

EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT...

Dog Food



Total Pet Publishing
THE PET PUBLISHING COMPANY

Acknowledgements

We give our thanks to the following for their invaluable contributions within this guide:

Tamara Garmston of the Pet Food Manufacturer's Association

Everything You Wanted To Know About Dog Food

*“The world was conquered through the understanding of dogs; the world exists through the understanding of dogs.”
~ NIETZCHE*

About this guide

In this eBook we will present to you an authority guide on how to get a better understanding of pet food labels as well as answering some of the most popular dog nutrition questions on dog owner's minds.

What we are seeking to achieve with this guide is to give all the information you require to get an insight in to an area that often proves confusing and in some cases, misleading.

This note is important. Always seek the advice and opinion of pet care professionals should your dog be experiencing problems with their diet or other medical issues.

Understanding Pet Food Labels

Consumers are becoming more aware of what's in the products they buy and eat and are reading food labels more carefully, this scrutiny is being extended to pet food labels.

Pet food labelling is strictly regulated – The Feeding Stuffs Regulations 2002 require a statutory statement to be put on every label or package, which must contain certain obligatory declarations.

All the information given on a pet food label is governed by the Trade Descriptions Act and must therefore be truthful and not misleading about the nature and quality of the product.

Some of the terms required to be used on a label, by the legislation, may raise questions so to ensure you the reader understand your pet food label here is a little guide to what the terms mean;

Direction & Description

These must state: - whether the product is complete or complementary; the species for which the product is intended; directions for use.

Complete food when fed on its own will provide all the nutrients that a pet needs. Complementary food will provide all the nutrients a pet needs when combined with other complementary products, e.g. meat and biscuits.



Typical Analysis

The percentage of the following must be listed:

% Of proteins

% Of oils & fats

% Of fibre in the product

% Of moisture in the product when it exceeds 14%

% Of ash in the product (ash represents the mineral content of the food and is determined chemically by the burning of the product).

Ingredients List

The ingredients must be listed in descending order by weight. They can be indicated using category names, which are laid down by the Regulations, such as 'meat and animal derivatives', 'cereals', 'derivatives of vegetable origin'. Alternatively ingredients can be listed by their own individual names*. When an ingredient is used that does not fall into any of the prescribed categories, its individual name must be listed. In all other circumstances, mixing individual names and category names in the ingredients list is not permitted.

If particular attention is drawn to a specific ingredient (e.g. With Chicken), the percentage of that ingredient component must also be listed.

Small Animal Feed Labelling: Ingredients may be declared in the Statutory Statement. In such cases, all the ingredients shall be declared either by their specific names, with an indication of the amount of each ingredient, or

by using category names which are laid down by the Regulations, or by individual ingredient names listed in descending order by date.

Additives

If preservatives, antioxidants or colourants have been added to the product their presence has to be declared using category or chemical names, in accordance with the Feeding Stuffs Regulations.

The use of additives in products is based on safety standards relating to the use of all additives – in other words an additive must be necessary, effective and safe.

Vitamins

If Vitamins A D & E are added to the product, their presence and level has to be declared. The level must include both the quantity naturally present in the raw materials and the quantity added. The Regulations also lay down the units, which must be used to declare the level.

'Best Before' Date

This date indicates the minimum storage life of the product. The month and year must be shown.

Bar Code

This is not a legal requirement but allows for information about sales, stocks, etc.

Batch Number

A batch number or the date of manufacture must be given to facilitate traceability of the product. This may be given either in the statutory statement or elsewhere on the package/label/container, in which case the statutory statement shall indicate where it can be found.

Net Weight

The Net Weight must be given in accordance with the Feeding Stuffs Regulations 2002. The Weights and Measures (Packaged Goods) Regulations 1986 lays down the exact marking and size of lettering required. The net weight may be given either in the Statutory Statement or elsewhere on the packaging/label, in which case the Statutory Statement should indicate where it might be found.

Name and Address

This is the name and address of the company responsible for the products. It may be a manufacturer, packer, importer, seller or distributor

Other Information

Pet food labels will give a feeding guide to the pet owner indicating the amount of food to feed to the pet. The guide is determined by many factors, typically, food, age, lifestyle etc. If fed according to the specific feeding

guidelines on the product label, owners can rest assured that they are feeding their pets a balanced diet containing all the essential nutrients they require.

Owners do have a responsibility to ensure that they do not provide pets with more food than recommended and do not give them titbits from the table.

As a general rule of thumb, dogs should be kept in a lean and hard condition and owners should be able to feel their pet's ribs but not see them.

Range of products available

The pet food industry's objective is to provide safe, nutritious products. This is achieved by offering a huge selection of products designed to meet as many requirements as possible and to ensure that the pet owner can choose a food appropriate for their pet.

For example, [life stage products](#) are now available. These products meet the very specific nutritional needs of pets at certain stages of their lives, from early life, through adult to old age, not forgetting pregnancy and lactation. There are products available for dogs and cats, which are prone to gaining weight - for example spayed or neutered pets, or housebound animals. The industry understands how the nutritional demands vary between a poodle and a great dane and have developed criteria for a calcium and phosphorous balance to ensure that

conditions such as bone problems in giant breeds are becoming a thing of the past.

Manufacturers will choose materials for their nutritional contribution for individual recipes to meet the requirements of different pets

Ingredients

There is very strict legislation governing what can and cannot be used in the manufacture of prepared pet food. Commercially prepared pet food is made from raw materials taken from healthy animals, which have been inspected and passed as fit for human consumption. The industry uses the surplus to the human food requirements and takes the parts of the carcass, which are not widely consumed by people in the UK; therefore the industry only uses materials from animals, which are generally accepted in this country, which include beef, lamb, pork, poultry, fish, shellfish, rabbit and game. The industry does not use materials from horses, ponies, whales, dolphins and a long list of other species.

Pet food manufacturers have in place vendor assurance schemes to monitor the source of the incoming materials to ensure that they are actually getting what they ordered. The raw materials and ingredients of cereal and vegetable origin used to produce pet food are selected for their nutritional value, quality and contribution to the end product.

Still not clear?

Don't forget, you can always contact the manufacturer to get more info about the product – always quote the batch number.

Further information can also be found at the PFMA, the Pet Food Manufacturers' Association, the trade association representing approximately 95% of the UK pet food-manufacturing industry.

www.pfma.com

The Pet Food Manufacturers' Association was formed in 1970. It is a trade association, which represents approximately 95% of the UK pet food manufacturing industry and comprises 54 member companies.

The PFMA works through a committee structure, which has the widest possible representation of the member companies and their sectoral interests to fulfil the Association's aims and objectives, which are to:

Promote pet food products which are safe, of sound nutrition, palatable and which offer value for money

- Promote responsible pet ownership
- Raise standards in the pet food industry

- Represent members' views to UK and EU government departments and enforcement authorities
- Share knowledge on issues and keep members well informed on all industry wide matters
- Stimulate the growth and reputation of the industry by encouraging understanding and good working relationships amongst those associated with pet food

For More information contact:

Pet Food Manufacturers' Association

Third Floor

20 Bedford Street

London

WC2E 9HP

Tel 020 7379 9009

Fax 020 7379 8008

Email: info@pfma.org.uk

EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT PET FOOD, BUT WERE TOO AFRAID TO ASK.

Dogs require nutrients to maintain their health. These nutrients include amino acids, fats, vitamins and mineral.

The nutrient must be in a form that can be used by dogs. The food containing these nutrients must also be palatable so that dogs can eat the food containing these nutrients. Lastly, don't forget the most important nutrient of all, water. Dogs should always have access to clean water. Here are some important questions & answers that we feel K9 readers need to know.

Q. How important are proteins to my dogs diet? Are some proteins better than others?

Proteins are made up of amino acids and these amino acids are the building blocks the dog uses to make muscles, hair, skin and enzymes. Since each protein has a unique mix of these amino acids, proteins differ widely in their value to the dog. Generally, egg protein is regarded as the best, with animal proteins generally being higher quality than plant proteins. Many foods blend just the right mix of animal and plant proteins to provide the optimal mix of amino acids.

Q. How important are carbohydrates to my dogs diet? Are some carbohydrates better than others?

The carbohydrates found in pet foods usually come from plant sources like corn, rice, wheat, sorghum, barley and oats. While not absolutely necessary, carbohydrates are usually found in most pet foods because they are an excellent source of energy. Cooked carbohydrates from the grains listed above have all been shown to be readily available to dogs. A recent research report shows the more commonly used grains (rice, corn, wheat and barley) to be highly digestible while sorghum was less digestible.

Another class of carbohydrates provides bulk to the food and small amounts are generally regarded as being beneficial in helping promote the proper digestion and movement of food in the animal. These carbohydrates are referred to as fibre and common sources include beet pulp, rice bran, wheat middlings, corn bran and cellulose. Since these fibre sources are not well digested, they are commonly found in light dog foods to decrease the calories in the food.

Q. How important are fats to my dogs' diet? Are some fats better than others?

Fats have three important roles in a pet's diet. First, they provide energy and there is more than twice the amount of energy in an ounce of fat than an ounce of protein or carbohydrate. Second, they help in making the food more palatable, as long as the fat is of high quality and is properly protected from spoilage. Finally, fats provide essential fatty acids to your pet, which they need for a healthy skin and shiny coat. Some researchers believe the right balance of fatty acids is as important as the actual levels of fatty acids.

Q. Should I give my dog vitamin and mineral supplements?

For most dogs fed a complete and balanced commercial diet, vitamin and mineral supplements are unnecessary and in fact could be harmful. In fact dogs fed commercial diets are more likely to suffer from diseases of nutritional excesses than deficiencies due to the indulgent owner who adds vitamin or mineral supplements to their dogs' diet. Since most commercial diets contain a careful balance of nutrients, additional supplements of one or two nutrients can upset this balance. In some cases such as stress, illness or a particular medical condition,

supplements may be beneficial when given under the direction of your veterinarian.

Q. How much should I feed my dog?

An excellent place to start is to look for feeding guidelines on the package. Remember that these are guidelines only and that your pet's age, activity level, environmental temperatures all have an effect on how much your pet needs. It is best to weigh your pet regularly and increase the amount if your pet appears to be losing weight and decrease the amount if your pet appears to be gaining weight. Many pet stores and most veterinarian offices have scales you can use to weight your pet.

Q. How often should I feed my dog?

Young, growing dogs should be fed two or three times per day; feed newly weaned puppies three times a day and older growing puppies two times a day. Adult dogs can be fed once or twice a day depending upon owner preference. Adult dogs that are overweight and are being fed to lose weight should be fed twice a day to help minimize the risk of begging.

Q. I have been told that feeding dogs table scraps is not good for them. Why not? Isn't human food okay for my pet?

While an occasional piece of popcorn certainly won't hurt your dog, it is generally not recommended that you feed your dog table scraps for the following reasons: First, too many table scraps can add nutrients which would upset

the balance of the commercial dog food you are using. Second, your dog will assume he should always have human food along with his regular dog food. Lastly, feeding table scraps encourages a dog to beg for food.

Q. Is there a correct amount of vitamins and minerals for my dog? What happens if my dog gets too much vitamins or minerals?

Both vitamin and minerals have certain levels that are required for optimal health and either too much, or too little, generally can lead to health problems. For some nutrients the range where optimal health can be maintained is quite wide and the safety factor is quite high. Examples include Vitamin E, manganese and the B-vitamins. In contrast other nutrients have a relatively narrow range and careful attention must be paid to these nutrient to ensure the pet gets enough for proper health, but not so much that signs of nutrient excess develop. Examples here include zinc, selenium and copper.

Q. Is dry food better than canned food?

Dogs can thrive on any diet, dry, canned or semi-moist as long as it is complete and balanced. Dry diets are generally less expensive to feed than canned diets and in addition, the crunchy texture of dry diets will help keep your pets' teeth clean. However even pets fed dry diets still need periodic cleaning and can benefit from the many treats and toys, which help clean teeth.

Q. My dog really likes canned foods. Will he be harmed if I only feed him canned food?

Your dog will do fine on only canned as long as it is complete and balanced. If you feed your dog only canned food you should probably make sure you buy extra teeth cleaning chew toys as well as take your pet to get it's teeth brushed regularly.

Q. My veterinarian recommended feeding my dog a "premium" food. Why is that food better?

Premium Foods typically contain higher quality ingredients than standard foods. Because higher quality ingredients are used (more real meat) the foods are more nutrient-dense, which means they contain higher percentages of protein and fat so your pet eats less to obtain the same nutrition. In addition, premium foods tend to contain natural additives (natural preservatives like Vitamin E) and avoid the use of artificial colours and flavours. Many perceive premium foods to be healthier due to the use of natural additives. Premium foods also feature high quality carbohydrate sources like rice, one of the most digestible grains.

Due to the nutrient density and quality of ingredients, the average premium food is more digestible than the average standard food. This results in less backyard clean up for you. Since the ingredients are of higher quality, the cost of premium foods tends to be higher on a per pound basis. However the fact that they are of higher nutrient density and digestibility means the amount of food fed is less, so while overall feeding costs are higher it's not as much as you may think.

Q. Some people leave food out all day long for their dog. Is that good? Won't your dog eat too much?

Dry pet food can be left out all day as long as your dog does not overeat and gain excessive weight. Even when given food all day, most dogs will generally only eat once or twice a day. However, if your pet gains too much weight, it's a good idea to feed your dog using discrete meals once or twice a day.

Q. I am afraid to change my dog's food? Will he get sick?

Once your dog adjusts to a particular food, the dog's system, including the bacteria that live in the gastrointestinal, establish a careful balance. Because different foods contain different ingredients and nutrients, too quick a change can upset his system. For this reason a gradual change is recommended. Mix the old food with the new food, for the first three days use 75% of the old food, split it fifty fifty over the next three days and then over the next three days use 75% new food and after ten days your pet will be eating his new diet. Don't be afraid to change, simply do it slowly.

Q. My dog won't eat his food anymore? Why?

There are lots of reasons a dog might not eat his food and many dogs eat only sporadically, so your dog not eating for one day is usually not cause for concern. If your dog does not eat two days in a row it's generally a good idea to take him to your veterinarian and make sure he is okay. Dogs like consistency, so sometimes feeding him in a new place, at a different time or in a new bowl may cause him to not eat. Occasionally a food may not be stored properly or might be too old and the fats have started to go rancid, which can lead to feed refusal. Sometimes when the weather is too hot your dog might not want to eat. Lastly, think if your pet may have had too

many treats or may have gotten into the pantry or garbage and so may already have eaten his daily meal.

Q. Are there things I shouldn't feed my dog?

Yes. Leading the list is chocolate. Chocolate contains a substance called theobromine, which is toxic. Never feed chocolate or food containing it to your pet. Also, never feed an onion to your pet as large amounts can destroy your pet's red blood cells causing anaemia. While many people give their dogs raw meat, fish or poultry products these meats contain bacteria or possibly parasites, which are killed in the cooking process. For this reason raw meats are also not recommended. Softer bones such as those from pork or poultry should not be fed as they can splinter and puncture the intestines. Lastly, some people add fat to a dogs diet for a shiny coat. Sudden introduction of large amounts of fats can cause pancreatitis, so this should be avoided. One would be better off to switch to a high quality diet.

Q. Is it okay to give my dog treats? He really likes them.

There are a large number of high quality treats available for your dog. The first thing to remember when using treats is the 10% rule. Never let treats comprise more than 10% of your dogs diet. Most commercial pet foods contain enough nutrients that feeding up to 10% treats won't upset an otherwise balanced diet. Second, just like changing diets too fast can upset a pet digestive system, so can a large amount of treats all at once. Lastly, remember that treats contain calories so make sure to cut back on your pet's regular food if you feed treats every day.

Q. Are some treats better for dogs than others?

Generally speaking, treats can be divided into two categories, dry and semi-moist. Semi-moist treats contain 20-30% water, real meat or chicken and are highly palatable, making them valuable training treats. Dry treats and biscuits are usually not as palatable as semi-moist treats, but are less expensive and often can be used to help clean teeth.

Q. How long will dog food keep? How can I tell if the food is still good?

Most pet food has a relatively long shelf life and most manufacturers are code dating their products in a manner that is consumer friendly. Usually this results in a statement on the package that says "Use before xxxx", where "xxxx" represents the last date the product should be used. As a rule of thumb, dry food is generally good up to one year from date of manufacture, while can foods are good for two years. After that, certain components of the diet start to break down resulting in a product that smells bad, is unpalatable to your dog and which is not nutritious. While a can food is good for two years when unopened, once it's opened it should not be allowed to sit out for more than a couple hours because bacteria will quickly grow on moist pet food. Dry food can be left out all day as long as it stays dry and is protected from crawling insects.

I hope that this has made things clearer regarding the whole Pet Food Labelling process, and the reason why some foods are better for different types of dogs. The next time you go to buy your dog food, take a few minutes to look at the labelling and armed with your new found knowledge, find the food that caters for your dog the most..

Reproduced by:



You can get more reports like this along with access to specialist dog related eBooks, helpful articles, care guides and much more by becoming a member of the **K9 Magazine Premier Club**

www.K9Magazine.com/join

Further Resources & Useful Links

- www.pfma.co.uk (Pet Food Manufacturers Association)
- www.dogadvice.co.uk (general canine tips)
- www.dognutrition.org.uk (the link between nutrition & health)
- www.dogallergies.org.uk (allergies and your dog)
- www.k9magazine.com/dogfoodreviews (dog food reviews)

© All rights reserved by respective authors and publishers.

Legal Notice

© [Total Pet Publishing](#) All rights reserved.

This work is copyright protected along with all derivative works of all referenced authors and contributors. This content is for personal use only. You cannot amend, distribute, sell, use, quote or paraphrase any part or the content within this ebook without the consent of the author or individual copyright owner. Legal action will be pursued if this is breached. Please appreciate the hard work done.

Disclaimer Notice:

This book is for personal use only. It should serve as a reference only with no guarantee to any personal or financial gains. Results from usage of materials described in this book varies. By reading this material, you agree that the author is not liable on any consequences arising from usage of the information contained within this book. The reader assumes all responsibility for outcomes related to the implementation of advice in this manuscript.

About the Authors:

This book has been carefully prepared, researched and edited by a team of canine information experts. Our authors are, first and foremost, passionate about dogs and share a mutual satisfaction in assisting people who are experiencing problems with their pets. Our works have been read by more than 12 million pet owners globally.

