

USDA COMMODITY REQUIREMENTS

**QBD2
CHEESE, QUESO BLANCO
FOR USE IN DOMESTIC PROGRAMS**

Effective Date: 10/06/05

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Part 1 COMMODITY SPECIFICATIONS

Section 1.1 COMMODITIES

A. Quality of Product

The Queso Blanco Cheese delivered shall be made by the acid-set process and meet the requirements as specified in the Commercial Item Description (CID) A-A-20347 in effect on the date of the solicitation, which is available at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/fqa/ciddair.htm>.

B. Production Requirements

- (1) The product delivered to the Government shall have been manufactured from pasteurized milk that was produced in the United States and not previously owned by the Government, and in plants that were inspected and approved by the Dairy Grading Branch, Dairy Programs, Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS).
- (2) The presence of any extraneous material in the finished product shall be the basis for rejection.

C. Weight Requirements

- (1) For random weight pack sizes, the contractor shall deliver the number of units specified by the Government.
- (2) Five (5) pound pack size cheese shall not weigh less than five (5) pounds net weight, but not more than 5.5 pounds.

Section 1.2 WARRANTY

- A. The product shall have a shelf life of at least six (6) months from date of manufacturer. Product shall not be manufactured more than 30 days prior to shipping.
- B. The contractor shall be liable for losses due to excessive deterioration, mold development, or spoilage, which are discovered within 180 days of the date of delivery to the Government.

Section 1.3 QUALITY ASSURANCE

- A. The contractor or Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) shall perform the product testing and quality analysis to ensure that the finished product meets the commodity specifications. The results shall be evidenced by a Certificate of Analysis (COA). The percentage of moisture, milk fat, salt, pH value, and microbial requirement verification shall be evidenced by certificates issued by AMS, an independent commercial laboratory using AOAC International approved methodology, or the contractor's TQSA compliant laboratory. The quality, dates(s) of manufacture, and weight of the queso blanco cheese shall be evidenced by grading certificates issued by the contractor or AMS.

- B. Contractors shall notify the Government immediately of lots that fail to meet contract requirements.

Part 2 CONTAINER AND PACKAGING REQUIREMENTS

Section 2.1 GENERAL

This part provides the container specifications and packaging materials requirements used under this contract.

Section 2.2 COMMERCIAL PACKAGING REQUIREMENTS

- A. Contractors shall supply commercial brand products only and shall certify at the time of submission of an offer that the commercial product being delivered has a history of successful distribution and use in domestic commercial channels and is sold on the commercial market with an established level of consumer acceptance.
- B. Container and packaging requirements are those used in the current commercial shipping practices and shall comply with:
 - (1) U.S. domestic origin of containers and packaging materials in Section 2.3.
 - (2) Unitization requirements in Section 2.4.
 - (3) At contractor's option, a statement such as "Not for Retail Sale" may be printed on the principal display panel of the food label.
 - (4) The manufacturer's lot code/lot identification number shall be shown on the commercial bill of lading.
 - (5) Shipping containers shall be marked to show the maximum safe stacking height. It is the responsibility of the contractor in cooperation with the shipping container manufacturers to determine the safe stacking height.
 - (6) For identification upon receipt at delivery warehouses, all commercial-labeled product shipping documents shall specify "FOR USDA FOOD DISTRIBUTION PROGRAMS."
- C. A company name or brand name shall be shown on all shipping containers.

Section 2.3 CONTAINERS AND MATERIALS

- A. All containers and packaging materials shall be new, manufactured, and assembled in the United States. The components that make up the fabricating materials of the containers and packaging materials shall be of U.S. origin to the extent that they are commercially available. Questions concerning the availability of a material should be directed to:
 - USDA/FSA/DACO
 - Room 5755 – South Bldg, STOP 0551
 - 1400 Independence Avenue SW
 - Washington, DC 20250-0551
 - ATTN: Packaging
- B. Constructed to meet the requirements of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for safe contact with the packaged

product.

- C. The contractor shall obtain and maintain documentation from the container or packaging material manufacturer to verify that the containers and packaging materials used in this contract were in compliance with the Government's requirements.

Section 2.4 UNITIZATION REQUIREMENTS

Shipments shall comply with the following unitization requirements:

- A. Unless otherwise specified by the Government, all shipments of packaged products shall be unitized (palletized and stretch wrapped).
- B. Pallets shall be:
 - (1) Constructed to facilitate the safe handling and transportation of the packaged product, as a unit, without loss or damage.
 - (2) A Number 2, four-way, reversible flush stringer with no broken runners or slats.
 - (3) Suitable for use in the shipment of food products.
- C. Plastic stretch wrap shall be:
 - (1) Constructed of a plastic film which is to be stretched a minimum of 50 percent beyond its original length when stretched around the pallet load.
 - (2) Applied as tightly as possible around all tiers of the palletized shipping containers. The shipping containers shall be held firmly in place by the stretch wrap.
- D. Pallet loads shall be:
 - (1) Stacked in such a way as to minimize the amount that shipping containers overhang the edges of pallets.
 - (2) Blocked and braced or otherwise loaded into the conveyance in a manner that prevents shifting during transit.

Section 2.5 MONTH/YEAR OF PACK

- A. The month/year of pack shall be shown on all shipping containers.
- B. A date fill code may be applied in addition to, but not in lieu of, the month/year of pack.

Section 2.6 LOT CODE/CERTIFICATE NUMBER

A lot code or official inspection certificate number shall be legibly marked on all primary shipping materials. Contractors may use any type of lot coding system provided a unique code is used to identify each lot under a contract. When requested contractors shall provide the Government an explanation of the lot coding system utilized.