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EUROPEAN STANDARD FOR PROCESSED CHEESE

November 18st 2022

1. SCOPE

This standard applies to all products produced and manufactured in the European Union under the denomination "processed cheese".

This standard applies only to products that are named according to this standard, even if they are similar in nature.

Products not complying with one or more parts of this standard, to the compositional provisions in section 3 shall be named with different names.

2. DESCRIPTION

Processed cheeses¹ 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 agitating the mixture,
- iii. with the aid of heat (above 69°C) and melting agents in a well-mixed medium², to produce a homogeneous, and stable product.

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.
- c) Milk and milk products other than the above.

* For further details, see relevant Codex standards.

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

3.2. Other permitted ingredients

Other ingredients, e.g. sodium chloride or potassium chloride, 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) are permitted as long as these ingredients are not used to replace dairy ingredients under section 3.1 raw materials.

¹ Varying the processing technology and composition will result in different textures from spreadable, semi-solid to sliceable.

² It is recognized that emulsifying salts do not function directly as emulsifiers.



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3.3. Composition

Cheese and other dairy ingredients (see the raw materials described in 3.1) should constitute at least 80% of the raw materials on a dry matter basis.

4. FOOD ADDITIVES

Only functional classes (colours, melting agents, acidity regulators, preservatives, emulsifiers, stabilizers³, thickeners, anticaking agents⁴) may be used according to EU Regulation 1333/2008⁵.

5. LABELLING

In addition to the provisions of the General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods (CODEX STAN 1-1985), Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011⁶, the General Standard for the Use of Dairy Terms (CODEX STAN 206-1999) and Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013⁷, the following specific provisions apply:

5.1. Name of the food

- 5.1.1.** 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) and Regulation (EC) No 1924/2006⁸.
- 5.1.2.** 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.
- 5.1.3.** 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) Regulation (EC) No 1924/2006.
- 5.1.4.** The term 'spreadable' can be used.

FDM	Min dry matter	
	Processed cheese	Processed Cheese qualified as "spreadable"
Equal to or above 30%	34%	30%
Below 30%	29%	25%

5.2. Declaration of milk fat content

The milk fat content shall be declared, 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.

³ 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)).

⁴ For the surface treatment of sliced and shredded products, only.

⁵ Consolidated version 28OCT2020, see <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:02008R1333-20201028&from=EN>

⁶ Consolidated version 01JAN2018, see: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:02011R1169-20180101>

⁷ Consolidated version 01JAN2019, see: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1585912359941&uri=CELEX:02013R1308-20190101>

⁸ Consolidated version 13DEC2014, see <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/search.html?qid=1585912446161&text=1924/2006&scope=EURLEX&type=quick&lang=en>