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SINGLE DOCUMENT

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

'Carmarthen Ham '

EC No

PGI (✔) **PDO** ( )

1. NAME

'Carmarthen Ham '

2. MEMBER STATE OR THIRD COUNTRY

United Kingdom

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT OR FOODSTUFF

3.1. Type of product

Class 1.2 Meat-based products.

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

Carmarthen Ham is an air dried salt cured ham made from pork legs. The ham is hung at an ambient temperature of 16-26 degrees centigrade for a period of 6 to 9 months. The age of Carmarthen Ham is counted from the first day of salting

The finished ham has a rounded external shape at the base and is tapered to the top. Externally a whole Carmarthen Ham is dark beige colour and the skin (or rind) has a hard dry “leathery” feel.

When sliced, Carmarthen Ham has a uniform rich deep pink to dark red colour, with interspersed cream coloured fat throughout. It has a slight salty, sweet pork taste and a soft springy texture. It has a delicate and mellow flavour with salty overtones, providing a balanced sensation between tenderness and a tendency to melt. Carmarthen Ham has a characteristic delicate aroma typical of air dried ham. The ham disintegrates when pulled and has a silky soft texture.

Chemical composition of Carmarthen Ham:

	Grams/100grams
Protein content	26.8
Carbohydrate content	0.0
Of which sugars	0.0
Fat content	5.9

* 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

Of which saturates	2.5
Monounsaturates	2.8
Polyunsaturates	0.5
Energy value	673.9KJ/100grams
	160.3Kilocalories/100 grams

The layer of fat which is a cream on the surface below the rind must not exceed the maximum acceptable depth of 5mm.

The hams are presented and marketed as whole hams or boned, sliced and packed in pieces of various weights and shapes according to customer requirements.

3.3. Raw materials (for processed products only)

Fresh pig hind legs weighing 8-10kgs.

Cooking salt

Preservatives (Potassium Nitrate (E252) Sodium Nitrite (E250))

3.4. Feed (for products of animal origin only)

N/A

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

- trimming and shaping of the pork legs
- application of preservative
- salting
- rinsing
- netting
- ripening or maturing of the ham

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

N/A

3.7 Specific rules concerning labelling

N/A

4 CONCISE DEFINITION OF THE GEOGRAPHICAL AREA

The designated geographical area encompasses an area around Carmarthen town. Travel in a north westerly direction from where the River Taf enters Carmarthen Bay towards St Clears. Take the B4299 in a northerly direction through the village of Meidrim until it meets the B4333. Then travel in a south-easterly direction on the B4333 reaching the village of Conwyl Elfed. From Conwyl Elfed travel in a southerly direction to Bronwydd Arms on the A484 and then go in a North Easterley direction on the B4301 to the village of Pontarsais. After Pontarsais travel southwards on the A485 to the village of Abergwili and then follow the A40 in a easterly direction to Nantgaredig From Nantgaredig go in a southerly direction on the B4310 and then south easterly direction keeping on the B4310 all the way to the village

of Drefach.((the B4310 crosses the A48) After reaching the village of Drefach follow the river Gwendraeth through Kidwelly and into Carmarthen Bay.

5 LINK WITH THE GEOGRAPHICAL AREA

5.1 Specificity of the geographical area

Pig keeping/farming has had a long history of association with Wales and West Wales. In 1922 the Welsh pig Society was formed originally (in West Wales) and this society was instrumental in developing The Pedigree Welsh Pig breed.

Pig keeping in Wales derived largely from the "tyddyn" small holder or peasant tradition with smallholders rearing one or two weaners to fatten and slaughter in the winter for their own consumption. Rearing methods were small scale extensive and non commercial often using waste foodstuff and whey which historically was a byproduct from small scale on farm butter and cheesemaking. The use of waste feed stuffs provided a cheap method of rearing their pigs and secured meat for their tables. Traditional rearing methods were practiced with traditionally pigs being kept on straw or allowed to roam outdoors especially in woodlands foraging for acorns or eating windfall apples from orchards.

Although historically lamb and beef would often be sold at market as they would command higher prices the pig was kept for the Welsh farmers own consumption. All parts of the pig were utilised and no part of the pig was ever wasted. Fresh products such as faggots would be made on the day from the offal, the head would be brined to make brawn the intestines would be used as casings for fresh sausages, fresh meat and the sides and hams were cured and preserved for the coming year.

Welsh families have been curing welsh pork in dry salt to preserve them for generations. In the autumn surplus fresh meat was put in salt to preserve it in order to feed the family over the winter months, however, with the advent of freezers and fridges in the 1950s the art of curing began to decline. In all parts of Wales this ancient art of preservation of pork legs which were traditionally eaten fried or boiled at the age of 3 months has continued. In the late 1970s in the Carmarthen area, there was a demand for maturing hams longer than the three months and eating the ham raw like the continental hams. This was how Carmarthen Ham evolved and its production remains very much a cottage industry

5.2 Specificity of the product

As a cottage industry, the production of Carmarthen Ham is dependent upon savoir faire, skill and experience which have been passed down from one generation to the next primarily through one family. Specific skills and experience are required throughout the process but in particular at the following stages:-

- The shaping of the legs, to remove excess fat and flesh –to produce the specific desired shape which is a rounded external shape at the base and tapered to the top.
- The exact quantities of preservatives and salt added will vary very slightly according to weight and size of the ham, and time of the year when the ham is being produced. With heavier, larger hams, very slightly more salt and preservatives is required. Hams made when the ambient temperatures are higher during summer months also require slightly more salt and preservatives to preserve them compared to hams made during cooler winter months but amounts used would not exceed the maximum levels determined by EU legislation.

- The re applying and massaging of the salt into the ham. Moisture is removed from the flesh of the ham by the addition of the salt. Skill is required to know when sufficient moisture has been removed to produce Carmarthen Ham. This is achieved by assessing the firmness of the muscle and is a "feel" which is a skill passed down from one generation to the next.
- Monitoring the maturing of the hams and determining the "readiness" of the ham by feeling the ham for its firmness and dryness. Externally a whole Carmarthen Ham is dark beige in colour and the skin (or rind) has a hard dry "leathery" feel. Recognising the correct "feel" of the mature Carmarthen Ham is a skill passed down from one generation to the next.

The combination of savoir faire and experience at the above stages produces a product that when sliced, has a uniform rich deep pink to dark red colour, with interspersed cream coloured fat throughout. It has a slight salty, sweet pork taste and a soft springy texture. It has a delicate and mellow flavour with salty overtones, providing a balanced sensation between tenderness and a tendency to melt. Carmarthen ham has a characteristic delicate aroma typical of air dried ham. The ham disintegrates when pulled and has a silky soft texture.

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)

Small scale extensive pig keeping has had a long history of association with Wales and West Wales as proven by the formation of the Welsh Pig Society in West Wales in 1922 and its instrumental role in the development of the Pedigree Welsh Pig breed. Although historically Welsh farmers sold their lamb and beef at market the small number of pigs that were kept, were destined for the farming families own consumption.

As a result, Welsh families have been curing welsh pork in dry salt to preserve them for generations. All parts of the pig were utilised and no part of the pig was ever wasted. In the autumn surplus fresh meat was put in salt to preserve it in order to feed the family over the winter months, however, with the advent of freezers and fridges in the 1950s the art of curing began to decline. In all parts of Wales this ancient art of preservation of pork legs which were traditionally eaten fried or boiled at the age of 3 months has continued. In the late 1970s in the Carmarthen area, there was a demand for maturing hams longer than the three months and eating the ham raw like the continental hams, this led to the evolution of Carmarthen Ham.

The production of Carmarthen Ham has always been and remains very much a cottage industry and is dependent upon savoir faire, skill and experience which has been passed down from one generation to the next. Specific skills and experience are required throughout the process but in particular at the shaping of the legs, the reapplying, massaging of the salt into the ham and determining the readiness of the ham by recognising the correct "feel" of the ham by "feeling" the ham for its firmness and dryness.

The unique characteristics of Carmarthen Ham with its slight salty, sweet pork taste delicate mellow flavour and a soft springy texture provides a balanced sensation between tenderness and a tendency to melt. These characteristics of Carmarthen Ham as a quality product are widely recognised and in demand by consumers throughout Wales, UK and overseas.

Carmarthen Ham has been served in Royal Garden Parties and in many famous hotels and restaurants, including The Celtic Manor during the prestigious Ryder Cup in 2010. Carmarthen Ham has also been featured regularly on television programmes and in the press.

Carmarthen Ham was awarded a Great Taste Awards for the Best Welsh Speciality

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Reference to publication of the specification

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

https://whitehall-admin.production.alphagov.co.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/309969/carmarthen-ham-product-specification-20140506.pdf

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