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SPECIFICATION

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006 on protected geographical indications and protected designations of origin

"Anglesey Sea Salt/Halen Môn"

EC No:

PDO (✔) PGI ( )

1 RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT IN THE MEMBER STATE

RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT IN THE MEMBER STATE: UNITED KINGDOM

Name: Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Address: Food Composition and Standards Team
Area 7e, 9 Millbank
c/o Nobel House,
17 Smith Square
London
SW1P 3JR
United Kingdom

Tel: +44207 238 6075
Fax: +44207 238 5728
Email: protectedfoodnames@defra.gsi.gov.uk

2 GROUP

Name: The Anglesey Sea Salt Company Limited/Halen Môn
Address: The Anglesey Sea Salt Company/Halen Môn
Brynsiencyn,
Llanfairpwllgwyngyll,
Anglesey
LL61 6TQ

Tel.: +44 (0) 1248 430871
Fax: +44 (0) 1248 430399
e-mail: alison@halenmon.com

www.halenmon.com

Composition: Producers

The applicant company is the only company producing 'Anglesey Sea Salt/Halen Môn' in the defined area. However, the applicant recognises that any other producer in the defined area would have the right to produce the product in accordance with the specifications and the obligations imposed by the regulatory framework.

3 TYPE OF PRODUCT

Class Group 1:8 Other Annex I products (spices etc)

4 SPECIFICATION

(summary of requirements under Article 4(2) of Regulation (EC) No 510/2006)

4.1 Name: Anglesey Sea Salt/Halen Môn

4.2 Description:

Anglesey Sea Salt/Halen Môn is the name given to salt flakes harvested from the Menai Strait in Anglesey, North Wales. They are crystalline white, flat, soft flakes which contain over 30 trace elements and are additive free. The flakes of salt measure no larger than 2 centimetres across at grading. It is due to the mneral content that Anglesey Sea Salt/Halen Môn is demonstrably different in appearance, texture, taste and mouth feel. The salt has a concentrated salty taste and crunchy texture arising from the naturally occurring calcium and magnesium left after the unique rinsing process which gives the Anglesey Sea Salt/Halen Môn its white appearance and a clean taste without any bitterness which can be caused by excess calcium.

The unique qualities of Anglesey Sea Salt/Halen Môn derive from the raw materials - the pure seawater and the method of crystallising and rinsing the salt. Anglesey Sea Salt/Halen Môn is an additive free sea salt that consists of the following naturally occurring trace elements and minerals:

Composition

Sodium Chloride	Greater than 90% by weight
Water	Less than 4%
Lead	less than 2mg / kg
Tin	less than 200mg / kg
Arsenic	less than 0.5mg / kg
Mercury	less than 0.1mg / kg
Cadmium	less than 0.5mg / kg
Copper	less than 2 mg / kg
Zinc	Trace
Magnesium	At least 0.2%
Iodine	Up to 1 mg/kg
Calcium	0.08% - 0.15%

Three different grades of flakes are produced; coarse, fine and ground.

4.3 Geographical area:

The Menai Strait, Anglesey, North Wales. The Menai Strait is the strip of water separating the Isle of Anglesey from the mainland of Wales. The Strait runs from Fort Belan at the South West end on the mainland side SH 115 440610 and Abermenai point on the Anglesey side OS sheet SH 115 443615 to a line between the jetty projecting into the straits at 580740 on Anglesey side and the end of Bangor pier on mainland side 582 736 The area is under the jurisdiction of the Caernarfon Harbour Trust.

4.4 Proof of origin:

- Sea water is drawn from the Menai Strait under licence permitted from the Queen through the Crown Estates and is the only raw material used in the making of Anglesey Sea Salt/Halen Môn. The licence demonstrates that the sea water is purely sourced from the Menai Strait.

- The correct level of taste and appearance of the salt is attributable to the expertise and skilled artisanal training. These skills are acquired as part of a training programme which includes practical demonstrations. All harvesters are trained to achieve the standard operating procedures which ensure consistent quality.

- Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) ensures that critical control points and records are kept and maintained throughout the production process to demonstrate product safety and traceability. HACCP is the current system followed but a similar or equivalent system could be used.

- Daily records are kept of 'Positive Release' whereby the working environment is checked that it is fit for purpose, cleaning records are kept, plus records of salt harvested, and records of all salt packed. All batches are given a julien code which is put into a computer traceability system and recorded as being taken out when the goods leave the site.

- The records are written by the packer or harvester, and checked by the supervisor. They are filed in an accessible place in case of future need. All records are written and the julien codes are put into a computer based traceability system recording how many tubes/bags are packed.

- Every container of salt can be traced back to the person who packed it by a code.

- All plant, harvesting and packing components are cleaned on a daily, weekly, monthly or yearly basis, and the cleaning is recorded and audited.

4.5 Method of production:

- In a continuous process, sea water is drawn each day by pumps into a sealed storage tank made of stainless steel. The water then flows into a sealed header tank and then into the concentration plant. The actual source is a pipe situated inter-tidally under a sand bank 90 metres from the foreshore in front of the salt plant. The intake pipe is covered and uncovered twice a day, as the tide ebbs and flows. The sea water is pumped at high tide only.

- The water pumped is unadulterated sea water, no additives or additional liquids are added. A sand bank and mussel bank naturally filters the sea water before it is drawn from the Menai Strait. The sea water then passes through a number of manmade filters: sand filter, carbon filter and spun polypropylene filters of various sizes and a UV filter. These filters are all housed within the plant room.

- The sea water flows into a large holding tank, from where it passes through to a smaller header tank.

- It is concentrated to the required strength (within a range of 10-20%) brine in a flooded seawater vacuum evaporator and flows into a saturator tank. The saturator is a double skin tank that allows brine and salt to be mixed to achieve stronger brine. All salt crystals under 2mm are re-dissolved.

- The saturator feeds the crystallisation tanks at the required strength (within a range of 17-25%) and the brine is further concentrated by the gas heaters above the tanks at 50 to 65ºc for a maximum of 23 hours.

- The crystallisers are changed on a regular basis, cleaned with fresh water and then the cycle restarts.

- When the crystallisation point of salinity is reached, crystals begin to form on the surface of the brine and as the crystals grow heavier they sink and fall to the bottom of the tanks. This crystallisation point varies between 25% and 35% Sodium Chloride measured by salinometer or hydrometer and varies according to atmospheric pressure and instrument used.

- The heating and ventilation are controlled by extractor fans and blowers to give a consistent product.

- The salt flakes are harvested by hand by scooping out the flakes of salt with a shovel, from the crystalliser and placing in a shallow sieve.

- This is rinsed by hand wafting through concentrated brine so that the finer flakes fall through the bottom along with the excess chalk. The correct level of taste and appearance is reached from expertise-skilled artisan training. The skills are learnt as part of a training programme using practical

demonstrations by existing staff and coloured pictures of acceptable and unacceptable sized, shaped and textured flakes. All harvesters are trained to a set of Standard Operating Procedures which ensures consistent quality in all measurements.

- The harvesting of the salt flakes is carried out in the morning, and the salt is then piled up to allow it to drain overnight The following morning the salt is put into trays and dried in a low temp oven at 85c to a specific moisture content which is under 4% The drying process takes up to 24 hours depending on humidity and moisture content. A unique part of the drying process is 'jiggling' which is turning the salt by hand in the trays preventing a crust of dry salt from forming.

- Anglesey sea salt/Halen Môn is made from pure sea water. At no point in the method of production is additional rock salt or sea salt added in the process.

- The salt is then hand packed into appropriate containers according to the customers' requirements. All packaging is food safe.

- All processes of the method of production are undertaken inside, under controlled conditions. so that a consistent end product is achieved.

4.6 Link:

The sea salt is characteristic of its origin in its taste and appearance. Just as grapes are affected by terroir and weather, Anglesey sea salt/Halen Môn is affected by the cleanliness of the sea water as well as the method of making it.

The Menai Strait is served by the clean Gulf Stream with no large cities or heavy industries present on its banks.

The Gulf Stream comes from the Atlantic and washes up the west coast of Britain. It is warmer than the East coast reaching a mean of 15 degrees in Summer at the surface and 12 degrees at the bottom (source: Atlas of the Seas around the British Isles 1981). Mean salinity of the sea water is 34.25 to 35 parts per 1000 around the area although it can reach levels up to 36. This follows through into the strength of the flavour of Anglesey sea salt/Halen Môn, so less is needed to season food.

The uniqueness of the product is partly due to the extreme tidal range of over 9.5 metres which means the Strait is changed twice a day by the incoming tide. The unusual double high tide, which occurs when the Gulf Stream washes around the island, helps to provide the balance of trace elements and acts to give a new body of seawater every day to draw from.

The seawater is pre-filtered by being drawn through a sandbank and then a mussel bank. The quality of the raw material has a direct effect on the quality of the sea salt. Equally the rinsing process is unique to this product.

It is due to its mineral content that Anglesey sea salt/Halen Môn is demonstrably different in appearance, texture, taste and mouth feel. Its flakes are large and flat and not granular. It is the rinsing of the salt which gives it a white appearance and has a clean taste with no bitterness which can be caused by an excess of calcium.

Link with geographical area:

The specificity of the area is based on its climatic conditions, the presence of a tidal reach and the lack of heavy industry or shipping.

The sandbank and mussel bank allow the water to be pre-filtered, the shellfish also drawing calcium out of the seawater in the growing season.

Historically, the first records of salt making on the island of Anglesey were in Roman times, rising to a peak in the early C18th. There are remains of a salt works in Holyhead at the north of the island on 'Salt Island' (or 'Ynys Halen' in Welsh) which is connected by a road to the main island. Salt Island gained its name from the salt works which processed sea water to make sea salt. The factory was closed down in the 18th Century as rock salt was being used to 'strengthen the brine' which was seen as adulteration.

The present salt works of Halen Mon was started in Brynsiencyn in 1997.

Anglesey Sea salt/Halen Môn is well established and highly recognised by the food industry both in the UK and worldwide. As a quality product it is used by many top chefs and gastronomes and it regularly appears as a named ingredient on their menus. Many renowned restaurateurs and agri-food businesses have demonstrated their preference for this salt.

Here are comments recognising the taste and the region of Anglesey Sea Salt/Halen Môn.

‘Anglesey sea salt/Halen Môn is unsurpassed: it has a pure taste, perfect bite and a deliciously crunchy texture.’

Chris Chown
Chef Proprietor, Plas Bodegroes, Pwllheli, Wales

‘I use Anglesey sea salt/Halen Môn because it fits with my food philosophy; good ingredients require little work to turn them into great meals. Anglesey Sea Salt/Halen Môn enhances every dish I add it to.'

Jane Milton
Food Industry Expert, blogger and chef

‘Anglesey Sea Salt/Halen Môn is extracted with great care using an innovative system that preserves all the trace elements and minerals of the fresh tumbling sea water of the Menai Strait. The complex mineral structure of Anglesey Sea Salt/Halen Môn makes all the taste areas on the palate highly sensitive and lively, and hence makes food taste exceedingly vibrant.'

Colin Pressdee
Food writer

'The delicate flakes of the Organic Sea Salt leave a delicious lingering taste on the lips, like the clear Anglesey seawater from which they are taken, and add a tantalising depth to every dish in which they are used...It's life changing stuff.'

Simon Majumdar
Author, food writer and broadcaster

4.7 Inspection body:

Name:	Knight International Inspectorate
Address:	Winnington Hall Winnington Lane Winnington Northwich Cheshire United Kingdom CW8 4DU
Tel:	01606 871051
e-mail:	solo@knightinternational.co.uk

The inspection body conforms to the principles of EN 45011 standard.

4.8 Labelling: