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Publication of an application pursuant to Article 50(2)(a) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 November 2012 on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs

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.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

Council Regulation (EC) No 510/2006 on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs*

'ŠTAJERSKI HMELJ'

EC No: SI-PDO-0005-01191 – 10.01.2014

PGI ( )PDO (X)

1. NAME

'Štajerski hmelj'

2. MEMBER STATE OR THIRD COUNTRY

Slovenia

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT OR FOODSTUFF

3.1. Type of product

Class 1.8. Other products of Annex I of the Treaty (spices etc.)

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

The hop plant is a herbaceous perennial climbing plant. It is dioecious, which means that that a single specimen will have either male or female inflorescences only. Only the female inflorescences are of economic interest, since it is only on female plants that hop cones develop.

Štajerski hmelj is the cultivated dried hop cones and the products made from them in the form of hop pellets or hop extracts. Typical hop products include type 90 pellets, type 45 pellets, which are enriched with lupulin, and CO_2 and ethanol hop extracts. Pellet-making entails grinding and pressing the hops, while hop extract is made using a solvent such as CO_2 and ethanol to separate the contents from the pellets.

Štajerski hmelj is used almost entirely (99%) for brewing beer, giving beer its characteristic bitterness and the flavour imparted by the hop bitters and essential hop oils. Štajerski hmelj is known around the world for its characteristic fine aroma, and is distinguished by its relatively high quantity of essential oil and the exceptional balance between its aromatic components.

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* Replaced by Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 November 2012 on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs.

Approximately 3 % of total global hop production comes from the defined geographical area. Štajerski hmelj includes the following Slovenian hop varieties: Styrian Savinjski Golding, Aurora, Atlas, Ahil, Apolon, Bobek, Buket, Blisk, Celeia, Cekin, Cicero, Cerera, Dana, Styrian Gold and Styrian Eureka. The highest production levels are for the Aurora, Bobek, Celeia and Styrian Savinjski Golding varieties. A low percentage of overall production comes from the more recent varieties, Dana and Styrian Gold, followed by some new varieties that are still in the testing phase. The varieties are classified as fine aroma and aroma hops (Aurora, Bobek, Celeia, Savinjski Golding) and bittering hops (Dana).

Štajerski hmelj is distinguished by its fine hop aroma, with herbal, fruit or flower notes.

3.3. Raw materials (for processed products only)

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3.4. Feed (for products of animal origin only)

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

Every step of Štajerski hmelj production, including storage and drying, must take place within the defined geographical area.

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

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3.7. Specific rules concerning labelling

Štajerski hmelj is labelled with a common logo for Štajerski hmelj.

4. CONCISE DEFINITION OF THE GEOGRAPHICAL AREA

Štajerski hmelj is produced in the geographical area that stretches along the border of the Styrian (Štajerska) region towards the south, where the border continues along the Sava river. To the south-east the production area's boundary is formed by the national border with Croatia, to the north by the national border with Austria, while to the east the hop-growing area ends at the Mura river.

5. LINK WITH THE GEOGRAPHICAL AREA

5.1. Specificity of the geographical area

The use of hops in brewing beer in the territory of present-day Slovenia is mentioned as early as around 1160 in the land registry records of the Škofja Loka manor, which belonged to the archbishopric of Freising. More intense hop production started to develop after 1870, in the Savinja valley. The largest area lies across the basin of the Savinja river, in the lower Savinja valley, which comprises a broad plain along the

Savinja and its tributaries between Soteska and Celje and the valley to the south of Celje that cuts diagonally into the hills known as the Posavsko Hribovje. The hop cultivation area also includes the Mislinja valley, which spreads from Mislinjski Graben, in the upper course of the river, down between the Pohorje massif and the eastern Karavanke mountains into the Slovenj Gradec basin in the middle course. The valley continues below the foothills of Uršlja Gora to the west and the Pohorje massif to the east. Significant production areas are also found along the Drava river, between the settlements of Muta and Radlje ob Dravi and along the Drava's lower course near Ptuj and Ormož.

Several rivers (the Savinja, Mislinja, Drava and Mura) flow through the geographical area of production for Štajerski hmelj and have a significant influence over the growth and development of the plants and the quality of the product. The predominant soil on the fluvial terraces of these rivers is eutric cambisol lying on medium-deep to deep sandy gravel, which are classified as cambic soils. These are the most suitable soils for hop production.

Temperature is another major factor dictating the rate of growth and development for hop plants. The biological growth processes for hops start in spring, when the average daily air temperature is higher than 4 to 5°C for several consecutive days. Optimal hop growth takes place in temperatures between 15 and 18°C. The lowest temperature during the growing season that still enables normal hop growth is 10°C. Over the period from pruning to the onset of technological maturity, hops need a sum of effective temperatures between 1 700 and 1 900°C. Conditions in the Lower Savinja valley from April to August have been found to provide a sum of active temperatures between 2 400 and 2 500°C. Between 1995 and 2000 the average sum of active temperatures from the day the 5°C threshold was crossed to the technological maturity of the hop was 2 490°C for Styrian Savinjski Golding, and 2 560°C for Aurora. An average sum of effective temperatures was also defined for after the 5°C threshold was passed, which was 1 699°C for Styrian Savinjski Golding and 1 751°C for Aurora. The active and effective temperature values defined for hops are reached across the entire area of hop production in Slovenia.

Hops require 500 to 600 mm of precipitation during the growing season. During the growing season (April to September) an average of 690 mm of rain falls in the geographical area.

5.2. Specificity of the product

The geographical area has a major influence on the production of hops. The climate, soil and hop-growing tradition all contribute to the quality of Štajerski hmelj. Transplanting the hops outside the defined geographical area also changes the characteristics of the varieties to some extent.

Štajerski hmelj is distinguished by the excellent balance of its aromatic components, and its relatively high level of essential oil, which makes Štajerski hmelj famous all over the world.

The quality, uniformity and stability of the product have been further improved by targeted breeding, which has led to the development of new Slovenian hop varieties. The Styrian Savinjski Golding variety has been followed by new, local Slovenian varieties that maintain the characteristically pleasing hop aroma, with a range of

different fruit and flower notes. These varieties enjoy a unique and positive reputation around the world and give beer a pleasant, rounded bitterness and high quality flavour.

Štajerski hmelj is well known to numerous microbreweries, as well as all the giants of global beer production. Štajerski hmelj is highly prized and rated as of the highest quality at international exhibitions and tastings organised by established beer connoisseurs.

Cultivating plants from high quality planting material and mother plants free of viruses and viroids also has an impact on the quality of the hops produced.

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

The causal link between the major influence of environmental factors on the quality of Štajerski hmelj is demonstrable in the case of the Styrian Savinjski Golding varieties. The English Fuggle variety was introduced from England at the end of the nineteenth century, with its ecotype the Styrian Savinjski Golding becoming particularly well established after 1926, when other more sensitive varieties were destroyed by hop peronospora. Although Styrian Savinjski Golding belongs genetically to the Fuggle group, the quality of its essential oils differs from the Fuggle varieties. This is the result of influences from the geographical area of production, which are expressed in the composition and quality of the oils. A comparison of individual essential oil components from several samples of the two varieties indicates that Styrian Savinjski Golding has a lower maximum value of beta-caryophyllene, giving it a higher maximum value for the ratio between alpha-humulene and beta-caryophyllene. The alpha-humulene-to-beta-caryophyllene ratio is one of the main indicators of quality for hop aroma. The maximum values of farnesene and linalool – two further indicators of a fine hop aroma – are higher in Styrian Savinjski Golding than Fuggle samples (as recorded in many years of comparative analysis by the Slovenian Institute for Hop Research and Brewing (IHPS)). It is precisely this variety, Styrian Savinjski Golding, that has given Štajerski hmelj (Styrian hops or Steirer Hopfen) its reputation within the trade all over the world.

The link between hop production and the hop-growing area is also demonstrated by numerous results from more than 60 years of work by the IHPS.

Hop production has a very long tradition in Slovenia. The first major guide on hops in Slovenian was published as early as 1852 in Janez Bleiweiss's journal on farming, crafts and cultural matters *Novice kmetijskih, obertnijskih in narodnih reči.* Numerous newspaper cuttings going back to the nineteenth century bear witness to the quality of Štajerski hmelj. Štajerski hmelj was mentioned in 1883 in *Gospodarska priloga* (the Business Supplement) of the Styrian Business Association, which states that Štajerski hmelj went on sale in Nuremburg in 1883 for the first time.

The reputation of Štajerski hmelj has been maintained to this day, some of the credit for which being attributable to the traditional hop celebrations, such as the August hop-growers' festival in Braslovče (Praznik hmeljarjev v Braslovčah), and the hop-

growers feast (Hmeljarski likof) celebrated at the start of October in Žalec, as well as the annual selection of the elder and princess of the hops. Some years ago the Eco-Museum of Hop-Growing and the Brewing Industry was opened in Žalec,with a focus on the hop-growing tradition in Slovenia.

Many customers swear by the high quality of the hops produced, which they say are an essential part of their beer-making work. The hop trade in Slovenia is very much export-oriented, with exports to foreign markets constituting over 95 % of production for many years now. Štajerski hmelj has a great reputation in many countries around the world and on every continent, primarily under the English version of its name: Styrian hops. For most brewers around the world, Štajerski hmelj is today synonymous with quality and it enjoys an excellent global reputation.

Reference to publication of the specification

(Article 5(7) of Regulation (EC) No 510/2006*)

http://www.mko.gov.si/fileadmin/mko.gov.si/pageuploads/podrocja/Varna_in_kakovostna_hrana_in_krma/zasciteni_kmetijski_pridelki/Specifikacije/stajerski_hmelj_specifikacija.pdf

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