



ACS STATEMENT ON THE DEFINITION OF MILK, MILK PRODUCTS, AND CHEESE

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The American Cheese Society (ACS) supports the following important definitions which clearly express the unique qualities of dairy and dairy products. These terms reflect longstanding traditions in dairy farming and cheesemaking, as well as current regulatory and labeling requirements. It is ACS's position that these products, and the terms used to define them, must be preserved, and that they should always be used accurately in the interest of transparency for consumers.

MILK

ACS supports the Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) definition of "milk" from [21 CFR 131.110\(a\) Milk](#):

Milk is the lacteal secretion, practically free from colostrum, obtained by the complete milking of one or more healthy cows. Milk that is in final package form for beverage use shall have been pasteurized or ultrapasteurized, and shall contain not less than 8 1/4 percent milk solids not fat and not less than 3 1/4 percent milkfat. Milk may have been adjusted by separating part of the milkfat therefrom, or by adding thereto cream, concentrated milk, dry whole milk, skim milk, concentrated skim milk, or nonfat dry milk. Milk may be homogenized.

MILK PRODUCTS

ACS supports the definition of "milk products" from [21 CFR 1240.3\(j\) Milk products](#):

Food products made exclusively or principally from the lacteal secretion obtained from one or more healthy milk-producing animals, e.g., cows, goats, sheep, and water buffalo, including, but not limited to, the following: lowfat milk, skim milk, cream, half and half, dry milk, nonfat dry milk, dry cream, condensed or concentrated milk products, cultured or acidified milk or milk products, kefir, eggnog, yogurt, butter, cheese (where not specifically exempted by regulation), whey, condensed or dry whey or whey products, ice cream, ice milk, other frozen dairy desserts and products obtained by modifying the chemical or physical characteristics of milk, cream, or whey by using enzymes, solvents, heat, pressure, cooling, vacuum, genetic engineering, fractionation, or other similar processes, and any such product made by the addition or subtraction of milkfat or the addition of safe and suitable optional ingredients for the protein, vitamin, or mineral fortification of the product.

CHEESE

ACS adheres to the internationally recognized definition of "cheese" from the [Codex Alimentarius "General Standard for Cheese \(CODEX STAN 283-1978\)](#)," and cites this definition in its [ACS Best Practices Guide for Cheesemakers](#):

The ripened or unripened soft, semi-hard, hard, or extra-hard product, which may be coated, and in which the whey protein/casein ratio does not exceed that of milk, obtained by: (a) coagulating wholly or partly the protein of milk, skimmed milk, partly skimmed milk, cream, whey cream or buttermilk, or any combination of these materials, through the action of rennet or other suitable

coagulating agents, and by partially draining the whey resulting from the coagulation, while respecting the principle that cheese-making results in a concentration of milk protein (in particular, the casein portion), and that consequently, the protein content of the cheese will be distinctly higher than the protein level of the blend of the above milk materials from which the cheese was made; and/or (b) processing techniques involving coagulation of the protein of milk and/or products obtained from milk which give an end-product with similar physical, chemical and organoleptic characteristics as the product defined under (a).

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About the American Cheese Society (ACS)

ACS is the leading organization supporting the understanding, appreciation, and promotion of farmstead, artisan, and specialty cheeses produced in the Americas. Over 1,700 members strong, ACS provides advocacy, education, business development, and networking opportunities for cheesemakers, retailers, enthusiasts, and the extended industry. ACS strives to continually raise the quality and availability of cheese in North America.

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