

**APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION OF  
~~DESIGNATION OF ORIGIN / GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION~~<sup>1)</sup>  
FOR AN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT OR FOODSTUFF**

**1.1. I. Applicant:**

**1. Name or first name and surname<sup>2)</sup>:**

**Okręgowa Spółdzielnia Mleczarska “Top-Tomyśl” w Nowym Tomyślu [“Top-Tomyśl”  
District Dairy Cooperative in Nowy Tomyśl,**

**Okręgowa Spółdzielnia Mleczarska w Śremie [District Dairy Cooperative in Śrem],**

**Okręgowa Spółdzielnia Mleczarska w Czarnkowie [District Dairy Cooperative in  
Czarnków],**

**Okręgowa Spółdzielnia Mleczarska w Kowalewie-Dobrzycy pod Pleszewem [District  
Dairy Cooperative in Kowalewo-Dobrzyca near Pleszew],**

**Zakład Produkcji Spożywczej i Handlu J.A. Frąckowiak s.c. w Granowie [Food  
Production and Trade Company J.A. Frąckowiak, civil law partnership, in Granowo]  
and**

**“TOP” s.c. H. i W. Huszczak, B. i A. Humerczyk w Chodzieży [“TOP” civil law  
partnership H. and W. Huszczak, B. and A. Humerczyk in Chodzież]**

**2. Seat or residence and address:**

Okręgowa Spółdzielnia Mleczarska “TOP - TOMYŚL”  
ul. Kolejowa 33  
64-300 Nowy Tomyśl  
Poland

**3. Mailing address:**

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<sup>1)</sup> Delete as appropriate.

<sup>2)</sup> Only a group is entitled to apply for registration. A natural or legal person can apply for registration once the European Commission has defined the conditions under which such person can be treated as a group.

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#### **4. Person acting on behalf of the applicant:**

Elżbieta Zawadzka – President of Okręgowa Spółdzielnia Mleczarska "TOP - TOMYŚL"

#### **5. Group:**

The group consists of producers dealing with the production of '**wielkopolski ser smażony**'.

## **II. Specifications**

### **1. Name:**

**WIELKOPOLSKI SER SMAŻONY**

### **2. Application for registration of:**

(1) **designation of origin**

(2) **geographical indication**

### **3. Category:**

Group: Cheese — class 1.3

### **4. Description:**

Appearance (external and in cross section)	Homogenous cheese mass. In the case of fried cheese with caraway, caraway seeds are visible ( <i>see Appendices 1 and 2</i> )
Shape (external and in cross section)	Depending on the packaging used
Size	Depending on the packaging used
Colour (external and in cross section)	The colour of the cheese mass varies from light cream to yellow, depending on the quantity of butter used in production ( <i>see Appendices 1 and 2</i> )
Consistency, “feel to the touch”	Fried cheese has a firm, homogenous and elastic consistency.
Taste and smell	The taste and smell are typical of fried cheese (originating in ripened curds).
Microbiological, physical and chemical characteristics	Coliform bacteria – absent in 0.1 g Coagulase-positive Staphylococcus – absent in 0.1 g Number of moulds – maximum 100 in 1 g Listeria monocytogenes – absent in 25 g Salmonella – absent in 25 g Fat – minimum 7.5% Water – maximum 65% Sulphite-reducing spores – absent in 1 g
Declared levels, e.g.: alcohol content (in %), pH value, water activity, other indicators	pH value: 5.2-5.6

## Raw materials:

### 1. Milk:

Milk used to produce curds used in the production of ‘wielkopolski ser smażony’ must be raw. The entire production cycle of ‘wielkopolski ser smażony’, from the purchase of raw milk to the finished product, should not take more than six or seven days. Any extension of the production process (use of milk or curds which have been kept too long) has a negative impact on the final product.

### 2. Caraway:

Caraway is used to produce ‘wielkopolski ser smażony’ optionally. Caraway may be added to ‘wielkopolski ser smażony’ in order to obtain one of the two possible taste varieties of the cheese, which are:

- natural (pure) ‘wielkopolski ser smażony’,
- ‘wielkopolski ser smażony’ with caraway

These are the only two varieties of the fried cheese which may be marketed under the name ‘wielkopolski ser smażony’.

## 5. Geographical area:

The area is situated within the administrative borders of the Wielkopolskie Voivodeship.

## 6. Proof of origin:

The control of the quality and authenticity of ‘wielkopolski ser smażony’ is carried out at all stages of its production, starting from milk production and purchase and ending with the control of the marketed finished product. This control is intended to guarantee the adequate quality of the raw materials, compliance of the production of ‘wielkopolski ser smażony’ with the specifications, and the desired quality of the finished product.

The plant producing ‘wielkopolski ser smażony’ maintains a list of milk suppliers along with the number of bovine animals kept. Producers intending to start production of milk used to make cheese apply for entry on the aforementioned list. The control body is therefore able to verify the origin and quantity of the supplied raw material.

Moreover, each milk supplier is registered with the Agricultural Market Agency in connection with the allocated milk quota. The control body is therefore able to compare the

list of suppliers kept with the register maintained by the Agricultural Market Agency (a government body).

Processors that do not purchase milk and do not produce curd themselves but buy ready-made curd must be in possession of documents confirming that the curd was made on a specific day in accordance with the method described in these specifications. These documents must be available to the control body at all times.

The control body keeps a list of plants that process milk and produce ‘**wielkopolski ser smażony**’. Each entity that intends to start production is obliged to report this information to the control body.

Each producer keeps a production register at the production site and records in it information on the entire production process and the internal control system in place at the plant. This enables the control body to trace the product and identify suppliers as well as verify the entire production method.

The control body is able to verify whether the production method complies with the specifications. The milk acquisition (milk quality), subsequent stages of the production process, and the final product are also checked.

According to the control plan held by the control body, the producers of ‘**wielkopolski fried cheese**’ are checked, so are, if necessary, milk suppliers.

## **7. Production method:**

<p><b>Stage 1 – Storage of raw milk</b></p> <p>Raw milk is stored for no longer than 24 hours at a maximum temperature of 6°C.</p>
<p><b>Stage 2 – Skimming the milk</b></p> <p>The skimming is done in centrifugal milk-cream separators (special apparatus for skimming milk).</p> <p>The fat content of the skimmed milk should not exceed 1%.</p>
<p><b>Stage 3 – Heating the milk</b></p> <p>The skimmed milk is heated to a temperature of 70-75°C and left at that temperature for at least 30 seconds.</p>

**Stage 4 – Cooling**

The previously heated, skimmed milk is cooled to 21°C and poured into tubs (tanks).

**Stage 5 – Preparation of the starter culture**

The starter culture is prepared from pasteurised milk with the addition of a strain of lactic streptococci. This milk preparation is kept at a temperature of 25°C for 8-10 hours, which produces the starter culture, i.e. milk containing natural microflora.

**Stage 6 – Souring**

The milk is soured at 20-23°C through the addition of the starter culture corresponding to 2% of the total milk quantity. As a result of adding starter including pure cultures of acidifying bacteria (lactic streptococci) to the milk, the milk sours and a curd is formed.

**Stage 7 – Heating and turning the curds**

When the curds have reached an acidity of approx. 31°SH, they are slowly heated (for about 2 hours) to a temperature of 32-33°C. The heated curds are then cut and gently turned.

**Stage 8 – Draining**

The whey separated from the curds is drained off and the curds are then pressed and drained at a temperature of 20°C until a water content of approx. 64% is obtained. By draining off the water curd cheese is obtained.

**Stage 9 – Crumbling and placing on metal sheets**

The curd cheese is crumbled and then spread on metal sheets in a cheese maturer.

**Stage 10 – Ripening**

The ripening process (maturation of the curd cheese) takes place on metal sheets at a temperature of 16-27°C. The process consists in the natural decomposition of the albumen until the curd becomes a glassy mass with a smell, consistency and appearance characteristic of that process.

Depending on the air temperature and the rate of processes occurring in the curd mass, the ripening process takes 2 or 3 days. The indication that the ripening process can be terminated is the content of curd that has not ripened, which for the whole mass should be less than 25%.

The ripening process takes place in a completely natural way (natural albumen decomposition). It is forbidden to add any substances that may replace the ripening process. In particular, it is not allowed to use fluxes, i.e. salts that enable frying the curd without ripening.

### Stage 11 – Mixing with fat and frying

The matured curd cheese is mixed with milk fat (butter) with the addition of salt, and also caraway in the case of ‘wielkopolski ser smażony’ with caraway. It is then fried in a ‘topialka’<sup>3</sup> for approx. 15 minutes at a temperature of at least 90°C.

The addition of milk fat depends on the percentage fat content that is to be obtained in the finished product. The most common variety of fried cheese is that with the addition of butter with a 15% fat content. The fat content in the total mass of the cheese cannot be less than 7.5%.

### Stage 12 – Packaging

After obtaining a uniform cheese mass, it is poured into cups – the most commonly used cups have a net capacity of 200 g (*see Appendices 3 and 4*). However, packaging with a different capacity is also allowed.

Once cooled, the cheese mass can also be formed into blocks.

If necessary, extend the fields or enlarge the table to include subsequent production stages.

### Banned practice:

Banned practice refers to:

1. the addition of substances that may replace the ripening process (e.g. fluxes, i.e. salts that enable frying without ripening), or
2. the use of fats other than milk fat (butter) for production.

Are all the production stages carried out in the geographical area defined in point 5?

YES

NO

Does the final preparation of the agricultural product or foodstuff (e.g. cutting, packaging) take place in the geographical area defined in point 5?

YES

NO

Has the method of producing the agricultural product or foodstuff changed in recent years?

YES

NO

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<sup>3</sup> Topialka – a thermiser with a double water jacket in which the maturated curd cheese and additives are heated to a set temperature.

Please specify whether the changes affected the characteristics or specific quality of the agricultural product or foodstuff.

Changes in the production method include the preparation of the starter culture (Stage 5 of the production method), which resulted in obtaining curd cheese of an unvaried quality. Currently, the starter culture is prepared from pasteurised milk with the addition of a strain of lactic streptococci. In the past, unpasteurised milk was left for a few days to sour by itself. However, in the case of production carried out on a larger scale, this method cannot be used, because it does not guarantee full control over the preparation of the starter culture and the development of other strains of bacteria found in raw milk.

Enlarge the frame if necessary.

## 8. Link with the geographical region:

At the outset, it is necessary to characterise Wielkopolska (Greater Poland) as an ethnographic region, because it was in its territory that the tradition of making **fried cheese** existed. This product has never been one of the exquisite dishes found in Polish cuisine. As J. Licznerski wrote in his work “Serowarstwo” [Cheese-making] in the 1930s, that “(...) *In many countries, fried cheese is a favourite dish, especially among the working class (...)*”. The taste of this cheese is so unique that it was and still is very popular, regardless of the social status of those eating it. For many people from Wielkopolska who have moved to other parts of Poland, this cheese is one of the tastes of their childhood or family home. This fact clearly proves the high reputation of this product.

In order to prove the link of the product (**wielkopolski ser smażony**) with the area to which its name refers, the following will be described, based on available ethnographic and historical literature as well as other materials and documents:

- the ethnographic diversity of Wielkopolska;
- the conditions and reasons for the ethnographic diversity of Wielkopolska;
- the historical conditions of cattle breeding and the development of dairy farming in Wielkopolska;
- the influence of colonisation, mainly by Olenders, on milk production and processing in Wielkopolska;
- the history of making from milk curd cheese and then **fried cheese**;
- methods of making and using **fried cheese** described in various guides and cookery books;
- the reputation of **fried cheese from Wielkopolska**.

### 1. Wielkopolska – an ethnographic region

The name Wielkopolska refers to a diverse area that in different periods also had other names, such as: the Grand Duchy of Posen or, during the partition, the Province of Posen. The ethnographic region was defined as the area of historical Wielkopolska from the

18<sup>th</sup> century, that included the pre-partition Poznań and Kalisz voivodeships. The thus understood area played an important role in the process of shaping the Polish state; it was directly adjacent to the areas occupied by the Germans, and had links with both Silesia and Pomerania. Moreover, it was distinguished by its distinct economic and social structure (which was also associated with specific political activities and social mentality), as well as geographical features different from those of neighbouring areas. The aforementioned features of the historical region played an important role in the development of folk culture. The period of partition (from the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century), when this area was divided into two areas with different fates, was of great importance for Wielkopolska as an ethnographic or cultural region. In terms of economic relations as well as other social and cultural processes affected by economic issues, these two areas developed in an unsynchronised way. As a result, the lands under the Prussian partition differed fundamentally in social and economic terms from the lands seized by Russia.

Based on the materials collected for the purposes of “Atlas Języka i Kultury Ludowej Wielkopolski” [Atlas of the Language and Folk Culture of Wielkopolska], it should be concluded that Wielkopolska is an ethnographic region that refers to the area of historical Wielkopolska. The map of Wielkopolska as an ethnographic region shows that the borders, especially in the eastern part, go beyond the border of the historical region and do not constitute “sharp” linear borders, but are delineated by certain zones marked by the range of cultural facts, sometimes unevenly distributed in space, but creating a specific structure. It is, among other things, such structure, formed in the past, that makes it possible to distinguish a given region from other territories.

The western borders of the Wielkopolska ethnographic region are basically marked by the former ethnic Polish-German borderland. In the area concerned, cultural elements characteristic of Wielkopolska (nomenclature related to agriculture, tools, food, rituals), represented by the autochthonous population in the interwar period (1918-1939), have been preserved. Numerous elements are related to Slavic traditions in the German ethnic area while indicating links of western Wielkopolska with the area of Western Slavdom – Lusatia. There are also references to the Lower Silesia region. The southern border roughly corresponds to the historical Silesian-Greater Poland border and, to a large extent, to the former administrative divisions. In the border zone, cultural references to Silesian areas, especially Opole Silesia, can be found. It is slightly more difficult to delineate the northern border. Wielkopolska is separated from Pomerania by an intermediate zone, where cultural phenomena have intermingled over the centuries. This border covers the areas of Krajna, Pałuki, Noteć River and Tuchola Forest, as well as part of Kujawy. It should be noted that in central, western and northern Wielkopolska, there are cultural phenomena that refer to Pomerania and Kujawy (e.g. the winter cycle ritual – ‘podkoziółek’, or the custom of breaking glass in front of the bride’s house – ‘polterabend’). The eastern border of the region is the most blurred and difficult to delineate. The history of these areas was decisive. The administrative divisions of Wielkopolska, and later the partition border, disturbed cultural continuity in the eastern part. As a result, a different face of folk culture developed in this part of the region. All this was reflected in a number of areas, both in terms of material culture – construction, methods of farming, food processing, as well as in elements of spiritual culture. **In the western, northern and southern parts of Wielkopolska, a tradition of making fried cheese from ripened curd cheese developed. Generally, this can be delineated to the area of the former Prussian partition. To the east of the former partition border, i.e. to the east of the Prosna River, there was no tradition of making such cheese.** Its occurrence in the area of eastern Wielkopolska was associated with attempts to unify the Polish lands divided through the partition in the interwar period and after World

War II. Besides home cheese processing, known for centuries, industrial producers of ‘**wielkopolski fried cheese**’ also emerged after 1945.

Materials from ethnographic research conducted in Wielkopolska until the 1960s are rather poor. Prof. Józef Burszta wrote in the foreword to Volume I of *Kultura Ludowa Wielkopolski* [Folk Culture of Wielkopolska]: “*It so happened that Wielkopolska is one of the most neglected regions in terms of ethnographic research*”. This was primarily due to one fact: Wielkopolska, as an area with different historical fates and a different cultural face, was not an attractive research area. It was this otherness, the heterogeneity of the area that posed a certain challenge for researchers. The aforementioned *Kultura Ludowa Wielkopolski*, edited by Józef Burszta (a 3-volume work published in the 1960s), was in fact the first important work with a holistic perception of Wielkopolska as a region. Andrzej Brenz’s work *Wielkopolska jako region etnograficzny* [Wielkopolska as an ethnographic region] (Poznań 1996) is extremely important. The author makes a synthetic assessment of existing materials and views and, based on various, complementary criteria, determines the boundaries (as far as possible) and features of the Wielkopolska ethnographic region. He concludes by stating that be that the historical, ethnographic or cultural region, they all have their reference to tradition and historical continuity and are based on a sense of bond with the region. The regional community is an intermediate level between the local community associated with the nearest place of residence (village, town or city) and the national community associated with one’s own country. Thus, the regional community unites and encompasses local communities. According to the views of numerous researchers, Wielkopolska was rather and still is a conglomeration of smaller regions, or rather subregions, e.g. Szamotuły, Nowy Tomyśl, Kościan, Biskupizna. Such subregions can be delineated based on selected criteria that can be related to colonisation, building materials, dialects, costumes, or even food processing, which is of interests to us in this case. As already mentioned, the differences between the eastern and the remaining parts of Wielkopolska were due to the partition border that artificially divided this area for over 100 years.

## 2. Historical and economic conditions for the development of cattle breeding and milk processing

The factors of the greatest importance for food production include:

- geographical factors (soils, terrain, climate);
- historical factors;
- social and economic factors;
- cultural factors;
- political factors.

The emergence of regional differences was determined not only by the cultural heritage of a given area, but also by the rate at which new elements from different sources and concerning various aspects, especially economic and social ones, were adopted. In the past, the rate of social and economic transformations in the Polish ethnic territory, including Wielkopolska, varied. The administrative and political as well as economic and social transformations that took place in the 19<sup>th</sup> century had a decisive influence on the changes in the folk culture of Wielkopolska. It was primarily in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as a result of colonisation of the marshy

areas of the Obra, Noteć and the sands of Nowy Tomyśl (colonisation began in the 18<sup>th</sup> century), that the almost contemporary agricultural and breeding image of Wielkopolska developed.

The breeding of cows and other milk-producing animals was probably known to the tribes inhabiting the area of Wielkopolska as early as the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. Dairy products were definitely more important than meat foods. This can be evidenced by borrowing the name '*twaróg*' [curd cheese] from Slavic tribes by the Germans, as well as the word '*śmietana*' [dairy product produced by souring heavy cream] (this one passed to the Germans and Romanians). Originally, cows were primarily draught animals, and milk was an additive used "on the side". As a perishable product, it had to be used quickly and could not be transported like dried meat or fish. For centuries, people tried to find ways to extend the shelf life of milk.

The first product to be made from milk was curd cheese. This simplest form of cheese has been produced, almost unchanged, to this day. In almost all parts of Poland and in neighbouring areas, fresh milk, from which cream had been previously removed, was poured into appropriate vessels, i.e. clay bowls, jugs or pots. The milk stored in those vessels got sour without any human interference. This process usually took place at a temperature of 20-30°C. Maintaining this temperature was ensured by placing the vessel with milk on a warm stove. As a result of heating the milk, whey separated, and the remaining milk turned into curds. The whey and curds were then poured together into a heart-shaped linen bag, from which the whey dripped, leaving the dried curds inside the bag. Over the years, linen bags were replaced with sieves and strainers, onto which the cheese mass was poured. This cheese, obtained in a natural way, with no human interference, apart from leaving the milk at the right temperature, started to be referred to as "Polish sour cheese".

After a few hours, the drained cheese was still a perishable product. Attempts were therefore made to extend its shelf life. Initially made by hand, the cheese was formed into balls or oblong packets, adding a pinch of salt, dill or caraway beforehand. Such cheese was dried in airy and dry rooms, in special cages or near a stove. Curd cheese preserved in this way, called '*gomółka*' or '*kaska*' in Wielkopolska, could be stored for many months. Over the years, new ways of storing dairy products emerged. They began to be salted, cooled, melted, fried and dried, thus producing new types of cheese.

The next revolution in milk processing came after a centrifugal milk-cream separator was invented, which made it possible to obtain milk with a specific fat content, including standardised milk with a 2% fat content. Consumption of dairy products in the countryside, especially in manors and in wealthy peasant households, was quite significant for centuries. The situation in towns and cities was definitely different. Milk began to reach there only thanks to the Olenders at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Colonisation originating from the Netherlands reached Poland during the religious reformation as early as the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Religious immigrants reached first Ducal Prussia and Royal Prussia (the Żuławy region). In the following years, colonisation covered areas farther and farther up the Vistula River. Colonisation in the former Poznań voivodeship corresponds to colonisation from Prussia while being also its further stage. Polish terms '*olędrzy*', '*olędrzy*' or '*olendrzy*' and their German equivalents '*Holländer*' and '*Hauländer*' became common in the following centuries. The latter word in German meant someone who clears forests. Besides settlements in marshy areas and wetlands, Olenders established villages on dry forest clearings, far from water bodies. The "Olender" colonisation in Wielkopolska was not limited to this nation only. Apart from the Olenders from the Netherlands, the area concerned was colonised also by Germans, mainly

Protestants from the border areas, i.e. Neumark, Silesia and Pomerania, as well as Catholics mainly from the depths of the Reich, i.e. Bavaria or Swabia. The settlers also include Poles (Catholics and Protestants), mainly from Silesia as well as Bohemia and Moravia.

The oldest foundation charters in Wielkopolska concern settlements such as Olędry Ujskie (1597) and Olędry Nowe Dwory (1601) (in the Wieleń estate). The greatest revival of colonisation took place throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century, until the end of the partition.

At that time, large concentrations of settlements were established on the Noteć River, along the Czarnków–Wieluń line; on the Warta River, in the vicinity of Międzychód and east of the Obra River line. A number of villages were also founded on the border of the former Poznań, Kalisz and Gniezno voivodeships between Śrem and Pyzdry, and within a wide strip on the Czarniejewo–Murowana Goślina–Rogoźno–Chodzież line (i.e. in the former Poznań and Kościan poviats). There are no Olender settlements in the Wałcz powiat or in the Wschowa Land. In north-western Wielkopolska, most Olender settlements were established in dry areas and those forested as a result of clearing.

A similar Olender colonisation movement occurred in the area around Nowy Tomyśl, playing a decisive role in shaping the economic and cultural image of this area whose geographical name is the Nowy Tomyśl Plain or Nowy Tomyśl Sandur. The region enclosed more or less by the line: Pniewy – Pszczew – Zbąszyń – Wolsztyn – Rakoniewice – Grodzisk Wielkopolski – Opalenica was an intensively colonised area from the very beginning of this colonisation. This is also a historical area of **fried cheese** production (*see Appendices 5 and 6*). In the territory of Wielkopolska, “Olender (Dutch) colonisation” did not refer, as already mentioned, to the nationality of the settlers, but certain principles of Dutch law, originating from the earlier Dutch colonisation. This was primarily associated with a number of privileges, such as: the equal status of settlers towards the feudal lord, initially temporary and then perpetual lease, personal freedom and monetary rent, i.e. rent as a feudal burden (thus this is rent economy). During the period of the Olender colonisation, approximately 300 new settlements were established. New colonies next to old villages were also often founded.

The Olenders can be described as enlightened farmers who definitely valued animal breeding more than grain growing. Along with them, lowland cattle became widespread on the Nowy Tomyśl Plain. The Olenders also settled the marshy and boggy areas in the Warta River valley, from Skwierzyna to Oborniki and farther towards Poznań. With their advanced agricultural skills, they were able to adapt little fertile areas, covered with forest and intersected by marshy valleys of watercourses, for agricultural crops. These riverside settlements differed from those in the vicinity of Nowy Tomyśl. Most settlements were founded on the so-called “raw root”, i.e. from scratch. Previously founded, but largely depopulated villages were also colonised. On the Nowy Tomyśl Plain, mainly solitary, scattered settlements were established. Especially in the Kąkolewo – Chrośnica – Wytomyśl triangle (a side about 16 km long), the area is covered with a dense network of farmsteads located at a greater or lesser distance from each other. One gets the impression that it is one village spread over a large area. This impression is further reinforced by the extremely well-developed network of local roads enabling access to particular farmsteads that are often connected by an additional road running through their yards (*see Appendices 7-11*).

The development of the Olender settlements was closely observed by the landowners, who were the first to take up the breeding of cattle breeds brought by the Olenders from the Netherlands. Olender settlers were considered good breeders (in Mecklenburg, Germany, the first Olender settlers appeared as early as the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries).

The Napoleonic period was the turning point in agricultural production, as the profitability of grain production drastically decreased at that time due to cheap grain from overseas. Breeding became a new, significant source of income. Besides breeding on landed estates, breeding on peasant farms also began to develop. Freed from serfdom, the peasants began to see numerous benefits in keeping cows. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the most common cattle breeds, also on peasant farms, included: Oldenburg, Dutch and Swiss breeds and their crossbreeds with the domestic breed. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, two directions in cattle breeding became clearly visible: breeding of high-milk producing breeds of cows and beef cattle. There was yet another extremely important factor favouring cow breeding. The 19<sup>th</sup> century was a time of development of capitalism and dynamic development of towns and cities, whose inhabitants increasingly sought milk.

Milk processing on a much larger scale was only possible with the invention of the first centrifugal milk-cream separator by Carl Gustav Patrik de Laval from Sweden in 1878. This fact revolutionised and accelerated the development of dairy farming. The centrifugal separator, commonly known as the centrifuge, enabled for the separation of cream and the production of butter on a large scale. The very first dairies began to appear on landed estates. Those established at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were cooperative dairies. The first Polish cooperative dairy in Western Poland was the one established in Buk in 1882 (the dairy established in Poznań in 1881 was a German cooperative). The facility was established thanks to the efforts of local landowners – Zygmunt Niegolewski and Władysław Szubert, who should be considered the actual pioneers of cooperative dairying in Wielkopolska. The dairy established at that time exists to this day. In 1883, dairy cooperatives were established in Krotoszyn, **Kowalewo-Dobrzyca** near Pleszew, Kościan, Gostyń and **Śrem**. The social activist and priest Piotr Wawrzyniak contributed greatly to the establishment of this dairy in Śrem. Before the outbreak of World War I, there were about 60 dairies in the Prussian partition. The dairy plants were of various sizes and had different processing capacities. The District Dairy Cooperative, which was established in 1945, continued the dairy tradition in Nowy Tomyśl after World War II.

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, shops selling dairy products appeared in towns and cities. The 20<sup>th</sup> century brought further development of dairy farming. It should be mentioned that in the interwar period, Wielkopolska was at the forefront of milk production and cattle breeding in Poland. Unlike the south-eastern voivodeships, the quality of cattle bred was much better in the Poznań voivodeship (Poznań is the capital of Wielkopolska), which was influenced by the Olender population that over time assimilated with the indigenous population of Wielkopolska. The assimilation process dates back to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The use of farming methods borrowed from the Olenders enabled the development of the production of milk and dairy products in Wielkopolska based on farms breeding black-and-white lowland cattle, focused on milk and meat. The large scale of milk production and processing required producers to cooperate in order to use their potential as effectively as possible. This resulted in the establishment of cooperatives, unions and producer organisations. Established in Poznań in 1920, the Wielkopolska Breeders Association and Dairy Chamber made significant contributions to the development of cattle breeding and milk processing. Among its 250 members, there were only landowners. The Dairy School opened in Września in 1929 began to educate staff for the dairy industry in Wielkopolska and other regions. The dairy in Września was one of the most modern in Poland during the interwar period. In 1939, the plant processed 35,000 litre of milk per day.

The excellent breeding traditions in Wielkopolska continued after World War II in different political and economic conditions. The most modern dairy plant was established in

Gostyń, and in 1966, a new plant was opened in Poznań, in today's Droga Dębińska Street. In the 1970s and 1980s, much of the Poznań market was taken over by plants in Środa Wielkopolska, Śrem, Kaźmierz as well as Nowy Tomyśl and Kościan. After 1989, the Wielkopolska dairy industry faced progress and adapted to the new economic conditions.

Transformations took place in all plants. The most buoyant cooperatives include those in Kościan, Środa Wielkopolska, **Nowy Tomyśl, Czarnków, Śrem**, Gniezno and Konin. Besides old plants with decades of tradition, often dating back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, new ones were also established after 1989, which also refer in their production to the roots of the Wielkopolska tradition in the production of dairy products and various types of cheese, including 'wielkopolski ser smażony'.

### 3. **Fried cheese** in specialist literature

The first stage of **fried cheese** production is obtaining curd cheese, the so-called Polish sour cheese. The next stage is curd cheese ripening, in Polish 'zgliwienie'<sup>4</sup>. *Encyklopedia Rolnictwa i wiadomości związek z niem mających* [Encyclopedia of Agriculture and related information] from 1877 describes this process as follows: "(...) *Every freshly made cheese is initially white, crumbly and almost always has a sour taste. After some time, it changes this appearance, takes on a fatty colour, which moves from the surface deeper and deeper, and finally becomes greasy. The chemical process of cheese maturation is explained by Dr. J. Otto in this way: Cheese, under the influence of favourable conditions, decomposes, and the following are released as products of rotting: leucine, thyrofin, ammonia and the so-called ammoniacal bases: butylamine, amylamine, etc. These neutralise the acid in the cheese, and once this process reaches a certain level, the cheese becomes soluble. (...)*"

A. Bal in the book *Gospodarka mleczna, T. III Serowarstwo* [Dairy farming, Vol. III Cheese-making] published in Warsaw in 1934, presents the ripening process in the following way: "*When we leave the curd longer, its top layer turns yellow and becomes increasingly soft. Over time, this process affects deeper and deeper layers. It is induced by microorganisms living in the access of oxygen and this process is normally called the rotting process. In order for such cheese to be used, it is fried. However, there are many people who like such cheese and prepare it on purpose.*"

With the development and popularisation of cattle breeding, manuals called guides began to be published to help housewives in managing dairy products. *Poradnik dla gospodyń wiejskich i miejskich, czyli zbiór rad, wiadomości i przepisów...* [A Guide for Rural and Urban Housewives, i.e. a Collection of Advice, Information and Recipes...], edited by P. E. Leśniewski and published in Warsaw in 1838, comprehensively describes the production of curd cheese. It also emphasises the differences between the production of fat cheeses by the Dutch or the Swiss, and sour, so-called Polish cheeses produced in Poland. The authors of the guide present the relationships and methods for obtaining good cheese.

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<sup>4</sup> *Słownik języka polskiego* [The Dictionary of the Polish Language] contains the following definition of the word 'zgliwieć' – "to change under the influence of microorganisms into a gooey mass with an unpleasant smell".

Information on the production of sour cheeses is also included in *Encyklopedia rolnicza wydawana staraniem i nakładem Muzeum Przemysłu i Rolnictwa w Warszawie* [Agricultural Encyclopedia published by the efforts and with the use of the resources of the Museum of Industry and Agriculture in Warsaw], Vol. IX from 1900.

In the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, other guides called *Kuchnia* [Cuisine] appeared. In 1885, *Kuchnia polska, niezbędny podręcznik dla kucharzy i gospodyń wiejskich i miejskich oraz poradnik w wielu gałęziach gospodarstwa domowego* [Polish Cuisine, an Indispensable Manual for Rural and Urban Cooks and Housewives and a Guide to Many Branches of the Household] was published in Toruń. The aforementioned publication contains a recipe for **fried cheese**, though it is not referred to in it as **fried cheese** but boiled cheese. However, the recipe instructs how to make **fried cheese**. It is recommended to set crumbled curd cheese aside in a warm place for 8-12 days, stirring it every day. Then it should simmer being stirred vigorously until it dissolves. To enhance the taste, adding butter or caraway is recommended.

The production of **fried cheese** was specific to the former Prussian partition, i.e. Western Wielkopolska and Central Wielkopolska. Outside Wielkopolska, the taste of this cheese was known in the areas of Lower Silesia, Paluki and Pomerania. Research shows that there was no tradition of its production in the territory of the Congress Poland, i.e. in the lands of the former Russian partition.

It should be assumed that the process of its production could have been initiated by the Dutch or Germans who arrived in Poland as part of the colonisation campaigns. Such cheese could also have been known in earlier centuries, but there are no sources confirming this. Its production could have been a simple consequence of processing cheese that had rotted and was still suitable for consumption. This method of cheese processing could have been a consequence of making use of curd cheese, not formed into lumps and dried, which had got slightly “rotten” and started to lose its curd cheese structure through dissolving. Frying, or boiling, as the processing of ripened curd cheese was originally called, could have been a natural consequence of further processing of cheese, leading to its complete dissolution. The terms “cooking” and “frying” were used interchangeably still in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The fact that this is a cheese characteristic of the Wielkopolska lands covered by the former Prussian partition is evidenced by a work published in Poznań at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, entitled *Gospodyni doskonała czyli Przepisy utrzymywania porządku w domu i zaopatrzenia...* [The Perfect Housewife, i.e. Rules for Maintaining Order in the Home and Managing Supplies...] from 1899 – second edition, in which a recipe for **fried cheese** is included. The continuity of the Wielkopolska tradition is confirmed in a specific way in *Kucharz wielkopolski* [Wielkopolska Cook] by Maria Śleżańska from 1904. *Kucharz wielkopolski* was published in Poznań by Jarosław Leitgeber. “*A Fast Way of Preparing Cheese*” contains important information on the recipe for making **fried cheese**. “( ) grate curd cheese on a grater over a bowl, pour into a pot, cover with a lid and place in a dark place. After a few days, when the cheese has fermented completely, add the required amounts of salt and melted butter; mix thoroughly and simmer until it is well fried, stirring constantly from the bottom so that it does not stick. Then pour into a deep container, and once cooled, cut around with a knife and put on a plate. You can also, when removing it from the pot, add a few caraway seeds and mix thoroughly.”

In the interwar period (1918-1939), after Poland regained independence, attempts were made to unify and consolidate Polish lands divided by partitions also in terms of food processing and culinary practice. Maria Śleżańska’s book *Kucharz wielkopolski*

[Wielkopolska Cook] was published under the title *Kucharz polski. 1635 praktycznych przepisów smacznych ...* [Polish Cook. 1635 Practical Recipes for Tasty Dishes...] in 1932 and included the same recipe for “*A Fast Way of Making Cheese*”. This book was published in the same year in Warsaw as the seventh edition and in Poznań as the eighth edition. In the 1930s, J. Licznerski’s work entitled *Serowarstwo* [Cheese-making] was published, presenting recipes and methods of cheese production collected throughout Poland. The author was the director of the State Dairy School in Rzeszów. This publication also included a recipe for fried cheese, praising its taste and dietary values (according to the author it is an easily digestible cheese). In 1934, the publishing house of the Agricultural Education Society in Warsaw also published a book entitled *Gospodarka mleczna, T. III – Serowarstwo* [Dairy Farming, Vol. III – Cheese-making], in which its author, engineer A. Bał, provided a recipe for **fried cheese**.

The tradition of frying cheese was also continued after World War II. During research for *Kultura Ludowej Wielkopolski* [Wielkopolska Folk Culture], in the early 1960s, the tradition of its production was confirmed. The production of the once common ‘*kaska*’ (dried and salted curd cheese), called ‘*gomółka*’ in the eastern poviats, was dying away, and “*Housewives say that more cheese is fried today. Cheese, which must first start fermenting, is fried, adding butter and egg to make it tasty.*” All this is related to changes in customs, greater availability of ready-made products sold in dairy and general grocery stores.

In the period after World War II, a recipe for **fried cheese** could be found even in such publications as *Chemia praktyczna dla wszystkich* [Practical Chemistry for Everyone], a collective work first published in the mid-1950s.

The fact that the recipe for **fried cheese** is a regional recipe, specific to the Wielkopolska region, is evidenced by its inclusion in the work entitled *Kuchnia Wielkopolska – wczoraj i dziś, czyli porady jak smacznie i tanio gotować zachowując tradycje i zdrowie* [Wielkopolska Cuisine – Yesterday and Today. Tips on How to Cook Tastefully and Cheaply While Maintaining Tradition and Good Health], published in Poznań in 1992.

The recipe for “cheese with caraway” (it is not called **fried cheese**) was included in *Encyklopedia gotowania – Potrawy z serami* [Encyclopedia of Cooking – Dishes with Cheeses] by Barbara Adamczewska, published by Prószyński i S-ka in Warsaw in 2005. The recipe is as follows: “*Crumble the cheese with a fork and leave covered for 3-4 days. It should become chewy. Then put it in a pot with melted butter and fry until it melts. While frying, add salt and caraway. Set aside, cool slightly and add an egg yolk to the warm (not hot) cheese, mix well, pour into a salad bowl and cool. This is an excellent cheese for sandwiches.*”

#### 4. Reputation of ‘**wielkopolski ser smażony**’:

The reputation of ‘**wielkopolski ser smażony**’ that it enjoys among consumers is extremely important. **Fried cheese** produced according to the Wielkopolska recipe passed down through the generations has maintained its high reputation throughout Poland and abroad. This is especially shown by those who have not been in their hometown for a long time, when they have an opportunity to eat ‘**wielkopolski ser smażony**’. The bonds with one’s place of origin are manifested very visibly at such times.

Consumer opinions clearly emphasise the wonderful and unique taste of **fried cheese** produced in plants in Wielkopolska based on the centuries-old tradition. Its taste has always been appreciated by the inhabitants of Wielkopolska. They associate the taste of

**fried cheese** with their childhood. This is the same cheese that their mothers, aunts and grandmothers used to make years ago, using home-made methods. The fact that the producers of ‘**wielkopolski ser smażony**’ keep receiving letters of thanks and congratulations proves the high quality of the product produced in this area (*see Appendices 12 and 13*). This cheese has been produced for many years, in accordance with local tradition and a recipe characteristic of this area of Poland. It is this particular **fried cheese** that consumers are looking for. It is worth adding that most of the produced fried cheese is sold in the capital of Wielkopolska, i.e. the city of Poznań. Today, ‘**wielkopolski ser smażony**’ comes in two varieties, as:

- (1) **natural (pure) ‘wielkopolski ser smażony’;**
- (2) **‘wielkopolski ser smażony’ with caraway.**

Selected opinions on **fried natural cheese and fried cheese with caraway** are presented below along with passages from letters that testify that this product has a unique taste and very often brings the aromas of childhood or early youth to the former and current residents of Wielkopolska. These letters were sent to plants producing **fried cheese**. Therefore, only one conclusion can be drawn. **Fried cheese** has a historically established good reputation. Its unique taste is associated with the warmth of a family home and loved ones. The letters of people who have been living outside Wielkopolska for 20-30 years are full of nostalgia for the family home and the taste of **fried cheese**, e.g. those written by residents of Warsaw (letter No. 1) and Piotrków Trybunalski (letter No. 2), quoted below:

- (1) *“I was accidentally treated to “fried cheese” in Poznań. I really liked it, because since I was a child, as I was born in Poznań, I ate fried cheese with a lot of caraway at home with great appetite. I have been living in Warsaw for 30 years now and there is no such cheese here at all...”*
- (2) *“I really like your fried cheese, especially that with caraway. It is a dish from my childhood. My grandmother and mother used to make it at home. I found memories of this cheese in your products. Unfortunately, in the city where I live, this product is unavailable...”*

Statements that can be found in the above letters, including: “THIS IS A DISH FROM MY CHILDHOOD”, or “MY GRANDMA AND MOTHER USED TO MAKE IT AT HOME”, or “I FOUND MEMORIES OF THIS CHEESE IN YOUR PRODUCTS” best reflect the traditional location of this product. Even though these people have not been in their hometown for a long time, this bond with the place of origin has remained and was revealed profoundly when they came across the product made in Wielkopolska near Nowy Tomyśl.

**The unique taste of fried cheese is also emphasised in letters not only from Poznań and other cities in Wielkopolska**, but also from such a large city as Bydgoszcz. Although this city is outside the Wielkopolska region, it is influenced by the culinary customs of Wielkopolska.

At the clear suggestion of consumers, producers of fried cheese have been producing its variety with caraway for many years. Many people claim that it is caraway that gives cheese its unique, desired taste. Here are some examples of opinions on the production of **fried cheese with caraway**:

- (1) *“Congratulations on resuming the production of **fried cheese with caraway**. Keep it up. I have been waiting for this for many years. In my opinion, it is caraway that truly ennobles fried cheese”.*
- (2) *“Congratulations on a successful product, i.e. **fried cheese** made according to the old Polish recipe. I buy it quite often, but to make it taste like cheese made according to my Grandma’s recipe, I melt it and add a lot of caraway. I suggest that the Plant produce a variety of fried cheese with caraway. It will undoubtedly be very popular as well.”*

Consumers delighted with the **taste of ‘wielkopolski ser smażony’** (in this case from Nowy Tomyśl) also send their thanks:

- (1) *“Dear Mr Director, My whole family and neighbours eat your product – “TOP TOMYŚL” **fried cheese** – it is not just tasty – it is delicious (...)”*
- (2) *“I would like to thank your company for the very tasty **FRIED CHEESE**. I am sure that this is not only my opinion. (...)”*

In the materials attached to this application, we can also find a letter from a resident of Gubin, which contains an interesting story about an accidentally found cup of fried cheese. The small round cup reminded Mr Kornel from Gubin of the years of World War II and cheese fried in Sierpów near Bojanów Stary.

All the above opinions, congratulations, thanks and requests to indicate where and how fried cheese produced according to the old recipe can be bought, attached to the application, clearly evidence its wonderful and unique taste.

The very good quality of fried cheese and its very high reputation are confirmed by numerous awards received by plants producing **fried cheese from Wielkopolska**.

#### I. MAJOR AWARDS AND DISTINCTIONS GRANTED TO TOP – TOMYŚL DISTRICT DAIRY COOPERATIVE IN NOWY TOMYŚL

(the awards and distinctions granted are arranged chronologically):

##### **For FRIED CHEESE**

“Polska Żywność” Foundation

- “POLSKI PRODUCT” [POLISH PRODUCT’ label for **fried cheese** (1994)

Wielkopolska Fundacja Żywnościowa, Głos Wielkopolski, TVP Poznań, Radio Merkury – organisers of the “DOBRE BO POLSKIE” [GOOD BECAUSE IT’S POLISH] Competition

- “DOBRE BO POLSKIE” [GOOD BECAUSE IT’S POLISH] Certificate for: **fried cheese** (1999)

“ZŁOTY HIPOLIT” [GOLDEN HIPOLIT] Statuette

- the highest distinction in the “DOBRE BO POLSKIE” competition for: **fried cheese** (2000)

1<sup>st</sup> “FERMA BYDŁA 2001” [CATTLE FARM 2001] International Fair in Poznań

- “MLECZNA PERŁA 2001” [MILK PEARL 2001] statuette for:  
**fried cheese**

Eugeniusz Kwiatkowski Association

- the highest distinction – “POLSKI PRODUCENT ŻYWNOŚCI – 2001” [POLISH FOOD PRODUCER – 2001] title for:  
**fried cheese (2001)**

20<sup>th</sup> National Cheese Assessment – Białystok 2001, under the patronage of the Polish Committee of the International Dairy Federation FIL/DL, the National Union of Dairy Cooperatives, the Union of Private Milk Processors, the Federation of the Trade Union of Dairy Workers and the National Association of Dairy Professionals

- distinction for high quality for:  
**natural fried cheese (2001)**  
**fried cheese with caraway (2001)**

“Najlepszy wyrób mleczarski w Wielkopolsce” [Best Dairy Product in Wielkopolska] Competition – Sielinko

- the first place in “Kropla mleka z Wielkopolski” [A Drop of Milk from Wielkopolska] Competition for:  
**fried cheese (2003)**

Competition “Nasze kulinarne dziedzictwo” [Our Culinary Heritage] organised by the “Agro-Smak” project, the “Modna Gospodyni” editorial team and the Agricultural Editorial Team of Polish Radio Program 1 – Warszawa

- Certificate of Award in the “Nasze Kulinarne Dziedzictwo” [Our Culinary Heritage] competition for:  
the best Polish regional food product “PERŁA 2003” [PEARL 2003] **for fried cheese (2003)**

POLAGRA-FOOD 2004 Fair – Poznań

- GOLD MEDAL of the Poznań International Fair:  
**for fried cheese with caraway (2004)**

It is particularly noteworthy that fried cheese received the “DOBRE BO POLSKIE” certificate (1999) and the “ZŁOTY HIPOLIT” statuette, the highest distinction in the “DOBRE BO POLSKIE” Consumer Product Quality Competition for **fried cheese (2000)**. The aforementioned competition was organised by:

- Wielkopolska Fundacja Żywnościowa [Wielkopolska Food Foundation],
- Głos Wielkopolski daily,
- TVP Poznań,
- Radio Merkury.

The decision to award the “DOBRE BO POLSKIE” certificate (currently the name of the competition has been changed to “Najlepsze w Polsce” [Best in Poland]) – in

accordance with the competition rules<sup>5</sup> (*see Appendix 14*) – was made by consumers themselves. Consumers vote for any products of their choice by sending competition coupons published in the press or via the Internet or by telephone. The competition organisers are only responsible for verifying the applications, counting the votes cast and awarding certificates to companies manufacturing products that received the largest number of votes. Additionally, companies manufacturing products ranked 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> are awarded Statuetka Hipolita. The most important advantage of this competition is the fact that it is only consumers that decide on awarding particular products and it was consumers who decided to award **fried cheese**.

Twice a year, in the presence of representatives of voivodeship and city authorities, representatives of business, numerous economic and non-governmental organisations, and journalists representing the press, radio and TV, a ceremony is held in the Poznań City Hall to award the winners of the competition with certificates, and the best of them, who received the largest number of votes, are awarded “Statuetka Hipolita”. The fact that “Statuetka Hipolita” was awarded to the **fried cheese** producer (District Dairy Cooperative in Nowy Tomyśl) testifies to the unwavering reputation of **fried cheese** and its highest quality appreciated by consumers. In the edition of the competition in which the **fried cheese** was awarded, 4,123 people voted for this product.

## II. AWARDS AND DISTINCTIONS GRANTED TO THE DISTRICT DAIRY COOPERATIVE IN CZARNKÓW

“Alimentorum Fabricator Optimus” – Exemplary Food Producer, “LAURUS AUREUS – ZŁOTY LAUR” [LAURUS AUREUS – GOLDEN LAUREL] statuette

- for manufacturing products of the highest quality, creating a modern brand, entrepreneurship and special care for the environment

“**HIT 2002**” certificate and statuette for dairy products – award granted at the International Food Industry Fair – POLAGRA – FOOD in Poznań

The **Highest Quality** certificate for the District Dairy Cooperative – 2005

MEDAL of the National Union of Dairy Cooperatives for District Dairy Cooperative in Czarnków – as part of the 10<sup>th</sup> “MLEKO-EXPO 2001” Dairy Fair

Award EMS Promotional and Publishing Agency for the District Dairy Cooperative in Czarnków for the company’s market success – Warsaw 2003

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<sup>5</sup> Due to Poland’s accession to the EU, both the competition logo and the competition rules, that can be found at: [www.food.org.pl](http://www.food.org.pl), have been modified. Currently, the competition is intended for products manufactured by companies from all over the EU that enjoy the greatest recognition of consumers in Poland. The name of the competition has been changed to “NAJLEPSZE W POLSCE” [BEST IN POLAND]. The competition is adapted to the principles of the operation of the European single market, in particular to the principles of the free movement of goods and services.

“WIELKA KONEW EUROPEJSKA” [GREAT EUROPEAN JUG] – 2005 – Award of the EMS Promotional and Publishing Agency under the honorary patronage of Władysław Serafin, President of the National Union of Farmers, Machinery Rings and Agricultural Organisations

- for outstanding achievements on the European single market

“Dobre bo polskie” certificate and “Statuetka Hipolita” – October 2003

- for a set of different curd cheeses

### III. AWARDS AND DISTINCTIONS GRANTED TO THE DISTRICT DAIRY COOPERATIVE IN KOWALEWO – DOBRZYCA

“**FRIED CHEESE**” – nomination for the HIT 2003 title and

HIT 2003 title awarded by the readers of “Gazeta Poznańska” daily in the competition organised by the “punkt” Advertising Agency and “Gazeta Poznańska”

### IV. AWARDS AND DISTINCTIONS GRANTED TO THE DISTRICT DAIRY COOPERATIVE IN ŚREM

“Dobre bo polskie” certificate and the authorisation to mark **FRIED CHEESE** with this label – September 1999

### V. AWARDS AND DISTINCTIONS GRANTED TO ZAKŁAD PRODUKCJI SPOŻYWCZEJ I HANDLU J.A. FRĄCKOWIAK s.c. in GRANOWO

“Dobre bo polskie” certificate – Consumer Award – September 2001, competition organisers: Wielkopolska Fundacja Żywnościowa, Głos Wielkopolski, TVP Poznań, Radio Merkury

“Wielkopolska Jakość” [Wielkopolska Quality] certificate – March 2004, awarded by the Wielkopolska Institute of Quality

- for the unique taste and nutritional value of the **fried cheeses** produced, the certificate was extended in March 2006 for another 2 years

Diploma for the best dairy product in the **fried cheese** group awarded at the “Sielinko 2001” Wielkopolska Agricultural Fair

Diploma for the best dairy products in Wielkopolska 2003 for **natural fried cheese and fried cheese with spices** awarded at the “Sielinko 2001” Wielkopolska Agricultural Fair

Diploma for the best dairy products in Wielkopolska 2004 for **fried cheese in a 50g package** awarded at the “Sielinko 2004” Wielkopolska Agricultural Fair

“DOBRY WIELKOPOLSKI SMAK” [GOOD WIELKOPOLSKA TASTE] diploma for the best dairy products in Wielkopolska 2005 for **traditional fried cheeses** awarded at the “Sielinko 2005” Wielkopolska Agricultural Fair

[We highly appreciate as a distinction letters received from customers, where, in addition to words of thanks for a good product, they compare it to fried cheese prepared at home by their great-grandmothers.]

VI. AWARDS AND DISTINCTIONS GRANTED TO “TOP” s.c. HALINA i WŁODZIMIERZ HUSZCZAK, BOGUMIŁA i ADAM HUMERCZYK in CHODZIEŻ

“Wielkopolska Jakość” [Wielkopolska Quality] certificate of the European Award System awarded by the Wielkopolska Institute of Quality – October 2005

Diploma in the Dairy Competition for the best products from Wielkopolska awarded in 2004 by the Wielkopolska Agricultural Advisory Centre at the “Sielinko 2004” Wielkopolska Agricultural Fair:

- for semi-fat pure fried cheese, fried cheese with caraway, garlic and herbs.

The quality of the products and the dynamic development of the company have been appreciated by the local community – “TOP” civil partnership was nominated in the “7 Wspaniałych” [7 Magnificent Ones] competition in the Small Business category in 2005.

[What we value most, however, is being praised by our consumers – since the beginning of our operation, our customers have frequently let us know that they appreciate the quality and taste of our product.]

## 9. Control:

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

ul. Wspólna 30

00-930 Warszawa

phone: +48 22 623-29-00

+48 22 623-29-01

fax: +48 22 623-29-98

+48 22 623-29-99

## **10. Labelling:**

Each package should carry the producer's label. The label should indicate the name 'wielkopolski ser smażony'. The logo of the Protected Geographical Indication should be clearly visible on the label.

## **11. Specific requirements introduced by applicable regulations:**

No special national or EU requirements apply.

## **12. Additional information:**

Bibliography (concerning point 8 of the application):

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5. "Encyklopedia Rolnictwa i wiadomości związek z niem mających", ed. J. T. Lubomirski, E. Skawiński, S. Przysański, Warszawa 1877
6. "Poradnik dla gospodyń wiejskich i miejskich, czyli zbiór rad, wiadomości i przepisów, obejmujący różne szczegóły gospodarstwa kobiecego", Warszawa 1838
7. "Encyklopedia rolnicza wydana staraniem i nakładem Muzeum Przemysłu i Rolnictwa w Warszawie", 1900
8. "Kuchnia polska, niezbędny podręcznik dla kucharzy i gospodyń wiejskich i miejskich oraz poradnik w wielu gałęziach gospodarstwa domowego, Toruń 1885
9. M. Ślezańska "Kucharz Wielkopolski", Poznań 1904
10. Bał "Gospodarka mleczna" Vol. III "Serowarstwo", Warszawa 1934
11. "Kultura ludowa Wielkopolski" Vol. II, Poznań 1964
12. "Chemia praktyczna dla wszystkich", Warszawa 1960
13. "Kuchnia Wielkopolska wczoraj i dziś, czyli porady jak smacznie i tanio gotować zachowując tradycje zdrowotne", Poznań 1992
14. A. Adamczewska "Encyklopedia gotowania – potrawy z serami", Warszawa 2005
15. "Kucharz Polski 1635 praktycznych przepisów smacznych, tanich i wystawnych obiadów", Księgarnia J. Przeworskiego, Warszawa 1932
16. "Gospodyni doskonała, czyli przepisy utrzymania porządku w domu", Poznań 1899

## **13. List of documents attached to the application:**

1. Photo of fried cheese
2. Photo of fried cheese
3. Photo of fried cheese in a package
4. Photo of fried cheese – view of the lid
5. Geographical area of the production of milk used to produce fried cheese according to the Wielkopolska recipe
6. Area of the Wielkopolskie Voivodeship historically linked with the tradition of producing ‘wielkopolski ser smażony’
7. Photo
8. Photo
9. Photo
10. Photo
11. Photo
12. Fried cheese – consumer opinions
13. Letters from consumers of fried cheese quoted in the application

### III. Summary of the specifications (Single document)

#### SINGLE DOCUMENT

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006 on the on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin

‘Wielkopolski ser smażony’

EU No.:

PGI       PDO

1. **Name**

Wielkopolski ser smażony

2. Member State or third country

Poland

3. Description of the agricultural product or foodstuff

3.1. Type of product

Group: Cheese — class 1.3

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

Consistency:

Fried cheese from Wielkopolska (Greater Poland) has a firm, homogenous and elastic consistency.

Colour:

The colour of the cheese mass varies from light cream to yellow, depending on the quantity of butter used in production (the fat content of the cheese mass may not be lower than 7.5%) and how intensely it is fried.

Taste and smell:

The taste and smell are typical for fried cheese, i.e. rather sharp, originating in ripened curds.

pH value: 5.2-5.6.

Water: maximum 65%.  
Fat: minimum 7.5%  
Coagulase-positive Staphylococcus: absent in 0.1 g  
Number of moulds: maximum 100 in 1 g  
Sulphite-reducing spores: absent in 1 g

Sometimes visible caraway seeds are added to the fried cheese. The taste and smell of fried cheese with caraway remains typical for that product (originating in ripened curds) while the taste and smell of caraway are clearly perceptible. The other features of the fried cheese with caraway are the same as for cheese without caraway.

### 3.3. Raw materials

#### 1. Milk

Milk used to produce curds used in the production of ‘wielkopolski ser smażony’ must be raw. The entire production cycle of ‘wielkopolski ser smażony’, from the purchase of raw milk to the finished product, should not take more than six or seven days. Any extension of the production process (use of milk or curds which have been kept too long) has a negative impact on the final product.

#### 2. Caraway

Caraway is used to produce ‘wielkopolski ser smażony’ optionally. Caraway may be added to ‘wielkopolski ser smażony’ in order to obtain one of the two possible taste varieties of the cheese, which are:

- natural (pure) ‘wielkopolski ser smażony’,
- ‘wielkopolski ser smażony’ with caraway.

These are the only two varieties of the fried cheese which may be marketed under the name ‘wielkopolski ser smażony’.

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

Not applicable

### 3.5. Specific steps in production that must take place in the identified geographical area

Production stages:

- **Storage of raw milk** – Raw milk is stored for no longer than 24 hours at a maximum temperature of 6°C.
- **Skimming the milk** – The skimming is done in centrifugal milk-cream separators (special apparatus for skimming milk).  
The fat content of the skimmed milk should not exceed 1%.
- **Heating the milk** – The skimmed milk is heated to a temperature of 70-75°C and left at that temperature for at least 30 seconds.
- **Preparation of the starter culture** — The starter culture is prepared from pasteurised milk with the addition of a strain of lactic streptococci. This milk preparation is kept at a temperature of 25°C for 8-10 hours, which produces the starter culture, i.e. milk

containing natural microflora.

- **Souring** — The milk is soured at 20-23°C through the addition of the starter culture corresponding to 2% of the total milk quantity.
- **Heating and turning the curds** — When the curds have reached an acidity of about 31°SH, they are slowly heated (for about 2 hours) to a temperature of 32-33°C. The heated curds are then cut and gently turned.
- **Draining** — The whey separated from the curds is drained off and the curds are then pressed and drained at a temperature of 20°C until a water content of about 64% is obtained. By draining off the water curd cheese is obtained.
- **Crumbling and placing on metal sheets** — The curd cheese is crumbled and then spread on metal sheets in a cheese maturer.
- **Ripening** — The ripening process (maturation of the curd cheese) takes place on metal sheets at a temperature of 16-27°C. The process consists in the natural decomposition of the albumen until the curd becomes a glassy mass with a smell, consistency and appearance characteristic of that process.

Ripening takes 2 or 3 days. The indication that the ripening process can be terminated is the content of curd that has not ripened, which for the whole mass should be less than 25%.

- **Mixing with fat and frying** — The matured curd cheese is mixed with milk fat (butter) with the addition of salt, and also caraway in the case of ‘wielkopolski ser smażony’ with caraway. It is then fried for about 15 minutes at a temperature of at least 90°C.

#### **Banned practice:**

Banned practice refers to the addition of substances that may replace the ripening process (e.g. fluxes, i.e. salts that enable frying without ripening) or to the use of fats other than milk fat (butter) for production.

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

‘Wielkopolski ser smażony’ is packed at the production site, since it may be packed (moulded) only directly after frying, when it is still hot. Reheating the fried cheese, once cooled, in order to shape it, is not allowed. Such practice is detrimental to the quality of the product.

#### 3.7. Specific rules concerning labelling

Each package should carry the producer’s label. The label should indicate the name ‘wielkopolski ser smażony’. The logo of the Protected Geographical Indication should be clearly visible on the label.

#### 4. Concise definition of the geographical area

The area is situated within the administrative borders of the Wielkopolskie (Greater Poland) Voivodeship.

## 5. Link with the geographical area

### 5.1. Specificity of the geographical area

Specificity of the area where ‘wielkopolski ser smażony’ is produced:

Starting from the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, there was a colonising movement concentrated in the area of Wielkopolska (particularly western Wielkopolska) called the Olender movement (the name ‘Olenders’ was used for colonisers from Western and South-Western Europe). It is highly probable that the practice of frying cheese was started by these settlers.

These Olenders, as well as settlers from the region of Brandenburg (‘Bamberski’ farmers) were at the origin of the local know-how and customs developed over centuries on the farms of Wielkopolska, which led to a high level of cattle farming, agriculture and methods of obtaining milk in those areas. Until this day, Wielkopolska has been known for the uniform quality of its milk. As milk cows yielded more milk, farmers sought ways of preserving one of the dairy products, namely fresh curd cheese. One such method was the production of fried cheese following the natural ripening of curd cheese (the natural decomposition of albumen which takes 2-3 days). This method of handling curd cheese (ripening and frying) did not come about by chance. Initially this was done in order to extend the period in which the cheese could be eaten. With time, the production of fried cheese in Wielkopolska became everyday routine and no meal in Wielkopolska was complete without it.

The natural method of producing ‘wielkopolski ser smażony’, steeped in tradition, points to a solid link between the region where it is produced, the correct execution of each stage of production and the particular quality of fried cheese.

### 5.2. Specificity of the product

‘Wielkopolski ser smażony’ owes its characteristic taste and smell to the ripened and fried curd cheese and to caraway (in the case of fried cheese with caraway). The use of fresh raw materials, i.e. milk and the curd cheese produced from it, is extremely important for the production of ‘wielkopolski ser smażony’. This is linked to the need to ensure the specific quality of the final product and finish the whole production cycle of the fried cheese within 6-7 days.

The ripening process is particularly important for the production of this fried cheese. The process consists in the natural decomposition of albumen which lasts for 2-3 days. It is precisely the ripening process that has a determining influence on the specificity and exceptional character of ‘wielkopolski ser smażony’, i.e. its taste and smell.

Frying the cheese using only milk fat (butter) is an equally important process, since it influences the taste, smell, colour and consistency of the final product.

### 5.3. Specific quality, reputation or other characteristic of the product

The link between ‘wielkopolski ser smażony’ and the region where it is produced is based, in particular, on its reputation, described below, and the quality characteristics mentioned in point 5.2 that are due to the traditional methods of its production.

‘Wielkopolski ser smażony’ is typical for the lands of western Wielkopolska including the Nowotomska Plain, and for central Wielkopolska, as evidenced by frequent references to it in old documents, books and other accounts written on or about these lands. One example is a work published in Poznań at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, entitled *Gospodyni doskonała, czyli Przepisy utrzymywania porządku w domu i zaopatrzenia* [The Excellent Housewife, or How to Take Care of and Shop for your Household] from 1899, where a recipe for fried cheese can be found. The link between fried cheese and Wielkopolska is also confirmed in “Kucharz wielkopolski” [The Wielkopolska Chef] by Maria Ślezańska from 1904. This book was published in Poznań by Jarosław Leitgeber. “Prędkie sposoby robienia sera” [The fast way of making cheese] described in this book does indeed contain information on making fried cheese according to the recipe from Wielkopolska.

Fried cheese has also been mentioned in more recent books. The fact that the recipe for fried cheese is regional and typical of Wielkopolska is confirmed by its inclusion in “Kuchnia Wielkopolska — wczoraj i dziś, czyli porady jak smacznie i tanio gotować zachowując tradycje i zdrowie” [Wielkopolska Cuisine Yesterday and Today — How to Cook Tasty and Inexpensive Meals while Respecting Tradition and Health], published in Poznań in 1992. A recipe for fried cheese with caraway is also included in “Potrawy z serami” [Cheese dishes] by Barbara Adamczewska (2005).

With time, preparing and eating fried cheese became a popular and everyday activity in Wielkopolska. Fried cheese itself became a typical product for the inhabitants of Wielkopolska, and no breakfast or supper was complete without it. ‘Wielkopolski ser smażony’ produced according to the recipe passed down through the generations has maintained its high reputation throughout Poland and abroad. Its taste has always been appreciated by the inhabitants of Wielkopolska. They associate the taste of fried cheese with their childhood. The cheese is produced according to local tradition and the recipe is typical of that part of Poland. Consumers are on the look-out for precisely that fried cheese which their mothers and grandmothers used to make at home.

Nowadays fried cheese produced throughout Wielkopolska is mainly sold in Poznań, the capital of the region, which is further proof that this exceptional product, with its extremely characteristic taste and smell, is a typical product linked to a definite region and constitutes an indissociable part of its culture.

Fried cheese produced by various Wielkopolska producers has received a number of prizes and distinctions at the Wielkopolska Consumer Competition for Product Quality, where the prizes are awarded by consumers. This confirms the consistently high reputation of ‘wielkopolski ser smażony’ and its superior quality which is so appreciated by consumers. The fact that prizes have been awarded to various producers from Wielkopolska over the years shows that the product is of a high quality which all producers are eager to maintain.

**Reference to publication of the specifications**

(Article 5(7) of Regulation (EC) No 510/2006)

<http://www.bip.minrol.gov.pl/strona/DesktopDefault.aspx?TabOrgId=1620&LangId=0>

## **IV. Scope and frequency of inspections carried out to verify whether the production process is compliant with the specifications**

### **1. Control of the quality of raw materials**

- Control of the rules regarding the purchase and quality of milk used to produce curd cheese from which fried cheese is made from farms holding a veterinary certificate.
- Control of the rules regarding the purchase and quality of curd cheese and documents specifying the date of curd cheese production – applicable to fried cheese producers that purchase curd cheese for its production.

The following should also be checked:

- **the effectiveness of milk skimming**, i.e. whether the fat content does not exceed 1%;
- **the quality of butter**, including parameters such as fat content, water content, presence of other fats;
- **the quality of caraway**, in the case of the production of fried cheese with caraway.

### **2. Control of the production method**

Control should cover, in particular, the following production stages:

- **Starter culture preparation.** The type of strain used to prepare the starter culture and the parameters (time and temperature) of this production stage should be checked.
- **Souring.** The parameters (time and temperature) of this production stage should be checked.

The proper course of the starter culture preparation and souring process determines the organoleptic characteristics and the pH value in the finished product.

- **Draining.** The water content in the curd following whey separation should be checked.  
The proper course the draining process determines the water content in the finished product and its microbiological stability.
- **Ripening.** It must be check whether no substances that can substitute or support the process, the parameters (time and temperature) of this production stage, and the organoleptic properties of the curd mass after the ripening process have been used.

The proper course of the ripening process determines the organoleptic properties of the finished product.

- **Mixing with fat and frying.** It correctness of this stage must be checked, i.e. whether the process parameters (time and temperature) are observed.  
The proper course of the process consisting in mixing the curd with fat and its frying determines the organoleptic as well as physical and chemical properties (in particular the fat content) of the finished product.

### **3. Control of the quality of the finished product**

The adequate quality of the product confirms the proper course of the technological process and that the producer has met all requirements regarding the quality of raw materials and spices, preparation of raw materials for production, and storage conditions.

#### **4. Control of storage conditions**

It must be checked whether the conditions in the storage facility (temperature and humidity) are monitored and have no adverse impact on the quality of the product (physical and chemical as well as microbiological processes indicating deterioration in the quality).

### **FREQUENCY OF INSPECTIONS**

All the above stages (from 1 to 4) should be controlled 3 times a year for a period of 2 years. If all stages are carried out properly, inspections can be carried out once every 6 months.

If irregularities are found in only one stage, this stage should be controlled with increased frequency – once every 2 months, while the remaining stages should be checked once every 6 months.