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**GAIN Report Number:** JA6059

## Japan

**Post:** Tokyo

### **GI Application Submitted for “Prosciutto di Parma”**

**Report Categories:**

Agricultural Situation  
FAIRS Subject Report  
Livestock and Products

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**Report Highlights:**

Japan’s Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) announced an application for a geographical indication (GI) for “Prosciutto di Parma,” filed by Italy on December 7, 2016. This is the first application for an imported product under the Japanese system. Public comments on the application are due to MAFF by March 7, 2017. Interested U.S. parties also are welcome to provide a copy of their comments to [agtokyo@fas.usda.gov](mailto:agtokyo@fas.usda.gov).

Keywords: Geographical Indication, Prosciutto di Parma, JA6059

**General Information:**

Japan's Ministry Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) announced via its [website](#) (Japanese) an application for GI protection for "Prosciutto di Parma," filed by Italy on December 7, 2016– See Appendix 1 for an unofficial English translation. This is the first application for foreign product since the Act for Protection of Names of Designated Agricultural, Forestry and Fishery Products and Foodstuffs (GI Act) was established in June 2015 (see [JA5008](#)).

Interested parties are invited to comment on the application in Japanese using a comment [form](#) available on MAFF's website (in Japanese) -- See Appendix 2 for an unofficial English translation. You may notice that the comment form refers to articles in the GI Act – See Appendix 3 for an unofficial translation of the articles of the GI Act referenced in the comment form.

MAFF will permit public inspection of the application (which includes product specification details as well as a rule for production process management) for 60 days (i.e., until February 7, 2017). Additionally, comments from any interested parties must be submitted within three months from the date of the public notice of the application for GI protection (i.e., by March 7, 2017).

Comments are to be filed in-person by hand or via post to:

Intellectual Property Division, Food Industry Affairs Bureau, MAFF  
1-2-1, Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, 100-8950, Japan  
Between 10:00 – 12:00, 13:00-17:00, except Saturdays, Sundays, and Holidays

Interested U.S. parties also are also welcome to share their comments on the application with FAS/Tokyo at [agtokyo@fas.usda.gov](mailto:agtokyo@fas.usda.gov).

**Background on Regional Collective Trademark**

"Prosciutto di Parma" was registered as a regional collective trademark by Japan's Patent Office (JPO) in August 2007. Accordingly, the name has been afforded certain protections since then in the Japanese market. However, GI protection may be perceived to be preferable to regional collective trademark protection because, in part:

1) Under the GI system, MAFF is in charge of investigating and discontinuing any violations. However, a producer protected by a regional collective trade mark is responsible for addressing any violations itself, without Government assistance.

and

2) If a GI protection is granted, a producer is protected so long as it continues to produce the product. However, a regional collective trade mark requires renewal every 10 years (for a fee).

See [JA5008 for a more comprehensive analysis, including](#) a table showing the major distinctions between MAFF's GI system and the collective trademark system.

## **Appendix 1. Unofficial Translation of the GI Application for “Prosciutto di Parma”**

1. Number of application for registration: 77
2. Date of registration application: July 22, 2016
3. Name of Applicant: Consorzio del Prosciutto di Parma
4. Applicant's address: PARMA (PR) LARGO CALAMANDREI 1/A CAP 43121 ITALY
5. Name of the applicant's representative: CAPANNA VITTORIO (Chairman)
6. Applicant website address: <http://www.prosciuttodiparma.com/> (Italian), <http://parmaham.org/> (Japanese)
7. Classification to which agricultural, forestry and fishery products belong: 20th Class, Meat products, Hams
8. Name of agriculture, forestry and fishery products: Prosciutto di Parma, Parma Ham
9. Producing areas such as agricultural, forestry and fishery products: Republic of Italy, a part of Parma Province in Emilia-Romagna Province, (a) south of the Emilia Way at a distance of no less than 5 kilometer (km), (b) up to an altitude not higher than 900 meters, (c) bordered to the east by the Enza River and to the west by the Stirone River.
10. Characteristic traits of agriculture, forestry and fishery products

### (1) Introduction

Prosciutto di Parma is a flavorful raw ham made of selected pork thigh meat that has been cured in the process in order to soften with minimal salt. Prosciutto di Parma has reduced weight by more than 1/4 of the original due to moisture reduction. Its meat becomes soft by curing and the flavor is condensed.

Prosciutto di Parma is a registered product of the European Union's Protected Designation of Origin (PDO).

### (2) The appearance of Prosciutto di Parma

A round external shape. The distal part (the foot) and any external imperfections that may compromise the product image are removed, trimming to leave a maximum of 6 cm of meat standing proud of the head of the femur.

### (3) Weight of Prosciutto di Parma

Weight is normally 8 to 10 kg but never less than 7 kg.

### (4) Color of Prosciutto di Parma

The color of sliced product is uniform pink to red, interspersed with pure white where fat is present.

(5) The aroma and taste of Prosciutto di Parma

Mild and delicate flavor, slightly salty with a fragrant and distinctive flavor.

(6) Components of Prosciutto di Parma

It is known that high quality ham must contain a limited amount of sodium chloride and moisture and the proteolysis index has a negative effect on the hardness of the lean meat.

The range of salt content, moisture content, and proteolysis index of Prosciutto di Parma are as follows.

- Prosciutto di Parma with weight 9 kg or more.

Moisture: 59.0% to 63.5%

Salt content: 4.5% to 6.7%

Proteolysis index: 24.0% to 31.0%

- Prosciutto di Parma with weight between 7 and 9 kg

Moisture: 59.0% to 64.0%

Salt content: 4.5% to 6.9%

Proteolysis index: 24.0% to 31.0%

(7) Food additives

Unlike other common hams, the ingredients of Prosciutto di Parma are only pork meat and salt. It does not contain additives such as nitrite and nitrate as a coloring and preservative which are commonly used for manufacturing processed meat products. Such artificial food additives are prohibited for use and Prosciutto di Parma is the highest quality meat carefully cured by skilled artisans with their skill and experience.

(8) Nutritional value of Prosciutto di Parma

The proteins of Prosciutto di Parma contain abundant free amino acids due to the natural decomposition of proteins during long-term cure (12% in total protein) (the percentages in parenthesis are average values, the same applies hereinafter). Prosciutto di Parma is also easily digested.

Oleic acid (43.34%) the main component of olive oil, accounts for the largest portion (43.4 percent) in the fat of Prosciutto di Parma. It also contains a lot of stearic acid (11.30%) and linoleic acid (7.96%) which are considered to be effective in preventing atherosclerosis. In addition, the lean portion (in case of removing the fat from the surface) contains valine (198.5 mg) (average included in 100 g, the same applies hereinafter), leucine (268.7 mg), isoleucine (175.0 mg) in abundance. Prosciutto di Parma is therefore an ideal food for athletes and those who consume a lot of energy. Prosciutto di Parma is rich in minerals, containing phosphorus (1/4 to 1/6 of the daily nutritional requirement), potassium, iron and zinc.

11. Method of production of agriculture, forestry and fishery products

(1) Careful selection of raw materials

The long and backbreaking process of making Prosciutto di Parma begins with careful selection of pork as a raw material.

Hogs for Prosciutto di Parma are limited to Large White, Landrace, or Duroc, which are born at certified hog farms located in the north and central Italy, including Emilia-Romagna, Veneto, Lombardy, Piedmont, Molise, Umbria, Tuscany, Marche, Abruzzo and Lazio. Those hogs are fed and fattened with specially formulated blended grains for production of Prosciutto di Parma, cereals, and whey from Parmigiano Reggiano cheese. Hogs maintain the highest level of health and are considered to gain weight gently. Only the castrated healthy hogs that have grown to a weight of 150 kg or more after at least a nine month feeding period are sent to slaughter. This is a big difference from other inexpensive general hams, which are usually made from hogs born and raised in Northern Europe and being processed after a six month feeding period.

Raw materials (fresh legs of hogs) of Prosciutto di Parma have the following properties.

- Fat concentration: The iodine value and the linoleic acid content in the inner fat layer and the outer fat layer of the subcutaneous fat layer of the leg meat shall not exceed 70% and 15% respectively.

- Fat layer: the depth of the fat layer of the external part of the fresh, trimmed leg, measured vertically from the top of the femur (near rib), must be approximately 20 millimeters (mm) for fresh legs used for the production of 'Prosciutto di Parma' weighing between 7 and 9 kilograms (kg) and 30 mm for fresh legs used for the production of 'Prosciutto di Parma' weighing more than 9 kg. The thickness of this fat layer must not be less than 15 mm and 20 mm for the two categories of fresh legs, including the rind. At the crown, the layer of fat must be such that the rind cannot separate from the underlying layer of muscle fiber.

- Fresh trimmed legs should preferably weigh between 12 and 14 kg, but may not weigh less than 10 kg.

- Quality of meat: Legs confirmed to satisfy conditions of muscle disorders (PSE, DFD, etc.) by a veterinarian at a slaughterhouse are excluded from the production line.

- Legs from hogs slaughtered less than 24 hours or more than 120 hours may not be used.

(2) Production procedure of Prosciutto di Parma (before slicing)

"Prosciutto di Parma" undergoes the following 10 processing stages:

a. Separation, b. Cooling, c. Trimming, d. Salting, e. Resting Period, f. Washing/Drying, g. Pre-curing, h. Greasing, i. Final curing, j. Quality inspection

a. Separation

The hog has to be:

Healthy- rested – without food for 15 hours.

Slaughter takes place if the above requirements are met; afterwards legs are separated from the sides.

b. Cooling

Hams are then placed in special cold storage rooms for 24 hours to reduce the ham's temperature from 40°C to 0°C. Cooling hardens the meat and facilitates trimming. During the cooling stage, the weight of hams reduces by at least 1%.

#### c. Trimming

Trimming removes fat and rind from hams and makes them peculiar “chicken leg” round shape. Trimming will make the ham look better and make it easy for salting. During these operations, legs with even the slightest imperfection are discarded. After trimming, legs lose up to 24% of their weight in fat and muscle. Apart from refrigeration, legs that are used for the production of Prosciutto di Parma must not undergo any other preservation treatment, including freezing.

#### d. Salting

Slaughterhouses send refrigerated and trimmed legs (average weight 15 kg) to meat processing plants every week. Firstly, skilled salt artisans put wet and dry salt on hams. Skin is treated with wet salt, while lean parts are sprinkled with dry salt. It is extremely important that salting is carried out on legs that have been kept at a correct and constant temperature because an excessively cold leg absorbs little salt, while a leg that has not been sufficiently refrigerated can be prone to decomposition.

Chemicals, preservatives or other kinds of additives are not used. Legs do not undergo smoking.

Salted hams are stored in cold storage rooms called preliminary salting rooms at a temperature ranging between 1°C and 4°C at about 80% humidity.

After 6-7 days of storage in these rooms, hams are taken out and sprinkled again with tiny amounts of salt. Hams are then put back into new cold storage rooms, called final salting rooms, to store for 15 to 18 days depending on their weight.

During this period, hams slowly absorb salt and lose some of their moisture. At the end of the salting period, hams weigh about 3.5% to 4% less.

#### e. Resting

After removing all of the residual salt, hams are stored in resting rooms for between 60 and 90 days at about 75% humidity and at a temperature between 1°C and 5°C. During this stage, hams must be allowed to “breeze” and should not become too dry or too wet. The air in the rooms is changed frequently. The absorbed salt penetrates deeply into hams and evenly distributes in a ham muscle. Weight of hams reduces about 8 to 10 % during this process.

Then hams are hung in another refrigerator at 75% humidity for 70 days. In this period, meat of hams turns black, but it regains the original rose color at the final stage of curing.

#### f. Washing/Drying

After rinsing with lukewarm water, rinds of hams are scraped and any remaining salt or impurities are removed. Hams are set out to dry for several days in the air when the weather conditions are favorable (dry, windy and sunny weather) or in special drying rooms for Prosciutto di Parma.

#### g. Pre-curing

Pre-curing is carried out in large rooms with windows where hams are hung on the traditional “scalere” (ladders). When the outside temperature and humidity are in favorable conditions, windows are opened to facilitate a constant and gradual drying of the hams. Skilled artisans believe that this period is a very important time for Prosciutto di Parma to create its unique flavor.

After pre-curing, hams are beaten to make them their typical rounded shape. The cavity around the bare part of the bone is sprinkled with pepper to keep the contact area dry. During this stage the hams lose a further 8 to 10% of their weight. When pre-curing is over, the part of the hams without a rind is dry and hard.

#### h. Greasing

The cavity around the bare part of the bone, exposed muscular parts and any cracks are covered with a layer of ground pork fat mixed with a pinch of salt and ground pepper and, if necessary, rice flour. The purpose of greasing is softening the superficial muscular layers to prevent from drying too quickly compared to the inner layers as well as causing extra moisture loss.

#### i. Final curing

In the 7th month, hams are moved to the “cellars” which have less air flow and light. Hams are hung there until the end of curing. Curing of hams takes at least one year to a maximum of three years from the first salting.

During the final curing, important biochemical and enzymatic processes take place and it is during this stage that hams acquire their special fragrance and taste. Hams lose about 5 % of their weight during final curing.

Hams are subjected to a quality check before being moved from cellars.

#### j. Quality check

After a period of 10 months for hams with a final weight of 7 to 9 kg and 12 months for hams weighing more than 9 kg, the independent agency IPQ (Parma Quality Institute) checks the curing period with seals applied to hams and confirms that hams conform to all production processes. The IPQ inserts special horse bone needles which rapidly absorb fragrances in different parts of hams. Then they smell them to check the quality of hams. The official certification marks, the crown mark of Parma, are stamped on hams that have passed all quality checks as a proof of genuine Prosciutto di Parma.

#### (3) Pre-sliced packs of Prosciutto di Parma

Sale of pre-sliced packs of Prosciutto di Parma is allowed when Consorzio del Prosciutto di Parma authorized stores to slice hams and sell in their stores or when selling qualified pre-sliced packs conforming to the following A) to J) slicing processes.

A) As in the case in all production processes, including hog farmers, slaughterhouses and ham processing plants described at 11(1) and (2), slicing or packing factories of Prosciutto di Parma must be located at: Republic Italy, a part of Parma Province in Emilia-Romagna Province, (a) south of the Emilia Way at a distance of no less than 5 km, (b) up to an altitude not higher than 900 meter, (c) bordered to the east by the Enza River and to the west by the Stirone River.

B) Production of pre-sliced packed Prosciutto di Parma, including deboning, preparation, slicing, and packing, can only be carried out under IPQ inspectors as in the case in all production processes described at 11 (1) and (2). Doing so proves that pre-sliced packs of Prosciutto di Parma are made of authentic Prosciutto di Parma. Slicing and packing operations of Prosciutto di Parma are conducted at factories certified in advance by IPQ located in the area prescribed in 11 (3) a).

C) One who wishes to produce pre-sliced packs of Prosciutto di Parma shall submit an application form specifying the following contents to IPQ.

- a) Registration to chamber of commerce, industry, craftsmen or agriculture
- b) Name, company name, office on the company's register, legal representative
- c) Place of packing factory
- d) Details of public health permit and description of site and equipment
- e) Production capacity and production volume
- f) Name of the packing material supplier, company name, office in the register

D) IPQ officially approves a manufacturer of packing materials and a packer and permits to copy the certification mark of Consorzio del Prosciutto di Parma onto packing materials.

E) Manufacturers of packing materials and pre-sliced packs agree to comply with the provisions stipulated by the IPQ. They agree to accept any kind of inspection related to production of pre-sliced packs of Prosciutto di Parma, such as checking the number of the packing materials before and after the usage.

F) Hams used for production of pre-sliced packs of Prosciutto di Parma shall have a moisture content of 60% or less and water activity shall not exceed 0.91.

G) The ham is divided into two weight classes which determine the minimum curing period and best before date. Best before dates differ as shown below depending on the curing period and packing style (whether with or without a film between sliced hams or vacuum pack).

Best before date table

Weight of hams	Curing period (Months)	Packed with films (Days)	Packed without films (Days)	Vacuum-packed (Days)
Under 9.5 kg	13	90	60	150
	15	120	90	150
9.5 kg or more	16	90	60	150
	18	120	90	150

Pre-sliced packs without using films between slices of hams must be processed in an extremely hygienic environment.

H) Storage and transportation of pre-sliced packs of Prosciutto di Parma shall comply with the standards of the Republic of Italy and the EU's existing regulations, in particular the storage temperature and the criteria for the particular transport vehicle equipment.

I) All pre-sliced packs of Prosciutto di Parma, regardless of package shapes, size and weight, must bear, on the upper left, a triangle covering 25% of the package surface on a black background showing the consortium trademark "ducal crown", "Prosciutto di Parma" and the wording "Protected Designation of Origin according to Law No. 26 dated 13th February 1990 and EC regulation 1107/96. Packaged under the supervision of Istituto Parma Qualita".

J) Packages of pre-sliced packs of Prosciutto di Parma must include the name of a company that produced Prosciutto di Parma (which made and sold hams after curing) or a name of a company that produced pre-sliced packs. These names must be written on a glossy translucent straight part next to the black triangle using minimum of 4.5 mm letters (letter type is free) in black.

In addition, in any case, the information from a) to g) below shall be listed on packages of pre-sliced packs of Prosciutto di Parma.

- a) Name or company name or registered trademark of a producer, a packer agent or a seller.
- b) Place of packing factory
- c) Production time (year month of aging start)
- d) Best before date
- e) Storage procedure
- f) Net weight
- g) Nutritional component

## 12. Reasons of attributes of agriculture, forestry and fisheries products mainly originate from their production areas

### (1) Easy to procure feed for raw material (hogs)

Hog farming has always existed in the plains of the Po Valley, initially because these areas were covered with oak forests that provided acorns used to fatten omnivorous hogs. The hogs were later raised and fattened on dairy products from dairy farms (whey) and other vegetables such as corn. An abundant and good quality hog supply by active hog farms in the low plains just under the production area of Prosciutto di Parma has been contributing to the establishment and development of its production.

In addition to hog farming, dairy farming has long been active in the production area of Prosciutto di Parma, which overlaps with the production area of Parmigiano Reggiano cheese in Parma Province. Therefore, hogs for Prociutto di Parma always have been fed whey which is a by-product of Parmigiano Reggiano cheese. Flavorful Prosciutto di Parma has been produced from hogs which ate feed containing the whey.

### (2) Advantage of the production area

Unlike the salting process, the curing process of Prosciutto di Parma requires a not too humid environment. The hills around Parma, the Modena hills to south and the Veneto region to north of the Po Valley, were historically ideal for curing hams because the humidity levels were relatively low, especially during the summer months after slaughtering has taken place. Also this area has been ideal for production of Prosciutto di Parma because salt was available locally.

Production of Prosciutto di Parma uses a little salt to obtain natural and rich flavor. Therefore, the environment of the production site as described above is increasingly important.

## 13. History of agriculture, forestry and fisheries products at their production areas

(1) The history of ham production is very old. Already in the 2nd century BC, Cato the Censor who was a politician in Roman times and wrote in his book "agriculture" about the wonderful aroma of hams cured by wind, made {prosciutto} around the town of Parma in Italy.

He also wrote "When they spread a little amount of fat on hams of hogs and dry them, hams will cure without rotting at all. They become delicious meat and we can eat for a while and the fragrance will not fade". Historical facts show that existence of trading of salted pork with Italian cities and Greece in the Po River basin during the Etruscan era in the 5th century BC.

(2) Among the producers who had independently produced hams, 23 producers voluntarily founded Consorzio del Prosciutto di Parma in 1963. The objectives of the foundation are to establish strict regulations on the traditional processing methods of hams which have been handed down from ancient times to this area, to preserve the fame of making the Parma's raw ham, guarantee the quality of the ham in order to distinguish it from other hams. It has passed already 54 years in 2016 since "Prosciutto di Parma" was established by Consorzio del Prosciutto di Parma. Its production in 2009 was 9,025,769 pieces. The value of production shipment was 740 million euros (about 96.6 billion yen) and the total retail sales were 1.5 billion euros (about 195.9 billion yen).

14. 14 Whether or not applicable to Article 13, Paragraph 1, Item 4, item b of the Act Applicable

(This is the same or similar to a registered trade mark.)

Name or name of trademark owner: Consorzio del Prosciutto di Parma

Registered trademark: PROSCIUTTO DI PARMA

Designated goods or designated services: Italian ham from Parma region

Registration number for trademark registration: No. 5073378

Date of registration of trademark right: August 31, 2007

Name or name of exclusive licensee: NA

Date of consent of trademark owner etc.: NA

15. (If contents listed in 9 to 11 and items specified in Article 7, Paragraph 1, Item 4 to No. 6 stipulated in the description are different): NA

16. photo of agricultural, forestry and fisheries product



17. Date of Notice: December 7, 2016

18. Inspection period of applications etc.

(2 months from public notice date) until February 7, 2017

19. Comment period

(3 months from public notice date) until March 7, 2017



## **Appendix 2. Comment form**

Subjects to be confirmed in submitting opinion:

Regarding the information of the submitter when sending a copy of this opinion to the applicant, I would like:

- To send as described in submission of opinions
- Not to display submitter's address, name, telephone number (blacked out) and only display the name of city or town where a submitter lives.

Year / Month / Day

Submitter:

Name (in case of corporation, name of an organization and representative's name): seal

Additional notes  
Form 2 (Relating to Article 8)

A comment in writing

Mr. Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

Year / Month / Day

Submitter:

Address: (〒)

Name (in case of corporation, name of an organization and representative's name):

seal

Phone number:

I submit my opinion as follows based on Article 9, Paragraph 1 of the Act on Protection of Names of Designated Agricultural, Forestry and Fisheries Products and Foodstuffs (hereinafter referred to as the "Act").

1 Application for registration subject to my opinion

(1) Number and date of application for registration

(2) Classification of application Agriculture, forestry and fishery products and foodstuffs

(3) Application name of agricultural, forestry and fishery products and foodstuffs

2 Contents of opinion

The application for registration above at section 1,

It should be registered.

(The reason)

The registration should be refused for the following reasons (multiple selections are acceptable).

It falls under Article 13, Paragraph 1, Item 2 of the Act.

(The reason)

It falls under Article 13, Paragraph 1, Item 3 of the Act.

(The reason)

It falls under Article 13, Paragraph 1, Item 4 of the Act.

(The reason)

Other

### **Appendix 3. Provisional Translation of the GI Act related to the comment form**

#### Article 8-10: Publication and Opposition Procedure

Minister shall, upon the receipt of the application, publicize the application for registration for the period of two months from the date of publication. Any natural and juridical person may submit a notice of opposition to Minister within three month from the date of the publication.

#### Article 13: Decision of Refusal

Minister shall refuse the application if:

- (1) the application is made by a group of producers whose registration has been cancelled pursuant to Article 22 where two years have yet to elapse since the date of such cancellation;
- (2) the method of production process management does not conform to criteria necessary to ensure that producers comply with the production method stipulated in the specification or a group of producers lack in financial or technical ability to conduct production process management;
- (3) the product does not meet the definition of designated agricultural, forestry and fishery products and foodstuffs; or
- (4) a name is considered to be any of the following:
  - (a) generic term; or
  - (b) the name that is identical or similar to the registered trademarks, except those submitted by owner of the registered trademark or authorized user.