

**§ 58.729 Forming containers.**

Containers either lined or unlined shall be assembled and stored in a sanitary manner to prevent contamination. The handling of containers by filler crews should be done with extreme care and observance of personal cleanliness. Preforming and assembling of pouch liners and containers shall be kept to a minimum and the supply rotated to limit the length of time exposed to possible contamination prior to filling.

**§ 58.730 Filling containers.**

Hot fluid cheese from the cookers may be held in hotwells or hoppers to assure a constant and even supply of processed cheese to the filler or slice former. Filler valves shall effectively measure the desired amount of product into the pouch or container in a sanitary manner and shall cut off sharply without drip or drag of cheese across the opening. An effective system shall be used to maintain accurate and precise weight control. Damaged or unsatisfactory packages shall be removed from production, and the cheese may be salvaged into sanitary containers, and added back to cookers.

**§ 58.731 Closing and sealing containers.**

Pouches, liners, or containers having product contact surfaces, after filling shall be folded or closed and sealed in a sanitary manner, preferably by mechanical means, so as to assure against contamination. Each container in addition to other required labeling shall be coded in such a manner as to be easily identified as to date of manufacture by lot or subplot number.

**§ 58.732 Cooling the packaged cheese.**

After the containers are filled they shall be stacked, or cased and stacked in such a manner as to prevent breaking of seals due to excessive bulging and to allow immediate progressive cooling of the individual containers of cheese. As a minimum the cheese should be cooled to a temperature of 100 °F. or lower within 24 hours after filling. The temperature of the cheese should be reduced further, before being shipped or if storage is intended.

**§ 58.733 Quality control tests.**

(a) *Chemical analyses.* The following chemical analyses shall be performed in accordance with the appropriate edition of the Official Methods of Analysis of the AOAC as specified in the appropriate Standards of Identity or in accordance with methods that give equivalent results.

(1) *Cheese.* A representative sample of cheese used in the manufacture of pasteurized process cheese products shall have been tested prior to usage to determine its moisture and fat content.

(2) *Pasteurized process cheese products.* As many samples shall be taken of the finished product direct from the cooker, hopper, filler, or other location as is necessary to assure compliance with composition requirements. Spot checks should be made on samples from the cooker as frequently as is necessary to indicate pasteurization by means of the phosphatase test, as well as any other tests necessary to assure good quality control.

(b) *Examination of physical characteristics.* As many samples shall be taken as is necessary to assure meeting the required physical characteristics of the products. Representative samples shall be taken from production for examination of physical characteristics. The samples shall be examined at approximately 70 °F. the first day of operation after the date of processing for the following characteristics: (1) Finish and appearance, (2) flavor, (3) color, (4) body and texture, and (5) slicing or spreading properties.

(c) *Keeping quality.* During processing or preferably from the cooled stock select sufficient samples at random from the production run. The samples should be stored at approximately 50 °F. for 3 months for evaluation of physical characteristics as in paragraph (b) of this section. Additional samples may be selected and held at different temperatures or time.

(d) *Weight control.* During the filling operation as many samples shall be randomly selected and weighed from each production run as is necessary to assure accuracy of the net weight established for the finished products.