

**Extension Column – May 26, 2021**  
**Buffalo County Extension**  
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**Variety of Cheese**

One of the joys of shopping for cheese is the wide variety and flavors available. But ever wonder what the different terms and words mean on a package of cheese? Here is a quick guide for some of the most popular terms.

Natural Cheese – made from milk that may have had salt, enzymes and flavorings added. This happens by adding a starter culture to milk, which can change its flavor and texture. The cheese may or may not be aged. Often it comes in blocks, slices, cubes or shreds.

Pasteurized Process Cheese – companies heat one or more natural cheeses together. A popular type of processed cheese is “American Cheese” singles, which has a smooth, mild flavor.

Pasteurized Process Cheese Food – companies make processed cheese foods by blending one or more natural cheeses along with other dairy foods like cream, milk, or whey. At least 51 percent of the cheese food must be cheese.

Processed Cheese Product – uses milk, salt, cultures and natural enzymes as ingredients – just like cheese – but they don’t go through the traditional cheese making process.

Pasteurized Process Cheese Spread – these are similar to pasteurized process cheeses, except that an edible stabilizer and moisture are added so it can spread smoothly at room temperature.

In addition, other items like “sandwich slices” may be in the dairy case. These may seem like cheese and may contain limited amounts of dairy, but do not melt or taste like cheese.

For more information about cheese, contact Nebraska Extension in Buffalo County, 1400 East 34<sup>th</sup> Street, Kearney, Nebraska 68847, or call (308) 236-1235.