschen or in other northern German regions under free-range conditions. In a third production stage, Dithmarscher Gans is transferred to be slaughtered with due care in accordance with the requirements described below.

All geese and derived products labelled as Dithmarscher Gans must come from a traditional Dithmarscher Gans variety. A breeding register must be kept for the selection and preservation of the characteristics of the Dithmarscher Gans.

The breeding lines are maintained on a holding located in Dithmarschen. Geese are selected for breeding on the basis of a mean value, grazing capacity and vitality.

Dithmarscher Gans is loaded gently for transport to slaughter. The transport takes place in late evening or during the night. The minimum slaughter age of a goose is 20 weeks, or 16 weeks for a young goose. The Dithmarscher Gans is processed using the dry-slaughter method.

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

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

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

The geographical area is a region of northern Germany known historically and for agricultural purposes as Dithmarschen. The region of Dithmarschen is surrounded on all sides by water, namely the North Sea, the Eider and Elbe rivers and the Kiel Canal, and is reachable only across bridges or by ferry. The region of Dithmarschen, from which Dithmarscher Gans originates, is delimited to the west by the North Sea, to the south by the Elbe and to the east and north by the Kiel Canal and the rivers Eider and Elbe respectively.

The Dithmarschen region therefore also has historical origins and was traditionally known as a ‘Free Farmers’ Republic’.

5. **Link with the geographical area**

The application to register ‘Dithmarscher Gans’ as a PGI is based on the product’s specific characteristics and quality. These characteristics are the result of the relevant rearing of geese in this region of Dithmarschen.

The Dithmarschen region is a landscape characterised by high humidity and specific vegetation. It lies between waterways on one side and the North Sea on the other, resulting in a unique blend of sea air, wet weather and lush meadows and marshes. The landscape of Dithmarschen consists of extensive pastures that are excellent for goose farming and the production of goose feed. They provide optimum conditions for breeding and rearing the parent animals and goslings, because of the wet environment.

In nature too, birds leave their ancestral habitat and seek out breeding and dwelling areas with optimal conditions for each species. Ultimately, this happens for one reason only, and that is to breed offspring with optimum physical characteristics. Compared to other common poultry species, the goose is a bird relatively close to its natural ancestor and, as is customary in the wild, rears its offspring only during a certain season of the year. This fact is exploited in the keeping and breeding of the Dithmarscher Gans. The prevailing conditions in the Dithmarschen area encourage the geese to pass on special characteristics that can be achieved only under optimum conditions. The use of effective expert breeding programmes results in large geese with a very good breast layer and the desired ratio between meat, fat and bone, produced under these optimal conditions. These Dithmarscher Gans birds are reared in accordance with the criteria set out above, such as the generous provision of green space, and feed with a minimum of 70 % cereals and/or green matter from the region of Dithmarschen in all stages of production, as if they were in the wild. After hatching and rearing up until their 21st day of life in the region of Dithmarschen, they can then enjoy the same conditions in other regions of northern Germany, such as the rest of Schleswig-Holstein, Lower Saxony, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania or Brandenburg. In terms of their nature and origin, they have characteristics that lead to the desired fattening conditions and quality characteristics. Moreover, as is observed in the wild, spreading the subsequent fattening over the whole of northern Germany means that the species is not concentrated in one particular area.

This helps prevent the emergence of specific pathogens and supports the development of the desired quality characteristics, such as a high muscle meat content with very little fat.

The general principle that the essential first stage of production, namely the keeping of the parent birds and the associated hatching and rearing of the goslings up until 21 days of life, takes place in the Dithmarschen region constitutes the basic and most important foundation for the production of Dithmarscher Gans. This is the condition for the uniqueness of the Dithmarscher Gans line. The animals can then be fattened in free-range farming under the above-mentioned rearing and reproduction conditions across northern Germany.

The quality characteristics of these specific geese will not differ. The animals have the special physical and quality characteristics described above, distinguishing them from other geese not from Dithmarschen.

Dithmarscher geese have traditionally been sold by local geese farmers for decades at seasonal farmers' markets and special goose markets. Traditional goose dishes and products are offered, for example, in the autumn around Saint Martin's Day (11 November) and in the run-up to Christmas.

Consumers travel to Dithmarschen from other regions to eat various goose dishes such as roast goose with red cabbage or Brussels sprouts, or other traditional dishes containing goose meat, or to buy Dithmarscher Gans products (such as whole birds, legs, giblets or similar) direct from the producer. Dithmarscher Gans is popular not only with consumers but also in the catering sector throughout the region and beyond as a particularly high-quality goose. The traditional goose markets and sales campaigns during the slaughter season are a specific regional tourist attraction which has developed around the Dithmarscher Gans as a product associated with the region. A long tradition of rearing, monitoring and marketing the Dithmarscher Gans therefore exists in the generally relatively small goose holdings in the Dithmarschen region.

Reference to publication of the specification

https://register.dpma.de/DPMAregister/geo/detail.pdfdownload/42379