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Product Specification

Tête de Moine, Fromage de Bellelay

Registered as a Protected Designation of Origin (PDO)¹

according to the decision of 19 January 2001 of the Federal Office for Agriculture, amended by the decisions of 16 July 2003, 8 July 2008, 20 September 2012, 1 May 2017, 11 November 2020 and 14 April 2021.

Section 1 General provisions

Art. 1 Name and protection

¹ *Tête de Moine* or *Tête de Moine, Fromage de Bellelay*, Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) (hereinafter *Tête de Moine*).

² The term 'rosette', used in conjunction with the designation of origin, is also protected.

Art. 2 Geographical area

The geographical area comprises the mountain area and enclosed summer pastures of the districts of Franches-Montagne, Porrentruy, the commune of Saulcy and the administrative district of Bernese Jura with the exception of the communes of Nods, Diesse, Lamboing, Prêles and La Neuveville.

Section 2 Description of product

Art. 3 Physical characteristics

Tête de Moine is a full-fat, semi-hard cheese made from raw milk.

Raw material:	Raw milk
Shape:	Cylindrical or very slightly curved
Rind:	Firm, smeared, grainy, moist and healthy
Colour:	Red-brown
Height:	Maximum 70–100% of the diameter
Diameter:	10–15cm

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¹ Translator's note: The English term Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) has been used throughout this text. However, the French *Appellation d'Origine Protégée (AOP)* is the term commonly used on cheese labels in Switzerland to denote a cheese of protected origin. There is no difference in meaning between PDO and AOP, nor in their scope of protection.

Weight:	0.7–2kg
Openings:	1–8mm, rather rare, small and isolated cracks
Texture:	Fine, suitable for shaving and cutting, ivory to pale yellow in colour, homogeneous, slightly moist and sticky, creamy. The cheese melts quickly in the mouth.
Fat content:	A minimum of 510g per kg and a maximum of 540g per kg of fat content by weight in dry matter, preferably an average of 525g per kg and a minimum of 315g per kg by weight of fat content in the cheese.
Salt:	Maximum of 25g per kg of cheese
Additives and ingredients:	None
Suitability for shaving:	Rosettes obtained with a special device called a <i>Girole</i> or a similar device must remain compact.
Rosettes:	<i>Tête de Moine</i> is not usually sliced, but shaved with a <i>Girole</i> or similar device to obtain rosettes, as shown on the label in Article 23.
Distinctive shape:	Cumulative criteria falling within the scope of protection of the product: cylinder-shaped semi-hard cheese, which may be slightly curved, and whose height is 70–100% of its diameter with a maximum weight of 3kg as shown on the labels in Article 23. Absolute and reserved criterion: the <i>Tête de Moine</i> rosette as shown on the labels in Article 23.

Art. 4 Organoleptic characteristics

Smell/aroma:	Pure and aromatic, more pronounced as it matures. In general, it has a faint smell of rind and mushrooms.
Taste:	Tastes of acidified milk, usually with a faint taste of rind and hay. Moderately salty and slightly tangy.

Section 3 Description of production method

Art. 5 Roughage in general

¹ Seventy per cent of the dairy cattle's feed ration calculated in terms of dry matter (DM) must come entirely from the farm's own forage area or from adjacent common pastures.

² The use of somatotropin, urea, products containing urea, animal meal, feed produced from genetically modified plants, or growth hormones or similar products is prohibited.

³ The distribution of silage of any kind (including wrapped bales) is prohibited at any time of the year to any livestock.

⁴ During the green feeding period, dairy cows must be allowed to graze for at least 120 days on pasture.

Art. 6 Animal feed permitted during the green feeding period

¹ The following are permitted as animal feed during the green feeding period:

- a) Grass.
- b) Cereals harvested green including maize.
- c) Vetch mixtures, rape, turnip and other similar annual fodder crops.
- d) Raw, cleaned potatoes, neither sprouting nor rotten, and cleaned, healthy pome fruit.
- e) Fresh beet leaves and tops; foddering of these crops must take place within 24 hours of them being harvested.

² The use of the fodder listed under paragraph 1 (with the exception of letter d) is prohibited from 1 December until the beginning of the green feeding period of the following year.

Art. 7 Complementary feed permitted during the green feeding period

The following are permitted as complementary feed:

- a) Hay, aftercrop, straw.
- b) Wheat bran, pomace, dried sugar beet pulp, dried brewers' grains not rehydrated.
- c) Cereal husks and oat husks.
- d) Artificially dried green fodder (grass, green maize and green-cut cereals) in the form of chopped dried fodder (in cubes or briquettes), as well as dried maize cob residues.

Art. 8 Animal feed allowed during the dry period

¹ The hay and aftercrop that make up the basic ration must be healthy and not be excessively fermented or mouldy. With the exception of cooking salt (sodium chloride), no preservatives are permitted for the preservation of basic fodder.

² Baling hay and aftercrop into high-density bales is only permitted if the bales are stored on a dry surface and protected from rain and condensation.

³ If necessary, good quality, clean straw may also be fed to the cattle.

⁴ Fodder beet, sugar beet and carrots, not exceeding 15kg per cow per day in total, must be clean and healthy. If they are cut into pieces, they must be prepared daily; they may be mixed with chopped, dry fodder on a clean surface. Root cutters and other utensils must be kept clean.

⁵ Cleaned, de-sprouted, healthy, non-green potatoes and cleaned, healthy, pome fruit are permitted. To prevent sprouting, only products authorised for ware potatoes may be used in the same doses.

⁶ Dried fruit pomace, dried beet pulp, dried brewers' grains not rehydrated and molasses (molasses mixed with a carrier substance) may be fed to the cattle.

Art. 9 Concentrated feed

¹ The following are permitted as concentrated feed for dairy cows:

- a) Feed grain, wheat bran and other high-quality milling by-products.
- b) Artificially dried green fodder that has not been overheated.
- c) Dried potatoes.
- d) Oilseeds in the form of seed, oil or cake, oil meals and beans; for residues from the extraction of rapeseed oil, poppy seed oil or cotton seed oil, the daily ration must not exceed 500g per cow.
- e) Mixtures prepared with the animal feed listed in letters a, b, c and d of this paragraph.

² Concentrated feed must not be moistened or given as a drink. Concentrated feed must be given in a cleaned trough, either on its own or mixed with beets, potatoes, chopped hay, hay flowers or cereal husks immediately before feeding.

Art. 10 Milk delivery

The milk must be delivered once or twice a day. In the case of a single delivery, the milk must be stored on the farm at a maximum temperature of 18°C.

Art. 11 General production conditions

¹ The origin of the milk is determined by the location of the farm buildings. In order to guarantee traceability, the cheese dairies must keep a register of their incoming milk.

² Bactofugation and ultrafiltration are prohibited. The only techniques authorised for adjusting fat content are natural skimming, centrifuging or the re-incorporation of whey cream that comes exclusively from producing *Tête de Moine*.

³ The production facilities must be certified under one of the quality assurance standards. Farms that process milk must have at least one authorisation number.

Art. 12 Rennet, cultures and additives

¹ The milk must be inoculated:

- indirectly with in-house yeasts or starter cultures produced from mother cultures recommended for *Tête de Moine*; and
- directly or indirectly with the culture of the certificate of origin.

The applicant group shall draw up a list of recommended mother cultures in consultation with Agroscope.

² The use of genetically modified organisms and products derived from them is prohibited.

³ All additives are prohibited.

Art. 13 Production process

¹ If the milk is cooled to a temperature of between 8°C and 18°C, it must be processed within 18 hours after the first milking. If the milk is cooled to a temperature below 8°C, it must be processed within a maximum of 24 hours after the earliest milking.

² The milk must be processed in copper vats.

³ The cheese must be made from milk that is of suitable quality for cheesemaking; it must not have been heated above 40°C or undergone similar mechanical treatment.

⁴ The curd is heated to a temperature of between 46°C and 53°C and then pressed.

⁵ The wheels of cheese are immersed in a brine bath for at least 12 hours. The duration of the brining process is adapted to the desired salt content.

Art. 14 Ripening process

¹ To ensure that a smear forms on the rind, the cheese is regularly treated during the ripening process with the bacteria *Brevibacterium linens* and water or salt water. If necessary, natural yeast or other cultures can be added if they are recommended by a competent federal authority, e.g. Agroscope.

² The cheeses are matured on spruce boards.

³ During storage, the ideal temperature of the cellar is between 13°C and 14°C. For normal maturation, the relative humidity should be around 90 per cent.

⁴ Each wheel of *Tête de Moine* must be matured for at least 75 days in the geographical area. Cheeses with a maturation period of at least four months may be labelled with the term RESERVE, and cheeses with a maturation of at least six months may be labelled with the term EXTRA.

Section 4 Specific requirements for *Tête de Moine fermière*

Art. 15 Requirements for the use of the name *Tête de Moine fermière*

The term *fermière* is reserved for cheese produced by farmers who process only milk from their own farm or a production facility on their own farm and who meet the following additional requirements:

- a) The milk used in the production comes from cows reared in compliance with the Swiss Organic Farming Ordinance. The cows are not dehorned. Only cows that have been dehorned and were already kept on the farm or the production facility prior to approval for the production of *Tête de Moine fermière* are permitted.
- b) The milk for the production of *Tête de Moine fermière* must be produced between April and October only when sufficient permanent grassland is available to provide basic fodder to dairy cattle. Grazing must account for at least 75 per cent of the ration calculated in dry matter (DM). The remainder of the ration, i.e. a maximum of 25 per cent of the ration calculated in dry matter (DM), must comply with the provisions of the product specification and the Swiss Organic Farming Ordinance.

Art. 16 Production of *Tête de Moine fermière*

¹ Production must take place between April and October. It is limited to 500 litres per day and per farm or production facility.

² *Tête de Moine fermière* is made using whole (not skimmed) milk in a copper vat with a maximum capacity of 500 litres, which may only be used once every 24 hours to make the cheese (*Tête de Moine fermière*). The vat is heated by a wood fire (with wood from the *Tête de Moine* geographical area) directly underneath it.

³ The curd must be heated to a temperature of between 44°C and 53°C.

⁴ Cloths must be used to remove the curd.

⁵ Brining is carried out directly at the place of production.

⁶ The minimum ripening period is 100 days.

Section 5 Final product testing

Art. 17 Grading

Any cheese produced with the aim of obtaining the designation *Tête de Moine* must be subject to two assessments:

- a. Grading by the assessment board appointed by the applicant group according to the provisions of the control handbook; and
- b. Release for sale by the producer or the affineur.

Art. 18 First assessment or grading

¹ The first assessment is carried out by the assessment board on cheeses aged between 45 and 75 days according to the provisions of the control handbook.

² The cheeses selected for grading are assessed in accordance with Article 3. The main criteria are as follows:

- a) Visual assessment of the external characteristics
- b) Texture
- c) Openings
- d) Flavour/taste

³ Each criterion is assessed on a scale of five points. To bear the name *Tête de Moine*, the cheese must obtain a minimum of 18 points with no criterion scoring less than four points.

Art. 19 Second assessment

The release for sale of cheese that has been found to meet the necessary requirements by the assessment board is the responsibility of the producer or the affineur. The manufacturer shall keep at least half a wheel of cheese per production batch (i.e. the production of one vat) for control purposes. In order to be able to release the production batch, the control cheese must be evaluated and meet the grading criteria.

Art. 20 Use of the name *Tête de Moine*

¹ The name *Tête de Moine* is reserved for cheeses sold in the form of whole cheeses, half cheeses or as rosettes pre-packaged in trays. The *Tête de Moine* must be covered with its typical rind, with the exception of cut surfaces and rosettes.

² Foodstuffs containing *Tête de Moine* may bear the words '*à la Tête de Moine*' or similar words in addition to the specific name of the end product under the following conditions:

- a) The specific name of the foodstuff must precede the designation '*Tête de Moine*';
- b) The name '*Tête de Moine*' or its logo may not appear larger than the name of the foodstuff;
- c) Subject to letter d, the foodstuff may not contain other cheeses;
- d) Cheese mixtures for fondue or ready-made fondue must contain at least 25 per cent *Tête de Moine*.

Art. 21 Marketing of downgraded cheeses

¹ Cheeses that do not meet the quality requirements of the *Tête de Moine* designation may not bear the protected name. Downgraded cheeses must be sold in such a way that they can only be consumed in processed form, in particular as melted cheese. They may only be placed on the market without the rind.

² The affineurs shall keep a register of the use of downgraded cheeses.

Section 6 Labelling and certification

Art. 22 Traceability mark

¹ A casein mark is affixed to each wheel of cheese at the cheese dairy indicating at minimum the authorisation number of the dairy and the date of production.

² This casein mark is sold by the applicant group to each manufacturer of *Tête de Moine*. The price covers the production and distribution costs and, where applicable, the costs for certification, protection and basic promotion of *Tête de Moine*.

Art. 23 Labelling

¹ The following official logos must be used to label whole cheeses, half cheeses and pre-packed rosettes:



² The terms RESERVE, EXTRA and *fermière* appear in the banner at the bottom of the logo.

³ The official logos must be applied as a label on whole wheels and half wheels of cheese and have a minimum diameter of 8cm. The labels are sold exclusively by the applicant group to each producer of *Tête de Moine*. The price covers the production and distribution costs and, where applicable, the certification, product protection and basic promotion costs for *Tête de Moine*.

⁴ Official logos on pre-packaged rosettes must have a minimum diameter of 2cm and be displayed on the face of the packaging visible to consumers at the point of sale.

⁵ Quality symbols relating to designations within the meaning of the Federal Act on Agriculture may appear on official logos. They must be clearly separate from the PDO sign, positioned in the same way on the on the right-hand side of the official logos and be of the same size.

Art. 24 Certification body

¹ Certification is carried out by the OIC (*Organisme Intercantonal de Certification*), SCES No 0054.

² The minimum control requirements are described in the *Tête de Moine* control handbook, which is valid for all companies in the sector.