CODEX ALIMENTARIUS
INTERNATIONAL FOOD STANDARDS

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
World Health Organization

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STANDARD FOR WHEY CHEESES

CXS 284-1971

Formerly CODEX STAN A-7-1971. Adopted in 1971. Revised in 1999, 2006.
Amended in 2010, 2018, 2022.

2022 Amendment

The following amendment was made to the text of the standard following decisions taken at the forty-fifth session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in December 2022.

Page	Location	Text in previous version	Text in amended version
4	Section 7.3 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* (CXS 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 address of the manufacturer or packer shall appear on the container. 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.	The labelling of non-retail containers should be in accordance with the *General Standard for the Labelling of Non-Retail Containers of Foods* (CXS 346-2021).

1. SCOPE

This standard applies to all products intended for direct consumption or further processing, in conformity with the definition of whey cheeses in Section 2 of this standard. Subject to the provisions of this standard, Codex standards for individual varieties of whey cheeses may contain provisions which are more specific than those in this standard.

2. DESCRIPTION

2.1 **Whey Cheeses** are solid, semi-solid, or soft products which are principally obtained through either of the following processes:

(1) the concentration of whey and the moulding of the concentrated product;

(2) the coagulation of whey by heat with or without the addition of acid.

In each case, the whey may be pre-concentrated prior to the further concentration of whey or coagulation of the whey proteins. The process may also include the addition of milk, cream, or other raw materials of milk origin before or after concentration or coagulation. The ratio of whey protein to casein in the product obtained through the coagulation of whey shall be distinctly higher than that of milk.

The product obtained through the coagulation of whey may either be ripened or unripened.

2.2 Whey Cheese obtained through the concentration of whey is produced by heat evaporation of whey, or a mixture of whey and milk, cream, or other raw materials of milk origin, to a concentration enabling the final cheese to obtain a stable shape. Due to their relatively high lactose content these cheeses are typically yellowish to brown in colour and possess a sweet, cooked, or caramelized flavour.

2.3 Whey Cheese obtained through the coagulation of whey is produced by heat precipitation of whey, or a mixture of whey and milk or cream, with or without the addition of acid. These whey cheeses have a relatively low lactose content and a white to yellowish colour.

3. ESSENTIAL COMPOSITION AND QUALITY FACTORS

3.1 Raw materials

(1) For products obtained through the concentration of whey:

whey, cream, milk and other raw materials obtained from milk.

(2) For products obtained through the coagulation of whey:

whey, milk, cream and buttermilk.

3.2 Permitted ingredients

Only for use in products obtained by coagulation of whey:

– Sodium chloride

– Starter cultures of harmless lactic acid bacteria

Only for use in products obtained through the concentration of whey by heat treatment

– Sugars (limited by GMP)

3.3 Permitted nutrients

Where allowed in accordance with the *General Principles for the Addition of Essential Nutrients to Foods* (CXG 9-1987), maximum and minimum levels for minerals and other nutrients, where appropriate, should be laid down by national legislation in accordance with the needs of individual country including, where appropriate, the prohibition of the use of particular nutrients.

4. FOOD ADDITIVES

Food additives listed in Tables 1 and 2 of the *General Standard for Food Additives* (CXS 192-1995) in Food Category 01.6.3 (Whey cheese) and 01.6.6 (Whey protein cheese) may be used in foods subject to this standard.

5. CONTAMINANTS

The products covered by this standard shall comply with the maximum levels for contaminants that are specified for the product in the *General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed* (CXS 193-1995).

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

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* (CXC 1-1969), the *Code of Hygienic Practice for Milk and Milk Products* (CXC 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* (CXG 21-1997).

7. LABELLING

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

7.1 Name of the food

The name of the food shall be **whey cheese**. Where it is considered necessary for consumer information in the country of sale, a description of the nature of the product may be required. The words “whey cheese” may be omitted in the designation of an individual whey cheese variety reserved by a Codex standard for individual cheeses, and, in the absence thereof, a variety name specified in the national legislation of the country in which the product is sold, provided that the omission does not create an erroneous impression regarding the character of the food.

In case a whey cheese obtained through the co-agulation of whey is not designated by a variety name, but with the designation “whey cheese”, the designation may be accompanied by a descriptive term such as provided for in Section 7.1.1 of the *General Standard for Cheese* (CXS 283-1978).

Unripened whey cheese obtained through the concentration of whey may be designated according to the fat content as provided in Section 7.2.

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.

For cheeses obtained from the concentration of whey, the declaration of milk fat content may be combined with an indication of the fat content as follows:

Fat on the dry basis[1]	
Creamed whey cheese	minimum 33%
Whey cheese	minimum 10% and less than 33%
Skimmed whey cheese	less than 10%

7.3 Labelling of non-retail containers

The labelling of non-retail containers should be in accordance with the *General Standard for the Labelling of Non-Retail Containers of Foods* (CXS 346-2021).

8. METHODS OF SAMPLING AND ANALYSIS

For checking the compliance with this standard, the methods of analysis and sampling contained in the *Recommended Methods of Analysis and Sampling* (CXS 234-1999) relevant to the provisions in this standard, shall be used.

[1] The dry matter content of whey cheese includes water of crystallization of the lactose.