

METRIC

A-A-20347A

December 4, 2008

SUPERSEDING

A-A-20347

December 20, 2004

COMMERCIAL ITEM DESCRIPTION

CHEESE, QUESO BLANCO

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has authorized the use of this Commercial Item Description (CID).

1. SCOPE. This CID covers Queso Blanco cheese (Queso Blanco) packed in commercially acceptable containers, suitable for use by the Federal, state, local governments, and other interested parties.

2. PURCHASER NOTES.

2.1 Purchasers *shall specify* the following.

- Type(s) of Queso Blanco required (Sec. 3).
- When the age requirement at the time of delivery is other than specified (Sec. 5.6).
- When analytical and microbial requirements are different than specified (Sec. 6.1).
- When analytical and microbial requirements need to be verified (Sec. 6.3).
- Manufacturers' quality assurance and plant survey (Sec. 9.1), manufacturer's/distributor's certification (Sec. 9.2) or USDA certification (Sec. 9.3).

2.2 Purchasers *may specify* the following.

- Packaging requirements other than commercial (Sec. 10).

3. CLASSIFICATION. The Queso Blanco shall conform to the following list, which shall be specified, as required, in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order.

Types.

Type I - Acid set

Type II - Enzyme

4. MANUFACTURER'S/DISTRIBUTOR'S NOTES. Manufacturer's/distributor's products *shall meet* the requirements of the:

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- Salient characteristics (Sec. 5).
- Analytical requirements: *as specified by the purchaser* (Sec. 6).
- Manufacturer's/distributor's assurance (Sec. 7).
- Regulatory requirements (Sec. 8).
- Quality assurance provisions: *as specified by the purchaser* (Sec. 9).
- Packaging requirements other than commercial: *as specified by the purchaser* (Sec. 10).

5. SALIENT CHARACTERISTICS.

5.1 Definition. Queso Blanco is a Latin-style cheese prepared traditionally by either an acid set or rennet-set (enzyme) process. Queso Blanco "white cheese" has a creamy white appearance made from pasteurized cow's milk. Queso Blanco is slightly acidic, does not melt when heated and is sliceable. The cheese is firm, curdy and has a salty taste. Queso Blanco is popularly used in enchiladas, burritos, or combined with fruits as a dessert.

5.2 Processing. The Queso Blanco shall be prepared and packaged in accordance with current good manufacturing practices (21 CFR Part 110).

5.2.1 Pasteurization. All dairy ingredients shall be pasteurized at a temperature of not less than 71.7°C (161°F) for a period of not less than 15 seconds, or for a time and at a temperature equivalent thereto in phosphatase destruction.

5.2.2 Dairy ingredients. Dairy ingredients used in the manufacture of Queso Blanco shall originate from a plant that has been approved by the Dairy Grading Branch (DGB), Dairy Programs (DP), Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), USDA.

5.2.3 Manufacturing plants. The manufacturing plants shall be eligible for Section I listing in the most recent version of the publication Dairy Plants Surveyed and Approved for USDA Grading Service.

5.3 Finished Product.

5.3.1 Appearance. The Queso Blanco shall be clean and free from all impurities, mold, soft spots, cheese pests and any objectionable condition which may detract from the quality of the finished product.

5.3.2 Color. The Queso Blanco shall have a creamy white, uniform bright color, and an attractive sheen, with no gloss.

5.3.3 Flavor and odor. The Queso Blanco shall have a bland to slightly acid flavor. The Queso Blanco may possess a milky dairy flavor, and may have a salty taste but shall not possess any undesirable flavors or odors.

5.3.4 Body and texture. The body of the Queso Blanco shall be curdy, medium firm, and resilient. The texture shall be close, tough, and free from lumps but must chunk freely. The Queso Blanco may show slight brittleness or roughness. Queso Blanco shall not stick to the knife or break when cut into 0.64 cm (¼ in) chunks. When heated the body shall become soft, loose its shape, but shall not melt, stretch or run.

5.4 Age requirement. The Queso Blanco must not be manufactured more than 30 days prior to delivery.

5.5 Shelf life. When refrigerated between 0.6 to 3.3°C (33 to 38°F), the shelf life of Type 1 (acid set) Queso Blanco shall be 1 year. When refrigerated between 0.6 to 3.3°C (33 to 38°F), the shelf life of Type II (rennet set) Queso Blanco shall be 90 days.

6. ANALYTICAL REQUIREMENTS.

6.1 Analytical and microbial requirements. Unless otherwise specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, the Queso Blanco shall conform to the following analytical and microbial requirements:

Fat	18.5 to 25.0 percent
Moisture	45.0 to 55.0 percent
Salt	1.8 to 3.0 percent
<i>Listeria monocytogenes</i>	Negative
<i>Salmonella</i>	Negative
pH	5.25 to 5.90

6.2 Preparation of sample. A minimum of 100 g of Queso Blanco must be blended to uniformity in a minimum time using a Robot Coupe food processor (AOAC method 983.18) or equivalent. This uniform sample shall be used in the analyses for fat, moisture, salt, and pH.

6.3 Analytical and microbial testing. When specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, analyses shall be in accordance with the following methods from the Official Methods of Analysis of the AOAC International, from the Bacteriological Analytical Manual (BAM) method, the latest edition of the USDA - DA Instruction 918-RL, Laboratory Methods and Procedures, or the latest edition of the Standard Methods for the Examination of Dairy Products.

<u>Test</u>	<u>Method</u>
Fat	933.05 <u>1</u> /
Moisture	926.08 <u>1</u> /
Salt	935.43 or 983.14 <u>1</u> /

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<u>Test</u>	<u>Method</u>
<i>Listeria monocytogenes</i>	993.09, 999.06, 993.12, 2003.12, 2003.09 <u>1/</u> or BAM, Ch. 10 <u>2/</u>
<i>Salmonella</i>	2004.03, 2003.09 <u>1/</u> or <u>3/</u>
pH	Quinhydrone, Ch. 15 <u>4/</u>

- 1/ Official Methods of Analysis of the AOAC International.
- 2/ 8th Edition, Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Bacteriological Analytical Manual (BAM) or the FDA BAM Online.
- 3/ The latest edition of the USDA - DA Instruction 918-RL, Laboratory Methods and Procedures.
- 4/ The latest edition of the Standard Methods for the Examination of Dairy Products.

6.4 Test results. The test results for fat, moisture, and salt shall be reported to the nearest 0.1 percent. The test results for *Listeria monocytogenes* and *Salmonella* shall be reported as positive or negative. The test results for pH to the nearest 0.01 value. Any result not conforming to the analytical requirements shall be cause for rejection of the lot.

7. MANUFACTURER'S/DISTRIBUTOR'S PRODUCT ASSURANCE. The manufacturer/distributor shall certify that the Queso Blanco provided shall meet the salient characteristics of this CID, conform to their own specifications, standards, and quality assurance practices, and be the same Queso Blanco offered for sale in the commercial market. The purchaser reserves the right to require proof of conformance.

8. REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS. The delivered Queso Blanco shall comply with all applicable Federal and State mandatory requirements and regulations relating to the preparation, packaging, labeling, storage, distribution, and sale of the Queso Blanco within the commercial marketplace. The delivered Queso Blanco shall comply with all applicable provisions of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, the Fair Packaging and Labeling Act, and regulations promulgated thereunder. The delivered Queso Blanco shall comply with the allergen labeling requirements of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act. When the Queso Blanco is used for the National School Lunch Program, the cheese must comply with all applicable provisions of the Child Nutrition Programs.

9. QUALITY ASSURANCE PROVISIONS. *Purchaser shall specify 9.1, 9.2 or 9.3.*

9.1 Manufacturer's quality assurance and plant survey. When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchaser order, the Queso Blanco manufacturer shall be required to have their facilities inspected by USDA, AMS, DP, DGB, and be eligible for listing in Section I of the AMS publication Dairy Plants Surveyed and Approved for USDA Grading Service. (An AMS plant survey verifies that, at the time of the survey, the manufacturer produces products in a clean, sanitary environment in accordance with Title 21 Code of Federal Regulations Part 110 -

Current Good Manufacturing Practice in Manufacturing, Packing, or Holding Human Food and the requirements contained in 7 CFR Part 58 General Specification for Dairy Plants Approved for USDA Inspection and Grading Service.)

9.2 Manufacturer's/distributor's certification. When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, the manufacturer/distributor will certify that the Queso Blanco distributed meets or exceeds the requirements of this CID.

9.3 USDA certification. When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order that product quality and acceptability or both be determined, the USDA, AMS, DP, DGB, shall be the certifying program. DGB inspectors shall certify the quality and acceptability of the Queso Blanco in accordance with DGB procedures which include selecting random samples of the Queso Blanco, evaluating the samples for conformance with the salient characteristics of this CID and other contractual requirements, and documenting the findings on official DGB certificates. In addition, when required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, DGB inspectors will examine the Queso Blanco for conformance to the United States Standards for Condition of Food Containers in effect on the date of the solicitation. To qualify for this option the plant must be listed in Dairy Plants Surveyed and Approved for USDA Grading Service (see Sec. 9.1).

10. PACKAGING. Preservation, packaging, packing, labeling, and case marking shall be in accordance with good commercial packaging unless otherwise specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order.

11. USDA INSPECTION NOTES. When Section 9.3 is specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, USDA certification shall include evaluation of the quality and condition of samples of the Queso Blanco and compliance with requirements in the following areas.

- Salient characteristics (Sec. 5).
- Analytical and microbial requirements *when specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order* (Sec. 6.3). When USDA testing of Queso Blanco is specified, DGB inspection personnel shall select samples and conduct the tests or send the samples to the AMS Laboratory.
- Packaging requirements (Sec. 10 or as specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order).

12. REFERENCE NOTES.

12.1 USDA Certification Contacts.

12.1.1 USDA certification contact. For USDA certification, contact the **Branch Chief, DGB, DP, AMS, USDA, STOP 0230, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-0230,** telephone (202) 720-3171 or on the Internet at: www.ams.usda.gov/dairygrading.

12.1.2 CN meal pattern requirements contact. For CN crediting information, contact the **Head, Technical Assistance Section, Child Nutrition Division, Food and Nutrition Service, 3101 Park Center Drive, Alexandria, VA 22302,** telephone (703) 305-2609 or on the Internet at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns>.

12.2 Analytical testing and technical information. For USDA technical information on analytical testing, contact the **Branch Chief, Technical Service Branch, S&TP, AMS, USDA, STOP 0272, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-0272,** telephone (202) 690-0621, or via E-mail: shirleyj.wright@usda.gov.

12.3 Sources of documents.

12.3.1 Sources of information for nongovernmental documents are as follows:

Copies of the Official Methods of Analysis of the AOAC International may be obtained from: **AOAC International, 481 North Fredrick Avenue, Suite 500, Gaithersburg, MD 20877-2417,** telephone (301) 924-7077. Internet address: <http://www.aoac.org>.

Copies of the Standard Methods for the Examination of Dairy Products may be obtained from: **American Public Health Association, Publications Sale, P.O. Box 753, Waldorf, MD 20604-0753,** telephone (301) 893-1894 or on the Internet address at: <https://secure.matrixgroup.net/apha/media/orderform.cfm>.

12.3.2 Sources of information for governmental documents are as follows:

Applicable provisions of: the Child Nutrition Programs are contained in 7 CFR Parts 210, 220, 225, 226, and Appendices A and C; the Fair Packaging and Labeling Act are contained in 16 CFR Parts 500 to 503; and the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act is contained in 21 CFR Parts 1 to 199. These documents may be purchased from. **Superintendent of Documents, New Orders, P.O. Box 371954, Pittsburgh, PA 15250-7954.** Credit card (Visa, MasterCard, Discover/ NOVUS, and American Express) purchases may be made by calling the Superintendent of Documents on (866) 512-1800, (202) 512-1800, or on the Internet at: <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/nara/index.html>.

Copies of the FDA Bacteriological Analytical Manual (BAM) is available on-line from FDA, Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition **on the Internet at:**

<http://vm.cfsan.fda.gov/~ebam/bam-toc.html>.

Copies of the General Specifications for Dairy Plants Approved for USDA Inspection and Grading Service, Dairy Plants Surveyed and Approved for USDA Grading Service, and DA INSTRUCTION 918-RL, Resident Grading Quality Control Service Programs and Laboratory Analysis are available from: **Dairy Grading Branch, Dairy Programs, Room 2746-S, STOP 0230, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-0230 or by calling (202) 720-3171.**

Copies of this CID, the United States Standards for Condition of Food Containers, and beneficial comments, recommendations, additions, deletions, clarifications, etc., and any data which may improve this CID are available from and/or provided to: **Branch Chief, PPB, FV, AMS, USDA, STOP 0247, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-0247, telephone (202) 720-9939, Fax (202) 690-1527, via E-mail: FQASStaff@usda.gov or on the Internet at: www.ams.usda.gov/FQAS.**

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