COMMERCIAL ITEM DESCRIPTION

BLEND, CHEESE, PIZZA

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

1. SCOPE. This CID covers cheese blends for pizza (pizza cheese blend) packed in commercially acceptable containers, suitable for use by Federal, State, local governments, and other interested parties.

2. PURCHASER NOTES.

2.1 Purchasers shall specify the following.

- Type(s), style(s), cheese(s), total fat content, and shred size(s) of pizza cheese blend required (Sec. 3).
- When analytical requirements are different than specified (Sec. 7.1).
- When analytical requirements need to be verified (Sec. 7.3).
- Manufacturer’s quality assurance and plant survey (Sec. 10.2), Manufacturer’s/distributor’s certification (Sec. 10.3) or USDA certification (Sec. 10.4).

2.2 Purchasers may specify the following.

- When the cheeses used for the pizza cheese blend are to be graded or inspected by the Dairy Grading Branch (DGB), Dairy Programs (DP), Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), USDA (Sec. 10).
- Food Defense Section 10.1: Food Defense System Survey (FDSS) (Sec. 10.1).
- Packaging requirements other than commercial (Sec. 11).

3. CLASSIFICATION. The pizza cheese blend shall conform to the following list, which shall be specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order.
A-A-20096A

Types, styles, cheeses, total fat content, and shred sizes.

**Type I** - Frozen
**Type II** - Chilled

**Style A** - Two cheese blend (*as specified by the purchaser*)
**Style B** - Three cheese blend (*as specified by the purchaser*)
**Style C** - Four cheese blend (*as specified by the purchaser*)
**Style D** - Five cheese blend (*as specified by the purchaser*)
**Style E** - Six cheese blend (*as specified by the purchaser*)
**Style F** - Other (*as specified by the purchaser*)

**Cheese 1** - Mozzarella (21 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) § 133.155)
**Cheese 2** - Mozzarella, low-moisture, part-skim (21 CFR § 133.158)
**Cheese 3** - Mozzarella, low-moisture (21 CFR § 133.156)
**Cheese 4** - Provolone (21 CFR § 133.181)
**Cheese 5** - Parmesan (21 CFR § 133.165)
**Cheese 6** - Romano (21 CFR § 133.183)
**Cheese 7** - Asiago (21 CFR § 133.102)
**Cheese 8** - Cheddar (21 CFR § 133.113)
**Cheese 9** - Monterey Jack (21 CFR § 133.153)
**Cheese 10** - Colby (21 CFR § 133.118)
**Cheese 11** - Other (*as specified by the purchaser*)

**Total fat content a** - Standard fat content
**Total fat content b** - Reduced fat content (21 CFR § 101.62 (b) (4))

**Shred size i** - 3.2 x 3.2 mm (1/8 x 1/8 in) in length and width
**Shred size ii** - 3.2 to 38.1 mm (1/8 to 1-½ in) in width and 1.6 x 1.6 mm (1/16 x 1/16 in) in length
**Shred size iii** - Other (*as specified by the purchaser*)

4. **MANUFACTURER’S/DISTRIBUTOR’S NOTES.** Manufacturer’s/distributor’s products shall 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 assurance (Sec. 8).
   - Regulatory requirements (Sec. 9).

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1 Check with manufacturer for availability.
- Quality assurance provisions: *as specified by the purchaser* (Sec. 10).
- Packaging requirements other than commercial: *as specified by the purchaser* (Sec. 11).

5. **PROCESSING GUIDELINES.**

5.1 **Processing.** The pizza cheese blend shall be processed in accordance with current Good Manufacturing Practices (21 CFR Part 110).

5.2 **Food security.** The pizza cheese blend should be processed and transported in accordance with the Food and Drug Administration’s (FDA’s) *Guidance for Industry: Food Producers, Processors, and Transporters: Food Security Preventive Measures Guidance.* This guidance 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 postproduction finished product.

5.3 **Age requirements.** The individual cheeses, except mozzarella cheeses, used in the pizza cheese blend specified by the purchaser in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order shall be aged in compliance with all applicable Federal regulations including those contained in 21 CFR § 133.181 for provolone cheese, 21 CFR § 133.165 for Parmesan cheese, 21 CFR § 133.183 for Romano cheese, 21 CFR § 133.102 for asiago cheese; 21 CFR § 133.113 for cheddar cheese, 21 CFR § 133.153 for Monterey Jack cheese, 21 CFR § 133.118 for Colby cheese. The mozzarella cheeses used in the pizza cheese blend shall be aged not less than 5 days and not more than 40 days at 3.3 to 5°C (38 to 41°F).

6. **SALIENT CHARACTERISTICS.**

6.1 **Ingredients.**

6.1.1 **Pasteurization.** When dairy ingredients are pasteurized, they 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. For those cheeses in which the dairy ingredient is not pasteurized, the cheese shall be aged in accordance with the appropriate Standard of Identity.

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6.1.2 **Dairy ingredients.** Dairy ingredients used in the manufacture of pizza cheese blend shall originate from a plant that has been approved by the Dairy Grading Branch (DGB), Dairy Programs (DP), Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), USDA.

6.1.3 **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*.

6.1.4 **Anticaking agent.** If an anticaking agent is used, the amount used shall be the minimum required to produce the desired effect, but shall not exceed 2.0 percent of the cheese by weight.

6.2 **Finished product.** The pizza cheese blend shall contain the cheeses specified in a blend to achieve the technical and flavoring effect specified by the purchaser in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order. The cheese shall comply with all applicable Federal regulations including those contained in 21 CFR § 133.155 for mozzarella cheese, 21 CFR § 133.158 for low-moisture, part-skim mozzarella cheese, 21 CFR § 133.156 for low-moisture mozzarella cheese, 21 CFR § 133.181 for provolone cheese, 21 CFR § 133.165 for Parmesan cheese, 21 CFR § 133.183 for Romano cheese, 21 CFR § 133.102 for asiago cheese; 21 CFR § 133.113 for cheddar cheese, 21 CFR § 133.153 for Monterey Jack cheese, 21 CFR § 133.118 for Colby cheese, 21 CFR § 101.62 for food nutrient content claims for fat, 21 CFR §101.13 for general principles for nutrient content claims, and 21 CFR § 130.10 *Requirements for foods named by use of a nutrient content claim and a standardized term*. The shredded pizza cheese blend shall also comply with 21 CFR § 133.146 for grated cheeses.

6.3 **Quality Specifications.**

6.3.1 **Flavor and odor.** The pizza cheese blend shall have a mild pleasing flavor typical of the cheeses used in the blend. The cheese may possess slight acid and feed flavors, but shall not possess any undesirable flavors or odors.

6.3.2 **Body and texture.** The shredded pizza cheese blend shall be free flowing and shall not be matted.

6.3.3 **Appearance.** The cheese shall be free from all foreign and extraneous materials. No visible signs of mold shall be permitted.

6.3.4 **Color.** The pizza cheese blend shall have a uniform bright color and an attractive sheen appropriate for the cheeses used in the blend.

6.3.5 **Shred size.** For shred size i, the shredded pizza cheese blend shall be shredded to a nominal length and width of 3.2 x 3.2 mm (1/8 x 1/8 in), and for shred size ii, the shredded pizza cheese blend shall be shredded to a nominal width of 3.2 to 38.1 mm (1/8 to 1-\(\frac{1}{2}\) in) and length
of 1.6 x 1.6 mm (1/16 x 1/16 in). The length and width of shred size iii, shall be specified by the purchaser.

6.3.6 Fines. Pizza cheese blend in shredded form shall not contain more than 8.0 percent fines. Fines shall be tested using a Standard Test 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.

6.4 Storage requirements. The Type I frozen pizza cheese blend shall be frozen immediately after shredding. The Type II chilled pizza cheese blend shall be stored at 1.7 to 5°C (35 to 41°F).

6.5 Shelf life. The shelf life of Type I frozen pizza cheese blend shall not be less than 90 days after manufacture, when stored between 1.7 to 5°C (35 to 41°F), after delivery to the purchaser. The Type II chilled pizza cheese blend shall have at least two-thirds of its shelf life remaining when delivered to the purchaser.

7. ANALYTICAL REQUIREMENTS.

7.1 Analytical requirements. Unless otherwise specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, the pizza cheese blend shall conform to the following analytical requirements.

7.1.1 Milk fat and moisture content. Milk fat and moisture composition for cheeses comprising the pizza cheese blend is provided in Table I.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cheese</th>
<th>Percent Moisture</th>
<th>Percent Milk Fat in Dry Matter(^3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asiago</td>
<td>Not more than 45 percent</td>
<td>Not less than 50 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheddar</td>
<td>Maximum of 39 percent</td>
<td>Minimum of 50 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colby</td>
<td>Not more than 40 percent</td>
<td>Not less than 50 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monterey Jack</td>
<td>Maximum of 44 percent</td>
<td>Minimum of 50 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozzarella</td>
<td>More than 52 percent but not more than 60 percent</td>
<td>Minimum of 45 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low moisture mozzarella</td>
<td>More than 45 percent but not more than 52 percent</td>
<td>Minimum of 45 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-moisture, part skim mozzarella</td>
<td>More than 45 percent but not more than 52 percent</td>
<td>Less than 45 percent but no less than 30 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parmesan</td>
<td>Not more than 32 percent</td>
<td>Not less than 32 percent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^3\) The fat content for reduced fat cheese shall meet the requirements of 21 CFR § 101.62 (b).
Table I. Moisture and Milk Fat Requirements (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cheese</th>
<th>Percent Moisture</th>
<th>Percent Milk Fat in Dry Matter³</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provolone</td>
<td>Maximum of 45 percent</td>
<td>Minimum of 45 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romano</td>
<td>Not more than 34 percent</td>
<td>Not less than 38 percent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.1.2 Salt content. The pizza cheese blend shall contain not less than 1.0 percent but not more than 2.0 percent salt.

7.1.3 pH. The pizza cheese blend containing mozzarella cheese shall have a pH value not to exceed 5.5.

7.1.4 Meltability. A circular 38.1 mm (1-1/2 in) diameter, 6.35 mm (1/4 in) thick slice cheese upon heating to 205°C (400°F) for 10 minutes in a petri plate shall expand to a minimum diameter of 76.2 mm (3 in) or #4 (very good) on an official meltability scale when examined after cooling (USDA - DA Instruction 918-RL, Laboratory Methods and Procedures).

7.1.5 Physical characteristics of cheese blend containing mozzarella cheese by pizza making. Pizza should be prepared in accordance with the USDA - DA Instruction 918-RL, Laboratory Methods and Procedures method C.8 with a pizza crust, approximately 22.86 cm (9 in) in diameter. Commercial frozen crust is acceptable. Thaw the frozen crust to room temperature on a pizza tray. Spread a thin layer of tomato puree all over the crust. Spread a uniform thin layer of shredded pizza cheese blend containing mozzarella cheese approximately 65 g (2.29 oz) over each half of the pizza (if two tests are conducted simultaneously, or approximately 130 g (4.59 oz) over the entire pizza if the crust is used for one test. Place the prepared pizza in a preheated commercial oven at 287°C (550°F) for 10 minutes. After removing the pizza from the oven, the pizza cheese blend containing mozzarella cheese should be melted and evenly distributed over the surface of the crust on which it was spread. There should be no blisters. The cheese should have an even, slightly darker cheese color than the color before cooking. There should be no burnt areas. Stick a fork into the pizza cheese blend containing mozzarella cheese and lift the pizza cheese blend about 8.52 to 12.7 cm (3 to 5 in). The pizza cheese blend should be stringy and even and should not break. This characteristic stretch ability of mozzarella cheese is desired in the pizza industry. There shall be no free fat drippage when a slice is made and held at a slight angle.

7.2 Preparation of sample. A minimum of 100 g (3.5 oz) of pizza cheese blend 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. No further processing is required for the meltability testing.
7.3 Analytical and physical testing. When specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, analyses shall be in accordance with the following methods from the AOAC International Official Methods of Analysis (OMA), 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Method</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fat</td>
<td>933.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moisture</td>
<td>926.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt</td>
<td>935.43 or 983.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pH</td>
<td>981.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meltability</td>
<td>DA 918-RL Section C.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Characteristics of Cheese Blend by Pizza Making</td>
<td>DA 918-RL Section C.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fines</td>
<td>See Sec. 5.3.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.4 Test results. The test results for fines, fat, moisture, and salt shall be reported to the nearest 0.1 percent. The test results for pH shall be reported to the nearest 0.01 value. The test results for meltability shall be reported in accordance with DA Instruction 918-RL, Laboratory Methods and Procedures. Any result not conforming to the analytical requirements shall be cause for rejection of the lot.

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

9. REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS. The delivered pizza cheese blend shall comply with all applicable Federal and State mandatory requirements and regulations relating to the preparation, packaging, labeling, storage, distribution, and sale of pizza cheese blend within the commercial marketplace. The delivered pizza cheese blend shall comply with all applicable provisions of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, the Fair Packaging and Labeling Act, and regulations promulgated thereunder. The pizza cheese blend shall comply with the allergen labeling requirements of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act. When the pizza cheese blend is used for the National School Lunch Program, the cheese must comply with all applicable provisions of the Child Nutrition Programs.

10. QUALITY ASSURANCE PROVISIONS. Purchaser shall specify 10.2, 10.3 or 10.4; purchaser may specify 10.1.
10.1 **Food Defense.** When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, a FDSS shall be conducted by USDA, AMS, Fruit and Vegetable Program (FV), Specialty Crops Inspection Division (SCI). Food Defense requirements include a documented and operational food defense plan that provides for the security of a plant’s production processes and includes the storage and transportation of pre-production raw materials and other ingredients and postproduction finished product. The plan shall address the following areas: (1) food security plan management; (2) outside and inside security of the production and storage facilities; (3) slaughter, when applicable, and processing, including all raw material sources; (4) shipping and receiving; (5) storage; (6) water and ice supply; (7) mail handling; (8) personnel security; and (9) transportation, shipping, and receiving. When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, a FDSS shall be conducted by USDA, AMS, FV, SCI. The FDSS verifies that operators of food establishments have implemented measures to minimize the risk of tampering or other criminal actions against the food under their control. (An AMS, FDSS verifies the participating company’s adherence to the FDA’s “Guidance for Industry - Food Producers, Processors, and Transporters: Food Security Preventive Measures Guidance.”) For further information, see section 13.1.1 and 13.2.2.

10.2 **Manufacturer’s quality assurance and plant survey.** When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, the product manufacturer shall 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.* (An AMS plant survey verifies that, at the time of the survey, the manufacturer produces products in a clean, sanitary environment in accordance with 21 CFR Part 110 - Current Good Manufacturing Practice in Manufacturing, Packing, or Holding Human Food and the requirements contained in 7 CFR Part 58 General Specification for Dairy Plants Approved for USDA Inspection and Grading Service.)

10.3 **Manufacturer’s/distributor’s certification.** When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, the manufacturer/distributor will certify that the pizza cheese blend distributed meets or exceeds the requirements of this CID.

10.4 **USDA certification.** When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order that product quality and acceptability or both be determined, the USDA, AMS, DP, DGB shall be the certifying program. DGB inspectors shall certify the quality and acceptability of the pizza cheese blend in accordance with DGB procedures which include selecting random samples of the pizza cheese blend, evaluating the samples for conformance with the salient characteristics of this CID and other contractual requirements, and documenting the findings on official DGB certificates. In addition, when required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, DGB inspectors will examine the pizza cheese blend 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* (see Sec. 10.2).
11. PACKAGING. Preservation, packaging, packing, labeling, and case marking shall be commercial unless otherwise specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order.

12. USDA INSPECTION NOTES. When Section 10.4 is specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, USDA certification shall include evaluation of the quality and condition of samples of the pizza cheese blend 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. 7.1). When USDA testing of pizza cheese blend is specified, DGB inspection personnel shall select samples and submit them to the USDA, Science and Technology Programs (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 Contacts.


13.1.2 USDA Food Defense contact. For a USDA Food Defense survey, contact the Chief, Inspection Branch, SCI, FV, AMS, USDA, STOP 0240, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-0240, telephone (202) 720-2482, Fax (202) 720-0393, or via E-mail: Nathaniel.Taylor@ams.usda.gov.

13.1.3 Analytical testing and technical information. For USDA technical information on analytical testing and USDA, AMS, DA Instruction 918-RL, Laboratory Methods and Procedures issued on January 2, 2001, contact the Director, USDA, AMS, S&TP, Laboratory Division, 801 Summit Crossing Place, Suite B, Gastonia, NC 28054, telephone (704) 867-3873, Fax (704) 853-2800, or via E-mail: AMSLaboratoryDivision@ams.usda.gov.

13.1.4 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.

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, 481 North Fredrick Avenue, Suite 500, Gaithersburg, MD 20877-2417, telephone (301) 924-7077. Internet address: http://www.aoac.org for non-members and http://www.eoma.aoac.org for members and AOAC OMA subscribers.

Copies of the Standard Methods for the Examination of Dairy Products may be obtained from: American Public Health Association, 800 I Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001-3710, Book Orders, telephone (888) 320-2742, via E-mail: apha@pbd.com or on the Internet at: https://secure.apha.org/source/orders/index.cfm.

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 Specifications for Dairy Plants Approved for USDA Inspection and Grading Service are contained in 7 CFR Part 58 Subpart B, 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 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.


Yield information for pizza cheese blend is available in the *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* available online at: [http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/foodbuyingguide.html](http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/foodbuyingguide.html).

Copies of this CID, the U.S. Standards for Condition of Food Containers (7 CFR Part 42), and beneficial comments, recommendations, additions, deletions, clarifications, etc. and any data which may improve this CID are available from and/or provided to. **Chief, Standardization Branch, SCI, FV, AMS, USDA, STOP 0240, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-0240, telephone (202) 720-5021, Fax (202) 690-1527, via E-mail:** Robin.Chilton@ams.usda.gov, or on the Internet at: [http://www.ams.usda.gov/CommercialItemDescription](http://www.ams.usda.gov/CommercialItemDescription).

**CIVIL AGENCY COORDINATING ACTIVITIES:**

- DOJ - BOP
- HHS - NIH, FDA
- USDA - FV, FSA, FNS, DA
- VA - OSS

**PREPARING ACTIVITY:**

- USDA - FV

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