



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Agricultural
Marketing
Service

Dairy
Programs

USDA Specifications for Shredded Cheddar Cheese

Effective March 1, 2001

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1 **Plant Requirements**

Cheddar cheese shall be manufactured, shredded, 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 inspected by the AMS, Dairy Grading Branch.

2 **Product Age and Temperature Requirements**

Cheddar cheese shall be aged no less than 10 days at 38⁰ F. to 42⁰ F. (3.5⁰ C. to 5.5⁰ C.) prior to inspection. This aging may take place before or after the cheese is shredded.

3 **Regulatory**

Shredded Cheddar cheese shall comply with all applicable Federal regulations including those contained in 21 CFR Part 133.113 for Cheddar Cheese and 21 CFR Part 133.146 for Grated Cheese.

4 **Composition Requirements**

Milkfat

Shredded Cheddar cheese shall contain not less than 49.0 percent milkfat by weight of the solids.

Moisture

Shredded Cheddar cheese shall contain not more than 39.0 percent moisture.

pH

Shredded Cheddar cheese shall not have a pH exceeding 5.35 using the quinhydrone method.

5 Quality Requirements

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

Flavor

Shredded Cheddar cheese shall have a mild pleasing flavor. It may be lacking in flavor development, or may possess characteristic Cheddar cheese flavor. Shredded Cheddar cheese shall meet the flavor requirements of U.S. Grade A or better according to the U.S. Standards for Grades of Cheddar Cheese.

Body and texture

Shredded Cheddar cheese may have the following body and texture characteristics to a slight degree: mealy, weak, or pasty. The cheese shall be free from all foreign and extraneous materials. Shredded Cheddar Cheese shall have a height and width up to 3/16 inch in either dimension. Shredded Cheddar cheese shall be free flowing and shall not be matted. An approved anticaking agent may be added as a processing aid. 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 weight of the shredded Cheddar cheese.

Fines

Shredded Cheddar 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

Shredded Cheddar cheese may be colored or uncolored but if colored, it shall be a medium yellow-orange. The cheese shall have a uniform bright color, and an attractive sheen. No visible signs of mold shall be permitted.

6 **Official Identification**

Shredded Cheddar cheese officially inspected and found to meet these requirements may be identified with the official USDA Quality Approved Inspection Shield.