CLAIMS

1. A cheese analogue composition comprising from 20% to 30% by weight of a fat composition; from 1% to 45% by weight of a starch; from 0% to 15% by weight of non-animal protein; and from 35% to 65% by weight of water; wherein the combined weight percent of starch and non-animal protein in the composition does not exceed 45%; wherein the fat composition comprises from 20% to 85% by weight of saturated fatty acid residues; from 10% to 50% by weight of stearic acid residues (C18:0); and from 2% to 35% by weight of lauric acid residues (C12:0); wherein said percentages of fatty acid residues refers to fatty acids bound as acyl groups in glycerides in the fat composition and being based on the total weight of C4 to C24 fatty acid residues bound as acyl groups present in the fat composition.

2. A cheese analogue composition according to Claim 1, wherein the fat composition comprises from 20% to 70% by weight of saturated fatty acids, preferably from 20% to 60% by weight of saturated fatty acids; more preferably from 65% to 85% by weight of saturated fatty acids or from 20% to 65% by weight of saturated fatty acids.

3. A cheese analogue composition according to Claim 1 or Claim 2, wherein the fat composition comprises less than 10% by weight of palm oil, preferably, wherein the composition comprises less than 5% by weight of palm oil, more preferably, wherein the composition comprises less than 2% by weight of palm oil, and most preferably wherein the composition does not comprise palm oil, and/or wherein the fat composition is a non-hydrogenated fat composition.

4. A cheese analogue composition according to any preceding claim, wherein the fat composition comprises 20% by weight or less, preferably 10% by weight or less of palmitic acid (C16:0).

5. A cheese analogue composition according to any preceding claim, wherein the fat composition has a weight ratio of stearic acid (C18:0) to palmitic acid (C16:0) of from 1:1 to 12:1.

6. A cheese analogue composition according to any preceding claim, wherein the fat composition has a weight ratio of lauric acid (C12:0) to stearic acid (C18:0) of from 1:4 to 4:1.

7. A cheese analogue composition according to any preceding claim, wherein the fat composition comprises from 10% to 25% by weight lauric acid (C12:0); and/or from 15% to 45% by weight stearic acid (C18:0).

8. A cheese analogue composition according to any preceding claim, wherein the fat composition has a solid fat content (SFC) N35 of less than 5, measured on unstabilised fat according to ISO 8292-1, preferably 4 or less; more preferably 3 or less; and most preferably 2 or less.

9. A cheese analogue composition according to any preceding claim, wherein the fat composition comprises an interesterified fat, preferably wherein the fat composition comprises an interesterified fat blend, preferably wherein the interesterified fat or interesterified fat blend has been produced by chemical interesterification, enzymatic interesterification, or a combination thereof, and optionally wherein the interesterified fat or interesterified fat blend is produced by an interesterification reaction that is stopped prior to reaching an equilibrium product distribution.

10. A cheese analogue composition according to any preceding claim, wherein the fat composition comprises an interesterified fat blend comprising at least one fat selected from shea butter, shea stearin, shea olein, cocoa butter, cocoa stearin, cocoa olein, allanblackia fat, kokum fat, mango kernel fat, sal fat, illipe butter, and mixtures thereof; and at least one oil selected from coconut oil, coconut oil stearin, coconut oil olein, palm kernel oil, palm kernel olein, palm kernel stearin, babassu oil, and mixtures thereof.

11. A cheese analogue composition according to any preceding claim, wherein the fat composition comprises an interesterified blend of shea butter and coconut oil or an interesterified blend of shea stearin and coconut oil, preferably wherein the fat composition comprises an interesterified blend of from 20% to 80% by weight of shea butter and from 20% to 80% by weight of coconut oil, or wherein the fat composition comprises an interesterified blend of from 20% to 80% by weight of shea stearin and from 20% to 80% by weight of coconut oil.

12. A cheese analogue composition according to any preceding claim, wherein the fat composition comprises a blend of (i) from 20% to 80% by weight of an interesterified blend of from 20% to 80% by weight of shea butter and/or shea stearin and from 20% to 80% by weight of coconut oil; and (ii) from 20% to 80% by weight of liquid oil such as sunflower oil, rapeseed oil, or a combination thereof.

13. A cheese analogue composition according to any preceding claim, wherein the fat composition comprises from 5 to 35 percent by weight of CN46 andCN48 triglycerides, preferably from 10 to 30 percent by weight of CN46and CN48 triglycerides, and/or wherein the fat composition comprises from 2 to 12 percent by weight of St2M triglycerides, preferably from 5 to 12 percent by weight of St2M triglycerides.

14. A cheese analogue composition according to any preceding claim, wherein the starch comprises non-modified starch, modified starch, or a combination thereof, preferably wherein the starch comprises a non-modified or modified vegetable starch, rice starch, tapioca starch or a combination thereof; preferably wherein the starch comprises potato starch, waxy maize starch, tapioca starch, or a combination thereof, and/or wherein the non-animal protein comprises plant protein such as algae protein, black bean protein, canola wheat protein, chickpea protein, fava protein, lentil protein, lupin bean protein, mung bean protein, oat protein, pea protein, potato protein, rice protein, soy protein, sunflower seed protein, wheat protein, white bean protein, and protein isolates or concentrates thereof; or wherein the non-animal protein comprises seitan, mushroom protein, legume protein, tempeh, yam flour, tofu, mycoprotein, peanut flour, yuba, nuts, protein derived from nuts, nut derived milk products, or a combination thereof.

15. A cheese analogue composition according to any preceding claim, wherein the cheese analogue composition further comprises an animal milk-derived protein, preferably wherein the animal-milk derived protein comprises casein.

16. A cheese analogue composition according to any preceding claim, wherein the cheese analogue composition comprises one or more flavouring additives, preferably wherein the one or more flavouring additives are present in an amount of from 0.1% to 5% by weight of the cheese analogue composition, and/or wherein the cheese analogue composition comprises one or more colouring additives, preferably wherein the one or more colouring additives are present in an amount of from 0.01% to 1% by weight of the cheese analogue composition.

17. A cheese analogue composition according to any preceding claim, wherein the cheese analogue composition further comprises an ionic or non-ionic emulsifier, a polyhydroxy compound, milk, liquid flavours, alcohols, humectants, honey, liquid preservatives, liquid sweeteners, liquid oxidising agents, liquid reducing agents, liquid anti-oxidants, liquid acidity regulators, liquid enzymes, milk powder, hydrolysed protein isolates (peptides), amino acids, yeast, sugar substitutes, salt, spices, fiber, thickening

and gelling agents, egg powder, enzymes, gluten, vitamins, preservatives, sweeteners, oxidising agents, reducing agents, anti-oxidants, and acidity regulators.

18. A cheese analogue composition according to any preceding claim, wherein the cheese analogue composition is substantially free of animal protein and/or animal fats, preferably, wherein the cheese analogue composition is free of animal protein and/or animal fats, and/or wherein the cheese analogue composition is substantially free of animal-derived products, preferably, wherein the cheese analogue composition is free of animal-derived products.

19. A cheese analogue composition according to any one of Claims 1 to 18, wherein the cheese analogue composition further comprises one or more animal-derived products such as animal oils, marine oils, animal-derived proteins, animal-derived polysaccharides, or any combination thereof; preferably wherein the one or more animal-derived products comprise animal milk proteins, animal milk fats, or a combination thereof, preferably wherein the one or more animal-derived products are present in the cheese analogue composition in an amount of from 0.1% to 20% by weight of the cheese analogue composition.

20. A cheese analogue composition according to any preceding claim, wherein the cheese analogue composition comprises from 35% to 55% by weight of water; and wherein the combined weight percent of starch and non-animal protein in the cheese analogue composition is from 25% to 35%; preferably, wherein the cheese analogue composition is a cheddar cheese, parmesan cheese, feta cheese, sandwich cheese, or similar-type cheese analogue composition, or

wherein the cheese analogue composition comprises from 45% to 55% by weight of water; and wherein the combined weight percent of starch and non-animal protein in the cheese analogue composition is from 20% to 35%; preferably, wherein the cheese analogue composition is a soft cheese analogue composition such as a brie or brie-type cheese, pizza cheese, or similar-type cheese analogue composition, or

wherein the cheese analogue composition comprises from 50% to 65% by weight of water; and wherein the combined weight percent of starch and non-animal protein in the cheese analogue composition is from 5% to 25%; preferably, wherein the cheese analogue composition is a spreadable cheese analogue composition such as a cream cheese, or similar-type cheese analogue composition.

21. A cheese analogue composition according to any preceding claim, wherein the fat composition has a solid fat content (SFC) N10 of less than 60, measured on unstabilised fat according to ISO 8292-1, preferably, wherein the fat composition has a solid fat content (SFC) N10 of from 50 to 60, measured on unstabilised fat according to ISO 8292-1.

22. A cheese analogue composition according to any preceding claim, wherein the combined weight percent of starch and non-animal protein in the cheese analogue composition is less than 30% and preferably from 20% to 30%; optionally, wherein the cheese analogue composition comprises less than 12.5% by weight of non-animal protein.

23. A food product comprising a cheese analogue composition according to any preceding claim, preferably wherein the food product is a vegetarian or vegan cheese substitute food product, such as a pizza cheese, a sandwich cheese, a feta cheese, a soft spreadable cheese, or a hard cheese; preferably wherein the food product comprises a pizza cheese, a sandwich cheese, or a feta cheese.

24. Use of a fat composition in a cheese analogue composition, wherein the fat composition comprises from 20% to 80% by weight of saturated fatty acids; from 10% to 50% by weight of stearic acid (C18:0); and from 2% to 35% by weight of lauric acid (C12:0); wherein said percentages of fatty acid residues refers to fatty acids bound as acyl groups in glycerides in the fat composition and being based on the total weight of C4 to C24 fatty acid residues bound as acyl groups present in the fat composition; and wherein the cheese analogue composition comprises from 20% to 30% by weight of the fat composition; from 1% to 45% by weight of a starch; from 0% to 15% by weight of non-animal protein; and from 35% to 65% by weight of water; wherein the combined weight percent of starch and non-animal protein in the composition does not exceed 45%.

25. Use according to Claim 24, wherein the use further comprises using the cheese analogue composition in a food product, wherein the cheese analogue composition, fat composition and/or food product are as defined in any one of Claims 1 to 23.

26. Use according to any one of Claims 24 to 25, wherein the use comprises using the fat composition to improve the nutritional profile of the cheese analogue composition when compared to an analogous cheese analogue composition comprising the same amount by weight of coconut oil, such as wherein the use comprises using the fat composition to improve the effect of *in vivo* cholesterol levels in a consumer of the cheese analogue

composition when compared to an analogous cheese analogue composition comprising the same amount by weight of coconut oil.

27. Use according to any one of Claims 24 to 26, wherein the use comprises using the fat composition to improve one or more sensory properties and/or one or more functional properties of the cheese analogue composition when compared to an analogous cheese analogue composition comprising the same amount by weight of coconut oil, such as wherein the one or more sensory properties comprise hardness, adhesiveness, cohesiveness, resilience, springiness, or a combination thereof, and/or wherein the one or more functional properties comprise ability to slice, ability to handle, ability to stretch when heated, reduction in waste during slicing, reduction of waste during shredding, improved quality of the cheese, or a combination thereof.

28. Use according to any one of Claims 24 to 27, wherein the use comprises using the fat composition to reduce the hardness of the cheese analogue composition when compared to an analogous cheese analogue composition comprising the same amount by weight of coconut oil, preferably, wherein the cheese analogue composition is according to Claim 20, more preferably, wherein the use comprises using the cheese analogue composition in a pizza cheese food product, a sandwich cheese food product, or a feta cheese food product, or

wherein the use comprises using the fat composition to reduce the extent to which the cheese analogue composition increases in hardness over time compared to an analogous cheese analogue composition comprising the same amount by weight of coconut oil, preferably wherein the use comprises using the cheese analogue composition in a pizza cheese food product, a sandwich cheese food product, or a feta cheese food product, or

wherein the use comprises using the fat composition in a cheese analogue composition according to Claim 20, and wherein the use comprises using the fat composition to reduce the brittleness and/or firmness of the cheese analogue composition compared to an analogous cheese analogue composition comprising the same amount by weight of coconut oil, preferably, wherein the use comprises using the fat composition in a pizza cheese food product or a sandwich cheese food product, or

wherein the use comprises using the fat composition in a cheese analogue composition according to Claim 20, and wherein the use comprises using the cheese analogue composition in a pizza cheese food product or a sandwich cheese food product, and

wherein the use comprises using the fat composition to improve the appearance of the food product compared to an analogous food product comprising a cheese analogue composition comprising the same amount by weight of coconut oil.

29. A process of manufacturing a cheese analogue composition according to any one of Claims 1 to 22, or a food product according to Claim 23, wherein the process comprises combining a fat composition as defined in any one of Claims 1 to 22, water, starch, and optionally non-animal protein and/or one or more additional components to form the cheese analogue composition, and optionally forming the cheese analogue composition into food products, optionally wherein the combining is carried out at a temperature of from 70°C to 85°C.