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(Announcements)

## OTHER ACTS

## EUROPEAN COMMISSION

**Publication of an application pursuant to Article 6(2) of Council Regulation (EC) No 510/2006 on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs**

(2012/C 334/09)

This publication confers the right to object to the application pursuant to Article 7 of Council Regulation (EC) No 510/2006 <sup>(1)</sup>. Statements of objection must reach the Commission within six months of the date of this publication.

## SINGLE DOCUMENT

## COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006

## 'OIGNON DE ROSCOFF'

EC No: FR-PDO-0005-0812-25.06.2010

PGI ( ) PDO ( X )

## 1. Name:

'Oignon de Roscoff'

## 2. Member State or third country:

France

## 3. Description of the agricultural product or foodstuff:

## 3.1. Type of product:

Class 1.6. Fruit, vegetables and cereals, fresh or processed

## 3.2. Description of product to which the name in point 1 applies:

'Oignon de Roscoff' is a long-keeping onion (*Allium cepa*, a member of the lily family). The variety requirements for the production of the onion are the following: the onion must be between 30 mm and 80 mm in diameter with a shape ranging from round and elongated to round and flattened. Its tail must be solidly fixed to the bulb by the neck and measure at least 5 cm. The colour of its external tunics varies from rosy to rosy-coppery, the internal scales are white to lightly rosy and have a rosy-coloured edge. The dry matter content of the bulb varies from 9 % to 13 %.

'Oignon de Roscoff' is obtained either from:

- farm seeds meeting the variety requirements defined above, or
- certified seeds of the Jack and Kéravel varieties.

<sup>(1)</sup> OJ L 93, 31.3.2006, p. 12.

'Oignon de Roscoff' keeps naturally. Anti-germinating treatments are prohibited.

The date of end of marketing is 1 May of the year following the harvest.

It has the following organoleptic characteristics: when raw, the onion develops a rich and complex bouquet dominated by fruity aromas. Its texture feels juicy and crunchy in the mouth and it has a fruity and sweet taste, with a slight sharpness. After cooking its texture becomes tender and the sharpness gives way to a sweet taste.

3.3. *Raw materials (for processed products only):*

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3.4. *Feed (for products of animal origin only):*

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3.5. *Specific steps in production that must take place in the defined geographical area:*

All of the operations, from the production of seeds, seedlings and bulblets to the cultivation of the onions and their drying, take place in the geographical area.

3.6. *Specific rules concerning slicing, grating, packaging, etc.:*

'Oignon de Roscoff' is a fragile onion: it must be handled very carefully after harvest, especially as it receives no anti-germinating treatments, because 'Oignon de Roscoff' must be stored in bulk in the geographical area before packaging. The obligation to store the onion in the geographical area is justified by the fragility of the onion: as 'Oignon de Roscoff' is lifted before it is completely mature and before its external scales are completely dry, the onion is sensitive to mechanical shocks. Every precaution must be taken during storage. Storage takes place in box pallets or ventilated silos in order, in particular, to avoid damaging the tunics. It must be kept in mind that the onions continue to dry during storage.

Once they have dried, the onions must be kept as close as possible to the production sites until packaging. Over the years, the operators in the geographical area have acquired the necessary know-how as well as equipment and materials designed to reduce the likelihood of the bulbs knocking against each other before packaging. Packaging in the geographical area limits the frequency of handling between storage and final packaging.

'Oignon de Roscoff' is presented for consumption:

- in the form of braids with an onion at the end called 'penn kapiten' and the other onions arranged in order of increasing size,
- in containers weighing not more than 6 kg and equipped with a tamper-proof closing system in order to guarantee the origin of the onions and the quality of the product,
- in rigid containers weighing not more than 12 kg, a packaging that enables the unit sale of the onions.

For packaging, each onion is prepared manually in order to ensure its consistency, the position of its tail and the absence of any germination and to enhance its presentation by eliminating loose, dry tunics and damaged bulbs. At this stage, the onion is braided or trimmed, in other words it is rid of its roots, which can be done easily during manual handling. During this sorting, non-conforming onions and onions that do not comply with the desired quality and typical features are eliminated. This manual sorting requires perfect knowledge of the product, as it is, in particular, necessary to detect by hand the slightest defects in the bulb, which might indicate premature breaking of dormancy. The operation calls for particular knowledge and appreciation of the product, this being a specific requirement related to 'Oignon de Roscoff' and one in which the vegetable producers in the geographical area have specialised. Besides, as the onions are fragile, they are packaged as close as possible to the production sites in close association with the manual sorting and preparation stages, this precisely in order to limit the handling of the onions and thus prevent any alterations. Additionally, packaging in the geographical area makes it possible to monitor more efficiently the traceability and quality of the products.

### 3.7. *Specific rules concerning labelling:*

The labelling of the packaging units consists of:

- the name 'Oignon de Roscoff' marked in clear, legible and indelible characters; the size of the characters may neither in width nor height be smaller than that of the characters of any other words on the labelling,
- the words 'appellation d'origine protégée' immediately below the designation, with no text in between,
- the EU PDO logo close to the designation, with no text in between,
- the identification of the packaging unit.

In the case of onions marketed in rigid containers weighing not more than 12 kg, each onion is identified by affixing a self-adhesive sticker featuring:

- the name 'Oignon de Roscoff'; the size of these characters may neither in width nor height be smaller than that of the characters of any other words on the self-adhesive sticker,
- the words 'appellation d'origine protégée'.

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

The geographical area extends to the following municipalities and parts of municipalities in the département du Finistère:

Brignogan-Plage, Cléder, Goulven, Île-de-Batz, Kerlouan, Lanhouarneau, Mespaul, Plouéan, Plouescat, Plougar (sections A1p, D1p, D2p), Plougoulm, Plouider (sections A2, AA, AB, AC, C2), Plounéour-Trez, Plounévez-Lochrist, Plouvorn (sections A1, A2p, A3, F1p, Gp), Plouzévéde, Roscoff, Saint-Pol-de-Léon, Saint-Vougay, Santec, Sibiril, Tréflaouéan, Tréflez, Trézilidé.

The geographical area of 'Oignon de Roscoff' is situated in the vegetable-growing area of Haut-Léon between Kerlouan in the west and Saint-Pol-de-Léon in the east, along the Channel coast. It is located on a plateau inclined towards the sea and stretches inland over an area of about 10 kilometres, which corresponds to an altitude of about 100 metres.

### 5. **Link with the geographical area:**

#### 5.1. *Specificity of the geographical area:*

Natural factors relevant to the link

The vegetable-growing area of Haut-Léon is located on a plateau inclined slightly towards the sea and crisscrossed with a network of small rivers joining the coast. The geographical area of 'Oignon de Roscoff' covers about 30 kilometres from east to west along the coastline of the plateau, an area where the altitude usually does not exceed 100 metres.

This geographical situation explains the highly particular climatic conditions prevailing in the geographical area, which benefits from the action of the Atlantic Ocean and the Channel. Sheltered from the ocean influences by the Monts d'Arrée, the geographical area is subjected to moderate rainfall that is evenly distributed throughout the year. Periods of summer drought and heavy rainstorms are rare. Furthermore, owing to the Gulf Stream, the Roscoff region has very mild winter temperatures with infrequent periods of frost, while the heat in the summers remains moderate. The dominant winds, which are north-easterly in the spring/summer, help propagate the maritime influence all the way to the southern reaches of the defined geographical area.

The geographical area rests on an ancient crystalline basement made up principally of granites from the Armorican Massif. The basement is covered with wind-blown silt, which is thickest along the coastline. These loamy deposits constitute soft and deep soils that are fertile and have a strong water-holding capacity. Ideally suited to its purpose, the area designated for the cultivation of the onions offers well exposed and ventilated land with healthy soils whose water reserve is sufficient for all irrigation needs.

Human factors relevant to the link

Introduced in the 17th century, the rosy-coloured onion started being cultivated in the Roscoff region during the 18th century to meet the needs of seafarers for foods that keep well. In the middle of the

19th century, the activities of the 'Johnnies', the nickname given by the British to the peasants of Roscoff who peddled onions, helped spread the reputation of 'Oignon de Roscoff' beyond the French borders. The know-how related to this production was passed on from one generation to the next and has been maintained up until the present day in the Roscoff region. The operators in the geographical area who are involved in the production of 'Oignon de Roscoff' have pooled their expertise in order to, over the years, select a variety adapted to the surroundings and establish its technical production itinerary, from the production of seeds to the final packaging of the product.

Already a long time ago, the combination of a suitable climate and well-adapted soils encouraged agriculture in the geographical area to specialise strongly in vegetable-growing, in contrast to the surrounding land, which is more oriented towards animal husbandry. The agricultural system of the vegetable-growing area of Haut-Léon in the Finistère is characterised by a dense network of small farms specialised exclusively in the production of field-scale vegetables and composed of small parcels separated from each other with a dwarf wall or an embankment.

#### 5.2. *Specificity of the product:*

'Oignon de Roscoff' is a medium-sized onion with a rounded shape.

It is distinguished from other onions by the rosy to rosy-coppery colour of its external scales and by the rosy edge of its internal scales. Its dry matter content is low.

One of the particularities of 'Oignon de Roscoff' is its natural capacity to be dormant for many months without needing to be treated with a chemical germination inhibitor, provided it is preserved appropriately. It has a long tail that is well attached to the bulb by the neck and can often be kept until the spring of the year following its harvest. Presented as braids or in containers of a limited weight, it is a fragile product owing to its low dry matter content and must be handled with care.

Whether eaten raw or cooked, 'Oignon de Roscoff' reveals specific organoleptic characteristics. When raw, it has an intense aroma marked generally by fruity notes. Its texture is particularly juicy, in addition to which it is usually characterised by crunchiness and a slight sharpness. It loses its sharpness when cooked. Its sweet taste is accentuated by concentration.

#### 5.3. *Causal link between the geographical area and the quality or characteristics of the product (for PDO) or a specific quality, the reputation or other characteristic of the product (for PGI):*

The Roscoff region provides a soil and climate that is well-suited to this delicate crop.

The soft and only slightly stony soils of the geographical area allow the bulbs to develop freely and grow harmoniously, which contributes to their rounded shape. The winds constantly blowing over the Brittany coast reduce the incidence of cryptogamic diseases of the foliage and bulbs. As heavy rainstorms are rare, this minimises the risk of seeds washing away and damage during the field drying of the onions. The quality and regularity of the appearance of 'Oignon de Roscoff' owe much to the combined effect of these favourable natural conditions.

The particularly mild winters of the Roscoff region make it possible to plant the crop early in the year, as frosts are rare after February. Selected in particular for their natural drying capacity, the parcels identified for the production of the onions allow the growth cycle of the plants to start up rapidly. This is essential in order to complete the cultivation without irrigation, which is a distinctive characteristic of 'Oignon de Roscoff'. The regular and moderate rainfall in the geographical area, on loamy soils that have a substantial water reserve, guarantee a regular hydrologic regimen for the crops. This in turn allows the onions to grow without stress. The but slight sharpness of the product results, in particular, from this regular supply of water.

The juicy quality, linked to the particular characteristics of the tunics of the onion, is typical of the 'Oignon de Roscoff' variety and results from the long-standing selection work carried out by operators in order to achieve this variety.

The sweet quality, linked to the particular characteristics of the 'Oignon de Roscoff' variety, develops when the onions are harvested while still slightly immature physiologically. This sweet sensation is accentuated by the but slight sharpness and in contact with small amounts of alliinase, the enzyme behind the hydrolysis of the sulphur compounds of alliums.

The location and history of the town of Roscoff have played a significant role in the creation and characteristics of the product, in particular its ability to keep naturally. The intense activity of the port of Roscoff in the 17th and 18th centuries explains why onions intended for the provisioning of the many ships chartered or calling at port there started being grown commercially. These onions, a source of vitamin C, helped prevent scurvy and constituted a basic foodstuff for seafarers, who were at sea for several weeks, even months, without calling at ports.

Furthermore, the geographical situation of Roscoff and its proximity to the English coast were crucial in establishing the flourishing trade with Great Britain at the root of the 'Johnnie' phenomenon and the reputation of the product. Braided as and when required and sold door to door, 'Oignon de Roscoff' had to keep during the entire selling period, until the following spring. These markets naturally drove producers to select varieties with a marked capacity to remain dormant.

This delicate crop requires great technical expertise, whether in choosing the parcels, planting and managing the crops, monitoring their health, synchronising the falling over of tops or lifting the crop at the optimal time. In order for 'Oignon de Roscoff' to reveal all its organoleptic qualities, especially its sweet taste and fruity odour, it must be harvested while still slightly immature physiologically in order to interrupt the growing and dilution of the bulbs. Every precaution must be taken later on during transport, drying and packaging in order to avoid damaging the tunics and preserve the quality of the product. This know-how has only been acquired gradually over time through the accumulated experience of several generations of producers who devoted themselves to this crop.

**Reference to publication of the specification:**

(Article 5(7) of Regulation (EC) No 510/2006)

<https://www.inao.gouv.fr/fichier/CDCOignonDeRoscoff.pdf>

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