GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION
SAZANOS KVELI

NUMBER OF REGISTRATION: 34
DATE OF REGISTRATION: 10/11/2026
GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION: Sazanos Kveli
NAME OF PRODUCT FOR WHICH REGISTRATION OF: Cheese

NAME AND ADDRESS OF APPLICANT: Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia; 34, Marshal Gelovani Ave., 0159, Tbilisi, Georgia

1. Product Name. Sazanos Kveli

2. Product Description
"Sazanos Kveli" − dairy product[1] − unripened or ripened cheese, which may be consumed either immediately upon completion of the technological process (fresh cheese/chkinti cheese), or after being kept and stored for a certain period in salt-whey brine, which ensures the development of its characteristic organoleptic and physicochemical properties. It is produced in household production[2] by a household production operator[3], in an unorganized manner[4]. "Sazanos Kveli" is made from raw milk[5] of endemic Georgian Mountain breed of cattle.

2.1. Organoleptic Characteristics:
Taste and Odour − clean, pleasant and delicate taste characteristic of raw, unripened chkinti cheese, unsalted or moderately salty, with a specific lactic-acid odour characteristic of raw cow's milk;
Colour − white throughout the mass, slightly yellowish;

Surface − glossy;

Consistency − soft and elastic, slightly firm, moderately dense, homogeneous throughout the mass, without a rind. Raw, unripened cheese wheels are without holes, while ripened cheese is characterized by holes of various shapes and sizes.

[1] "Technical Regulations on Milk and Dairy Products", approved by Resolution №152 of the Government of Georgia of 3 April 2015, Article 4, subparagraph "b".
[2] "Rule for Unorganized Production of Food/Animal Feed", approved by Resolution №14 of the Government of Georgia of 2020, Article 2, paragraph 1, subparagraph "a".
[3] "Rule for Unorganized Production of Food/Animal Feed", approved by Resolution №14 of the Government of Georgia of 2020, Article 2, paragraph 1, subparagraph "b".
[4] Ibid., subparagraph "g".
[5] Gotsiridze N., Technology of Milk and Beef Production, Tbilisi, 1997, p. 130; Ioseliani N., Craniological Study of Georgian Brachyceros, Tbilisi, 1927.

Shape − a low cylinder with rounded edges, with a distinct mould imprint on the smooth surface. Diameter − 10-15 cm, height − up to 5 cm, weight − up to 1 kg, or a high, deformed cylindrical shape with a diameter of 26-27 cm, height of 8-9 cm and weight of up to 3 kg**.**

2.2 Characteristics of Finished Product:

"Sazanos Kveli" shall meet the following requirements:

Mass Fraction of Moisture − not more than 50-52%;

Fat Content (calculated on dry matter) − not less than 45-50%;

Salt Content − 0-2%

3. Geographical Area of Production

The raw milk required for the production of "Sazanos Kveli", its primary treatment and processing, and production of the product shall take place only in household farms in the villages of the Upper and Lower Sazano communities of Terjola and Zestaponi municipalities. The villages of Upper Sazano include: Deltasubani, Mujireti, Skande, Shimshilakedi, Chikhori. The villages of Lower Sazano include: Tklapivake, Sasakhle, Zovreti, Chalatke. Also included are the villages of Rupoti, Tuzi, Vardigora, Telepa and Alisubani in Terjola and Zestaponi municipalities adjacent to the Sazano communities.

4. Raw Materials Used in Production

4.1. Raw Milk

For the production of "Sazanos Kveli", raw milk shall be used which is the product of the normal physiological secretion of the mammary gland of healthy cattle of the endemic Georgian Mountain breed, in the bactericidal phase[6], obtained during the lactation period from one or more animals as a result of one or more milkings, without the addition or removal of any substance, within no more than one to two hours after milking.

Physicochemical Parameters of Raw Milk[7]

[6] Basiladze G., Butter Production Technology, Tbilisi, 2024, p. 34; Davydov R. B., Milk and Dairy Farming, Tbilisi, 1976, p. 46.

[7] Tabatadze L., Prospects for the Conservation and Use of the Georgian Mountain Cattle Breed in Georgia. Contemporary Current Scientific Issues. Gori, Georgia, 2010, p. 378.

Name of Raw MAterial	Density, (g/cm^3) Average Not Less Than	Solids-Not-Fat (%) Average Not Less Than	Fat (%) Average Not Less Than	Protein (%) Average Not Less Than	Lactose (%) Average	Ash (%)	Acidity Not More Than (°T)
Raw Milk	1,028	8,7	3,8	3,3	4,7	0,7	16-18°T

5. Confirmation of Origin

The traceability of "Sazanos Kveli" shall be ensured at the stages of milking, cheese production, ripening, cutting, packaging and distribution.

For the purpose of ensuring traceability, a family production entity whose activities are related to any stage of the production of the protected geographical indication "Sazanos Kveli" shall be required to have appropriate information related to the stages of cheese production, ripening and placing on the market and to keep the relevant records.

6. Description of Production Process

In family production, cattle are milked in the morning and evening. The raw milk obtained is strained through a coarse cloth or 2–3 layers of gauze into a bucket or large clay pots. It is advisable to maintain the temperature of the freshly drawn milk.

Milk intended for the production of "Sazanos Kveli" shall be freshly drawn, unripened, unpasteurized, with an acidity within the range of 16–18°T. "Sazanos Kveli" belongs to the group of uncooked cheeses; it is removed by hand and is also referred to as "handmade cheese". Rennet (chymosin or pepsin), known locally as "cheese mother", is added to the freshly drawn and strained milk intended for coagulation at a temperature of 32–34°C, and the milk is stirred with a stick. Chymosin is prepared from the gastric mucosa of calves and lambs, while pepsin is prepared from the stomachs of adult ruminants and pigs. To maintain the temperature, the vessel containing the milk is placed near the fire. The normal milk coagulation process lasts 30–40 minutes. Completion of the coagulation process is determined by placing a hand on the resulting curd: if the coagulated mass does not adhere to the hand, the milk is considered coagulated. The resulting curd is cut with a stick in mutually perpendicular directions to obtain cubes measuring 10–15 mm. At the same time, the vessel containing the milk is placed on the stove and heated, while the mass is stirred and broken up by hand until cheese grains approximately the size of a hazelnut are obtained; this process lasts 20–30 minutes. The grains acquire the desired size, elasticity, firmness and moderate dryness. The finished grains are gradually gathered with both hands on one side of the vessel, and the rounded, ball-like cheese mass is removed, turned in the hands and moderately pressed so that moisture remains in the cheese mass. The drained, rounded and formed cheese wheel is placed in a clay or plastic bowl for self-pressing. The first turning is carried out after 10 minutes, the second after 30 minutes, and the third after another 30 minutes. Cheese made in the morning remains in the bowl at room temperature until evening. In the evening, coarse crystalline salt is sprinkled over the outer surface of the cheese wheel and rubbed in by hand. The cheese is left in the same bowl until morning and is then stored in a clay vessel in the brine

(15–16%) formed from its own released salt and whey for no more than one week, after which the cheese is ready to be placed on the market.

7. Link With The Geographical Area

7.1 Natural Factor

One of the main activities of the population of the geographical area is the production of milk and "Sazanos Kveli", distinguished by its particular quality and characteristics. The distinctive qualities of the local cheese are attributable to such factors as the existing natural conditions, the endemic cattle breed and local experience in cheese production.

The local hayfields and pastures are characterized by various types of meadow vegetation, the species composition (clover, alfalfa, ryegrass, timothy grass, matitela, quail grass and urobalkhi) and nutritional value of which largely determine the distinctive qualities and popularity of cheese made from local milk. Until the onset of winter, cows feed on these grasses. In winter, locally produced maize straw is mainly used as feed, supplemented with hay made from the above-mentioned plants and crushed maize.

The quality of the local grass and, consequently, of the milk is determined both by the composition of the soils found in this area (humus-carbonate, brown, yellow and podzolic soils, etc.) and by the local humid subtropical climate. The distinctive qualities of "Sazanos Kveli" are also largely attributable to the endemic Georgian Mountain cattle breed, which has distinctive physiological characteristics and is well adapted to the local conditions and climate.

7.2 Human Factor

Based on centuries-old folk traditions, and unlike in the other regions of Imereti, the population of the specified geographical area developed an original technology for the production of "Sazanos Kveli", the particular features of which are as follows:

- "Sazanos Kveli" is produced from freshly drawn, unripened raw milk obtained from healthy cows of the endemic Georgian Mountain breed during the bactericidal phase, with an acidity ranging from 16–18°T, instead of the ripened milk with an acidity of 20–21°T used in the production of Imeretian cheese.
- "Sazanos Kveli" is produced exclusively in family production by a family production entity, on a non-industrial basis.
- "Sazanos Kveli" is made from milk that has not undergone heat treatment[8], during which a number of bacteria beneficial to cheese production (for example, lactic acid bacteria) are destroyed and some of the native enzymes in milk (for example, lipases) are broken down. These contribute to the development of the characteristic taste and aroma of the cheese, which cannot be produced by the conventional addition of bacterial starter cultures to milk intended for cheese production[9].
- The distinctive sensory properties of "Sazanos Kveli" ready for placing on the market are developed during a short-term ripening process (not exceeding one week), which, unlike that of

[8] Скотт Р., Робинсон Р., Уилби Р., Производство Сыра, Научные основы и технологии, Издательство ПРОФЕССИЯ, Санкт-Петербург 2005, С 146/ Scott R., Robinson R., Wilbey R., Cheesemaking: Scientific Principles and Technologies, PROFESSION Publishing House, St. Petersburg, 2005, p. 146.

[9] Скотт Р., Робинсон Р., Уилби Р., Производство Сыра, Научные основы и технологии, Издательство ПРОФЕССИЯ, Санкт-Петербург 2005, С 175/ Scott R., Robinson R., Wilbey R., Cheesemaking: Scientific Principles and Technologies, PROFESSION Publishing House, St. Petersburg, 2005, p. 175.

Imeretian cheese, takes place exclusively in salt-whey brine, resulting in cheese with a relatively more yellow colour, a distinctly pleasant aroma and taste, and a delicate consistency[10].

7.3 Reputation

"Sazanos Kveli" has been produced in Imereti for centuries. The distinctive character of "Sazanos Kveli" and the high demand for it led to the existence of a cheese market in the vicinity of this area. The agricultural products market, the so-called "market located near the Iron Bridge", was established in Upper Sazano in the 19th century, and cheese produced by the population of Sazano and the surrounding villages continues to be sold there to this day. "Sazanos Kveli" is distinguished by its taste characteristics and enjoys particular popularity in local cuisine. It should be noted that "Sazanos Kveli" is mainly consumed as fresh (chkinti) cheese for the preparation of the traditional Georgian dish – khachapuri.

It should be emphasized that "Sazanos Kveli" is referred to in a number of sources, including: based on expeditionary research conducted by "Origin Georgia" in 2016, "Sazanos Kveli", due to its recognition, was considered one of the important Georgian products with the potential for protection as a geographical indication[11]; "Sazanos Kveli" is included in the "Atlas of Georgian Food Products Linked to Their Place of Origin"[12], developed within the framework of an internationally supported project; furthermore, "Sazanos Kveli" is described in the Catalogue[13] of Georgian Traditional Dairy Products.

A number of television reports have also been dedicated to the distinctive character of "Sazanos Kveli": "Sazanos Kveli – Expedition to Imereti"[14]; "Sazano-Imeretian Cheese, Khachapuri Baked in a Tone Oven and Ekala; Good Morning Georgia"[15].

8. Packaging. Labelling

A wheel of "Sazanos Kveli" may be supplied to the consumer either whole or cut into pieces, packaged or unpackaged.

With regard to both packaged and unpackaged "Sazanos Kveli", information shall be provided to the consumer taking into account the requirements established by the legislation of Georgia "On the Provision of Food Information to Consumers", "On the Approval of the Technical Regulation on Milk and Dairy Products" and "On Appellations of Origin and Geographical Indications of Goods".

When "Sazanos Kveli" is supplied to the consumer, the name of the product shall appear on the packaging, in the principal field of vision:

In Georgian: "საზანოს ყველი"
and the inscription "რეგისტრირებული გეოგრაფიული აღნიშვნა"

[10] Piranishvili N. L., How to Make High-Quality Cheese, State Publishing House of the Georgian SSR, Tbilisi, 1949, p. 41.
[11] Gabunia D., Kvimsadze M., Gabunia E., Geographical Indications: Quality and Development, Origin Georgia, p. 244.
[12] Atlas of Georgian Food Products Linked to Their Place of Origin, in cooperation with the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture and Sakpatenti, with the support of Elkana and Slow Food International, p. 42.
[13] Mikadze-Chikvaidze A., Koniashvili K., Catalogue of Georgian Traditional Dairy Products, USDA Food for Progress, 2018, p. 61.
[14] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5g96GrAuIq8&t=1s
[15] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bq-jNBx_Mwc

as well as the official symbol of registered Geographical Indication, the use of which is regulated in accordance with the procedure established by the legislation of Georgia.

In Latin script: "Sazanos Kveli"

and the inscription "Protected Geographical Indication" and/or PGI

In Cyrillic script: "Сазанос квели"

and the inscription "Охраняемое Географическое Указание".

9. Control Bodies

State control of "Sazanos Kveli", in accordance with the requirements established by the legislation of Georgia, shall be exercised by the competent authority of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia – the National Food Agency, or by a control body – a legal entity to which the Ministry has delegated the performance of a specific task related to state control and which is accredited by the relevant body of Georgia or of a member country of the European Union or the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

The association of producers of "Sazanos Kveli" (if such exists), in accordance with the Law of Georgia "On Appellations of Origin and Geographical Indications of Goods", for the purpose of ensuring the quality, reputation and authenticity of "Sazanos Kveli", shall, within the scope of its authority, monitor the use of the name of goods placed on the market and carry out other actions provided for by this Law and the legislation of Georgia.