Ref. Ares(2021)7635290 - 10/12/2021

PRODUCT SPECIFICATION

"Cornish Sardines"

PDO ( ) PGI (X)

1 RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT IN THE MEMBER STATE

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)
Area 1A
Nobel House
Smith Square
London
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Tel: +44 20 7238 6951
Email: protectedfoodnames@defra.gsi.gov.uk

2 GROUP

Name: Cornish Sardine Management Association
Address: 50 The Strand
Newlyn
Penzance
Cornwall TR27 6LL
Tel: 01736 364 324
Fax: 01736 366 692
Email: info@seafoodcormwalltraining.co.uk
Composition: producers/processors (15) other ( )

3 TYPE OF PRODUCT

Class Group 1.7: Fresh fish, molluscs and crustaceans and fish based products.

4 SPECIFICATION

(summary of requirements under Article 7(1) of Regulation (EC) No 1151/2012)

4.1 Name:

"Cornish Sardines"

4.2 Description:

Cornish Sardines is the name given to the pelagic fish of the species sardina pilchardus which have been caught, landed and processed in the designated geographical area. The colloquial name given to the fish is pilchard.

Cornish sardines/pilchards are metallic green or olive coloured along the back with golden flanks and pearlescent silver shading to silvery-white on the belly. There are a series of dark spots along the upper flanks, sometimes with a second or third series below. The size of the fish can vary during the season. A kilo of sardines will contain between 9 -18 fish depending on the individual size of the fish.

The body is sub cylindrical, with a rounded belly showing a small ridge from gill opening to anus. The hind margin of the gill is smoothly rounded with a 3-5 distinct bony strive radiating downward on the lower operculum. The dorsal fin is at the midpoint of the body, the last two anal fin rays are enlarged and there are 8 pelvic finrays, the pelvic fin insertion is situated well behind dorsal; the largest scales of any pelagic fish.

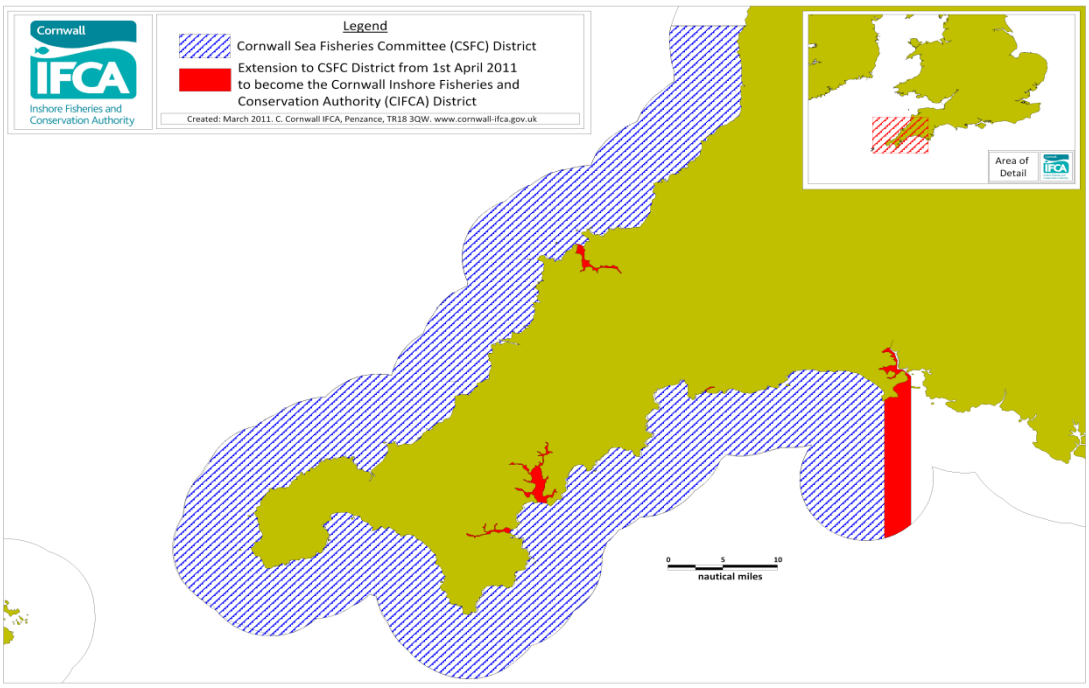
The flesh has a firm, fine texture when fresh, this soon softens and deteriorates exponentially as temperatures rise above 1° Celsius. The individual strength of taste varies with the freshness of the fish and level of fat in the flesh.

Fresh Cornish Sardines should be bright and firm, with most scales intact, gills should be dark pink or red in colour. They should be plump and smell fresh and are at their best in late summer when they are moist and full of taste. They may be sold either fresh or frozen.

4.3 Geographical area:

The County of Cornwall. The capture of sardines will be defined as the sea areas of the Cornwall Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (CIFCA) area of jurisdiction (also known as the CIFCA district) – up to six miles off the Cornish coast. The port area of Plymouth covered by the PL4 postcode is also included, for landing and processing only.

The Cornwall IFCA District extends from Marsland Mouth on the north coast of Cornwall, around to the western end of the Plymouth Breakwater in Plymouth Sound on the south coast, for all the waters out to the six mile limit and includes the rivers and estuaries up to tidal limits. The District is measured from the 1983 baselines as they existed on 25th January 1983, which may be from exposed rocks, including the Eddystone Rock, and other low tide elevations. The baselines are in accordance with the Territorial Waters Order in Council 1964 (1965 III p.6452A) as amended by the Territorial Waters (Amendment) Order in Council 1979 (1979 II p.2866).



4.4 Proof of origin:

When the catch has been made, fishermen record information including tonnage, location, and depth caught, fishing methods, record of by-catch, etc, whilst they are still on the vessels. This information is collected by the Cornish Sardine Management Association (CSMA) for recording on to their databases. It is a requirement of the CSMA to ensure that skippers and owners record and submit details of the catch to CSMA. This information is evidence that the product was caught within the geographical area.

Cornish Sardines are sold to fish merchants and fish processors, either at an auction market or by a direct deal with the merchant/processor. The fishermen record which processors have bought their fish to further ensure traceability throughout the supply chain. The fish processors and merchants also keep detailed records of who they bought from and who they sold the fish to. These records are kept by the processors to comply with EU legislation on the traceability of fish products. This information is the evidence that the fish was landed and processed within the geographical area.

All catches are recorded and monitored by CIFCA and the Marine Management Organisation (MMO).

4.5 Method of production:

The Vessels are put to sea from ports in the geographical area. They use ring nets and drift nets to catch the Cornish Sardines.

The Cornish Sardines are brought aboard from the drift or ring nets. Once on board, Cornish Sardines are iced to maintain quality and freshness. The vessels use insulated bins and some vessels use fish holds to store the fish in chilled conditions before being taken ashore.

Back on land the sardines are sold to merchants and fish processors either direct from the vessel or at an auction market. The buyers collect the fish from the quayside or market and take it to their local factory. The fishermen record which processors have bought their fish to ensure traceability throughout the supply chain.

The fish can be processed in several ways but primary processing in this context is regarded as any one, or a combination of filleting, heading, gutting, salting, marinating freezing and packing.

- Filleting is defined as the manual or mechanical separation of the head and backbone from the meat.
- Heading and gutting is defined as removal of the head and intestine, with the tail on or off.
- Salting or marinating is defined as the preservation of the product by the reduction of the water phase, through the addition of salt and/or acids, to create an environment inhospitable to spoilage bacteria.
- Freezing is defined as the entire product being brought and held below a temperature of zero degrees Celsius whereby it changes into a solid state.

When whole, fresh fish is packaged in ice and cool boxes for transportation to customers. Otherwise the fish are frozen and packaged in boxes or bags for frozen storage and then onward to customers.

Seafood Cornwall check that the processors adhere to the CSMA's agreed minimum quality and hygiene standards for processors.

4.6 Link:

The characteristics of the Cornish Sardine are linked to the geographical area on the basis of the tradition of catching and processing. These methods are well documented traditional fishing practices.

The Cornish Sardine is drawn to the geographical area by its environment, i.e. the conditions available to it in the shallow waters of the bays close to the Cornish coast. These waters provide the sheltered environment preferred by the fish. The North Atlantic Oscillation (NAO) is a climatic phenomenon of the Atlantic area in which Cornwall lies and is generally responsible for the temperatures and tides which also control where the phytoplankton i.e. food for Cornish Sardines is found.

The specific link with the geographical area is that fishing for the sardines takes place when the fish move to these shallow bays. This characteristic style fishing technique is reminiscent of the traditional practices of previous generations.

Traditionally, the fish were caught when they came closer to the shore. In the past this was through actual sightings of the shoals by scouts, called 'Huers', who were on located at viewing points on the cliffs. Once the shoals of fish were sighted, the lookouts would direct (by a local semaphore) the vessels to make the catch through calling 'hevva', this signal was for fishermen and other townsfolk to come and help. The fisherman began to shoot their long net 'seine' in a semi-circle around the shoal of fish under the direction of the huer. The seine net and stop nets worked together to completely enclose the fish.

The area was limited by the line of sight from the cliff tops. This tradition continues; the knowledge of where the fish congregate has been passed down through generations, although modern technology has replaced the cliff top watch. The addition of modern technology means that the distance off shore has broadened over the decades but the local fleets still stay within sight of the shore following the fish

where they congregate in shallow water. The geographical limits of the fish catching operations are all within the 6 mile limit of the CIFCA and the area therefore well describes the fish catching area.

Through the sixteenth to nineteenth century, pilchards, as the fish were more commonly known at the time, were a valuable product. As food they were cured and exported over large distances, and their oil could be used to provide lighting and heating. In the days before modern refrigeration methods, each fishing village had many cellars where the pilchards were processed. They were placed in stone tanks salted and pressed. The salt took the moisture out of the fish. When the fish had been pressed, they were ready for market. The main market for Cornish pilchards was Italy. They were shipped off in sailing ships to Naples, Genoa, Venice and Livorno. Over the centuries fishing has been an important industry for Cornwall. Newlyn still lands more fish than any other port in England and it is still an important part of the Cornish economy.

Fishing for Cornish Sardines is a vital part of Cornwall's heritage, the skill of locating and catching the fish has been long established in Cornwall and has been handed down over the generations. The fleet of vessels sail from ports, harbours and coves dotted around the 329 mile Cornish Coastline. The specific link with the geographical area is that when the fish move closer to the shore then they can be caught and in the past this was through actual sightings of the shoals and now it is due to the knowledge passed down through generations.

The delicate composition of the fish requires them to be landed promptly. The boats return to local ports, from where they are taken to factories for packaging, storage, processing. The landing and processing of Cornish Sardines takes place within the defined geographical area of the CIFCA fisheries district, Cornwall and the administrative/port area of Plymouth covered by the PL4 postcode. This area, includes traditional cove and ports where processing took place in the past. The modern technology and hygiene standards and the pressures on coastal property now means that the factories on industrial estates have taken over from fish cellars in village harbours but all the factories are in the geographical area.

The 'Cornish Sardine Management Association' (CSMA), - a group of fishermen and merchants formed in 2002, their aim being to maintain a top quality product and consider methods to manage and develop both the catching and marketing of Cornish sardines. The use of the name Cornish Sardine and the reputation of the quality of the product has grown in the past 10 years due to the hard work of the members of the CSMA and the high quality of their product. Cornish Sardines have achieved an increasing volume of sales particularly in the UK retail market where they have acquired a cachet. Cornish Sardines can be found on sale in fish counters at major UK retailers such as Waitrose, Tesco and Marks &Spencer.

4.7 Inspection body:

Name: Cornwall Council

Address: Public Health & Protection Service

Unit 6 Threemilestone Industrial Estate

Truro

Cornwall

TR4 9LD

Tel.: 0300 1234 191

Email: tradingstandards@cornwall.gov.uk

Website: www.cornwall.gov.uk/protectednames

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

4.8 Labelling: