

OTHER ACTS

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Publication of the amended product specification following the approval of a minor amendment pursuant to the second subparagraph of Article 53(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012

(2020/C 73/07)

The European Commission has approved this minor amendment in accordance with the third subparagraph of Article 6(2) of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 664/2014 ⁽¹⁾.

The application for approval of this minor amendment can be consulted in the Commission's eAmbrosia database.

PRODUCT SPECIFICATION OF A TRADITIONAL SPECIALITY GUARANTEED

‘ФИЛЕ ЕЛЕНА’ (FILE ELENA)**EU No: TSG-BG-01017-AM01 – 23 July 2019****‘Bulgaria’****1. Name(s) to be registered**

‘Филе Елена’ (File Elena)

2. Type of product

Class 1.2. Meat products (cooked, salted, smoked, etc.)

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 product was registered under Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 835/2014

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

‘Филе Елена’ (File Elena) is a specific dried raw meat product made from pork tenderloin. The name comes from the town of Elena in northern Bulgaria, in the foothills of the forested Elena Balkan mountain range. The name is specific in itself because it is known throughout the country and has entered into common use without the geographical region influencing the product's quality or characteristics.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 179, 19.6.2014, p. 17.

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)

'Филе Елена' (File Elena) is a pressed dried raw meat product prepared from chilled or frozen pork tenderloin, auxiliary ingredients and natural seasonings. It is suitable for direct consumption by all consumer groups.

Physical properties — shape and dimensions

— Oval-cylindrical, flattened oblong shape, with no specific dimensions.

Chemical properties

- Water content: not more than 55 % of the total weight
- Salt (sodium chloride): not more than 6,3 % of the total weight
- pH not less than 5,4.

Organoleptic properties

- External appearance and colour: clean, well-dried surface coated with savory and black pepper, the savory imparting a green colour to the surface;
- Cut surface: the muscle tissue is pinkish red, with a darker hue at the edges, whereas the fat is pale pink to cream-coloured;
- Taste and smell: characteristic, pleasant, slightly salty, with a distinct aroma of the seasonings used, free from foreign flavours and odours;
- Consistency: dense and elastic.

'Филе Елена' (File Elena) may be marketed whole, cut into pieces or sliced, vacuum-packed, in cellophane or in modified-atmosphere packaging.

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)

Composition:

- Pork tenderloin, chilled or frozen: 100 kg;
- Salting mixture for 100 kg of pork tenderloin: 3,5 kg of salt, 40 g of antioxidant, i.e. ascorbic acid (E300), 100 g of potassium nitrate or 85 g of sodium nitrate, 500 g of refined granulated sugar;
- Seasoning mixture for 100 kg of pork tenderloin: 2 kg of savory and 200 g of ground black pepper;
- Twine: as permitted for use with food.

Production method:

'Филе Елена' (File Elena) is made from chilled or frozen pork tenderloin with a pH of 5,6-6,2. The loin is cut away along the projecting surface of the ribs with the aid of a knife, moving down the vertebral column and along the transverse processes. The muscle tissue between the transverse processes of the thoracic vertebrae is then removed. The fat and fascia are trimmed from the pork tenderloin fillets, which are placed in clean containers for salting. To ensure a better distribution of the components of the salting mixture, the nitrates and the salt are mixed first, after which the other ingredients are added. Salting is carried out using the dry method – each tenderloin fillet is rubbed with salting mixture by hand or mechanically. The salted pieces are placed in suitable containers in arranged in several rows in cold rooms with an air temperature of between 0 °C and 4 °C. After 5 days, the arrangement of the pieces is reversed (the top and bottom pieces are swapped) and they are left for at least another 5 days under the same conditions. When the salting process is complete, a hanging loop made of twine is applied to each tenderloin fillet. After being prepared in this way, the tenderloin fillets are hung on wooden and/or metal frames (rods) arranged on stainless-steel wheeled sausage racks. The pieces are not allowed to come into contact with one another. They are left hanging on the rack to drain for up to 24 hours at an air temperature not exceeding 12 °C. When drained, they are placed in natural or air-conditioned drying chambers with temperature and humidity regulation. Drying takes place

at an air temperature not exceeding 17 °C and a relative humidity of 70-85 %. Whilst drying, the product is pressed in wooden-panel presses. The tenderloin fillets are kept in the presses for 12-24 hours. They are first placed in the press when they are slightly dry and a slight crust can be felt on their surface. Pressing is carried out repeatedly until the product has thoroughly dried out and the tenderloin fillets are of the correct shape. The presses must be able to absorb and release moisture and must therefore be made of natural material (wood) which can be cleaned and dried. The product's final external appearance is determined by pressing. After the final pressing, the tenderloin fillets are coated with a pre-homogenised mixture of ground black pepper and crumbled savory, as per the formulation.

The drying process lasts for at least 25 days – depending on the size of the pieces of meat – until a dense elastic consistency characteristic of the product is achieved.

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

Specificity of the product

The specific properties of 'Филе Елена' (File Elena) are attributable to the following characteristics:

- Raw material: the high-quality part of a pig's carcass having high nutritional value, namely striploin;
- Product surface: coated with savory and ground black pepper in appropriate proportions, in accordance with the formulation, which imparts to the product a specific greenish colour not found in other dried raw meat products belonging to the same group;
- Taste and aroma: The product's characteristic taste and aroma are attributable to the carefully selected and processed ingredients, the specific conditions in which it is dried and pressed, and an appropriate choice of seasonings. In this regard, the seasoning savory plays a major part, giving the product a distinctive and specific taste.

Specificity of the product

'Филе Елена' (File Elena) is a dried raw meat product made of uncomminuted meat. The centuries-old Bulgarian domestic traditions of preparing delicacies from beef, veal, sheepmeat and goatmeat provided a good basis for applying a similar technique in the case of pork as well. In a number of regions of the country where it was possible to keep pigs, products of this kind were made at home. However, when Bulgaria was part of the Ottoman Empire, for religious reasons it was almost impossible to place pork products on the market. The first known instances of a similar product being made from pork date back to 1855, when Stoyan Arnaudov of Gabrovo produced dried raw pork in his workshop for 2 090 groshes, a considerable sum at that time (Petar Tsonchev: *Iz stopanskoto minalo na Gabrovo*, Hudozhnik Publishing House, Sofia, 1929).

The first normative document relating to 'Филе Елена' (File Elena) was industry standard ON 18 64338-73, 'Elena' dried raw pork tenderloin, Ministry of Agriculture and the Food Industry, Sofia, 1973, which was compiled by Ivan Konovski and Trendafil Ignatov. The technique used to make this product finally became established in the early 1980s, when the meat industry was under State control and specialists working in undertakings in the Elena area had amassed many years of experience. Subsequently, the last State normative document, TU 22/18 May 1983, Technical specification for 'File Elena' dried raw pork tenderloin, NAPS, Sofia, 1983, and the annexed technical instructions (Technical instruction for the production of 'Elena' dried raw pork tenderloin, Ministry of Agriculture and the Food Industry, Sofia, 1983), were published. 'File Elena' is produced on the basis of these documents to this day.

The production method and formulation of the product are also described in *Sbornik tehnologicheski instruktsii za proizvodstvo na mesni proizvedenia*, in the Technical Instruction for the production of delicacies from pork loin (p. 319) 'File Elena', NAPS-DSO Rodopa and the Institute for the Meat Industry, Sofia, 1980, and in *Tehnologicheski narachnik za dobiv i prerabotka na meso ot svine, edar i dreben rogat dobitak* (p. 98), DSO Rodopa and the Institute for the Meat Industry, Sofia, 1984. In 2003 the Association of Meat Processors in Bulgaria collected traditional recipes and techniques for dried raw uncomminuted meat products in *Sbornik s traditsionni balgarski retsepturi i tehnologii*, where information on 'File Elena' can be found on pages 88-89.

The traditional character of 'Филе Елена' (File Elena) is expressed in:

- the unchanged composition of the formulation;
- the methods used in the production process;
- its traditional taste.

The traditional character of the formulation, unchanged through the years. The traditional character of the formulation is expressed in its main ingredients, in the composition of the salting mixture and seasoning mixture (described in point 4.2). This formulation dates from the first descriptions of the product in the aforementioned documents – industry standard ON 18 64338-73 and TU 22/18 May 1983, which have been kept up to the present day.

The traditional methods used in the production process and characteristic of 'Филе Елена' (File Elena) are also mentioned in the records of Hristo Savatov, long-serving specialist at the Rodopa meat factory in Veliko Tarnovo.

These traditional methods include: the methods of salting, pressing and drying, and of applying the seasoning mix.

- Salting is carried out using the dry method – each tenderloin fillet is rubbed with salting mixture by hand or mechanically. During salting, which lasts not less than 10 days, the maturing process begins.
- Another traditional feature of the product is the even distribution of moisture, which is ensured through pressing. This results in the meat drying evenly, which in turn ensures that the meat matures correctly. The meat is pressed using presses made from natural wood. The wood provides stability under pressure and partly absorbs the moisture released from the product, which is important not only for the product's shape but also for the natural development of the specific microflora.
- The drying of the product is carried out in specific conditions of air temperature and humidity in order to select the specific microflora which contribute to the characteristic organoleptic, nutritional and taste properties of the finished product. The traditional technique requires premises for drying and maturing so as to allow the development and preservation of lactic-acid microflora specific to Bulgaria. The fine-tuning to natural processes which is preserved in this traditional drying method is due to the work and knowledge of generations of Bulgarian technologists, as reflected in the first technical document dating from 1973.
- The characteristic features of the product's seasoning mixture lie in its preparation and application. Traditionally, the dried savory is crumbled rather than ground, and the seasoning mixture is applied to the tenderloin through rolling. These traditional methods of preparation (the crumbling of the savory) and application (rolling) of the seasoning mixture allow the preservation of essential oils contained in the seasoning, giving the finished product a more pronounced taste. This preserves the fresh green colour of the seasoning mixture in which the product is coated.

The taste of the product has remained unchanged throughout the many years for which 'Филе Елена' (File Elena) has been produced and marketed.

Formation of the traditional taste

The natural microflora selected by means of traditional methods of drying and pressing, along with the product's carefully selected and balanced seasonings form the characteristic aroma and taste of 'Филе Елена' (File Elena) which has been preserved to this day.

According to Prof. Kalinka Boshkova, the production of 'Филе Елена' (File Elena) is traditionally associated with complex microbiological, physico-chemical and biochemical processes occurring in the meat ingredients during salting, maturing, drying and pressing. (Boshkova Kalinka *Mikrobiologia na mesoto, ribata i yaytsata*, Plovdiv, 1994). It is these processes which help achieve a stable colour, good structure and pleasant aroma and taste in the finished product. This is due to the species composition of the natural microflora and its development in the meat ingredients. The microflora is mainly comprised of micrococci (*M. varians*) and lactobacilli (*L. plantarum*, *L. casei*). Studies have been carried out in this respect by V. Peneva, S. Brachkova, G. Stoeva, and S. Kuncheva: *Sadarzhanie na nitriti v mesni produkti*, Second International Symposium on Nitrites and Meat Product Quality, p. 115, Collected articles, Varna, 1984, and by R. Kiseva: *Usavershenstvuvane na tehnologiyata za proizvodstvo na surovo-susheni mesni produkti ot nerazdrobeni surovini. Disertatsia*, Institute for the Meat Industry, Sofia, 1985.

‘Филе Елена’ (File Elena) is a product that has won multiple awards at fairs and exhibitions in Bulgaria and abroad, receiving certificates and gold medals from: the 57th International Exhibition, Brussels, 1986; the *Taynata na balgarskia vkus* competition during the Meatmania international meat and meat products exhibition in Sofia (*Yubileyno izdanie ‘10 godini AMB – -1994-2003’*, page 22-30) and the 2010 and 2013 IFFA international exhibitions in Germany. It also received a certificate of excellence in the Competition for traditional Bulgarian products organised by the Belgian Embassy in Sofia, 2007.
