

## CHEESE AND CHEESE CURD DISPLAYS

In addition to refrigeration, there are several factors in certain cheese that may further control the growth of pathogenic organisms. These factors may include the presence of organic acids, preservatives, or competing flora, PH, water activity, or salt concentration. When two or more of these criteria are combined, the resultant effect is an additional hurdle to the outgrowth of pathogens of concern. It is this effect that makes it possible to safely store some refrigerated cheeses beyond either one of the two Food Code criteria for date marking and refrigeration.

( i.e.: 7 days at 41°F or 4 days at 45°F).

Note: Reference to refrigeration means held at 41°F or less.

**Cheese Curd:** Reference: Dairy Inspection Policy # 5-34

Cheese curd requires refrigeration at all times, with one exception. Exception: Cheese curd can be offered for sale out of refrigeration, **only on the day it is manufactured and must be disposed of at the end of the day (or within a 24 hour period)**. The policy allows dairy plants and retail outlets to sell fresh curd, out of refrigeration, if labeling and time controls are followed.

Issue a disposal agreement;

- If the curd is found out of refrigeration at the retailer and is past the date of manufacture.
- Exceeds 24 hours from the time of manufacture
- Package is not properly labeled.

Labeling and Time control requirements:

- Packages must be labeled with the date of manufacture. Additionally package label must include; name of food, net weight statement, ingredient statement, name and address of the manufacturer, packer or distributor, and nutritional information. Labeling is not required if curd is sold at the retail outlet of the cheese curd manufacturer.
- Packaged curd must be labeled with the date of production and the time of production if the curd is allowed to remain out of refrigeration for a time period not to exceed 24 hours.
- Packaged curd may be labeled with the date of production (without the time of production) if curd displayed out of refrigeration is discarded at the end of the day produced.
- Retail outlets are allowed to package bulk cheese curds, if they are licensed for processing and meet all requirements for a processing facility. The manufacturer must supply the retail outlet all of the required labeling information. Retail outlet is then responsible to ensure each package is labeled as such.

**Retail Cheese Displays:** Reference the Code of Federal Regulations-21 CFR

Cheese types that do not support growth of *Listeria Monocytogenes* include hard or semi-soft cheese such as Cheddar, Romano, Colby, and Swiss, and various pasteurized process cheeses.

- Hard cheese is manufactured with a moisture content not exceeding 39%-  
21 CFR 133.150
- Semi-soft cheese contain more than 39% but less than 50% moisture-  
21 CFR 133.187.
- Pasteurized process cheeses, manufactured according to 21 CFR 133.169 and labeled as containing an acidifying agent, are also known to inhibit the growth of L.Mono.

The following are some of the cheese types, contain less than 39% moisture, and **are exempt from date marking and refrigeration requirements: NOTE: All must be packaged.**

1. Asiago (Old and Medium types)
2. Reggiano
3. Romano
4. Sap Sago
5. Gruyere
6. Parmesan
7. Aged Cheddar( normally packaged in colored wax coatings)

**OTHER:**

8. Pasteurized Process cheese foods and spreads that have met Tanaka study or challenge study criteria.
9. Ultra-pasteurized cheese and milk products, that are aseptic packaged.

**Semi-Soft Cheese Types:** Contain less than 50% moisture content, but greater than 39% moisture

\*need to be under refrigeration, but are exempt from date marking requirements.

1. Asiago( Fresh and Soft types)\*
2. Blue
3. Brick
4. Caciocavallo Siciliano
5. Gouda\*
6. Muenster
7. Roquefort
8. Gorgonzola
9. Monterey Jack
10. Provolone
11. Monterey
12. Edam\*
13. Swiss
14. Limburger
15. Pasteurized Process Cheese\*
16. Low Moisture Part-Skim Mozzarella

Some of the cheese types that are **“NOT EXEMPT”** from date marking and refrigeration requirements, include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Brie

2. Camembert
3. Cottage
4. Ricotta
5. Teleme
6. Mozzarella(full fat)
7. Cold pack or cold pack cheese spreads
8. Cream cheese

For cheese labeling requirements, please reference the resource section document-  
Cheese and Cheese Product Labeling Guidelines: dfs-2011-0102 January 2002

