



**The Czech Republic introduces this year, as the first country in the world, hop marking according to the system adopted at a meeting of the International Hop Growers' Convention (IHGC) and approved by all 34 member states, which represent more than 98% of the world's hop-growing areas.**

The mentioned system is based on the use of three-character codes for international marking of hop varieties and three-character codes for the country and hop-growing area (producing district). The main purpose of using these codes is a quick identification of the variety and its origin. In the context of hop certification pursuant the Czech national Act No 97/1996 Coll., on hop protection, the introduction of this system will be an indisputable contribution to ensuring that the quality and origin of hops can be proven.

Hop certification (consisting of two stages - stage 1 – marking, stage 2 - verification) is carried out by the Central Institute for Supervising and Testing in Agriculture (UKZUZ). The certification process begins with the preparation and distribution of marking material to growers. Then, at harvest inspections are performed with an emphasis on the marking of hops according to the different cadastral areas and varieties.

The marking process is followed by the verification of the quality and the origin of the hops at the respective certification centres under the official surveillance of UKZUZ's employees. The final act of the certification process is the issue of a certificate ("Certificate for a certified product") to the applicant, together with the calculation of fees based on the quantity of certified hops.

In the certification season of 2020/2021, i.e. from 1 August 2020 to 31 July 2021, a total of 6 514 tonnes of hops and hop products were certified, of which 5 729 tonnes were of Czech provenance. UKZUZ issued a total of 2 174 certificates during this period.

The introduction of the international hop marking system was agreed at a meeting of representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic, UKZUZ, the Hop Growers Union of the Czech Republic, and the Union of Hop Merchants and Processors in the Czech Republic. It involved adjustments to the application Hop Field Register, in which marking labels are generated, hop production is registered and certificates declaring the quality and the origin of hops are issued. **This means that as from 1 August 2022 only the international abbreviations of the varieties and areas will be stated both in the weighing documents and in the certificates instead of their full names.**

At present, in three hop-growing areas in the Czech Republic (Tršická, Úštěcká, and Žatecká) 24 registered hop varieties are grown, of which the most grown variety is "Žatecký poloraný červeňák", currently grown on 4 121,6 ha, which represent 82,9 % of the hop-growing areas in the Czech Republic.

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