

Subject: Lower Sodium Specifications for Process and Blended Cheese

Dear Food Service Directors:

Below is information from the USDA on Lower Sodium Specifications for Process and Blended Cheese.

FNS continues to make improvements in all of its USDA Foods to align them with the most current Dietary Guidelines for Americans. One of the improvements slated for School Year 2012 is to reduce the sodium levels in Process and Blended Cheeses. USDA currently buys process cheese that contains 422 mg per ounce and blended cheese that contains 450 mg per ounce.

To reach this goal, FNS partnered with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) to encourage cheese manufacturers to formulate cheeses with lower sodium levels. Last month, FSA conducted market research through a Request for Information/Sources Sought Notice to determine what types of reduced sodium cheeses were available commercially. FSA asked cheese suppliers to submit their reduced sodium specifications and describe how the reduction would impact the cost, quality, and food safety of the products. As a result sodium levels will be reduced from as much as 450 milligrams per serving to between 200 and 300 milligrams per 1 ounce serving.

FSA released the solicitation for the Calendar Year 2011 process cheese today. The reduced sodium process cheese specification will be in effect with July-December 2011 deliveries for the following products and codes:

Commodity Name	Commodity Code	Group	Pack Size
CHEESE 30 LVS	B064	5	6/5 LB LOAVES
CHEESE SLICED YEL	B065	5	6/5 LB SLC LVS
CHEESE SLICED W	B066	5	6/5 LB SLC LVS
CHS RDU SKIM SLC Y	B119	5	6/5# SLC YELLOW
CHS RDU SKIM SLC W	B133	5	6/5# SLC WHITE
CHSE RDU FAT 2	B007	5	12/2 LB LOAVES (HH Programs)
CHEESE RDU WHT 2	B204	5	12/2 LBS (HH programs)
CHEESE RDU YEL 2	B205	5	12/2 LBS (HH programs)

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Janet West or Mark Crewdson.

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