

Product specification for Cambrian Mountains Lamb

A protected geographical indication (PGI)

Responsible country: Great Britain

GB number: F0080

Competent authority

Name: Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs

Address: Defra

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Applicant group

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Composition: Producers 18

Type of product (as in Annex XI Implementing Regulation 668/2014)

Class 1.1 Fresh Meat (and offal)

1. Product name(s)

Cambrian Mountains Lamb

2. Description

“Cambrian Mountains Lamb” is the name traditionally given to the carcase or the cuts of meat from lambs born, reared and slaughtered in the Cambrian Mountains area of mid Wales.

“Cambrian Mountains Lamb” is a seasonal product available from June through to January, produced from an extensive sustainable traditional system of farming. "Cambrian Mountains Lamb" is produced exclusively from ewes that have a genetic make-up of either a minimum 80% Welsh Mountain or minimum 80% from the other traditional Welsh native hill breeds listed below; -

- Badger face Welsh Mountain
- Balwen Welsh Mountain
- Beulah Speckled Face
- Black Welsh Mountain
- Brecknock Hill Cheviot
- Kerry Hill
- Llanwenog
- Lleyn
- Welsh Easycare

These breeds may be kept as pure native breeds or crossed with terminal sire breeds. As hardy mountain animals, the smaller native Welsh sheep grow and develop on the hills where they roam and feed freely on the Cambrian Mountains natural vegetation. The result is a light hill lamb with carcase weights 10kg to 20 kg. In contrast for example to lowland lambs which would have heavier carcass weights 15kg to 25+kgs.

“Cambrian Mountains Lamb” is a slowly matured extensively reared lamb taking around 16+ weeks before it is ready for the market, making it a slower maturing lamb than others. This gives more time for Cambrian Mountains Lamb’s flavour and succulent texture to fully develop.

It is its breeding, natural diet and slowness of growth which is key to its taste and which produces a carcass that has got great conformation for succulent, tender, juicy meat with a depth of flavour which is both delicate and sweet.

“Cambrian Mountains Lamb” releases a good sweet aroma when cooked. The long summer grazing on the Cambrian Mountains also leads to “Cambrian Mountains Lamb” being a naturally fit animal achieving the optimum balance of tasty lean meat to fat which influences the final succulent texture. The meat is dark red in colour marbled with minimal creamy white fat and delicate muscle structure. “Cambrian Mountains Lamb” are carcass classified as 3L to 3H fat class and U to O conformation with the majority of lambs classifying as R conformation. In comparison lowland lambs would aim to have a higher percentage in conformation categories E and U.

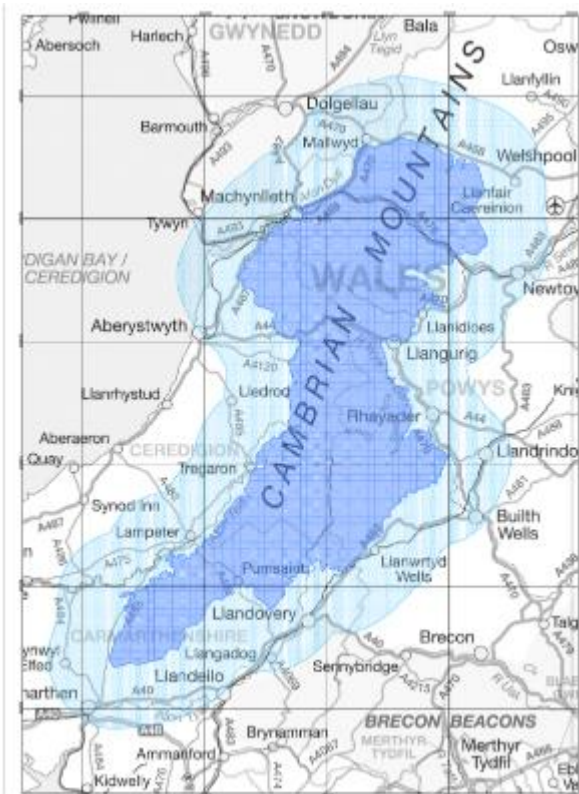
Cambrian Mountains Lamb is primarily sold to butchers and supermarkets in carcass form but can also be sold as primal cuts of lamb when appropriate. “Cambrian Mountains lamb” is always sold deadweight and not sold through livestock auction markets.

3. Geographical area

The Cambrian Mountains are located in central Wales. The Cambrian Mountains area as designated by Natural Resource Wales is shown in the map below. It includes the mountainous area (shaded dark blue) plus a 10 mile curtilage (shaded light blue) which includes the following “*necklace*” towns/villages of the Cambrian Mountains; -

- Newtown
- Llanidloes
- Llangurig
- Llandrindod
- Builth Wells
- Llanwrtyd Wells
- Llandovery
- Llangadog
- Llandeilo
- Carmarthen
- Cynwyl Elfed
- Lampeter
- Llanybydder
- Tregaron

- Lledrod
- Aberystwyth
- Machynlleth
- Llanfair Caereinion
- Rhayader
- Mallwyd



4. Proof of origin

“Cambrian Mountains Lamb” must be born, reared and slaughtered within the designated area of the Cambrian Mountains area of Mid-Wales. At all stages in the production of “Cambrian Mountains Lamb”, records are kept to provide a complete audit trail and traceability from farm to final consumer. Each “Cambrian Mountains Lamb” (whether it is in carcass or cut meat form) can be traced back to the farm from where it came by reference to producers holding numbers, lamb electronic identification records and the OS grid reference of the location of the slaughterhouse.

- All Cambrian Mountains Lamb is produced on Farm Assured farms or similar.
- Cambrian Mountains Lamb is produced from ewes that have a genetic make-up of either a minimum 80% Welsh Mountain or minimum 80% from the other traditional Welsh native hill breeds listed. These breeds may be kept as pure native breeds or crossed with terminal sire breeds. - This is audited by annual on farm flock inspections by external auditors.
- At least 75% of the annual dry matter of the animal's diet must come from the Cambrian Mountains designated area. This is audited by recording evidence of feed inputs imported onto the farm.
- Cambrian Mountains Lamb will vary in weight typically from 10kg to maximum 20kg (deadweight). This will be recorded and disseminated to the Cambrian Mountains Lamb Producers by the abattoir.
- All Cambrian Mountains Lamb has to be slaughtered in approved abattoirs located within the designated area of the Cambrian Mountains and identified by a unique code to ensure traceability.
- All lambs are slaughtered in accordance with Meat and Livestock Commission specifications, or equivalent.
- All abattoirs maintain their own records to ensure traceability of each batch of Cambrian Mountains Lamb passing through the abattoir.
- The abattoir provides each producer sending their lamb for slaughter with a unique vendor number to ensure traceability from "fork to farm".
- All Cambrian Mountains Lamb producers are encouraged to be members of the Cambrian Mountains Lamb Producer Group.

5. Method of production

Cambrian Mountains Lamb must be born, reared and slaughtered within the designated area of the Cambrian Mountains area of Mid - Wales. It is a seasonal product, available from June to January.

- The lambs are produced from ewes that have a genetic make-up of either a minimum 80% Welsh Mountain or minimum 80% from the other traditional Welsh

native hill breeds. These breeds may be kept as pure native breeds or crossed with terminal sire breeds.

- On higher mountain farms ewe lambs are not bred during their first year. This enables the ewe lambs to have another year's growth before producing Cambrian Mountains Lamb the following year. The lambing season is generally from January to May.
- The majority of the flocks would be from typically *Hefted* flocks. *Hefting* is a traditional method of managing flocks of sheep on large areas of common land and communal grazing.
- All "Cambrian Mountains Lamb" producers operate the traditional "*Hafod a Hendre*" system with all the sheep staying near the farmstead during the winter months and grazing the mountain land during the summer and autumn. Indoor finishing of lambs is not routine practice and is only allowed for welfare reasons such as inclement weather conditions.
- The exact length of grazing on the hill/mountain is dependent upon weather, but all "Cambrian Mountains Lamb" would graze the hill/mountain for a minimum of 3 months and often up to 5 months.
- At least 75% of the annual dry matter of the animal's diet must come from the Cambrian Mountains designated area.
- Cambrian Mountains Lamb is a seasonal product available from June to January carcass weights 10kgs - 20kgs.
- Lambs are slaughtered and dressed according to current legislative requirements.

6. Link with the geographical area

"Cambrian Mountains Lamb" is born, reared and slaughtered in the Cambrian Mountains area of Wales.

The "Cambrian Mountains Lamb" application is based on the reputation and characteristics of the product referenced to the geographical area from where the product is produced.

Cambrian Mountains Lamb is produced from an extensive sustainable traditional system of farming whereby valuable habitats and eco systems are maintained. The grazing of sheep and lamb production by farmers within the Cambrian Mountains plays an important part of this conservation process. 85% of the land in the Cambrian Mountains is used for agriculture, comprising mainly of hill sheep farms.

The natural vegetation of the Cambrian Mountains is a result of the areas geology, topography, climate and soils. The rocks of the Cambrian Mountains provide the framework and backcloth for the unique landscape and were laid down 500-400 million

years ago and are mainly marine sedimentary rocks. The Cambrian Mountains are predominantly formed from Ordovician rock along the south eastern edge of the range, whilst the remainder is composed mainly of Silurian sandstones and mudstone.

The area is sparsely populated and largely comprises of upland moorland the majority of which is over 300 metres rising to a height of 752 metres at Pumlumon Fawr. The area has a relatively mild maritime climate with a high annual average rainfall, in some places over 250cms' and the area is the source of numerous rivers including the Severn and Wye. It is this abundance of rain that provides optimum conditions for the growth of the predominantly species rich Cambrian Mountain vegetation on which both ewes and lambs thrive.

The acid grasslands on the Cambrian Mountains have a high representation of purple moor-grass, heath rush *Juncus squarrosus* or mat-grass *Nardus stricta* and on more freely drained areas, grassland species such as sheep's-fescue *Festuca ovina* with varying amounts of bilberry *Vaccinium myrtillus*, fir club-moss *Huperzia selago*, alpine club-moss *Diphasiastrum alpinum* and lichen, *Cladonia impexa* will be present.

On the better developed summit blanket bog there are species such as less purple moor-grass hare's-tail cottongrass *Eriophorum vaginatum* or deergrass *Trichophorum cespitosum*, and heather *Calluna vulgaris*. Whereas where the water table is high communities are rich in bog-moss species *Sphagnum spp.*, and a range of higher plants including cranberry *Vaccinium oxycoccus*, cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix*, common cottongrass *Eriophorum angustifolium* and bog asphodel *Narthecium ossifragum*.

These principal vegetation types on the Cambrian Mountains such as the acid grassland, blanket bog communities and upland dwarf-shrub heath together provides an environment with a myriad and mosaic of vegetative species. It is a combination of all these different types of plants that contribute to the taste of the Cambrian Mountains Lamb. This is a very different diet compared to lambs which have been reared solely on agriculturally improved grassland.

The Cambrian Mountains Lamb is a hardy mountain animal and is allowed to grow and develop naturally at a slow pace on the hills where they roam and feed freely on the diverse Cambrian Mountains vegetation. The Cambrian Mountains Lamb grazes the mountainsides extensively during the summer and autumn and at least 75% of the annual dry matter of the animal's diet must be sourced from within the designated area.

In addition to the diverse natural vegetation of the Cambrian Mountains contributing to the characteristics of Cambrian Mountains Lamb, breeding of the lamb is also a factor. The lambs are produced exclusively from ewes that have a genetic make-up of either a minimum 80% Welsh Mountain or a minimum 80% from the other traditional Welsh native hill breeds. As hardy mountain animals, the smaller native Welsh sheep are allowed to grow and develop naturally at a slow pace. In contrast lowland lambs typically graze better quality agriculturally improved grassland (which are able to support higher stocking rates) and are quicker maturing.

As a result of the lamb's natural diet and genetic make-up, Cambrian Mountains Lamb takes around 16+ weeks before it is ready for the market, making it a slower maturing lamb than others, which gives more time for Cambrian Mountains Lamb flavour to fully develop. The carcass of this slowly maturing and extensively reared lamb has excellent conformation that gives succulent, tender, juicy meat with a depth of flavour which is both delicate and sweet. Cambrian Mountains Lamb releases a good aroma when carved.

The specific knowledge and expertise required to produce lamb from the challenging terrain of the Cambrian Mountains often in adverse weather is clearly recognised and this skill base has developed and remained relatively unchanged for generations.

Cambrian Mountains Lamb comes from traditional extensive Welsh mountain farms where, in 2005 the Cambrian Mountains supported 591,000 breeding ewes (14% of the nation's breeding ewe population). Cambrian Mountain farmers still use traditional farming methods that originated from the Middle Ages, which have been passed down through generations.

On hill and mountain terrain, Cambrian Mountain shepherds often use several working dogs, which have to drive the sheep and lambs long distances. The dogs are often worked "blind" or out of sight of the shepherd over vast expanses of terrain.

Some Cambrian Mountain terrain can be inaccessible for shepherds and shepherds often still use horses to access the steep terrain and vast wetland bogs on hill tops.

Cambrian Mountain Lamb producers typically have resident hefted flocks where the flock remains with the hill/ mountain area of the farm regardless of whether there is a change of tenant/owner. Hefting is a method of managing flocks of sheep on large areas of common land and communal grazing. Lambs graze with their mothers on the "heft" belonging to their farm, where they gain a lifelong knowledge of where optimal grazing and shelter can be found. Working on open land with hefted flocks requires a specific shepherding skill set to ensure that the land continues to be successfully grazed.

Many of the tasks within the year such as shearing and autumn gathering will be done through co-operation and collaboration between neighbouring farmers. The Welsh word for this is "Cyfnwid".

Adhering to the old "Hafod a Hendre" system whereby the sheep spend their winter at the farmstead in the valleys and then the ewes and lambs are shepherded up to the hill/mountain for 3-5 months on natural pasture land rich in diverse grasses and herbs for the long summer grazing. The exact length of grazing on the hill/mountain is dependent upon weather. With inclement weather conditions this period could be reduced but would be for a minimum of 3 months. The majority of Cambrian Mountains Lamb is produced on family run extensive upland farms. The production of this lamb helps contribute to the sustainability of traditional upland farms, rural communities and the natural environment of the Cambrian Mountains.

Cambrian Mountains Lamb is slaughtered close to source within the designated geographical area which reduces food miles and supports animal welfare. Recent University research has shown that Cambrian Mountains Lamb production has some of the lowest carbon emissions in the UK.

Historically lamb production had a pivotal role for Cambrian Mountains communities and their economy and there is a long-established link between the Cambrian Mountains and lamb production with many historical references to the importance of Welsh Lamb production in this area which date back to the 14th century. (Source: Hafod Manuscripts)

Cambrian Mountains Lamb won two Great Taste Awards in 2013 and won a bronze in the True Taste of Wales awards lamb category in 2008. Cambrian Mountains Lamb is recognised as a quality product both throughout the UK and Europe and is widely acclaimed by chefs and food critics. Jacob Kennedy Chef/Proprietor - Bocca di Lupo restaurant commented that *“Cambrian Mountains Lamb is beyond exceptional and is possibly the best I’ve ever tasted. I’ve never tried any with simultaneously such depth of flavour and such tenderness”*

Cambrian Mountains Lamb has been sold to suppliers in France and Italy and Master Butchers in London who specialise in providing seasonal meat which has been traditionally reared. The Provenance Village Butcher in 2013 stated:

“Our Cambrian Mountain lamb owes its premium quality and exceptional flavour to the traditional way in which the sheep are reared. As hardy mountain animals, the native Welsh Mountain breed of sheep are allowed to grow and develop naturally on the hills so that Cambrian Mountain Lamb matures slowly for deep flavour and a succulent texture. The long summer grazing produces just the right balance of tasty meat and minimal fat, which also improves the final texture of the lean meat,

The Cambrian Mountains Initiative which supports Cambrian Mountains Lamb was a project which started in 2007 to help sustain traditional Welsh upland farms and rural communities and was inspired, supported and endorsed by its President His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. In a speech at the time he spoke about the founding group of nine Cambrian Mountains Lamb farmers who swiftly developed a positive relationship with a food processor and a retail group, with whom they were working very productively, in what was a very tough time for the sector. The Prince went on to say, *‘I am so pleased that both new contracts are about to be signed that will see Cambrian Mountains lamb carried in their premium range throughout the UK.’*

There are currently 18 farmers that produce Cambrian Mountains Lamb. A total of 14000 lambs have been marketed through the scheme between 2007 and 2019 with a large UK retailer as the main outlet. Caterers and other outlets can also source the lamb.

It is this combination of natural and human factors which work together to provide a strong link between the geographical area and the product.

7. Inspection body

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The inspection body conforms to the principles of ISO 17065 standard.

8. Labelling

ENDS

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