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(Announcements)

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 118/15)

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.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006

'HUITRES MARENNES OLÉRON'

EC No: FR/PGI/005/0591/16.02.2007

PGI (X) PDO ()

1. Name

'Huîtres Marennes Oléron'

2. Member State or Third Country

France

3. Description of the agricultural product or foodstuff

3.1. Type of product

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

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

Huîtres Marennes Oléron are oysters which are matured or bred on oyster beds. They are not open sea oysters.

Depending on the degree of transformation of the product after it has been placed on oyster beds, which is basically measured using the filling power index (*ratio* of drained flesh to total weight × 100), the *Huître Marennes Oléron* is classified:

- from 7 to 10,5, as a fine fattened oyster,
- above or equal to 10,5, as a special fattened oyster,
- above or equal to 12, as a special oyster grown on an oyster bed.

⁽¹⁾ OJL 93, 31.3.2006, p. 12.

From an organoleptic point of view:

- a Fine Fattened Oyster is rich in water content and balanced with a fine flesh flavour,
- the Green Fine Fattened Oyster has the characteristics of the fine fattened oyster and a green hue around the gills as a result of it becoming green naturally on a 'green' oyster bed,
- a Special Fattened Oyster is round, voluminous in the mouth, and is noticeably softer,
- the Green Special Fattened Oyster has the characteristics of the special fattened oyster and a green hue around the gills as a result of it becoming green naturally on a 'green' oyster bed,
- a Special Oyster Grown on an Oyster Bed, with a sizeable amount of flesh, is firm and crispy, ivory in colour and has a pronounced, long-lasting taste in the mouth.

The *Huîtres Marennes Oléron* are sold alive and are not processed.

3.3. Raw materials

Not applicable

3.4. Feed (for products of animal origin only)

Not applicable

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

The maturing or breeding of *Huîtres Marennes Oléron* must take place in oyster beds situated in the identified geographical area.

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

Packaging and dispatch of the *Huîtres Marennes Oléron* must take place within the identified geographical area in order to preserve their quality and to ensure better sanitary conditions through speed of execution, and in order to guarantee their origin.

To safeguard their quality and ensure better sanitary conditions for the product, the oysters must be packaged within 24 hours of being fished. The oyster bed worker ensures that the sanitary condition of the oysters is good and monitors the sanitary condition of the oysters that they dispatch. Each consignor is subject to a collective multi-year plan of sanitary own checks, as part of which sampling and bacteriological analyses are carried out. Quality is also guaranteed by means of a final check before packaging, carried out by qualified or managerial staff, in order to eliminate empty, badly formed or soiled oysters. The oysters must be packaged flat, with the cupped valve on the bottom, to guarantee the most favourable preservation conditions possible. The packages are secured tightly and the baskets are adapted to the quantity of oysters packaged, in order to prevent the oysters from moving.

To guarantee the origin of the product, the consignor keeps a register to monitor the products (in batches) and this allows them to be tracked at all stages of the process. In accordance with current legislation (Decree 94-340) each consigning establishment must be approved by the veterinary services (EC No) as a consigning establishment of live shellfish.

On no account can the product be transported loose or presented for sale out of its original packaging.

3.7. Specific rules concerning labelling

Apart from the indications required by current legislation, the following items which are specific to *Huîtres Marennes Oléron* are mentioned on the labelling:

- the geographical name: 'Huîtres Marennes Oléron',
- the logo for 'Huîtres Marennes Oléron',
- the logo of the Protected Geographical Indication,
- the commercial name of the product:
 - 'Huîtres Fines de Claires', with the specification: 'affinées en claires à Marennes Oléron',
 - 'Huîtres Fines de Claires Vertes', with the specification: 'affinées en claires à Marennes Oléron',

- ‘Huîtres Spéciales de Claires’, with the specification: ‘affinées en claires à Marennes Oléron’,
- ‘Huîtres Spéciales de Claires Vertes’, with the specification: ‘affinées en claires à Marennes Oléron’,
- ‘Huîtres Spéciales Pousse en Claire’.

4. Concise definition of the geographical area

The geographical area for maturing on oyster beds, breeding on oyster beds, packaging and dispatching *Huîtres Marennes Oléron* is the area of the Bassin de Marennes Oléron.

This includes twenty-seven communes: Le Gua, Nieulle-sur-Seudre, St Just-Luzac, Marennes, Bourcefranc-le-Chapus, Hiers-Brouage, Moëze, Saint Froult, Port des Barques, Beaugeay, Soubise, Saint Nazaire (right-bank of the Seudre: 12 communes), La Tremblade, Etaules, Chaillevette, L'Eguille, Arvert, Breuillet, Mornac (left-bank of the Seudre: 7 communes), Saint Trojan, Grand Village, Le Château d'Oléron, Saint Pierre d'Oléron, Dolus, Saint Georges d'Oléron, La Brèe les Bains, Saint Denis d'Oléron (Ile d'Oléron: 8 communes).

5. Link with the geographical area

5.1. Specificity of the geographical area

The principle activity of the Bassin de Marennes Oléron is shellfish farming. Oyster farming is carried out on tidal land (for breeding) and salt marshes (for maturing and breeding).

The oyster beds are often former salt marshes, they are shallow basins located on the edges of the Seudre or on the coast between the île d'Oléron and the mainland. They are fed through the action of gravity by brackish waters (mixture of sea water and freshwater) when the tide comes up through channels.

The oyster bed has an environment which is very rich in minerals and nutrients, and allows phytoplankton, on which oysters feed, to grow. Oysters filter the water with their developed gills and effectively benefit from the nutritional resource specific to the oyster bed. By taking in this nourishment specific to the oyster bed within several hours, the oyster becomes transformed by means of a significant renewal of its cellular tissues and, in turn, acquires the characteristics of this particular environment.

5.2. Specificity of the product

Huîtres Marennes Oléron are oysters which are matured or raised on oyster beds, and this confers on them a more refined taste (less bitter and iodized) than that of open sea oysters, better resistance to decreases in water levels and therefore they are better preserved, a quality shell (outside free from parasites and inside renacred), a green hue around the gills (for the Fine Fattened Green Oysters or the Special Fattened Green Oysters) and natural purification. Breeding on oyster beds allows, in addition to the characteristics gained from maturing on oyster beds, the oysters to grow significantly (flesh and shell), and gives them a very specific texture and flavour.

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

Huîtres Marennes Oléron are the product of:

- a particular environment, the oyster bed, characterised by a geomorphological configuration and a unique and specific hydraulic system,
- the knowledge of the oyster bed worker of the environment and the product which has been passed down over the centuries and has given rise to breeding and maturing in oyster beds,
- a shellfish, the oyster, perfectly adapted to this environment.

The principal organoleptic characteristics which are transformed after maturing or breeding in oyster beds are:

- improved presentation: certain organisms which colonise the outsides of the open sea oyster shells, such as barnacles and macrophytic algae, recede or disappear. Furthermore, being placed in oyster beds enables the oyster to increase the solidity of the insides of its shell by means of a renacring effect,

- improved quality outside the water: the quality of the packaged oysters is significantly superior where they come from oyster beds, as the strengthened shells which are the result of placement in oyster beds limits the inter-valvular loss of water during decreases in the water level,
- a more refined taste: the clay and mineral content of the soil and the walls is specific to the oyster bed. It helps to build up a nutritious substratum which is important for the development of the oyster's nourishment. Oysters placed in beds have access to this nourishment which is specific to the bed. This specific nourishment gives the oyster its 'oyster bed taste'. Additionally, the salty taste is generally mitigated by the placement on the bed,
- acquisition of the green hue around the gills (not systematic): the wall of the oyster beds can naturally become covered by a diatom known as *Navicula ostrea* which produces a blue pigment. By filtering water from the bed, the oyster becomes pigmented around its gills. The blue pigment of the diatoma together with the natural colour of the gills turns the latter green,
- the growth gain of the oyster (solely for breeding on beds): when bred on oyster beds, the oysters grow significantly and generally double their initial weight. Bound to the extremely rich environment of the oyster bed in these conditions, the flesh is very considerable in size and the oyster acquires a pronounced taste of the oyster bed.

Reference to publication of the specification

http://agriculture.gouv.fr/spip/IMG/pdf/cdc_igp_huitres_maren.pdf
