

HIGH QUALITY FOOD CERTIFICATION MARK SCHEME



HIGH QUALITY FOOD (KMÉ)

CERTIFICATION MARK SCHEME

SPECIFIC CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Mozzarella cheese

Budapest, October 2025

Mozzarella cheese

Applications for the High Quality Food (KMÉ) and High-quality Food Gold Grade certification mark may be submitted only for soft or semi-hard, heated, kneaded, homogeneous mozzarella cheese made from pasteurised cow's or buffalo milk/cream with typical organoleptic characteristics. Applications may also be submitted in the case of products produced by traditional smoking.

Mandatory elements

The product must comply with the applicable Hungarian and EU legislations and the following criteria:

Ingredients that may be used

- a) cow's milk or buffalo milk,
- b) skimmed milk, semi-skimmed milk or mixtures thereof,
- c) cream,
- d) pure cultures of lactic acid bacteria,
- e) rennet,
- f) table salt,
- g) lactic acid,
- h) citric acid.

Shape and weight of the cheese

Shape:

- Soft mozzarella cheese: ball or mini ball,
- Semi-hard mozzarella cheese: slab or roll.

Weight

- Soft mozzarella cheese: 50 g – 400 g,
- Semi-hard mozzarella cheese: 100 g – 2500 g.

In the case of sliced or grated cheese, the manufacturer must guarantee that its product originates from cheese which meets the criteria set out in this specification.

Quality requirements

Soft mozzarella cheese (product packaged with brine):

- Fat content in the dry matter: 40–53%
- Dry matter content: 32–42%

Light Mozzarella:

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KIVÁLÓ MINŐSÉGŰ ÉLELMISZER



- Fat content in the dry matter: 26–32%
- Dry matter content: 32–42%

Semi-hard mozzarella cheese:

- Fat content in the dry matter: 36–50%
- Dry matter content: 42–54%

For light pizza mozzarella:

- Fat content in the dry matter: 20–32%
- Dry matter content: 45–52%

Sensory requirements

Appearance (shape, exterior)	Soft mozzarella cheese: in the shape of a ball or mini ball, uniformly convex, without rind. The surface of the cheese is uniformly white, elastic, moist to the touch and smooth.
	Semi-hard mozzarella cheese: regular slab or cylindrical shape, uniformly convex, without rind. The packaging is intact. The surface of the cheese is uniformly white, pale cream in colour, elastic and moist to the touch.
Interior (colour, perforation)	Uniform in colour, the cut surface is solid and free of holes.
Consistency and texture	Soft mozzarella cheese: soft, slightly elastic, possibly serum-permeable when cut, with a characteristic fibrous texture.
	Semi-hard mozzarella cheese: elastic, easy to cut and grate, with a characteristic fibrous texture.
Odour	Slightly acidic, clear, characteristic of milk, free from foreign odours.
Taste	Mild taste, slightly acidic, characteristic of milk, fresh, harmonious, free of foreign taste.

Microbiological requirements:

- Salmonella n=5 0/25 g
- Coliform n=5 c=2 m=10 cfu/g M=102
- Listeria monocytogenes n=5 0/25 g

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Optional elements

Applications for the High Quality Food (KMÉ) and High Quality Food Gold Grade certification marks may be submitted for products that, in addition to the above, also comply with at least one point in each of the optional element categories of I and II.

I. Production process

Self-monitoring and self-testing

1. Full in-plant self-monitoring (for organoleptic, analytical and microbiological parameters as defined in the KMÉ) of the product per batch. It shall include at least the following analytical parameters:
 - fat content,
 - dry matter content,
 - non-fat dry matter content,
 - protein content,
 - non-milk fat where vegetable fat is also used in the plant,
 - net weight.
2. Shelf-life testing for each batch, testing and documentation of organoleptic, analytical and microbiological parameters.
3. Use of methods in the plant with which the production processes, product safety, quality and hygiene are regularly checked. Based on the findings, corrective measures are put in place, good practices are identified and staff are trained accordingly.
4. Trend analysis within the framework of self-monitoring: creation of a quality control chart for the graphical representation of analytical and microbiological values, with the indication of guidance values, a warning threshold and/or limit values. These values shall be compared to the actual data collected from self-testing, and, if necessary, appropriate measures shall be taken.
5. Tests shall be carried out in external laboratories under the self-monitoring scheme, with regard to the following criteria:
 - fat content,
 - dry matter content,
 - fat-free dry matter content,
 - water content in the non-fat cheese material,
 - non-milk fat where vegetable fat is also used in the plant,
 - microbiology (for micro-organisms included in the product specification),
 - net weight,
 - lactose content in the case of a lactose-free product.

A minimum of nine random samples from different production batches, produced and dispatched for marketing in the given year, shall be examined annually in a way that at least one sample is included from each calendar quarter.

Milk processing methods

6. The processor shall include in the supplier contracts that it will only accept milk and cream from the dairy farm with an aflatoxin M1 content not exceeding the limit, which it shall check for itself in all batches of raw milk and/or cream delivered to and accepted at the plant. The testing method must be such that it can be used to verify compliance with the upper limit specified in the applicable regulation on the maximum levels of certain contaminants in foodstuffs.
7. Product made from milk with proven higher nutritional values (e.g. higher Ca/protein content).
8. Microbiological testing of raw mixed milk and cream that enters the plant, which shall be carried out 3 times a month to verify compliance with the following parameters:
 - Salmonella $n=5$ 0/25 g
 - Staphylococcus aureus: $n=5$ $c=2$ $m=10^2$ $M=5 \cdot 10^2$
 - Listeria monocytogenes $n=5$ 0/25 g
 - Coliform $n=5$ $c=1$ $m=10$ $M=10^2$
 - Microbe count $n=5$ $c=2$ $m=10^5$ $M=3 \cdot 10^5$
 - E. faecalis $n=5$ $c=2$ $m=10$ $M=10^2$
 - E. coli $n=5$ $c=1$ $m < 1$ $M < 10$
 - Sulphite reducing Clostridium $n=5$ $c=2$ $m=10$ $M=10^2$
10. Batch-based self-testing, with a focus on the production process (from the receipt of the raw milk/cream until the delivery of the finished product).
11. Microbiological testing of pasteurised raw milk from every tenth batch of raw material, but at least two times a month, to verify compliance with the following parameters:
 - S. aureus $n=5$ $c=2$ $m=1$ $M=10$
 - Listeria monocytogenes $n=5$ 0/25 g
 - Coliform $n=5$ $c=1$ $m=1$ $M=10$
 - Microbial count $n=5$ $c=2$ $m=10^4$ $M=10^5$
 - E. faecalis $n=5$ $c=2$ $m=10$ $M=10^2$
12. Raw material assessment/supplier programme, which includes trend analysis of raw milk/cream lab results.
13. Closed production technology.
14. Use of raw materials bearing the KMÉ certification mark.
15. Eligibility to use the 'Tejszív' [Milk Heart] logo.

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16. A product protected by the European Union with a geographical indication of origin.

Animal husbandry (the production process of the input)

17. Feeding with feed which may be used in GMO-free production.
18. Certified organic farming (not optional in combination with point 37).
19. Participation in the AKG agri-environmental scheme.
20. The farm has a valid Global GAP animal welfare certification.
21. The farm receives EU funding for animal welfare.
22. If the dairy processor is also a dairy farmer, a documented aflatoxin test [of its own feed and any purchased feed (mass, fodder, supplementary premixes)] shall be carried out at least once every calendar quarter.

Use of consumer-friendly packaging

23. A favourable packaging solution that can be clearly distinguished in terms of convenience and practicality from the packaging of other similar products available on the market. In the case of consumer-friendly packaging, sustainability aspects as defined in optional element category II shall also be taken into consideration. Consumer-friendly packaging with an ecological footprint/environmental load greater than that of similar products on the market is not acceptable.

II. Sustainability

Environmental protection (reduction of environmental footprint, green logistics)

24. Application of eco-friendly manure treatment methods.

Note: The undertaking has a process in place to identify, assess and respond to environmental and social risks and opportunities. (environmentally friendly manure storage, amount of manure applied,)

• Use of environment friendly, renewable energy resources

25. The plant/applicant derives part of its energy from renewable energy sources (e.g. thermal water, geothermal heat, solar panels, biogas) in the production and preparation process.
*(The undertaking has a certified green product, green service, or sells green energy /solar energy, wind energy, hydropower, biogas, geothermal energy/).
Document to demonstrate the distribution of total and renewable electricity consumption in the last financial year).*

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- **Use of sustainable management inputs/technological methods**

26. More efficient resource management, material, energy and water management, and modernisation of processing technologies that reduce environmental impact (for example regenerative heat recovery, waste heat recovery, the improvement of the efficiency of the refrigeration systems and the reduction of energy consumption).
(It shall be demonstrated
 - *whether it has environmental compliance/certification*
 - *whether it uses a qualified green product or service for its operation.**It has a process in place to identify, assess and respond to environmental and social risks and opportunities.*
It is necessary to examine what proportion of the materials used by the undertaking or by the undertakings in its value chains are recycled, reclaimed, renewable and non-renewable raw materials /circular economy/.)
27. Energy recovery system on production machines.
(For example, the use of any equipment that captures and transmits compressor waste heat. Recycling of thermal energy for other industrial processes that require heat or steam).
28. Application of an Environmental Management System (EMS) or EMAS (Eco-Management and Audit Scheme) in accordance with standard MSZ EN ISO 14001:2015, certifying environmental compliance.
(Preparation of annual reports which provide information about the energy use, waste management, water use and other environmental impacts.)
29. Certified and regularly used environmentally friendly and/or water-saving cleaning products and detergents.
(Certifications, safety data sheets, specifications, certification marks on the packaging. Certificates from certification bodies, e.g. Ecocert, Green Certification, Breeam, Leed.)
30. Utilization of by-products, minimisation of product and material losses.
(The undertaking has a process in place to identify, assess and respond to environmental and social risks and opportunities. The undertaking uses raw materials, secondary raw materials produced from waste in accordance with circular economy principles, and the circular economy requirements are taken into account in the design of the product, including the packaging of the product.)
31. Operation of an environmentally sound waste management system. Separate waste collection and recycling, in a documented form.
(The undertaking is authorised to handle, collect, transport, store and dispose of persistent organic pollutants in a non-polluting way once they become waste.)
32. Efficient and environmentally friendly waste water treatment technology (e.g. biological waste water treatment).

33. Verified decrease in specific water use.
(E.g. use of effluent hot water from installations for secondary cleaning tasks, drip irrigation, rainwater collection and recycling, grey water recycling.)

- **Green rating**

34. Official proof of a recognised, certified sustainability rating in accordance with the EU legislation in force (e.g. but not limited to: EcoVadis, B Corp, BREEAM, LEED, ISCC).
35. Green sourcing policy, documented: prioritising suppliers that have made sustainability investments.
(The undertaking makes its suppliers carry out an environmental assessment of the products and/or services. Demonstration of the proportion in which suppliers use, for example, renewable energy sources, whether they take building energy aspects into account, whether they operate an environmentally sound waste system, minimise the environmental impact of the logistics network and that of transport.)
36. The undertaking has a Science Based Target Initiative (SBTI) commitment.
37. The raw material used in the production of the product comes from certified organic or extensive farming or has a reduced environmental footprint for which there is other scientific evidence. (not optional together with point 18)
(E.g. products labelled as organic, environmentally friendly product or service.)

- **Use of eco-friendly packaging solutions**

38. Application of an eco-friendly packaging solution for packaged products (reduced packaging size or alternative packaging materials e.g. compostable /FSC or PEFC logo/).
39. Suppliers of primary packaging material that come into contact with the product shall have BRC or IFS PACsecure certification.

- **Transport**

40. The main component comes to the processing plant from own farm or from within a distance of 100 km.
(Place of production, the production and/or processing site may be located within a distance of 100 km.)
41. Feed is delivered from within a distance of 100 km.
42. Live animals are transported within a radius of 100 km.
43. Transport optimisation, route planning to reduce emissions.
(Lean & Green program)

44. The product shall be delivered to the consumer in a short supply chain.

Social aspects

45. Existence of SMETA (Supplier Ethical Data Exchange) audit.

46. Prevention of food waste through donation.

47. Prevention of food waste by preventing waste generation in production and logistics.