



Enhancing the bond between dogs and their families

Choosing the Right Dry Dog Food for Your Dog

Choose the best quality dry dog food you can afford. The best foods contain human-grade ingredients. Most dog foods in large chain pet stores and grocery stores are made from ingredients not fit for human consumption. Rejected animal parts, grains and other products are used in dog and other pet food. This is not the healthiest meal for your dog.

Do your research! Just as with human food, the ingredient list is in order of highest to lowest percentage of product used. If the first ingredient is chicken, the product contains more chicken than anything else. Look at the entire list of ingredients, but place greater emphasis on the top of the list. Look for quality whole meats, grains and vegetables. Avoid animal byproducts, animal fat and animal digest. Chicken is much better than chicken byproducts. (Byproduct is the term used for parts such as chicken heads and feet.) Avoid brewers rice, corn gluten meal and other partial grains. These are used as “fillers” in many foods, do not contain the whole grain and are not easily digestible. Manufacturers use these products because they are cheap but still pass the minimum standards required by the AAFCO (Association of American Feed Control Officials).

Avoid foods containing sugar, salt, artificial colors or flavors, preservatives, and additives. These are added to make the food more palatable to your dog or look more pleasing to you. These are not good for your dog and are not necessary.

Some people balk at the price of higher quality foods. When you are feeding a high quality food with no “filler” products, your dog will require less food to maintain the same weight. Since higher quality foods contain a greater percentage of digestible products, your dog might also have fewer or smaller stools. Less cleanup duty for you! A healthier diet means a healthier dog, which could mean reduced medical bills over your dog's life.

For more information about dry dog foods, I recommend you find back issues of the Whole Dog Journal and read their dry dog food reviews. Reviews are usually done annually in the February issue. They are available at www.whole-dog-journal.com.

What's right for one dog will not be right for every dog. If your dog is healthy, energetic, has a beautiful coat, no gas, no itchy skin, or other symptoms, your current food might be just fine. There is no one food that is right for every dog. Consider the same criteria when



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choosing treats for your dog. Find healthy treats and avoid the doggie junk food. You want a healthy, well-trained dog that will be with you for many years!

Where can you purchase high quality dog foods? Find a local pet supply store that carries high quality foods. I rotate my dogs' foods periodically. Examples of what I feed include: California Natural Lamb Meal & Rice from Natura and Pinnacle Trout & Sweet Potato Dry Formula from Breeder's Choice. Both the Natura website, www.naturapet.com, and the Breeder's Choice website, www.breeders-choice.com, contain information about their ingredients and a list of retailers, such as Pet Outfitters in Greenwood Village, CO.

