



The Dog Food Report

A Primer On What Food Choices Are The Best For YOUR Dog!

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Introduction

While many dog owners want what's best for their dogs, sometimes little thought is given to what we feed them. If we were to believe the TV and magazine advertisements, all we have to do is pour some kibble that we buy at the supermarket in the bowl and make sure they have lots of fresh water.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

The following report will explain why the commercial dog food we buy is often woefully inadequate to serve the nutritional needs of your dog.

Problems like itching, scratching, hotspots, hair loss, bad breath, dandruff and paw licking are often clear signs that a lack of proper nutrition is taking its toll on your canine friend.

But the main purpose of this report is to awaken you, the dog owner, to the fact that all pet foods are **NOT** alike. Not only are their huge differences from one brand to another but also with a little variety and effort on your part, you can vastly improve your dog's overall health and well-being.

The key is to read pet food labels. They'll pretty much tell you the whole story. Just like people food, they're required by law to list the ingredients in the order of the amounts they contain. Use this report to educate yourself about what some of those ingredients mean.

The first part of **The Dog Food Report** is provided by the Animal Protection Institute. It will examine what's in most supermarket brands of dog foods and even some brands considered "premium, as well as what to look for on the ingredients label.

Further along we'll discuss the growing popularity of the RAW and BARF diets as well as make some specific recommendations of pet food brands that we like and why.

While I've been lucky to have a veterinarian who has supported my efforts to feed my dog a varied diet that includes vegetables, fruits, various meats and table scraps, many vets are simply not trained in animal nutrition and pretty much parrot what they learned in vet school that a dog needs to eat the same thing day in and day out it's whole life. The fact remains that much of what vets learn in vet school are sponsored by large pet food companies. And nutrition is really a sub-specialty and most vets are actually generalists.

So what to do? How do you make the right choices? Well, reading this report is a good start. Knowledge is power! "Bone" Appetit!

Gene R. Sower

What's Really In Pet Food?

Plump whole chickens, choice cuts of beef, fresh grains, and all the wholesome nutrition your dog or cat will ever need.

These are the images pet food manufacturers promulgate through the media and advertising. This is what the \$11 billion per year U.S. pet food industry wants consumers to believe they are buying when they purchase their products.

This report explores the differences between what consumers think they are buying and what they are actually getting. It focuses in very general terms on the most visible name brands -- the pet food labels that are mass distributed to supermarkets and discount stores -- but there are many highly respected brands that may be guilty of the same offenses.

What most consumers don't know is that the pet food industry is an extension of the human food and agriculture industries. Pet food provides a market for slaughterhouse offal, grains considered "unfit for human consumption," and similar waste products to be turned into profit. This waste includes intestines, udders, esophagi, and possibly diseased and cancerous animal parts.

Three of the five major pet food companies in the United States are subsidiaries of major multinational companies:

1. Nestlé (Alpo, Fancy Feast, Friskies, Mighty Dog, and Ralston Purina products such as Dog Chow, ProPlan, and Purina One),
2. Heinz (9 Lives, Amore, Gravy Train, Kibbles-n-Bits, Nature's Recipe),
3. Colgate-Palmolive (Hill's Science Diet Pet Food).

Other leading companies include:

1. Procter & Gamble (Eukanuba and Iams),
2. Mars (Kal Kan, Mealttime, Pedigree, Sheba, Waltham's), and
3. Nutro.

From a business standpoint, multinational companies owning pet food manufacturing companies are an ideal relationship. The multinationals have increased bulk-purchasing power; those that make human food products have a captive market in which to capitalize on their waste products, and pet food divisions have a more reliable capital base and, in many cases, a convenient source of ingredients.

There are hundreds of different pet foods available in this country. And while many of the foods on the market are similar, not all of the pet food manufacturing companies use poor quality or potentially dangerous ingredients.

Ingredients

Although the purchase price of pet food does not always determine whether a pet food is good or bad, the price is often a good indicator of quality. It would be impossible for a company that sells a generic brand of dog food at \$9.95 for a 40-lb. bag to use quality

protein and grain in its food. The cost of purchasing quality ingredients would be much higher than the selling price.

The protein used in pet food comes from a variety of sources. When cattle, swine, chickens, lambs, or other animals are slaughtered, the choice cuts such as lean muscle tissue are trimmed away from the carcass for human consumption.

However, about 50% of every food-producing animal does not get used in human foods. Whatever remains of the carcass -- bones, blood, intestines, lungs, ligaments, and almost all the other parts not generally consumed by humans -- is used in pet food, animal feed, and other products. These "other parts" are known as "by-products," "meat-and-bone-meal," or similar names on pet food labels.

The Pet Food Institute -- the trade association of pet food manufacturers -- acknowledges the use of by-products in pet foods as additional income for processors and farmers: *"The growth of the pet food industry not only provided pet owners with better foods for their pets, but also created profitable additional markets for American farm products and for the byproducts of the meat packing, poultry, and other food industries which prepare food for human consumption."*

Many of these remnants provide a questionable source of nourishment for our animals. The nutritional quality of meat and poultry by-products, meals, and digests can vary from batch to batch.

James Morris and Quinton Rogers, two professors with the **Department of Molecular Biosciences, University of California at Davis Veterinary School of Medicine**, assert that, *"There is virtually no information on the bioavailability of nutrients for companion animals in many of the common dietary ingredients used in pet foods. These ingredients are generally by-products of the meat, poultry and fishing industries, with the potential for a wide variation in nutrient composition."*

Claims of nutritional adequacy of pet foods based on the current **Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO)** nutrient allowances (*'profiles'*) *do not give assurances of nutritional adequacy and will not until ingredients are analyzed and bioavailability values are incorporated."*

Meat and poultry meals, by-product meals, and meat-and-bone meal are common ingredients in pet foods. The term "meal" means that these materials are not used fresh, but have been rendered.

What is rendering? Rendering, as defined by Webster's Dictionary, is "to process as for industrial use: to render livestock carcasses and to extract oil from fat, blubber, etc., by melting."

Homemade chicken soup, with its thick layer of fat that forms over the top when the soup is cooled, is a sort of mini-rendering process. Rendering separates fat-soluble from water-soluble and solid materials, removes most of the water, and kills bacterial contaminants, but may alter or destroy some of the natural enzymes and proteins found in the raw ingredients. Meat and poultry by-products, while not rendered, vary widely in composition and quality.

What can the feeding of such products do to your companion animal?

Some veterinarians claim that feeding slaughterhouse wastes to animals increases their risk of getting cancer and other degenerative diseases. The cooking methods used by pet food manufacturers -- such as rendering, extruding (a heat-and-pressure system used to "puff" dry

foods into nuggets or kibbles), and baking -- do not necessarily destroy the hormones used to fatten livestock or increase milk production, or drugs such as antibiotics or the barbiturates used to euthanize animals.

Animal and Poultry Fat

You may have noticed a unique, pungent odor when you open a new bag of pet food -- what is the source of that delightful smell? It is most often rendered animal fat, restaurant grease, or other oils too rancid or deemed inedible for humans.

Restaurant grease has become a major component of feed grade animal fat over the last fifteen years. This grease, often held in fifty-gallon drums, may be kept outside for weeks, exposed to extreme temperatures with no regard for its future use. "Fat blenders" or rendering companies then pick up this used grease and mix the different types of fat together, stabilize them with powerful antioxidants to retard further spoilage, and then sell the blended products to pet food companies and other end users.

These fats are sprayed directly onto extruded kibbles and pellets to make an otherwise bland or distasteful product palatable. The fat also acts as a binding agent to which manufacturers add other flavor enhancers such as digestes. Pet food scientists have discovered that animals love the taste of these sprayed fats. Manufacturers are masters at getting a dog or a cat to eat something she would normally turn up her nose at.

Wheat, Soy, Corn, Peanut Hulls, and other Vegetable Proteins

The amount of grain products used in pet food has risen over the last decade. Once considered filler by the pet food industry, cereal and grain products now replace a considerable proportion of the meat that was used in the first commercial pet foods. The availability of nutrients in these products is dependent upon the digestibility of the grain. The amount and type of carbohydrate in pet food determines the amount of nutrient value the animal actually gets.

Dogs and cats can almost completely absorb carbohydrates from some grains, such as white rice. Up to 20% of the nutritional value of other grains can escape digestion. The availability of nutrients for wheat, beans, and oats is poor. The nutrients in potatoes and corn are far less available than those in rice. Some ingredients, such as peanut hulls, are used for filler or fiber, and have no significant nutritional value.

Two of the top three ingredients in pet foods, particularly dry foods, are almost always some form of grain products. **Pedigree Performance Food for Dogs** lists:

1. Ground Corn,
2. Chicken By-Product Meal, and
3. Corn Gluten Meal

as its top three ingredients.

9 Lives Crunchy Meals for Cats lists Ground Yellow Corn, Corn Gluten Meal, and Poultry By-Product Meal as its first three ingredients.

Since cats are true carnivores -- they must eat meat to fulfill certain physiological needs - - one may wonder why we are feeding a corn-based product to them. The answer is that corn is a much cheaper "energy source" than meat.

Soy is another common ingredient that is sometimes used as a protein and energy source in pet

food. Manufacturers also use it to add bulk so that when an animal eats a product containing soy he will feel more sated. While soy has been linked to gas in some dogs, other dogs do quite well with it. Vegetarian dog foods use soy as a protein source.

In 1995, **Nature's Recipe** pulled thousands of tons of dog food off the shelf after consumers complained that their dogs were vomiting and losing their appetite. Nature's Recipe's loss amounted to \$20 million. The problem was a fungus that produced vomitoxin (an aflatoxin or "mycotoxin," a toxic substance produced by mold) contaminating the wheat.

In 1999, another fungal toxin triggered the recall of dry dog food made by **Doane Pet Care** at one of its plants, including Ol' Roy (Wal-Mart's brand) and 53 other brands. This time, the toxin killed 25 dogs.

Although it caused many dogs to vomit, stop eating, and have diarrhea, vomitoxin is a milder toxin than most. The more dangerous mycotoxins can cause weight loss, liver damage, lameness, and even death as in the Doane case.

The Nature's Recipe incident prompted the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to intervene.

Dina Butcher, Agriculture Policy Advisor for North Dakota Governor Ed Schafer, concluded that the discovery of vomitoxin in Nature's Recipe wasn't much of a threat to the human population because "the grain that would go into pet food is not a high quality grain."

Additives and Preservatives

Many chemicals are added to commercial pet foods to improve the taste, stability, characteristics, or appearance of the food. Additives provide no nutritional value. Additives include emulsifiers to prevent water and fat from separating, antioxidants to

prevent fat from turning rancid, and artificial colors and flavors to make the product more attractive to consumers and more palatable to their companion animals.

Adding chemicals to food originated thousands of years ago with spices, natural preservatives, and ripening agents. In the last 40 years, however, the number of food additives has greatly increased. All commercial pet foods must be preserved so they stay fresh and appealing to our animal companions.

Canning is a preserving process itself, so canned foods contain less preservatives than dry foods. Some preservatives are added to ingredients or raw materials by the suppliers, and others may be added by the manufacturer. Because manufacturers need to ensure that dry foods have a long shelf life to remain edible after shipping and prolonged storage, fats used in pet foods are preserved with either synthetic or "natural" preservatives.

Synthetic preservatives include butylated hydroxyanisole (BHA) and butylated hydroxytoluene (BHT), propyl gallate, propylene glycol (also used as a less-toxic version of automotive antifreeze), and ethoxyquin. For these antioxidants, there is little information documenting their toxicity, safety, interactions, or chronic use in pet foods that may be eaten every day for the life of the animal.

Potentially cancer-causing agents such as BHA, BHT, and ethoxyquin are permitted at relatively low levels.

The use of these chemicals in pet foods has not been thoroughly studied, and long-term build-up of these agents may ultimately be harmful. Due to questionable data in the original study on its safety, ethoxyquin's manufacturer, Monsanto, was required to perform a new, more rigorous study. This was completed in 1996. Even though Monsanto found no significant toxicity associated with its own product, in July 1997, the FDA's Center for Veterinary Medicine requested that manufacturers voluntarily reduce the maximum level for ethoxyquin by half, to 75 parts per million.

While some pet food critics and veterinarians believe that ethoxyquin is a major cause of disease, skin problems, and infertility in dogs, others claim it is the safest, strongest, most stable preservative available for pet food. Ethoxyquin is approved for use in human food for preserving spices, such as cayenne and chili powder, at a level of 100 ppm -- but it would be very difficult to consume as much chili powder every day as a dog would eat dry food. Ethoxyquin has never been tested for safety in cats.

Some manufacturers have responded to consumer concern, and are now using *"natural" preservatives such as Vitamin C (ascorbate), Vitamin E (mixed tocopherols), and oils of rosemary, clove, or other spices*, to preserve the fats in their products. Other ingredients, however, may be individually preserved.

Most fishmeal, and some prepared vitamin-mineral mixtures, contains chemical preservatives. This means that your companion animal may be eating food containing several types of preservatives.

Federal law requires preservatives to be disclosed on the label; however, pet food companies only recently started to comply with this law.

Additives in Processed Pet Foods

- Anticaking agents
- Antimicrobial agents
- Antioxidants
- Coloring agents
- Curing agents
- Drying agents
- Emulsifiers
- Firming agents
- Flavor enhancers
- Flavoring agents
- Flour treating agents
- Formulation aids
- Humectants
- Leavening agents
- Lubricants
- Nonnutritive sweeteners
- Nutritive sweeteners
- Oxidizing and reducing agents
- pH control agents
- Processing aids
- Sequestrants
- Solvents, vehicles
- Stabilizers, thickeners

- Surface active agents
- Surface finishing agents
- Synergists
- Texturizers

While the law requires studies of direct toxicity of these additives and preservatives, they have not been tested for their potential synergistic effects on each other once ingested. Some authors have suggested that dangerous interactions occur among some of the common synthetic preservatives.

Natural preservatives do not provide as long a shelf life as chemical preservatives, but they are safe.

How Pet Food is Made?

Although feeding trials are no longer required for a food to meet the requirements for labeling a food "complete and balanced," most manufacturers perform palatability studies when developing a new pet food. One set of animals is fed a new food while a "control" group is fed a current formula. The total volume eaten is used as a gauge for the palatability of the food. The larger and more reputable companies do use feeding trials, which are considered to be a much more accurate assessment of the actual nutritional value of the food. They keep large colonies of dogs and cats for this purpose, or use testing laboratories that have their own animals.

Most dry food is made with a machine called an expander or extruder.

First, raw materials are blended, sometimes by hand, other times by computer, in accordance with a recipe developed by animal nutritionists. This mixture is fed into an expander and steam or hot water is added. The mixture is subjected to steam, pressure, and high heat as it is extruded through dies that determine the shape of the final product and puffed like popcorn. The food is allowed to dry, and then it is usually sprayed with fat, digest, or other compounds to make it more palatable.

Although the cooking process may kill bacteria in pet food, the final product can lose its sterility during the subsequent drying, fat coating, and packaging process. A few foods are baked at high temperatures rather than extruded. This produces a dense, crunchy kibble that is palatable without the addition of sprayed on palatability enhancers. Animals can be fed about 25% less of a baked food, by volume (but not by weight), than an extruded food.

Ingredients are similar for wet, dry, and semi-moist foods, although the ratios of protein, fat, and fiber may change. A typical can of ordinary cat food reportedly contains about 45-50% meat or poultry by-products. The main difference between the types of food is the water content. It is impossible to directly compare labels from different kinds of food without a mathematical conversion to "dry matter basis." Wet or canned food begins with ground ingredients mixed with additives. If chunks are required, a special extruder forms them. Then the mixture is cooked and canned. The sealed cans are then put into

containers resembling pressure cookers and commercial sterilization takes place. Some manufacturers cook the food right in the can.

There are special labeling requirements for pet food, all of which are contained in the annually revised Official Publication of AAFCO. The use of the terms "all" or "100%" cannot be used "if the product contains more than one ingredient, not including water sufficient for processing, decharacterizing agents, or trace amounts of preservatives and condiments." Products containing multiple ingredients are covered by AAFCO Regulation PF3(b) and (c). The "95% rule" applies when the ingredient(s) derived from animals, poultry, or fish constitutes at least 95% or more of the total weight of the product (or 70% excluding water for processing).

Because all-meat diets are usually not nutritionally balanced, they fell out of favor for many years. However, due to rising consumer interest in high quality meat products, several companies are now promoting 95% and 100% canned meats as a supplemental feeding option.

The "dinner" product is defined by the 25% Rule, which applies when "an ingredient or a combination of ingredients constitutes at least 25% of the weight of the product" (excluding water sufficient for processing) as long as the ingredient(s) shall constitute at least 10% of the total product weight; and a descriptor that implies other ingredients are included in the product formula is used on the label. Such descriptors include "recipe," "platter," "entree," and "formula."

A combination of ingredients included in the product name is permissible when each ingredient comprises at least 3% of the product weight, excluding water for processing, and the ingredient names appear in descending order by weight.

The "with" rule allows an ingredient name to appear on the label, such as "with real chicken," as long as each such ingredient constitutes at least 3% of the food by weight, excluding water for processing.

The "flavor" rule allows a food to be designated as a certain flavor as long as the ingredient(s) are sufficient to "impart a distinctive characteristic" to the food. Thus, a "beef flavor" food may contain a small quantity of digest or other extract of tissues from cattle, without containing any actual beef meat at all.

What Happened to the Nutrients?

Dr. Randy L. Wysong is a veterinarian and produces his own line of pet foods. A long-time critic of pet food industry practices, he said, "Processing is the wild card in nutritional value that is, by and large, simply ignored. Heating, cooking, rendering, freezing, dehydrating, canning, extruding, pelleting, baking, and so forth, are so commonplace that they are simply thought of as synonymous with food itself."

Processing meat and by-products used in pet food can greatly diminish their nutritional value, but cooking increases the digestibility of cereal grains.

To make pet food nutritious, pet food manufacturers must "fortify" it with vitamins and minerals. Why? Because the ingredients they are using are not wholesome, their quality

may be extremely variable, and the harsh manufacturing practices destroy many of the nutrients the food had to begin with.

Contaminants

Commercially manufactured or rendered meat meals and by-product meals are frequently highly contaminated with bacteria because their source is not always slaughtered animals. Animals that have died because of disease, injury, or natural causes are a source of meat for meat meal. The dead animal might not be rendered until days after its death. Therefore the carcass is often contaminated with bacteria such as Salmonella and Escherichia coli.

E. Coli bacteria are estimated to contaminate more than 50% of meat meals. While the cooking process may kill bacteria, it does not eliminate the endotoxins some bacteria produce during their growth and are released when they die. These toxins can cause sickness and disease. Pet food manufacturers do not test their products for endotoxins.

Mycotoxins -- These toxins comes from mold or fungi, such as vomitoxin in the Nature's Recipe case, and aflatoxin in Doane's food. Poor farming practices and

improper drying and storage of crops can cause mold growth. Ingredients that are most likely to be contaminated with mycotoxins are grains such as wheat and corn, cottonseed meal, peanut meal, and fishmeal.

Labeling

The National Research Council (NRC) of the Academy of Sciences set the nutritional standards for pet food that were used by the pet food industry until the late 1980s. The NRC standards, which still exist and are being revised as of 2001, were based on purified diets, and required feeding trials for pet foods claimed to be "complete" and "balanced." The pet food industry found the feeding trials too restrictive and expensive, so AAFCO designed an alternate procedure for claiming the nutritional adequacy of pet food, by testing the food for compliance with "Nutrient Profiles."

AAFCO also created "expert committees" for canine and feline nutrition, which developed separate canine and feline standards. While feeding trials can still be done, a standard chemical analysis may be also be used to determine if a food meets the profiles.

Chemical analysis, however, does not address the palatability, digestibility, or biological availability of nutrients in pet food. Thus it is unreliable for determining whether a food will provide an animal with sufficient nutrients.

To compensate for the limitations of chemical analysis, AAFCO added a "safety factor," which was to exceed the minimum amount of nutrients required to meet the complete and balanced requirements.

The digestibility and availability of nutrients is not listed on pet food labels.

The 100% Myth – Problems caused by Inadequate Nutrition

The idea of one pet food providing all the nutrition a companion animal will ever need for its entire life is a myth.

Cereal grains are the primary ingredients in most commercial pet foods. Many people select one pet food and feed it to their dogs and cats for a prolonged period of time. Therefore, companion dogs and cats eat a primarily carbohydrate diet with little variety. Today, the diets of cats and dogs are a far cry from the primarily protein diets with a lot of variety that their ancestors ate. The problems associated with a commercial diet are seen every day at veterinary establishments. Chronic digestive problems, such as chronic vomiting, diarrhea, and inflammatory bowel disease are among the most frequent illnesses treated. These are often the result of an allergy or intolerance to pet food ingredients.

The market for "limited antigen" or "novel protein" diets is now a multi-million dollar business. These diets were formulated to address the increasing intolerance to commercial foods that animals have developed. The newest twist is the truly "hypoallergenic" food that has had all its proteins artificially chopped into pieces smaller than can be recognized and reacted to by the immune system.

Dry commercial pet food is often contaminated with bacteria, which may or may not cause problems. Improper food storage and some feeding practices may result in the multiplication of these bacteria. For example, adding water or milk to moisten pet food and then leaving it at room temperature causes bacteria to multiply. Yet this practice is suggested on the back of packages of some kitten and puppy foods.

Pet food formulas and the practice of feeding that manufacturers recommend have increased other digestive problems. Feeding only one meal per day can cause the irritation of the esophagus by stomach acid. Feeding two smaller meals is better.

Feeding recommendations or instructions on the packaging are sometimes inflated so that the consumer will end up purchasing more food. However, **Procter & Gamble** allegedly took the opposite tack with its Iams and Eukanuba lines, reducing the feeding amounts in order to claim that its foods were less expensive to feed. Independent studies commissioned by a competing manufacturer suggested that these reduced levels were inadequate to maintain health. Procter & Gamble has since sued and been counter sued by that competing manufacturer, and a consumer complaint has also been filed seeking class-action status for harm caused to dogs by the revised feeding instructions.

Urinary tract disease is directly related to diet in both cats and dogs. Plugs, crystals, and stones in cat bladders are often triggered or aggravated by commercial pet food formulas. One type of stone found in cats is less common now, but another more dangerous type has become more common. Manipulation of manufactured cat food formulas to alter the acidity of urine and the amount of some minerals has directly affected these diseases. Dogs also form stones as a result of their diet.

History has shown that commercial pet food products can cause disease. An often-fatal heart disease in cats and some dogs is now known to be caused by a deficiency of the amino acid taurine. Blindness is another symptom of taurine deficiency. This deficiency was due to inadequate amounts of taurine in cat food formulas, which itself occurred

because of decreased amounts of animal proteins and increased reliance on carbohydrates.

Cat foods are now supplemented with taurine. New research suggests that supplementing taurine may also be helpful for dogs, but as yet few manufacturers are adding extra taurine to dog food.

Inadequate potassium in certain feline diets also caused kidney failure in young cats; potassium is now added in greater amounts to all cat foods.

Rapid growth in large breed puppies has been shown to contribute to bone and joint disease. Excess calories and calcium in some manufactured puppy foods promoted rapid growth. There are now special puppy foods for large breed dogs. But this recent change will not help the countless dogs that lived and died with hip and elbow disease.

There is also evidence that hyperthyroidism in cats may be related to excess iodine in commercial pet food diets. This is a new disease that first surfaced in the 1970s, when canned food products appeared on the market. The exact cause and effect are not yet known. This is a serious and sometimes terminal disease, and treatment is expensive.

Many nutritional problems appeared with the popularity of cereal-based commercial pet foods. Some have occurred because the diet was incomplete. Although several ingredients are now supplemented, we do not know what ingredients future researchers may discover that should have been supplemented in pet foods all along. Other problems may result from reactions to additives. Others are a result of contamination with bacteria, mold, drugs, or other toxins. In some diseases the role of commercial pet food is understood; in others, it is not. The bottom line is that diets composed primarily of low quality cereals and rendered meat meals are not as nutritious or safe as you should expect for your cat or dog.

Source: The Animal Protection Institute

www.api4animals.org

Do You Know What Supermarket Pet Foods Really Contain?

As I mentioned in the introduction, reading pet food labels is very revealing if you know what all the terms mean.

How many of the ingredients words listed on the package sound like, look like, words that describe or explain nutritious, flavorful and healthy FOOD?

This country spends more than \$20 billion annually on pet foods and treats and pet related items and yet most of us do not know how to read pet food labels. Most people don't realize that most supermarket pet foods contain chemical preservatives and meat "by-products" which are UNFIT for human consumption.

Artificial flavorings and colorings and chemical additives are commonplace in the pet food industry and may be contributing to serious health problems in the pet population.

Veterinarians and animal activists have warned consumers about two chemical additives in particular called **Propylene Glycol and Ethoxyquin**.

Propylene Glycol is used in pet foods to keep products moist and has been thought by some veterinary researchers to cause red blood cell damage in cats.

There is NO government agency working to protect the rights of our animals with regard to nutrition, so it is up to us as pet owners, to be vigilant about what they eat. Avoid any food with the following ingredients: Propylene Glycol, Ethoxyquin, BHA, BHT, meat by-products, trace minerals in the form of mineral oxides or sulfates. Trace minerals in these forms can not be digested by the animal consuming them.

Please go to the store where you now buy your Pet Food. Read the labels on what you buy and the other Pet Foods on the shelf.

What to look for----- Ingredients preserved with Vitamin E or C or Tocopherols (a name for those same vitamins), and trace minerals in a "Chelated form". This is a good thing. Chelation enables these minerals to be readily absorbed by the animal's intestinal tract and bloodstream.

These by-products may include decayed meat or even the remains of companion pet animals.

Ingredients on the label are listed in order of predominance in the food.

The first item should always be a meat or meat meal followed by another of similar quality or a vegetable or grain product. When the label starts with **meat by-products**, you could be feeding your animal any or all of the following: *"the non-rendered, clean parts, other than meat derived from slaughtered mammals, including, but not limited to: lungs, spleen, kidneys, brain, livers, blood, bone, partially de-fatted low temperature fatty tissue, and stomachs and intestines freed of their contents."*

Poultry by-product meal consists of: *"ground, rendered, clean parts of the carcass of slaughtered poultry, such as necks, feet, undeveloped eggs and intestines, exclusive of feathers except in such amounts as might occur unavoidably in good processing practices."*

What is "Meal"?

Note that "Meat and bone meal" can **LEGALLY** include dead pets/animals (from road kill or vet's offices) that have been ground up in rendering factories. If they were wearing chemical flea collars or had been treated with antibiotics or steroids before they died, those get ground up with them. So does the plastic bag around their bodies.

Commercially manufactured foods are usually highly contaminated with bacteria. Animals that have died from all sorts of disease, trauma, or natural causes often are a source for "Meat Meal" It is commonly known that 25-50% of meat meals are contaminated by Salmonella bacteria.

The term "**Meal**" in conjunction with the words "beef, lamb or poultry" simply means that the meat or poultry has been ground or reduced in particle size and there has been no compromise in quality. Meal is a common ingredient in pet foods and is simply a term used for the processing of the item into a more usable form. *Beef, lamb or poultry meal as a first ingredient is usually a sign of a higher quality food providing it is free from chemical preservatives.*

By-Products

Parts of the animal not fit for human consumption. By-products can include intestines, chicken heads, duck bills, fish heads, chicken and turkey feet, hides, feathers and bone. Ingredients listed as beef, chicken and poultry by-products are not required to include actual meat. Rendered meat can be any rendered mammal meat including dogs and cats. *By-Products can include diseased and contaminated slaughterhouse meat, hair, and dehydrated garbage!* Obviously harmful chemical additives are often included.

Ethoxyquin, BHA & BHT

Chemical additives used as preservatives. Ethoxyquin is regulated as a pesticide and cannot be added to human food. Ethoxyquin is also manufactured as a rubber preservative. The containers are marked POISON. The Department of Agriculture lists it as a pesticide. OSHA lists it as a hazardous chemical. *Ethoxyquin promotes cancer of the kidneys, bladder, and stomach.*

BHA and BHT have been known to cause liver and kidney dysfunction, and bladder and stomach cancers. These chemicals are banned in most countries in Europe. *Many American Pet Food manufacturers still use Ethoxyquin, BHT, and BHA as preservatives.* They could be using them in their foods, even though they are not listed on the bags/boxes. Manufacturers are only required to list what THEY put into the food--if they buy an ingredient from someone else who has already added these chemical preservatives, they do not have to list that on the bag or box.

The leading commercial Pet Food will admit, usually, to using BHT, BHA, and/or Ethoxyquin as preservatives and say that these chemicals are used in very small amounts. BUT--small amounts every day over a period of 10-15 years can build up--you figure it out for yourself!! These companies use these chemicals to preserve and extend the shelf life of their products because months may go by before they are purchased and used by consumers .

A Word about Protein

More protein in pet food is **NOT** necessarily better. You may have heard of pets having "hot spots", a sore that he/she constantly licks. This is actually an excretion of excess

protein through the skin. An animal's system has no way to rid itself of this excess heat (produced by high protein) other than panting.

Actual Ingredient Labels

Here are the results of a few commercially available dog and cat foods compiled from simply READING LABELS!!!

Pedigree Mealtime Small Crunchy Bites: Ground corn, meat and bone meal, wheat mill run, animal fat (preserved with BHA/BHT), digest of poultry by-products, etc. etc.

Friskies Alpo with Lamb meal, rice and barley: Ground yellow corn, poultry by-product meal, lamb meal, animal fat (stabilized with BHA), digest (poultry by-products, beef and beef by-products), soybean meal, brewers rice, etc. etc.

Purina fit and trim: Ground yellow corn, soybean meal, soybean hulls, ground wheat, corn gluten feed, corn gluten meal, turkey by-products, etc., etc.

Friskies Alpo(Chunky with Liver)—CANNED: Water sufficient for processing, meat by-products, chicken, liver, poultry by-products, soy flour, caramel color, etc., etc.

Cesar Select Dinners--for small dogs—CANNED: Sufficient water for processing, beef by-products, liver, meat by-products, poultry by-products, lamb, etc., etc.

Friskies "Chef's Blend": Ground yellow corn, digest of chicken by-products, poultry by-products, corn gluten meal (second corn product), fish meal, meat and bone meal, etc. Animal fat (Preserved with BHA)

Nine Lives "Plus Care--Real Tuna and egg flavors": Ground yellow corn, corn gluten meal, (that's two corns--virtually the same thing) poultry by-product meal, ground wheat, animal digest, animal fat (preserved with BHA), meat and bone meal, tuna meal, egg product, natural and artificial flavors, and Ethoxyquin, a preservative.

Friskies Alpo "Gourmet Dinner": Ground yellow corn, poultry by-products, corn gluten meal, soybean meal, meat and bone meal, animal fat (preserved with BHA)--and later down the list, Ethoxyquin (a preservative).

Friskies "Ocean Fish Flavor": Ground yellow corn, digest of chicken by-products, poultry by-product meal, meat and bone meal, corn gluten meal (Same as "ground yellow corn"? --TWO that are virtually the same!), soybean meal, fish meal, animal fat (preserved with BHA), natural and artificial flavors, Ethoxyquin (a preservative), etc., etc.

Whiskas Ground--with bits 'o beef: Meat by-products, poultry by-products, sufficient water for processing, chicken, beef, liver, dried beet pulp, etc.etc.etc.

Even “premium” brands like Iams and Science Diet, while not as bad, have cheaper filler ingredients listed second and various animal “by-product meals” listed right towards the top:

Iams Chunks: Chicken, Corn Meal, Ground Whole Grain Sorghum, Chicken By-Product Meal, Ground Whole Grain Barley, Chicken Fat.

Science Diet Adult Original: Chicken, corn meal, ground grain sorghum, ground wheat, chicken by-product meal, brewers rice, soybean meal.

If you see cheap filler ingredients like corn, soy or animal by-products listed in the top 5 ingredients, put the bag down and RUN the other way. If you find these ingredients further down the ingredients list, just put the bag down and walk the other way.

Barf and Raw Food Diets

Raw foods and BARF diets, which stands for Bones And Raw Foods, are an interesting and sometimes controversial type of dog food diet that I would recommend only for the truly dedicated dog owner who's willing to educate themselves about canine nutrition.

According to dog trainer Karen Peak, "One of the benefits with a raw meat diet is you know exactly what is going into the animal. However, a drawback is you also can end up with a malnourished pet!"

The basic premise is that the BARF diet mimics what the dog would naturally eat in the wild. This, after all, suited them just fine for thousands of years before commercial dog food companies sprang up in only the last 50 –60 years or so.

Dogs, being true omnivores, not strict carnivores like cats, would often eat the bellies of the beasts they killed, typically grazing animals that had grasses and other foliage in their guts.

So when you think about it in these terms, it totally makes sense. Let's face it, dogs were thriving for thousands of years before Ralston Purina came along.

So the essence of this type of diet is raw meat, raw meaty bones, raw chicken necks, backs, wings, etc., mixed with ground veggies and occasional grains. Proponents often report remarkable transformations in their pets that often thrive on this type of diet.

A sample BARF diet written by Tom Lonsdale, a veterinary surgeon in Australia and author of several books and websites about RAW and BARF diets, can be read [HERE](http://www.rawmeatybones.com/diet/ExpDiet.html).
(<http://www.rawmeatybones.com/diet/ExpDiet.html>)

A transcript from a 2003 Internet interview with Dr. Lonsdale can be read [HERE](http://www.doghobbyist.com/articles/DogHobbyist/LonsdaleTranscript.html).
(<http://www.doghobbyist.com/articles/DogHobbyist/LonsdaleTranscript.html>)

Find his book, *Raw Meaty Bones For Health* by clicking [HERE](#).

Find several other books on RAW feeding that we recommend [HERE](#). Look on the list for "Give Your Dog a Bone" by Ian Billinghurst, often considered the grand daddy of BARF books.

If you're interested in feeding this type of diet you'll need to educate yourself about safe meat handling practices and make an informed decision.

Food Guide

You,ve Come A Long Way Baby !

As I stated earlier, all pet foods are NOT created equal. In the last few years many new “whole food”-oriented pet foods have come into the market to supply the increasing demand of pet owners who expect better things for their pets.

There are also an increasing number of excellent, fully- and partially-balanced “mixes” that allow you to prepare healthy, wholesome, convenient meals for your pet without preservatives or mystery ingredients.

Below are a few types of foods that we recommend. If you’re reading this ebook on your PC (which is the best way to do it), you can click any food title to take you to the website for further information. Most are highly rated by the [Whole Dog Journal](#), a publication that accepts no advertising and reports on the holistic treatments and benefits to our canine companions.

Each year they publish a “Best of” issue that focuses on wet foods and then dry foods. All the brands below have been positively rated. Please note: while other brands have also made the list we’ve limited our selection to a few that we’ve had first hand experience with. There are many other great brands and formulations out there and now that you know what to look for, you’ll be able to read the labels and tell the difference, too!

Kibble for Puppies

Solid Gold Wolf Cub:

High energy diets, like most puppy foods, can promote rapid growth in large breed puppies, which can play a role in the development of orthopedic diseases. WolfCub Large Breed Puppy Formula contains a lower amount of protein, fat, and calories than Hundchen Flocken Puppy Food to help control the growth process. Research shows that a Calcium level of 1.5% or less is the most suitable for a large breed puppy.

Partial List of Ingredients in Order of Amounts: Bison | Salmon Meal | Brown Rice | Millet | Cracked Pearled Barley | Rice Bran | Canola Oil | Flaxseed Oil | Garlic | Amaranth | Blueberries | Yucca Schidigera Extract | Taurine | Carotene | Choline Chloride | Vitamin E Supplement

Solid Gold Hundchen Flocken Puppy:

For puppies & smaller dogs. The higher caloric formula is also suitable for pregnancy, lactation, stress, high activity and underweight, mature dogs.

Partial List of Ingredients in Order of Amounts: Lamb Meal, Ground Millet, Ground Brown Rice, Canola Oil, Flaxseed Oil, Menhaden Fish Meal, Ground Barley, Rice Brand, Amaranth, Garlic, Blueberries, Yucca Schidigera Extract, Vitamins & Minerals.

Eagle Pack Puppy Formula:

Ideal for small and medium-breed puppies from weaning to 12-18 months of age. Also great for lactating bitches.

Partial List of Ingredients in Order of Amounts: Chicken Meal, Ground Yellow Corn, Rice Flour, Pork Meal, Corn Germ Meal (Dry Milled), Dried Beet Pulp, Chicken Fat (preserved with Natural Mixed Tocopherols, Citric Acid, and Rosemary Extract), Fish Meal, Brewers Dried Yeast, Wheat Germ Meal, Dried Egg Product.

Flint River Ranch Kibble For Puppies & Adults:

The Flint River Ranch original KIBBLE formula is TWICE OVEN-BAKED under carefully controlled conditions and temperatures - resulting in better nutrition, palatability and digestibility for your dog or puppy.

Partial List of Ingredients in Order of Amounts: Chicken Meal, Whole Wheat Flour, Ground Rice, Lamb Meal, Poultry Fat (Preserved with Tocopherols and Ascorbic Acid), Ground Whole Wheat, Flax Seed, Dried Whole Egg, Lecithin, Fish Meal, Brewers Dried Yeast, Wheat Germ Meal, Dried Kelp, Dehydrated Alfalfa Meal.

Kibble for Adult Dogs

Flint River Ranch Senior Plus Kibble:

Senior Plus Oven-baked Kibble has been formulated with a wholesome and rich source of Glucosamine and Chondroitin Sulfate that helps maintain healthy joint cartilage in older, mature dogs. 250 Mg Glucosamine, 100 mg Chondroitin per serving.

Partial List of Ingredients in Order of Amounts: Whole Wheat Flour, Ground Rice, Chicken Meal, Ground Whole Wheat, Oatmeal, Poultry Fat (Preserved with Tocopherols and Ascorbic Acid), Oat Bran, Lamb Meal, Flax Seed, Dried Whole Egg, Fish Meal, Brewers Dried Yeast, Wheat Germ Meal, Lecithin, Dried Kelp, Dehydrated Alfalfa Meal.

Flint River Ranch Lamb – Millet – Rice:

Specifically formulated for those dogs that are allergic to wheat, corn and/or chicken.

Partial List of Ingredients in Order of Amounts: Lamb Meal, Ground Whole Millet, Ground Whole Rice, Race Bran, Menhaden Fish Meal, Grapeseed Oil, Flaxseed Meal, Lecithin, Garlic, Rosemary & Sage Extract.

Eagle Pack Senior Care Formula:

Formulated for Large-breed seniors - 5 years and older, medium-breed seniors - 7 years or older, small-breed seniors - 9 years or older, those dogs who would benefit from the inclusion of Glucosamine (41 milligrams per cup) - to enhance the body's natural renewal process to help rebuild joint cartilage, improve joint flexibility and reduce pain. It is included at maintenance levels.

Partial List of Ingredients in Order of Amounts: Chicken Meal, Ground Brown Rice, Brewers Rice, Ground Yellow Corn, Chicken, Chicken Fat (preserved with Natural Mixed Tocopherols, Citric Acid and Rosemary Extract), Dried Beet Pulp, Pork Meal, Fish Meal, Rice Bran, Brewers Dried Yeast, Dried Egg Product, Flaxseed oil.

Solid Gold Wolf King:

Formulated for any adult dog, but especially for those of the larger breed. Developed as one of the original "hypo-allergenic" dog foods, and designed to enhance total health, assist the immune system and protect against disease.

Partial List of Ingredients in Order of Amounts: Bison | Salmon Meal | Brown Rice | Millet | Cracked Pearled Barley | Oatmeal | Rice Bran | Canola Oil | Flaxseed Oil | Garlic | Amaranth | Blueberries | Yucca Schidigera Extract | Taurine | Carotene

Solid Gold Millennium Beef and Barley:

Made with USDA beef, Menhaden Herring and a selection of nutritious grains. Millennium is ideal for dogs with an intolerance of lamb or poultry. Millennium Beef and Barley Formula has a higher level of oil and calories than our other adult formulas, making it ideal for performance or sporting dogs, which require a higher caloric intake.

Partial List of Ingredients in Order of Amounts: USDA Beef, Ground Barley, Ground Brown Rice, Sweet Potatoes, Menhaden Herring, Flax seed, Rice Bran, Salmon Oils, Garlic, Dried Seaweed Meal, Cranberry Meal, Parsley, Thyme, Dried Apples and Dried Carrots.

Solid Gold Holistique Blendz:

A "semi-vegetarian" basis diet, to which different protein sources can be added. This diet has multiple uses. Holistique Blendz was created to be used as the nutritionally balanced base, to which additional raw (or cooked) meat, vegetables, or canned food can be added, if desired. This formula is ideal for very allergic dogs; the protein source may be selected according to the dog's particular intolerances and energy requirements. Adding extra meat to the diet increases total fat and protein intake. Holistique Blendz may also be fed alone, for dogs on a restricted-calorie diet, or for older dogs with pancreatic or kidney problems that need reduced amounts of protein or fat. This product contains no artificial preservatives, colors, flavors, salt or sugar and no wheat, corn or soy - which are common causes of allergies in dogs.

Partial List of Ingredients in Order of Amounts: Menhaden Fish Meal, Oatmeal, Rye, Potatoes, Salmon Oil, Sesame Oil, Almond Oil, Lentils, Sea Vegetation, Green Tea, Garlic, Spearmint, Pumpkin Meal, Quinoa, Cranberry Meal and Apple Meal.

Canned Dog Food

Canned foods have an increased moisture content, and are often recommended for pets that are prone to urinary tract infections and blockages. Wet food is also softer, for the mouths of older dogs with dental problems, or for young puppies. Canned foods are an excellent addition to dry food diets, for extra variety or increased palatability.

Solid Gold Chicken & Liver:

Partial List of Ingredients in Order of Amounts: Chicken, Chicken Broth, Chicken Liver, Ground Brown Rice, Ground Barley, Garlic, Sesame Oil, Vitamin A Supplement Choline Chloride, Niacin, Vitamin E Supplement.

Solid Gold Lamb & Barley:

Partial List of Ingredients in Order of Amounts: Lamb, Lamb Broth, Ground Brown Rice, Ground Barley, Carrots, Sesame Oil, Guar Gum, Vitamin A Supplement, Choline Chloride, Niacin, Vitamin E Supplement.

Solid Gold Turkey & Ocean Fish:

Partial List of Ingredients in Order of Amounts: Turkey, Turkey Broth, Ocean Fish, Potatoes, Carrots, Alfalfa Sprouts, Cottage Cheese, Sesame Oil, Guar Gum, Vitamin A Supplement.

Dog Food Mixes

In our opinion, mixes are the most interesting and versatile category that offer dog owners an opportunity to feed their dogs wholesome foods by creating a nutritious base that they can **add their own protein sources** to as well as embellish with their own supplements and ingredients if they choose. While some people may think you're crazy for "cooking" for your dog, most mixes require nothing more than the ability to boil water. And you don't need to do it every meal --- just make enough for several meals and refrigerate the rest! Some of our favorites include:

Flint River Ranch Dry Water Super Premium:

The specialized all-natural ingredients are blended and prepared utilizing a combination of freeze-drying, dehydration, heat drying, moist-cooking and oven-baking. Scoop desired amount of DryWater into the dog's dish, add enough hot water, bottled or tap, to just cover the food, stir briefly to blend - let stand for about 2 minutes and serve up a warm meaty gravy-like meal.

Partial List of Ingredients in Order of Amounts: Chicken Meal, Whole Wheat Flour, Whole Chicken (No By-products), Ground Rice, Rice Flour, Ground Whole Wheat, Rice Bran, Grape Seed Oil, Poultry Fat (preserved with mixed tocopherols and ascorbic acid), Flax Seed, Toasted Oats, Rice, Folded Pasta, Fresh Potato, Dehydrated Peas and Freeze Dried Vegetables (Tomato Flakes, Carrot Flakes, Celery, Garlic Granules, Spinach, Parsley Flakes), Dehydrated Alfalfa, Dried Kelp, Wheat Germ Meal, Dried Whey, Fish Meal, Avocado Oil, Brewer's Dried Yeast.

[Sojourner Farms:](#)

Sojos European-Style Dog Food Mix is a wholesome blend of quality grains, dried herbs, ground nuts, and sea kelp that you mix with meat to make your own fresh, homemade dog food in minutes.

Partial List of Ingredients in Order of Amounts: oat flakes • rye flakes • yellow corn meal • wheat flakes • ground pecans • dried kelp • carob powder • parsley leaf • nettles leaf

[Dr. Harvey's Canine Health:](#)

Dr. Harvey uses only the finest organic and human consumption ingredients, with no dyes, no preservatives, and no chemicals. When this meal is combined with fresh protein and oils the result is the healthiest meal available for your companion dog.

Partial List of Ingredients in Order of Amounts: Organic Brown Rice Flakes, Organic Kamut Flakes, Organic Spelt Flakes, Organic Rolled Oats, Organic Barley Flakes, Organic Triticale Flakes, Sweet Potatoes, Carrots, Potatoes, Zucchini, Peas, Green Beans, Beets, Broccoli, Parsley Leaf, Lecithin Granules, Garlic Granules, Bee Pollen Granules, Nutritional Yeast Flakes, Alfalfa Leaf, Rose Hips, Red Clover Blossoms, Oat Straw, Flax Seed Meal, Papaya Leaf, Rosemary Leaf, Dandelion Root, Peppermint Leaf, Ginger Root, Spirulina, Foenugreek, Basil Leaf, Fennel Seed.

[The Honest Kitchen \(Verve & Force\):](#)

These are three tasty foods that combine the wholesomeness of a homemade diet with the convenience of an easy-to-prepare, scientifically balanced blend. Perfect to feed alone, or ideal as the base for a Raw or other home made diet. Completely free of all chemicals, by-products, fillers, wheat, corn, soy, rice and beet pulp. Verve is also dairy-free and Force is entirely free of grains.

Partial List of FORCE Ingredients in Order of Amounts: USDA Chicken, Organic flaxseed, Potatoes, Celery, Cabbage, Sweet Potatoes, Zucchini, Green Beans, Apples, Honey, Alfalfa, Kelp, Yogurt, Bananas, Papayas, Basil, Garlic, Rosemary & Vitamins & Minerals: Tricalcium Phosphate, Choline Chloride, Vitamin D3 Supplement, Vitamin E Supplement, Selenomethionine, Iron Amino Acid Chelate, Zinc Amino Acid Chelate, Potassium Iodide, Potassium Chloride, Copper Amino Acid Chelate.

Partial List of VERVE Ingredients in Order of Amounts: Organic Rolled Rye, Organic Rolled Barley, USDA Beef, Organic Rolled Oats, Organic Flaxseed, Carrots,

Alfalfa, Potatoes, Eggs, Spinach, Red & Green Bell Peppers, Apples, Chicory, Parsley, Cranberries, Rosemary, Peppermint & Vitamins & Minerals: Tricalcium Phosphate, Choline Chloride, Vitamin D3 Supplement, Vitamin E Supplement, Selenomethionine, Iron Amino Acid Chelate, Zinc Amino Acid Chelate, Potassium Iodide, Potassium Chloride, Copper Amino Acid Chelate.

The Honest Kitchen (Embark):

This diet is made with limited carbohydrates and high protein to support muscle structure and function, and promote lean body mass. It is particularly suited to puppies and more active dogs and is ideal for those who are intolerant of grains.

Partial List of EMBARK Ingredients in Order of Amounts: 100% human food grade turkey, organic flaxseed, potatoes, celery, spinach, carrots, coconut, apples, kelp, eggs, sesame seeds, bananas, cranberries, rosemary, vitamins and minerals.

Cat Foods

Flint River Ranch Cat Food:

All natural, oven-baked premium cat food and kitten food specially formulated to meet all of your cat's health needs.

Partial List of Ingredients in Order of Amounts: Chicken Meal, Ground Yellow Corn, Lamb Meal, Corn Gluten Meal, Poultry Fat (Preserved with Mixed Tocopherols and Ascorbic Acid), Ground Whole Wheat, Dried Brewers Yeast, Fish Meal, Corn Germ Meal, Salt, Dried Beet Pulp, Dehydrated Cheese, Lecithin, D-Activated Animal Sterol (Source of Vitamin D-3), Vitamin A Acetate, Vitamin B12 Supplement, Vitamin E Supplement, Niacin Supplement, Riboflavin, Calcium Pantothenate, Choline Chloride, Pyridoxine Hydrochloride, Folic Acid, Biotin, Thiamine Mononitrate, Inositol, DL-Methionine, Manganese, Dehydrated Kelp, Zinc Sulfate, Copper Sulfate, Cobalt Sulfate, Ferrous Sulfate, Taurine, Calcium Iodate, Sodium Selenite, Dried Whey.

Solid Gold Katz-n-Flocken:

Premium Dry food formula made with Lamb, Millet, Amaranth, Barley and Brown Rice. Ideal for adult cats and kittens, to maintain total health.

Partial List of Ingredients in Order of Amounts: Lamb Meal | Menhaden Fish Meal | Ground Millet | Ground Brown Rice | Ground Barley | Rice Bran Oil | Canola Oil | Flaxseed Oil | Amaranth | Rice Bran | Garlic | Blueberries | Yucca Schidigera Extract | Taurine | Carotene | Choline Chloride | Calcium Carbonate | Vitamin E Supplement.

A Note About “Allergy Free” Foods

No food is 100% allergy free because every dog is different and different dogs are allergic to different things. But if you have a dog that licks it's feet or scratches and itches constantly, it may be a food allergy or it may be environmental (carpets, household chemicals, etc). We've indicated those foods that have a lower incidence of causing food allergies. Consider them a starting point, not an end-all be-all.

In Conclusion

As you can see from just these few examples, it's a whole brave new world out there in terms of pet nutrition. The foods listed above are certainly **NOT** your parent's pet foods of old. If you learn nothing else from this report, learn this: It's OK to experiment and give your dog a varied diet. Table scraps mixed with a good kibble and a dose of [Flaxseed Oil](#) or Fish oil or other [sources of Omega 3, 6 and 9 fatty acids](#) will be light years beyond feeding them Purina Dog Chow or some other supermarket brand. As with any change in diet, change it gradually so you don't upset your dog's digestive system. Watch their stools for signs of distress. Softer stools after switching foods is normal for 2 – 3 days. And always give plenty of filtered or distilled water. You'll see wonders in your dog's coat, skin and enthusiasm for eating!

A Note About the Foods Listed:

Please understand that there are many other great foods than just the one's listed here. *Wellness*, *Canidae*, *California Natural* and *Spot's Stew* are some other brands that we like that also come to mind. After a point, it becomes redundant to list and carry every super premium brand and frankly, when you get to a certain level they become similar in terms of benefits, ingredients, cost, etc. It becomes more a question of what your dog will eat, is the food easy to get and does it work for your dog.

All foods discussed within this report can be found here:

<http://www.lucy-the-dog.com/food.html>

“Bone” Apetit!



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