

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

EU protected food names scheme: protected designation of origin

Bonchester cheese

Product specification

“Bonchester Cheese”

PDO (*) **PGI ()**

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: Easter Weens Enterprises

Address: Easter Weens Farm,
Bonchester Bridge,
Roxburghshire
Scotland
TD9 8JQ

Tel:

Email:

Name: Mrs Brenda Leddy

Address: Stich Hill Jersey
Garden Cottage Farm
Stich Hill
Kelso
TD9 7TJ

Composition: Producer/processor (1). other (1)

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:

“Bonchester Cheese”

4.2 Description:

Bonchester cheese is a white coated full fat soft cheese containing a minimum of 20% milk fat and a maximum of 60% water. It is made from unpasteurised whole milk from Jersey cows.

Bonchester is an unpressed cheese which ripens with time and temperature and if cut open when ripe will flow.

The cheese has the following characteristics:-

Flavour: - in a young cheese, clean and milk

- in a mature cheese, stronger and more yellow

Colour: - yellow to deep yellow dependent on the degree of ripening

Body: - in a young cheese, moderately firm

- In a mature cheese, soft, if over ripened the curd becomes runny

Texture: - close and smooth

- Finish and appearance: - cylindrical with a white coat:
- Small: 78mm diameter minimum 100 grams
 - Medium: 130mm diameter minimum 280 grams

4.3 Geographical area:

The area in which the herds of Jersey cows are grazed from which the milk is obtained and where the cheese is made and matured is defined as the border lands of England and Scotland, including the river systems of the Tyne, the Tweed and the Solway Firth. The designated area falls within a radius of 90 kilometres from the summit of Peel Fell on the border and in the middle of the Cheviot Hills.

4.4 Proof of Origin:

4.5 Method of production:

The cheese is made from the morning and evening milk of Jersey cows, which is not heat-treated in any way, by the following unvarying method.

Evening milk is kept chilled overnight and warmed to 32°C before mixing with the morning milk immediately after the end of morning milking.

Starters are added and stirred into the milk.

The milk is decanted into stainless steel pails or aluminium basins and incubated at a temperature in the range 25°C to 30°C for 1.5 hours.

Rennet is added and stirred into the milk. After one hour the curds are cut and allowed to settle for half an hour when they are decanted into moulds with tops. The tops are removed after three hours and the cheeses are turned. Three hours later the cheeses are turned again.

The following morning the cheeses are turned onto wire trays and immersed in brine at 13°C. Small cheeses are immersed for 20 minutes, larger cheeses for 40 minutes.

On removal from the brine, the cheeses are allowed to drain and are then turned onto dry wire trays. They remain in this “temperate room” at 13°C for four days being turned daily.

The cheeses are then moved into a temperature controlled room at 11°C for maturing. Small cheeses are then wrapped and boxed for despatch.

4.6 Link:

Bonchester cheese was developed at the Easter Weens Farm in 1980/81 [with help from The West of Scotland Agricultural College] using the Camembert method as a guide.

Production started in 1982 in converted buildings but by 1987 a new purpose built dairy was needed to keep pace with increasing demand.

With the controlled environment of the new dairy and the exceptional hygienic quality of the unpasteurised Jersey milk, the Bonchester cheese is known for its quality and consistency.

The cheese is always available from April to December but little or none is made in the winter months of January and February.

The characteristics of the cheese are essentially due to the geographical environment in the Border lands of England and Scotland. The soils are derived from the border clay overlaying Silurian, old red sandstone and carboniferous limestone rocks. The rainfall is consistent and ranges from 750mm to 1000mm in suitable sites for milk production. The average air temperature ranges from 3°C in January to 16°C in July. These conditions support grasses and other herbs which are characteristic of this region. As grass provides the main diet of the Jersey cows either grazed or conserved as silage or hay, the flavour of these pastures passes into the cheese. This combined with the microbial flora that has colonised the dairy and the unvarying cheese making practices gave the cheese its specific properties which are highly regarded in the specialist cheese market.

The border county has been subjected to many geological actions mainly volcanic and glacial. Lowland features in the Border county have weathered to soft profiles, there is an absence of rugged outlines (as in the Highlands of Scotland) and a greenness typical of lowland hill country. This rock is of the lower Silurian period, sandstones which have weathered away into soil deep enough to maintain sheep pastures and in the valleys rich enough to give the fertile lands of Tweeddale. The bulk of Cheviot country is natural grassland because the large amount of calcium present in the land prohibits the growth of heather.

The valleys of the Tweed and its tributaries have a wide divergence of climatic conditions, rainfall varies from 30 inches annually in the coastal belt to over 70 inches on the high

ground south of Hawick. The prevailing conditions ensure early springs and milk autumns, but cool summers and severe winters.

This unique landscape gives rise to grazing whose flavour comes out in the raw material for the cheese. The milk used for the production of these cheeses is not pasteurised or heat treated to retain its full flavour.

4.7 Inspection body:

Name: Scottish Food Quality Certification Ltd

Address Royal Highland Centre
10th Avenue
Ingliston
Edinburgh
EH28 8NF

Tel: 0131 335 6615

Fax: 0131 335 6601

Email: enquiries@sfqc.co.uk

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

4.8 Labelling:

Each cheese carries a Bonchester Cheese label. In the label illustration, the mountain is “Ruberslaw” as seen from Bonchester, the escallop is from the family coat of arms and the Jersey cow (dehorned) appears in the foreground with the words unpasteurised across its lower flanks. The whole being contained within a circle.

August 2007