

OTHER ACTS

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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

(2013/C 292/07)

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⁾.

APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION OF A TSG

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 509/2006**on agricultural products and foodstuffs as traditional specialities guaranteed ⁽²⁾****‘BACALHAU DE CURA TRADICIONAL PORTUGUESA’****EC No: PT-TSG-0007-0064****1. Name and address of the applicant group**

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2. Member State or Third Country

Portugal

3. Product specification**3.1. Name to be registered**

‘Bacalhau de Cura Tradicional Portuguesa’

The indication ‘Produced following the Portuguese tradition’, translated into the language of the country where the product is marketed, shall appear on the labelling.

3.2. Whether the name is specific in itself expresses the specific character of the agricultural product or foodstuff

The name denotes the specific nature of the product and the type of maturity to which the fish is subject, using a technique which has been well known since the 16th century.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 343, 14.12.2012, p. 1.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 93, 31.3.2006, p. 1. Replaced by Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012.

3.3. *Whether reservation of the name is sought under Article 13(2) of Regulation (EC) No 509/2006*

- Registration with reservation of the name
- Registration without reservation of the name

3.4. *Product type*

Class 1.7 — Fresh fish, molluscs and crustaceans and products derived therefrom

3.5. *Description of the agricultural product or foodstuff to which the name under point 3.1 applies*

'Bacalhau de Cura Tradicional Portuguesa' is a product which is obtained following the scaling, salting and drying of cod from the species *Gadus morhua*.

The finished uncooked product has the following characteristics:

Physical characteristics

External: a whole first-class fish, weighing more than 1,5 kg, with a characteristic uniform colouring which can vary between pale yellow and straw yellow.

Internal: when cut, the musculature should be consistent, yellowish in colour with a iridescent shine. The sliced surface should reveal the septa of connective tissue which separate the different bundles of muscle (flakes).

Chemical characteristics:

- moisture content of no more than 47 %,
- chloride content, expressed in % of NaCl, equal to or more than 20 %,
- protein content equal to or more than 26 %,
- total volatile basic nitrogen (TVB-N) content equal to or less than 35 mg/100 g,
- free amino nitrogen (FAN) content of between 95 mg/100 g and 120 mg/100 g,
- total trimethylamine oxide content equal to or less than 3 mg/100 g.

Organoleptic characteristics: 'Bacalhau de Cura Tradicional Portuguesa' has a characteristic aroma of dry salted cod, with a consistency and intense flavour which lingers in the palate and has a pronounced and pleasant aroma. Following cooking, its texture is homogeneous, succulent and tender. The 'flakes' separate easily, maintaining their consistency.

3.6. *Description of the production method of the agricultural product or foodstuff to which the name under point 3.1 applies*

The manufacturing process for 'Bacalhau de Cura Tradicional Portuguesa' consists of four essential stages: cleaning, salting, maturing/ageing and drying. However, there are other processes which as a whole characterise the production method, as described below:

Thawing: if required, this is carried out in specially designed containers. The containers are filled with clean running water, kept at temperatures of less than 18 °C, ensuring that the high quality of the fish is maintained.

Scaling: this is performed either by hand or by machine, with the fish kept at a temperature of between 0 °C and 8 °C. This process involves cutting the stomach of the cod, removing the upper two thirds of the vertebral column and the remainder of the swim bladder, leaving the traditional and characteristic aspect of cod butterfly (open). The fish should then retain the requisite quality requirements after full and proper scaling, which will improve the efficiency of the salting process.

Washing: the fish is thoroughly washed in clean water, removing all residual entrails and blood clots resulting from bleeding and evisceration, particularly in the fish's stomach area. The musculature should therefore be free of blood and remains of liver, with a uniform appearance and colour, and a full structure, and a glossy white colour and firm consistency. The skin must also be fully intact.

Salting: this is carried out immediately after washing on each fish individually, covering the stomach area with sufficient quantities of salt (approximately 0,33 kg of salt/kg of fish) and in a uniform manner. The cod is stacked in consecutive layers until the containers are filled, forming homogeneous layers, allowing for the brine to drain freely, hence the term 'dry salting' or 'free salting'. Over a minimum period of 30 days, the fish is subject to pressing in cold storage (10 ± 2 °C), with the relative air humidity varying between 80 % and 85 %.

The resulting product is referred to as green salted cod, and has the following chemical characteristics:

- protein: > 18 g/100 g,
- total volatile basic nitrogen (TVB-N) content: < 25 mg/100 g,
- free amino nitrogen (FAN) content: < 85 mg/100 g,
- trimethylamine nitrogen (TNC) content: < 2,5 mg/100 g,
- humidity: < 56 g/100 g,
- chloride (NaCl) content: > 18 g/100 g.

Maturing: the green salted fish is transferred, layer by layer, onto another pallet. Between each layer a sufficient quantity of salt is added, with the order of layers reversed as compared to the original layer. This results in a new pile of cod which is once again pressed. The fish must remain in cold storage for at least 30 days, at a temperature lower than or equal to 4 °C and in relative humidity of 80-85 %. Throughout this maturing process, there is an increase in volatile chemical compounds, which help develop the flavour and aroma characteristic of this product.

Washing: the fish is then thoroughly washed with clean water and brushed using special brushes to remove any residual salt and remaining mucous on the skin.

Draining: the washed fish is stacked on pallets and left to stand for two days, so that the water used for washing can run off freely.

Drying: this is necessary in order to extract more of the water contained in the tissue of the cod, until humidity of no more than 47 % is achieved. This drying can be done naturally or using artificial means. The natural process, commonly referred to as 'natural drying', can be performed in a passive manner by exposing the fish to wind and sunlight, provided the ambient air quality permits this. By lifting and stretching, the fish layers are stacked one on top of the other. The process is repeated as many times as is necessary in order to obtain the desired level of humidity (≤ 47 %). Artificial drying is carried out with a drying tunnel. This operation lasts for between two and four days, depending on the size of the cod. It is not conducted constantly, i.e. involving rest periods and at temperatures of between 18 °C and 21 °C, with a percentage of relative air humidity of between 45 % and 80 %.

Selection: this is carried out with the aim of selecting cod by size and quality, discarding fish which do not meet the requirements for the end product.

Storage/packaging: the salted, dried fish is packed in cardboard boxes suitable for containing food products, or placed on pallets, in cold storage refrigeration where the maturing process continues under controlled temperature (of between 2 °C and 4 °C) and relative air humidity (55-60 %) conditions for a period of no less than 90 days.

3.7. Traditional character of the agricultural product or foodstuff

The specific nature of common dried salted cod is the result of the following characteristics:

Raw materials:

- The raw material used is cod from the species *Gadus morhua* which is caught in the North Atlantic, fresh, and refrigerated or frozen at high sea, with the head removed and gutted, and with a weight of more than 3 kg.

Portugal has a strong tradition of cod fishing in the seas of the North Atlantic and this traditional process has always existed for treating this species of cod, which exists solely in and originates from the cold waters of the North Atlantic.

End product:

- yellow colour significantly darker,
- more intense flavour and taste,
- the flakes are more prominent and with a wider separation,
- higher salt content at the final stages of the production process,
- minimum weight of 1,5 kg at end of the production process.

When cooked in similar conditions, this product appears more consistent and has a more pronounced flavour and a more homogeneous texture, and is more juicy and tender, than common dried salted cod. The 'flakes' separate more easily, more intact and shinier.

3.8. *Traditional character of the agricultural product or foodstuff*

The first documents describing fishing activity and salt treatment in Portugal date from the mid-16th century. However, it was during the Portuguese discoveries of the 15th century that, motivated by the need to discover products that would not perish during long sea crossings, the Portuguese discovered the ideal fish in the northern seas of the Atlantic.

Pioneers in fishing of cod in Newfoundland (Canada) quickly introduced cod into the country's national eating habits, finding 'a thousand and one different ways' in which to cook it. Fishing in the large reefs of Newfoundland and Greenland was traditionally carried out in large sailing 'lugres' which were later replaced by trawler vessels. Fishing technology may have been different at the time, but the post-catch procedures for preparing and salting cod were no different.

The stages involving the scaling and preparation (deheading and gutting) of the fish were performed on board. The entire process carried out after the fish was boarded had to be performed, as is the case today, in strict hygiene and technical conditions.

In those days, salting was carried out between the first catch and unloading at the shipowner's on-land facility. The first fish to be caught and salted could have between four and five months' worth of salt, whereas the last to enter the hold — i.e. the first fish to leave — would have at least approximately 25 days' worth of salt (i.e. the duration of the return trip).

The level of maturity and maturing of the fish has always been one of the most important factors in the evolution of the fish industry, factors which have prematurely been associated with the need to use cold conditions (in processing and storage).

Amzalak tells us that drying warehouses were used in Aveiro since at least 1572, a sign that the preparation of dried cod, having been completed on the Portuguese mainland, was also carried out on stray fish, where catches would also involve salting on board.

The manufacturing process for 'Bacalhau de Cura Tradicional Portuguesa' complies with the traditional method: dehydration of the fish is, without doubt, the key stage in the process, which is why salting is always carried out first and then drying, with rest periods ensuring a rebalancing of osmosis. Free salting makes it possible for there to be gradual enzyme activity, leading to a good level of maturation, owing to the delay in penetration of salt into the cod.

Although processing technologies have changed considerably with the passing of the centuries, particularly in terms of cold conditions and drying, the traditional nature of this product is based on the raw materials which have always been used and the different phases of the traditional method of production, scaling, salting, maturation/aging and drying, which, re-creating the process and periods

for this product in the days of salting on board ships, ensure the proper maturing of cod at the time of green salting and following dry salting, providing the unique characteristics of flavour and aroma that traditionally characterise this product.

3.9. Minimum requirements and procedures to check the specific character

Minimum requirements

'Bacalhau de Cura Tradicional Portuguesa' has to meet the following specific requirements:

Physical and chemical characteristics and features of raw materials.

Method of salting (free salting).

Characteristics after salting in terms of NaCl and humidity.

A minimum period of 30 days for maturity of the green salty product, in cold storage.

Non-continuous drying.

Minimum period of 150 days for the production of 'Bacalhau de Cura Tradicional Portuguesa', as mentioned in point 3.6 of these document.

The weight of each cod (i.e. the finished product) cannot be less than 1,5 kg.

Physical, chemical and organoleptic characteristics.

Frequency of checks

Production units are subject to an initial and single certification audit, to examine risk assessment criteria.

The frequency of checks will depend on the result of that audit and the size of the batch produced, as shown in the table below:

For producers with a result of more than 70 % in the certification audit:

Batch size	Inspections	Chemical analysis	Microbiological analysis
Batch of < 5 tonnes	1	3	2
5 ≤ Batch ≤ 10 tonnes	1	6	4
Batch of > 10 tonnes	1	9	6

For producers with a result of between 50 % and 70 % in the certification audit:

Batch size	Inspections	Chemical analysis	Microbiological analysis
Batch of < 5 tonnes	2	3	2
5 ≤ Batch ≤ 10 tonnes	2	6	4
Batch of > 10 tonnes	2	9	6

For producers with a result of less than 50 % in the certification audit:

Batch size	Inspections	Chemical analysis	Microbiological analysis
Batch of < 5 tonnes	3	3	2
5 ≤ Batch ≤ 10 tonnes	3	6	4
Batch of > 10 tonnes	3	9	6

4. **Inspection body**

4.1. *Name and address*

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4.2. *Specific tasks of the authority or body*

The control body is responsible for verifying all information contained in the specifications and obligations.
