



**CL 2015/22-MMP  
July 2015**

**TO:** Codex Contact Points  
Interested International Organisations

**FROM:** Secretariat, Codex Alimentarius Commission,  
Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme  
00153 Roma, Italia

**SUBJECT:** **Request for comments at Step 6 on the draft General Standard for Processed Cheese**

**DEADLINE:** **30 September 2015**

<b>COMMENTS:</b>	<b>To:</b>	<b>Copy to:</b>
	Codex Contact Point for New Zealand Ministry for Primary Industries Wellington New Zealand email: <a href="mailto:CodexNZ@mpi.govt.nz">CodexNZ@mpi.govt.nz</a>	Secretariat Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme Viale delle Terme di Caracalla 00153 Rome, Italy email : <a href="mailto:codex@fao.org">codex@fao.org</a>

## BACKGROUND

1. The 38<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission (CAC38), taking into account the recommendation of the CCEXEC70<sup>1</sup> and recognizing the progress made, agreed to adopt the proposed draft Standard for Processed Cheese at Step 5, noting the reservations of Egypt and the EU.
2. The Commission requested New Zealand to convene a physical Working Group (pWG) and to consider hosting a physical meeting of CCMMP to look at the outstanding issues as outlined in the Circular Letter, CL2015/15-MMP, issued in May 2015. The Commission confirmed the time frame for the completion of work, i.e. 2016, as outlined in the Project Document presented to CAC37.<sup>2</sup>

## REQUEST FOR COMMENTS

3. Codex members and observers are invited to submit comments at Step 6, as directed above, on the draft General Standard for Processed Cheese (see Annex I).
4. Comments should be submitted through the Codex Contact Point or recognized international organizations having observer status with the Codex Alimentarius Commission. Comments should be in accordance with the general guidance for the provision of comments (Annex II) and presented in Word file to facilitate their analysis and compilation.
5. Members and observers which have submitted technical comments at Step 5 are reminded to resubmit their comments in response to this CL.

<sup>1</sup> [REP15/EXEC](#) para. 19

<sup>2</sup> [REP15/CAC](#) paras 83-84 and Appendix IV

**DRAFT GENERAL STANDARD FOR PROCESSED CHEESE**  
**(at Step 6)**

**1. SCOPE**

This Standard applies to processed cheese, including named-variety processed cheese, intended for direct consumption or further processing, in conformity with the description in Section 2 of this Standard.

This standard does not apply to products similar in nature and named as, for example, processed cheese preparations, processed cheese spreads and processed cheese food.

**2. DESCRIPTION**

**Processed cheeses**<sup>3</sup> are the milk products obtained

- (i) from cheese as described in CODEX STAN 283-1978, with or without the addition of other raw materials and permitted ingredients,
- (ii) by melting and emulsifying the mixture,
- (iii) with the aid of heat and emulsifying (or melting) salts in a well-mixed medium<sup>4</sup>, to produce a homogeneous, smooth and stable oil-in-water emulsion.

Named-variety (ies) processed cheeses are processed cheeses, as defined above, characterized by the use in their manufacture of one or more recognized varieties of cheese, and a reference to these in their designation.

**3. ESSENTIAL COMPOSITION AND QUALITY FACTORS****3.1 Raw materials**

- a. Cheese\*;
- b. Milk products rich in fat (e.g. butter\*, butteroil\*, ghee\*, cream\*, cream powder\*);
- c. Milk and milk products other than the above (e.g. milk concentrates, buttermilk, milk powders\*, milk proteins, whey powders\*, lactose\*).

\* For further details, see relevant Codex standards.

The use of these raw materials shall be in conformance with Section 3.3.

**3.2 Permitted ingredients**

- Sodium chloride, and potassium chloride as a salt substitute;
- Water;
- Safe and suitable processing aids;
- Vinegar;
- Lemon juice;
- Cultures of harmless bacteria and enzymes;
- Nutrients where allowed in accordance with the *General Principles for the Addition of Essential Nutrients to Foods* (CAC/GL 9-1987).

**3.3 Composition**

Cheese should be the single largest ingredient of the raw materials described in 3.1 on a dry matter basis.

**4. FOOD ADDITIVES**

Only those functional classes indicated in the table below may be used for the product categories specified. Within each class, and where permitted according to the table, only those individual additives listed may be used and only within the limits specified. The list of additives will be developed.

<sup>3</sup> Varying the processing technology and composition will result in different textures from spreadable, semi-solid to sliceable.

<sup>4</sup> It is recognized that emulsifying salts do not function directly as emulsifiers.

<b>Functional Class</b>	<b>Processed Cheese</b>	<b>Processed Cheese with ≤25% DM and &lt;30% FDM</b>
Colours	X	X
Emulsifying Salts	X	X
Acidity Regulators	X	X
Preservatives	X	X
Emulsifiers	X	X
Stabilizers	X <sup>1</sup>	X <sup>1</sup>
Thickeners	X	X
Anticaking Agents	X <sup>2</sup>	-

<sup>(1)</sup> Usage to be in compliance with the definition of milk product (2.2 of the *General Standard for Use of Dairy Terms* (CODEX STAN 206-1999)).

<sup>(2)</sup> For the surface treatment of sliced and shredded products, only.

## 5. CONTAMINANTS

The products covered by this Standard shall comply with the Maximum Levels for contaminants that are specified for the products in the *General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed* (CODEX STAN 193-1995).

The milk used in the manufacture of the products covered by this Standard should comply with the maximum levels for contaminants and toxins specified for milk by the *General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed* (CODEX STAN 193-1995) and with the maximum residue limits for veterinary drug residues and pesticides established for milk by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

## 6. HYGIENE

It is recommended that the products covered by the provisions of this standard be prepared and handled in accordance with the appropriate sections of the *General Principles of Food Hygiene* (CAC/RCP 1-1969), the *Code of Hygienic Practice for Milk and Milk Products* (CAC/RCP 57-2004) and other relevant Codex texts such as Codes of Hygienic Practice and Codes of Practice. The products should comply with any microbiological criteria established in accordance with the *Principles and Guidelines for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria Related to Foods* (CAC/GL 21-1997).

## 7. LABELLING

In addition to the provisions of the *General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods* (CODEX STAN 1-1985) and the *General Standard for the Use of Dairy Terms* (CODEX STAN 206-1999), the following specific provisions apply:

### 7.1 Name of the food

7.1.1 The name of the food shall be "Process(ed) Cheese".

In addition, appropriate qualifiers describing the fat content may be used in line with the *Guidelines for Use of Nutrition and Health Claims* (CAC/GL 23-1997).

7.1.2 The name of named variety (ies) processed cheese shall be Process(ed) \_\_\_\_\_ Cheese, the blank being filled with the variety name(s), as appropriate in the country of sale.

7.1.3 Use of nutrition claims such as reduced fat can be part of the designation and shall be in line with the *Guidelines for the Use of Nutrition and Health Claims* (CAC/GL 23-1997).

### 7.2 Declaration of milk fat content

The milk fat content shall be declared in a manner found acceptable in the country of sale to the final consumer, either (i) as a percentage by mass, (ii) as a percentage of fat in dry matter, or (iii) in grams per serving as quantified in the label provided that the number of servings is stated.

**7.3 Declaration of cheese content**

If the consumer would be misled by the omission, the ingoing percentage of cheese in the formulation (m/m) shall be declared.

**7.4 Declaration of milk protein content**

If the consumer would be misled by the omission, the milk protein content shall be declared in a manner acceptable in the country of sale to the final consumer, either as (i) a percentage by mass, or (ii) grams per serving as quantified in the label provided the number of servings is stated.

**7.5 Labelling of non-retail containers**

Information required in Section 7 of this Standard and Sections 4.1 to 4.8 of the *General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods* (CODEX STAN 1-1985), and, if necessary, storage instructions, shall be given either on the container or in accompanying documents, except that the name of the product, lot identification, and the name and the address of the manufacturer or packer shall appear on the container, and in the absence of such a container on the processed cheeses themselves. However, lot identification, and the name and address of the manufacturer or packer may be replaced by an identification mark, provided that such a mark is clearly identifiable with the accompanying documents.

**8. METHODS OF ANALYSIS AND SAMPLING (to be developed)****8.1 Methods of analysis****8.2 Methods of sampling**

### GENERAL GUIDANCE FOR THE PROVISION OF COMMENTS

In order to facilitate the compilation and prepare a more useful comments' document, Members and Observers, which are not yet doing so, are requested to provide their comments under the following headings:

- (i) General Comments
- (ii) Specific Comments

Specific comments should include a reference to the relevant section and/or paragraph of the document that the comments refer to.

When changes are proposed to specific paragraphs, Members and Observers are requested to provide their proposal for amendments accompanied by the related rationale. New texts should be presented in underlined/bold font and deletion in ~~strikethrough font~~.

In order to facilitate the work of the Secretariats to compile comments, Members and Observers are requested to refrain from using colour font/shading as documents are printed in black and white and from using track change mode, which might be lost when comments are copied/pasted into a consolidated document.

In order to reduce the translation work and save paper, Members and Observers are requested not to reproduce the complete document but only those parts of the texts for which any change and/or amendments is proposed.