

**Consultation on an application
to register the name
“Ayrshire Early New Potatoes”/
“Ayrshire Earlies” as a
Protected Geographical Indication (PGI)
under the EU Protected Food Name (PFN)
scheme**

May 2016

Agriculture, Food and Rural Communities Directorate
Food, Drink and Rural Communities Division

T: 0131-244 4806 F: 0131-244 9990
E: Protected_Food_Names@gov.scot



13 May 2016

Dear Sir/Madam

**APPLICATION TO REGISTER THE NAME "AYRSHIRE EARLY NEW POTATOES" /
"AYRSHIRE EARLIES" AS A PROTECTED GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION (PGI)
UNDER THE EU PROTECTED FOOD NAME (PFN) SCHEME**

You are invited to provide comments on an application the Scottish Government has received to register "Ayrshire Early New Potatoes" / "Ayrshire Earlies" as a product of protected geographical indication under the above scheme.

Full details of the consultation and how to respond to it are contained within the consultation paper. A link to the consultation paper on Citizen Space can be found on the Scottish Government website at:
<https://consult.scotland.gov.uk/food-and-drink/ayrshire-early-new-potatoes-ayrshire-earlies>

If you have any queries about this consultation please contact Hazel Green by email: Protected_Food_Names@gov.scot or by telephone: 0300 244 4806.

If you are aware of other organisations, businesses or individuals who you think should be consulted, please feel free to copy this consultation to them or alternatively inform us of the omission.

We look forward to your response.

Yours faithfully

Food, Drink and Rural Communities Division
Scottish Government

Saughton House, Broomhouse Drive, Edinburgh EH11 3XD
www.gov.scot



LIST OF CONSULTEES

5 Legal Deposit Libraries

Aberdeen City Council

Aberdeenshire Council

Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board

Albert Bartlett

Aldi

Alyn Smith MEP

Angus Council

Ardneil Farm

Argyll and Bute Council

Asda

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British Hospitality Association

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British Potato Trade Association

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Campden and Chorleywood Food Research

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Catherine Stihler MEP

City of Edinburgh Council

Clackmannanshire Council

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

Confederation of British Industry's Scotland

Consumer Focus Scotland

Convention of Scottish Local Authorities

Co-operative

Craft Guild of Chef's

David Coburn MEP

David Martin MEP

Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development for Northern Ireland

Dowhill Farm

Dumfries and Galloway Council

Dundee City Council

East Ayrshire Council

East Dunbartonshire Council

East Lothian Council

East Renfrewshire Council

Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee
Falkirk Council
Farmcare Trading Ltd
Federation of Chefs
Federation of Small Businesses
Fife Council
Food & Drink Federation
Food Division - Welsh Government
Food Standards Agency
Food Standards Scotland
Fresh Fruit Produce Consortium
Fresh Potato Suppliers Association
Fresh Suppliers Association
Girvan Early Growers
Glasgow City Council
Greenvale
Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Highland Council
Ian Duncan MEP
Ian Hudghton MEP
Intellectual Property Office
Institute of Hospitality
Inverclyde Council
Lidl
Low Boydston Farm
Marks and Spencer
Midlothian Council
Moray Council
Morrison's
National Farmer's Retail & Markets Association
North Ayrshire Council
North Lanarkshire Council
Orkney Islands Council
Perth and Kinross Council
Pre-Basic Growers
Provision Trade Federation
Renfrewshire Council
Sainsbury's
Science and Advice for Scottish Agriculture

Scotland Food & Drink
Scotland's Rural College
Scottish Borders Council
Scottish Council for Development and Industry
Scottish Enterprise
Scottish Food and Drink Federation
Scottish Food Guide
Scottish Food Quality Certification
Scottish Government Library
Scottish Grocers Federation
Scottish Natural Heritage
Scottish Parliament Information Centre Library
Scottish Retail Consortium
Shetland Islands Council
South Ayrshire Council
South Ayrshire Council Environmental Health
South Lanarkshire Council
Stirling Council
Tesco
The Crown Estate
The Guild of Fine Food Retailers
The Patent Office
The UK Protected Food Names Association
VisitScotland
Waitrose
West Dunbartonshire Council
West Lothian Council

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Introduction to Protected Food Name Scheme

The EU Protected Food Name (PFN) scheme provides a system for the protection of food names on a geographical or traditional recipe basis. This system is similar to the familiar 'appellation controlee' system used for wine. There are three schemes which highlight regional and traditional foods whose authenticity and origin can be guaranteed through an independent inspection system.

- Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) - must be produced, processed or prepared in the geographical area that an applicant wants to associate with the product.
- Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) - must be produced, processed and prepared in one area and have distinct characteristics from this area. PDO differs from PGI in that all 3 production stages must take place in the area that an applicant wants to associate with the product.
- Traditional Speciality Guaranteed (TSG) - must have a traditional name and characteristics that distinguish it from other similar products. These characteristics can't be due to the area the product is made in or based purely on technical advances used in production. Once protected, a TSG product can be produced in any country within the EU.

It can take up to 4 years to get the name of a food or drink product legally protected by the EU.

Products

Most foods such as meat, dairy, fish products, fruits, vegetables, beer, beverages made from plant extracts, bread, pastries, cakes, biscuits, confectionery and pasta can apply for PFN status. Examples of other products which can also be registered under particular designations include:

- PGI / PDO - natural gums and resins, hay, essential oils, mustard paste, cork, cochineal, flowers and ornamental plants, wool, wicker and scutched flax; and
- TSG - pre-cooked meals, prepared condiment sauces, soups and broths, ice-cream and sorbets, chocolate (and other food preparations containing cocoa).

Who can apply

Applications for each of the three designations can be put forward by groups of producers. Such groups may include other interested parties (for example butchers in the case of applications for meat).

Individuals can also put forward applications for either of the two geographical designations (i.e. PGI and PDO) if:

- The defined geographical area has characteristics which differ from neighbouring areas; or
- The product has characteristics which are different from those produced in neighbouring areas.

It is important to note that producers who are not part of the original applicant group, but who can show to the satisfaction of the nominated inspection body that their product conforms fully with the registered specification, may use the registered name.

Benefits

As well as providing a way of helping to preserve our national and regional food heritage there are also good economic reasons to register products under the scheme, including:

- Legal protection against imitation throughout the EU;
- Increased awareness of the product both locally and throughout the EU;
- Opportunities to take advantage of consumers' increased interest in regional foods by positioning the product firmly at the quality end of the market;
- The opportunity to get a premium on the product. The results of European wide research has shown that Geographical Indication (GI) products are sold (on average) 2.23 times as high as comparable non-GI products.
- Greater potential ability, under EU state aids rules, to attract public funding for promotional initiatives and activities.

RESPONDING TO THE CONSULTATION

The purpose of this consultation is to notify interested parties of the application and to provide an opportunity to object, if appropriate, or comment on the application.

This consultation commences on 13 May 2016 and closes on 05 August 2016. This constitutes a period of 12 weeks, and fulfils the Scottish Government commitment to provide all interested parties with this minimum period to respond to any consultation exercise.

If you wish to respond to this consultation exercise, we would be grateful if you could let us know your intention to do so no later than 10 June 2016 by writing to:

[Protected Food Names@gov.scot](mailto:Protected_Food_Names@gov.scot) or

Food and Drink Industry Growth Division
Scottish Government
B1 Spur
Saughton House
Broomhouse Drive
Edinburgh
EH11 3XD

You will then have until the closing date to submit your comments or objection in full. This can be submitted by writing to the contact details above or by using the online survey facility hosted by Citizen Space. We recommend that you fully consider this consultation document before sitting down to complete the online survey.

Please note that any objections to the application will need to specify the grounds on which it is based. For guidance on what constitutes an admissible objection as laid down in Article 10 of the Council Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 please go to <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/txt/pdf/?uri=celex:32012r1151&from=en>

Handling your response

We need to know how you wish your response to be handled and, in particular, whether you are happy for your response to be made public. Please ensure you complete, and where appropriate return, the Respondent Information Form with responses as this will ensure that we treat your response appropriately. If you ask for your response not to be published we will regard it as confidential, and we will treat it accordingly.

All respondents should be aware that the Scottish Government are subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and would therefore have to consider any request made to it under the Act for information relating to responses made to this consultation exercise.

What happens next

Where respondents have given permission for their response to be made public and after we have checked that they contain no potentially defamatory material, responses will be made available to the public on the Scottish Government consultation web pages. Responses can be copied and sent to you, but a charge may be made for this service.

Following the closing date, all responses will be analysed and considered along with any other available evidence to help us reach a decision on the final specification to be registered as a PGI. All documentation is then passed to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), the competent authority in the UK, for onward processing for the EU.

Comments and complaints

If you have any queries or comments regarding this consultation exercise, please write to us using the contact details above or phone 0131 244 4806.

Respondent Information Form

Please Note this form must be returned with your response.

Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

- Individual
- Organisation

Full name or organisation's name

Phone number

Address

Postcode

Email

The Scottish Government would like your permission to publish your consultation response. Please indicate your publishing preference:

- Publish response with name
- Publish response only (anonymous)
- Do not publish response

We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

- Yes
- No

Consultation Document

PRODUCT SPECIFICATION COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 1151/2012

“Ayrshire Early New Potatoes” / “Ayrshire Earlies”

PDO () PGI (✓)

1 RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT IN THE MEMBER STATE

Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
EU Food Policy Team - Food and Policy Unit
Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London
SW1P 3JR
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0)207 238 6075

Email: protectedfoodnames@defra.gsi.gov.uk

2 GROUP

Name: Girvan Early Growers
Address: Grangestone Industrial Estate
Girvan
Ayrshire
KA26 9PY

Tel: +44 (0)1465 715 328

Fax: +44 (0)1465 715 700

Email: girvanearlygrow@btconnect.com

Composition: Producers/processors () Other (§)

3 TYPE OF PRODUCT

Class 1.6 - Fruit, vegetables and cereals fresh/processed

4 SPECIFICATION

(summary of requirements under Article 7 of Regulation (EC) No 1151/2012)

4.1 Name:

“Ayrshire Early New Potatoes” / “Ayrshire Earlies”

4.2 Description:

Ayrshire Early New Potatoes / Ayrshire Earlies are the name given to immature potatoes of the *Solanum tuberosum* species of the *Solanaceae* family grown in Ayrshire, Scotland.

The potato has the following characteristics: It is small in size, 15 – 70mm diameter, due to the young age. The potato is round or oval in shape with a soft skin and distinctive strong earthy nutty flavour and aroma. It has a creamy texture and is a bright white colour which is consistent throughout the potato.

Ayrshire Early New Potatoes are grown from the basic seed varieties catalogued in the national registers of varieties of the Member States of the EU.

Ayrshire Early New Potatoes are sold to local markets, retailers, supermarkets and potato wholesalers throughout the UK. The potatoes are sold either loose or in trays/bags of various weights according to customer requirements. The first crop is harvested in May and is sold with the soil still on in order to protect the soft skin of the potatoes. As the season progresses the skin hardens sufficiently to allow washing.

Ayrshire Early New Potatoes are harvested from the beginning of May until the end of July. Potatoes harvested after this period are called main crop potatoes.

Ayrshire Early New Potatoes must be planted, grown and harvested in the defined geographical area and no later than 31st July.

4.3 Geographical area:

The region of Ayrshire in the West of Scotland within the geographic Local Authority boundaries of North and South Ayrshire Councils.

4.4 Proof of origin:

From seed

Seed potatoes maintain full traceability from their source, to their arrival on farm and traceability is maintained throughout the growing, harvesting, processing and sale of the potatoes ensuring complete full traceability from “field to fork”.

On farm

Immediately post-harvest, before the potatoes leave the farm, each batch of potatoes, is allocated a unique number which makes reference to the date and field of harvest and the name and address of the Ayrshire farm from which it came. This information is available to processors.

Post farm packaging and distribution

Ayrshire Early New Potatoes / Ayrshire Earlies are sold to local markets, retailers, supermarkets and potato wholesalers throughout the UK. The potatoes are sold either loose or in trays/bags of various weights according to customer requirements.

If further processing occurs, e.g. if potatoes from a 1 ton box are washed and put into the smaller packs of the weights mentioned above, each pack will be allocated a separate number which makes reference to the 1 ton box from which it came. Post farm assurance, including traceability is in line with British Retail Consortium Global Standard for Food Safety, or equivalent. This system is required to identify and trace product lots throughout all stages of processing and distribution to market. The system ensures that produce supplied to customers are adequately labelled or identified to facilitate traceability.

The quality control system used is capable of linking raw material lot codes through to finished product codes. This enables the finished product to be identified should the recall of a particular batch of raw material need to be instigated. The traceability system covers primary packaging (in direct contact with food), other relevant packaging materials such as printed outer packaging, and processing aids. Traceability of batches of products is able to link to any quality and residue test results. The system provides traceability “forwards” and “backwards” in both directions and the traceability system is tested at least annually in its entirety.

4.5 Method of production:

The growing of Ayrshire Early New Potatoes / Ayrshire Earlies has two pre planting elements, preparing the soil and preparing the seed, followed by dedicated and specialist planting, growing and harvesting management.

Soil Preparation

When soil temperatures are approaching 10°C, which is usually in the last two weeks of February, the soil is power harrowed to further break it down to make it as fine and free draining as possible. The soil is then ready for planting.

Seed preparation

Ayrshire Early New Potatoes / Ayrshire Earlies are grown from seed registered with the Seed Classification Scheme or equivalent. Seed potatoes are delivered to farm in the preceding autumn. They are stored in chitting houses, sheds with glass sides to allow light onto the seed to encourage sprouting, a process known as “physiological ageing”. During this process the seed potatoes are placed in single layered boxes to enable light to reach each individual seed potato.

The chitting house is well ventilated to minimise the risk of disease and help prevent the temperature in the chitting house rising above 50°C. During cold weather, the vents are closed and heat is applied via gas or diesel fuelled space heaters, as required, to keep ambient air temperature in the chitting house above 10°C. By mid-February, after successful chitting seed potatoes will have a strong sprout of about 25mm.

Planting

The soil is pushed up into shallow drills and the potatoes are planted by hand or by machine. To achieve quick growth, the seed is planted under approximately 75mm of soil; with the same amount of soil underneath. These are shallower drills than normal, which enable quicker heating of the soil and allow swift emergence. The small size of Ayrshire Early New Potatoes at harvest, require shallow drills.

Post planting management

The plants emerge in mid-March. From the start of May until the end of July, the crop will be sprayed approximately every ten days to prevent potato blight. Due to the shallow drills, the plants are susceptible to drying out so close attention is paid to soil moisture levels and irrigation may be applied if available.

Harvesting

Following test digs, harvesting occurs from the beginning of May until the end of July. Initially, the “green tops” of the plants are cut off with a mechanical topper. The crop is either dug from the soil by mechanical lifters and picked off the ground by hand or harvested and lifted by one machine which separates soil and the potatoes are elevated into a trailer or potato box.

Ayrshire Early New Potatoes / Ayrshire Earlies are sold into local markets, retailers, supermarkets and to potato wholesalers throughout the UK. The potatoes are sold either loose or in trays/bags of various weights according to customer requirements.

4.6 Link & History:

Ayrshire has been at the heart of the Scottish (and indeed UK) potato industry since the cultivation of the crop was first reported in Scotland in a commercial basis in 1793. The area provides some of the first potatoes of the year grown in Scotland and the Ayrshire Early New Potatoes / Ayrshire Earlies are renowned across the country for their quality, flavour, and as a symbol of the new season.

The production of potatoes in Ayrshire was a source of employment for a large proportion of the population in the West of Scotland including local people and many migrant workers usually from Ireland known as “tattie howkers”. Traditionally, seaweed, a nutrient-rich material widely available along the coastal region, was collected (a process known as “wrecking”) and spread on fields in the winter as a fertiliser. Manure was also used from the livestock for which the area is known. Potatoes were planted by hand and harvested using a “*graip*”, the traditional Scottish word for “fork”.

Due to its light sandy soil, sheltered beaches and early warming by the Gulf Stream, farms in Ayrshire, and particularly along the Ayrshire coast have always been able to plant their crop a few weeks earlier than in other parts of Scotland. The original crop cycle was planting in June and lifting in mid-autumn.

In 1857 two Ayrshire farmers (Dunlop and Hannah), visited the Channel Islands (where farmers had been planting early crops for many years) to study how they managed to grow potatoes so early in the year. Two years later, after some experimentation, Ayrshire Earlies were grown and sold on a commercial basis. The industry was helped by the completion in 1860 of the railway line, which linked up Girvan with Glasgow. This provided the much needed transportation

of both potatoes to Glasgow and beyond and to allow for the large quantities of manure required to fertilise the land to be delivered to the farms in the region (this was complimented by barge shipments from cattle transported from Ireland to Scotland). The train network also allowed potatoes to be lifted in the morning and on sale that afternoon in Glasgow and Edinburgh.

In 1881 a new method to help cultivate potatoes earlier called sprouting, was pioneered and this was taken up and implemented in the area by many Ayrshire farmers, thus allowing potatoes to be planted as early as February.

There is also a link with potato breeding in Ayrshire as Donald McKelvie, a Lamlash Grocer produced the many 'Arran' Potato varieties in the early 20th Century. Many associate the variety "Epicure" with Ayrshire as well, though it was not bred here. Other modern varieties may be used as Ayrshire Early New Potatoes / Ayrshire Earlies as well as traditional ones.

Peak potato acreage in Ayrshire occurred in 1918, when 11,434.75 acres were grown. The harvesting process became more mechanised in the 1960s and fewer people were employed as a result.

Reputation

Ayrshire potatoes have the long-standing reputation of marking the end of supply of old season potatoes and start of supply of new season potatoes. Many factors are said to have influenced the flavour of the Ayrshire Early New Potatoes / Ayrshire Earlies including light coastal soil, mild climate, fertilisers and speed of delivery to markets.

Press coverage has been recorded as early as 1857 when the *North British Agriculturalist and Edinburgh Evening News* mentioned potato production being "extensively practiced along the coast on the light and early soils". In the Parish of Maybole growing early potatoes was said to be the "main occupation" in 1951 according to John Strawhorn and William Boyd's *The Statistical Account of Scotland*. Heather Holmes described early potatoes as being "synonymous with the county of Ayrshire" and their production to be a "specialised and intensive branch of Ayrshire farming" in her book "Tattie howkers". In 1901, it was reported in the *North British Agriculturalist* that in Girvan, the potato was "a most important one (product) in the district". The book "*Old West Kilbride*" by Molly Blyth has the subtitle "*The Tattie Toon*" because of its close connection with potatoes as

well. In August 2014, a *Daily Record* article said “Ayrshire in Scotland provides some of the finest new potatoes grown in Scotland”.

Ayrshire Early New Potatoes / Ayrshire Earlies have been endorsed by famous chefs such as Jaqueline O’Donnell and Nick Nairn. Chef and cookery writer Christopher Trotter has expressed “There is nothing quite like an Ayrshire potato”.

4.7 Inspection body:

Name: South Ayrshire Council Environmental Health

Address: Burns House

Ayr

KA7 1UT

Tel: +44 (0)1292 618222

Fax: +44 (0)1292 288755

Email: environmental.health@south-ayrshire.gov.uk

4.8 Labelling:

Each box or bag of potatoes is marked with a farm identification number issued by North and South Ayrshire Councils which is specific to individual farms as specified at section 4.4.

Consultation Questions

1. Do you object to the application to register the name “Ayrshire Early New Potatoes” / “Ayrshire Earlies” as a Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) under the EU Protected Food Name (PFN) scheme?

Yes

No

2. Please outline your comments or objection here



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