

Cream cheese (Chill storage) inventory and supplier qualification, especially for cold chain operations.

What is FEFO?

FEFO = First Expiry, First Out

It's a cold chain-critical inventory rotation method where products with the earliest expiration dates are dispatched first, regardless of arrival or batch date.

This differs from:

FIFO (First In, First Out): oldest received item is used first — doesn't account for expiry.

LIFO (Last In, First Out): rarely used in food industry; unacceptable for perishables.

Why FEFO is Essential for Cream Cheese

Reason	Impact
Cream cheese is a high-risk perishable	Delays in dispatching earlier expiry stock can lead to spoilage and write-offs.
Retail packs (200g–500g) often go to supermarkets	Requires traceability and expiry-level accuracy.
Bulk packs (1–5kg) may be used in hotels or food processors	Non-compliance with FEFO can result in customer rejection or QA audit failure.

How a Supplier Should Demonstrate FEFO Compliance

Evidence Required	Good Practices
Printed expiry and batch codes on each unit/carton	Clearly visible, scannable, and mapped to inventory system
ERP or WMS with expiry-based picking logic	Automatically flags near-expiry stock and restricts dispatch of fresher batches first
Manual FEFO log register (if no ERP)	Daily entries showing batch code, expiry date, and dispatch reference
Separate staging area for near-expiry goods	Helps force movement of short shelf-life stock without mixing with new stock
Proof in invoices or dispatch notes	Invoices reflect batch code & expiry of goods being delivered

Audit Questions You Can Ask the Supplier

1. How do you ensure cream cheese nearing expiry is shipped first?
2. Do your systems allow expiry-based batch allocation?

3. Can you show dispatch logs from the last 2 weeks with expiry data?
4. What's your policy if a near-expiry batch is still in stock after 3 days?

Consequences of Not Following FEFO

Older cream cheese may remain unsold or deteriorate in storage.

Customer complaints or recalls due to early expiry post-purchase.

Violation of ISO 22000:2018 clause 8.5.2.2 (product release and traceability).

Possible regulatory non-compliance if near-expiry or expired stock is sold.