

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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Voluntary - Public

Date: 10/19/2017

GAIN Report Number: E17068

EU-28

Post: Brussels USEU

EU Registers Cheese with a Codex Standard as a PGI

Report Categories:

Trade Policy Monitoring

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Report Highlights:

On October 19, 2017, the European Commission published [Commission Implementing Regulation 2017/1901](#) on the registration of “Danbo” cheese as an EU protected geographical indication (PGI) in the EU’s Official Journal. This is the first cheese the Commission has registered that has a revised general food standard for cheese production established through Codex Alimentarius.

General Information:

The European Commission published Denmark's application for registering danbo cheese as a PGI on February 2, 2012. Thereafter, the United States requested consultations between Denmark and the United States, Australia, New Zealand, Uruguay and Argentina, during which time the objecting parties made clear that danbo is considered to be a generic term. After these consultations, the United States received no indication from the Commission as to its consideration of evidence presented by objecting parties or its timeline for making a recommendation for registering "danbo" as a PGI. After the issue lay dormant for several years, the Commission revisited Denmark's proposal this October, providing no official notice to objecting parties. In Implementing Regulation 2017/1901, the Commission justifies its decision by saying that "the perception of this term outside the EU and the possible existence of related regulatory production standards in third countries are not deemed relevant to the present decision."

Danbo cheese has had a Codex general food standard for over 50 years, and both the EU and in particular Denmark were very active in updating the Codex general food standards for danbo cheese finalized in 2007. Today there are 16 cheeses with individual Codex standards, e.g., mozzarella, cheddar, brie and havarti. The U.S. dairy industry is very concerned that havarti will become the next PGI. Havarti is much more economically significant for U.S. stakeholders.

Transparency and responsiveness to the EU's top trading partners is lacking in the Commission's process in registering danbo as a PGI. Additionally, a new line has been crossed when the EU designated a generic cheese with a revised codex standard as a PGI.