



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Agricultural
Marketing
Service

Dairy
Division

USDA Specifications for Cream Cheese, Cream Cheese with other Foods, and Related Products

Effective August 22, 1994

USDA Specifications for Cream Cheese, Cream Cheese with other Foods, and Related Products

1.0 Plant Requirements.

Cream cheese and related products shall be manufactured and packaged in accordance with the requirements contained in 7 CFR Part 58, Grading and Inspection, General Specifications for Approved Plants and Standards for Grades of Dairy Products.

2.0 Product Temperature Requirements.

The cheese shall be cooled to 45⁰ F. prior to inspection, then tempered to 45⁰ F. to 55⁰ F. for product evaluation.

3.0 Regulatory.

3.1 **Cream cheese** shall comply with the Food and Drug Standards of Identity for Cream cheese (21 CFR Part 133.133).

3.2 **Neufchatel cheese** shall comply with the Food and Drug Standards of Identity for Neufchatel (21 CFR Part 133.162).

3.3 **Reduced fat and Light Cream cheese** shall comply with all applicable Federal regulations including those contained in 21 CFR Part 133.133 for Cream cheese, 21 CFR Part 101.62 for nutrient content claims for fat, and 21 CFR Part 130.10 for foods named by use of a nutrient content claim and standardized term.

3.4 **Cream cheese with other foods**, such as strawberries, chives and salmon shall comply with all applicable Federal regulations contained in 21 CFR Part 133.134.

3.5 **Neufchatel cheese with other foods** shall comply with all applicable Federal regulations including those contained in 21 CFR Part 133.162 for Neufchatel.

3.6 **Reduced fat and Light Cream cheese with other foods** shall comply with all applicable Federal regulations including those contained in 21 CFR Part 133.133 for Cream cheese, 21 CFR Part 133.134 for Cream cheese with other foods, 21 CFR Part 101.62 for nutrient content claims for fat, and 21 CFR Part 130.10 for foods named by use of a nutrient content claim and a standardized term.

4.0 Composition Requirements.

4.1 **Cream cheese.**

- *Moisture* -- Not more than 55 percent.
- *Milkfat* -- Not less than 33 percent total fat (as marketed).
- *pH* -- Range - 4.4 to 4.9
- *Salt* -- Not more than 1.4 percent.

4.2 **Neufchatel cheese.**

- *Moisture* -- Not more than 65 percent.
- *Milkfat* -- Not less than 20 percent but less than 33 percent total fat (as marketed).
- *pH* -- Range - 4.4 to 5.0
- *Salt* -- Not more than 1.4 percent.

4.3 **Reduced fat Cream cheese.**

- *Moisture* -- Not more than 70 percent.
- *Milkfat* -- Not less than 16.5 percent but less than 20 percent total fat (as marketed).
- *pH* -- Range - 4.4 to 5.1
- *Salt* -- Not more than 1.4 percent.

4.4 **Light/lite Cream cheese.**

- *Moisture* -- Not more than 70 percent.
- *Milkfat* -- Not more than 16.5 percent total fat (as marketed).
- *pH* -- Range - 4.4 to 5.2
- *Salt* -- Not more than 1.4 percent.

4.5 **Cream cheese with other foods.**

- *Moisture* -- Not more than 60 percent.
- *Milkfat* -- Not less than 27 percent total fat (as marketed).
- *Salt* -- Not more than 1.4 percent.

4.6 **Neufchatel cheese with other foods.**

- *Moisture* -- Not more than 70 percent.
- *Milkfat* -- Not less than 20 percent but less than 33 percent total fat (as marketed).
- *Salt* -- Not more than 1.4 percent.

4.7 **Reduced fat Cream cheese with other foods.**

- *Moisture* -- Not more than 70 percent.
- *Milkfat* -- Not less than 16.5 percent but less than 20 percent total fat (as marketed).
- *Salt* -- Not more than 1.4 percent.

4.8 **Light/Lite Cream cheese with other foods.**

- *Moisture* -- Not more than 70 percent.
- *Milkfat* -- Not more than 16.5 percent total fat (as marketed)
- *Salt* -- Not more than 1.4 percent.

The chemical analysis shall be made available in accordance with the following methods of the Official Methods of Analysis of the AOAC, 15th Edition, 1990:

<u>Test</u>	<u>Method Number</u>
Fat	933.05
Moisture	926.08 or 977.11
Salt	983.14 or 935.43

The pH analysis shall be made in accordance with the following method in Standard Methods for the Examination of Dairy Products, 16th Edition, 1992:

<u>Test</u>	<u>Method Number</u>
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pH	15.3D
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5.0 Dairy Ingredients.

The quality of the cream used in the manufacture of cream cheese and related products shall meet the requirements of cream acceptable for the manufacture of butter U.S. Grade A or better. Dairy products used as ingredients for which there are U.S. grades established (nonfat dry milk, dry whole milk, and dry whey) shall meet the criteria of U.S. Extra Grade. Dairy products for which there are no USDA grades established shall meet the applicable requirements of 7 CFR Part 58. The plants which produce dairy ingredients for use in the Cream cheese and related products shall be approved by the Dairy Grading Branch, Dairy Division, Agricultural Marketing Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

6.0 Nondairy Ingredients.

6.1 **All stabilizers and emulsifiers** shall be clean and wholesome, and shall be approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration 21 CFR Part 133.133 (b)(2)(i) and Part 133.134 (a)(1)(i).

6.2 **Food colors** shall be those certified by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration as safe for human consumption 21 CFR Part 133.134 (a)(2).

6.3 **Salt** shall be free flowing, white refined sodium chloride and shall meet the requirements of The Food Chemical Codex.

6.4 **When other foods are added**, they shall be clean, wholesome, and of uniform good quality, free from visible mold, rancid flavor or decomposed particles. Such ingredients shall be consistent in size and color to produce the desired appearance and appeal of the finished product.

7.0 Quality Requirements.

7.1 **Flavor.**

Cream cheese and related products shall possess a slight lactic acid and cultured diacetyl flavor and aroma; no off flavors or odors such as bitter, flat, sulfide, and yeasty shall be present. When other food is added, it shall be added at a level sufficient to impart a

desirable characteristic flavor to the finished product. The characterizing flavor shall not be at an intensity which results in a harsh or unnatural flavor.

7.2 **Body and texture.**

Cream cheese shall be smooth, and free from lumps or grittiness. Reduced fat Cream cheese may be slightly weak or pasty. Light Cream cheese may be weak or pasty to a pronounced degree. Droplets or beads of moisture on the surface of the cheese are permissible. Moisture droplets may not run together or pool. The cheese shall be medium firm when cold (45° F.), and be spreadable at room temperature (68° F.). When labeled as “Soft,” the Cream cheese shall be spreadable at refrigeration temperature (45° F.).

7.3 **Color and appearance.**

Cream cheese shall have a uniform white to light cream color. When other food is added, it shall be uniformly distributed and impart the desirable characteristic color to the finished product. The cheese shall be free from visible mold or other surface discolorations.

8.0 Microbial Requirements.

Microbial determinations shall be made in accordance with the methods described in the latest edition of Standard Methods for the Examination of Dairy Products, published by the American Public Health Association. Samples shall be taken as often as necessary to insure microbial control.

- Coliform -- Not more than 10 per gram.
- E. Coli. -- Negative.
- Yeast and Mold -- Not more than 10 per gram.
- Standard Plate Count -- Not more than 25,000 per gram.

9.0 Official Identification.

Products officially inspected and found to meet these requirements may be identified with the official USDA Quality Approved Inspection Shield.