

OTHER ACTS

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Publication of an application pursuant to Article 50(2)(b) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs

(2015/C 204/08)

This publication confers the right to oppose the application pursuant to Article 51 of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽¹⁾.

PRODUCT SPECIFICATION OF A TRADITIONAL SPECIALITY GUARANTEED

'JĀŅU SIERS'**EU No: LV-TSG-0007-01264 – 09.10.2014****LATVIA****1. Name to be registered**

'Jāņu siers'

2. Type of product

Class 1.3 Cheese

3. Grounds for registration**3.1. Whether the product**

- results from a mode of production, processing or composition corresponding to traditional practice for that product or foodstuff
- is produced from raw materials or ingredients that are those traditionally used.

The method of preparation, recipe, appearance, colour and taste give 'Jāņu siers' its traditional character, which has remained unchanged for tens or even hundreds of years.

'Jāņu siers' is a fresh sour-milk cheese prepared as follows: milk is curdled using only the yeast of lactic acid bacteria or curds. 'Jāņu siers' is produced from milk and curds; these are heated to remove the whey, and butter or cream, eggs, salt and caraway seeds are added to what is left. The resulting mass is heated and intensively stirred until a homogeneous consistency is obtained.

3.2. Whether the name

- has been traditionally used to refer to the specific product
- identifies the traditional character or specific character of the product

Jāņi is the Latvian festival most rich in traditions and celebrates the summer solstice. Many traditions are associated with Jāņi, such as the weaving of wreaths, decorating the home with flowers, herbs and grasses traditionally picked during Jāņi, singing, lighting bonfires and preparing special foods. When German crusaders arrived on the shores of the Baltic Sea in the 12th century, they were taken aback by the scale of the festivities taking place around the bonfires on the night of Jāņi. Beer and 'Jāņu siers' are an integral part of celebrations on the night of Jāņi. The name 'Jāņu siers' being given to the cheese eaten during the summer solstice celebrations (Jāņi) is recorded in Latvian folk-songs, considered to be a treasure trove of Latvian oral folklore; these were collected, arranged and edited by Krišjānis Barons between 1894 and 1915 in his work *Latvju dainas*.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 343, 14.12.2012, p. 1.

4. Description

- 4.1. *Description of the product to which the name under point 1 applies, including its main physical, chemical, microbiological or organoleptic characteristics showing the product's specific character (Article 7(2) of this Regulation)*

'Jāņu siers' is a sour-milk cheese with a clean, lactic-acid flavour and aroma, and the pronounced associated flavour and aroma of caraway seeds.

'Jāņu siers' is in the form of a low cylinder, with a diameter of 8-30 cm and a height of 4-6 cm. The colour of the cheese ranges from pale yellow to yellow.

The cheese is moderately salty. Its consistency is soft, compact, slightly grainy and homogeneous throughout. Appearance in cross-section: without eye-holes, although gaps and dense areas in the mass may be present, visibly even distribution of caraway seeds.

Chemical properties:

- Fat in dry matter: no more than 30 %
- Maximum water content: no more than 58 %
- Salt content 1,2-1,8 %

- 4.2. *Description of the production method of the product to which the name under point 1 applies that the producers must follow including, where appropriate, the nature and characteristics of the raw materials or ingredients used, and the method by which the product is prepared (Article 7(2) of this Regulation)*

The following ingredients are required to produce 10 kg of 'Jāņu siers':

- 28-50 litres of skimmed milk,
- 10-13 kg of skimmed milk curds,
- 1,0-1,2 kg of butter (82 % fat) or 2,5 l cream (35 % fat),
- 0,6-1,0 kg of egg pulp (without shells),
- 40-50 g of caraway seeds,
- 100-120 g of cooking salt.
- Food colouring (beta-carotene) may also be added.

Preparation method:

- the milk is heated in a pan (to 85-90 °C) but not boiled.
- The crumbled curd is added to the hot milk. Stirring continues until the mixture is heated to 65-85 °C. Stirring continues until the milk has completely curdled and the whey begins to separate.
- During the heating process the curds change in structure and become slightly stretchy.
- The whey is drained off.
- The cheese mass is placed back into the pan. The egg mix, butter or cream, caraway seeds and salt are added and the mixture heated to 65-70 °C (stirring continues) until the cheese mass comes away from the sides of the pan (approximately 15-30 minutes) and becomes a homogeneous mass with a slightly elastic consistency.

- The cheese mass is placed into moulds and left in a cool place for at least 1-2 hours. Remove the cheese from the moulds, allow to dry, and pack.

Although the demand for 'Jāņu siers' is highest around the summer solstice, it is produced all year round

4.3. Description of the key elements establishing the product's traditional character (Article 7(2) of this Regulation)

The uniqueness of 'Jāņu siers' lies in its traditional production methods and ingredients and its shape and colour, all of which have remained unchanged for hundreds of years.

Traditional ingredients

'Jāņu siers' is made from milk and curds, to which butter or cream, eggs, salt and caraway seeds are added. This is documented in many literary sources, which bring together historical information on recipes and preparation methods for 'Jāņu siers', including *Latviešu svētki Latviešu Folkloras Krātuves materiāli*, 1940; *Latviešu pavāru grāmata; Muižas pavāriem par mācību visādus ēdienus gardi sataisīt un savārīt*, Jelgava, 1796; Amols, M. *Piens, sviests un siers un viņu apstrāde*, Jelgava, 1899; Kļaviņa, A. *Viesību galds*, Rīga: Liesma, 1971; Gustava, V., Jansone, I. *Pavārgrāmata*, Rīga: Liesma, 1977; Masiļūne, N., Pasopa, A. *Latviešu ēdieni*, Rīga: Avots, 1986; Ozola, L. *Siera ražošanas tehnoloģija*, Rīga: Neo, 1997; Dumpe, L. *Latviešu tradicionālā piensaimniecība; Piena produkti un piena ēdieni*, Rīga, 1998; Ozola, L. and Ciproviča, I. *Piena pārstrādes tehnoloģijas*, Jelgava: LLU, 2002; *Praktiskā Jāņu grāmata*, SIA Tautas mākslas centrs, 2004; *Jāņu siers*, Siera Klubs, 2004.

In his work on farming guidelines, published in the mid-nineteenth century, Kārlis Lepevičs emphasised that the cheese's distinctive flavours and consistency depend on the ingredients being used in the correct proportions. Henriete Dauderte's cookbook, published around this time, indicates along with other twentieth-century instructional books that more milk is added than curds, depending on the sourness of the curds, as adding more milk makes the cheese sweeter.

Shape and colour

The round shape of 'Jāņu siers' is significant and symbolic. Round-shaped foods are usually eaten at the time of the summer solstice as a symbolic representation of the sun. Likewise, the shape and colour of 'Jāņu siers' is associated with the symbolic representation of the sun. At summer solstice feasts, 'Jāņu siers' embodied both the creative energy of the sun and the plentiful and successful yield of dairy products. The roundness of 'Jāņu siers' symbolises the sun and the world; by cutting the cheese into pieces, each person takes a part of the sun's energy.

In many of the folk-songs contained in Krišjāņa Barons' work *Latvju dainas* (1894–1915) the tying of 'Jāņu siers' is presented as a special ritual: the cheese is wrapped so the knot is in the centre of the cheese round, and the folds of the fabric are arranged in such a way that even impressions are created in the surface of the cheese. The knot and the area around it creates the 'Jāņu siera viducītis' [middle of the 'Jāņu siers'] and the folds leave an impression resembling the sun's rays. The tying gives the cheese its shape, likened to a 'round wheel'. This process is described in all literary descriptions of the preparation of 'Jāņu siers'.

Preparation method

The soft, well-bound, slightly elastic and homogeneous consistency and mild flavour of 'Jāņu siers' are the result of skills developed over many years.

The preparation of curd is mentioned in documents of the Riga Jesuit College dating back to the late 16th century and early 17th century.

The recipe for 'Jāņu siers' is found in many books, e.g. Kļaviņa, A. *Viesību galds*, Rīga: Liesma, 1971; Gustava, V., Jansone, I. *Pavārgrāmata*, Rīga: Liesma, 1977; Masiļūne, N., Pasopa, A. *Latviešu ēdieni*, Rīga: Avots, 1986.

'Jāņu siers' has become a national treasure. It is a prominent and popular symbol of the cultural identity which Latvia presents to other countries. 'Jāņu siers' also has an important place in other major Latvian rites of passage and seasonal festivals.

For many years an annual dairy products show and competition has been held in Latvia. Every two years this also involves Latvian cheese producers competing for the honour of being the producer of the most traditional and tasty 'Jāņu siers'. In 2003, at the annual 'Latvijas novadu Siera diena' [Latvian Regional Cheese Day] event, 'Jāņu siers' was highly commended and given the esteemed title of 'Latvijas Sieru karalis' [the 'king' of Latvian cheeses].
