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## Japan

**Post:** Tokyo

### Prosciutto di Parma GI Registered in Japan

**Report Categories:**

Agricultural Situation

**Approved By:**

Christopher Riker

**Prepared By:**

Daisuke Sasatani

**Report Highlights:**

Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) announced an application for a geographical indications (GI) protection for Prosciutto di Parma / Parma Ham filed by Consorzio del Prosciutto di Parma on December 7, 2016. The original application was later withdrawn and re-submitted with some modifications (outlined herein). "Prosciutto di Parma / Parma Ham" was put on public display again on May 22, 2017 and ultimately registered under MAFF's GI protection system on September 15, 2017.

Keywords: Geographical Indication, Prosciutto di Parma, Parma Ham, [JA6059](#), JA7118

## General Information:

“Prosciutto di Parma / Parma Ham” was registered under Japan’s Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF)’s Geographical Indication (GI) protection system on September 15, 2017. See [http://www.maff.go.jp/e/policies/intel/gi\\_act/register.html](http://www.maff.go.jp/e/policies/intel/gi_act/register.html). It is the first foreign agricultural product to successfully receive GI protections in Japan, and one of 42 agricultural products that have been officially registered for GI protections in Japan (as of the date of this report).

According to Consorzio del Prosciutto di Parma, the term “Parma ham” has sometimes been included on ham products in Japan which were not affiliated with Parma or Italy. Accordingly, Consorzio del Prosciutto di Parma also included this term in its application submitted to MAFF in December 2016 (see [JA6059](#)).

Subsequent to Consorzio del Prosciutto di Parma’s December 2016 filing, some parts of the original application were modified to amend the production process outlined in the application. Specifically, the Consorzio del Prosciutto di Parma modified:

- Appearance of Prosciutto di Parma: “A round external shape” was deleted.
- Components of Prosciutto di Parma: Initially, there were two categories: one was Prosciutto di Parma with weight of nine kg or more and the other was with a weight between seven and nine kg. These categories were combined and the moisture content was listed as 59.0-63.5%, salt content as 4.2- 6.2%, and proteolysis index as 24.0-31.0%.
- Nutritional value of Prosciutto di Parma: The entire section was deleted.
- Careful selection of raw materials: Duroc breed was deleted and included among other breeds. The weight of hogs was initially between 150kg or more, but was changed to 160kg (allows  $\pm 10\%$ ).
- Production procedure of Prosciutto di Parma (before slicing):
  - There were initially 10 stages, but this was reduced to nine stages. Both final curing and quality inspection were combined into a single stage.
  - Salting: How much and how often slaughterhouses sent thighs to meat processing plants was deleted.
  - Resting: “Hams are hung in another refrigerator at 75% humidity for 70 days” was deleted.
  - Pre-curing/Trimming: Pre-curing was modified to pre-curing/trimming. Additionally, the following text was deleted: {t}he 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-cutting is over, the part of the hams without a rind is dry and hard.”

- Final-curing/Quality inspection: It is still noted that final-curing of hams takes at least one year, but “a maximum of three years” was deleted.
- Pre-sliced packs of Prosciutto di Parma: The introduction along with parts C), D), E) and H) in the original application were deleted.
- Production and export data were updated. Initial data reported were for 2009, but updated data were reported for 2016.

After the resubmission, the application was put on public display again for an additional three months. The period for public comment closed on August 22, 2017, and, before approving the application, the term “leg meat” was changed to read “thigh meat” across the entirety of the product’s definition.

Prosciutto di Parma was officially registered for GI protections in Japan on September 15, 2017.

Appendix 1, below, includes an unofficial translation of the full public notice of the registered Prosciutto di Parma / Parma ham.

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

1. Number of registration: 41
2. Date of registration: September 15, 2017
3. Number of application for registration: 77
4. Date of registration application: July 22, 2016
5. Name of Applicant: Consorzio del Prosciutto di Parma
6. Applicant's address: PARMA (PR) LARGO CALAMANDREI 1/A CAP 43121 ITALY
7. Name of the applicant's representative: CAPANNA VITTORIO (Chairman)
8. Applicant website address: <http://www.prosciuttodiparma.com/> (Italian), <http://parmaham.org/> (Japanese)
9. Classification to which agricultural, forestry and fishery products belong: 20th Class: Meat products, Hams
10. Name of agriculture, forestry and fishery products: Prosciutto di Parma, Parma Ham
11. 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.
12. 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

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.

Moisture: 59.0% to 63.5%

Salt content: 4.2% to 6.2%

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 at all. 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.

### 13. 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 and other breeds, 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 160 kg (allows  $\pm 10\%$ ) 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 thighs 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 thigh meat shall not exceed 70% and 15% respectively.

- Fat layer: the depth of the fat layer of the external part of the fresh, trimmed thigh, measured vertically from the top of the femur (near rib), must be approximately 20 millimeters (mm) for fresh thighs used for the production of 'Prosciutto di Parma' weighing between 7 and 9 kilograms

(kg) and 30 mm for fresh thighs 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 thighs, 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 thighs should preferably weigh between 12 and 14 kg, but may not weigh less than 10 kg.

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

- Thighs 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 9 processing stages:

a. Separation, b. Cooling, c. Trimming, d. Salting, e. Resting Period, f. Washing/Drying, g. Pre-curing, h. Greasing, i. Final curing and 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 thighs 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 thigh" round shape. Trimming will make the ham look better and make it easy for salting. During these operations, thighs with even the slightest imperfection are discarded. After trimming, thighs lose up to 24% of their weight in fat and muscle.

Apart from refrigeration, thighs 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 thighs to meat processing plants.

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 thighs that have been kept at a correct and constant temperature because an excessively cold thigh absorbs little salt, while a thigh that has not been sufficiently refrigerated can be prone to decomposition. Chemicals, preservatives or other kinds of additives are not used. Thighs 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.

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 in the air when the weather conditions are favorable (dry, windy and sunny weather) or in special drying rooms when weather conditions are unfavorable.

g. Pre-Curing/Trimming

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.

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/Quality check

In about the 7th month, hams are moved to the “cellars” which have less air flow than the pre-curing room. Hams are hung there until the end of curing. Curing of hams takes at least one year 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.

After a period of 12 months for hams, 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 each ham. 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

A) As in the case in all production processes, including hog farmers, slaughterhouses and ham processing plants described at 13(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 13 (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 13 (3) A).

C) 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.

D) 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.

E) 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 bland name “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.”

F) 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

14. 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 Prosciutto 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 extremely important.

15. 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 prosciutto. It has passed already 54 years in 2016 since Consorzio del Prosciutto di Parma was established.

(3) Production in 2016: Its production in 2016 was 8,993,708 pieces. The value of production shipment was 850 million euros (about 105.2 billion yen) and the total retail sales were 1.9 billion

euros (about 235.0 billion yen). In 2016, 107,212 pieces were exported to Japan and the total sales were 107 million euros (about 13.2 billion yen).

16. Whether or not applicable to Article 13, Paragraph 1, Item 4, item b of the Act Applicable: Yes  
(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 and April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2017

Name or name of exclusive licensee: NA

Date of consent of trademark owner etc.: NA

17. (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

18. Photo of agricultural, forestry and fisheries product:

