

METRIC

A-A-20345A

September 30, 2021

SUPERSEDING

A-A-20345

November 14, 2007

COMMERCIAL ITEM DESCRIPTION

CHEESE SAUCE, CONDENSED OR DEHYDRATED, SHELF-STABLE

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

1. SCOPE. This CID covers condensed or dehydrated shelf-stable cheese sauce (cheese sauce), 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), flavor(s), and packaging type(s) of cheese sauce desired (Sec. 3).
- Manufacturer's/distributor's certification (Sec. 10.5) or USDA certification (Sec. 10.6).

2.2 Purchasers *may specify* the following:

- Food Defense (Sec. 10.3) and Manufacturer's Quality Assurance (Sec. 10.4). *Purchaser must specify 10.5 or 10.6. In addition, purchaser may specify 10.1 or one of the following combinations: 10.3.1 with 10.4.1, or 10.3.2 with 10.4.2.*
- Packaging requirements other than commercial (Sec. 11).

3. CLASSIFICATION. The cheese sauce 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, cheese flavors, and packaging types of cheese sauce.²

Type I - Condensed (reduced moisture), creamy, or liquid

Type II - Dehydrated or dry mix

Flavor 1 - Cheddar cheese

Flavor 2 - Combination of cheeses (*as specified by the purchaser*)

Flavor 3 - Cheddar cheese with additional non-cheese ingredients such as bacon, jalapeños, green bell peppers, red bell peppers, tomatoes, etc. (*as specified by the purchaser*)

Flavor 4 - Combination of cheeses with additional non-cheese ingredients such as bacon, jalapeños, green bell peppers, red bell peppers, tomatoes, etc. (*as specified by the purchaser*)

Flavor 5 - Other (*as specified by the purchaser*)

Packaging type a - Plastic cup with aluminum foil lid

Packaging type b - Plastic jar with plastic lid

Packaging type c - Sauce-packet squeeze

Packaging type d - Pouch

Packaging type e - Steel can

Packaging type f - Aerosol can

Packaging type g - Pail

Packaging type h - Glass jar with metal or plastic lid

Packaging type i - Squeeze bottle

Packaging type j - Other (*as specified by the purchaser*)

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).
- 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).

5. PROCESSING GUIDELINES.

5.1 Processing. The cheese sauce must be processed in accordance with *Current Good Manufacturing Practice, Hazard Analysis, and Risk-Based Preventive Controls for Human Food* (21 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 117).

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

5.2 Pasteurization. The dairy ingredients used in the manufacture of cheese sauce and the final product must be subjected to such temperatures and holding periods in approved systems as it will assure proper pasteurization or ultra-pasteurization of the product. The heat treatment by either process will be sufficient to ensure public health safety and to assure shelf-life yet retaining the most desirable flavor and body characteristics of the finished product in accordance with *Grading and Inspection, General Specifications for Approved Plants and Standards for Grades of Dairy Products* (7 CFR Part 58).

5.3 Food defense. The cheese sauce must be processed and transported in accordance with *Mitigation Strategies to Protect Food Against Intentional Adulteration* (21 CFR Part 121). This regulation 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 cheese sauce is specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, the cheese sauce 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.

6. SALIENT CHARACTERISTICS.

6.1 Labeling. All ingredients must be declared by their common or usual name in descending order of predominance by weight (21 CFR §101.4) unless exempted by 21 CFR §101.100.

6.2 Ingredients.

6.2.1 Cheese sauce. The cheeses used in the cheese sauce must not be imitation or substitute cheese and must comply with the FDA Standard of Identity for Cheeses and Related Cheese Products (21 CFR Part 133). If Cheddar cheese is used in the cheese sauce, it must meet the requirements as specified in CID A-A-20208C³. Cheese sauce flavors 1 and 3 must contain Cheddar cheese (21 CFR §133.113). Cheese sauce flavors 2, 4, and 5 may contain other cheeses such as, but not limited to Monterey cheese (21 CFR §133.153) and Parmesan cheese (21 CFR §133.165). Cheese sauce flavors 3 and 4 contain non-cheese ingredients such as bacon, jalapeños, green bell peppers, red bell peppers, tomatoes, etc. The cheese sauce may contain

³ If CID A-A-20208C has been superseded, the Cheddar cheese must meet the requirements of the superseding document in effect on the date of the solicitation, contract, or purchase order.

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thickeners, preservatives, natural and/or artificial flavorings, beta carotene, the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic (FD&C) colors, and appropriate spices, including salt, annatto, and paprika.

6.2.2 Additional processing ingredients. 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. The additional ingredients must be approved food additives (21 CFR Part 170) or meet Generally Recognized as Safe (GRAS) requirements (21 CFR Parts 182 and 184) for those uses by Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

6.3 Finished product.

6.3.1 Flavor and aroma. The cheese sauce must have the appropriate cheese flavor for the flavor of cheese sauce desired as specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order. The cheese sauce must have the appropriate pronounced tangy and salty notes with no objectionable aftertaste and there must be no foreign odors or flavors that are burnt, scorched, stale, rancid, or moldy.

6.3.2 Color. The cheese sauce must be well blended and have a white or light to medium yellow/orange color characteristic of the type of cheese sauce as specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order. There must be no foreign color to the product, such as, but not limited to, excessively dark, brown, or black areas indicative of excessive heating.

6.3.3 Texture. When prepared according to the manufacturer's directions, the cheese sauce consistency must be smooth, creamy, and moderately thick, with no lumps.

6.4 Foreign material. All ingredients must be clean, sound, wholesome, and free from foreign material, such as, but not limited to, extraneous plant material, dirt, plastic, insects, insect pieces or rodent or insect infestation, and metal contaminants.

7. ANALYTICAL REQUIREMENTS. NOT APPLICABLE

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

9. REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS. The delivered cheese sauce 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 cheese sauce in the commercial marketplace. Delivered cheese sauce must comply with all applicable provisions of

the FD&C Act, the Fair Packaging and Labeling Act, Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act (FALCPA), and regulations promulgated thereunder. The allergen statement must be provided in a format which complies with FALCPA for any product which contains wheat, fish, milk, soy, tree nuts, eggs, peanuts, and Crustacean shellfish or those in effect on the date of the solicitation, contract, or purchase order. When the cheese sauce is used for the National School Lunch Program, the cheese sauce must comply with all applicable provisions of the Child Nutrition (CN) Program. When a CN label is specified, the label must be approved in its final format by the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS).

10. QUALITY ASSURANCE PROVISIONS. *Purchaser must specify 10.1 or 10.2, and 10.5 or 10.6. Purchaser may specify one of the following combinations: 10.3.1 with 10.4.1, or 10.3.2 with 10.4.2.*

10.1 Manufacturer's quality assurance for dairy components. When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchaser order, the dairy component manufacturer will be required to have their facilities inspected by USDA, AMS, Dairy Programs (DP), Dairy Grading and Standardization Division (DGSD), and be eligible for listing in Section I of the AMS publication *Dairy Plants Surveyed and Approved for USDA Grading Service*⁴. An AMS, DP plant survey verifies that at the time of the survey, the manufacturer produces products in a clean sanitary environment and satisfactorily meets the requirements contained in 7 CFR Part 58 *Grading and Inspection, General Specifications for Approved Plants and Standards for Grades of Dairy Products*.

10.2 USDA certification for dairy components. When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, the USDA, AMS, DP, DGSD, must certify that the dairy components used for the manufacturing of cheese sauce meet or exceed the requirements of the U.S. Standards for Grades. The DGSD inspectors must certify the dairy components in accordance with DGSD procedures which include: random sampling of the dairy components, evaluating the samples for conformance with the appropriate U.S. Standards for Grades, USDA Specifications, and/or CID, and documenting the requirements on official DGSD certificates.

10.3 Food defense. When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, a Food Defense Systems Survey (FDSS) or audit must be conducted by USDA, AMS, Specialty Crops Program (SCP), Specialty Crops Inspection (SCI) Division. 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 post-production finished product. The plan must address the following areas: (1) food security plan management; (2) outside and inside security of the production and storage facilities; (3) 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.

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

10.3.1 FDSS. When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, a FDSS must be conducted by USDA, AMS, SCP, SCI Division. 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 *Mitigation Strategies to Protect Food Against Intentional Adulteration* (21 CFR Part 121).

10.3.2 Food defense section of the Plant Systems Audit (PSA). When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, a food defense audit will be conducted as part of the PSA. The audit will be conducted by USDA, AMS, SCP, SCI Division auditors. This 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. The food defense section of the PSA verifies the participating company's adherence to *Mitigation Strategies to Protect Food Against Intentional Adulteration* (21 CFR Part 121).

10.4 Manufacturer's quality assurance. When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, the product manufacturer will 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 the awarding of the contract. Failure to provide this documentation within the proper time frame may result in the contract being terminated for cause.

10.4.1 Plant survey. A plant survey conducted by USDA, AMS is required within 12 months prior to the date of the awarding of the contract. The plant survey audit verifies that, at the time of the survey, the manufacturer produces products in a clean, sanitary environment in accordance with *Current Good Manufacturing Practice, Hazard Analysis, and Risk-Based Preventive Controls for Human Food* (21 CFR Part 117).

10.4.2 PSA. A PSA conducted by USDA, AMS is required within 12 months prior to the date of the awarding of the contract. The PSA verifies the manufacturer's capability to produce products in a clean, sanitary environment in accordance with *Current Good Manufacturing Practice, Hazard Analysis, and Risk-Based Preventive Controls for Human Food* (21 CFR Part 117) and verifies that the manufacturer has in place an internal quality assurance program that meets or exceeds USDA requirements.

10.5 Manufacturer's/distributor's certification. When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, the manufacturer/distributor must certify that the cheese sauce delivered meets or exceeds the requirements of this CID.

10.6 USDA certification. When required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order that product quality and acceptability or both be determined, the USDA, AMS, SCP, SCI Division inspectors, must be the certifying program. SCI Division inspectors must certify the quality and

acceptability of the cheese sauce in accordance with SCI Division procedures, which include selecting random samples of the cheese sauce, evaluating the samples for conformance with the salient characteristics of this CID and other contractual requirements, and documenting the findings on official SCI Division score sheets and/or certificates. In addition, when required in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, SCI Division inspectors will examine the cheese sauce for conformance to the Standards for Condition of Food Containers (7 CFR Part 42) in effect on the date of the solicitation.

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. 10.6 is specified in the solicitation, contract, or purchase order, USDA certification must include evaluation of the quality and condition of samples of cheese sauce and compliance with requirements in the following areas:

- Processing guidelines (Sec. 5).
- Salient characteristics (Sec. 6).
- Packaging requirements (Sec. 11).

13. REFERENCE NOTES.

13.1 USDA services.

13.1.1 USDA certification. For USDA certification information contact: **National Program Mission Support, SCI Division, SCP, AMS, USDA, via E-mail: SCIinspectionoperations@usda.gov.**

13.1.2 USDA FDSS, plant survey, and PSA. For a USDA FDSS, plant survey, and PSA contact the **Chief, Auditing Services Branch, SCI Division, SCP, AMS, USDA, Room 1566 South Building, STOP 0247, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-0247, telephone (202) 720-5021, fax (866) 230-9168, or via E-mail: SCAudits@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.

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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>.**

13.2.2 Sources of information for governmental documents are as follows:

Applicable provisions of the Standards for Condition of Food Containers are contained in 7 CFR Part 42, 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 at (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 this CID and the 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, DC 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-2019-title7-vol2/pdf/CFR-2019-title7-vol2-part42.pdf>.**

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