

Brussels, 27 August 2002

Commission launches website on applications to register EU quality products

As from today, the applications for registration of a product as a 'Protected Designation of Origin' (PDO), a 'Protected Geographical Indication' (PGI) or a 'Traditional Speciality Guaranteed' (TSG) can be consulted on the web site of the Directorate-General for Agriculture. This new service should contribute to more transparency, simplification and effectiveness in the consultation procedure before registration of a PDO/PGI/TSG. The rules on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin of agricultural products and foodstuffs¹ and the rules on certificates of specific character for agricultural products and foodstuffs² foresee that at least six months before finally registering a product, the European Commission has to publish the main characteristics of the application request in the Official Journal of the European Communities. The publication of the application for registration confers the right to object to this request. Consequently, a transparent registration procedure is the pre-requisite for other parties concerned to exercise their right of objection. In order to facilitate the consultation of the requests published in the various issues of the Official Journal all pending registrations can now be consulted at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/agriculture/foodqual/protoc/firstpub/index_en.htm

Throughout Europe there is an enormous range of great foods. However, when a product acquires a reputation extending beyond national borders it can find itself in competition with products which pass themselves off as the genuine article and take the same name. This unfair competition not only discourages producers but also misleads consumers. That is why, in 1992, the European Union created systems known as PDO (Protected Designation of Origin), PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) and TSG (Traditional Speciality Guaranteed) to promote and protect food products.

A *PDO (Protected Designation of Origin)* covers the term used to describe foodstuffs which are produced, processed and prepared in a given geographical area using recognised know-how.

In the case of the *PGI (Protected Geographical Indication)* the geographical link must occur in at least one of the stages of production, processing or preparation. Furthermore, the product can benefit from a good reputation.

¹ Council Regulation (EC) No 2081/92 of 14 July 1992 on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs

² Council Regulation (EC) No 2082/92 of 14 July 1992 of on certificates of specific character for agricultural products and foodstuffs

A TSG (*Traditional Speciality Guaranteed*) does not refer to the origin but highlights traditional character, either in the composition or means of production.

Why do we have a European system for developing and protecting foodstuffs?

- To encourage diverse agricultural production
- To protect product names from misuse and imitation
- To help consumers by giving them information concerning the specific character of the products

How can one find out which products are registered?

Detailed information on the products already registered as PDO/PGI or TSG can be found at: http://europa.eu.int/comm/agriculture/foodqual/quali1_en.htm

How do producers and processors go about registering a product name?

- A group of producers must define the product according to precise specifications.
- The application, including the specifications, must be sent to the relevant national authority ...
- ... where it will be studied first and thereafter transmitted to the Commission.
- Here the application will undergo a number of control procedures.
- If it meets the requirements, a first publication in the Official Journal of the European Communities will inform those in the Union who are interested.
- If there are no objections, the European Commission publishes the protected product name in the Official Journal of the European Communities and on its website.