

Knowing The Difference In Cheese

Too often, we select products from the grocery store without reading or understanding the labels, the U.S. Department of Agriculture points out. For example, do you know the difference between cheese, pasteurized process cheese, pasteurized process cheese food, and pasteurized cheese spread?

On the grocery shelf, the appearance of some of these products is identical, yet there is considerable difference in the production and contents of each product. Usually, the label is your only clue in differentiating among these products.

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service explains that natural cheese is produced by separating milk solids from milk by curdling it with a bacteria culture. The curd is then separated from the whey and aged to produce a variety of cheeses.

The production of natural cheese starts with fresh milk. But the production of pasteurized process cheese starts with a blend of fresh and aged natural cheeses. The natural cheeses are shredded, mixed, and heated (pasteurized), after which no further ripening occurs. The blend may consist of one or more varieties of natural cheese and may contain pimentos, fruits, vegetables, or meats. A smoked flavor may also be added.

Add the word "food" to pasteurized process cheese and you have a different product. Cheese food is

prepared in much the same manner as process cheese except that it contains less cheese, and has nonfat dry milk, or whey solids and water added. This results in a lower milk fat content and more moisture than in process cheese. Cheese food is milder in flavor, has a soft texture, and spreads more easily. It melts more quickly than process cheese because of the higher moisture content. Like process cheese, it may also contain pimentos, fruits, vegetables, or meats, or have a smoked

flavor. Cheese food may be used instead of process cheese though it is not likely to yield as much cheese flavor.

Pasteurized process cheese spread has a higher moisture content than any of the products mentioned so far. A stabilizer is used in this product to prevent separation of ingredients. It is more spreadable than most cheeses and may also contain various flavoring materials.

Pasteurized process cheese, cheese foods, and

spread may be inspected by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. If the product has been inspected the cheese may bear USDA's "Quality Approved shield." This means that the product was manufactured in a plant meeting USDA requirements for plant sanitation and equipment, and that it meets USDA quality specifications for the cheese itself. (Consumer news service)

Dirty Joke?

Q. "How much dirt is in a hole six by six feet?"
A. "There is no dirt in a hole!"



Pennsylvania Secretary of Agriculture James A. McHale stopped for a chat with Lancaster County

Dairy Princess Diane Crider on Wednesday evening at the Solanco Fair. McHale officially opened the fair.

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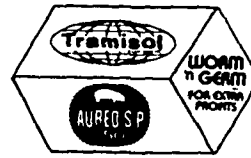
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