

## PRODUCT SPECIFICATION

### “CARMARTHEN HAM”

EC No: UK-PGI-0005-01229-19.05.2014

**PDO ( )      PGI ( X )**

This summary sets out the main elements of the product specification for information purposes.

#### 1 RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT IN THE MEMBER STATE

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Composition: Producers/processors ( 2 )      Other ( § )

#### 3 TYPE OF PRODUCT

Meat products Class 1.2

## 4 SPECIFICATION

### 4.1 NAME: “CARMARTHEN HAM”

### 4.2 DESCRIPTION:

“Carmarthen Ham” is an air dried salt cured ham made from pork legs. The ham is hung at an ambient temperature of 16 -26 degrees centigrade for a period of 6 to 9 months. The age of “Carmarthen Ham” is counted from the first day of salting.

The ham has a rounded external shape at the base and is tapered to the top. Externally a whole “Carmarthen Ham” is dark beige colour and the skin (or rind) has a hard dry “leathery” feel.

When sliced, “Carmarthen ham” has a uniform rich deep pink to dark red colour, with interspersed cream coloured fat throughout. It has a slight salty, sweet pork taste and a soft springy texture. It has a delicate and mellow flavour with salty overtones, providing a balanced sensation between tenderness and a tendency to melt. “Carmarthen ham” has a characteristic delicate aroma typical of air dried ham. The ham disintegrates when pulled and has a silky soft texture.

Chemical composition of Carmarthen Ham:

	Grams/100grams
Protein content	26.8
Carbohydrate content	0.0
Of which sugars	0.0
Fat content	5.9
Of which saturates	2.5
Monounsaturates	2.8
Polyunsaturates	0.5
Energy value	673.9KJ/100grams 160.3Kilocalories/100 grams
Salt content	7.3g/100g

The layer of fat which is a cream on the surface below the rind must not exceed the maximum acceptable depth of 5mm.

The hams are presented and marketed as whole hams or boned, sliced and packed in pieces of various weights and shapes according to customer requirements.

### 4.3 GEOGRAPHICAL AREA:

The designated geographical area encompasses an area around Carmarthen town centre (Map of the geographical area at Annex 1).

Travel in a north westerly direction from where the River Taf enters Carmarthen Bay up the River Taf until it reaches the town of St Clears. Take the B4299 in a northerly direction through the village of Meidrim until it meets the B4333. Then travel in a south-easterly direction on the B4333 reaching the village of Conwyl Elfed. From Conwyl Elfed travel in a southerly direction to Bronwydd Arms on the A484 and then go in a North Easterley direction on the B4301 to the village of Pontarsais. After Pontarsais travel southwards on the A485 to

the village of Abergwili and then follow the A40 in an easterly direction to Nantgaredig From Nantgaredig go in a southerly direction on the B4310 all the way to the village of Drefach (the B4310 crosses the A48). After reaching the village of Drefach follow the River Gwendraeth through Kidwelly and into Carmarthen Bay.

#### **4.4 PROOF OF ORIGIN:**

All cuts of pork used to produce “Carmarthen Hams” must have an indelible ink mark/logo identifying the slaughterhouse from where the fresh hind legs have been produced. Only fresh hind legs from recognised slaughter houses bearing the indelible stamp are used to produce “Carmarthen Ham”.

“Carmarthen Ham” producers are required to be licensed by Environmental Health Officers or similar and comply with EU Food Standard regulations. The production of Carmarthen Hams is HACCP regulated.

Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) ensures that critical control points and records are kept and maintained throughout the production process to demonstrate product safety and traceability. HACCP is the current system followed but a similar or equivalent system could be used.

To produce “Carmarthen Ham”, records of traceability are kept by the producer through all stages of production by a system developed for their own use. It is critical for the successful production of “Carmarthen Ham”, to know and monitor the age of the ham at all stages of production.

The plastic vats used to salt the hams are number coded with indelible ink and when the hams are removed from the plastic vats and washed, each batch of hams is number coded according to the week of the year with indelible ink.

When the Carmarthen hams are hung until they reach maturity, they are hung on stainless steel hooks which are colour coded to enable the exact age of the ham to be known or monitored at any time.

The final product bears the mark identifying the slaughterhouse where the fresh hind legs were produced and the batch week number on each ham. All information is recorded in a production diary.

#### **4.5 METHOD OF PRODUCTION**

The composition of “Carmarthen Ham” comprises of:

- Whole Pork legs (Fresh pig hind legs weighing 8-10kgs from pigs from recognised slaughterhouses. Fresh pig hind legs from Landrace, Large White or Welsh breeds or crosses of those breeds).
- Cooking salt
- Preservatives Potassium nitrate (E252), Sodium Nitrite (E250)

Carmarthen Ham is produced in the following stages:

- Trimming and shaping of legs of pork
- Addition of preservatives
- Addition of salt
- Re-applying of salt

- Rinsing off the salt
- Netting of hams
- Maturing of hams

#### Shaping of legs of pork and the addition of salt & potassium nitrate

Day 1 - The fresh pork legs, ranging from 8-10kgs in weight are bone in to include half the fibula and tibia and the whole femur. The aitch bone is cut straight parallel to the axis of the ham at a distance of 2cms from the head of the femur which has been freed. The inner face of the ham is uncovered down to the bottom. The pork legs are hand trimmed of any loose flesh, to produce a ham which has a rounded external shape at the bottom and tapered to the top. A palm of preservative (containing Potassium Nitrate(E252) and Sodium Nitrite (E250) is rubbed into the legs and left to sweat at an ambient temperature ranging between 16-26 degrees centigrade for 24 hours in a plastic vat. E252 and E250 are used as a preservative to retain the rich red colour of the ham. The exact quantity of preservative used varies according to the size of legs and time of year but would not exceed the maximum levels determined by EU legislation. The exact quantities are gauged by skill and personal experience of the butcher.

#### Addition of salt

Day 2 – A generous palm of salt is rubbed into the legs and placed in a plastic vat and stored in a cold room set at 3°C. For seven days. The salt also acts as a preservative by prohibiting the growth of bacteria. The quantity of salt used varies according to the size of legs and time of year but would not exceed 65g per ham. Exact quantities of salt are gauged by skill and personal experience.

#### Reapplying salt

The procedure of rubbing salt into the legs is repeated once a week for 4 weeks and the ham is then stored at 2-4 degrees centigrade

#### Rinsing off of the salt

Day 35 –Hams are washed in running cold tap water and placed in a plastic vat containing water for 3 days to remove excess salt. The water in the vat is changed daily.

#### Netting of hams

Day 39 – The hams are removed from water, number coded by week of the year, netted in muslin net, which is of fine mesh and then hung with stainless steel hooks which are colour coded and numbered according to which week of the year the hams are made. The hams are then left to air dry naturally.

#### Maturing of hams

The hams are then hung in a hygienic airy room used solely to dry hams at an ambient temperature of between 16 and 26 degrees centigrade to mature for 6 -9 months. If it is judged by skill and personal experience that the hams are drying too quickly the air within the room is intermittently circulated by means of an electric fan or similar and the hams are rotated within the room. The “readiness” of the ham is determined by dryness and firmness of the ham judged by personal skill and experience of the “Carmarthen Ham” maker. When the ham is “ready”, the skin of the “Carmarthen Ham” will be a dark brown and have a leathery texture and feel and the flesh of the ham will be a deep red. The ham when matured has lost up to 50% of its weight. The layer of cream coloured fat on the surface below the rind must not exceed the maximum acceptable depth of 5mm

## 4.6 LINK

“Carmarthen Ham” is an air dried salt cured whole bone in ham weighing between 4-5kgs and takes 6-9 months to mature. Pig farming has had a long history of association throughout Wales including West Wales and the Carmarthen area. The Welsh Pig Society for West Wales formed in 1922 covering the Counties of Carmarthen, Pembroke and Cardigan. This society later evolved to become the Welsh Pig Society and was instrumental in developing the Pedigree Welsh Pig breed. Welsh families throughout Wales and the Carmarthen area have been curing welsh pork in dry salt to preserve them for generations. All parts of the pig were utilised and no part of the pig was ever wasted. In the autumn surplus fresh meat was put in salt to preserve it in order to feed the family over the winter months, however, with the advent of freezers and fridges in the 1950s the art of curing began to decline. In all parts of Wales this ancient art of preservation of pork legs which were traditionally eaten fried or boiled at the age of 3 months has continued. In the late 1970s in the Carmarthen area, there was a demand for maturing hams longer than the three months and eating the ham raw like the continental hams. This was how “Carmarthen Ham” evolved.

The production of “Carmarthen Ham” is very much a cottage industry and is dependent upon savoir faire, skill and experience which has been passed down from one generation to the next primarily through one family. This skill base that has developed over 30 years is widely recognised throughout Wales, the UK and overseas as only existing within the designated area. Specific skills and experience are required throughout the process but in particular at the following stages:-

- The shaping of the legs, to remove excess fat and flesh –to produce the specific desired shape
- The exact quantities of preservatives and salt added will vary very slightly according to weight and size of the ham, and time of the year when the ham is being produced. With heavier, larger hams, very slightly more salt and preservatives is required. Hams made when the ambient temperatures are higher during summer months also require slightly more salt and preservatives to preserve them compared to hams made during cooler winter months.
- The re applying and massaging of the salt into the ham. Moisture is removed from the flesh of the ham by the addition of the salt. Skill is required to know when sufficient moisture has been removed to produce “Carmarthen Ham”. This is achieved by assessing the firmness of the muscle and is a “feel” which is a skill passed down from one generation to the next.
- Monitoring the maturing of the hams and determining the “readiness” of the ham by feeling the ham for its firmness and dryness. Recognising the correct “feel” of the mature “Carmarthen Ham” is a skill passed down from one generation to the next.

“Carmarthen Ham” has been sold in the historically famous Carmarthen market since the late 1970`s and “Carmarthen Ham” has grown in popularity and is being recognised and in demand by consumers throughout Wales, U.K. and overseas. It has been served in Royal Garden Parties and in many famous hotels and restaurants, including The Celtic Manor during the prestigious Ryder Cup in 2010. “Carmarthen Ham” has also been featured regularly on television programmes and in the press.

Below are comments recognising the quality, taste and the region of “Carmarthen Ham”:-

**Bob Farrand, director of Fine Food Retailers**

“Carmarthen Ham” was awarded a Great Taste Awards for the Best Welsh Speciality “The winners really deserve recognition for the craft and dedication they show in the making of such fine foods – it really encompasses what Great Taste Awards are all about”.

**Matthew Fort (food critic)**

“Carmarthen ham is a delicate pink, salty, sweet, moist, gently irresistible ham”.

**Colin Presdee (food critic)**

“It has a distinctive flavour and it is said it rivals the very best served ham worldwide”.

**5 INSPECTION BODY:**

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**6 LABELLING:**

ANNEX 1

