When purchasing feed, it is essential to take time to read the feed tag that, by law, is attached to every bag of feed or mineral sold. This will help you determine if the feed is legal and safe for the animal species you will feed it to and that it will satisfy the animal's nutritional needs. The following sections will typically be on most feed tags.

**PRODUCT NAME**
The feed name and brand will be listed at the top. If it is medicated, the word “medicated” must be at the end of the name.

**GUARANTEED ANALYSIS**
This section defines the nutritional composition of the feed or mineral. If the product is intended as a feed or feed supplement, the following must be listed as a minimum: crude protein, crude fat and crude fiber. For mineral products, minimum and maximum guaranteed levels of calcium and salt are required. Minimum guaranteed levels must be listed for phosphorus, magnesium, sodium, potassium, zinc, copper, selenium and vitamin A. If a nutrient is listed on the label, it is subject to testing by government agencies to ensure proper inclusion of the nutrient. Unless otherwise indicated with a maximum level, the product may contain higher levels of the nutrient than listed.

**FEEDING DIRECTIONS**
This is a set of instructions for how the feed or mineral should be fed to the animal, including how much to feed daily and, if needed, how to mix the mineral or feed with additional product to achieve the recommended intake rate. If the product contains medication, this section will typically indicate the concentration of the medication as well as the concentration of the medication to be delivered to the animal on a daily basis.

**CAUTIONARY STATEMENTS**
This section describes potential hazards for other classes of animals and species. Also, if you should adhere to a withdrawal period, it will be indicated here. If there are special mixing or handling considerations, it will also be listed in this section.

**FEED INGREDIENTS**
This section lists the feed ingredients, typically in order of highest to lowest inclusion rate. Note that many manufacturers will use general descriptive terms like grain products, plant protein products or forage products. The use of generalized terms allows the manufacturer the latitude to least-cost formulate the feed without having to reprint labels for each modified ration.

**NET WEIGHT**
This is the total weight of the packaged product.

**MANUFACTURER**
The name and location of the feed manufacturer is typically included in this section.

**NOTE:** You cannot determine the amount of net energy or total digestible nutrients (TDN) contained in the feed product from most labels. It is wise to have this discussion with your feed dealer since supplying adequate energy to the animal is as important as meeting protein, minerals and vitamin requirements.