Cheesemaker

Dairy processing

Job title	Cheesemaker
Department	Dairy processing
Reports to	Head Cheesemaker
Direct reports	None
Location	*[To be confirmed by the employer]*
Contract type	*[Permanent / fixed-term / other]*
Salary and benefits	*[To be confirmed by the employer]*

Job purpose

Makes cheese in vats by following set recipes and procedures. Adds cultures and rennet, cuts, cooks and drains the curd, then moulds, presses and brines the cheese, while keeping accurate records and high hygiene standards.

Key responsibilities

Making cheese in the vat

- Fill vats with milk and check the temperature before starting
- Add cultures, rennet and other ingredients in the right amounts and at the right time
- Test the curd set and cut it to the correct size
- Cook and stir the curd to the set temperature and time
- Check acidity (pH) at key stages and adjust the make as instructed

Draining, moulding and pressing

- Drain the whey and handle the curd carefully to protect yield and texture
- Fill moulds, turn cheeses and press them as the recipe says
- Place cheeses in brine and record brining times
- Label cheeses and move them to the ripening or storage areas

Records and quality

- Record times, temperatures, pH and ingredient batch numbers for every vat
- Take samples for the laboratory as required
- Tell the Head Cheesemaker straight away about any make that does not go to plan
- Help check cheeses during ripening for appearance and texture

Hygiene and safety

- Follow hygiene rules on hand washing, clothing and footwear
- Clean and sanitise vats, moulds, tools and the make room after each make
- Handle cleaning chemicals and hot water safely

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- Report accidents, near misses and hazards straight away

Qualifications and experience

Essential

- Basic reading, writing and number skills, including weighing and measuring
- Ability to follow recipes and written procedures exactly
- Willingness to learn cheesemaking skills
- Good attendance and timekeeping
- Willingness to work shifts, including early starts and weekends

Desirable

- Basic food hygiene certificate or similar
- Experience making cheese or working in food production
- Basic understanding of pH and starter cultures
- A short cheesemaking course or similar training

Skills and attributes

- Attention to detail
- Careful record keeping
- Patience and care when handling curd
- Good timing during each stage of the make
- Teamwork
- Interest in cheese and food quality

Measures of success

- Cheese meets recipe, quality and food safety specifications
- Yield and waste within target
- Complete and accurate make records for every vat
- Make schedule completed on time
- Equipment passes hygiene checks
- No accidents or injuries

Working conditions and safety

Early starts and shift work, which may include weekends. The make room is warm and wet and the brine and ripening rooms are cool; the work involves standing, repeated movements and lifting, and PPE is provided.

- Follow health and safety rules and safe systems of work, and wear the correct PPE
- Follow food safety, hygiene, HACCP and quality procedures at all times
- Report hazards, accidents, near misses and concerns promptly

This job description outlines the main duties of the role. It is not a complete list, and the employer may update it as the business changes, in consultation with the jobholder.

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