

# CONSORTIUM FOR THE PROTECTION OF ASIAGO CHEESE VICENZA

## PRODUCTION SPECIFICATION PDO “ASIAGO”

(Ministerial Decree 03/08/2006 Official Gazzette no. 190, 17/08/06)

### Article 1

#### Name

The protected designation of origin “Asiago” is reserved for the semi-cooked cheese, produced with cow’s milk, obtained in accordance with this specification. Production is divided into two different types of cheese, pressed Asiago and fostered Asiago, whose characteristics are described below.

### Article 2

#### Production area

PDO “Asiago” cheese is produced with milk from herds located in the defined area and in dairies located within the protection zone that is stated below:

Province of Vicenza: the whole territory;

Province of Trento: the whole territory;

Province of Padova: the municipalities of Carmignano di Brenta, S. Pietro in Gù, Grantorto, Gazzo, Piazzola sul Brenta, Villafranca Padovana, Campodoro, Mestrino, Veggiano, Cervarese S. Croce and Rovolon;

Province of Treviso: the territory thus delimited: taking as a reference point the town of Rossano Veneto, near Vicenza, the limit follows the road Rossano - Castelfranco Veneto until its junction with state road no. 53 “Postumia”.

Along this road, crossing the ring road south of Treviso, to its intersection with the Alemagna highway. The boundary continues north along the path of said highway to the river Piave. Then turns west along the right bank of said river to the border of Treviso and Belluno. From this point the limit is identified with the boundary of the province of Treviso to the point of this meeting with the boundary of the province of Vicenza.

The production areas indicated above, which are located at a height not less than 600 metres, are identified as mountainous territory.

### Article 3

#### Animal feed

The cattle whose milk is intended for processing into PDO “Asiago” cheese should not be fed with the fodder and feed as indicated below:

### Forages

- Crops of canola, rapeseed, mustard, Greek hay;
- Leaves of fruit trees, leaves of chard and collards;
- silo grass of clover, pea, and by-products;
- Fruits and their by-products from industrial processing, fresh and kept moist;
- vegetables and related products, fresh and kept moist;
- By-products of fermentation industries, fresh and kept moist (brewers grains, distillery, vines, etc.);
- sugar by-products: sugar beet pulp, fresh and in a silo;
- slaughtering and breeding by-products: various residuals, as they are or associated with other forages;
- Urea, urea phosphate, biuret.

### Feed

- meat, fish and feather meals;
- rapeseed meal, citrus seeds, grape seeds;
- vegetables and dried fruit;
- industrial processing of dried vegetables and fruit by-products (beans and peas peels, artichokes, chestnuts, pods, husks, seeds, dregs);
- sugar by-products: protein concentrate from molasses, various dried pulps, and others;
- industrial fermentation dried products; stillage fermentation, fermentation residues and others.

If the milk is intended for the production of PDO Asiago cheese which bears the term “mountain product” it is also forbidden to be fed with any type of silage.

## Article 4

### Origin of the product

Each stage of the production process is monitored, for every input and output. In this way, product traceability is ensured by registration in specific lists, managed by the control structure, by milk producers, gatherers, processors, packers and maturers of cheese without the crust, and timely declaration of the quantities produced to the control structures. The verification of process and product non-compliance carries prohibition of marketing the product under the name Asiago.

## Article 5

### Production Method

The “Asiago” cheese, both in the type of pressed and in that of fostered, is produced by milk complying with health regulations. However, production of fostered “Asiago” in huts during the pastures period of milk is allowed. Notwithstanding the health regulations in force, the milk must be stored at temperatures between 4 and 11 degrees Celsius and

should be processed within a maximum time of 60 hours of first or optional second milking. In the case where the “Asiago” cheese is manufactured with raw milk, the transformation must be obtained within 36-48 hours in the plant, according to existing provisions.

For the production of pressed “Asiago” cheese, milk may be used that is obtained by one or two milkings, raw or pasteurized at 72 degrees Celsius for 15 seconds, according to current regulations.

For the production of fostered “Asiago” cheese, milk can be used from two milkings partially skimmed to separate the cream, or from two milkings partially skimmed, or from a single milking even partially skimmed.

It may be raw milk or thermised to 57/68 degrees Celsius for 15 seconds with positive analytical phosphatase parameter. Further milk treatments than those expressly set forth in this specification are not allowed. For the production of PDO Asiago cheese which bear the words “mountain product”, it is allowed to use milk from 2 or 4 milkings, but the processing of the milk must occur within 18 hours of receipt, in the case of use of milk of 2 milkings, within 24 hours of receipt in the case of use of milk of 4 milkings.

Milk production in place for the production of pressed “Asiago” must be whole milk and the mixture in the boiler is milk, lactic acid or starter, bovine rennet and possibly small amounts of sodium chloride. During processing, for technological requirements, an amount of drinking water may also be added.

In the case of production of fostered “Asiago” the milk used in processing is partially skimmed, possibly with the addition of lysozyme (E 1105) within the legal limits, the mixture is thus formed from partially skimmed milk, lactic acid or starter, bovine rennet, any small amounts of sodium chloride and lysozyme. The use of Lysozyme (E1105) is in any case prohibited in the production of PDO “Asiago” that boasts the additional wording “mountain product”.

The milk for processing into Asiago must derive from one or two milkings. The milk for the transformation of fostered Asiago must result from two milkings partially skimmed, from two milkings, one of which is skimmed, or from a single milking even partially skimmed.

In the processing of milk into pressed “Asiago”, the following technological parameters are met:

- Coagulation temperature 35/40 ° C
- Cutting the curd at 15/25 minutes by the addition of rennet the size of walnut / hazelnut;
- Semi cooked temperature: 44 ° + / - 2 ° C;
- Pressing for up to 12 hours;

In the processing of milk into fostered “Asiago” the following technological parameters are met:

- Coagulation temperature: 33/37 ° C;
- Cutting the curd at 15/30 minutes by the addition of rennet to the size of a hazelnut or less;
- Semi-cooked temperature: 47 ° + / - 2 ° C

The waste or scrap of curd from previous processes cannot be used in subsequent production of PDO “Asiago” cheese.

## Article 6 Identification and marking

All forms of PDO “Asiago” cheese are identified by means of casein plates numbered and marked with stencilled moulds, held by the Consortium for Protection, instructed in use and allocated to all claimants, containing the following constitutive logo of the denomination,



as an integral part of this specification. This logo represents a form of cut cheese and missing a wedge; the missing wedge, turned into a stylized “A” is partially in the form. The overall height of the logo affixed on the form of cheese is 100 mm for the Asiago and 80 mm for the fostered Asiago. In stencilled moulds, the alphanumeric code of the dairy manufacturer and the name of the denomination is also inserted,



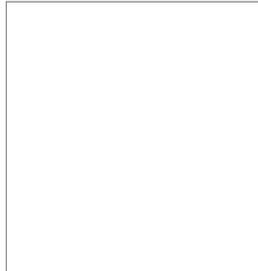
repeated several times at a height of 25 mm for pressed Asiago and 20 mm for the fostered Asiago.

The forms of fostered “Asiago” also have stamped on the rind, an alphabetical letter indicating the production month:

|           |   |
|-----------|---|
| January   | B |
| February  | C |
| March     | D |
| April     | E |
| May       | H |
| June      | I |
| July      | L |
| August    | N |
| September | P |
| October   | S |
| November  | T |
| December  | U |

The forms of Asiago that boast the additional wording “mountain product” are

characterized by including, in the stencilled moulds indicated in the preceding first paragraph of this article, and on its face, the words “mountain product”. Furthermore, at the end of the minimum period of aging, the aforementioned shapes are further identified by branding, placed on the crust, made with instruments property of the protection Consortium in use and allocated to eligible dairy farms, and bearing the following symbol:



#### Article 7 Storage and aging methods

Before salting, the cheeses are kept for a minimum period of 48 hours in places 10/15°C with relative humidity of 80-85%.

Salting, if not already completed with a paste, is completed dry or in brine at 20 ° +/- 2° Be.

The minimum aging of pressed “Asiago” is 20 days from date of manufacture.

The minimum aging of fostered “Asiago” is 60 days from the last day of the production month.

The minimum aging of Asiago which bears the words “mountain product” is 90 days from the last day of production for fostered Asiago and 30 days from production for pressed Asiago.

Curing must take place within the production area in the same warehouse with temperatures between 10/15°C with relative humidity between 80-85%.

These conditions must be detected by suitable instruments.

For the first 15 days after salting, fostered “Asiago” may be kept in storage at temperatures between 5/8 ° C.

Asiago cheese, which uses the term “mountain product”, must be seasoned by companies located in mountain areas in which local conditions may have temperature and humidity determined by natural environmental conditions.

#### Article 8 Characteristics of the finished product

Technical specification characteristics for pressed “Asiago” cheese at 20 days of maturation.

Specification Tolerances

a) visual organoleptics

- white or slightly yellowish paste
- marked and irregular eyes
- delicate and pleasant flavour
- thin and elastic crust

b) chemical

|                   |                   |         |
|-------------------|-------------------|---------|
| - Moisture        | 39.5%             | +/- 4.5 |
| - Protein         | 24.0%             | +/- 3.5 |
| - Fat             | 30.0%             | +/- 4.0 |
| - Sodium chloride | 1.7%              | +/- 1.0 |
| - Fat on the dry  | not less than 44% | None    |

c) physical

|            |                             |
|------------|-----------------------------|
| - Bottom   | straight or slightly convex |
| - Face     | flat or almost flat         |
| - Weight   | 11 to 15 Kg                 |
| - Height   | 11 to 15 cm                 |
| - Diameter | 30 to 40 cm                 |

d) Microbiology and sanitary

|                  |                     |
|------------------|---------------------|
| - Pathogens      | Absent              |
| - S. Aureus      | * M < 1,000 per g   |
| - E. coli        | * M < 1,000 per g   |
| - Coliforms 30°C | * M < 100,000 per g |

\* These data refer to a cheese made with heat-treated milk.

Technical specification characteristics for the fostered “Asiago” cheese at 60 days maturation.

Specification Tolerances

a) visual/sensory

- straw-coloured or slightly yellowish paste
- small and medium sized eyes
- Sweet taste (medium)/fragrant (old)
- smooth and regular crust

b) chemical

|            |        |          |
|------------|--------|----------|
| - Moisture | 34.50% | +/- 4.00 |
| - Protein  | 28.00% | +/- 4.00 |
| - Fat      | 31.00% | +/- 4.50 |

|                   |                   |          |
|-------------------|-------------------|----------|
| - Sodium chloride | 2.40%             | +/- 1.00 |
| - Fat on dry      | not less than 34% | None     |

c) physical

|            |                             |
|------------|-----------------------------|
| - Bottom   | straight or almost straight |
| - Face     | flat or almost flat         |
| - Weight   | 8 to 12 Kg                  |
| - Height   | 9 to 12 cm                  |
| - Diameter | 30 to 36 cm                 |

d) microbiology and sanitation

|             |                    |
|-------------|--------------------|
| - Pathogens | Absent             |
| - S. Aureus | * M <10,000 per g  |
| - E. coli   | * M <100,000 per g |

“Asiago” cheese forms, after the minimum period of maturation, the product may be surface treated with substances permitted under the provisions in force. The shapes on the surface (crust) are not edible.

The surface treatment of the forms must in any case allow the readability of the identification of casein plate form of the name and logo.

It is prohibited to surface treat with colouring and anti-mould substances for the forms of Asiago which boast the added mention “mountain product”.

### Article 9 Packaging

Entire forms of PDO “Asiago” can be portioned and pre-packaged into pieces to allow visibility of the side of the form. In each case, packaging in portions from the centre is allowed on the condition that the weight does not exceed 10% of the weight of the form itself. These portions will still have the crust of the dish. It is allowed to indicate on the label that lysozyme (E 1105) is not used.

The packaging, wherever portioning involves scraping and/or removal of the crust, making marking of origin (cubes, slices etc.) invisible must take place in the production area in order to ensure the traceability of the product.

Asiago cheese produced with milk from stables in mountain areas, converted in dairies located in a mountainous area and cured in a mountainous area, can boast on the label, the additional wording “mountain product”.

The pressed “Asiago” cheese can also be labelled with the indication fresh.

The fostered “Asiago” cheese can also be labelled with the indication matured.

The fostered “Asiago” cheese with maturing between 4/6 months, can also indicate that on the label.

The fostered “Asiago” cheese, matured over 10 months, can be labelled also indicating “aged”.

The fostered “Asiago” cheese, matured more than 15 months, can be labelled also indicating “extra aged”.

Any labels, stamps, silk screens, etc., bearing business signs must conform to current regulations on labelling and presentation of foodstuffs and in any case must always allow for complete legibility of the markings constituting the PDO “Asiago” (stencilling moulds) and casein forms identifying “Asiago” cheese.