

OTHER ACTS

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

(2008/C 19/11)

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

SUMMARY

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006**‘LAPIN PORON LIHA’****EC No: FI/PDO/005/0352/15.07.2004****PDO (X) PGI ()**

This summary sets out the main elements of the product specification for information purposes.

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Composition: Producers/processors (X) Other ()

3. Type of product:

Class 1.1: Fresh meat (and offal)

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 93, 31.3.2006, p. 12.

4. Specification:

(Summary of requirements under Article 4(2) of Regulation (EC) No 510/2006)

4.1. Name: 'Lapin Poron liha'

- 4.2. *Description:* The name *Lapin Poron liha* is used to designate Lapland reindeer meat products in the food trade and in food marketing. The designation covers the carcasses of reindeer calves that are less than one year old and carcasses of adult reindeer (cows, steers and bulls) that are over a year old as well as their parts (cuts). Lapland reindeer meat is sold in whole, half and quarter carcasses or cut into carcass and muscle parts for direct use or for storage.

Reindeer (*Rangifer tarandus tarandus* L.) is a traditionally kept, privately owned, half-wild utility animal from Finland's reindeer husbandry area. It is a long-legged, four-toed member of the deer family (*Cervidae*), a herbivore and ruminant.

Reindeer meat is tender, dark and tastes of game. Reindeer meat fibres are thinner than those of beef or elk meat. Delicate reindeer meat is high in energy content, nearly equivalent to fattier beef. Reindeer meat is low in fat. There is very little fat in fillet steaks (without the membrane) or topside cuts. Fat is a visible layer on the topside and back. Reindeer fat is very rich in unsaturated fatty acids. Because of their beneficial effects, the fats of reindeer meat can be compared with fish fats. Reindeer fat and blood are also rich in polyunsaturated fatty acids. Reindeer meat has as many as 50-60 % of unsaturated oleic acids, which have been found to reduce harmful LDL cholesterol.

The protein content of reindeer meat is high (about 23 %) and it is rich in free amino acids. Reindeer meat is very rich in vitamins, the most important of which are the many B-group vitamins. It also has a lot of A and E vitamins. The vitamin E level is approximately 0,5 µg/100 g. Reindeer meat has 4-5 times more vitamin C than beef.

The mineral and trace-element levels of reindeer meat are higher than those of meat from other animals. Reindeer meat is rich in potassium, calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, sulphur, silicon, manganese, zinc and copper. Compared to beef and pork, the iron level of reindeer meat is particularly high, i.e. 3-5 mg/100 g. It is very rich in copper and selenium. It has 5-10 times more selenium than beef.

The vitamin levels of calf meat are higher than those of adult reindeer meat, reaching their peak in the autumn at slaughter time. In the autumn calf meat contains 2-3 % more protein than the meat of a female reindeer. The ash, magnesium and potassium content of calf meat is a little higher than that of a female reindeer. Calf meat has a lower fat content than that of adult animals and its energy content is lower. The meat's water content depends on the animal's age, nutritional state and time of slaughter. Average water content in the meat of an adult reindeer is 69 %, while it ranges between 71 % and 75 % in the case of calves.

The various characteristics of commercial meat types are set out in the Reindeer Herders' Association's reindeer meat classification (2005) for the reindeer industry (PE-PE5), in which the meat of adult reindeer and calves is sorted into its most appropriate uses.

- 4.3. *Geographical area:* The traditional production area of *Lapin Poron liha* is the Finnish reindeer husbandry area, which is located quite far North, between 65 °N and 70 °N. Under the Finnish Reindeer Husbandry Act (No 848/1990), the area includes the Province of Lapland (excluding the cities of Kemi and Tornio and the municipality of Kemijärvi), the municipalities of Hyrynsalmi, Kuivaniemi, Kuusamo, Pudasjärvi, Suomussalmi, Taivassalmi and Yli-Ii in the Province of Oulu and the areas North of the River Kiiminkijoki and the Puolanka-Hyrynsalmi road in the municipalities of Puolanka, Utajärvi and Ylikiminki.

4.4. *Proof of origin:* In order to obtain a 'Lapin Poron liha' label:

- the reindeer meat covered by the designation must originate from reindeer born and reared in the area defined in Section 4.3 which graze freely on natural pastures during the spring, summer, autumn and, for some of them, early winter before slaughter,
- according to the rules, instructions and industry recommendations, the production and handling of reindeer meat covers reindeer keeping, slaughter transport, processing (cutting), packaging and storage,

- the processing (cutting) and packaging of reindeer meat from the Finnish reindeer husbandry area must occur in a delineated geographical area, i.e. the reindeer husbandry area,
- reindeer meat is produced by professional reindeer rearers living in Finland's reindeer husbandry area who are familiar with the legislation on reindeer rearing and who operate in an organised manner as required by Finnish reindeer husbandry legislation.

Control of origin

Under Finnish reindeer husbandry legislation a reindeer owner ear tags the animal either immediately after its birth or at least no later than its arrival for slaughter.

When the reindeer have been sorted for slaughter and separated from those animals to be kept alive they are marked during sorting on the pastureland with a slaughter tag attached to the ear, so giving a number to the slaughter animal. The number follows the carcass until cutting. Cut meats are given a cutting and processing batch number, which follows the product as far as the consumer. Meat cutting rooms and meat product plants must record the carcasses and other meat entering the establishment as well as the meat sent out from it. Meat cutting rooms and meat product plants are supervised by the municipal supervisory authorities.

The director of the slaughterhouse and the veterinary inspector monitor reindeer slaughter in slaughterhouses. Slaughtering is carried out in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 854/2004 and Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Decree No 38/EEO/2006 on meat inspections. The sale of reindeer meat direct to the consumer from the place of slaughter or production (e.g. the sorting point or reindeer farm) is permitted.

The animals are reared, slaughtered and processed (cut up) in accordance with Community legislation, supporting national legislation and in part on the basis of recommendations issued by the Reindeer Herders' Association. Supervision is carried out by Evira, the Finnish Food Safety Authority, which operates under the authority of the competent Ministries. Controls are the responsibility of local food authorities and of each State Provincial Office.

- 4.5. *Method of production:* In the reindeer husbandry year of 2005-2006, 200 196 reindeer were left to live beyond the winter (breeding reindeer) in Finland. They produced a total of 116 488 calves, of which 94 115 were slaughtered in the autumn and early winter. Of the adult reindeer (cows, bulls and steers) 30 038 were slaughtered in the autumn and early winter.

About 70-75 % of the slaughter animals are 5 to 8 month old calves, with a slaughter weight of about 22 kg. The average weight of a slaughtered adult female is about 35 kg; the slaughter weight of the largest male reindeer can be 70-80 kg.

The slaughter rate at current authorised maximum levels is about 90 000-110 000 reindeer a year. Reindeer husbandry produces 2-2,5 million kg of meat annually, the value of production to reindeer owners being EUR 11-15 million/year.

Reindeer husbandry is practised through a system of reindeer herding cooperatives. Each reindeer herder is a member of a cooperative, of which there are 56 in total, 41 in the province of Lapland and 15 in the province of Oulu. These independent reindeer husbandry units have strictly defined boundaries and they vary in terms of their size and number of reindeer. Reindeer herders always follow the natural rhythm of the North when taking care of reindeer. Gathering the reindeer together is the most time-consuming task in reindeer husbandry. Other tasks on the ground include earmarking, counting, sorting, transporting and herding the reindeer, slaughtering them for personal use and providing them with additional feed where necessary. The reindeer graze freely on natural pastures during the spring, summer, autumn and early winter before slaughter. During this period they obtain all their feed from natural sources. The reindeer's summer feed may include as many as 350 plant species or more, mainly vascular plants. The most popular food plants in the summer include marsh plants as well as meadow- and other grasses growing along streams. Summer nutrition is easily digestible and rich in protein, vitamins, minerals and trace elements.

In the late summer and particularly in the autumn, the reindeer like to feed on mushrooms and spread out in the best mushroom areas. The reindeer eat mushrooms until snowfall and dig out what mushrooms remain from under the snow, even in early winter.

Lichens are important winter nutrition for reindeer. In many places, lichens account for 30-60 % of their winter diet. In the winter the reindeer also eat moss and plenty of shoots and they nibble at the branches of trees and shrubs. Beard and horsehair lichens, which grow on trees, are part of their winter diet, especially in the late winter when hard snowdrifts prevent digging down for lichen.

70-75 % of slaughter animals are 5-8 month old calves, to which additional feed has not been given. A few of the adult reindeer to be slaughtered are given supplementary feeds of hay produced in the reindeer husbandry area, either so that they can stay where they are until transfer to the field abattoir or during sortings when they take longer than usual. Supplementary feed is targeted in practice towards those breeding animals kept alive after the others are slaughtered and it is important to protect their food supply at times of ice and snow. Supplementary feed is given to 30-50 % of breeding animals over a 1 to 4 month period, depending on winter conditions. In numerical terms, supplementary feed is given to some 50 000 breeding animals in open countryside and to some 75 000 breeding animals in enclosed conditions while 75 000 breeding reindeer receive no supplementary feed whatsoever. Supplementary feeding ends in the spring, six to nine months before the reindeer are slaughtered. About 30 % of the fodder in the supplementary feed comes from outside the reindeer husbandry area.

The reindeer are slaughtered in the reindeer husbandry area in approved slaughterhouses meeting EU Regulations, fourteen cooperative-owned, four in private hands and one in a research facility. 4-5 % of the reindeer are slaughtered direct where they are reared and sold direct to the consumer.

Reindeer rearing, live reindeer transport, slaughter, the supervision of slaughter, meat inspection and the chilling, transport, storage of carcasses and waste management are all performed in accordance with Community legislation, national legislation and recommendations issued by the industry itself.

Lapland reindeer meat is sold in whole, half and quarter carcasses or cut into carcase and muscle parts for direct use or for storage. All processing (cutting) and packaging of reindeer meat covered by the designation takes place in a delineated geographical area, i.e. Finland's reindeer husbandry area. The reason for undertaking these activities in the reindeer husbandry area is to ensure product quality, particularly given the long distance transportation involved. At the same time efforts are made to check the origin of the product and to ensure that all products marketed under the *Lapin Poron liha* label satisfy the requirements laid down.

- 4.6. *Link:* Reindeer husbandry is an ancient livelihood. The oldest petroglyphs probably depicting reindeer date back more than 3 000 years. The first reliable information on reindeer herding in Europe dates from 892 AD. Wild reindeer was one of the earliest and most important game animals. The reindeer is originally a fell animal, half tamed from the Scandinavian wild fell deer. Deer hunting eventually led to reindeer husbandry, on which people could subsist in the Northernmost areas of Finland from the 17th century onwards.

The first literary reference to the reindeer as food and the excellence of reindeer meat as food dates from 1555, from the descriptions of Finland in the History of the Northern Peoples by Olaus Magnus. In the area corresponding to the current Finnish reindeer husbandry area, reindeer have been kept since the 18th century.

Reindeer meat is produced by professional reindeer rearers living in Finland's reindeer husbandry area, whose work is based on information on reindeer collected over the centuries; there are currently 5 037 reindeer owners in Finland, 800-1 000 of them Sámi.

In the summer, before they arrive for slaughter, reindeer graze on marshes, riverside meadows, fells and forest clearings. They provide the reindeer with an adequate supply of grasses, sedges, meadow-grasses and herbs. Summer nutrition is easily digestible and rich in protein, vitamins, minerals and trace elements. In autumn reindeer like to feed on mushrooms. The reindeer is the only large herbivore able to process energy from lichens in conditions where snow interrupts growth for the greater part of the year.

Reindeer meat is a unique, speciality product of the reindeer husbandry area. The reindeer meat covered by the designation must be produced from reindeer born and reared in the Finnish reindeer husbandry area and which graze freely on natural pastures during the spring, summer, autumn and early winter before slaughter.

The harsh Northern conditions, very distinguishable seasons (e.g. the midnight sun versus the long, cold, snowy winter) and highly nutritious summer feed make reindeer meat a unique product. The area's characteristics make the reindeer meat what it is: a gamey meat, but with its very own special taste, along with its other special characteristics.

4.7. *Inspection body:*

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- 4.8. *Labelling:* *Lapin Poron liha*, which is sold as whole, half and quarter carcasses, is marked with a '*Lapin Poron liha*' label attached to the carcass, followed by the words '*suojattu alkuperänsänsä*' (protected designation of origin) or the corresponding official Community symbol. Whether the meat has come from an adult animal or a calf is also indicated. Carcasses or meat cuts are packed for storage and sale in vacuum packaging for example and the covering is marked with the '*Lapin Poron liha*' mark (e.g. a stamp or sticker), followed by the words '*suojattu alkuperänsänsä*' (protected designation of origin) or the corresponding official Community symbol. Whether the meat has come from an adult animal or a calf is also indicated. The corresponding markings are required in the case of meat sold direct.
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