

South Africa: Recognition and Protection of Karoo Lamb as a Geographical Indication

3 November 2023 2 min read

South African Geographical Indication's ("GI") include Rooibos (Western Cape), Honeybush (Eastern Cape and Western Cape), and several wine GIs including Stellenbosch, Constantia and Paarl, which are all recognised as GIs under various legislation. Karoo Lamb / Karoo Lam' is the first South African product to be registered as a geographical indication under South Africa's Agricultural Products Standards Act.

The Act controls and promotes specific product standards (e.g. meat, dairy products) notably from a quality point of view both locally and for export.

Geographical Indications ("GIs") are signs on products which denote qualities and characteristics which are as a consequence of origin. The protection and enforcement of GIs promote the exclusivity of products from specific regions and boost local economies.

Karoo Lamb has been granted GI status due to its distinctive qualities, supported by evidence as a result of extensive research. Its unique taste and texture are attributed to the Karoo lamb's diet, which primarily consists of Fynbos in the semi-desert natural landscape of the Karoo.

Only lamb exclusive to the Karoo may now carry this GI with the Act making it an offence to use a mark, in connection with the sale of an agricultural product, that conveys or creates a false or misleading impression as to, amongst others, the quality or place of production of such product.

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