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Dog Food Facts

Commercial Dog Foods

There are a myriad of dog foods on the market, and each claims to be nutritious and complete. However, most commercial foods are sorely lacking in many ways. To be blunt, most commercial dog food is garbage! By that I mean *Iams*, *Eukanuba*, *Science Diet*, *Purina*, *Pro Plan*, and many other brands are bad for dogs. You don't have to become a nutritionist to learn to tell the quality of a food. Below are some tips to reading ingredient lists that will help you pick the right food for your dog and your budget.

First things first

Dog foods ingredients are listed in order of weight. At least the first two ingredients should be a named meat. If listed as meal, such as "chicken meal" this simply means that the water has been removed before processing, and there is more of that meat by weight. Dogs are carnivores, and meat is key to maintaining their health.

By-Products, by no means

By-products basically should read as "garbage in this food." Poultry by-products can be 100% chicken feet by weight. While this isn't harmful to a healthy dog, it is largely indigestible, yet counts on the nutrition chart. It is impossible to ascertain the quality of by-products, but it is safe to assume that they are of so little value that they can't be used elsewhere in the human or pet food industries.

Hay is for horses

Many commercial dog foods are mostly made up of grain. This is primarily filler and has little nutritional value. It does nothing to promote good health and just winds up in your dog having bigger stools. Corn and wheat are two of the leading causes of food allergy problems, and even brands such as *Science Diet*, *Eukanuba*, and *Iams* are loaded with them. Brewers rice is also a low quality grain and is essentially a filler. Corn gluten meal and corn bran are the remains of corn after the nutritious parts have been removed. Avoid foods containing large amounts of grains. If they appear at all, they should be well down the list of ingredients.

Large breed/Small breed/Puppy/Senior/etc.

Ideal dog foods are good for all life stages and most all dogs. Some giant breeds may need less protein, but as a general rule, your dog will thrive on a quality grain-free food. Manufacturers split up the foods into categories more for marketing reasons than age/breed specific nutrition.

An Online Source

www.dogfoodanalysis.com takes no money from any dog food companies, and offers free analysis of most every food on the market. These foods are given a star rating from one to five stars. They created a 6th star after some high end grain-free foods came on the market a couple of years ago. While this site may not be the only resource you might need, they are a great starting point in determining the quality of foods you are considering. - Chip Bridges