

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

**I. Applicant**

**1. Name<sup>2)</sup>:**

**1A. TATRZAŃSKO-BESKIDZKA SPÓŁDZIELNIA PRODUCENTÓW  
'GAZDOWIE' PRODUCERS COOPERATIVE IN LEŚNICA**

**1B. REGIONAL SHEEP AND GOAT BREEDERS ASSOCIATION IN NOWY TARG**

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

2A. 34-403 LEŚNICA, UL. POLNA 33

2B. UL. SZAFLARSKA 93 d/7, 34-400 NOWY TARG

**3. Mailing address:**

3A. Tatrzańsko-Beskidzka Spółdzielnia Producentów „Gazdowie” w Leśnicy  
ul. Polna 33  
34-406 Leśnica  
Telephone: 018 2656498, mobile 608120268  
Fax: 018 2656498  
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3B. Regionalny Związek Hodowców Owiec i Kóz w Nowym  
Targu ul. Szaflarska 93 d/7  
34-400 Nowy Targ  
Telephone: 018 2664621

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

**4A. Kazimierz Furczoń**

**4B. Jan Jarczy**

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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 may apply for registration after the European Commission has laid down the conditions under which such a person may be treated as a group.

## 5. Group:

*Provide information on the composition of the group.*

The group is comprised of members of the 'Gazdowie' cooperative and members of the Producers Group: LIVE SHEEP AND GOATS, SHEEP AND GOAT MEAT; FRESH, REFRIGERATED AND FROZEN and breeders who are members of the Regional Sheep and Goat Breeders Association.

## II. Specification

### 1. Name:

Provide the name of the agricultural product or foodstuff.

**'Jagnięcina podhalańska'**

### 2. Application for registration of:

Mark with a cross if the applicant is seeking to register the name referred to in Section 1 as a designation of origin or geographical indication.

1) Designation of Origin

X

2) Geographical Indication

### 3. Category:

Class 1.1 Fresh meat (and offal)

### 4. Description:

*Provide a description of the agricultural product or foodstuff and, where necessary to demonstrate the link referred to in Section 8, also information on the raw material composition, physical, chemical, microbiological, or organoleptic characteristics.*

The protected geographical indication covers lambs of the 'Podhale zackel' breed as well as 'Polish mountain sheep' and 'Polish coloured mountain sheep', both originating from this breed, marketed as fresh meat.

The designation 'jagnięcina podhalańska' refers to meat obtained from lambs reared by mothers bred in a traditional manner that has remained unchanged for centuries. The sheep are grazed in mountain pastures throughout the season, from the end of April to the beginning of October. Ewe lambing is possible throughout the year.

A 'jagnięcina podhalańska' is a lamb which is not more than 60 days old. These are suckling lamb carcasses weighing between 4 kg and 8 kg.

'Jagnięcina podhalańska' comes from lambs up to 60 days old, with a carcass weight of 4 to 8 kg. The meat is light pink, tender, and juicy with a distinctive aroma. The smell of 'jagnięcina podhalańska' is similar to that of game (especially venison).

The meat is also characterised by small amount of white perirenal fat, with a solid consistency, weighing between 30 and 40 grams, and minimal external carcass fat, estimated at 1.5 to 2 points under EUROP classification, which allows it to be classified as class 1. (Ciuruś J., Drożdż A. (1995 a). *‘Increasing the efficiency of dairy lamb production from mountain sheep through commodity crossbreeding.’*, *Rocz. Nauk. Zoot.*, 22, 2: 37–45)

## **5. Geographical area:**

*Indicate geographical area.*

In Śląskie voivodeship: in Cieszyn powiat, Istebna municipality

in Żywiec powiat, the following municipalities: Milówka, Węgierska Górka, Rajcza, Ujszoły, Jeleśnia, and Koszarawa

In Małopolskie voivodeship: the entire Nowy Targ powiat and the entire Tatra powiat, in Sucha powiat, the following municipalities: Zawoja and Bystra Sidzina,

in Limanowa powiat, the municipalities: Niedźwiedź and part of the Kamienica municipality that is located on the territory of the Gorce National Park or south of the Kamienica River, as well as the following parishes of Mszana Dolna municipality: Olszówka, Raba Niżna, Łostówka, Łętowe, and Lubomierz,

in Nowy Sącz powiat: Piwniczna, Muszyna, and Krynica.

## **6. Proof of origin:**

*Provide the information on the procedure adopted to confirm that the agricultural product or foodstuff originates from the defined geographical area.*

The entire production process is monitored by a special control system, which allows for end-to-end tracking of the product. The designation ‘jagnięcina podhalańska’ can only be applied to products that fully meet each of the following conditions:

1. They have been produced in the geographical area defined in Section 5, in accordance with the production method described in Section 7, and possess the characteristics specified in the description in Section 4.
2. Their producers have agreed in writing to comply with the specifications, including the ‘proof of origin’ obligations.
3. Their producers committed to keeping a register of the lambs from which ‘jagnięcina podhalańska’ is obtained (based on the mandatory ‘Animal Identification and Registration’ operated by the Agency for Restructuring and Modernisation of Agriculture) to enable product traceability.
4. Their producers provided the following information to the Tatrzańsko-Beskidzka Spółdzielnia Producentów ‘Gazdowie’ Producers Cooperative in Leśnica or the Regional Sheep and Goat Breeders Association in Nowy Targ.
5. Any producer who wants to produce a product covered by the protected designation is required to submit a declaration to the Cooperative or the Association no later than

November 30 of the year preceding the production of 'jagnięcina podhalańska'. These declarations must include at least:

- a) first name and surname of the breeder and address,
- b) indication of grazing area,
- c) indication of the number of sheep by breed,
- d) breeder's declaration referred to in Section 6.2.

The Cooperative and the Association subject breeders to random internal inspections, independent of the inspections carried out by the authority specified in Section 9 of the specification. These inspections include the grazing location and the breed of animals, as well as oversight over the proper course of the production process (as declared in the specification). The control system reflects the specific features of traditional sheep grazing.

The Cooperative and the Association maintain a register of breeders producing 'jagnięcina podhalańska'.

Any breeder who intends to start production is required to submit the necessary information to the Cooperative or the Association in advance.

The compliance of the production method with the specification is verified by a control body. The origin of the raw material, the different stages of the production process, and the characteristics of the finished product are also verified. All producers, as well as their group, are subject to controls in accordance with the control plan held and approved by the control body.

## **7. Method of production:**

*Provide a description of the production method for the agricultural product or foodstuff and provide information on packaging if there are reasons why packaging should take place in the geographical area defined in Section 5 and indicate those reasons.*

For the production of 'jagnięcina podhalańska', lambs of the breeds 'Polish mountain sheep', 'Polish coloured mountain sheep', and 'Podhale zackel' are used, and they are reared by mothers bred in a traditional manner that has remained unchanged for centuries. The sheep are grazed in mountain pastures throughout the season, from the end of April to the beginning of October. Ewe lambing is possible throughout the year.

These breeds, due to their genetic traits and the local knowledge and skills of the breeders: *gazda* and *baca* (the folk term for producers involved in cheese production and sheep grazing), exhibit excellent adaptation to the climatic conditions present in the geographical area specified in Section 5.

Due to the harsh climatic conditions of the geographical area in which 'jagnięcina podhalańska' is produced, lambs born during the winter months are kept in the sheepfold throughout the rearing process. When the mothers are taken out to pasture, the lambs are bred separately. Lambs may accompany their mothers to grazing if the weather permits.

Throughout the rearing process, the basic feed of suckling lambs for the production of 'jagnięcina podhalańska' is their mothers' milk.

The breeding of mountain sheep culminating in the production of ‘jagnięcina podhalańska’ takes place in a mountain environment, in small extensively maintained flocks feeding on natural feed sourced mainly from the local resources of the breeders. The fodder (green forage, hay, haylage) must not come from an area other than that indicated in Section 5. Fodder concentrates may come from another area. The sheep density per hectare is up to 10 heads. In the summer, between late April and October, the mothers are fed on mountain pastures. The pastures are not fertilised and feature a wide botanical diversity, which contributes to the taste of ‘jagnięcina podhalańska’.

The grazing and production area for ‘jagnięcina podhalańska’ is located close to five National Parks: To the north of the designated area, there is the Gorce National Park, to the south – the Tatra National Park, to the west – the Babia Góra National Park, to the east – the Pieniny National Park and the Magura National Park, as well as Landscape Parks and areas of high natural value: Natura 2000.

The ultimate taste of ‘jagnięcina podhalańska’ is strongly influenced by the specific vegetation found in the area where it is produced. Many of the plant species that the sheep feed on while grazing are endemic to the Tatra and Beskid Mountains.

The lambs are reared extensively, with the exclusive use of pasture in the area referred to in Section 5. The rearing method involves constant transhumance, except during winter. The grazing method ensures the product’s specific character, since the mothers feed on diverse, unique vegetation in areas which are not used intensively, and this affects the milk with which the lambs are fed.

The lambs may be slaughtered and cut to obtain carcasses also outside the area referred to in Section 5.

## **8. Link with the geographical area:**

*When applying to register a name indicated in Section 1 as a designation of origin, provide elements demonstrating the link between the quality and characteristics of the agricultural product or foodstuff and the geographical environment in the area referred to in Section 5.*

The production area of ‘jagnięcina podhalańska’ overlaps with that of ‘oscypek’ (Protected Designation of Origin) and ‘redykołka’ as products produced under the traditional sheep-grazing system practised in the Polish Carpathians. Within the entire designated area, the following breeds of sheep are grazed: Polish mountain sheep, Polish coloured mountain sheep, and Podhale zackel. Nowadays, *redyk*, or the trailing of the sheep to the mountain pastures and their transhumance from there throughout the area, is still practised.

This is a coherent area in historical, ethnic, cultural and geographical terms. The unique method by which sheep are bred in this area developed over centuries and forms an integral part of the region’s landscape and culture.

### ***8.1 Natural link to the region.***

#### ***8.1.1 Climate and soil***

The area indicated in Section 5 suffers from a harsh climate with a low average temperature of around 5 °C and long-lasting snow cover. The average annual rainfall is between approximately 900 and 1,200 mm. The indicated area is dominated by low fertility brown and podzolic soils. In the Tatra Mountains and the Pieniny Mountains, podzolic soils and podzol formed on granitoids, and various types of rendzina on limestone. Entisols, inceptisols, or soilless areas cover 40% of the Tatra Mountains.

In the region of the Beskid Mountains, there are soils on a flysch base – mainly podzols and brown soils. Along the rivers and in the vicinity of streams, alluvial soil-forming processes have led to the development of more or less stony fluvisols – usually mountain soils. In terms of soil quality, the Żywiec region is characterised by soils of low and medium classes. Harsh natural conditions, and the relatively steep hillsides present in extensive areas, make these soils vulnerable to erosion. Such conditions strongly limit the possibilities for agricultural production.

### 8.1.2 Vegetation

The area identified in Section 5 is characterised by an abundance of diversified vegetation. For example, there are a total of 810 species in the vascular plant flora of Zakopane, of which 585 are native species and 225 are alien species that emerged in the area as a result of human activity.

The richness of species in the region is largely attributable to the presence of secondary, semi-natural non-forest communities in the landscape of the Tatra Mountains and Podhale. The formation and survival of these communities is possible above all due to certain human economic activities. They have emerged where once forest communities were and, through long-term management, have developed a distinctive vegetation suitable for a particular use. The resulting vegetation communities feature a unique species composition and structure. They are mostly composed of indigenous species originating from natural, native plant communities. (M. Wesołowska, 'Zróżnicowanie roślinności łąk i pastwisk Tatr Zachodnich oraz ich przedpola w związku ze sposobem użytkowania' ['Diversity of vegetation of meadows and pastures of the Tatra Zachodnie Mountains and their foregrounds in light of their use']: [http://info.botany.pl/ekologia/resea/proc\\_05mw1.html](http://info.botany.pl/ekologia/resea/proc_05mw1.html))

Plants native only to the Podhale region of Poland include: Tatra larkspur (*Delphinium oxysepalum*), carpathian flax (*Linum extraaxillare*), snow gentian (*Gentiana nivalis*), Clusius' gentian (*Gentiana clusii*), alpine saw-wort (*Saussurea alpina*), hawkweed-leaf saxifrage (*Saxifraga hieracifolia*), alpine violet (*Viola alpina*), alpine bellflower (*Campanula alpina*), yellow vulneraria (*Anthyllis alpestris*), Shaggy hawkweed (*Hieracium villosum*), pendulous milkvetch (*Astragalus penduliflorus*), tufted leopard's-bane (*Doronicum clusii*), creeping sibbaldia (*Sibbaldia procumbens*), creeping avens (*Geum reptans*), buttercup (*Ranunculus pseudomontanus*), yellow mountain saxifrage (*Saxifraga aizoides*), dark stonecrop (*Sedum atratum*), yellow whitlow-grass (*Draba aizoides*), rock rose (*Helianthemum grandiflorum*), Oeder's lousewort (*Pedicularis oederi*), thora buttercup (*Ranunculus thora*), grey alpine groundsel (*Senecio carniolicus*), carpathian groundsel (*Senecio carpaticus*), glacier pink (*Dianthus glacialis*), dwarf fleabane (*Erigeron nanus*), alpine sainfoin (*Hedysarum hedysaroides*), carpathian locoweed (*Oxytropis carpatica*), whorled lousewort (*Pedicularis verticillata*), moss campion (*Silene acaulis*), alpine butterwort (*Pinguicula alpina*), four-toothed sunray (*Heliosperma quadridentatum*), alpine hutchinsia (*Hutchinsia alpina*), tatra

scurvy-grass (*Cochlearia tatrae*), Hungarian fleabane (*Erigeron hungaricus*), Wahlenberg's wallflower (*Erysimum wahlenbergii*), carpathian snowbell (*Soldanella carpatica*), hardy saxifrage (*Saxifraga perdurans*). Plants such as mat-grass (*Nardus stricta*), alpine bluegrass (*Poa alpina*), great masterwort (*Astrantia major*), thora buttercup (*Ranunculus thora*), Tatra meadow grass (*Sesleria tatrae*), alpine sainfoin (*Hedysarum hedysaroides*), alpine aster (*Aster alpinus*), mountain avens (*Dryas octopetala*), glaucous thistle (*Carduus glaucus*), alpine clover (*Trifolium alpinum*), glandular toothwort (*Dentaria glandulosa*), prostrate fescue (*Festuca supina*), distichous oreochloa (*Oreochloa disticha*), bog bilberry (*Vaccinium uliginosum*), whorled lousewort (*Pedicularis verticillata*), highland rush (*Juncus trifidus*), alpine bistort (*Polygonum viviparum*), meadow rue (*Thalictrum aquilegifolium*) and rosebay willowherb (*Epilobium angustifolium*) are also common here.

Plants such as: edelweiss (*Leontopodium alpinum*), Turk's cap lily (*Lilium martagon*), silver thistle (*Carlina acaulis*), crocus scepusiensis (*Crocus scepusiensis*), alpine avens (*Geum montanum*), yellow mountain saxifrage (*Saxifraga aizoides*), spotted gentian (*Gentiana punctata*), willow gentian (*Gentiana asclepiadea*), spring gentian (*Gentiana verna*), autumn crocus (*Colchicum autumnale*), precocious carnation (*Dianthus praecox*), alpine poppy (*Papaver burseri*), mountain houseleek (*Sempervivum montanum*), angelica (*Archangelica officinalis*), aconite (*Aconitum firmum*) and alpine pasqueflower (*Pulsatilla alpina*) are also very common in these areas.

Particularly noteworthy is the Pilsko massif (1,557 metres altitude) in the Żywiec Landscape Park, on which a subalpine zone has formed, as in the Tatra Mountains, is one of the most unspoilt areas in Poland. The subalpine zone extends from an altitude of around 1,400 metres to the summit of Pilsko. The dwarf mountain pine (*Pinus mugo Turra*) scrub that is present here forms patches, amongst which small occurrences of glabrous mountain ash (*Sorbus acuparia ssp. glabrata*) and rock currant (*Ribes petraeum*) are present. The mountain pine clusters are interlaced with tall herb and undershrub communities. Among the alpine species present here, there are: bisexual crowberry (*Empetrum nigrum ssp. hermaphroditum*), alpine juniper (*Juniperus communis ssp. alpina*), alpine clubmoss (*Diphasiastrum alpinum*) and dwarf willow (*Salix herbacea*).

In contrast to alpine forests, subalpine glades are characterised by a great floristic richness. These glades have been formed due to human use, so the dominant vegetation communities are meadows and pastures, among which unique peatland and flush mires are found. A natural peculiarity of supra-regional importance is the plant cover of the Cebulowa mountain pasture. The flush mires and peatland found here are characterized by a unique floristic composition. In late June and early July, Siberian chives (*Allium sibiricum*) and felwort (*Swertia perennis*) bloom en masse there. Some other interesting plant species have also been recorded here, including the globeflower (*Trollius altissimus*), western marsh orchid (*Dactylorhiza majalis*), the marsh helleborine (*Epipactis palustris*) and common butterwort (*Pinguicula vulgaris ssp. vulgaris*). The Rysianka mountain pasture is very picturesque, especially in early spring, when fields of crocus scepusiensis (*Crocus scepusiensis*) bloom. *Crocus scepusiensis* is a species whose abundance depends on sheep grazing. When pastoral use is discontinued, their numbers are gradually reduced, which may lead to the complete disappearance of these stands. *Campanula serrata*, *Aconitum firmum ssp. moravicum* and *Tozzia alpina* are listed as species of Community interest. For these species, among others, the habitat refuge of the Żywiec Beskids was designated within the European Natura 2000 network. Alpine bell (*Cortusa matthioli*), which occurs on the banks of streams and in seepage spring areas, is a species

listed in the Polish Red Book of Plants. (*Kwartalnik turystyczny w górach*, Issue 3 (9) – Summer 2006)

The mountain shepherding activity in this area, practised for many centuries, has markedly shaped the areas now under protection. As an example, the Gorce National Park can be mentioned here. The richness of the vegetation in the glades developed as a result of the long-term grazing and penning of sheep and cattle. The most valuable communities include fertile sword lily and bentgrass meadows. Here and there, at higher elevations, large patches of tall herb vegetation, with tall-growing white hellebore are present. On wetlands, near water-heads and groundwater seepage sites, valerian and sedges flush mires have formed, and in their humid surroundings – lush thistle meadows with *Cirsium rivulare* and bistort (*Polygonum bistorta*). In clearings where grazing and mowing have been discontinued for several decades, an intensive forest succession is evident, i.e. the transformation and impoverishment of the vegetation cover, leading to the forest re-establishment. ([www.parki.pl](http://www.parki.pl))

### 8.1.3 Link to the region

As far as sheep breeding is concerned, the climate only allows extensive rearing of resilient and environmentally well-adapted, low-demanding sheep, able to withstand 24-hour grazing, which has been carried out here traditionally for several hundred years. For the entire grazing period, the sheep are kept outdoors, away from human settlements, on natural and unfertilised land. Sometimes, they also travel very long distances from the places where they spend the winter. As a result, they are highly resistant, well-muscled and lean, and of high nutritional quality.

Summer grazing of flocks on mountain pastures is deeply rooted in the traditions and culture of the region. At the same time, this practice effectively prevents unfavourable floristic changes in the grazed areas – expansion of shrubs and trees (an example of the consequences of abandoning such activities is the current condition of mountain pastures in Bieszczady) – and degradation of the sward. The mere presence of these sheep breeds – the only domestic breeds well adapted to living in such adverse conditions – has a measurable impact on the landscape values of the region, and thus on its attractiveness to tourists.

Grazing practices that are consistent with the traditions and skills of local residents provide a number of environmental benefits. In many plants, the fact that the sheep bite the sward very low inhibits their growth. This is not an entirely negative consequence. Grazing on mountain pastures prevents the spread of tufted hairgrass (*Deschampsia caespitosa*) – a tall grass that prevents the growth of other plants. The example of the Tatra National Park, where after a sheep grazing ban was imposed, tufted hairgrass spread rapidly and it was only possible to eradicate it after the restriction was lifted, is worth mentioning here.

The present-day mountain landscape (Tatra mountain pastures, Gorce and Beskids glades) is the result of centuries of pastoral activity of the highlanders. The yearly grazing of the glades by the sheep in alternation with the mowing of the land where the sheep were penned has ensured the stability of the ecosystem and prevented natural overgrowth. This is because the glades, which lie in the alpine floor and are free of human intervention, are subject to natural succession. The regression of sheep-herding has also caused rapid degradation of the pasture sward in the mountains, but also succession, i.e. overgrowing of clearings with blueberry bushes, spruce seedlings, which, after a certain period of time, may result in the loss of once



intensively grazed areas, but also, over time, in a change of the characteristic landscape of the Carpathians.

The most beneficial form of overgrowth protection for high-altitude glades is sheep grazing. Not only do the sheep prevent unwanted 'infestation' of trees and shrubs, but they naturally enrich the sward with readily available nitrogen with their droppings. It is the most economical and natural method of maintaining the landscape values of Poland's protected mountain areas.

Vegetation favoured by sheep usually has a richer leaf content than plants, is physiologically younger, contains more dicotyledonous plants, etc. Chemical analyses demonstrate that it contains more protein and less fibre. ('*Chów owiec metodami ekologicznymi*' ['*Organic sheep breeding*'] Radom, 2004 - Prof. Andrzej Drożdż, PhD)

During grazing, the sheep trample the turf, which facilitates the growth of grasses and as a result prevents soil erosion. On the other hand, excessive trampling compromises the roots of certain plants and undesirable plants such as annual meadow grass (*Poa annua*) and hoary plantain (*Plantago media*) appear in the sward, making it impossible for other plants to grow and develop. With inappropriate and intensive grazing, turf can even be destroyed, which is why the skills of local highlanders are of crucial importance to enable sustainable management of these areas. The trailing of sheep (*redyk*) practised for centuries by local highlanders, which involve moving herds over long distances, prevent pasture degradation. In addition, sheep grazing is an excellent way to fertilise pastures – the sheep push their droppings into the ground with their hooves.

Currently, the National Parks authorities are asking for sheep to graze on their mountain pastures precisely because of these beneficial effects. In addition, traditional shepherding is an important element of the mountain landscape, attracting crowds of tourists.

### **'Podhale zackel' breed**

Podhale zackel sheep have been reared in the Podhale and the Beskid Mountains regions for centuries. The tradition of rearing these sheep dates back to the migration of the Vlach-Rusyn shepherding tribes across the Carpathians, which started in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and ended at the Moravian Gate in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Podhale zackels were and still are versatile sheep. Their wool and hides were used to make everyday clothes, folk or regional costumes, or decorative items. Milk and meat covered the protein needs of the population that lived in unfavourable natural and agricultural conditions. The grazing of large flocks of sheep on mountain pastures contributed to their economic use and nurtured the mountain ecosystem. The Podhale zackel is a breed well adapted to the harsh conditions of the designated area.

It is a breed of numerous advantages that should be preserved:

- resistance to harsh environmental conditions;
- a distinctive wool coat with a tufted structure, excellent protection against the adverse effects of precipitation;
- strong maternal instinct;
- high vitality;
- longevity (15 years);
- strong herd instinct, the sheep of this breed can be kept in large flocks, - supply of milk for the production of regional cheeses.

### **'Polish mountain sheep' breed**

The process of improving Podhale zackel, using Carpathian zackel from Transylvania and Frisian sheep initiated before the First World War was continued over the following decades. After the Second World War, as work began on improving the white variety of Podhale zackel, the name 'polska owca górska' (POG, Polish mountain sheep) was adopted in Poland for the whole group. Breeding improved the body weight of adult ewes, the performance and quality of the wool coat, the milk yield which currently under 150 days of pasture milking is amounts to 70–80 litres. The improvement, in the bulk population, of the breed's productive parameters was combined with characteristics which make it ideally suited to the difficult climate: sound health, longevity, disease resistance and its fair — for the conditions in which it is reared — milkability and fertility. It has also been possible to maintain the taste of the lambs' meat. The unique set of features of 'Polish mountain sheep' organism ensures that it is perfectly adapted to the mountain environment and bears indisputable testimony to the nature of the genotype of this population – a very valuable one, superbly established in the highland culture and landscape of the region.

The main center for breeding Polish mountain sheep is Podhale. These are versatile sheep – they provide wool, hides, meat and, above all, milk, which is used to make traditional products: oscypek, bryndza, and żentyca. They are small-sized, late-maturing sheep with mixed wool (underfur and guard hairs), their fleece open in the form of long and narrow tufts of white, sometimes black colour. The POG is characterised by a harmoniously built body, supported by rather thin but strong and muscular limbs, and has a lowering and narrow rump. Rams' horns are spiral, while some ewes have vestigial horns. The body weight of adult rams is 60–70 kg, ewes 45–50 kg. Although the POG's meat yield is low, this is compensated for by the excellent quality of the meat.

Both Polish mountain sheep, Polish coloured mountain sheep, as well as Podhale zackel sheep pastured in the mountains feed on highly differentiated vegetation specific to the local botanical composition, which contributes to the nutritional value, particular taste, and aroma of 'jagnięcina podhalańska'.

The unique natural environment of the region and the breeding method contribute to the exceptional succulence of 'jagnięcina podhalańska', which lies in its marbling, i.e. intramuscular fat content. During cooking, this fat melts but remains within the meat and makes it succulent. The meat juices comprise substances conveying taste and aroma. The volatile substances contained in the fat are the main components of taste and aroma. Apart from the animal's age, it is the composition of the diet which essentially determines these characteristics. The distinctive natural vegetation of the region, which is the basis of the mothers' diet, has a direct impact on the quality of the milk suckled by the lambs. As the green forage fed to the lambs originates from the designated area, it includes a rich blend of unique flowers, herbs, and grasses. Many of the herbs consumed by the sheep are used in folk medicine.

The clean environment means that 'jagnięcina podhalańska' is free from harmful effects of industrial pollution, and thus it contains no toxins, heavy metals, or other substances which are harmful to health. Due to the fact that in the newborn lamb, it is primarily the skeletal system and muscle tissue that develops, and since this is a period of intensive growth and good feed efficiency, the feed the lambs ingest has a crucial impact on the quality and palatability of the meat.

From observation, it appears that the plant species most frequently eaten by sheep from meadows, mountain pastures and other pastures are those found generally in the Carpathians. It is worth emphasising that among these species, there are many therapeutic plants used in

folk medicine. These plants contain vitamins, proteins, lipids, and elements essential to the health and proper functioning of the body, such as magnesium, zinc, selenium, iodine, and lithium. The sheep eat more leaves than stems and almost 30% more legumes than grasses with the same digestibility. Accordingly, access to a young and easily digestible sward offers sheep the potential for optimum levels of consumption and production. Experiments have shown that non-fertilised areas, compared to fertilised ones, are characterised by a richer diversity of flora and a higher proportion of clovers. In fertilised areas, the vegetation has clearly been homogenised, which has an obvious negative effect on the mineral composition of the sheep's diet. The micronutrient-rich pasture vegetation translates into the quality of the mothers' milk and, consequently, the characteristics of the lamb meat. The quality and, in particular, the diversity of the vegetation used as hay during the winter period is essential for the proper feeding during the period when the herd is in the sheepfold. Due to the lack of fertilisation of the pastures and the resulting richer flora, there is an abundance of legumes and especially clovers, for example alpine clover, which is preferred by the sheep because it is succulent, easily digestible, and rich in micronutrients.

### ***Traditional breeding system***

The breeding system used in the designated area is thoroughly traditional and fully reflects the skills of local breeders. The methods employed by local producers are what make 'jagnięcina podhalańska' a unique product. In the rough conditions of the designated production area, only sustainable and traditional livestock breeding that recognises the particularities of the climate and the constraints arising from nature conservation is possible. An additional original element of the breeding system is the traditional feeding method based on maternal milk and feed from the designated area.

#### *8.1.4 The impact of area and breeding method on product quality.*

The strong link between 'jagnięcina podhalańska' and the region described in Section 5, the favourable influence of the traditional method of breeding by local producers based on grazing on unfertilised pastures, is supported by research carried out by the National Research Institute of Animal Production. The research was conducted in Bielanka, where the Experimental Department of the National Research Institute of Animal Production Grodziec Śląski Sp. z o.o. is located. The research consisted of an experimental comparison of the effect of mountain pasture fertilisation on the quality of sheep milk and lamb meat. As part of the experiments, two mountain pastures: 'E – ecological' and 'F – fertilised' were designated, of which the 'F' pasture was treated with mineral nitrogen fertilisation. It is worth pointing out that in the floristic composition of the non-fertilised pasture, the proportion of clovers averaged 22%, while within the fertilised pasture, it ranged only from 4.7% to 9.2%. The pastures were grazed with both mothers and lambs of the Polish mountain sheep breed, so that the results of the research results could be related to 'jagnięcina podhalańska'.

The results demonstrate that in all lactation months, the milk of Polish mountain sheep ewes grazing on natural, non-fertilised pastures had a lower urea content, averaging 0.029%, while those from fertilised areas had an average urea content by approx. 35% higher, reaching 0.039%.

As in the case of milk, the serum urea content of sheep and lambs was lower for those fed on unfertilised pasture and stood at 47.2 mg/dl for lambs, while for those fed on fertilised pasture, it amounted to 50.1 mg/dl.

As the research clearly confirmed, the natural character of the region in question and the traditional method of breeding had a clear impact on the characteristics of the meat of Polish mountain sheep – the meat of lambs fed on unfertilised land had a proportion of polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFAs) approximately 19% higher. Furthermore, the ratio of non-saturated n-6 to n-3 fatty acids in the meat was at a favourable level for both groups: group E – 1.59, group N – 2.09, although the first value should be considered more desirable. Meat produced from lambs reared on an ecological pasture had 43% higher concentrations of conjugated linoleic acid (CLA) isomers compared to that from lambs reared on a fertilised pasture. The high CLA content in ‘jagnięcina podhalańska’ has a beneficial effect on blood lipoproteins, inhibits the development of cancer, and has strong anti-oxidising properties. The significantly better fatty acid characteristics of meat from lambs reared on unfertilised pastures indicate that this feature is a result of the diversified floristic composition of the sward, particularly the high proportion of legumes and herbs. The experiments demonstrated that the higher floristic diversity of the organic pasture and its lower yield were the result of the abandonment of nitrogen fertilisation.

(in: *www.ekostrona.izoo.krakow.pl*)

## *8.2 Historical link to the region.*

The production of ‘jagnięcina podhalańska’ takes place within the geographical area specified in Section 5. This area forms part of the Carpathians, which includes the Tatra Mountains, Beskid Mountains, Pieniny, and Gorce.

‘Podhale zackel’, ‘Polish mountain sheep’, and ‘Polish coloured mountain sheep’ are tightly linked to the history and traditions of the inhabitants of the Carpathians and, in particular, the highlanders, whose livelihoods have been associated with sheep farming for centuries. The highlanders have practised and continue to practise shepherding and, as members of the Podhale Union (Związek Podhale – an organisation of Polish highlanders), they work to preserve traditional shepherding ‘on mountain pastures’ in an area stretching from the Silesian Beskids and Żywiec Beskids to Podhale, Spisz, Pieniny, Gorce and Low Beskids. In their culture, they draw from the cultural richness of Vlachs.

Sheep breeding and pastoral economy in the mountains have shaped the region's unique landscape. Without mountain sheep farming, sustainable development of these areas is impossible. Pastoralism in the Polish Carpathians is the subject of an eight-volume publication entitled ‘Pasterstwo Tatr Polskich i Podhale’ [‘Shepherding in the Polish Tatras and Podhale’] which provides a detailed description of the shepherding culture associated with traditional sheep pasture.

The arrival of the Vlach tribes marked a profound change in the agricultural economy of the whole region and the start of sheep and cattle breeding in the area. In addition, the Vlachs brought with them and established skills associated with the production of milk, cheese, wool and hides – products obtained through breeding. The earliest notes of the Vlach tribes can be found in ‘Żywot św. Kingi’ [‘Life of Kinga of Poland’], a 15<sup>th</sup>-century hagiography by

historian and chronicler Jan Długosz. The regular migrations of the Vlach from the valleys to the mountain pastures sometimes turned into permanent settlements.

Their colonisation has left some lasting legacy. First of all, under the significant (if not dominant) influence of this colonisation, the highland ethos common to the entire Western Carpathians was formed. The Vlach colonisation had a profound impact on economic relations and the settlement grid of the Western Carpathians. The presence of Vlachs in the Carpathians is reflected in the geographical names of Vlach origin, e.g., Magura (a free-standing mountain massif) and Kiczora (beard, 'mountain covered with vegetation'). The tradition of shepherding and production of the related goods has been extensively documented over the centuries.

A report produced in 1564 refers also to the Vlachs grazing sheep flocks in the Lanckorona district (in Polish: *starostwo*) of the Żywiec region and in the Duchies of Oświęcim and Zator. In the Duchy of Zator, the Vlachs gave 3 rams per hundred head and one Wallachian cheese for permission to graze their flocks in the summer. The sheep tribute in the area in 1564 brought to the treasury 18 rams at 16 grosz each, 4 sheep cheeses at 6 grosz each, and 1 *pokoźleczny* [goat] cheese, also 'worth 6 grosz' (Kopczyńska-Jaworska, 1961).

Village foundation documents from Podhale dating from the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century refer to authorisations to 'graze sheep freely in mountain pastures' which seems to indicate that herds already existed at that time or that the possibility of holding them was taken into account (Falniowska-Gradowska 1997).

It should be emphasised here that the majority of levies and tributes in the Nowy Targ district (in Polish: *starostwo*) were soon converted from in-kind to in-money payments.

The Vlachs arrived in the Silesian Beskids in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The list of Vlach liabilities from 1647, a supplement to the Ducal Urbarium compiled in 1646 at the behest of Duchess Elizabeth Lucretia, the last Piast ruler of Cieszyn, was a tax register of 'Vlach meadows', which were exploited using the Vlach method of breeding sheep, cattle and making cheese, broadcloth and hides, which significantly increased the income derived by the ducal authorities from the mountain areas.

On the first map of Cieszyn Silesia by Jonas Nigrini, a teacher at the Evangelical Grammar School in Cieszyn, published in 1724, in the centre bottom, there is a drawing of an overlord accepting the greeting of a wanderer arriving at a shepherd's hut in front of which shepherds can also be seen. One of the shepherds holds a ram by the pen, another one guards the fire in *kolyba* [chalet], a third one plays a trembita. This is perhaps the first graphic representation of the *salasch*, of which there were, according to the map in question, 50 in the area of the Cieszyn Beskid at that time, which was accurately marked on the map with a graphic sign described in the key as: 'Opitionis casa cum septo pecuario vulgo Salasch' ('A general access hut with a pen for cattle called a *salasch* [shack]'). The second edition of the map enjoins the reader to visit the mountainous part of the Duchy of Cieszyn and enjoy the health-giving properties of ewe's milk, particularly in May, when the herbs are at their most effective.

Under the harsh breeding conditions in the high-altitude mountain pastures, away from human settlements, a specific breed of sheep called the *zackel*, adapted to the mountain climate, was formed. This is an ancient, primeval breed of white and coloured sheep originally found in the Southern Carpathians and to some extent in the Balkans, which came with the Vlachs to Poland. 'Zackel' is closely associated with the life and culture of the Carpathian highlanders. Its meat was consumed, and its milk used to make Wallachian cheeses: *bundz*, *bryndza* and *oscypek*.

Zackels from the Silesian Beskids and Podhale, known as Podhale zackels, were the point of departure for the development of an improved breed: the Polish mountain sheep. Advanced work to create the Polish mountain breed began in 1946 at the Experimental Department in Grodziec Śląski – the creation of Polish mountain sheep is attributed to Professor Mieczysław Czaja.

Pastoralism is one of the most common characteristic phenomena for the entire area identified in Section 5. It was widespread in territories where there was little land suitable for crops, while vast mountain pastures provided sufficient food for the sheep. Sheep, as a source of meat, milk, wool and hides, were the basis of the local community's livelihood and existence, while at the same time pastoralism represents the ethos of the local culture. The centuries-old tradition of sheep breeding in the designated area has found its natural reflection in the local cuisine. Jagnięcina podhalańska is an indispensable meat ingredient in the diet of the highlanders, as evidenced by the abundance and diversity of ways in which it is served. Specialities such as roast lamb (with lovage), lamb schnitzel with oscypek (PDO), lamb skewers, lamb with garlic and mint, lamb stewed in vegetables and *jagnięco duska* [lamb stew] are just a few examples.

In addition to their desirable body structure and slaughter yield, an important advantage of these lambs is the way in which their mountain ewes are fed, both in summer and during the tie-stall season – which, in the opinion of Italian importers, is ‘organic’. Grazing sheep on unfertilised mountain sward and feeding them quality mountain hay in winter has a proven impact especially on the quality of the sheep's milk and the cheese produced from it, but also on the culinary and sensory value of the meat and the composition of fatty acids. Products obtained in such conditions, referred to as 'ecological' or, as mentioned above, 'organic', are increasingly appreciated in countries where mass industrial forms of food production prevail (*‘Chów owiecami metodami ekologicznymi’* [*‘Organic sheep breeding’*], Radom 2004, A.Drożdż)

### 8.3 Reputation

‘Jagnięcina podhalańska’ has an excellent reputation among Polish and foreign consumers alike. The exceptional quality of the lamb produced in the area, and in particular its taste and health qualities, have made it a culinary speciality of highland cuisine. ‘Jagnięcina podhalańska’ is a very well known among domestic consumers, with almost every tourist visiting Podhale tasting it. The unique characteristics of ‘jagnięcina podhalańska’ were noticed more than 20 years ago by foreign consumers, who are willing to pay a higher price for ‘jagnięcina podhalańska’ than for any other lamb. ‘Jagnięcina podhalańska’ owes its reputation to its quality, which is the result of a combination of a unique geographical environment and the characteristics of the sheep breeds reared in the area. Just half a century ago there was a saying in the mountains: ‘sheep to keep, dreams to reap’, emphasising the profitability of sheep breeding.

Today, most of the production is exported to Western European countries where consumers, aware of its dietary benefits, treat lamb as a delicacy. Outside the area indicated in Section 5, consumption of ‘jagnięcina podhalańska’ is still relatively low. However, the excellent quality and growing reputation of this product is attracting potential purchasers from all over Poland.

An excellent proof of the reputation of 'jagnięcina podhalańska' is the fact that in 2008, it was awarded the national 'Perła' prize, a distinction awarded by the Chamber of Regional and Local Products in Warsaw, as part of the 'Our Culinary Heritage' competition.

The top quality and excellent reputation of 'Jagnięcina podhalańska' is reflected in the higher prices charged for it in comparison with lamb from other regions. The price obtained by producers for 'jagnięcina podhalańska' is approximately 10–20% higher than for produced in other parts of Poland.

Jagnięcina podhalańska is a valued and sought-after commodity among foreign buyers, and the volume of exports from the area is estimated at 30,000 lambs.

Jagnięcina podhalańska is a highly appreciated and sought-after delicacy in many parts of Europe.

## **9. Control body:**

*Provide the name and address of the body or departments<sup>3)</sup> carrying out the control of compliance with the specification and the scope of controls.*

### **Voivodeship Inspector of the Agricultural and Food Quality in Kraków**

Ul. Św. Sebastiana 9,  
31-049 Kraków  
Poland  
Telephone: +48(012) 623-30-50  
Fax: +48(012) 623-30-55  
Email: [wikrakow@ijhars.gov.pl](mailto:wikrakow@ijhars.gov.pl)

### **Voivodeship Inspector of the Agricultural and Food Quality in Katowice**

Ul. Jana III Sobieskiego 10,  
40-082 Katowice  
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Telephone: +48(032)35-111-61  
Fax: +48(032)35-111-63  
Email: [wikatowice@ijhars.gov.pl](mailto:wikatowice@ijhars.gov.pl)

## **10. Labelling:**

Provide, if any, specific labelling rules for the agricultural product or foodstuff in question.

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

*Please indicate whether there are specific requirements imposed by European Union or national legislation concerning the agricultural product or foodstuff to be notified.*

There are no domestic provisions applying to specific quality or characteristic features of 'jagnięcina podhalańska.'

## **12. Additional information:**

Provide additional information, if any, on the agricultural product or foodstuff to be notified.

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

*Please provide a list of materials and publications referenced in the application and a list of accompanying annexes.*

References:

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<sup>3)</sup> More than one department may be involved in the control.



1. Powstanie najmłodszych wsi beskidzkich [Establishment of the youngest Beskid villages] – Franciszek Popiołek, Cieszyn 1936.
2. ‘Pasterstwo Tatr Polskich i Podhala’ [‘Shepherding in the Polish Tatras and Podhale’], red.: S. Górzyński, J. Kolowca, Zakład Narodowy imienia Ossolińskich, Wydawnictwo PAN 1962, volume IV.
3. ‘Jagnięcina na Podbeskidziu’ [‘Lamb in the Podbeskidzie region’] – Beskid Association for Rural Development and Population Education in Żywiec Moszczanica, Żywiec 2001.
4. Vlach heritage in the Carpathians – Scientific and Technical Conference, Istebna, 56.10 2007.
5. ‘Hodowla i chów owiec’ [‘Sheep breeding and rearing’] – edited by Roman Niżnikowski, SGGW Publishing House, Warsaw 2003.
6. ‘Osobliwości przyrodnicze’ [‘Natural curiosities’] in: *Kwartalnik turystyczny w górach* – issue 3 (9), summer 2006,
7. ‘Polska owca górska’ [‘Polish mountain sheep’] – Paweł Paraponiak, in: *Wiadomości rolnicze polska*, issue 12/2007(40)
8. ‘Chów owiec metodami ekologicznymi’ [‘Organic sheep breeding’], Prof. Andrzej Drożdż, PhD,
9. M. Wesołowska, ‘Zróżnicowanie roślinności łąk i pastwisk Tatr Zachodnich oraz ich przedpola w związku ze sposobem użytkowania’ [‘Diversity of vegetation of meadows and pastures of the Tatry Zachodnie Mountains and their foregrounds in light of their use’], in:  
[http://info.botany.pl/ekologia/resea/proc\\_05mw1.html](http://info.botany.pl/ekologia/resea/proc_05mw1.html)
10. [www.parki.pl](http://www.parki.pl),
11. [www.ekostrona.izoo.krakow.pl](http://www.ekostrona.izoo.krakow.pl)

## SINGLE DOCUMENT

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006 on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for 'jagnięcina podhalańska',

EC No.

X PDO      PDO

### 1. NAME

Jagnięcina podhalańska

### 2. MEMBER STATE OR THIRD COUNTRY

Poland

### 3. DESCRIPTION OF THE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT OR FOODSTUFF

#### 3.1. Type of product:

Category 1.1 Fresh meat (and offal)

#### 3.2 Description of product to which the name in (1) applies:

The protected geographical indication covers the following breeds of lamb: Polish mountain sheep, coloured Polish mountain sheep, and Podhale zackel.

A 'jagnięcina podhalańska' is a lamb which is not more than 60 days old. These are suckling lamb carcasses weighing between 4 kg and 8 kg.

'Jagnięcina podhalańska' has the following properties:

#### 1. organoleptic properties:

- light pink colouring,
- soft, elastic structure,
- delicate flavour, succulent,
- a characteristic aroma which is similar to game (to venison in particular),
- minimal carcass fat – fat class 1 in the EUROP system, – a small quantity of white kidney fat (30 g to 40 g).

#### 2. physico-chemical properties:

- average total protein content: from 18% to 23%
- average dry matter content: from 20% to 25%
- average crude fat content: from 1.25% to 2.2%

#### 3.3 Raw material (for products processed only)

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

Lambs are fed solely with their mother's milk.

In summer and autumn the sheep are grazed in mountain pastures, green fodder forming the basis of their diet. In winter and early spring the sheep are fed hay, haylage and concentrated feed. With the exception of concentrated feed, feed must come from the geographical area defined in Section 4.

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

Lambs must be born in the area defined in Section 4 and raised there until they reach the requisite age and body weight.

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

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### **3.7 Specific rules concerning labelling**

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## **4. CONCISE DEFINITION OF THE GEOGRAPHICAL AREA**

In Śląskie voivodeship: in Cieszyn powiat, Istebna municipality

in Żywiec powiat, the following municipalities: Milówka, Węgierska Górka, Rajcza, Ujszoły, Jeleśnia and Koszarawa

In Małopolskie voivodeship: the entire Nowy Targ powiat and the entire Tatra

powiat,

in Sucha powiat, the following municipalities: Zawoja, Bystra and Sidzina,

in Limanowa powiat, the municipalities: Niedźwiedź and part of the Kamienica municipality that is located on the territory of the Gorce National Park or south of the Kamienica River, as well as the following parishes of Mszana Dolna municipality: Olszówka, Raba Niżna, Łostówka, Łętowe i Lubomierz,

in Nowy Sącz powiat, the municipalities: Piwniczna, Muszyna, and Krynica.

## **5. LINK WITH THE GEOGRAPHICAL AREA**

### **5.1 Specific nature of the geographical area**

#### 5.1.1. Natural factors

The area defined in Section 4 forms part of the Western Carpathians, which includes the Tatra Mountains, Beskid Mountains Pieniny, and Gorce. The area in which ‘jagnięcina podhalańska’ is bred is larger than the Podhale area in its present configuration; this name refers to the microregion which forms the centre of the whole production area. This is a coherent area in historical, ethnic, cultural and geographical terms. The unique method by which sheep are bred in this area developed over centuries and forms an integral part of the region’s landscape and culture.

The region suffers from a harsh climate with a low average temperature of around 5 °C, lengthy snow cover and significant precipitation ranging from 900 mm to 1,200 mm. Thermal conditions relating to the lie of the land are an important feature of the climate. The high altitude of the area results in cooler temperatures.

The grazing and production area for ‘jagnięcina podhalańska’ is located close to five National Parks: To the north of the designated area, there is the Gorce National Park, to the south – the Tatra National Park, to the west – the Babia Góra National Park, to the east – the Pieniny

National Park and the Magura National Park, as well as Landscape Parks and areas of high natural value: Natura 2000.

The natural character of this area owes much to the absence of industrial pollution and intensified agriculture.

The Podhale area is home to a wealth of unique vegetation, including both indigenous and imported plant species. Podhale is the only part of Poland in which the following plants can be found: Tatra larkspur (*Delphinium oxysepalum*), carpathian flax (*Linum extraaxillare*), snow gentian (*Gentiana nivalis*), Clusius' gentian (*Gentiana clusii*), alpine saw-wort (*Saussurea alpina*), hawkweed-leaf saxifrage (*Saxifraga hieracifolia*), alpine violet (*Viola alpina*), alpine bellflower (*Campanula alpina*), yellow vulneraria (*anthyllis alpestris*), shaggy hawkweed (*Hieracium villosum*) and pendulous milkvetch (*Astragalus penduliflorus*).

‘The Pilsko massif (1,557 metres altitude) in the Żywiec Landscape Park, on which a subalpine zone has formed, as in the Tatra Mountains, is one of the most unspoilt areas in Poland. The subalpine zone extends from an altitude of around 1,400 metres to the summit of Pilsko. Among the alpine species present here, there are: bisexual crowberry (*Empetrum nigrum ssp. hermaphroditum*), alpine juniper (*Juniperus communis ssp. alpina*), alpine clubmoss (*Diphasiastrum alpinum*) and dwarf willow (*Salix herbacea*). *Campanula serrata*, *Aconitum firmum ssp. moravicum* and *Tozzia alpina*, occurring in the designated area, are listed as species of Community interest. For these species, among others, the habitat refuge of the Żywiec Beskids was designated within the European Natura 2000 network. Alpine bell (*Cortusa matthioli*), which occurs here, is a species listed in the Polish Red Book of Plants. (*‘Kwartalnik turystyczny w górach’*, Issue 3 (9) – SUMMER 2006).

Polish mountain sheep, Polish coloured mountain sheep and Podhale zackels are grazed in the area indicated in Section 4. Only lambs of these breeds, reared with mothers raised by traditional methods, are used for the production of ‘jagnięcina podhalańska’. The sheep are grazed in mountain pastures throughout the season, from the end of April to the beginning of October. Lambing takes place continually throughout the year. Lambs born during the winter months are kept in the sheepfold throughout the rearing process. When the mothers are taken out to pasture, the lambs are bred separately. Lambs born during the spring may accompany their mothers to grazing if the weather permits. Grazing must take place within the area defined in Section 4. The sheep are bred extensively in small herd. The stocking density must be no more than 10 heads per hectare.

The **Podhale zackel** is a breed whose appearance in the area defined in Section 4 coincided with the migration of the Vlach shepherding tribes across the Carpathians which started in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and ended at the Moravian Gate in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Podhale zackels are versatile, well adapted to the region's harsh climate and resistant to disease. They have a strong herd instinct and produce excellent meat.

The **Polish mountain sheep** evolved from the Podhale zackel, the Carpathian zackel from Transylvania and the East Frisian. Breeding improved the body weight of adult ewes, the yield and quality of their wool and their milk yield. The improvement in the breed's productive parameters was combined with characteristics which make it ideally suited to the difficult climate: sound health, longevity, disease resistance and its good – for the conditions in which it is reared – milkability and fertility. It has also been possible to maintain the quality and characteristics of the lambs' meat.

### 5.1.2. Historical factors and human skills

The arrival of the Vlach tribes marked a profound change in the agricultural economy of the whole region and the start of sheep, goats, and cattle breeding in the area. The Vlachs brought with them the skills of milk, cheese, wool and leather processing. The oldest written reference to the Vlachs can be found in the 15<sup>th</sup> century work 'The Life of Saint Kinga of Poland' by Jan Długosz. A report produced in 1564 refers to the Vlachs grazing sheep in the Lanckorona district of the Żywiec region and in the Duchies of Oświęcim and Zator. Documents from Podhale dating from the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century refer to authorisations to graze sheep freely in mountain pastures, indicating that herds were already in the area at that time.

Local breeders of 'jagnięcina podhalańska' work exclusively with the breeds referred to in Section 5.1.1, as these animals are genetically well adapted to the harsh mountain climate and are the result of many generations of natural selection. The ability to work with these breeds is closely associated with the experience acquired by local breeders. These breeds are native to the Podhale area, as stated in the eight-volume 1960 publication 'Pasterstwo Tatr Polskich i Podhale' ['Shepherding in the Polish Tatras and Podhale']. Another characteristic grazing practice is 'redyk', which facilitates muscle and makes it possible to feed the sheep with a diversified range of vegetation that varies in particular depending on the subalpine area on which grazing takes place. The know-how of the local highlanders and the well established rules by which sheep are reared are reflected in the quality of 'jagnięcina podhalańska'. The production of 'jagnięcina podhalańska' forms an integral part of the local culture and the traditional methods of rearing sheep help to bind together different generations and preserve the community's unique identity, dialect, culture, art and traditions.

## **5.2. Specificity of the product**

'Jagnięcina podhalańska' is noted for its low carcass fat and its exceptional succulence, which is related to the intramuscular fat content or marbling. The meat is also distinguished by its light pink colour and its soft but elastic structure. The most characteristic and distinctive feature of 'jagnięcina podhalańska' is its specific taste and aroma which is similar to game (and in particular to the aroma of venison).

## **5.3 Causal link between the geographical area and the quality or characteristics of the product.**

The link between 'jagnięcina podhalańska' and the region is based on the product's characteristics, which are associated with its geographical origin and reputation.

The characteristics of 'jagnięcina podhalańska' are derived from the rearing method. The lambs are reared extensively with optimal use of pasture exclusively in the area referred to in Section 4. The rearing method involves constant transhumance, except during winter. The grazing method ensures the product's specific character, since the mothers feed on diverse, unique vegetation in areas which are not used intensively, and this affects the milk with which the lambs are fed.

The genetic make-up of the breeds traditionally used to produce 'jagnięcina podhalańska', coupled with the specific natural conditions prevailing in the region, has a decisive impact on the negligible fat content of the lambs' meat. The method used to feed the lambs, based on

their mothers' milk, also helps to account for the meat's low fat content. The natural conditions prevailing in the area and, in particular, the exceptional vegetation used to feed the sheep, affect the quality and nutritional value of the mothers' milk. This milk, which is the basis of the lambs' nutrition, is directly reflected in the specific taste of the meat and its gamey aroma, which is the most distinctive characteristic of 'jagnięcina podhalańska'. The unique qualities of the vegetation native to the region are passed on to the lambs in their mothers' milk. The original genotype which characterises the breeds used to produce 'jagnięcina podhalańska' also contributes to its specific taste. As the study shows: PGI lambs reared with their mothers and fed with the milk of mothers grazing on unfertilised pastures, compared with PGI lambs reared on fertilised pastures, have more favourable meat quality characteristics.

'Jagnięcina podhalańska' owes its exceptional succulence to its marbling, i.e. intramuscular fat. During cooking, this fat melts but remains within the meat and makes it succulent. The meat juices comprise substances conveying taste and aroma. The volatile substances contained in the fat are the main components of taste and aroma. Apart from the animal's age, it is the composition of the diet which essentially determines these characteristics.

#### Reputation of the product

'Jagnięcina podhalańska' is highly prized by Polish and foreign consumers alike. The strong image of 'jagnięcina podhalańska' among consumers is based on the long tradition of sheep farming in the region. The tradition, several hundred years old, of grazing mountain sheep, thereby building a strong 'brand', means that domestic consumers identify 'jagnięcina podhalańska' with the region in which it originates. Consumer awareness of the deeply rooted tradition of pastoral farming and the popularity of the highland ethos have contributed further to the reputation of 'jagnięcina podhalańska'.

One of Poland's most popular high mountain areas is located within the region, and this has further raised the profile of the region's produce. Consumers have been aware for many years that the whole area enjoys a clean natural environment with unique vegetation, and that this is reflected in the excellent quality of 'jagnięcina podhalańska'. The very first map of Cieszyn Silesia, published in 1724, identifies 50 shepherd's huts and the second edition of the map enjoins the reader to visit the mountainous part of the Duchy of Cieszyn and enjoy the health-giving properties of ewe's milk, particularly in May, when the herbs are at their most effective. In view of consumer awareness of the positive impact on the product of the area's unspoilt natural environment and its good reputation, people are prepared to pay higher prices for 'jagnięcina podhalańska'.

Consumers particularly value 'jagnięcina podhalańska' for its exceptional and specific aroma and delicately flavoured meat. As a result of the quality, taste and dietetic properties of 'jagnięcina podhalańska' it has become a highland speciality.

An excellent proof of the reputation of 'jagnięcina podhalańska' is the fact that it was awarded a nationwide 'Perła' prize in the "Our Culinary Heritage" competition in 2008.

The top quality and excellent reputation of 'Jagnięcina podhalańska' is reflected in the higher prices charged for it in comparison with lamb from other regions. The price obtained by producers for 'jagnięcina podhalańska' is approximately 10–20% higher than for lamb from other parts of Poland.

#### **REFERENCE TO PUBLICATION OF THE SPECIFICATION**

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

<http://www.minrol.gov.pl/index.php?/pol/Jakosc-zywnosci/Produkty-regionalne-i-tradycyjne/Zlozone-wnioski-o-rejestracje-Produkty-regionalne-i-tradycyjne>