

SINGLE DOCUMENT

'PARMIGIANO REGGIANO'

EU No: PDO-IT-02202 — 14.11.2016

PDO (X) PGI ()

1. Name(s)

'Parmigiano Reggiano'

2. Member State or Third Country

Italy

3. Description of the agricultural product or foodstuff**3.1. Type of product**

Class 1.3. Cheeses

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

'Parmigiano Reggiano' is a hard cheese made from raw cow's milk, which is partially skimmed by allowing the cream to rise to the surface. The cheese is scalded and slowly matured. The milk must not undergo any heat treatment and has to come from cows fed primarily on fodder obtained in the area of origin. The cheese must be matured for at least 12 months. 'Parmigiano Reggiano' can be sold whole, in portions or grated.

'Parmigiano Reggiano' has the following characteristics:

- The cheeses are cylindrical with a slightly convex or virtually straight heel and flat faces with a slightly raised edge.
- The flat faces have a diameter of 35 cm to 45 cm and the heel height is 20 cm to 26 cm.
- The minimum weight of each cheese is 30 kg.
- The outer rind is a natural straw colour.
- The rind is approximately 6 mm thick.
- The body of the cheese is between light straw-coloured and straw-coloured.
- The cheese's characteristic aroma and taste are fragrant, delicate and flavoursome without being pungent.
- The body of the cheese is fine-grained and flaky in texture.
- The minimum fat content in dry matter is 32 %.
- The cheese contains no additives.
- It has a cyclopropane fatty acid ratio of less than 22 mg per 100 g of fat (already accounting for uncertainty of measurement, gas chromatography-mass spectrometry (CG-MS) method).

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

The cows are to be fed primarily on fodder from the defined geographical area, specified by quantity and quality.

At least 75 % of fodder dry matter must be produced within the geographical area.

Feedstuffs may make up at most 50 % of the dry matter of the feed ration.

The use of silage of any kind is banned.

Cow's milk, salt, calf rennet.

The milk is from cows reared in the defined geographical area.

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

The farms that rear the dairy cows whose milk is to be processed into 'Parmigiano Reggiano' must be located within the defined geographical area.

The milk must be produced and processed within the defined geographical area. The milk from the evening and morning milkings is delivered to the dairy raw and unskimmed, observing the production specifications. The milk from the morning milking is placed in copper vats and mixed with the milk from the previous evening, partially skimmed by allowing the cream to rise to the surface. The fat-to-casein ratio of the milk in the heating vats, calculated as the weighted average of all batches in a given day's production, cannot exceed 1,1 + 12%. The whey from the previous day's cheesemaking is added to the milk; the use of starter cultures is not permitted. Following coagulation, for which only calf rennet can be used, the curds are broken up and scalded. Once the cheese mass has sunk to bottom of the vat, it is set in moulds. Markings are then stamped onto the cheeses. After some days, the cheeses are soaked in brine and then matured for at least 12 months.

The minimum 12-month maturing period must take place in the defined geographical area.

After the minimum maturing period, a quality inspection is performed to check compliance with the production specifications.

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

'Parmigiano Reggiano' can be sold whole, in portions or grated.

In the interests of consumer protection, in order to guarantee the authenticity of pre-packaged, grated or portioned 'Parmigiano Reggiano' placed on the market, grating, portioning and subsequent packaging must take place in the defined geographical area. This is necessary because the markings that identify a whole cheese as 'Parmigiano Reggiano' are lost or are not visible on grated cheese or portions, so the origin of the pre-packaged product has to be guaranteed. This is also necessary because the cheese needs to be packaged quickly after portioning and using procedures that prevent it from becoming dehydrated or oxidised, or from losing its original 'Parmigiano Reggiano' organoleptic characteristics. Cutting into a wheel of cheese deprives the cheese of the natural protection afforded by the rind, which — itself being highly dehydrated — insulates the cheese very well against the surrounding environment.

Only the whole cheese bearing the protected designation of origin 'Parmigiano Reggiano' may be grated. It must be packaged immediately after grating and may not be subject to any processing or have any substance added to it that could affect how long the cheese keeps for or its original organoleptic characteristics.

'Parmigiano Reggiano' portions may be packaged at the same business premises on which they are cut.

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

The identity markings found on each 'Parmigiano Reggiano' cheese are the words 'Parmigiano-Reggiano' in pin-dot writing, together with the registration number of the dairy that produced it and the year and month of production, which are applied to the surface of the heel using stencils (marking strips). The cheeses also bear an oval stamp with the words 'Parmigiano Reggiano Consorzio Tutela', a casein nameplate with the codes identifying the cheese, and, as the case may be, the markings identifying a second-class cheese.

Pre-packaged, grated and portioned 'Parmigiano Reggiano' cheese placed on the market is identified by a logo depicting a segment and wheel of 'Parmigiano Reggiano' cheese next to a knife, with the words 'PARMIGIANO REGGIANO' appearing below. This marking, which is a mandatory component of the label, must be displayed in accordance with the technical specifications defined by the Consortium in the relevant agreement.

So that consumers can correctly identify its age, all pre-packaged 'Parmigiano Reggiano' portions of more than 15 g placed on the market must be labelled with minimum maturity.

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

The defined geographical area comprises the part of the province of Bologna to the left of the River Reno, the part of the province of Mantua to the right of the River Po, and the provinces of Modena, Parma and Reggio Emilia.

5. Link with the geographical area

Among the most important natural factors are the characteristics of the soil found within the defined geographical area — which extends from the Apennine ridge to the Po — coupled with climate conditions that directly influence both the composition of the natural flora and the fermentation of the cheese itself. With regard to human factors, as well as the historical importance of the cheese to the local economy, it should be noted that the complex operations performed on 'Parmigiano Reggiano' cheese have been developed over centuries of traditional cheesemaking practices within the production area, handed down from generation to generation with respect for authentic and unvarying local practices.

A fine-grained and flaky structure, a fragrant aroma, a delicate taste — flavoursome without being pungent — and high solubility and digestibility are distinguishing features of 'Parmigiano Reggiano' cheese.

These features reflect the unique qualities of the milk used for cheesemaking — raw milk is processed daily in copper vats and coagulated using calf rennet with a high rennin content — and the criteria used to select it, as well as the practice of soaking the cheeses in saturated brine and the extended maturation period.

The specific physical, chemical and microbiological properties of the milk that guarantee the specific characteristics and quality of 'Parmigiano Reggiano' cheese are basically the result of the diet fed to the dairy cows, based on fodder from the area of origin and with a strict ban on the use of silage of any kind. The minimum twelve-month maturing period, which — given the specific climate conditions present — must take place within the defined geographical area, is a necessary stage to bring about the specific enzyme processes through which the product obtained by processing milk can take on the characteristics that are unique to 'Parmigiano Reggiano'.

Reference to publication of the product specification

(the second subparagraph of Article 6(1) of this Regulation)

The consolidated specification text can be found at:

<http://www.politicheagricole.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/3335>

Alternatively:

by going directly to the homepage of the Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policy (www.politicheagricole.it) and clicking on 'Qualità' (at the top right-hand side of the screen), then on 'Prodotti DOP, IGP e STG' (on the left-hand side of the screen), and finally by clicking on 'Disciplinari di produzione all'esame dell'UE'.
