

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION **E**



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

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CX 5/35

CL 2015/34-MMP
December 2015

TO:

Codex Contact Points
Interested International Organizations

FROM:

Secretariat, Codex Alimentarius Commission
Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00153 Rome, Italy

SUBJECT:

Request for Comments at Step 6: Draft General Standard for Processed Cheese

DEADLINE:

20 February 2016

COMMENTS:

To:

Codex Contact Point for New
Zealand
Ministry for Primary Industries
Wellington
New Zealand
email: CodexNZ@mpi.govt.nz

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Secretariat
Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme
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BACKGROUND

1. The 38th Session of the Commission (CAC38), taking into account the recommendation of the CCEXEC70¹ and recognizing the progress made, agreed to adopt the proposed draft General 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, CL 2015/15-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 CAC37.²
3. The PWG met in December 2015 and prepared a draft standard for comments. The report of the PWG is attached at Appendix II.

REQUEST FOR COMMENTS

4. Comments at Step 6 are hereby requested on Draft General Standard for Processed Cheese (Appendix I).
5. Governments and international organizations wishing to provide comments should do so in writing **preferably by e-mail** to the above addresses before **20 February 2016**. Comments should be in accordance with the general guidance for the provision of comments (see Annex to this Circular Letter).

¹ [REP15/EXEC](#) para. 19

² [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 applies only to products that are named according to this Standard. Products not complying with one or more parts of this Standard, in particular to the compositional provisions in Section 3, even if they are similar in nature to processed cheese, shall be named with different names. Such names (e.g. “processed cheese preparation”, “processed cheese spreads”, “processed cheese food” or “processed dairy product”) should not create an erroneous impression and be acceptable in the country of sale.

2. DESCRIPTION

Processed cheeses 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 medium³, to produce a homogeneous, smooth and stable oil-in-water emulsion.

Varying the processing technology and composition will result in different textures from stringy, spreadable, semi-solid to sliceable.

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 name.

3. ESSENTIAL COMPOSITION AND QUALITY FACTORS

3.1 Raw materials

Category a. Cheese*;

Category b. Milk products rich in fat (e.g. butter*, butteroil*, ghee*, cream*, cream powder*);

Category 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 the provisions below.

3.1.1 Processed cheese with minimum cheese content of 75%

Cheese (category a) constitutes the only type of permitted raw material, except that milk products rich in fat (category b) may be added for fat content standardization of the final product.

3.1.2 Processed cheese with minimum cheese content of 51%

Cheese (category a) constitutes at least 51% of the total raw materials (categories a, b and c) on a dry matter basis in the final product.

3.1.3 Processed cheese designated with the qualifier “spreadable”

Cheese (category a) constitutes the largest among the three categories a, b and c.

However, for spreadable processed cheese with fat in dry matter (FDM) >45%, cheese constitutes at least 30% of the total raw materials (a, b and c) on a dry matter basis in the final product.

³ It is recognized that emulsifying salts do not function directly as emulsifiers.

3.1.4 Named Variety(ies) Process(ed) Cheese(s)

- (i) The cheese variety(ies) referenced in the name constitutes at least 51% of the ingoing cheese(s) (category a) on a dry matter basis in the final product.
- (ii) For strong-flavoured cheeses, such as matured blue-veined cheese, mould and bacterial surface-ripened cheese, or goat cheese(s), referred to in the name of process(ed) cheese a minimum percentage of the ingoing named-variety cheese(s) (category a) on a dry matter basis in the final product need not be specified.

3.2 Permitted ingredients⁴

- Sodium chloride, and potassium chloride as a salt substitute;
- Water;
- 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

Fat in dry matter (FDM)	Minimum dry matter		
	Processed cheese		Processed cheese designated as "spreadable"
	3.1.1	3.1.2	3.1.3
Equal to or above 50%	57%	50%	40%
Equal to or above 30%	34%	34%	30%
Below 30%	29%	29%	25%

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.

Functional Class	Processed cheese (51%)	Processed cheese (75%)	Processed cheese designated as "spreadable" 3.1.3
Colours	X	X	X
Emulsifying Salts	X	X	X
Acidity Regulators	X	X	X
Preservatives	X	X	X
Emulsifiers	X	X	X
Stabilizers ¹	X ³	X ³	X
Thickeners ¹	[X]	-	X
Anticaking Agents ²	X	X	-

(1) 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)).

(2) For the surface treatment of sliced and shredded products, only.

(3) In the case of processed cheeses with stringy texture, stabilisers may be used.

X The use of additives belonging to the class is technologically justified.

- The use of additives belonging to the class is not technologically justified.

⁴ It is recognized that milk products, including processed cheese, may be mixed with flavouring ingredients and/or other characterizing ingredients, the resulting food being named in accordance with the *General Standard for Use of Dairy Terms* (CODEX STAN 206-1999) and the *General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods* (CODEX STAN 1-1985).

[The following table was not discussed by the PWG.]

INS No.	Additive Name	Max. level	
Colours			
101i,ii	Riboflavins	300 mg/kg	
140	Chlorophyll	15 mg/kg	} used singly or } in combination
141i, ii	Chlorophylls, Copper Complexes	15 mg/kg	
160a (i)	Beta-Carotene (Synthetic)	25 mg/kg	
160a (ii)	Carotenes (Vegetable); Natural Extracts	600 mg/kg	
160b	Annatto Extracts	15 mg/kg	Calculated as bixin
160c(ii) ³	Paprika extract ⁵	40 mg/kg ³	Calculated as carotenoids (Capsanthin/ Capsorubin)
160e	beta-Apo-8'-Carotenal	35 mg/kg	
160f	beta-Apo-8'-Carotenoic Acid, methyl and ethyl esters	35 mg/kg	
Emulsifying (or Melting) Salts			
325	Sodium Lactate	GMP	
326	Potassium Lactate	GMP	
327	Calcium Lactate	GMP	
331i-iii	Sodium Dihydrogen Citrate; Disodium Citrate ⁶ ; Trisodium Citrate	GMP	
332i,ii	Potassium Citrates	GMP	
333	Calcium Citrates	GMP	
334	Tartaric Acid (L(+)-)		
335i,ii	Monosodium Tartrate; Disodium Tartrate	34,900 mg/kg	} singly or in } combination
336i,ii	Monopotassium Tartrate; Dipotassium Tartrate		
337	Potassium Sodium Tartrate		
338	Orthophosphoric Acid		
339i-iii	Sodium Dihydrogen Phosphate; Disodium Hydrogen Phosphate; Trisodium Phosphate	9,000 mg/kg	} singly } or in combination } expressed as P
340i-iii	Potassium Dihydrogen Phosphate; Dipotassium Hydrogen Phosphate; Tripotassium Phosphate		
341i-iii	Calcium Dihydrogen Phosphate; Calcium Hydrogen Phosphate; Tricalcium Phosphate		
343i,ii	Monomagnesium Phosphate; Dimagnesium Orthophosphate		
450i-vii	Disodium Diphosphate; Trisodium Diphosphate; Tetrasodium Diphosphate; Dipotassium Diphosphate ⁷ ; Tetrapotassium Diphosphate; Dicalcium Diphosphate; Calcium Dihydrogen Diphosphate		
451i,ii	Pentasodium Triphosphate; Pentapotassium Triphosphate		
452i,ii,iv,v	Sodium Polyphosphates, Glassy; Potassium Polyphosphate; Calcium Polyphosphate; Ammonium Polyphosphate		
380	Triammonium citrate		
Acidity Regulators			
170i	Calcium Carbonate	GMP	
260	Acetic Acid, Glacial	GMP	
261	Potassium Acetate	GMP	
262i	Sodium Acetate	GMP	
263	Calcium Acetate	GMP	
270	Lactic Acid	GMP	

⁵ INS 160c(ii), Paprika extract, is included based on the decision at CCFA 2015 to request for comments/proposals on uses and use levels of paprika extracts for inclusion in Table 1 and 2 of the GSFA – the levels justified in processed cheese have yet to be confirmed – that shown in the table above is an indication only of such a level.

⁶ Subject to JECFA approval for processed cheese

⁷ Subject to JECFA approval for processed cheese

INS No.	Additive Name	Max. level	
296	Malic Acid (DL-)	GMP	
297	Fumaric Acid	GMP	
330	Citric Acid	GMP	
338	Orthophosphoric Acid	2,200 mg/kg	expressed as P
500	Sodium carbonate	GMP	
575	Glucono delta-Lactone	GMP	
Preservatives			
200	Sorbic Acid	2,000 mg/kg	} singly or in } combination } expressed as } sorbic acid
201	Sodium Sorbate		
202	Potassium Sorbate		
203	Calcium Sorbate		
280	Propionic Acid	GMP	
281	Sodium Propionate	GMP	
282	Calcium Propionate	GMP	
283	Potassium Propionate	GMP	
234	Nisin	12.5 mg/kg	
301	Sodium Ascorbate	GMP	
302	Calcium Ascorbate	GMP	
1105	Lysozyme Hydrochloride	GMP	
Anticaking Agents			
460i	Microcrystalline Cellulose	GMP	
460ii	Powdered Cellulose	GMP	
500i	Sodium carbonate	GMP	
551	Silicon Dioxide (Amorphous)	10 g/kg	} } Used singly } or in combination } expressed as SiO ₂
552	Calcium Silicate		
553i	Magnesium Silicate (Synthetic)		
553iii	Talc		
Emulsifiers			
322	Lecithins	GMP	
471	Mono- and Diglycerides of fatty acids	GMP	
472a	Acetic and Fatty Acid Esters of Glycerol	GMP	
472b	Lactic and Fatty Acid Esters of Glycerol	GMP	
472c	Citric and Fatty Acid Esters of Glycerol	GMP	
472e	Diacetyltartaric and Fatty Acid Esters of Glycerol	10,000 mg/kg	
472f	Tartaric, Acetic and Fatty Acid Esters of Glycerol (Mixed)	GMP	
473	Sucrose Esters of Fatty Acids	10,000 mg/kg	
476	Polyglycerol Esters of Interesterified Ricinoleic Acid	5,000 mg/kg	
Stabilizers			
401	Sodium Alginate	GMP	
402	Potassium Alginate	GMP	
403	Ammonium Alginate	GMP	
404	Calcium Alginate	GMP	
406	Agar	GMP	
407	Carrageenan	GMP	
410	Carob Bean Gum	GMP	
412	Guar Gum	GMP	
413	Tragacanth Gum	GMP	
414	Gum Arabic	GMP	
415	Xanthan Gum	GMP	
416	Karaya gum	GMP	
417	Tara Gum	GMP	
424	Curdlan	GMP	
418	Gellan Gum	GMP	
440	Pectins (Amidated and Non-amidated)	GMP	

INS No.	Additive Name	Max. level
461	Methyl Cellulose	GMP
466	Sodium Carboxymethyl Cellulose	GMP
1400	Dextrins White and yellow, Roasted Starch	GMP
1401	Acid Treated Starch	GMP
1402	Alkaline Treated Starch	GMP
1403	Bleached Starch	GMP
1404	Oxidised Starch	GMP
1405	Enzyme Treated Starch	GMP
1410	Monostarch Phosphate	GMP
1412	Distarch Phosphate	GMP
1413	Phosphated Distarch Phosphate	GMP
1414	Acetylated Distarch Phosphate	GMP
1420	Starch Acetate esterified with Acetic Anhydrate	GMP
1421	Starch Acetate esterified with Vinyl Acetate	GMP
1422	Acetylated Distarch Adipate	GMP
1440	Hydroxypropyl Starch	GMP
1442	Hydroxypropyl Distarch Phosphate	GMP
1450	Starch Sodium Octenyl Succinate	GMP

5. PROCESSING AIDS

The processing aids used in products covered by this standard shall comply with the *Guidelines on Substances used as Processing Aids* (CAC/GL 75-2010).

6. 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.

7. 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).

8. LABELLING

In addition to the provisions of the *General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods* (CODEX STAN 1-1985), the *General Standard for the Use of Dairy Terms* (CODEX STAN 206-1999) and *Guidelines for the Use of Nutrition and Health Claims* (CAC/GL 23-1997), the following specific provisions apply:

8.1 Name of the food

8.1.1 The name of the food shall be "Process Cheese" or "Processed Cheese".

The name of the food shall be qualified by the term "spreadable" when the relevant provisions of section 3.1.3 apply.

In the case of named variety(ies) processed cheeses covered by section 3.1.1 or 3.1.2, the name of the food shall be "Process(ed) _____", or "_____ Process(ed) Cheese", the blank being filled with the variety name(s) as appropriate in accordance with Sections 2 and 3.1.4 of this Standard.

The name of the food shall be qualified by the term “stringy” if stabilizers are added to obtain a texture that exhibits stringy and chewy characteristics when the product is heated.

8.2 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.

8.3 Declaration of cheese content

In the case of products covered by section 3.1.2 or 3.1.3, the ingoing percentage of cheese in the formulation (m/m) shall be declared.

In the case of products covered by section 3.1.4, the ingoing percentage of the referenced named variety(ies) cheese(s) in the formulation (m/m) shall be declared.

8.4 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, either as (i) a percentage by mass, or (ii) grams per serving as quantified in the label provided the number of servings is stated.

8.5 Labelling of non-retail containers

Information required in Section 8 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.

9. METHODS OF ANALYSIS AND SAMPLING

[The following tables were not discussed by the PWG.]

9.1 Methods of analysis

Provision	Method	Principle	Note	Type	Comment
[milk]Fat	Depending on lactose, starch and dextrin contents: ISO 1735 IDF 5 or ISO 8262-3 IDF 124-3 (higher carbohydrate contents >5% m/m and/or extreme inhomogeneity).	Gravimetry (Schmid-Bondzynski-Ratzlaff) Gravimetry (Weibull-Berntrop)	Use ISO 1735 IDF 5 unless product is not covered by the scope of the method. In that case, use ISO 8262-3 IDF 124-3.	I	Processed cheese is within the scope of ISO 1735 IDF 5. Collaborative study results include data for processed cheese. Processed cheese is within the scope of ISO 8262-3 IDF 124-3. However, collaborative study results do not include data for processed cheese.
[milk] Protein	ISO 8968-1 IDF 20-1	Titrimetry (Kjeldahl)	This method measures total protein and does not specifically measure milk protein if nitrogen of other origin is present.	I	Processed cheese is within the scope of the method. Collaborative study results include validation data for cheese, not for processed cheese.

Provision	Method	Principle	Note	Type	Comment
Dry matter	ISO 5534 IDF 4 + Corr 1:2013	Gravimetry, drying at 102°C		I	Method is validated for processed cheese.
[Milk]fat in dry matter			When fat is measured by ISO 1735 IDF 5 or by ISO 8262-3 IDF 124-3 and dry matter is measured by ISO 5534 IDF 4, FDM may be obtained by calculation	I	
<i>Additional methods</i>					
Sodium chloride	ISO 5943 IDF 88	Potentiometry (determination of chloride, expressed as sodium chloride)		II	The method is applicable to processed cheese containing more than 0.2 % (mass fraction) of chloride ion.
Added phosphate	ISO/TS 18083 IDF RM 51	Calculation from phosphorus content and nitrogen content	Expressed as phosphorus Applicable to processed cheese derived from cheese varieties with a P/N ratio of 0.12 ± 0.02	IV	
	The cheese varieties Cheddar, Cheshire, Edam, Emmental, Gouda, Greyerzer (Gruyère), Hergards, Tilsiter, Samsø and Svecia generally have P/N ratios within the limits stated in the scope. A number of cheese varieties e.g. white mould cheeses, cheeses of the Munster type, most goat cheeses and different non-matured and matured cream cheeses may have lower P/N ratios. Limited amounts of milk or whey powder and ham can be present as optional ingredients without significantly changing the P/N ratio. In other cases, the applicability of the approach should be critically evaluated before use.				
	ISO 2962 IDF 33	Total phosphorus - Spectrophotometry		II	Processed cheese is within the scope of the method. r and R values are listed with the method. Collaborative study results are not provided or referenced.
Citrate emulsifying agents and pH-controlling agents	ISO 12082 IDF 52	Calculation based on citric acid content and lactose content	Expressed as citric acid Applicable to processed cheese and processed cheese products that contain no major ingredients with an appreciable content of citric acid, other than from milk powder or whey powder	IV	
	ISO/TS 2963 IDF/RM 34	Citric acid - Enzymatic determination		IV	Processed cheese is within the scope of the method. Available validation data are not fulfilling ISO 5725-2, therefore TS/RM.
Lactose	ISO 5765-1/2 IDF 79-1/2	Lactose - Enzymatic method: Part 1 – Glucose moiety or Part 2 – Galactose moiety		II	

9.2 Methods of sampling

PROVISION	METHOD	NOTE
Sampling	ISO 707 IDF 50	General instructions for obtaining a

		sample from a bulk
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REPORT OF THE CCMMP PHYSICAL WORKING GROUP ON THE GENERAL STANDARD FOR PROCESSED CHEESE

1. The Physical Working Group (PWG) met in Montevideo, Uruguay, from 8 – 10 December 2015 and was chaired by Dr Steve Hathaway of New Zealand. 19 member countries, one member organisation and 2 observer organisations attended the PWG. The participants' list is attached in the Annex.
2. The meeting was opened by Mr Martin Alvez, Counsellor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Uruguay, and was also addressed by Mr Enzo Benech, Vice-Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, Uruguay.
3. The PWG discussions were guided by the decision of the CAC38 and comments submitted in response to CL2015/22-MMP.
4. The PWG considered the draft as presented in CL2015/22-MMP and the proposals as prepared by the New Zealand secretariat (working paper on the draft general standard for processed cheese) and took into account all written comments submitted.
5. The report highlights only those sections of the draft standard that were amended.

Scope

6. The PWG amended the scope to clarify those products that are covered by the standard as opposed to those not covered.

Permitted ingredients

7. The PWG:
 - did not see the need to list any flavouring foods, such as spices, in the list of ingredients as the draft Standard was in principle for plain processed cheese and the use of spices and flavouring substances were, in any event, allowed for use as per the provisions of the *General Standard for the Use of Dairy Terms* and therefore agreed to insert a footnote to indicate this. This was in line with a similar approach taken for other milk product standards;
 - deleted the reference to safe and suitable processing aids on the basis that the use of these substances was covered by *Guidelines on Substances used as Processing Aids* (CAC/GL 75-2010) and made a reference to this under the heading "processing aids".

Compositional issues of processed cheese

8. The PWG discussed two specific issues:
 - whether cheese constituted the single largest ingredient out of the three raw material categories listed in section 3.1 and what this would mean in terms of the cheese content of the final product;
 - the minimum cheese content level.
9. The PWG also considered inclusion of a table to differentiate and specify the dry matter contents in relation to fat in dry matter levels for processed cheese and spreadable processed cheese.
10. There was agreement that cheese should constitute the single largest ingredient among the 3 raw material categories (i.e. >33%), but delegations had divergent views on a numerical minimum level of cheese content. Proposals were put forward for 75% and 51%.
11. To make provision for these proposals (i.e. 75% and 51%), the PWG agreed to group processed cheese according to the raw material inputs and to place these groups in the section on raw materials (section 3.1) to capture the relationship between raw materials and the product composition. It was also agreed to incorporate further groups for processed cheeses designated as spreadable, and named-variety processed cheeses, in this section.
12. The PWG developed a co-dependence between raw material and composition provisions and the labelling section (declaration of cheese content and product naming).

Processed cheese designated with the qualifier "spreadable"

13. There was discussion on an appropriate minimum cheese content for this group of processed cheeses.

14. Divergent views were expressed on the amount of cheese contained in these products with fat in dry matter content above 45%, with opinions ranging from those favouring 25% to 33%. The Chairperson reminded the PWG to keep in mind the mandate of Codex to facilitate international food trade while at the same time ensuring consumers are not misled.

15. France, as one of the members in favour of the 25% minimum cheese content, noted that many of these products within the scope of the draft Standard were already traded in the international market and there was need to recognize such products in the Standard. Nevertheless discussions on this category reflected the concerns with the low level of cheese in such products and the appropriateness of labelling these products as cheese. Products containing such low levels of cheese could be misleading to consumers who may be expecting a higher level of cheese content. Nonetheless there was recognition that it was considered necessary to address consumer concerns through specific labelling provisions.

16. Based on discussions, the PWG established a compromise level of 30%.

17. The Delegation of France did not support this decision.

Composition

18. In light of the discussion on raw material issues above, the PWG agreed to insert a table on compositional specifications in line with similar provisions under this section in other dairy standards.

Food additives

19. Much of the discussion focused on the technological justification for use of stabilizers and thickeners for the two groups of processed cheese (51% and 75%). There was divergent opinion on the need for these functional classes.

Stabilizers

20. There was support for the use of stabilizers in all three categories of processed cheese, recognizing its use in particular for stringy-textured processed cheese; UHT processed cheeses; and for spreadable processed cheese. The technological justification for this decision was that stabilizers bind cheese and other dairy ingredients and avoid water exudation. The Delegation of the United States of America was of the opinion that stabilizers should not be used when not technologically justified.

Thickeners

21. Members were divided on the use of thickeners for processed cheese 51% and it was retained in square brackets. It was agreed to exclude this functional class for use in processed cheese 75%; and for processed cheese designated as spreadable on the basis of a footnote recognizing that the usage should be in compliance with the definition of milk product (2.2 of the *General Standard for the Use of Dairy Terms*). The latter was based on the concern that usage of thickeners had the potential to displace dairy-based ingredients in the final product.

22. The Delegation of the European Union expressed the view that thickeners should be allowed in all categories of processed cheese including processed cheese 75% and did not support the decision taken by the PWG.

23. The PWG agreed that when comments were sought on the draft Standard, technological justification should be provided for the use of stabilizers and thickeners.

24. The PWG did not discuss the list of food additives that still needed to be developed and agreed that a proposal prepared by IDF would be included in the draft Standard and circulated for comments.

Labelling

25. The meeting agreed to relocate the reference to *Guidelines for the Use of Nutrition and Health Claims* (CAC/GL 23-1997) in the introductory paragraph to section 7.

26. In light of the elaboration of the different groups of processed cheeses described in section 3.1, the PWG took the following decisions:

27. Section 7.1 - provided clarity in naming of products covered under categories of processed cheeses described in sections 3.1.2, 3.1.3 and 3.1.4 (products described as spreadable, stringy and named-variety processed cheeses). The PWG recognized that further drafting was needed to clarify the naming of spreadable processed cheeses to reflect the three triggers for the mandatory labelling of spreadable processed cheeses (sections 3.1.3, 3.3 and 4).

28. The PWG agreed to a provision for mandatory quantitative declaration of the amount of the cheese variety referenced in the name.

29. For strongly flavoured cheeses, the PWG did not see the need to specify any minimum percentage of the ingoing variety, but supported a mandatory declaration of the percentage of the named variety cheese.
30. The PWG agreed to mandatory declaration of the cheese content (section 7.3) for products falling within the product groups covered under sections 3.1.2, 3.1.3 and 3.1.4.

Methods of Analysis and Sampling

31. The PWG did not discuss this section and agreed that a proposal prepared by IDF would be included in the Standard and circulated for comments.

Conclusion

32. The PWG expressed its gratitude to the IDF for their technical support and contribution to the meeting
33. The Chair of the meeting also thanked all the participants for their contribution to the discussions.
34. The Chair also expressed his appreciation to the Government of Uruguay for their support and collaboration in co-hosting this meeting.

Next steps

35. The PWG was advised that the report of the meeting and the revised draft General Standard for Processed Cheese (see Appendix 2) would be circulated for comment to all members and observers of the Commission before the end of 2015.
36. Based on comments received, New Zealand, as host government of CCMMP, will prepare a further report and recommendations for consideration and comments by members and observers by the end of March 2016.
37. New Zealand will prepare a final report reflecting all views based on the comments received, and submit through the Codex Secretariat to the 39th Session of the Commission (July 2016).

ANNEX

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS
LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS
LISTA DE PARTICIPANTES**

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ANNEX

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.