



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Agricultural
Marketing
Service

Dairy
Programs

USDA Specifications for Loaf, Sliced, Shredded and Diced Muenster Cheese

Effective March 1, 2001

USDA Specifications for Loaf, Sliced, Shredded and Diced Muenster Cheese¹

1 **Plant Requirements**

Muenster cheese shall be manufactured and packaged in accordance with the requirements contained in 7 CFR part 58, Grading and Inspection, General Specifications for Approved Plants and Standards for Grades of Dairy Products and be inspected by the AMS, Dairy Grading Branch.

2 **Product Age and Temperature Requirements**

Muenster cheese shall be aged no less than 10 days at 38°F to 45°F (3.5°C to 7°C) prior to inspection. Muenster cheese may be aged before or after the cheese is sliced, shredded or diced.

3 **Regulatory**

Muenster cheese shall comply with all applicable Federal regulations including those contained in 21 CFR Part 133.160 for Muenster and muenster cheese, and when appropriate those contained in 21 CFR Part 133.146 for grated cheese.

4 **Composition Requirements**

Milkfat

Muenster cheese in loaf, sliced and diced form shall contain not less than 50 percent milkfat by weight of the solids. Muenster cheese in shredded form shall contain not less than 49 percent milkfat by weight of the solids.

Moisture

Muenster cheese shall contain not more than 46 percent moisture.

pH

¹Compliance with these specifications does not excuse failure to comply with the provisions of the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act.

Muenster cheese shall not have a pH exceeding 5.4 using the quinhydrone method.

Salt

Muenster cheese shall contain not less than 1.2 percent and not more than 2.0 percent salt.

5 **Quality Requirements**

Muenster cheese samples shall be tempered to 45⁰F to 55⁰F (7⁰C to 13⁰C) prior to product evaluation.

Flavor

Muenster cheese shall possess a mild and pleasing flavor and may possess slight feed flavors.

Body and Texture

Muenster cheese shall be firm, possess a smooth, pliable body and may exhibit either small mechanical openings evenly distributed or a close body. The cheese may be slightly curdy. It shall not possess sweet holes, yeast holes or other gas holes.

Muenster cheese in sliced form: Muenster cheese in the sliced form shall easily separate from one another and not exhibit a rough surface or possess torn corners.

Muenster cheese in shredded form: Shredded Muenster Cheese shall have a height and width up to 3/16 inch in either dimension. It shall be free flowing and shall not be matted. An approved anticaking agent may be added to shredded cheese. If 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 weight of the shredded cheese.

Muenster cheese in diced form: Muenster cheese in diced form shall have all dimensions of the dice relatively equal.

Fines

Shredded Muenster Cheese shall not contain more than 6.0 percent fines. For shreds whose height and/or width is 1/16 inch or less, the fines content shall be determined using a Standard Test Sieve #14 (1.4 mm). For shreds whose height and/or width is greater than 1/16 inch, the fines content shall be determined using a Standard Test Sieve #8 (2.36 mm).

Note: The manufacturer shall provide shred size information. This information will determine the sieve used to measure the fines content. If shred size information is not provided, the Standard Test Sieve #8 will be used.

Color and Appearance

Muenster cheese shall possess a natural, uniform, and bright color. Muenster cheese in the loaf form may possess an orange surface color, typically provided on Muenster cheese. If surface color treated loafs are sliced, shredded or diced, such slices, shreds or dice may exhibit the surface color of the loaf. No visible signs of mold shall be permitted.

6 **Official Identification**

Muenster cheese that is officially inspected and found to meet the requirements may be identified with the official USDA Quality Approved Inspection Shield.