

**APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION
OF THE GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION OF THE AGRICULTURAL
PRODUCT**

I. Applicant

1. Name or first name and surname:

Stowarzyszenie Producentów Owoców i Warzyw w Ujanowicach [Fruit and Vegetable Producers Association in Ujanowice]

2. Seat or residence and address:

Urząd Gminy w Laskowej
34-602 Laskowa

3. Mailing address:

Kazimierz Joniec, Sechna 32, 34-603 Ujanowice,

Telephone: +48 18 333 41 58

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4. Person acting on behalf of the applicant:

Kazimierz Joniec

5. Group:

The group consists of producers – farmers associated in the Fruit and Vegetable Producers Association in Ujanowice. Currently, the Association brings together of 80 farmers.

II. Specifications

1. Name:

‘Suska sechłońska’

2. Application for registration of:

Please mark [X] if the applicant is seeking to register the name referred to in point 1 of the specifications as a designation of origin or geographical indication.

(1) designation of origin

(2) geographical indication

X

3. Category:

Please specify the category to which the agricultural product or foodstuff belongs¹.

¹ To be completed by the body that sends the application to the European Commission.

4. Description:

‘Suska sechłońska’ is an unpitted prune which has undergone drying and smoking using the method described in point 7. ‘Suska sechłońska’ is characterised by significant differences in the size and shape that depends on the variety of fruit intended for drying and may range from oblate to prolate. The dried fruit is characterised by elastic, pulpy flesh and wrinkled but shiny skin of deep blue to black. ‘Suska sechłońska’ is slightly sweet in taste, with a smoky aftertaste and aroma.

The size of an unpitted prune depends on the size of the fruit of the plum variety used and ranges from 1.5 to 4.5 cm, with a weight of 44 to 99 prunes per kg. ‘Suska sechłońska’ is characterised by a high water content in the finished product of at least 24% at the time of sale. Pitted plums that meet the aforementioned parameters before this process may also be sold as ‘suska sechłońska’.

5. Geographical area:

The geographical area in which ‘suska sechłońska’ is produced covers 239,55 km² and is located within four communes: Laskowa, Iwkowa, Łososina Dolna and Żegocina.

6. Proof of origin:

1. The production of ‘suska sechłońska’ is subject to the supervision and control system described below. Products to be labelled with the ‘suska sechłońska’ PGI must fully meet each of the following conditions:
 - (1) they have been produced in the geographical area defined in point 5 in accordance with the described production method and have the characteristics specified in the description;
 - (2) their producers have undertaken in writing to comply with the specifications;
 - (3) their producers have provided the information listed below to the Fruit and Vegetable Producers Association in Ujanowice, hereinafter referred to as the “Association”.
2. Producers that wish to use the PGI shall notify the Association of this fact. Entities that want to use it for the time starting from a given year should report this by 1 May of that year at the latest. If the willingness to use the PGI is reported after this deadline, the PGI may only be used starting from the following year.
3. The Association should be provided with information on the location of the drying facilities used to produce ‘suska sechłońska’ by a given producer. Each drying facility where ‘suska sechłońska’ is produced is assigned an identification number. The Association should maintain an up-to-date list of entities interested in producing ‘suska sechłońska’ and the current location of the drying facilities used. A given drying facility can only be assigned to one producer.
4. Each drying facility owner shall maintain a register in which it records information regarding raw material and the quantity of the finished product.

5. Producers must comply with the obligation to meet the conditions specified in point 6(1) from the moment of sending the application for registration to the European Commission. Producers must start complying with the obligation to meet the conditions specified in point 6(2) and (3) no later than three months from the first publication of the application for registration in the Official Journal of the European Union.

7. Production method:

Drying facilities must be located within the area defined in point 5 and the entire plum drying and smoking process must also take place there. The wood and raw materials used in production may come from outside the area defined in point 5. No preservatives may be used throughout the 'suska sechłońska' production process, and all the activities described must be performed by hand.

Raw material

Only unpitted plums of *Prunus domestica L. ssp. domestica* and varieties derived therefrom are used for the production of 'suska sechłońska': Promis, Tolar, Nektawit as well as Valjevka and Stanley that are easy to smoke. Fruits of these varieties have desirable characteristics for the drying and smoking process, including a high sugar content and a relatively low water content.

In order to ensure the highest possible quality of the final product, the fruit intended for drying must be harvested at the right time. The timing of fruit harvest is flexible and depends on weather conditions and the varieties of particular fruit trees. Fruit intended for drying should be harvested between harvest ripeness and consumption ripeness. Each producer decides itself when to harvest, based on its knowledge and experience in this regard. In the case of purchasing plums from other fruit growers, each producer selects itself specific batches of plums suitable for the production of 'suska sechłońska'.

Segregation of raw material

The harvested fruit is subjected to preliminary manual segregation in order to obtain the highest possible quality of raw material intended for the production of 'suska sechłońska'. The fruit must be healthy, without signs of rotting or mechanical damage and it must be free of visible damage caused by insects, mites or other pests. It must also be free of any other damage, impurities or other unspecified organisms which would make it unfit for consumption.

Fruit arrangement

The selected fruit is arranged by hand on a special grate made of wooden sticks (narrow and long wooden boards). The fruit should be arranged in such a way that air has free access to each plum. The usual layer of the plums on the grate does not exceed 20 cm. When arranging the fruit, another selection of the raw material used is made to ensure the highest possible quality of the final product.

Wood used for smoking

Only hard and dry wood of deciduous tree species is used to fire the drying facility. Tree species that are most commonly used for this purpose include beech, hornbeam, birch and wood of fruit trees, e.g. plum. Resinous wood is not allowed.

Smoking and drying

After the fruit has been arranged on the grate, the first stage of smoking and drying the plums with hot smoke begins. This process lasts up to 3 days. After this time, the producer, relying on its knowledge of and experience in drying and smoking plums, checks the plums in the lower layer of the grate that is closest to the heat source. If the fruit in the lower layer is sufficiently dried, then the upper layer of the fruit is swapped with the lower one and the smoking and drying stage is repeated. The temperature at which the plums on the sticks are dried and smoked should range from 45 to 70°C.

The duration of the production of 'suska sechłońska' (usually lasting from 4 to 6 days) depends on the varieties of the fruit used for its production and the temperature in the drying facilities, as well as external atmospheric factors, in particular ambient temperature and air humidity.

Sorting the fruit

Smoked fruit is removed from the grate by hand, paying attention to the extent to which each fruit has been dried. Smoked and dried fruit must not be damaged. Each producer assesses itself whether the plum already meets the parameters required in the product description. Once sorted, insufficiently dried fruit is subject to further smoking and drying.

Storage

Smoked fruit should be stored in dry and airy rooms. If the humidity of the stored fruit increases above the acceptable level, it is smoked and dried again, according to the described technology. Drying usually takes about one day.

Possible stoning

'Suska sechłońska' can be stoned. This process should be carried out very carefully, and the way in which it is done must not lead to an undesirable change in the product's characteristics. In particular, this process may not reduce the water content below the value presented in point 4 of the product description. Both manual and mechanical stoning is permitted.

Sale

Smoked and dried fruit may be sold in bulk or packaged.

Drying facility

The entire production process should be carried out in traditional 'sechłońska' drying facilities described below, in particular:

1. only those drying facilities whose design enables smoking and drying plums with smoke and dry air, and not only with dry air, are used in the production process;
2. the sticks of which the grate is made must be made of wood;
3. only one grate is used in each drying chamber;
4. the distance between the hearth and the grate may not be less than 160 cm.

8. Link with the geographical region:

The name 'suska sechłońska' comes from the local dialect. 'Suska' means here a dried and smoked plum. The adjective 'sechłońska' comes from the place-name Sechna in the commune of Laskowa. In the past, two names were used to refer to this village: 'Sechna' and 'Sechlina'. Currently, the name 'Sechna' is used. However, references to the old name 'Sechlina' have been preserved in the flexion of the currently used name 'Sechna', and thus the name 'suska sechłońska' is used and the village inhabitant is called 'sechlok'.

It should also be noted that the name of the village 'Sechna' or 'Sechlina' comes from the tradition of smoking and drying – 'Sechna' or 'Sechlina' – 'sechnie' (drying). This demonstrates the product's uniqueness and the deep-rooted tradition of the production method in the geographical area defined in point 5. Currently, due to the evolution of language, for the average consumer, the name of the village no longer refers to the drying or smoking process.

The link between 'suska sechłońska' and the area defined in point 5 results in particular from the use of a unique production method, characteristic of the area where 'suska sechłońska' is produced. The use of this method gives the product its specific properties. The product owes its reputation to its unique production method and the skills of local farmers. 'Suska sechłońska' is therefore a product characterised by unique characteristics and a reputation related to the place of origin. The design of the drying facilities and the method of drying differ from production methods used in other parts of Poland as well as in the neighbouring regions. In neighboring areas, fruit is not dried or smoked, and if it is, a different technology is used than in the case of 'suska sechłońska'.

Description of the area

The geographical area in which 'suska sechłońska' is produced covers 239,55 km² and is located within four communes: Laskowa, Iwkowa, Łososina Dolna and Żegocina. The largest part of this area (the entire area of the Laskowa and Iwkowa communes) is located in the territory of the Island Beskids. The area of the Żegocina commune is located on the border of the Island Beskids with the Wieliczka-Ciężkowice Foothills, while the area of the Iwkowa commune is located on the border of the Island Beskids with the Rożnów Foothills. The entire area is diverse and is characterised by significant differences in relative heights. The area concerned is located at an altitude of over 300 m above sea level and its topography is very variable, with most slopes having gradients of between 5 and 25°. Some peaks in this area exceed 900 m above sea level – e.g. the Jaworz mountain with a height of 921 m above sea level. As the altitude above sea level increases, temperatures decrease, while annual precipitation totals increase and so does air humidity. Precipitation in this area is in the range of 700-850 mm, providing water resources. Winds from the west and north-west prevail. Soils in this area are mainly poor (large proportion of classes V and VI).

Farms in this area are largely fragmented – the average size of a farm does not exceed 4 ha.

Tradition and reputation

According to the preserved records, the tradition of drying plums in the geographical area defined in point 5 is very long. Information from the first half of the 18th century indicates that the village of Sechna and Poor Clares' estate located on its territory were characterised by the abundance of fruit trees. Probably each farm had its own orchard at that time. Rows of plum trees grew in the fields (in 1738, at one of the farmsteads in Żmiąca, there was an orchard with 310 plum trees). Fruits were important food for the population at that time. They were eaten not only in autumn, but also in winter – raw, pickled, dried. As early as the 17th century, plums were used in the area defined in point 5 to produce jam.

According to old stories, the entire history of drying this fruit was connected with the activities of the local priest. The parish priest, who is no longer known by his name, a passionate fruit grower, ordered his parishioners to plant several or a dozen or so fruit trees as penance, depending on the sins confessed. In the unfertile soil, apple, cherry or pear trees grew poorly and did not fruit well, so he ordered people to plant plum trees. When these trees began to fruit well, the farmers outsmarted the parish priest and began to use the plums to produce plum brandy. Drunkenness was rampant, so the concerned parish priest and his vicar decided that plum trees should still be planted, but the fruit had to be dried, as it turned out that smoked plums could not be made into plum brandy. The parish priest had long since retired from earthly work, but fathers and sons still plant, dry and sell plums. According to old stories, these were the beginnings of smoking and drying plums in Sechna. This custom has survived to the present day, and the production method used has remained practically unchanged. Drying and smoking is so popular that songs and poems celebrating the tradition have been written about it. This old song is an example:

*“... Oj Sechna, Sechna ty skopiała wiosko,
gdyby nie suszarnie byłabyś stolicą ...”*

In her 2001 study entitled *“Od Ujanowic do Laskowej – przeszłość i współczesność”* [From Ujanowice to Laskowa – past and present], when describing the life of the inhabitants of the villages of the former *“Streszyce-Żbików demesne”* on the Łososina River: Ujanowice, Sechna, Kobyłczyna, Ms Małgorzata Sromek quotes another folk song (*“Sechna jesienią”* [Sechna in the autumn] by T. Grzegorzek):

*“Ładnie murowane toną w sadach chaty
Ogródek przy każdej jak paw przebogaty
Wieś poza tym zwie się “Zagłębie śliwkowe”,
Bo z zadbanych sadów jest “suszywo” zdrowe.*

*Suszą coraz mądrzej dziadek, ojciec i zięć, suszarnię
ma każdy jedną albo i pięć. Tu jesienią dymy
błękitne się wloką nad tą wsią co dawno nazwana
opoką.*

*Bywa, przez Wiliją chłop “pachnie” złociakiem –
w dobrej komitywie trzeba być z Sechlakiem!”
Większy i bardziej szczegółowy opis zawiera inna
przyśpiewka:*

*“Po drugiej wojnie Sechna ma żywot nobliwy,
Sechlaków “przynapitych” ratowały śliwy. Kto
sad “obkładał gnojem”, okopywał wiecznie ten
o “Wiliji, Świętach, mógł myśleć bezpiecznie.
Od wiek wieków udana ta ziemia śliwiana,
pazernie uprawiana, zrobi z chłopca – pana!*

*Kromolic, Pajorówka, Wójciki, Gwiżdżówka,
Zapotoce, Młokotówka, piękne Zakokoce.
Kasprzoki, Żołnówka, Garbusie, Oleksówka –
Wszędzie śliwy jak pięście. Ciepła jesień to szczęście!
Zabrzoki, Łukosówka, Góry, Nowokówka,
Granica, Pagorek, Przylaski – śliw niejeden worek!*

*A ile piękne suski kosztują mitręgi i
jakie przy nich chłop dostaje cięgi:
Na wiosnę zrób trzy “siągi” twarde – buk,
grabocki, do zagrzewki, na kolor suszone śliwioki.
Pod gruszkę – spali wszystko: korce, wyrzby, siby
Braknie – to od sąsiada pożyczys na niby..*

*Dwa tygodnie? Trzy mało – żeby dobre śliwy
“wjechały” na suszarnię – kto zdążył
szczęśliwy. Chłop obdarty, zdrapany na kolcach
jak igła, od pośpiechu nie dojadł, gęba schudła,
zbrzydła, bo w dopadki się mlóci, kopie i
pokłada; łapać słonko póki jest, bo wnet deszcz
popada!*

*Tony śliw na suszarniach zniesione na brzuchach.
Już! Pali się – od dymu czarno w nosie w
uchach Portki zezmelcowane nie jedne, lecz
troje, potem się je wyrzuci widłami na gnoje.
Na kolanach sortują w gorącu, zaduchu,
parują, przewracają, bo silni na duchu.*

*Na duchu, jak na duchu; gorszy kaszel, płuca,
oczy, bo płomień z paleniska dymem w nos
zarzuca. Wreszcie, gdy już gotowe: przebierać z
dzieckami, suszki nieudarzone “ślepcie” –
powyjmujcie sami.. Gdy wszystko przebrane –
podgrzać śliwy bukiem
pilnować, by suszarnia nie spłonęła z hukiem*

*Po skończonym szczęśliwie “rajwachu” z suszami
połowa biedy bywa już za Sechlakami.
Druga połowa – nerwy! Kiedy? Jaka cena?
Kto trafi dziś w dziesiątkę? – każda “stówka” cenna!*

*Kto też sprzeda najdrożej, kto się da wykiwać?
toczy się "polityka" jak wieś długa – żywa.*

*Dawnym czasem Sechlaki wyruszali w miasta,
hurtownie brały na kwit – do kasy i basta!
Ten, który w życiu trafił lepiej, to wracał
szczęśliwy: oprócz swoich skupował wszystkich
"kumpli" śliwy. i dorabiał gotówki z kierownikiem
w zmowie, a co się przy tym działo – niech wam
świadek powie.*

*Spółdzielnie owocarskie w całej Polsce prawie
znały swoich Sechlaków w rozmaitej sprawie. Raz
Koziołek się zawziął: "nie dom nic szpryncowi",
kasa jest na parterze – smyk ku balkonowi. Z
balkonu "z pieca na łeb" całkiem z innej strony do
Pekaesu, na dworzec – wpadł nie dogoniony.*

*Oprzytomniał Koziołek – gdyż był w Limanowej,
teraz on, nie kierownik, miał sny kolorowe: - "Na
Milicję nie pójdzie ten łapówkarz chciwy" –
Lecz Koziołek już odtąd nie sprzedał "pół śliwy"
Oj, Sachna, Sachna – przyszła wolność,
demokracja, wolny rynek, bazary – jakże inna
orientacja!"*

The tradition and continuity of drying plums in this area are also evidenced by numerous documents showing that 'suska sechłońska' and drying facilities were found in this region. In the works of the ethnographic commission of the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences No. 9 (records from 1905) "Ujanowice – wieś powiatu limanowskiego" [Ujanowice – a village of the Limanowa powiat] by Mr Jan Ligęza, in the section devoted to food, mentions of the use and consumption of dried plums can be found.

For example, a farmer's request from 1984 addressed to the Car Transport Company in Nowy Sącz for the provision of a car to transport dried fruit has been preserved. The information regarding the size of the crops contained in the request has been certified as true by the commune office in Laskowa. Numerous documents confirming studies on dried plums, e.g. from 1989, 1991 and 1992, provided by the local Sanitary and Epidemiological Station in Limanowa, have also been preserved. These documents have reference Nos. 1946, 1947, 1948, 1999, 2000, 2580 and 2581, which indicates a large number of such studies. There is also an architectural design for the construction of a two-chamber drying facility from 1980 in the village of Kobyłczyzna in the Laskowa commune. The presence of dried plums in this area is also confirmed by numerous plum purchase receipts and agreements on testing dried plums.

Over the years, the tradition of drying plums spread to neighbouring villages in the immediate vicinity – to the communes of Laskowa, Iwkowa, Łososina Dolna and Żegocina, because, as the local people say: "...where a Sechłończyk (a man from Sechna) got married,

he built drying facilities there, extending the tradition... and dried". In this area, plums are dried according to the old recipes from Sechna.

The unique drying facilities used until present day to obtain this product are the most straightforward evidence that the old method has been preserved. In the described area of four communes, there are as many as 677 drying houses. The number of drying facilities in each commune concerned is as follows: Laskowa – 310, Iwkowa – 185, Łososina Dolna – 112, Żegocina – 70. In the village of Sechna, from where the tradition originates, there are as many as 150 drying facilities. Considering that the area defined in point 5 has an area of 239.55 km² and that its population in 2004 was 21,885, there was on average one drying facility per 32 inhabitants and there were 3 drying facilities per km² in that year. This undoubtedly testifies to a very close link between this product and this area. The number of drying facilities is one of the elements that, among other things, distinguishes the described area from neighbouring areas.

The oldest, almost a hundred-year-old, single-chamber drying facility with a thatched roof is located in Sechna at Mr Michał Filipek's (photo No. 1). It is already badly damaged and, of course, it is not used at present and plums are no longer dried in it. Another very old drying facility is also located in Sechna at Mr Kazimierz Waligóra's (photo No. 2).

Photo No. 1



Photo No. 2



The largest, five-chamber drying facility is located at Mr Stanisław Pajor's who lives in Sechna (photo No. 3).

Photo No. 3



'Suska sechłońska' produced in accordance with a method passed down from generation to generation, consisting in smoking plums in special drying facilities, enjoys a consistently good reputation among both producers and consumers. The characteristic taste of 'suska sechłońska' with a hint of smoke is appreciated by all current and former residents of this area. It is worth adding that today most of 'suska sechłońska' is sold in the area where it is produced. This is further proof that this exceptional high-quality product with characteristic taste and smell, is a typical product associated with a specific region and is an inseparable element of its culture.

The awards and distinctions that 'suska sechłońska' received in various competitions are particularly noteworthy: in 2000, it was distinguished in the "Nasze Kulinarne Dziedzictwo"

[Our Culinary Heritage] competition (organised by Polish Radio Program I, “Gospodyni” weekly and Agro-Linia 2000), in 2004, it was awarded a prize in the “Perła 2004” [Pearl 2004] competition for the best Polish regional food product, and in 2006, it was ranked 1st in the “Małopolski Smak” [Taste of Lesser Poland] poll.

“Święto Suszonej Śliwki” (Prune Festival), held in the village of Dobrociesz since 2001, also bears testimony to the product’s reputation, its link to this area and the tradition of drying plums. It is on the occasion of the plum harvest that the hosts of the Iwkowa commune organise this festival, during which prune producers present their products. The highlight are prunes in various guises, not only those intended for consumption. Prunes are also the subject of performances and competitions held under to the slogan: everything about prunes (for more information visit www.sliwka.iwkowa.pl). The Prune Festival attracts not only the producers themselves but also visitors – both local ones and tourists. The event includes numerous competitions, tastings and colourful stands promoting prunes. The highlight is a competition for the best plum dish. In 2006, the “Plum commune” art competition was very successful. Almost a hundred children painted their own picture of the Iwkowa commune, with plums and other fruits dried in this area as its dominant element. For many people not familiar with the plum tradition, the organisers prepared a “Regional trail with plums in the background” (for more information visit www.iwkowa.pl).

Further confirmation of the reputation of ‘suska sechłońska’ is the ‘prune tourist trail’ mapped out by the local authorities in the area defined in point 5, indicating farms with plum orchards and drying facilities.

Another important fact is that plums account for approximately 23% of all fruit crops in this area. Plum orchards cover there 326 ha. In the Łososina Dolna commune, plum orchards account for 10.9% of all orchards in that area, in the Iwkowa commune, this figure is 42.2%, in the Żegocina commune, this is 20.6%, and as much as 44.7% in the Laskowa commune. It should be noted here that in 2004, plum orchards accounted for 6.7% of all orchards in Poland. The area concerned is therefore characterised by significant, above-average density of plum orchards. These plums are, among other things, the raw material for the production of ‘suska sechłońska’. The density of orchards is further proof of the enormous popularity of this product in this area.

Drying facilities

The development of the reputation of ‘suska sechłońska’ is also related to the preservation of the traditional, local production method based on experience and skills developed over decades by the people living in the area defined in point 5. Over time, local inhabitants engaged in drying plums have developed special drying facilities based on their own design to which the product owes its high quality and unique taste. These drying facilities blend in perfectly with the landscape of this area (photos 4-7).

Photo No. 4. Iwkowa commune/ Stanisław Zelek/



Photo No. 5. Iwkowa commune/ Władysław Świder/



Photo No. 6. Łososina Dolna commune / Tadeusz Klimek/



Photo No. 7. Łososina Dolna commune / Stanisław Kocoń/



According to local sources in the Iwkowa commune, today's drying facilities descent from a '*luftówka*' – a facility built into the ground whose only above-ground part was the roof and approximately 20-30 centimetres of the wall. It owed its name to the underground tunnel –

'*luft*'(vent), at the end of which there was a hearth. Over time, the structure of the drying houses changed and they began to be built on foundations, initially made of stone and later also of bricks, concrete, hollow bricks, etc. The foundation was quite high due to the fact that hearth – usually a kiln made of stone or concrete – was placed there. During burning, heat and smoke are released in this kiln, which, by means of a rotational movement, dries the plums placed above it in chambers. The drying facilities used to produce 'suska sechłońska' were most often made in-house and from easily accessible materials – most often wood. It is precisely such drying facilities that have become a permanent part of the landscape of the region and only in such drying facilities can genuine 'suska sechłońska' be prepared.

Plums are smoked and dried in such drying facilities with hot smoke, which also distinguishes 'suska sechłońska' from plums dried with hot air. It is the special design of these drying facilities that makes it possible to smoke and dry plums with smoke. When smoked in this way, the plum loses some of the water contained in while absorbing smoke, whose certain components have antiseptic properties. Reducing the water content in the tissue during smoking and the antiseptic effect of the smoke inhibit the development of putrefactive bacteria and extends the product's shelf-life. Smoke gives the fruit a unique colour, aroma and flavour.

The design of the drying facilities and the method of drying differ from production methods used in other parts of Poland as well as in the neighbouring regions. In neighboring areas, fruit is not dried or smoked, and if it is, a different technology is used than in the case of 'suska sechłońska'.

The drying facility consists of a foundation with a hearth and a covered chamber in which a grate made of wooden sticks is placed. Due to the topography of the area concerned (most slopes have gradients in the range of 5-25°), the design of the drying facility was adapted to steep slopes.

The foundation of a drying facility with a kiln and a hearth in it, is usually rectangular in shape and is made of non-flammable material. In the past, stone was used to make the foundation. Currently, other materials are used more often, e.g. hollow bricks and concrete flooring.

The foundation is tightly attached to the upper part of the drying facility (consisting of a chamber with a grate) in which a grate made of transversely arranged wooden sticks is placed, on which the fruit to be dried is laid.

Wooden sticks, usually with a diameter of 25x25 cm (currently sometimes replaced with hollow bricks or concrete), were used to build the upper part of the drying facility (chambers with a grate). The average chamber size is from around 2 metres in width and from around 3.5 metres in length. A wooden barrier divides the chamber into two parts through its centre.

Photo No. 8. Laskowa commune/ Czesław Zelek/



The lower part of the chamber, i.e. the grate, consists of adjacent knot-free wooden sticks of 4 cm in width and 3 cm in height. In the past, the sticks were round in shape and were made of hazel wood. Currently, coniferous wood is used to make sticks. The sticks must be of high-quality wood, as they wear out depending on the quantity of plums to be dried and drying intensity within 10 to 20 years. The sticks are placed on a level surface. They are arranged in such a way as to ensure the circulation of smoke and warm air at a height of around 180 cm above the hearth.

Photo No. 9. Laskowa commune/ Kazimierz Joniec/



The chambers are closed by means of wooden doors from the outside and inside. A kiln-hearth is placed under each chamber (traditional kiln-hearths are shown in photos Nos. 10 and 11). The temperature in the kiln is several dozen degrees Celsius.

Photo No. 10. Laskowa commune/ Michał Król/



Photo No. 11. Laskowa commune/ Stanisław Grzegorek/



The building is most often covered with a pitched roof made of ceramic tiles that not only protects the drying facility itself and the people working on it against adverse weather conditions, but also prevents the fire from being overheated by strong autumn winds. Drying facilities usually included two or three chambers. This tradition has survived to this day. It is, however, also possible to find drying facilities with only a single chamber or with as many as five chambers.

Photo No. 12. Laskowa commune/ Kazimierz Joniec/



Photo No. 13. Łososina Dolna commune / Stanisław Klimek/



According to the old architectural design, a two-chamber drying facility used for drying, smoking and producing 'suska sechłońska' from 1980 looks as shown in Figures 1-4.

Figure 1.

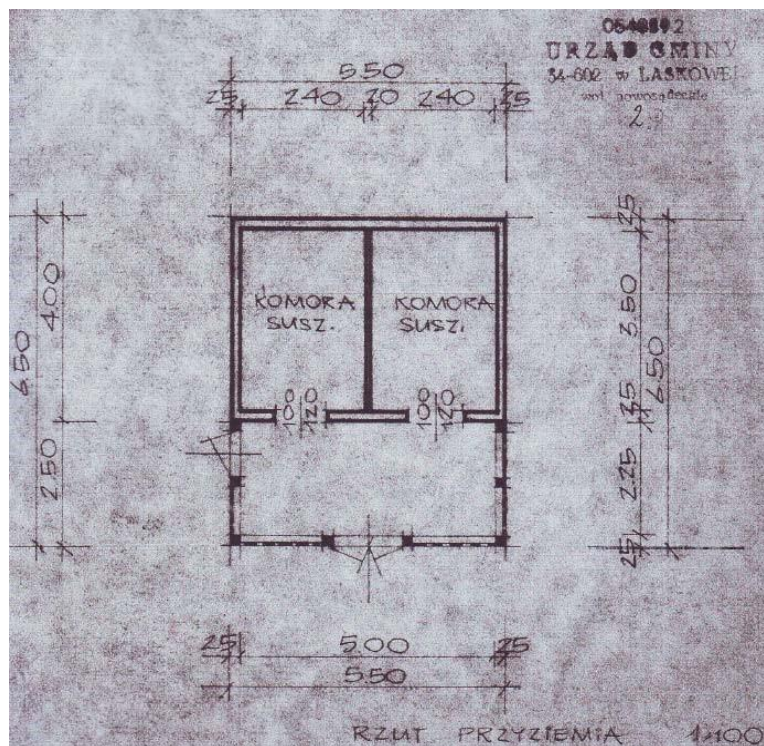


Figure 2.

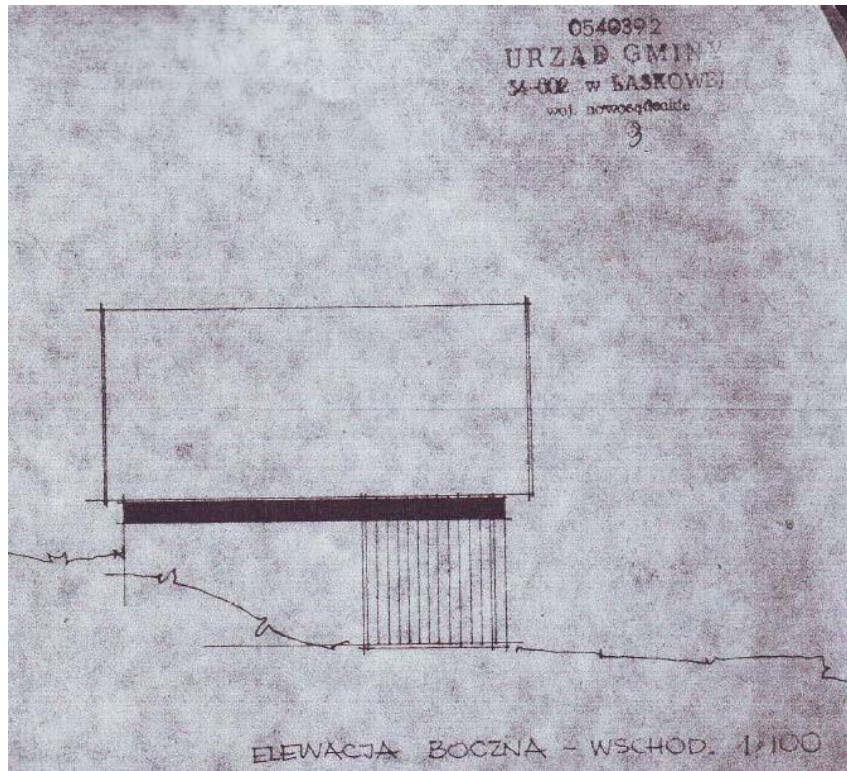


Figure 3.

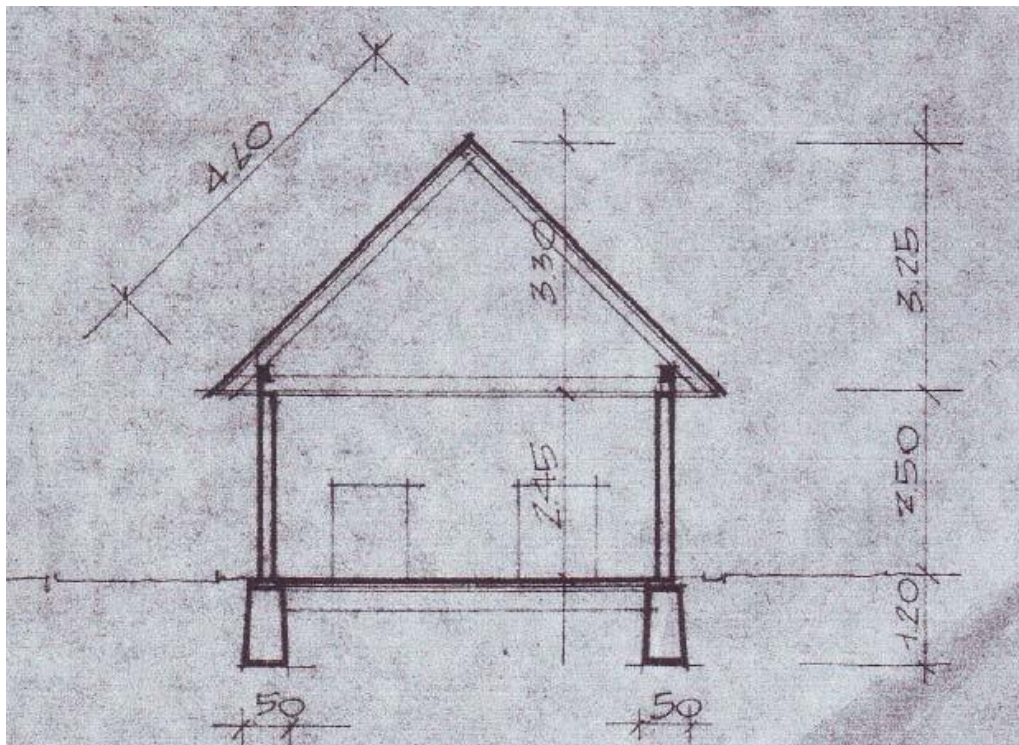
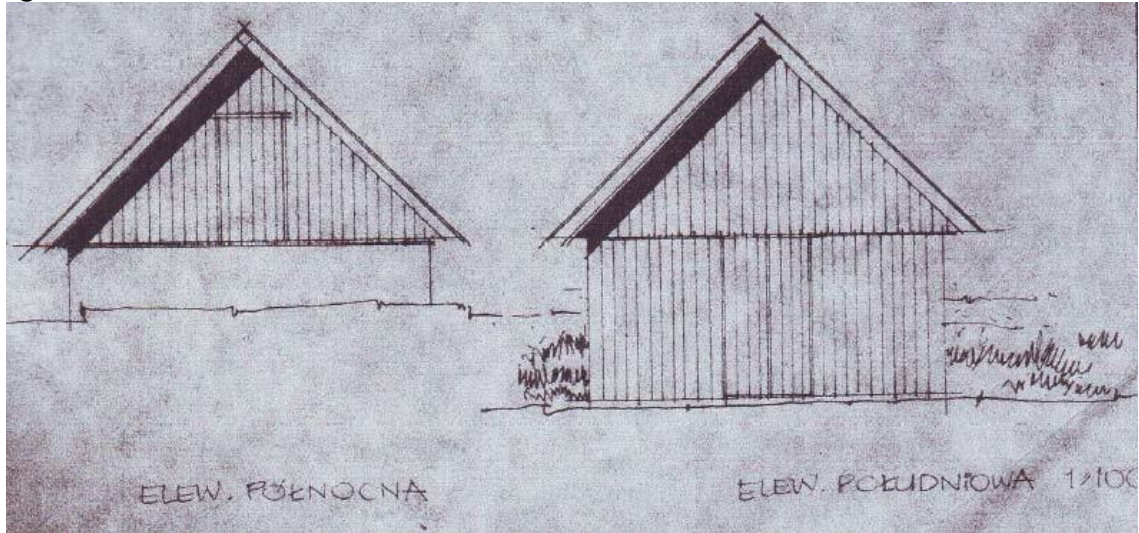


Figure 4.



9. Control:

Główny Inspektor Jakości Handlowej Artykułów Rolno-Spożywczych
[Chief Inspector of the Agricultural and Food Quality]

ul. Wspólna 30

00-930 Warszawa

Telephone: +48 22 623-29-00

+48 22 623-29-01

Fax: +48 22 623-29-98

+48 22 623-29-99

The Inspection is responsible for checking whether the production process is compliant with the specifications. Both documents confirming that relevant measures have been taken by producers and the quality characteristics of the finished product are checked.

10. Labelling:

Specific rules on the labelling of the agricultural product or foodstuff should be provided, if any.

11. Specific requirements introduced by applicable regulations:

Please indicate whether there are any specific requirements imposed by European Union or national legislation concerning the agricultural product or foodstuff concerned.

12. Additional information:

Please provide any additional information regarding the agricultural product or foodstuff concerned.

13. List of documents attached to the application:

Please provide a list of materials and publications referenced in the application and a list of attached appendices.

The application contains references to the following publications:

1. *“Od Ujanowic do Laskowej – przeszłość i współczesność”* [From Ujanowice to Laskowa – past and present], study by Małgorzata Sromek from 2001.
2. *“Ujanowice – wieś powiatu limanowskiego”* [Ujanowice – a village in the Limanowa powiat] by Jan Ligęza, notes from 1905 published in Krakow in 1928 by the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences.
3. Architectural design for the construction of a two-chamber drying facility from 1980 in the village of Kobyłczyna in the Laskowa commune.
4. Materials used to promote the product and region from the four communes: www.iwkowa.pl, www.laskowa.iap.pl, www.lososina.pl, www.zegocina.pl.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/06 on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin

‘SUSKA SECHLOŃSKA’

EC No:

PGI PDO

1. Name:

‘Suska sechłońska’

The name ‘suska sechłońska’ comes from the local dialect. ‘Suska’ signifies dried fruit, i.e. a dried and smoked prune. The adjective ‘sechłońska’ comes from the place-name Sechna, in the commune of Laskowa, from where the tradition of drying originates.

2. Member State or third country:

Poland

3. Description of the agricultural product or foodstuff:

3.1. Type of product:

Class 1.6 – Fruit, vegetables and cereals, fresh or processed

3.2. Description of the product to which the name in point 1 applies:

‘Suska sechłońska’ is an unpitted or pitted prune which has undergone drying and smoking.

Its size depends on the size of the fruit of the plum variety used and ranges from 1.5 to 4.5 cm, with a weight of 44 to 99 prunes per kg. Its shape depends on the variety of the fruit destined for drying and may range from oblate to prolate. ‘Suska sechłońska’ is characterised by an elastic, pulpy flesh as well as a wrinkled and sticky skin of deep blue to black. It is slightly sweet in taste, with a smoky aftertaste and aroma. The water content of the finished product is between 24 and 42% at the time of sale.

3.3. Raw materials

Only fruits of *Prunus domestica* L. ssp. *domestica* and varieties derived therefrom are used for the production of ‘suska sechłońska’: Promis, Tolar, Nektawit, Valjevka and Stanley. Fruits of these varieties have desirable characteristics for the drying and smoking process, including a high sugar content and a relatively low water content.

Plums intended for the production of ‘suska sechłońska’ may come from the defined geographical area. The fruit must be healthy, without signs of rotting or mechanical damage and it must be free of visible damage caused by insects, mites or other pests. The fruit used must be free of any other damage, impurities or other unspecified organisms which would make it unfit for consumption.

3.4. Feed (for products of animal origin only):

3.5. Specific steps in production that must take place in the defined geographical area:

The kilns used for drying must be located within the defined geographical area, and the entire drying and smoking process must also take place there. The wood and raw materials used in production may come from outside the defined area. The use of resinous wood is forbidden. The entire drying and smoking process is carried out in special fruit kilns typical of the area.

3.6. Specific rules concerning slicing, grating, packaging, etc.:

3.7. Specific rules concerning labelling:

4. Concise definition of the geographical area:

The geographical area in which ‘suska sechłońska’ is produced covers 239,55 km² and is located within the administrative boundaries of four communes of Małopolskie Voivodeship: Laskowa, Iwkowa, Łososina Dolna and Żegocina. The name ‘sechłońska’ comes from the village of Sechna, a locality in the commune of Laskowa, and is traditionally used throughout the geographical area in which ‘suska sechłońska’ is produced.

5. Link with the geographical area:

5.1. Specificity of the geographical area:

The area defined in point 4 is located at an altitude of over 300 m above sea level and its topography is very variable, with most slopes having gradients of between 5 and 25°C.

Characteristic fruit kilns, designed and built by the local people in a style adapted to the local terrain, form an integral part of the landscape.

Kilns consist of brick foundations around a hearth and a covered chamber with a wooden grate. The average chamber size is from around 2 metres in width and from around 3.5 metres in length. A wooden barrier divides the chamber into two parts through its centre. The grate, consisting of adjacent knot-free wooden sticks of 4 cm in width, 3 cm in height and about 1 metre in length, forms the bottom part of the chamber. The sticks are placed on a level surface. They are arranged in such a way as to ensure the circulation of smoke and warm air at a height of around 180 cm above the hearth. The chamber is closed by means of a wooden door through which the fruit kiln can be filled with plums and which also helps to keep in the warmth and protect against adverse atmospheric conditions. There is an oven under each chamber. The structure is protected by a pitched roof. Fruit kilns usually have two or three chambers; it is, however, also possible to find kilns with only a single chamber or with as many as five chambers. The temperature in the kiln when producing 'suska sechłońska' ranges from 45 to 60°C.

The oldest drying facility, no longer operational, is more than 100 years old. There are as many as 677 drying facilities in the designated area covering four municipalities. This is clear evidence of the product's very close link to the geographical area. The number of kilns is one of the aspects distinguishing the area in question from neighbouring areas.

Plums undergoing the drying and smoking process are arranged in a layer 30 to 50 cm thick. The producers turn the mass of drying plums once a day using a special shovel. The process lasts between 4 and 6 days, depending on the thickness of the plum layer. This method of drying and smoking plums has been developed thanks to the indigenous skills of local producers and is used solely for the production of 'suska sechłońska' in the defined geographical area.

5.2. Specificity of the product:

The product owes its specific characteristics to the skills of local producers and the method of producing 'suska sechłońska' developed by them. 'Suska sechłońska' undergoes both drying and smoking. The process of drying and smoking in drying facilities is carried out with hot smoke, which distinguishes 'suska sechłońska' from traditional prunes dried with warm air. During the smoking process, the plum loses some of the water from its tissues and absorbs smoke, which also has antiseptic properties. The reduction in the water content of the tissue during

smoking and the antiseptic effect of the smoke hinder the development of putrefactive bacteria, thus prolonging the shelf-life of the product. The smoke gives the fruit a unique colour, aroma and taste.

By combining these two processes, a product is obtained in which the water content at the time of sale is at least 24%. Moreover, 'suska sechłońska' produced this way is characterised by a distinctive sweet taste with a noticeable smoky aftertaste and aroma and by a shiny skin of deep blue to black.

5.3. Causal link between the geographical area and the quality or characteristics of the product (for PDO) or a specific quality, reputation or other characteristic of the product (for PGI):

The link between 'suska sechłońska' and the region is based on its reputation, built on a long tradition of making the product and the unique skills of local producers.

'Suska sechłońska' owes its high quality to the unique skills of local producers and the traditional production methods they use. The design of the drying kilns and the method of drying reflect the know-how of local producers and differ considerably from production methods used in other parts of Poland as well as in the neighbouring regions. The way in which the drying kilns are made ensures that warm air and smoke circulate simultaneously, thereby drying and smoking the plums. As the plums are dried in a layer 30 to 50 cm thick and turned once a day, the juice coming from the plums during the drying process does not flow onto the hearth but envelops the dried fruit, giving it a characteristics taste and shine of the skin.

The link between 'suska sechłońska' and the geographical area is indeed reflected in the name of the village 'Sechna', which is derived from the Old Polish word 'sechnie', meaning drying. This demonstrates the product's uniqueness and the deep-rooted tradition of the production method in the geographical area defined in point 4.

Legend has it that the history of plum-drying began with a local clergyman, who spread the custom of plum-smoking among his parishioners. The long tradition of 'suska sechłońska' is evidenced in a work entitled *Ujanowice – wieś powiatu limanowskiego* by Jan Ligęza, published in 1905 (Work No. 9 of the Ethnographic Commission of the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences). The custom has survived to modern times and the production method has remained practically unchanged. The special drying facilities for producing 'suska sechłońska' designed by local producers prove that the old method has survived. These drying facilities fit in perfectly with the landscape of the area.

Drying and smoking is so popular that songs and poems celebrating the tradition have been written about it. This old song is an example:

‘... Oj Sechna, Sechna ty skopciała wiosko,
gdyby nie suszarnie byłabyś stolicą ...’

(Oh Sechna, smoke-blackened Sechna, if it weren't for the fruit kilns you would be the capital ...)

The product's reputation is evidenced by press articles, such as: “Suszenie śliwek” (Plum drying) in the *Gazeta Krakowska* of September 2004, “Suska sechłońska lepsza niż Kalifornijska” (Suska sechłońska better than the California plum) in the *Gazeta Krakowska* of 27 April 2007 or “Suska sechłońska puka do Unii” (Suska sechłońska enters the EU market) in the *Dziennik Polski* of 2-3 May 2007, that noted the fact that the product had been applied for registration as a protected geographical indication.

The reputation of ‘suska sechłońska’ is also reflected in the prizes and distinctions awarded to it in various competitions: distinction in the 2000 ‘Nasze Kulinarne Dziedzictwo’ (Our Culinary Heritage) competition; prize at the ‘Perła 2004’ competition for the best Polish regional food product; first prize in the 2006 ‘Małopolski Smak’ poll.

Święto Suszonej Śliwki (Prune Festival), held at Dobrociesz since 2001 and featuring prunes in various guises, also bears testimony to the product's reputation, its link to the area and the tradition of drying plums. Further confirmation of the reputation of ‘suska sechłońska’ is the ‘prune tourist trail’ mapped out by the local authorities indicating farms with plum orchards and drying facilities.