C/2025/3216

16.6.2025

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/2025/3216)

COMMUNICATING THE APPROVAL OF A STANDARD AMENDMENT TO THE PRODUCT SPECIFICATION OF A PROTECTED DESIGNATION OF ORIGIN OR PROTECTED GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION ORIGINATING IN A MEMBER STATE

'Queso Manchego'

EU No: PDO-ES-0087-AM04 – 21.3.2025

PDO (X) PGI ( )

1. **Name of product**

'Queso Manchego'

2. **Member State to which the geographical area belongs**

Spain

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

Castile-La Mancha Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Rural Development

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4. **Description of the approved amendment(s)**

Explanation that the amendment(s) fall under the definition of a standard amendment as provided for in Article 24(4) of Regulation (EU) 2024/1143

The amendments described and explained below do not include a change in the name of the protected designation of origin or in the use of that name. They do not risk voiding the link or entail further restrictions on the marketing of the product. They are therefore 'standard amendments' within the meaning of Article 24 of 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.

1. *Entry in the registers*

The registers in which the various operators identified in the product specification must be entered have been defined.

The amendment concerns point (b), 'Checks and certification', of Section D, 'Proof that the product originated in the area', Section E, 'Method of production', and Section H, 'Labelling', of the product specification and points 3.5, 'Special rules concerning slicing, grating, packaging, etc.', and 3.6, 'Specific rules concerning labelling', of the single document.

Reasons

The product specification does not clearly define the registers in which operators involved in the production process must be entered. In accordance with the statutes of the Regulatory Board Foundation for the Designation of Origin Queso Manchego, operators have been entered in the registers of the foundation since it was established. It is therefore considered necessary to define the registers in accordance with those statutes.

This amendment affects the single document.

[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).

2. *Amendment of the wording relating to certification and operators' own control systems*

The amendment concerns point (b), 'Checks and certification', of Section D, 'Proof that the product originated in the area', of the product specification

The following text:

'In order to make it easier to obtain a licence to use the conformity mark for the designation of origin Queso Manchego and the relevant certification of Queso Manchego by the certification department of the Regulatory Board Foundation for the Designation of Origin Queso Manchego, producers must have control systems that ensure that the cheese complies with these technical specifications.'

has been replaced by:

'Producers must have their own control systems that ensure that the product complies with these technical specifications in order to obtain the relevant certification by an inspection body approved by the competent authority.'

Reasons

The purpose of this amendment is to ensure compliance with the current legislation under which, in checks prior to placing on the market of a product designated by a geographical indication and originating in the EU, verification of compliance with the product specification must be carried out by:

— one or more competent authorities within the meaning of Article 3, point (3), of Regulation (EU) 2017/625;

— one or more delegated bodies or natural persons to which certain official control tasks have been delegated, as referred to in Title II, Chapter III, of Regulation (EU) 2017/625.

This wording does not restrict the delegated inspection body in the product specification.

This amendment does not affect the single document.

3. *Amendment of the wording in relation to the affixing of the conformity mark*

The verb associated with the affixing of the casein labels has changed from 'to apply' to 'to affix'.

The amendment concerns point (f), 'Pressing', of Section E, 'Method of production', of the product specification.

The following text:

'The casein label, which bears the serial number allowing the identification of each individual piece, must be applied (in a central position) at this stage.'

has been replaced by:

'The casein label, which bears the serial number allowing the identification of each individual piece, must be affixed (in a central position) at this stage.'

Reasons

The purpose of this amendment is to ensure linguistic correctness, as casein labels are affixed to the surface of the cheese, in a central position.

This amendment does not affect the single document.

4. *Amendment of the wording in relation to the optional term 'queso de granja' (farmhouse cheese)*

The wording relating to the optional term 'queso de granja' in the product specification has been amended.

The amendment concerns Section H, 'Labelling', of the product specification and point 3.6, 'Specific rules concerning labelling', of the single document.

The optional term 'queso de granja' stems from the group's desire to distinguish the artisanal product made by cheese dairies that source their own milk. The wording originally proposed might be interpreted as meaning that the term 'queso de granja' could be used for pasteurised products. This amendment makes it clear that the optional term applies only to unpasteurised 'artisanal' cheeses.

This amendment affects the single document.

5. *Improvement to the wording, including as regards the body responsible for issuing casein labels as a conformity mark*

The body responsible for issuing conformity marks identifying the product has been specified.

The amendment concerns Section H, 'Labelling', of the product specification and point 3.6, 'Specific rules concerning labelling', of the single document.

Reasons

The body responsible for issuing casein labels as a conformity mark identifying the product has been included. No such body was mentioned in the product specification. Like the secondary labels, the casein labels are supplied by the Regulatory Board Foundation for the Designation of Origin Queso Manchego, as the management body.

This amendment affects the single document.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

'Queso Manchego'

EU No: PDO-ES-0087-AM04 – 21.3.2025

PDO (X) PGI ( )

1. **Name(s) (of PDO or PGI)**

'Queso Manchego'

2. **Member State or Third Country**

Spain

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

3.1. *Combined Nomenclature code*

— 04 – DAIRY PRODUCE; BIRDS' EGGS; NATURAL HONEY; EDIBLE PRODUCTS OF ANIMAL ORIGIN, NOT ELSEWHERE SPECIFIED OR INCLUDED

0406 – Cheese and curd

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

Pressed cheese made from milk of ewes of the Manchega breed, aged for a minimum of 30 days for cheeses weighing up to 1,5 kg and from 60 days up to a maximum of two years for larger cheeses.

'Queso Manchego' can be made with either pasteurised or raw milk. In the latter case, the label may bear the word 'Artesano' [artisanal].

'Queso Manchego' is a pressed cheese with the following physical properties after ageing:

— shape: cylindrical with smooth sides

— maximum height: 12 cm

— maximum diameter: 22 cm

— diameter/height ratio: between 1,5 and 2,2

— minimum weight: 0,4 kg

— maximum weight: 4,0 kg

The physico-chemical properties of the cheese are:

— Tel. 4,8 to 5,8

— dry matter: minimum 55 %

— fat content: minimum 50 % of dry matter

— total protein in dry matter: minimum 30 %

— sodium chloride: maximum 2,3 %

— no milk from other animal species.

Characteristics of the paste:

— consistency: firm and compact;

— colour: from white to ivory-yellow;

— aroma: lactic, intensely acidic and persistent, developing spicy notes and long overall persistence in cheeses that have been well aged;

— flavour: slightly acidic, strong and flavoursome, becoming spicy in cheeses that have been well aged. Pleasant and distinctive aftertaste produced by the milk of ewes of the Manchega breed;

— appearance: small, unevenly distributed eyes, although these are sometimes not present;

— texture: low elasticity, buttery, slightly floury; can become granular in very well-aged cheeses.

The microbiological limits are as follows:

— beta-glucuronidase-positive *Escherichia coli*: maximum of 1 000 CFU/g

— coagulase-positive *Staphylococcus aureus*: maximum of 100 CFU/g

— *Salmonella*: absence in 25 grams

— *Listeria monocytogenes*: absence in 25 grams.

Slightly acidic, strong and flavoursome, with the flavour becoming spicy in cheeses that have been well aged. Pleasant and distinctive aftertaste produced by the milk of ewes of the Manchega breed.

Queso Manchego may be packaged for marketing in the following forms:

— in portions

— grated

— sliced.

When intended for sale in sliced or grated format, Queso Manchego may be produced as a parallelepiped measuring 20-25 cm long by 8-12 cm wide, with sides 8-12 cm high, provided that the weight of the block does not exceed 4 kg.

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

Manchega sheep graze throughout the year on the natural resources of the area. When in the fold, their diet is supplemented with concentrated feed, hay and by-products.

As regards sheep farming, mention should be made of the pastures that occupy the clearings in the scrub. This annual pasture is composed of *Medicago minima*, *Scorpiurus subvillosus*, *Astragalus stella*, *Astragalus sesameus*, etc.

Deep, cooler soils can produce 'fenelares', dense pasture with a predominance of perennial and biennial plants, the appearance of which is dominated by the grass *Brachypodium phoenicoides*.

'Queso Manchego' cheese is made from milk of ewes of the Manchega breed, natural rennet or other authorised coagulation enzymes, and sodium chloride. The milk must not contain any medicinal products that may have a negative impact on production, maturation and preservation of the cheese. Queso Manchego can be made with either pasteurised or raw milk. In the latter case, the label may bear the word 'artesano' [artisanal].

The analytical characteristics of the milk are as follows:

— fat content: 6,5 % minimum

— proteins: 4,5 % minimum

— usable dry matter: 11 % minimum

— Tel. 6,5-7

— freezing point: ≤ – 0,550 °C.

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

The animals are reared, the milk extracted and the PDO cheese made in the production area.

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

Cheeses protected by the 'Queso Manchego' designation of origin may be dispatched and placed into circulation by dairies and undertakings entered in the relevant registers of the Regulatory Board Foundation for the Designation of Origin Queso Manchego only in packaging of a type that does not affect their quality.

'Queso Manchego' is always marketed with the rind, which may have been washed.

Queso Manchego may also be coated in paraffin, covered with legally authorised transparent substances or coated in olive oil, provided that the rind maintains its natural colour and appearance and the casein label can be read.

Under no circumstances may substances be used that turn the rind black.

Queso Manchego may be marketed in portions, sliced or grated, provided that it is packaged and its origin can be identified. This operation may be carried out outside the area of origin by undertakings that have accepted and comply with the agreed protocol so as to guarantee the operations undergone by Queso Manchego and ensure its traceability.

Packaging must comply with current legislation.

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

Labels must bear the following wording: 'Denominación de Origen Protegida "Queso Manchego"' [Protected Designation of Origin 'Queso Manchego'].

When the cheese is made with raw milk, this can be indicated on the label by means of the word 'Artesano' [artisanal]. Similarly, if the 'artisanal' cheese is made in cheese dairies owned by the same operator as the livestock farm that produces the raw material, and the cheese dairy exclusively processes milk from this livestock farm, the label may bear the words 'queso de granja' [farmhouse cheese].

The marketed product must bear a numbered secondary label issued by the Regulatory Board Foundation for the Designation of Origin Queso Manchego. The label must be affixed in the undertaking entered in the relevant registers of the foundation in such a way that it cannot be reused. In addition, every piece of Queso Manchego must have on one of its faces a casein label with a serial number casein. The label, which is supplied by the foundation, is affixed at the moulding and pressing stage.

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

The following local authority areas are covered by the 'Queso Manchego' designation of origin: 45 in the Province of Albacete, 84 in the Province of Ciudad Real, 156 in the Province of Cuenca and 122 in the Province of Toledo.

The following areas have been incorporated: Alcoba de los Montes and El Robledo in the Province of Ciudad Real, Albaladejo del Cuende, Villarejo de la Peñuela, Villarejo-Sobrehuerta and Villar del Horno in the Province of Cuenca.

5. **Link with the geographical area**

The geographical area of La Mancha is located in the southern part of the central plateau of the peninsula and is characterised by a low relief descending to the Atlantic.

La Mancha is a high plain with lime-clay soils and its pastureland has lime- and loam-rich substrates.

The area has an extreme climate and experiences wide variations characteristic of a continental climate, with very cold winters and hot summers. The temperature occasionally reaches 40 °C, sometimes varying by 20 °C over the course of a day and 50 °C over the year. Precipitation is scant, making the region one of the more arid areas of Spain, its extremely dry environment having a relative humidity of around 65 %.

The area's soil and climatic conditions have had a great influence on the processes of natural selection that have made the Manchega breed of sheep the breed best adapted to the area and producing a milk that gives 'Queso Manchego' its characteristic colour, aroma, flavour and texture.

Cheese has been made with milk from ewes of the Manchega breed since time immemorial and over the centuries manufacturing techniques have aimed to optimise the qualities of this traditional La Mancha cheese.

Reference to publication of the product specification

https://rec.castillalamancha.es/rec/public/documentacion/listadoDocs.faces#no-back-button