

## Franklin Foods Gets Patent For Process For Making Yogurt Cream Cheese

Washington— The US Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) this week issued a patent for an invention relating to processes for making yogurt cream cheese products.

Inventors are Jon R. Gutknecht and John B. Ovitt. The patent was assigned to Franklin Foods, Inc., Enosburg Falls, VT.

A health-conscious consumer might well find the concept of combining yogurt and cream cheese to be desirable, and thus attempt to combine these products together. However, due to the disparate properties of cream cheese and yogurt, including for example their differing consistencies, water content, and food chemistries, the combination of cream cheese and yogurt in mutually appreciable proportions “only generates a runny mess,” according to a background of the invention.

Producing a cream cheese having an appealing consistency and utility is not possible by mixing cream cheese and yogurt without also adulterating these ingredients either by discarding whey from the yogurt or cream cheese, or by adding substantial proportions of gums and processed milk byproducts such as milk protein concentrate, whey protein concentrate, casein or other products, the background continued.

At that point, the product is no longer cream cheese but a processed cheese spread, typically having inferior texture and nutritional value, and a flavor that is either bland or even mildly unpleasant, the background noted.

Accordingly, it was viewed as highly desirable to provide a process for making an improved cream cheese product from a milkfat fluid, having the consistency of high-milkfat cream cheese but combining the desirable flavor and nutritional benefits of yogurt with the flavor of whey retained from the milkfat fluid, yielding a robust taste. Since the butterfat content of yogurt is typically between 0 and 3.25 percent by weight, the combination of yogurt into a cream cheese product also would desirably yield a cream cheese having a lower butterfat content and a relatively higher protein content.

In one embodiment according to the invention, a process is provided for making a yogurt cream cheese product comprising steps of: providing a milkfat fluid comprising butterfat; pasteurizing the butterfat fluid to produce a cream cheese precursor; providing a yogurt, and combining that yogurt with the cream cheese precursor to produce a combined precursor; and homogenizing and acidifying the combined precursor, wherein said acidification is completed within about three hours following production of said combined precursor, producing a yogurt cream cheese product. **r**

## USDA's National Organic Program To Be Subjected To NIST Audit, Oversight

Washington— USDA's National Organic Program (NOP) has applied to the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) for recognition of its accreditation function, according to Kathleen A. Merrigan, deputy USDA secretary.

NIST's National Voluntary Conformity Assessment Systems Evaluation (NVCASE) program offers recognition of the accreditation function of NOP, Merrigan noted in a recent letter to Steve Etka, executive director of the National Organic Coalition. After the evaluation, NIST provides recognition to qualified US organizations that effectively demonstrate conformance with established criteria.

“Applying for and receiving recognition will support the NOP's credentials as an accrediting body and satisfy regulatory requirements to obtain peer review,” Merrigan wrote. NOP anticipates working with NIST beginning with the 2010 fiscal year.

“Third-party recognition is important for many of USDA's audit-based programs,” Merrigan pointed out. “We understand the value of this step as we continue working to strengthen the integrity of the NOP and to build the organic community's trust in the program.”

In June, the National Organic Coalition had met with Merrigan to discuss the need for greater consistency in the implementation of NOP rules. The coalition proposed that the NOP apply to NIST at the US Department of Commerce for recognition of its accreditation function

and to make a commitment to strictly comply with NIST requirements.

“We anticipate that the potential changes NOP will make to earn NIST recognition will result in greater consistency and integrity in USDA organic standards, greater fairness to organic farmers and handlers, and greater consumer confidence in the USDA organic label,” said Liana Hoodes, National Organic Coalition policy coordinator.

“We think the USDA and the entire Obama administration have sent a clear message that maintaining and improving the integrity of the organic industry is a national priority, and that the USDA will continue to build a trusting alliance with the broader organic community as the NOP grows and matures,” Hoodes added. **r**

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For more information, circle #7 on the Reader Response Card on p. 14