

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0125/09
by Urszula Gacek (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Piękny Jaś beans from the Dunajec Valley (or Dunajec Valley beans) - application for registration in the EU

Are *Piękny Jaś* beans about to become Małopolska's third regional product, after the cheeses *oscypek* and *bryndza*?

Beans formed the basis of the daily diet of the Incas, the Mayas and the Aztecs. They have been a staple in India and China for centuries. Beans were already being grown in Mexico and Peru thousands of years ago. The ancient Romans both ate them and used them to make face powder. However, it was not until the 16th century that beans started to be widely grown in Europe, after Christopher Columbus brought seeds back to Spain from America. Beans were introduced into Poland by Queen Bona Sforza, who is famous for revolutionising Polish cuisine.

The *Piękny Jaś* runner bean was first grown in the Dunajec, Raba and Vistula areas, and, by the end of the 19th century, was known throughout Poland. An account which appears in the parish records in the village of Tropie of a murder resulting from the theft of beanpoles stands as evidence of the long history of growing this variety in the Dunajec Valley.

The Dunajec Valley *Piękny Jaś* is one of the largest beans in the runner bean family.

Piękny Jaś beans are grown in a number of municipalities in the Dunajec Valley in the Małopolska region, namely: Gródek nad Dunajcem in the county ('powiat') of Nowy Sącz, Zakliczyn, Pleśna, Wojnicz, Tarnów, Wietrzychowice, Żabno, Radłów and Wierzchosławice in the county of Tarnów, Czychów in the county of Brzesko and Gręboszów in the county of Dąbrowa.

Bean growing accounts for a major share of local farm incomes.

An application for the registration of a designation of origin in respect of the agricultural product *Piękny Jaś* beans from the Dunajec Valley has been submitted the Commission in accordance with a decision of 17 January 2007 of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development adopted pursuant to Council Regulation (EC) No 510/2006 of 20 March 2006 on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs¹.

The award of a protected geographical indication will make this product more competitive and will help to protect the traditions and cultural heritage of the Małopolska region.

As an MEP for the Małopolska region, I should like to enquire:

- what stage has been reached in the processing of the above application?
- when the Commission expects to take a decision on the matter?

¹ OJ L 93, 31.3.2006, p. 12.