

First Edition of OVINUS - International Sheep Cheese Contest

RULES

General provisions

The following rules govern the First Edition of OVINUS - International sheep cheese contests - promoted by the Regional Agency for Agricultural Development Laore Sardegna in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Craft and Agriculture of Nuoro, the Consortium for the Protection of Pecorino Romano PDO, the Consortium for the Protection of Pecorino Sardo PDO, the Consortium for the Protection of Fiore Sardo PDO and OILOS - Organismo interprofessionale latte ovino sardo (Association of the Sardinian sheep milk industry).

ARTICLE 1

The Rules ensure the fair, neutral and technically correct performance of the Contest. By signing the application form you accept the conditions set forth herein. The OVINUS name and logo are distinctive signs of the Contest, therefore they are registered and owned exclusively by the Regional Agency for Agricultural Development Laore Sardegna. Consequently, they may not be used by third parties without prior authorisation and under the conditions set out in Article 12.

ARTICLE 2

The aim of the contest is to expand and promote the culture and knowledge of quality sheep's milk products, enhance their qualitative and sensory characteristics, create a meeting place for industry operators, promote quality improvement and diversification of production, and increase consumer awareness and consumption of sheep cheeses at regional, national and international level.

ARTICLE 3

The Committee responsible for the contest, hereinafter referred to as the Committee, is composed of a Chair, appointed by the Regional Agency for Agricultural Development Laore Sardinia, plus one representative from each of the following bodies: the Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Craft and Agriculture of Nuoro, the Consortium for the Protection of Pecorino Romano PDO, the Consortium for the Protection of Pecorino Sardo PDO, the Consortium for the Protection of Fiore Sardo PDO and OILOS - Organismo interprofessionale latte ovino sardo (Association of the Sardinian sheep milk industry).

The Committee will handle the following organisational steps: receive and assess entries, receive and anonymise the samples, appoint the judging panels and present the awards.

The Committee oversees compliance with the Rules, in particular with the purposes set out in Article 2 and with the conditions set out in Articles 5, 6 and 7.

ARTICLE 4

The cheeses admitted to the Contest must come from companies, hereinafter referred to as 'entrants', that produce and/or ripen and/or age cheeses in compliance with the food legislation in force in their countries.

Entrants with registered office and production/ripening facilities in the European Union must be approved pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 or registered in the dairy sector pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 852/2004.

ARTICLE 5

The contest is reserved for cheeses made **exclusively** from sheep's milk.

The contest is open to two classes of products:

- **PDO Cheeses**, reserved for Protected Designation of Origin cheeses under Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012.
- **Open Class**, reserved for cheeses that do not have Protected Designation of Origin under Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012.

The following 8 product categories are identified in the '**PDO Cheeses**' class:

1. **Fresh cheeses**. Cheeses ready for consumption immediately after being produced and for the time their initial physical, chemical and sensory characteristics are unchanged.

2. **Fast-ripening cheeses** (less than 2 months' ripening). Cheeses not ready for immediate consumption after being produced, but which must be kept for a period of less than 2 months under specific environmental conditions causing physical, chemical and sensory changes to the product.
3. **Medium ripening cheeses** (between 2 and 4 months). Cheeses not ready for immediate consumption after being produced, but which must be kept between 2 and 4 months under specific environmental conditions causing physical, chemical and sensory changes to the product.
4. **Medium/long ripening cheeses** (between 4 and 6 months). Cheeses not ready for immediate consumption after being produced, but which must be kept between 4 and 6 months under specific environmental conditions causing physical, chemical and sensory changes to the product.
5. **Long ripening cheeses** (between 6 and 12 months). Cheeses not ready for immediate consumption after being produced, but which must be kept between 6 and 12 months under specific environmental conditions causing physical, chemical and sensory changes to the product.
6. **Very long ripening cheeses** (over 1 year). Cheeses not ready for immediate consumption after being produced, but which must be kept for more than 1 year under specific environmental conditions causing physical, chemical and sensory changes to the product.
7. **Blue cheeses**. Cheeses for which the development and growth of characteristic moulds within the cheese is important during ripening.
8. **Surface mould or smear-ripened cheeses**. Cheeses for which the development and growth of characteristic fungal or bacterial microflora on the surface of the product is important during ripening.
9. **Flavoured cheeses**. Cheeses with the addition or surface covering of various components (e.g. spices, herbs, seeds, fruit, vegetables in general, dairy products, fish products, meat products, ash, etc.).

The following 9 product categories are identified in the 'Open Class':

1. **Fresh cheeses**. Cheeses ready for consumption immediately after being produced and for the time their initial physical, chemical and sensory characteristics are unchanged.
2. **Fast-ripening cheeses** (less than 2 months' ripening). Cheeses not ready for immediate consumption after being produced, but which must be kept for a period of less than 2 months under specific environmental conditions causing physical, chemical and sensory changes to the product.
3. **Medium ripening cheeses** (between 2 and 4 months). Cheeses not ready for immediate consumption after being produced, but which must be kept between 2 and 4 months under specific environmental conditions causing physical, chemical and sensory changes to the product.
4. **Medium/long ripening cheeses** (between 4 and 6 months). Cheeses not ready for immediate consumption after being produced, but which must be kept between 4 and 6 months under specific environmental conditions causing physical, chemical and sensory changes to the product.
5. **Long ripening cheeses** (between 6 and 12 months). Cheeses not ready for immediate consumption after being produced, but which must be kept between 6 and 12 months under specific environmental conditions causing physical, chemical and sensory changes to the product.
6. **Very long ripening cheeses** (over 1 year). Cheeses not ready for immediate consumption after being produced, but which must be kept for more than 1 year under specific environmental conditions causing physical, chemical and sensory changes to the product.
7. **Blue cheeses**. Cheeses for which the development and growth of characteristic moulds within the cheese is important during ripening.
8. **Surface mould or smear-ripened cheeses**. Cheeses for which the development and growth of characteristic fungal or bacterial microflora on the surface of the product is important during ripening.
9. **Flavoured cheeses**. Cheeses with the addition or surface covering of various components (e.g. spices, herbs, seeds, fruit, vegetables in general, dairy products, fish products, meat products, ash, etc.).

ARTICLE 6

The Committee will consider as activated only those categories in which at least 5 cheeses are entered. If any one category is not activated, the Committee reserves the right, after notifying the entrants concerned, to move existing entries to another appropriate category.

Any cheese samples that the Committee considers unfit for consumption will be excluded from the contest, after notifying the entrants concerned.

In the event of entries not stating their category or stating a clearly wrong category, the Committee reserves the right to place the products in the category it deems appropriate, after notifying the entrants.

The cheese samples admitted to the contest will be submitted to sensory testing by judging panels, appointed by the Committee, composed of professionals with experience in international and/or national dairy contests, cheese experts and cheese tasters, wine and food professionals/journalists, professionals of the regional agricultural agencies of Sardinia having experience in competitions. The number of panels and judges will depend on the number of samples to be assessed. Any persons having any connection with the entrants as defined in Article 5 are excluded from the judging panels.

ARTICLE 7

For each activated category, the Committee, at its sole discretion, will assign to each entry a score between 50 and 100 and, on the basis of the score, will designate high-scoring cheeses as **EXCELLENT** (score between 95 and 100), **VERY GOOD** (score between 90 and 94) and **GOOD** (score between 85 and 89).

The Committee will select only one cheese as winner of the **OVINUS Award**, after a judging panel has assessed the best EXCELLENT cheeses of each category.

The Committee may award special mentions to cheeses with outstanding refinement and/or packaging.

The judges will use a single assessment form, scoring the cheese samples for external and internal aspect, aroma, flavour, body and texture. The judging panels will operate independently; the completed assessment sheets will be kept on file by the Committee.

By submitting a written request to the Committee, entrants will be able to view the detailed assessment made by the judging panel of the cheese sample submitted by the company.

ARTICLE 8

Registration for the contest is free of charge.

The registration must be made by the legal representative of the company, referred to in Article 4, or by a duly authorised person, by no later than 23:59 of **10 December 2019**. Registrations can only be made online, on website www.ovinus.it. Entrants must attach the following documents:

- company information sheet;
- cheese identification form (one for each cheese entered in the contest);
- at least two photos of the cheese in contest (whole cheese and portion) on a neutral background, in .jpeg or .png format, having a maximum file size of 3 Mb.

Each entrant can enter up to 2 cheeses per category.

ARTICLE 9

The cheese entered in the contest must be received, appropriately wrapped and packaged, **between 24 February 2020 and 2 March 2020** in Sardinia at the collection centre that will be specified on the website www.ovinus.it by 31 December 2019. The packaging must bear the wording: OVINUS - International Sheep Cheese Contest.

The costs of shipping the product will be borne by the producer.

Cheese delivered late will be excluded from the Contest and will be returned only on express request, and in any case at the expense of the producer.

The cheeses entered in the contest will be placed in cold storage pending the assessment operations that will begin, concurrently for all categories, on 4 March 2020 and will end on 6 March 2020.

For each category in which a cheese is entered, the sample must consist of at least 2 kg of product. In detail:

- Cheeses weighing up to 5 kg must be sent whole. Cheese received that is cut or trimmed from its original form or which has a trier hole will be disqualified from the competition;
- Cheeses over 5 kg in weight may be delivered in portions equal to half their original form. The portion must not have a trier hole, or it will be disqualified.

The cheese samples registered in the PDO Cheese class must clearly show the distinctive signs of Protected Designation of Origin on the cheese wheel and/or portion and/or label, or they will be disqualified.

The Committee is not responsible for any products received that are damaged, poorly preserved or not fully suitable for the competition.

The entrant must also provide a whole wheel of cheese to be showcased in the exhibition accompanying the contest. This wheel of cheese will be returned on the entrant's written request and at the entrant's expense.

In the event that the cheeses become unpresentable due to natural deterioration, the Committee may request replacement products.

Products entered in the competition become the property of the Committee.

ARTICLE 10

The entrants are responsible for their statements. In case of false statements, the entrant will be disqualified.

ARTICLE 11

The final award ceremony will be held in Sardinia on **8 March 2020**.

The results of the contest will be published on website www.ovinus.it and social media and will be disseminated via other suitable media.

ARTICLE 12

Use of the OVINUS mark. Upon specific written request to the Committee and after receiving its authorisation, the entrants whose cheeses have been ranked as EXCELLENT, VERY GOOD and GOOD may use, at no cost, the OVINUS-2020 mark, in gold, silver and bronze for the EXCELLENT, VERY GOOD and GOOD rankings respectively. The producer of the cheese that wins the **OVINUS Award** will be able to use the OVINUS-2020 mark at no cost in soft red colour.

The mark, reserved for the products mentioned, may be used for promotion in printed materials, posters, brochures, web and other media and also in the product label and packaging.

ARTICLE 13

The Committee reserves the right to make any changes to the Contest Rules, if deemed essential for the best success of the activities, notifying any such changes promptly on website www.ovinus.it.

ARTICLE 14

Jurisdiction. Any disputes concerning the competition shall be adjudicated by the Court of Cagliari.