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Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

EU protected food names scheme: protected designation of origin

Staffordshire cheese

Product specification

"Staffordshire Cheese"

PDO (*) PG ( )

1. Responsible Department in the Member State:

Name: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)

Area 3A

Nobel House

Smith Square

London

SW1P 3JR

United Kingdom

Tel: 0207 238 6075

Fax: 0207 238 5728

Email: Protectedfoodnames@defra.gsi.gov.uk

2. Group:

Name: The Staffordshire Cheese Company

Address: Glenmore House

55 Rose Bank

Leek

Staffordshire ST13 6AG

United

Kingdom **Tel:**

01538 399733 **Fax:** 01538 399985

Email: jknox1066@aol.com

Composition: Producer/processors (X) Others (X)

3. Type of product:

Cheese – class 1.3

4. Specification (summary of requirements under Art. 7(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012)

4.1 Name Of Product:

"Staffordshire Cheese"

4.2 Description:

Staffordshire Cheese is made from milk from cows kept on Staffordshire farms. It has a smooth, slightly crumbly texture which can be hard or semi-hard depending on the age of maturity, a pale cream colour and is creamy, fresh and lactic in flavour. It has a fat content ranging from 30-35% with the fat in dry matter making up between 48-51%. The cheese is cylindrical in shape, weighs 8-10kg and is sold cloth-bound.

4.3 Geographical area:

The county of Staffordshire in England

4.4 Proof of origin:

The milk and cream used for the cheese may be sourced from any Staffordshire farm. Currently it is sourced from seven farms within the county of Staffordshire which are based near the cheese production dairy. The milk tankers collecting the milk and cream have a specific collection route and on-board computers which note

the farm details, milk volume, milk temperature and date of collection. The producer has a cheese process record compiled from the Dairy Farmers of Britain (DFB – a large dairy farmers' co-operative through which the milk for the Staffordshire cheese is brought) this includes a delivery note, which links back to the dairy farm and forward to the final pressed cheese in the maturing room. When the tanker delivers milk to the Staffordshire Cheese Company, the on-board computer generates a delivery note giving milk volume, tanker route number, milk temperature and delivery date. The co-operative has a central computer system called 'Core milk system' into which all milk tankers download information daily, including tanker route, farm collection point and chemical and bacterial analysis of the milk collected.

The Food Standards Agency's Food Safety Workbook is a documented record of the food safety management system. As well as covering the quality assurances given by the suppliers of raw ingredients used in making the cheese it also covers the traceability of the cheese once it leaves the production site. If the cheese is sold whole, the manufacturing date is on the invoice, if it is sold in portions it has on the label the packing date, which links back to the processing record for the manufacturing details. This is covered by the maintenance of batch and stock records, sales invoices and details of customers.

4.5 Method of production:

Fresh raw milk from farms within the county of Staffordshire is held overnight at a chilled temperature of 0-5°C. On day two, Staffordshire cream (also sourced from farms within the county) is added to the milk and stirred in for 15 minutes. This milk/cream mixture is pasteurised at 72-75.5°C for 15-20 seconds. The mixture is then pumped into a cheese vat and a temperature of 32.5-35°C achieved. At 28°C 0.2-0.4% mixed starter cultures containing strains of lactococcus lactis subsp.cremoris, lactocuccus lactis subsp. Lactis and lactocuccus lactis subsp. Diocetylactis, are added to the milk for acid development and flavour.

After 60 to 75 minutes of ripening at 32.5°C, rennet is added at the temperature of 31-33°C.

The rennet coagulation takes 45-50 minutes and is tested by hand before cutting.

Curd will then be firm with a clean break. After 35-45 minutes the curd is then cut the length of the cat and across the vat with a vertical knife, and then cut with a horizontal knife in the same manner. This takes 20 minutes.

The curds are then stirred at 30-32°C for 40 minutes. They are then settled, and the whey is drawn through a sieve at the end of the vat for 35 minutes. At the completion of the wheyoff, the acidity will be 0.29% lactic whey. The curds are then broken every 15 minutes over a period of 45 minutes. Acidity at first break is 0.39%, at second break 0.45% and at the final break 0.53% lactic acid.

The curds are then broken by stainless steel peg mill. 2.5% salt is added to the curds during milling. The salt is mixed in by turning the curds with a food-grade plastic shovel once and by hand three times. The cheese is only turned 4 times in total as any more would dry out the curds.

Then the salted cheese curds are hand filled to muslin cloth-lined stainless steel moulds. The cloths have sewn in circular bases, and the moulds are specially made for whey drainage and cheese shape. The cheeses are then pressed at 2lbs per square inch at 2125°C overnight. After pressing, the cheese cloth smoothly covers the surface of the cheese. The cheeses are stored on shelves at 7-10°C, turned daily for one week and weekly thereafter. The mild cheese is ripe in 2-4 weeks but can be matured for up to 12 months.

4.6 Link

The origins of the cheese can be linked back to the Cistercian monks who settled in Leek, Staffordshire in the 13th century. These Monks led a life of prayer, study and work. The monks set out to be self-sufficient and were agriculturalists, potters, bakers, brewers, cheesemakers and printers. They brought their cheesemaking skills to the region with them. Staffordshire Cheese continued to be produced until the advent of the Second World War, when the central milk gathering policy by the Milk Marketing Board spelt the end of many English regional cheeses. This application therefore represents the revival (by an artisan cheesemaker co-operating with local farmers) of this traditional cheese lost, as so many were, to wartime food supply

policy. The revived cheese is establishing its reputation among retailers and consumers.

The county of Staffordshire has a warm, wet, westerly climate and a carboniferous limestone terrain, producing lush grazing pasture which produces the creamy milk that gives the cheese its character. The soil has a natural aptitude for producing a fine herbage of grass (neighbouring counties of Cheshire and Derbyshire have a higher rainfall and temperature in comparison to Staffordshire). The properties of this grass are essential to the nature of the Staffordshire cheese. All milk and cream used to make the Staffordshire cheese are produced from cows grazing on this pasture. In winter the cows are fed mainly on grass silage and maize silage which comes from Staffordshire soil, with a small amount of concentrates to boost protein in the diet.

Staffordshire is neighboured by Cheshire and Derbyshire. Cheshire has a higher rainfall and temperature in comparison to Staffordshire. The land area has a high rock salt and saline (salt solution) content which is a considerable difference in comparison to the carboniferous limestone terrain of Staffordshire. The main cheese of Cheshire County is the Cheshire Cheese which is highly acidic and a very crumbly product.

The other nearest county to Staffordshire is Derbyshire where Stilton and Derby Cheese are made. These cheeses are very different to the Staffordshire cheese with the penicillium Rocquforti of Stilton and the smooth textured Derby which is more like a softer textured form of Cheddar.

Staffordshire Cheese differs from other varieties of cheese made in surrounding counties because of the distinctive nature of the cows diet, the mixture of starter cultures used and the size of the cloth bound cheese which creates a particular type of body and texture in the final product. The cheese is re-establishing its reputation with consumers and retailers.
It is sold at farmers' markets, farm shops, local delicatessens and by mail order.

4.7 Inspection body:

Name: Staffordshire Trading Standards Service

Address: Staffordshire County Council
2 Staffordshire Place
Tipping Street
Stafford
ST16 2DH
United Kingdom

Email: Alison.richardson@staffordshire.gov.uk

The inspection body is an official public body conforming to the principles of the EN 45011 standard.

4.8 Labelling

The approved PDO symbol will be used at point of sale, or on any packaging containing the product.

September 2007