

WHAT IS CIDER?

– REFLECTION ON THE DEFINITION OF CIDER

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SUMMARY

In Denmark a definition of cider is found in the Regulation on Fruit Juice¹, which was revised in 2003. This definition is discussed and compared to the definitions in the EU, United Kingdom, France and Sweden. The Danish definition was particularly important in 2005, when an additional tax was imposed on alcopops².

[a product made from apple or pear juice or any mix between these, where added sugar is fermented to a content of at least 0.4% vol. ethanol. To cider can be added natural flavours, water and sugar before or after fermentation, with the condition that the content of fruit juice is at least 15% of the final product. Alcohol is not allowed to be added to the product.]

This definition replaces the former definition in the Danish Regulation on Fruit and Vegetable Juice³ from 1990, in which cider was defined as

[a product made from apple juice, where added sugar is fermented to a content of at least 2.0% vol. ethanol. The product contains at least 2 g per litre of the carbon dioxide made by the fermentation.]

INTRODUCTION

In Denmark the term cider is associated with 3 different types of beverages:

- A *soft drink* containing 0.4 – 0.7% vol. alcohol. This is what most people in Denmark associate with the term cider. It has become very popular during the past years and was introduced from Sweden. The soft drink cider is made from water, concentrate, sugar and wine and has really nothing to do with cider in the traditional sense. The content of fruit juice is low.
- An *alcopop* in the Ready-to-Drink (RTD) category based on apple and/or pear concentrate. Like many of the alcopops they are simply soft drinks with alcohol. These products are made from water, concentrate, sugar, wine, added flavours and colourings. The flavours are often from exotic plants and the content of fruit juice is low.
- A *traditional wine* made mainly in United Kingdom, France and Spain although also known from other countries. This type of cider is the original and is a product fermented on apple juice.

In 2003 a new Danish Regulation on Fruit Juice¹ was put into action, in which cider is defined as

Until 2003, all Danish producers of the soft drink cider were granted an exemption to the condition requiring at least 2% vol. alcohol. The new condition of only 0.4% alcohol is made in order to satisfy the producers of the soft drink cider. The former condition requiring carbon dioxide has been removed together with the lowering of the alcohol. The former definition did not allow for still cider, which is a traditional product in Britain.

The below definitions of cider in The European Union in general, United Kingdom, France and Sweden are discussed in relation to the Danish definition. Cider from these countries is considered the most important in the Danish market. The discussion is seen from the personal point of view of the author being a producer of the traditional type of cider. Definitions are found in legislation or in a code of practise, but often it is just a question of common



practise, which products can be called cider. Common to most definitions is that they originate from the traditional cider.

THE EUROPEAN UNION

There is no common EU-legislation covering cider unlike for instance wine.

The Association of the Cider and Fruit Wine Industries of the EU (L'Association des Industries des Cidres et Vins de fruits de l'U.E.), AICV, is an organisation of the producers with members from 11 cider and fruit wine producing countries within the EU.

COUNTRY	MEMBER ORGANISATION
BELGIUM	ASSOCIATION BELGE DU CIDRE C/O CIDRE STASSEN S.A.
DENMARK	VIN OG SPIRITUS ORGANISATIONEN I DANMARK (V.S.O.D.)
FINLAND	FINNISH FOOD AND DRINK INDUSTRIES' FEDERATION
FRANCE	LE SYNDICAT NATIONAL DES TRANSFORMATEURS CIDRIQUES (S.N.T.C.)
GERMANY	VERBAND DER DEUTSCHEN FRUCHTWEIN- UND FRUCHTSCHAUMWEIN-INDUSTRIE E.V.
IRELAND	BULMERS LTD.
LITHUANIA	AB ALITA
NETHERLANDS	SIEBRAND GROEP B.V.
SPAIN	ASOCIACION ESPANOLA DE SIDRAS (AESI)
SWEDEN	KIVIKS MUSTERI AB
UNITED KINGDOM	THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CIDER MAKERS (NACM)

Member countries and organisations of AICV⁴.

According to the Code of Practice set out by AICV⁴ [*cider and perry are derived by the fermentation of the juices of apples or pears respectively without at any time adding distilled alcohol*]. Cider is 'produced from apples and possibly a limited volume of pears' and likewise perry is 'produced from pears and possibly a limited volume of apples'. 'Cider and perry can be still or carbonated either by secondary fermentation or the injection of carbon dioxide. Its alcoholic strength varies between 1.2% and 8.5% by volume. The fortification of cider and perry by adding distilled alcohol is not permitted.]



Traditional English cider matured in oak vats at Sheppy's, Somerset

AICV⁴ includes the following synonymous names for cider: *cider, cyder, cidre, cidre bouché, fermenté de pomme, pétillant de pomme, sidra, appellcider, Apfelwein, äppelcider, siideri*. Likewise, perry includes the following synonymous names: *perry, poiré, poiré bouché, fermenté de poire, pétillant de poire, perencider, Birnenwein, päroncider, päärynäsiideri*.

The use of concentrate and the addition of flavours, colourings or preservatives are not mentioned and thus fully accepted. Neither the amount of fruit juice nor the limited volume of pears/apples in cider/perry is defined. The definition includes the RTD-cider, but not the soft drink cider.

UNITED KINGDOM

In the UK the relevant law covering cider is the Alcoholic Liquor Duties Act 1979. For information reference is made to HM Customs and Excise Public Notice 162, 'Cider and wine production'⁵:

- In cider only 25% pear juice is allowed and in perry only 25% apple juice is allowed.
- Colourings may only be used to produce cider or perry in the colour range straw/gold/golden brown.
- There is no limit for adding sugar or water.
- Preservatives are permitted according to the food legislation. →



Cider is always made from apples (National Association of Cider Makers)

Cider is liable to duty, when the alcohol content is between 1.2 and 8.5% vol. Above 8.5% it is considered wine. The use of concentrate is permitted and there is no lower limit for the juice content. The soft drink cider below 1.2% alcohol exists in the Notice. The RTD-cider is called alcoholic carbonates or alcopops.

The British organisation for producers of cider and perry, National Association of Cider Makers (NACM), accounts for more than 90% of the cider sales in Britain. NACM has made a Code of Practice, which defines cider⁶:

[Cider is defined as a beverage obtained by the partial or complete fermentation of:

- the juice of apples (and pears, if desired, provided that no more than 25% of the mixed juice is pear); the juice may be derived from fresh juice or from concentrated juice or from a mixture of both,*
- with or without the addition before or after fermentation of sugars and/or of potable water,*
- without at any time adding alcoholic liquor,*
- without at any time adding any substance which gives colour or flavour, other than certain specifically permitted ingredients.*

The alcohol content must be greater than 1.2% alcohol by volume (ABV) but less than 8.5% ABV. NACM considers cider at 8.5% ABV or more to be Apple Wine. In the case of perry, NACM requires that no more than 25% of the juice may be from apples.]

This Code of Practice is in full accordance with AICV Code of Practise⁴. The soft drink cider is not included, but the RTD-cider is.

The British beer consumer organisation CAMRA – Campaign for Real Ale – has set up a committee to promote traditional cider and perry called APPLE – Apple and Pear Produce Liaison Executive.

On its home-page CAMRA has put a definition of real draught cider and perry⁷:

[A- Ingredients

- The liquid content before fermentation must consist entirely of non-pasteurised apple (Cider), or pear (Perry) juice.*
- No apple or pear juice concentrates to be used.*
- Normally, only the sugar naturally available in the fruit should be used to cause fermentation, but in years when the level of natural sugar in the fruit is low, the addition of extraneous sugar to aid fermentation is acceptable.*

B- Process

- No pasteurisation to take place during the production process in relation to the cask product.*
- No added colourings to be used.*
- No added flavourings to be used.*
- There must be no artificial carbonation for draught products.*
- Sweetener may be added to fully fermented Cider/Perry to make it sweet or medium.*
- The addition of water is permitted to bring the alcoholic content of the Cider/Perry down to the level required by the producer. Ideally, however, the minimum juice content should not be lower than 90% volume.*
- No micro filtration allowed (this takes all the yeast, leaving a “dead” product).]*

The allowance of artificial sweetener is inconsistent with the conditions of no colourings, no flavourings and no carbonation. The definition covers only the very traditional farm cider products.

Members of the internet newsgroup ukcider.co.uk have agreed on a definition of real cider⁸

[Real cider is the product of fermenting fresh apple juice. The amount of apple juice which went into the final product must be between 85 and 100% and should be clearly stated on the container it is sold in or dispensed from. No artificial sweeteners, flavourings or colourings are permitted. (For real perry substitute pear juice).]

Carbonation and the use of natural sweeteners is left to the discretion of the producer. This approach towards a definition of cider is simple and true to the traditional type.

In the UK *scrumpy* is also a term used for cider products. Originally scrumpy was cider made from windfalls (scrumps). Scrumpy is often rough and cloudy and made by traditional

methods. For some people scrumpy implies an inferior or poorly made cider – for other people scrumpy is high quality real cider.

In North America cider means unfiltered apple juice directly from the press and not pasteurised. They distinguish between sweet cider, which is apple juice and hard cider, which is like the European cider.

FRANCE

The French cider organisation UNICID (l'Union Nationale Interprofessionnelle Cidricole)⁹ distinguishes between the British and French spelling of the word:

[Cider' is a drink obtained from fermented apple juice, sugar and water, whereas 'cidre' is a drink fermented from apple juice or from a mixture of apples and pears. Addition of sugar or water to 'cidre' is not allowed.]

Furthermore, they distinguish between the different forms of cidre:

- [• Cidre traditionnel/Tradition/de tradition: Cider made from recommended varieties of cider apples or varieties used traditionally in the local area and according to fixed terms. The finished product presents in particular a slight, natural residual haziness and has an alcohol content above 4% vol. (likewise for poiré).*
- Cidre fermier : Cider exclusively made from fruits grown on the farm under the farmer's responsibility*
- Cidre de cru : Cider made from local varieties and with a name connected to either the geographical designation or connected to the name of a variety if that variety constitute a majority of the apples from which the cider has been made.*
- Cidre de table : Cider for daily consumption.*
- Cidre de terroir : Cider specific for a region according to utilisation of local varieties and certain skills.*
- Cidre brut: cider containing less than 28 g per litre of residual sugar.*
- Cidre demi-sec: cider containing at least 3% vol. alcohol and containing between 28 and 42 g per litre of residual sugar.*
- Cidre doux: cider containing less than 3% vol. alcohol and more than 35 g per litre of residual sugar.*
- Cidre bouché: cider of a superior quality. Bottled in special bottles.]*

A geographically protected designation exists for cider made in Brittany or Normandy. The cider is to be made from cider apples grown in Brittany/Normandy respectively.

In France they have a product called *Pétillant de pomme*: drink obtained from a light fermentation of pure apple juice. It could be

translated by sparkling apple juice and seems to be the perfect name for the soft drink cider.

With a system like this the consumer knows what to expect.

SWEDEN

In Sweden the National Food Administration (Livsmedelsverket) has defined some rules for cider produced in Sweden for the Swedish market¹⁰:

- Cider is a drink produced from fermented fruit juice of apple and/or pear. Besides permitted additives and natural aromas it is allowed to use non-fermented fruit juice from apples and/or pears, water and sugar. The content of fruit juice in the final product to be at least 15% vol. Fruit juice can even be from concentrate. Cider can be carbonated.*
- The alcohol in cider can only originate from fermentation of apple or pear juice, except for the minimum amount necessary as solvent for additives or aromas.*
- Cider can only be named apple cider or pear cider. Added aromas from other fruits to be stated in the name.*
- In apple cider more than 50% vol. of the juice to be from apples. Likewise for pear cider.*

The definition includes all 3 types of cider and there is no minimum content of alcohol. This definition originates from the soft drink cider. Previously only products below 2.25% alcohol could be called cider. Now, cider with less than 2.25% vol. alcohol is called weak cider (no wine tax) and strong cider contains more than 2.25% vol. alcohol.

DENMARK

When the Fruit Juice Regulation¹ was suggested, Danish Fruit Culture tried to influence the decision-making process with the author as spokesman. Danish Fruit Culture is a network of people interested in genuine fruit products – among others traditional cider. A suggestion was made with two levels of definitions covering the traditional cider in general and the very traditional farm cider:

Level 1: Strong cider

[Strong cider is a drink made by fermentation of apple juice. The juice can contain up to 25% pear juice, but not juice from other fruits. Sugar or concentrate can be added to the juice, but no other 'adjuncts' are allowed. Strong cider can be still or sparkling and addition of carbon dioxide is allowed. Correction of the sweetness with sugar and apple juice or concentrate is allowed. It is not allowed to add distilled alcohol, aroma or colourings. The end product must contain at least 85% fruit juice (fermented or not fermented). The alcohol content must be at least 2.0 and max. 8.5% vol.] →

This definition is very close to the AICV⁴ and NACM⁶ definitions, but differs with regard to concentrate. The above definition allows concentrate only for correction of the sugar content. This definition includes neither soft drink cider nor alcopop cider.

Level 2: Traditional cider

- [• *Traditional cider is a drink made by fermentation of 100% pure freshly pressed apple juice. It is not allowed to use concentrate.*
- *It is not allowed to add juice from other fruits than apples. Neither from other pomes, such as pears, nor from other fruits.*
- *It is not allowed to add water. After washing the apples it should be observed that the water is drained from the apples before milling and pressing.*
- *It is not allowed to adjust the sweetness at any point in the process, neither with sugar, nor with apple juice nor with concentrate. The apples must contain enough sweetness for the fermentation as well as for residual sweetness.*
- *Correction of the juice acidity is not allowed.*
- *It is not allowed to add carbon dioxide. Carbon dioxide should be natural by secondary fermentation in a bottle or in a cask.*
- *It is not allowed to add distilled alcohol, aromas or colourings.*
- *The alcohol content must be at least 2.0 and max. 8.5% vol.*
- *Fermentation is to take place as natural spontaneous fermentation. Use of pure yeast cultures is not permitted.*
- *The malo-lactic fermentation can be spontaneous. Addition of a lactic culture is not permitted.*
- *Pasteurisation is not allowed.*
- *Addition of sulphite and other preservatives is not allowed.*
- *Use of technical additives is allowed, when the manufacturer can make certain that these additives are not present in the final product.*
- *All additives must be stated on the label.]*

This level 2 definition applies to farm cider in the very basic traditional sense.

The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration (Fødevarestyrelsen) would not accept more than one definition for traditional cider in addition to the definition in the regulation, the reason being that unlike for instance France there is no common practise in Denmark for standards for food and drink. Furthermore, the definition in the regulation could not be altered because the industry had already acted according to the definition for years. For these reasons Danish Fruit Culture decided to recommend to the Directorate not to make a supplementary definition for traditional cider. The Danish



Pomona - Danish cider inspired by English and French cider tradition

Veterinary and Food Administration decided not to implement further definitions.

DISCUSSION

It is apparent that cider is a word used for very different products. Particularly in the Scandinavian countries the definition of cider is very broad. The soft drink cider has become very popular in Scandinavia, but is hardly available anywhere else in Europe. In Denmark the word cider has become synonymous with a soft drink so that a lot of people are not aware of the original meaning of the word. The term has been seriously devaluated. Unfortunately, the soft drink cider has for years been made on an exemption to the fruit juice regulation. So it is too late to change!

With the revised definition from 2003¹ the Veterinary and Food Administration has made the soft drink cider the official standard in Denmark. At the same time the Danish Directorate for Food, Fisheries and Agri Business has given financial support to projects, which aim to develop and promote traditional cider with Danish apple varieties. The official policy to promote quality products seems to operate at random!

Furthermore, the soft drink cider poses an advantage to all other beverages in Denmark. In the Danish tax legislation the soft drink cider is not considered a soft drink (it contains alcohol) and hence does not carry carbonated soft drink duty.

Neither is it considered a wine since it contains below 1.2% vol. alcohol and hence does not carry fruit wine duty.

In 2005 an extra tax on alcopops was introduced in Denmark². Alcopop is defined as a mix between an alcohol base and a soft drink, fruit juice, milk and even water. The alcohol can originate from beer, wine, fruit wine and distilled alcohol. Cider under the definition in the Danish Regulation on Fruit Juice¹ is not considered an alcopop, although the alcopop ciders are mostly marketed as such. The very broad definition of cider prevents the alcopop cider from being properly taxed.

Proper names for the soft drink cider and the RTD-cider would have been 'apple flavoured drinks'. The soft drink cider could even be called 'sparkling apple beverage'. The term cider should have been used for genuine products only. In future, new drink types will be developed and there is a risk of further devaluating the existing names. No one would argue that alcohol free beer or alcohol free wine is a soft drink. Both wine and beer are naturally beverages containing alcohol and so is cider! Like beer and wine cider is a traditional fermented beverage intended for adult enjoyment – it is neither a soft drink nor a sweet alcopop. □

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