



# SALSA

Safe and Local Supplier Approval



## What is SALSA *plus* Cheese and why do I need it?

### What is SALSA *plus* Cheese audit certification?

Buyers and consumers expect their food & drink to be safe and for those who produce it to have robust and effective controls in place to ensure this. The SALSA Scheme operates and oversees the **SALSA *plus* Cheese** audit certification and its process. A successful **SALSA *plus* Cheese** audit, the certificate confirming Approval and display of the **SALSA-APPROVED** stamp instantly tells all in the industry that your cheesemaking facility is committed to ensuring product safety, legality and consistency, and to continuously meet the requirements of a nationally recognised standard. Approval is effectively your valid passport – your credentials - to access markets and buyers, letting them know your operation and products fully comply with all safety, legality and quality standards expected by the UK food industry. The scheme is uniquely available to [Specialist Cheesemakers Association](#) members.



### What is the SALSA Scheme?

- SALSA is the UK's Food Safety Certification Scheme – not just a Audit Standard - for small and micro-sized food & drink businesses wishing to gain Approval to supply UK buyers. Membership-based, it is open to any small/micro producer operating within the UK.
- SALSA is a 'not-for-profit' organisation, founded by the four main trade associations representing the UK food industry: **The British Retail Consortium, The Food & Drink Federation, The National Farmers Union and The British Hospitality Association.**
- Since its launch in 2007, membership has grown year on year. SALSA now has approximately 2,000 approved members. Since the launch of **SALSA *plus* Cheese** in 2019, **over 50** sites have gained **SALSA *plus* Cheese** approval.

### Is SALSA *plus* Cheese right for my business?

- **SALSA *plus* Cheese** certification has been developed to offer small and micro cheesemakers a certification standard tailored to scale and systems of their particular operation. It is available for suppliers typically employing **5-50 full-time staff.**

### Who developed the SALSA *plus* Cheese Standard?

- The SALSA Food standard was written by experienced food safety experts to reflect both the legal requirements of producers and the enhanced expectations of 'best practice' of professional buyers. **SALSA *plus* Cheese** is the main SALSA Food audit *plus* an extensive module on cheesemaking, created by SALSA and The Specialist Cheesemakers Association. Additional criteria contained in the scheme were developed to:
  - encourage excellence in the small scale cheesemaking industry
  - raise the profile of processors within the cheese industry
  - give clear guidelines for approval to small processors.

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## ⑦ How many UK buyers recognise SALSA *plus* Cheese?

- Approval is recognised by a growing list of important UK Buyers. Buyers include Waitrose, Ocado ASDA and Morrisons, who all endorse the SALSA Scheme and actively use SALSA's 'live' online [Buyers' Directory](#)

## ⑦ How long does it take to gain Approval?

- Gaining Approval can take **up to 3 months** from date of payment through to Certification and is largely dependent on the current operating procedures of your business. To help members, the online **Users' Guide** offers a step-by-step guide through the audit process. The scheme also offers a mentoring service to support brewers to gain the accreditation.

## ⑦ Who is the Auditor and what does the Audit cover?

- **SALSA *plus* Cheese** auditors and mentors are industry experts in small scale cheese production, locally based, and specifically trained & qualified.
- The audit is an onsite inspection that typically lasts a full day. A **SALSA** Auditor will audit your operating procedures against the **SALSA *plus* Cheese** which covers additional requirements to reflect specific aspects of the small-scale cheese manufacture. These are included in:
  - Section 1.1.5 Training
  - Section 1.2.8 Personal Hygiene
  - Section 1.3 Cleaning
  - Section 1.5 Processing
  - Section 1.6 Control of Raw Materials
  - Section 2 HACCP
  - Section 3.8 Shelf Life Testing
  - Section 4.4 Building Structure
- Approval certification is only granted to suppliers who are able to demonstrate to a SALSA auditor that they are able to produce safe and legal products and are committed to continually meeting the requirements of the **SALSA *plus* Cheese** standard. At the end of the inspection, the SALSA Auditor will make a recommendation for Approval or advise on 'the next step to take' to SALSA Operations.

## ⑦ What advice and support is available to Members?

- A copy of the **SALSA *plus* Cheese** Standard can be [downloaded](#) free of charge from the SALSA website, before joining, for you to assess its value to your business. Auditors are very approachable and able to offer valuable guidance and advice on any issues that might arise during the audit process



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## What is SALSA *plus* Cheese and why do I need it?

- The Scheme offers members a unique range of support services to make certification as straightforward as possible. **Achievability, accessibility and affordability** are key assurances we offer.
- Resources include:
  - **Core guidance materials** – specifically written for cheese production
  - **Onsite guidance and advice** from locally-based mentors **at guaranteed rates**
  - **HACCP courses** (both general and specific for dairy) & **Food Labelling workshops** – held on-line; practical & interactive.
  - **Industry updates and a telephone helpline for** ‘in person’ advice on the registration and approval process.

### What are the main benefits of gaining SALSA *plus* Cheese Approval?

- **Security** that your business has demonstrated full legal, safety and quality compliance
- **Confidence** to approach new buyers promoting your approval status
- **Commercial benefits** for cheesemakers seeking new contracts
- **Assurance** your plant complies with relevant regulations and meets industry standards
- **‘Live’ visibility** via the **SALSA Buyers Directory**; your current products and status



### Can I speak to someone at SALSA?

- YES. The SALSA team are available Mon-Fri, 9.00-5.30 on the phone number below, or email [info@salsafood.co.uk](mailto:info@salsafood.co.uk).

*‘Achieving approval has been a great, positive step for the business. It has given us confidence not only in our products but also in our operational standards which will now enable the business to grow further.’*

*Burt’s Cheese*

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