

COMMERCIAL ITEM DESCRIPTION**CHEESE, QUESO BLANCO**

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

1. SCOPE. This Commercial Item Description (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).
- Manufacturer's/distributor's certification (Sec. 9.2) or USDA certification (Sec. 9.3).

2.2 Purchasers may specify the following.

- Manufacturer's quality assurance (Sec. 9.1 with 9.1.1), (Sec. 9.1 with 9.1.2), or (Sec. 9.1 with 9.1.3).
- Special labeling and packaging requirements (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:*

- Salient characteristics (Sec. 5).
- Analytical requirements: *as specified by the purchaser* (Sec. 6).
- Manufacturer's/distributor's assurance (Sec. 7).

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- 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 Fat content. The fat content of the Queso Blanco shall range from 18.5 to 25.0 percent by total weight.

5.3.2 Moisture content. The moisture content of the Queso Blanco shall range from 45.0 to 55.0 percent.

5.3.3 Salt content. The salt content of the Queso Blanco shall range from 1.8 to 3.0 percent.

5.3.4 pH. The Queso Blanco shall have a pH value between 5.25 to 5.9 using the quinhydrone method.

5.3.5 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.

5.4 Weight. The weight of the Queso Blanco shall be not less than 2.27 kg (5 lb).

5.5 Quality Specifications.

5.5.1 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.

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

5.5.3 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.

5.5.4 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.

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

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 5.9

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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 may then be used in the analyses for fat, moisture, salt, and pH.

6.3 Analytical, microbial and physical 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>
<i>Listeria monocytogenes</i>	993.09, 999.06 or 993.12 <u>1/</u> or BAM, Ch. 10 <u>2/</u>
<i>Salmonella</i>	<u>3/</u>
pH	Quinhydrone, Ch. 15 <u>4/</u>

1/ Official Methods of Analysis of the AOAC International

2/ Bacteriological Analytical Manual (BAM) method

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

6.3.1 Test results. The test results for fat, moisture, and salt shall be reported to the nearest 0.1 percent; *Listeria monocytogenes* and *Salmonella* shall be reported as positive or negative; and pH to the nearest 0.1 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. 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 9.2 or 9.3; purchaser may specify 9.1 with 9.1.1, 9.1 with 9.1.2 or 9.1 with 9.1.3.*

9.1 Manufacturer's quality assurance. When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, the product manufacturer shall be required to provide evidence, by certificate, that the manufacturing plant has undertaken one of the following quality assurance measures within 12 months prior to providing a bid, or no later than 10 business days from the date of awarding of the contract. Failure to provide this documentation within the proper time frame may result in the contract being terminated.

9.1.1 Plant systems audit. A plant systems audit (PSA) shall be conducted by USDA, AMS, or other third party auditing service and is required within 12 months prior to the date of the awarding of the contract. *(An AMS PSA verifies the manufacturer's capability to produce 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 have in place an internal quality assurance program. The AMS PSA determines the manufacturer's ability to produce under this CID, if the products of interest are identified at the time of the PSA.)*

9.1.2 Plant survey. A plant survey shall be conducted by USDA, AMS, or other third party auditing service and is required within 12 months prior to the date of the awarding of the contract. *(An AMS plant survey audit 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.)*

9.1.3 Total Quality Systems Audit. A total quality systems audit (TQSA) conducted by USDA/Farm Service Agency (FSA), or another survey performed by a third party auditing service is required within 12 months prior to the date of the awarding of the contract. *(A FSA TQSA verifies the manufacturer's capability to produce 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 verifies that the manufacturer has in place an internal quality assurance program. The FSA TQSA determines the manufacturer's ability to produce under this CID, if the products of interest are identified at the time of the TQSA.)*

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

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9.3 USDA certification. When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order that product quality or acceptability or both be determined, USDA, AMS, DGB, DP shall be the certifying agency. DGB shall certify the quality and acceptability of the Queso Blanco in accordance with agency procedures which include selecting random samples of the Queso Blanco, evaluating the samples for conformance with the salient characteristic of this CID and other contractual requirements, and documenting the findings on official score sheets and/or 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 of Condition of Food Containers in effect on the date of the solicitation.

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 requirements *when specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order* (Sec. 6.1). When USDA testing of Queso Blanco is specified, DGB inspection personnel shall select samples and conduct the tests.
- 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) 720-7471 or on the Internet at: www.ams.usda.gov/dairy/grade.htm.**

12.1.2 Total Quality Systems Audit contact. Inquiries about services and fees should be directed to: **Warehouse Licensing and Examination Division, Stop 9148, Kansas City Commodity Office, 6501 Beacon Drive, Kansas City, Missouri 64133-6476, telephone (816) 926-6417 or Fax (816) 926-1774, Website: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/daco/pdd/tqsa.htm>.**

12.1.3 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 Sources of documents.

12.2.1 Sources of information for nongovernmental documents is 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>.

12.2.2 Sources of information for governmental documents are as follows:

Applicable provisions of the: 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 (MasterCard or Visa) purchases may be made by calling the Superintendent of Documents on (202) 512-1803 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 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. **Head, Food Quality Assurance Staff, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, AMS, USDA, STOP 0243, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-0243, telephone (202) 720-9939, Fax (202) 690-0102, via E-mail. FQASTaff@usda.gov or on the Internet at: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/fv/fvqual.htm>.**

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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, STOP 0230, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-0230.**

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