

# *Consorzio del Formaggio "Parmigiano Reggiano"*

Sede: Via Kennedy, 18 - 42100 Reggio Emilia - Cod. fiscale P.IVA 00621790351  
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## **MARKING REGULATION**

### **CHAPTER I**

#### General Provisions and Definitions

##### Art. 1

##### Marks

1. The distinctive marks of Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese are represented by the mark of origin and by the grade selection mark.
2. The mark of origin is applied by the individual dairies by means of:
  - a) the application of a casein plate bearing the writing “Parmigiano-Reggiano” or “CFPR” and the codes identifying the wheel;
  - b) the use of appropriate matrixes (stencilling bands) that stencil dots on the rind forming the writing “Parmigiano-Reggiano” all around the surface of each wheel, as well as the number identifying the production dairy, the production year and month.
3. The grade selection marking is carried out by the Parmigiano-Reggiano Consortium by applying indelible marks, as specified in articles 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 below, after the authorised Control Body has executed the necessary inspection operations.

##### Art. 2

##### Tasks of the Parmigiano-Reggiano Consortium

1. The Consortium, in compliance with Law 526/99, establishes the ways in which marks should be used in observance of the Production Regulations and monitors

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- their correct use in dairies. In the event of improper uses of the marks of origin or of any other breaches of the standards according to Regulation 2081/92, found by the competent Bodies, the Consortium arranges for the withdrawal of stencilling bands and plates and/or for the enforcement of sanctioning measures in compliance with the rules in force;
2. The Consortium assigns an identification number to every Parmigiano-Reggiano dairy; this number is then given to the Control Body and included in the control system;
  3. The use on wheels of other marks that are not envisaged by this Regulation must be expressly authorised by the Consortium, which establishes application features and methods. Such marks cannot be superimposed over the DPO marks thereby ensuring that the latter prevail.

## Art. 3

### Obligations of Dairies

1. The dairies willing to produce Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese must submit the relevant application to the Consortium at least four months before the beginning of production activities. They must specify that they are part of the control system in order to be given a dairy identification number, stencilling bands and casein plates, which are necessary for the application of the marks of origin;
2. Dairies are liable for the proper use and preservation of stencilling bands and casein plates, which are supplied on a fiduciary basis;

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3. Dairies must keep the Production Journal updated on a daily basis, it must be authenticated by the Consortium and will be made available for the Control Body to carry out its activities and for the competent Authorities;
4. Dairies are obliged to keep records of the entire production.  
Should dairies fail to keep the necessary records, sanctions will be applied in compliance with the laws in force;
5. Dairies are obliged to make available or to have an individual responsible in making sure that the cheese is available to the Consortium for the execution of classification operations, mark application and invalidation, as envisaged in articles 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9. In case of breach, the Consortium arranges for the withdrawal of stencilling bands and casein plates and/or for the enforcement of sanctioning measures in compliance with the provisions envisaged in the control plan;
6. Dairies are obliged to provide all the elements that are useful for the implementation of this Regulation to the Consortium and to its officers in charge.

## Art. 4

### Definition of Production Lots and Quality Inspection

1. The production of each dairy is subdivided into lots, i.e.:
  - a) 1<sup>st</sup> lot: cheese produced in the months from January to April;
  - b) 2<sup>nd</sup> lot: cheese produced in the months from May to August;
  - c) 3<sup>rd</sup> lot: cheese produced in the months from September to December.

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2. Before applying the grade selection mark, every wheel of Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese is inspected by a Committee consisting of at least two experts appointed by the Consortium, registered in the list held by the Consortium and in turn the Control Body duly notified.

3. Quality Inspection and mark application operations must be carried out within the region of origin.

## **CHAPTER II**

### Procedures

#### Art. 5

#### Quality Inspection

The quality inspection operations are carried out for the three production lots in three periods of time, based on the following schedule:

- a) the cheese of the first lot is inspected starting from 1 December in the same year;
- b) the cheese of the second lot is inspected starting from 1 April in the year that follows;
- c) the cheese of the third lot is inspected from 1 September in the year that follows.

#### Art. 6

#### Cheese Classification

1. The cheese quality inspection is executed by assessing the external appearance, the texture and aroma of its paste by means of a hammer or cheese probe depending on local uses and habits, according to the classification contained in

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the annex;

2. With the aim of rendering the quality inspection as objective as possible, Committees must cut at least one wheel per lot and, in any case, at least one wheel for every thousand or fraction of a thousand to assess its structural and organoleptic features. Dairies are obliged to provide the wheels indicated by the experts that are to be cut and dairies are to give their permission for the taking of one portion of them.

## Art. 7

### Application of Ink Stamps

At the same time of the quality inspection, as specified in art. 6, indelible ink stamps are applied to wheels in order to identify the following categories defined in the annex:

- a) first category, indicating the wheels classified as “first grade”, “zero” and “one” Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese;
- b) second category, indicating the wheels classified as “medium grade” Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese;
- c) third category, indicating the wheels classified as “downgraded” and “reject”.

## Art. 8

### Application of Hot Iron Marks

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1. An oval hot iron mark bearing the writing “Parmigiano-Reggiano Consorzio Tutela” and the production year is burnt on the first and second category wheels;
2. Second category cheese is identified by means of an indelible mark applied all around the wheel;
3. The hot iron marking can take place seven days after the quality inspection, based on the instructions given by the Control Body.

## Art. 9

### Invalidation of Marks of Origin

The personnel appointed by the Consortium will remove the marks of origin on the wheels of the third category, as well as on the wheels affected by serious structural defects that compromise their maturation as well as on the wheels that received rectifications jeopardising the appearance of the wheel and/or the quality of the paste and/or the marks indicating production month and year and dairy identification number. Alternatively, such wheels shall be delivered to one or more processing companies that have signed a relevant contract with the Consortium. With regard to these wheels, the dairy must keep the documentation handed over by the above companies, proving that the marks of origin have been duly invalidated. The marks of origin are invalidated also on those wheels where they have not been applied correctly.

## Art. 10

### Drawing up of Inspection Reports

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A report is drawn up to record the operations relating to quality inspection, hot iron identification and marking of first and second category wheels, invalidation of the marks of origin for each lot or lot fraction for the entire production batch. This report must be signed by the personnel in charge of the execution of such operations and by the legal representative of the dairy, or by a person expressly appointed for this purpose.

## Art. 11

### Claims Appeals

1. Dairies are entitled to file a petition with the Consortium, by sending a notice via registered mail, to oppose the quality inspection results, within four days from the conclusion of the inspection;
2. Claims are analysed by a Committee of Appeals that may decide to repeat the cheese inspection within 15 days from receiving the notice. This Committee is appointed by the Consortium and consists of at least three members that are not part of the Quality Inspection Committees as per art. 4.

## **CHAPTER III**

### Other Provisions

## Art.12

### Request for Rectification of the Marks of Origin

For wheels that, during the maturation process, have developed a rind defect requiring rectifications in the area where the casein plate is located, the dairy

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should then ask the Consortium for a permission to apply an indelible hot iron mark replacing the plate. The dairy shall keep and hand over all the removed plates to the Consortium.

## Art. 13

### Request for Invalidation of the Marks of Origin

For wheels that, during the maturation process, developed serious defects such as to prevent the continuation of the maturation process, the dairy shall be entitled to request for the invalidation of the marks of origin or for delivery as per art. 9, prior to the quality inspection.

## Art. 14

### Assignment of Wheels before the 12<sup>th</sup> Month of Maturation

In case of an assignment of wheels before reaching the 12<sup>th</sup> month of maturation, and anyway within the region of origin, and even if already bearing the hot iron mark, delivery notes and invoices shall contain the following statement, which is equally signed by the legal representative of the dairy on the quality inspection and marking reports: "Cheese cannot be put on the market for consumption under the Parmigiano-Reggiano protected designation before having reached the 12<sup>th</sup> month of maturation".

## Art. 15

### "Export" and "Extra" Marks

Starting from the 18<sup>th</sup> month of maturation, Parmigiano-Reggiano holders can request

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the Consortium for the application of the “Parmigiano-Reggiano Export” or “Parmigiano-Reggiano Extra” marks.

To be eligible for the above marks, the cheese must comply with the commodity specifications established for “first grade” Parmigiano-Reggiano as per art. 7. Certified wheels that have reached the 18<sup>th</sup> month of maturation are eligible for the application of the above marks, including if the maturation process continues in premises located outside the region of origin; in this case, specific conventions will be signed with the Consortium for it to be able to carry out its monitoring activities.

The expenses relating to marking operations are paid by the applicants.

## Art. 16

### Costs

1. For the consignment of the stencilling bands and the casein plates, as a guarantee to the fulfilment of the relative obligations, the Consortium is entitled to ask for a guarantee deposit, whose amount shall be fixed on an annual basis;
2. For the service of invalidation of marks for third category wheels, as per articles 9 and 13, and for the application of the hot iron mark replacing casein plates, as per art. 12, dairies shall be asked to pay the expenses for each wheel within the limits already fixed by the Consortium;
3. Dairies shall be subject to a reimbursement of expenses for the early replacement of worn or decayed stencilling bands.

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## Annex

### COMMODITY CLASSIFICATION OF CHEESE

#### **1. “First grade” Parmigiano-Reggiano**

This qualification is attributed to those wheels that are free from any external and internal defects (size, rind, hammer, probe, paste texture, aroma, flavour) that may be detected both visually and by a probe and hammer inspection.

#### **2. “zero (0) and one (1)” Parmigiano-Reggiano**

This qualification includes:

- a) **zero**: wheels that, though complying with the specifications for first grade cheese, have surface splits on the rind, small erosions, slightly worn edges and limited rectifications that, however, do not in any way cause wheel deformation.
- b) **one**: wheels having slight texture anomalies, in particular:
  - one or two holes (round and oblong cavities that have formed in the paste) with diameters not exceeding 3-4 cm and upon condition that no aroma defects are found with the probe inspection;
  - localised hornet’s nest (zone of spongy paste) of a few centimetres without any aroma defects;
  - a few “fish mouths”, i.e. eyes of oblong shape not exceeding 3-4 cm;
  - light shivers formed by some paste slits with lengths not exceeding 3-4 cm;

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- widely-spaced and not excessively recurrent eyes;
- so-called “loose” wheels, i.e. wheels that have a soundless tone when beaten by the hammer.

### **3. “Medium grade” (one+) Parmigiano-Reggiano**

This category includes wheels having:

- holes with diameters exceeding 3-4 cm, without any aroma defects;
- hornet’s nests without any aroma defects;
- eyes spread throughout the wheel (glossy, round eyes with medium-small diameters);
- some slits and splits arranged horizontally;
- horizontal slits and splits located near one of the faces and/or affecting the sides;
- rectifications along the sides or faces without any aroma defects, well executed and of such a size that they do not significantly affect the external appearance of the wheel.

### **4. “Downgraded” cheese**

This category includes wheels having:

- very evident swelling of the wheel faces;
- spongy paste with large and widespread eyes;
- multiple and widespread horizontal slits in a folded configuration;
- large slits and splits scattered on most of the wheel;
- large cavity in the centre or around the centre having a circular or oblong shape,

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with or without spongy paste;

- deep and extensive rectifications along the sides and/or faces;
- evident aroma defects.

## **5. "Reject" cheese**

This category includes all those wheels characterised by the presence of numerous and serious defects, which means all those wheels that cannot be included in the above specified categories because of their quality.