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**Harzer cheese — Specification**



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## Harzer cheese — Specification

### 1 Scope

This African Standard specifies the requirements, sampling and test methods for Harzer cheese intended for direct human consumption or for further processing.

### 2 Normative references

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

ARS 53, *General Principles of Food Hygiene – Code of practice*

ARS 56, *Labelling of Prepackaged Foods*

ARS 1034, *Dairy Industry-Glossary of terms*

CXS 192, *General Standard for Food Additives*

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

ISO 707, *Milk and milk products — Guidance on sampling*

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 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 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 14501, *Milk and milk powder — Determination of aflatoxin M<sub>1</sub> content — Clean-up by immunoaffinity chromatography and determination by high-performance liquid chromatography*

ISO 16649-1, *Microbiology of food and animal feeding stuffs — 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*

### 3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ARS 1034 and the following shall apply.

#### Harzer cheese

soft surface- ripened cheese obtained from sour curd by coagulating of pasteurized fresh, concentrated, dried milk or combination of its fresh products and dried and pasteurized or treated by any equivalent heat-treatments to pasteurization.

### 4 Requirements

#### 4.1 Raw materials

Raw materials and ingredients used shall comply with relevant standards.

#### 4.1.1 Essential raw materials

- a) Cows' milk or buffaloes' milk, sheep's milk, goat's milk or their mixtures, and products obtained from these milks.
- b) Starter cultures of harmless lactic acid and/ or flavour producing bacteria and cultures of other harmless microorganisms.
- c) Rennet or other safe and suitable coagulating enzymes.

#### 4.1.2 Optional raw materials

- a) Sodium chloride and potassium chloride as a salt substitute.
- b) Potable water.
- c) Safe and suitable enzymes to enhance the ripening process.
- d) Safe and suitable processing aids.
- e) Herbs and spices.
- f) Rice, corn and potato, flours and starches: Notwithstanding the provisions in, ARS 1073, these substances can be used in the same function as anti-caking agents for treatment of the surface of cut, sliced, and shredded products only, provided they are added only in amounts functionally necessary as governed by Good Manufacturing Practice.

#### 4.2 General requirements

Harzer cheese shall:

- a) have smooth, yellow or reddish crust,
- b) have a firm yet flexible consistency,
- c) have a distinct aroma, and
- d) be free from dirt, foreign matter and without off- flavours and textural defects.

#### 4.3 Compositional requirements for Harzer cheese

Harzer cheese shall meet the compositional requirements given in Table 1 when tested in accordance with the test methods specified therein. Harzer cheese may be classified as identified in Table 1 and meet the compositional requirements, as shown.

**Table 1 — Compositional requirements for Harzer cheese**

Parameter	Cheese category	Test method
Milk fat in dry matter, % (m/m)	10	ISO 23319
Moisture, % (m/m), (max)	68	ISO 23319

### 5 Food Additives

Food additives may be used in Harzer cheese in accordance (CXS 192) – Category 01.6.2.1 (Ripened cheese with rind) and Category 01.6.2.2 (Rind for ripened cheese).

## 6 Contaminants

### 6.1 Heavy metals

The products covered by this African Standard shall comply with those maximum limits for metal contaminants specified in CXS 193.

### 6.2 Mycotoxins

When tested in accordance with ISO 14501, the level of aflatoxin M<sub>1</sub> shall not exceed 0.50 µg/kg.

### 6.3 Pesticides residues

Pesticide residue limits shall be in accordance with limits set by the Codex Alimentarius Commission for the product.

### 6.4 Veterinary drug residues

Veterinary drug residue limits shall be in accordance with limits set by the Codex Alimentarius Commission for the product.

## 7 Hygiene

The products covered by this African Standard shall be produced, prepared and handled in accordance with the provisions of the appropriate sections of ARS 53 and ARS 1036.

Harzer cheese shall be free from microorganisms and products originating from microorganisms in amounts which may represent a hazard to human health.

Harzer cheese shall comply with microbiological limits given in Table 2 when tested in accordance with the methods specified therein.

**Table 2 — Microbiological limits for Harzer cheese**

Food Category	Micro-organisms	Sampling plan		Limits		Test method reference	Stage of analysis
		n	c	m	M		
Ripened cheese	Salmonella	5	0	Absence in 25 g		ISO 6579-1	On the market during the shelf-life and during handling
	Listeria monocytogenes	5	0	Absence in 25 g		ISO 11290-1	On the market during the shelf-life
	Coagulase-positive staphylococci	5	2	10 <sup>2</sup> cfu/g	10 <sup>3</sup> cfu/g	ISO 6888-1	End of the production process
	Escherichia Coli	5	1	10 <sup>2</sup> cfu/g	10 <sup>3</sup> cfu/g	ISO 16649-1	On the market during the shelf-life
n = number of units comprising the sample c = number of sample units giving values between m and M m= The level of the required MCR in the product M= Value or level of microbial limit not to be reached or greater than in any unit of the sample							

## **8 Packaging**

Cheese shall be packaged in suitable food grade containers which will safeguard the hygienic, nutritional, technological, and organoleptic qualities of the product during dispatch, transport and use of the product until the end of its shelf life.

## **9 Labelling**

In addition to the provisions of ARS 56 and ARS 1034, the following specific provisions apply:

### **9.1 Name of the food**

The name of the food shall be Harzer cheese, provided that the product is in conformity with this standard. Where customary in the country of retail sale, alternative spelling may be used.

The use of the name is an option that may be chosen only if the cheese complies with this standard. Where the name is not used for a cheese that complies with this standard, the naming provisions in ARS 1073, may be used.

### **9.2 Declaration of milk fat 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.

## **10 Methods of sampling**

For checking compliance with this standard, the methods of analysis and sampling contained in ISO 707, shall be used.

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**Bibliography**

ES 1008-11 Soft cheese- Part 8 (Harzer -cheese)