

METRIC

A-A-20248C

November 27, 2018

SUPERSEDING

A-A-20248B

September 9, 2008

COMMERCIAL ITEM DESCRIPTION

CHEESE, MOZZARELLA

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

1. SCOPE. This CID covers types of mozzarella cheese (mozzarella 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), and agricultural practice(s) of mozzarella 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 certification (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 mozzarella cheese must conform to the following list which must be specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order.

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

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Types, styles, shred sizes, and agricultural practices.²

- Type I** - Mozzarella cheese (21 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §133.155)
- Type II** - Low-moisture mozzarella cheese (21 CFR §133.156)
- Type III** - Part-skim mozzarella cheese (21 CFR §133.157)
- Type IV** - Low-moisture part-skim mozzarella cheese (21 CFR §133.158)
- Type V** - Reduced fat mozzarella cheese (21 CFR §133.155 as modified by §§130.10 and 101.62(b)(4))
- Type VI** - Lite mozzarella cheese (21 CFR §133.155 as modified by §§130.10 and 101.56)

- Style A** - Block (loaf), frozen - 8/2.72 kilograms (kg) (6 pounds (lb))
- Style B** - Shredded, individually quick frozen (IQF) - 13.6 kg (30 lb) box
- Style C** - String, frozen - 28 grams (g) (1 ounces (oz)) packaged in a 13.6 kg (30 lb) box
- Style D** - String, unfrozen, individually wrapped - 28 g (1 oz) packaged in a 13.6 kg (30 lb) box
- Style E** - Chilled, processor packs³ 2.27 kg (5 lb) tote
- Style F** - Chilled, processor packs³ 2.72 kg (6 lb) tote
- Style G** - Chilled, processor packs³ 4.53 kg (10 lb) tote
- Style H** - Chilled, processor packs³ 5.44 kg (12 lb) tote
- Style I** - Chilled, processor packs³ 9.07 kg (20 lb) tote
- Style J** - Other (*as specified by the purchaser*)

- Shred size 1** - 3.2 x 3.2 millimeters (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

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).

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

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

5. PROCESSING GUIDELINES.

5.1 Processing. The mozzarella 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 mozzarella cheese must be processed and transported in accordance with the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA's) *Guidance for Industry: Mitigation Strategies to Protect Food Against Intentional Adulteration*.⁵ This guidance 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 security 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 mozzarella cheese is specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, the organic mozzarella 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 mozzarella cheese will be aged not less than 5 days and not more than 15 days at 0 to 5.5°C (32 to 42°F) prior to inspection unless the mozzarella cheese is manufactured and immediately shredded and frozen. Chilled mozzarella cheese (string and processors packs) will 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/loaf mozzarella cheese must not be less than 120 days; the shelf life of shredded mozzarella cheese must not be less than 90 days; the string mozzarella cheese must not be less than 150 days; and the processor pack mozzarella cheese must not be less than 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/>.

⁵ <https://www.fda.gov/food/guidanceregulation/guidancedocumentsregulatoryinformation/ucm562216.htm>.

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 Pasteurization. Pasteurization means that every particle of such product must have been heated in properly operated equipment to a temperature specified in the table (in 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 mozzarella 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 mozzarella 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 agent. When an anticaking agent is used with shredded mozzarella cheese, the amount used must be the minimum required to produce the desired effect. 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 mozzarella cheese (21 CFR §133.155), low-moisture mozzarella cheese (21 CFR §133.156), part-skim mozzarella cheese (21 CFR §133.157), low-moisture part-skim mozzarella cheese (21 CFR §133.158) modified by a nutrient content claim 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 FDA's regulations on food additives (21 CFR Part 170) or Direct

Food Substances Affirmed as Generally Recognized as Safe (GRAS) requirements (21 CFR Part 184) or has been self-determined to be GRAS by a panel of scientific experts.

6.6 Finished product. The mozzarella cheeses (21 CFR §§133.155, 133.156, 133.157, 133.158) 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 odor. The mozzarella cheese must have a mild pleasing flavor. The mozzarella cheese may possess slight acid and feed flavors, but must not possess any undesirable flavors or odors.

6.6.2 Color and appearance. The mozzarella cheese must have a natural white to light cream, uniform bright color, and an attractive sheen. The block/loaf style mozzarella cheese may be wavy to a very slight degree, and may have a slight variation in color due to salt penetration. No visible signs of mold will be permitted.

6.6.3 Body and texture. The block/loaf, string, and processor pack styles of mozzarella cheese shall possess a smooth, pliable body and must not contain sweet holes or be gassy. The mozzarella cheese must be free from all foreign and extraneous materials. The mozzarella cheese may have the following body and texture characteristics to a slight degree: open (caused by entrapped steam), lacking flexibility, mealy, weak, sticky, and rubbery. The shredded mozzarella cheese must be free-flowing and must not be matted. The string mozzarella cheese will be an extruded product, pliable and elastic to ensure the string can bend without breaking.

6.6.4 Shred size. For Shred size 1, the shredded mozzarella 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 mozzarella 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 mozzarella cheese must not contain more than 8.0 percent fines per weight. Fines must be tested using a Standard Test 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 must be clean, sound, wholesome, and free from evidence of rodent or insect infestation. The mozzarella 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 will 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 mozzarella cheese must conform to those in Table I:

TABLE I. Analytical and physical requirements

Test	Requirement
Milk fat content: Type I mozzarella cheese and Type II low-moisture mozzarella cheese	Not less than 45.0 percent on a dry basis
Milk fat content: Type III part-skim mozzarella cheese and Type IV low-moisture part-skim mozzarella cheese	Range between 30.0 to 45.0 percent on a dry basis
Milk fat content: Type V reduced fat mozzarella cheese	In accordance with 21 CFR §133.155 as modified by §§130.10 and 101.62(b)(4)
Milk fat content: Type VI lite mozzarella cheese	In accordance with 21 CFR §§130.10 and 101.56
Moisture content: Type I mozzarella cheese and Type III part-skim mozzarella cheese	Range between 52.0 to 60.0 percent
Moisture content: Type II low-moisture mozzarella cheese and Type IV low-moisture part-skim	Range between 45.0 to 52.0 percent
Moisture content: Type V reduced fat mozzarella cheese and Type VI lite mozzarella cheese	Not applicable
Salt: except for string cheese	Range between 1.0 to 1.5 percent
Sodium content (when specified by the purchaser): except string cheese	Not less than 185 milligram (mg) of sodium per 28 g serving
Sodium content for string cheese	Not more than 200 mg of sodium per 28 g serving
pH	Range between 5.1 and 5.4 value

7.2 Analytical verification. Purchaser must specify manufacturer's/distributor's certification (Sec. 10.3) or USDA certification (Sec. 10.4).

7.3 USDA verification procedures. When USDA certification (Sec. 10.4) 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 mozzarella cheese must be blended to uniformity in a minimum time using a Robot Coup food processor. This uniform sample may be used in the analyses for fat, moisture, salt, and pH. For the meltability test using a loaf, 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 shredded samples (Style B).

7.3.2 Meltability. The mozzarella cheese must melt completely, must not exhibit shreds of unmelted cheese or excessive blistering, and must stretch to a minimum of 76.2 mm (3 in) of unbroken strings. The melted mozzarella cheese may be chewy but not gummy. The mozzarella cheese may possess a slightly darker color than the color of mozzarella cheese before cooking but must not exhibit burnt areas or excessive browning. When testing meltability of mozzarella cheese on a pizza, place the pizza in an oven preheated to 218°C (425°F) and bake at that temperature for 12 minutes. Meltability does not apply to string cheese.

7.3.3 Analytical and physical 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 USDA - DA instruction 918 - RL, *Laboratory Methods and Procedures*⁶, or the latest edition of the *Standard Methods for the examination of Dairy Products*⁷ 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

⁶ USDA - DA Instruction 918 - RL, *Laboratory Methods and Procedures* is available at: DairyNFO@ams.usda.gov.

⁷ 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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Test	Method	Reported as
pH	Quinhydrone, Ch. 15 ⁸ or 15.022 ⁸	Nearest 0.01 value
Meltability	⁹	⁹
Fines	See Sec. 6.5.5	Nearest 0.1 percent

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

9. REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS. The delivered mozzarella 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 mozzarella cheese in the commercial marketplace. Delivered mozzarella cheese must comply with all applicable provisions 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 mozzarella cheese, the mozzarella 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 mozzarella cheese is used for the National School Lunch Program, the mozzarella 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*.¹⁰ (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

⁸ See footnote 7 on page 7.

⁹ See footnote 6 on page 7.

¹⁰ See footnote 4 on page 3.

production facility, and the requirements contained in 7 CFR Part 58 *General Specification for Dairy Plants Approved for USDA Inspection and Grading Service*).¹¹

10.2 Manufacturer's/distributor's certification. When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, the manufacturer/distributor must certify that the mozzarella cheese delivered meets or exceeds the requirements 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 mozzarella cheese in accordance with DGB procedures, which include selecting random samples of the mozzarella 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 mozzarella 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* (Sec. 10.1).¹¹

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 mozzarella 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*).

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

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@ams.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@ams.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, 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) 777-2741 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 Guidance for Industry: Mitigation Strategies to Protect Food Against Intentional Adulteration is available online from: **FDA, Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN) on the Internet at:**

<https://www.fda.gov/food/guidanceregulation/guidancedocumentsregulatoryinformation/ucm562216.htm>.

Copies of the USDA, AMS, DA Instruction 918 - RL, Laboratory Methods and Procedures are available from: [DairyNFO @ams.usda.gov](mailto:DairyNFO@ams.usda.gov).

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@ams.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:

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HHS - FDA
USDA - SCP
VA - OSS

PREPARING ACTIVITY:

USDA - SCP

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