**Cheeses in Brine — Specification**

#### Table of contents

[1 Scope 1](#_Toc127982049)

[2 Normative references 1](#_Toc127982050)

[3 Terms and definitions 1](#_Toc127982051)

[4 Requirements 1](#_Toc127982052)

[4.1 Raw materials 1](#_Toc127982053)

[4.2 General requirement 2](#_Toc127982054)

[4.3 Compositional Requirements 2](#_Toc127982055)

[5 Food Additives 2](#_Toc127982056)

[6 Contaminants 2](#_Toc127982057)

[7 Hygiene 2](#_Toc127982058)

[8 Labelling 3](#_Toc127982059)

[8.1 Name of the food 3](#_Toc127982060)

[8.2 Declaration of milkfat content 3](#_Toc127982061)

[8.3 Declaration of milk protein 3](#_Toc127982062)

[8.4 Additional Mandatory Requirements. 3](#_Toc127982063)

[8.5 Labelling of non-retail containers 3](#_Toc127982064)

9 Packaging……………………………………………………………………………………..…………….4

[10 Methods of Sampling and Analysis 5](#_Toc127982065)

#### Foreword

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This African Standard was prepared by the ARSO Technical Committee on Milk and milk products (ARSO/TC 04)

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## AFRICAN STANDARD

**Cheeses in Brine- Specification**

1 Scope

This draft African Standard specifies the requirements, sampling and test methods for Cheeses in Brine, intended for direct consumption or further processing, in conformity with the description in Clause 3 of this Standard.

Subject to the provisions of this Group Standard, African Standards for individual varieties of Cheeses in Brine may contain provisions which are more specific than those in this Standard

2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced standard (including any amendments) applies.

CODEX STAN 192-*General Standard for Food Additives*

CXS 193-*General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed*

CXC 1-*General Principles of Food Hygiene*

CXC 57-*Code of Hygienic Practice for Milk and Milk Products*

CXG 21-*Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria Related to Foods*

CXS 1-*General Standard for the Labelling of Pre-packaged Foods*

*CXS 234- Recommended Methods of Analysis and Sampling*

*WD-ARS XXX - Glossary of Dairy Terms*

*ISO 6579-1, Microbiology of the food chain. Horizontal method for the detection, enumeration and serotyping of Salmonella Part 1: Detection of Salmonella spp*

*ISO 11290-1, Microbiology of the food chain. Horizontal method for the detection and enumeration of Listeria monocytogenes and of Listeria spp. Part 1: Detection method*

*ISO 6888-1, Microbiology of the food chain-Horizontal method for the enumeration of coagulase-positive staphylococci (Staphylococcus aureus and other species): Part 1: Method using Baird-Parker agar medium*

*ISO 16649, Microbiology of the food chain-Horizontal method for the enumeration of beta-glucuronidase-positive Escherichia coli: Part 1: Colony-count technique at 44 degrees C using membranes and 5-bromo-4-chloro-3-indolyl beta-D-glucuronide*

*ISO 19020, Microbiology of the food chain — Horizontal method for the immunoenzymatic detection of staphylococcal enterotoxins in foodstuffs*

3 Terms and definitions

Cheeses in Brine are semi-hard to soft ripened cheeses in conformity with the ARS 1073. The body has a white to yellowish colour and a compact texture suitable for slicing, with none to few mechanical openings. The cheeses have no actual rind and have been ripened and preserved in brine until delivered to, or prepacked for, the consumer. Certain individual Cheeses in Brine contain specific herbs and spices as part of their identity.

4 Requirements

4.1 Raw materials

**4.1.1 Essential Raw materials**

Milk and/or products obtained from milk

**4.1.2 Optional Raw Materials**

– Starter cultures of harmless lactic acid and/or flavour producing bacteria and cultures of other harmless micro-organisms.

– Safe and suitable enzymes.

– Sodium chloride.

– Potable water.

– Safe and suitable Herbs and spices are part of the identity of the Cheese in Brine

4.2 General requirement

Cheese shall be free from dirt and foreign matter

4.3 Compositional Requirements

**Table 1: Designation According to firmness**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Soft** | **Semi-Hard** |
| Min fat in Dry matter, % | 40 | 40 |
| Min Dry matter, % | 40 | 52 |

**Table 2: Milk Fat content**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Fat Content | FDM % |
| High fat | above or equal to 60% |
| Full fat | above or equal to 45% and less than 60% |
| Medium fat | above or equal to 25% and less than 45%) |
| Partially skimmed | above or equal to 10% and less than 25%) |
| Skim | FDM is less than 10%) |

5 Food Additives

Food additives may be used and only within the limits specified in General Standard for Food Additives (CODEX STAN 192-1995) – Category 01.6.1 (Unripened cheese) & 01.6.2 (Ripened cheese) and table 3.

6 Contaminants

The products covered by this African Standard shall comply with the Maximum Levels for contaminants that are specified for the product in the General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed (CXS 193).

7 Hygiene

It is recommended that the products covered by the provisions of this standard be prepared and handled in accordance with the appropriate sections of the General Principles of Food Hygiene (CXC 1-1969), the Code of Hygienic Practice for Milk and Milk Products (CXC 57-2004) and other relevant Codex texts such as Codes of Hygienic Practice and Codes of Practice. The products should comply with any microbiological criteria established in accordance with the Principles and Guidelines for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria Related to Foods (CXG 21-1997).

**Table 3: Microbiological limits for Cheeses in Brine**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Food Category** | **Micro-organisms** | **Sampling plan** | **Limits** | **Test method reference** |
| **n** | **c** | **m** | **M** |
| Unripended, ripended soft, semi hard cheese  | *Salmonella* | 5 | 0 | Absence in 25 g | ISO 6579-1 |
| *Listeria monocytogenes* | 5 | 0 | Absence in 25 g | ISO 11290-1 |
| Coagulase-positive *staphylococci* | 5 | 0 | 102 cfu/gm | 103cfu/gm | ISO 6888-1 |
| Staphylococcal entero-toxins | 5 | 0 | Not detected in 25 g | ISO 19020 |
| *Escherichia Coli* | 5 | 1 | 102 cfu/gm | 103cfu/gm | ISO 16649-1 |

Where:

n = number of samples or units analyzed.

c = maximum allowable number of sample units yielding marginal results, i.e. results between m and M.

m = microbiological level that separates good quality from defective, or in a three-class plan good from marginally acceptable quality.

M = microbiological level in a three-class plan that separates marginally acceptable from unacceptable (defective) quality. Note: In a two-class plan M is assimilated to m.

8 Labelling

In addition to the provisions of the ARSO standard ARS-56 and the General Standard for the Use of Dairy Terms (CXS 206-1999), the following specific provisions apply:

8.1 Name of the food

The name of the food shall be Cheese in Brine. However, the word “Cheese in Brine” may be omitted in the designation of an individual Cheese in Brine variety reserved by a Codex standard for individual Cheese in Brine, and, in the absence thereof, a variety name specified in the national legislation of the country in which the product is sold, provided that the omission does not create an erroneous impression regarding the character of the food.

8.2 Declaration of milkfat content

The milk fat content shall be declared in a manner found acceptable in the country of sale to the final consumer, either (i) as a percentage by mass, (ii) as a percentage of fat in dry matter, or (iii) in grams per serving as quantified in the label provided that the number of servings is stated.

Additionally, terms may be used as per table (2).

8.3 Declaration of milk protein

If the consumer would be misled by the omission, the milk protein content shall be declared in a manner acceptable in the country of sale to the final consumer, either as

1. a percentage by mass,
2. or grams per serving as quantified in the label provided the number of servings is stated.

8.4 Labelling of non-retail containers

Information required in Section 7 of this Standard and Sections 4.1 to 4.8 of the General Standard for the Labelling of Pre-packaged Foods (CODEX STAN 1-1985), and, if necessary, storage instructions, shall be given either on the container or in accompanying documents, except that the name of the product, lot identification, and the name and address of the manufacturer or packer shall appear on the container. However, lot identification, and the name and address of the manufacturer or packer may be replaced by an identification mark, provided that such a mark is clearly identifiable with the accompanying documents.

**9 Packaging**

A container or outer container in which the Cheeses in brine is packed shall:

(a) be made from a material that :

 (i) is suitable for this purpose;

(ii) will protect the contents thereof from contamination; and

(iii) will not impart any undesirable flavour or taste to the contents thereof;

(b) be so strong that it will not be damaged or deformed during normal storage, handling and transport practices;

(c) in the case of a container that is re-used, be thoroughly cleaned and sterilized before the Cheeses in brine is packed therein;

(d) be intact; and

(e) be closed properly in a manner permitted by the nature thereof.

**10 Methods of Sampling and Analysis**

For checking the compliance with this standard, the methods of analysis and sampling contained in the Recommended Methods of Analysis and Sampling (CXS 234-1999) relevant to the provisions in this standard, shall be used.

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