

METRIC

A-A-20208C

May 23, 2019

SUPERSEDING

A-A-20208B

September 9, 2008

COMMERCIAL ITEM DESCRIPTION

CHEESE, CHEDDAR

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

1. SCOPE. This CID covers types of Cheddar cheese, packed in commercially acceptable containers, suitable for use by Federal, State, local governments, and other interested parties. **Please note: This document does not guarantee purchase of this item by USDA.**¹

2. PURCHASER NOTES.

2.1 Purchasers *must specify* the following:

- Type(s), style(s), shred size(s), agricultural practice(s), and U.S. Grade of Cheddar cheese desired (Sec. 3).
- When analytical requirements are different than specified (Sec.7.1).
- When compliance with analytical requirements must be verified (Sec. 7.2).
- Manufacturer's/distributor's certificate (Sec. 10.2) or USDA certification (Sec. 10.3).

2.2 Purchasers *may specify* the following:

- Manufacturer's quality assurance and plant survey (Sec. 10.1).
- Packaging requirements other than commercial (Sec. 11).

3. CLASSIFICATION. The Cheddar cheese must conform to the following list which must be specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order.

Types, styles, shred sizes, agricultural practices, and U.S. Grade.²

- Type I** - Cheddar cheese (21 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §133.113)
Type II - Reduced fat Cheddar cheese (21 CFR §133.113 as modified by §§130.10 and 101.62(b)(4))

¹ USDA purchase specifications are available at: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/selling-food/product-specs>.

² Not all options are available from every manufacturer. Check with the manufacturer/distributor for availability.

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Type III - Light or lite Cheddar cheese (21 CFR §133.113 as modified by §§130.10 and §101.56)

Type IV - Low sodium Cheddar cheese (21 CFR §133.116)

Style A - Block/print, frozen - 4.53 kilograms (kg) (10 pounds (lb))

Style B - Block, frozen - 18.1 kg (40 lb)

Style C - Slices, individual, frozen - 14.2 to 21.3 grams (g) (0.50 to 0.75 ounce (oz))

Style D - Shredded, frozen - 6 count - 2.27 kg (5 lb) box

Style E - Shredded, gas flushed - 2.27 kg (5 lb) box

Style F - Chilled, processor packs³ 2.27 kg (5 lb) tote

Style G - Chilled, processor packs³ 2.72 kg (6 lb) tote

Style H - Chilled, processor packs³ 4.53 kg (10 lb) tote

Style I - Chilled processor packs³ 5.44 kg (12 lb) tote

Style J - Chilled processor packs³ 9.07 kg (20 lb) tote

Style K - Other (*as specified by the purchaser*)

Shred size 1 - 3.2 x 3.2 millimeter (mm) (1/8 x 1/8 inch (in)) x 3.2 to 38.1 mm (1/8 to 1-1/2 in)

Shred size 2 - 1.6 x 1.6 mm (1/16 x 1/16 in) x 3.2 to 38.1 mm (1/8 to 1-1/2 in)

Shred size 3 - Other (*as specified by the purchaser*)

Agricultural practice (a) - Conventional

Agricultural practice (b) - Organic

U.S. Grade AA

U.S. Grade A

U.S. Grade B

U.S. Grade C

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

- Processing guidelines (Sec. 5).
- Salient characteristics (Sec. 6).
- Analytical requirements: *as specified by the purchaser* (Sec. 7).
- Manufacturer's/distributor's product assurance (Sec. 8).
- Regulatory requirements (Sec. 9).
- Quality assurance provisions: *as specified by the purchaser* (Sec. 10).
- Packaging requirements other than commercial: *as specified by the purchaser* (Sec.11).

³ Chilled Cheddar cheese must be packaged in totes (master bag). Cheddar cheese packaged in totes cannot be individually wrapped.

5. PROCESSING GUIDELINES.

5.1 Processing. The Cheddar cheese must be processed in accordance with *Current Good Manufacturing Practice (CGMP)* (21 CFR Part 110) or the *Current Good Manufacturing Practice, Hazard Analysis and Risk-Based Preventive Controls for Human Food* (21 CFR Part 117) in effect on the date of the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, and as applicable to the production facility. The manufacturing plants must be eligible for Section I listing in the most recent version of the publication *Dairy Plants Surveyed and Approved for USDA Grading Service*.⁴

5.2 Food defense. The Cheddar cheese must be processed and transported in accordance with 21 CFR Part 121, *Mitigation Strategies to Protect Food Against Intentional Adulteration*. This document identifies the kinds of preventive measures food manufacturers, processors, or handlers may take to minimize the risk that food under their control will be subject to tampering or other malicious, criminal, or terrorist actions. The implementation of enhanced food defense preventive measures provides for the security of a plant's production processes and includes the storage and transportation of pre-production raw materials, other ingredients, and post-production finished product.

5.3 Organic ingredients. When organic Cheddar cheese is specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, the organic Cheddar cheese must be produced, handled, and labeled in accordance with the USDA organic regulations by an operation that is certified organic in accordance with the requirements of the National Organic Program (7 CFR Part 205). A Certificate of Organic Production or Handling must be provided to verify that the product was processed and handled in accordance with the USDA organic regulations.

5.4 Age and storage requirements. The Cheddar cheese must be aged not less than 10 days except for Type II, reduced fat Cheddar cheese, which must be at least 20 days old before being graded. After aging, the Cheddar cheese must be placed in refrigeration and the temperature reduced to 0 to 5.5°C (32 to 42°F) within a 24-hour period and delivered at 0 to 5.5°C (32 to 42°F). For Style J, Cheddar cheese, larger blocks will take longer to reach 0 to 5.5°C (32 to 42°F). Chilled Cheddar cheese (processors packs) must be stored and delivered at 0 to 5.5°C (32 to 42°F).

5.5 Shelf life. After manufacture, the shelf life of the block/print Cheddar cheese must be at least 120 days; the shelf life of shredded Cheddar cheese must be at least 90 days; and the processor pack Cheddar cheese must be at least 30 days when stored between 0 to 5.5°C (32 to 42°F).

⁴ The *Dairy Plants Surveyed and Approved for USDA Grading Service* is available at: <https://apps.ams.usda.gov/dairy/ApprovedPlantList/>.

6. SALIENT CHARACTERISTICS.

6.1 Definitions.

6.1.1 Reduced fat. Food contains at least 25 percent less fat per reference amount customarily consumed (RACC) than an appropriate reference food (21 CFR §101.62). (The reference food may not be *Low Fat*.)

6.1.2 Light or lite. If the food derives 50 percent or more of its calories from fat, its fat content is reduced by 50 percent or more per RACC compared to an appropriate reference food (21 CFR §101.56).

6.1.3 Low sodium. In compliance with the standard of identity for low sodium Cheddar cheese (21 CFR §133.116) the food contains not more than 95 mg of sodium per pound of finished food.

6.1.4 Pasteurization. Pasteurization means that every particle of such product must have been heated in properly operated equipment to a temperature specified in the table (21 CFR §133.3(d)) and held continuously at or above that temperature for the specified time (or other time/temperature relationship which has been demonstrated to be equivalent thereto in microbial destruction).

6.2 Labeling. All Cheddar cheeses must comply with the labeling requirements in 21 CFR Parts 101 and 133, and 21 CFR §130.10. All ingredients must be declared by their common or usual name in descending order of predominance by weight (21 CFR §101.4(a)) unless exempted by 21 CFR §101.100.

6.3 Dairy ingredients. Dairy ingredients used in the manufacture of Cheddar cheese must originate from a plant that has been approved by the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), Dairy Program (DP), Grading and Standards Division (GSD), Dairy Grading Branch (DGB).

6.4 Anticaking agents. When anticaking agents are used with shredded Cheddar cheese, the amount used must be the minimum required to produce the desired effect and must not exceed 2.0 percent of the weight of cheese. When calcium silicate or silicon dioxide are used, the level must not exceed 2.0 percent of the weight of the cheese (21 CFR §§172.410(b), 172.480(b)(4)).

6.5 Additional processing ingredients. When used, all additional ingredients must be permitted by the applicable standard of identity for Cheddar cheese (21 CFR §133.113) and, if modified by nutrient content claims, permitted under 21 CFR §130.10(b), (c), or (d). When used, all additional ingredients must meet the standards specified in the Food Chemicals Codex (FCC) or, in the absence of FCC specification at a minimum, meet the specifications for quality set by the U.S. Pharmacopeia (USP)-National Formulary quality. The additional ingredients must be approved for those particular uses by Food and Drug Administration's (FDA)

regulations on food additives (21 CFR Part 170) or Direct Food Substances Affirmed as Generally Recognized as Safe (GRAS) requirements (21 CFR Part 184).

6.6 Finished product. The Cheddar cheeses (21 CFR §§133.113, 133.116) must comply with all applicable Federal regulations including: 21 CFR §101.13 for general principles for nutrient content claims, 21 CFR §130.10 *Requirements for foods named by use of a nutrient content claim and a standardized term*, 21 CFR §101.56 for food nutrient content claims for light or lite, and 21 CFR §133.146 for grated cheeses.

6.6.1 Flavor and aroma. The Cheddar cheese must have a mild pleasing flavor. The Cheddar cheese may possess slight acid and feed flavors but must not possess any undesirable flavors or odors.

6.6.2 Color and appearance. The Cheddar cheese must have a uniform, bright attractive appearance, practically free from white lines or seams. When the Cheddar cheese is colored it must be a medium yellow-orange. When the Cheddar cheese is uncolored it must have a natural white to light cream, uniform bright color, and an attractive sheen. No visible signs of mold will be permitted.

6.6.3 Body and texture. When a plug is drawn from the Cheddar cheese, it must be firm, smooth, compact, close and must be slightly translucent, but may have a few small mechanical openings. The Cheddar cheese may be very slightly open and definitely curdy or may be partially broken down if the cheese is more than three weeks old. The Cheddar cheese must be free from sweet holes, yeast holes, and gas holes of any kind. The surface must be free of mold. The shredded Cheddar cheese must be free flowing and must not mat, crumble, or oil off. The Cheddar cheese must be free from all foreign and extraneous materials.

6.6.4 Shred size. For Shred size 1, the shredded Cheddar cheese must be shredded to a nominal thickness and width of 3.2 x 3.2 mm (1/8 x 1/8 in) and the length will be 3.2 to 38.1 mm (1/8 to 1-1/2 in). For Shred size 2, the shredded Cheddar cheese must be shredded to a nominal thickness and width of 1.6 x 1.6 mm (1/16 x 1/16 in) and the length will be 3.2 to 38.1 mm (1/8 to 1-1/2 in).

6.6.5 Fines. The shredded Cheddar cheese must not contain more than 8.0 percent fines per weight. Fines must be tested using a standard sieve No. 8 (USA), sieve No. 8 (2.36 mm) for 3.2 x 3.2 mm (1/8 x 1/8 in) shreds or sieve No. 14 (1.4 mm) for 1.6 x 1.6 mm (1/16 x 1/16 in) shreds.

6.7 Foreign material. All ingredients and finished product shall be clean, sound, wholesome, and free from evidence of rodent or insect infestation. The Cheddar cheese must be free from foreign material, such as, but not limited, to dirt, hair, wood, glass, plastic, or metal. Any evidence of foreign material must be cause for rejection of the lot.

7. ANALYTICAL REQUIREMENTS.

7.1 Analytical and physical requirements. Unless otherwise specified in the solicitation, contract or purchase order, the following analytical and physical requirements for the Cheddar cheese must conform to those in Table I:

TABLE I. Analytical and physical requirements

Test	Requirement
Milk fat: Type I Cheddar cheese and Type IV low-sodium Cheddar cheese	Not less than 50.0 percent by the weight of the milk solids
Milk fat: Type II reduced fat Cheddar cheese and Type III light or lite Cheddar cheese	In accordance with 21 CFR §§130.10 and 101.56
Moisture: Type I Cheddar cheese and Type III low-sodium Cheddar cheese	Not more than 39.0 percent
Moisture: Type II reduced fat Cheddar cheese	Less than 49.0 percent
Salt: all types	Less than 2.1 percent
Sodium: Type I Cheddar cheese, Type II reduced fat Cheddar cheese, and Type III light or lite Cheddar cheese	Less than 200 mg per 28 g (0.99 oz) per serving
Sodium: Type IV low-sodium Cheddar cheese	Not more than 96.0 mg of sodium per pound of finished food
pH	Not greater than 5.30 value, except for shredded Cheddar cheese which will not exceed 5.35 value

7.2 Analytical verification. Purchaser must specify manufacturer's/distributor's certification (Sec. 10.2) or USDA certification (Sec. 10.3).

7.3 USDA verification procedures. When USDA certification (Sec. 10.3) is specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, analytical testing must be performed as follows.

7.3.1 Preparation of sample. A minimum of 100 g (3.5 oz) of Cheddar cheese must be blended to uniformity in a minimum time using a Robot Coup or equivalent food processor. This uniform sample may be used in the analyses for fat, moisture, salt, and pH. For the meltability test using a block/print, either manually shred 100 g (3.5 oz) through a 6.4 mm (1/4 in) shredder or a mechanical shredder. No further processing is required for the Meltability testing of the samples (Styles C and D).

7.3.2 Analytical testing and reporting. When specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, the analyses must be made in accordance with the following methods from the AOAC International Official Methods of Analysis (OMA), and the latest edition of the *Standard Methods for the Examination of Dairy Products*⁵, as specified in Table II. Any result not conforming to the analytical requirements may be cause for rejection of the lot.

TABLE II. Analytical and physical testing and reporting

Test	Method	Reported as
Sample preparation	983.18	---
Fat	933.05	Nearest 0.1 percent
Moisture	926.08	Nearest 0.1 percent
Salt	935.43 or 983.14	Nearest 0.1 percent
pH	Quinhydrone, Ch. 15 - 15.024 ⁵ or Potentiometric Ch. 15 - 15.022 ⁵	Nearest 0.01 value
Fines	See Sec. 6.6.5	Nearest 0.1 percent

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

9. REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS. The delivered Cheddar cheese must comply with all applicable Federal, State, and local mandatory requirements and regulations relating to the preparation, packaging, labeling, storage, distribution, and sale of the Cheddar cheese in the commercial marketplace. Delivered Cheddar cheese must comply with all applicable provisions

⁵ The latest edition of the *Standard Method for the Examination of Dairy Products*. Is available at: http://secure.apha.org/imis/APHA/Store/Search_Bookstore.aspx?InitialText=BK.

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of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic (FD&C) Act, the Fair Packaging and Labeling Act, and regulations promulgated thereunder. When a known allergen is included in the Cheddar cheese, the Cheddar cheese must comply with the allergen labeling requirements of the FD&C Act. Major allergens identified in the FD&C Act include: wheat, fish, milk, soy, tree nuts, eggs, peanuts, and shellfish or those in effect on the date of the solicitation, contract, or purchase order. When the Cheddar cheese is used for the Child Nutrition Programs, the Cheddar cheese must comply with all applicable provisions of the Child Nutrition Programs.

10. QUALITY ASSURANCE PROVISIONS. *Purchaser must specify 10.1, 10.2, or 10.3.*

10.1 Manufacturer's quality assurance and plant survey. When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, the manufacturer will 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*⁶. (An AMS DP plant survey audit verifies that, at the time of the survey, the manufacturer produces products in a clean, sanitary environment in accordance with CGMP (21 CFR Part 110) or the *Current Good Manufacturing Practice, Hazard Analysis and Risk-Based Preventive Controls for Human Food* (21 CFR Part 117) in effect on the date of the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, and as applicable to the production facility, and the requirements contained in 7 CFR Part 58, Subpart B, *General Specification for Dairy Plants Approved for USDA Inspection and Grading Service*).⁷

10.2 Manufacturer's/distributor's certification. When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, the manufacturer/distributor must certify that the Cheddar cheese delivered meets or exceeds the requirements of this CID. The manufacturer/distributor must certify via a Certificate of Conformance or other adequate documentation (*as specified by the purchaser*) that the Cheddar cheese meets the analytical requirements specified in Sec. 7 of this CID.

***10.3 USDA Grading.** When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order that product quality and acceptability or both be determined, the USDA, AMS, DP, DGB inspectors, must be the certifying program. DGB inspectors must certify the quality and acceptability of the Cheddar cheese in accordance with DGB procedures, which include selecting random samples of the Cheddar cheese, evaluating the samples for conformance with the salient characteristics of this CID and other contractual requirements, and documenting the findings on official DGB score sheets and/or certificates. In addition, when required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, DGB inspectors will examine the Cheddar cheese for conformance to the U.S. Standards for Condition of Food Containers (7 CFR Part 42) 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*.⁸

⁶ See footnote 4 on page 3.

⁷ 7 CFR Part 58 is available at: <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/granule/CFR-2011-title7-vol3/CFR-2011-title7-vol3-part58>.

⁸ <https://apps.ams.usda.gov/dairy/ApprovedPlantList/>

11. PACKAGING. Preservation, packaging, packing, labeling, and case marking must be commercial unless otherwise specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order.

12. USDA INSPECTION NOTES. When Sec. 10.3 is specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, USDA certification must include evaluation of the quality and condition of samples of Cheddar cheese and compliance with requirements in the following areas:

- Processing guidelines (Sec. 5).
- Salient characteristics (Sec. 6).
- Analytical requirements *when specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order* (Sec. 7). When USDA analytical testing is specified, DGB inspection personnel must select samples and submit them to the USDA, AMS, Science and Technology Program (S&TP) laboratory for analysis.
- Packaging requirements (Sec. 11 or *as specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order*).

13. REFERENCE NOTES.

13.1 USDA services.

13.1.1 USDA plant surveys and certification. For USDA plant surveys and certification contact: **William Francis, Acting Director, Grading and Standards Division, DP, AMS, USDA, Room 2758 South Building, STOP 0230, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-0230, telephone (202) 690-0530 or via E-mail: william.francis@usda.gov.**

13.1.2 Analytical testing and technical information. For USDA technical information on analytical testing, contact the **Laboratory Approval and Testing Division, S&TP, AMS, USDA, STOP 0272, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-0272, telephone (202) 690-4089 or via E-mail: KerryR.Smith@usda.gov.**

13.2 Sources of documents.

13.2.1 Sources of information for nongovernmental documents are as follows:

Copies of the AOAC International OMA may be obtained from: **AOAC International, 2275 Research Boulevard, Suite 300, Rockville, MD 20850-3250, telephone (301) 924-7077.**

Internet address: <http://www.aoac.org> for nonmembers and <http://www.eoma.aoac.org> for members and AOAC OMA subscribers.

Copies of the Food Chemicals Codex and U.S. Pharmacopeia may be purchased from: **United States Pharmacopeia Convention, 12601 Twinbrook Parkway, Rockville, MD 20877,**

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telephone (800) 227-8772 or (301) 881-0666, Fax (301) 816-8148 or on the Internet at: <http://www.usp.org>.

Copies of the Standard Methods for the Examination of Dairy Products may be purchased from: **American Public Health Association Press, 800 I Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001, telephone (202) 777-2742 or on the Internet at: http://secure.apha.org/imis/APHA/Store/Search_Bookstore.aspx?InitialText=BK.**

13.2.2 Sources of information for governmental documents are as follows:

Applicable provisions of the U.S. Standards for Condition of Food Containers are contained in 7 CFR Part 42, the General Specification for Dairy Plants Approved for USDA Inspection and Grading Services are contained in 7 CFR Part 58, the National Organic Program are contained in 7 CFR Part 205, the Fair Packaging and Labeling Act are contained in 16 CFR Parts 500 to 503, and the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act are contained in 21 CFR Parts 1 to 199. These documents may be purchased from: **Superintendent of Documents, New Orders, P.O. Box 979050, St. Louis, MO 63197-9000. 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. These documents may also be obtained free of charge on the Internet at: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/browse/collectionCfr.action?collectionCode=CFR>.**

Copies of the U.S. Standards for Grades of Cheddar Cheese are available from: **William Francis, Acting Director, Grading and Standards Division, DP, AMS, USDA, Room 2758 South Building, STOP 0230, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-0230, telephone (202) 690-0530 or on the Internet at: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/grades-standards/cheddar-cheese-grades-and-standards>.**

Copies of this CID and the U. S. Standards for Condition of Food Containers (7 CFR Part 42) are available from: **Director, SCI Division, SCP, AMS, USDA, Room 1536 South Building, STOP 0240, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-0240, via E-mail: CIDS@usda.gov or on the Internet at: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/grades-standards/cids> and <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2015-title7-vol2/pdf/CFR-2015-title7-vol2-part42.pdf>.**

CIVIL AGENCY COORDINATING ACTIVITY:

DOJ - BOP
HHS - FDA
USDA - SCP
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PREPARING ACTIVITY:

USDA - SCP

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