

Nutrition Talk

We're all accustomed to reading our own food labels but how many of you have read your dog's food labels? Can you decipher what's in them? Let's look at a couple.

Just like in our labels, it's the first 4 or 5 ingredients that make up the bulk of the food. Most store bought foods contain Meat by Products and Corn and many of the brands are still using **BHA** (butylated hydroxyanisole) or **BHT** (butylated hydroxytoluene) or **Ethoxyquin** as preservatives, which have been associated with liver, kidney and thyroid damage as well as fetal abnormalities and may be linked to cancer. **Tocopherols** (Vitamin E) and **Ascorbic Acid** (Vitamin C) are natural preservatives and antioxidants to look for in your dog foods.

INGREDIENTS TO AVOID:

Ground Corn / Corn Meal – The entire corn kernel ground or chopped, it must contain no more than 4% foreign material. The problem with corn of any kind is that it is difficult for most dogs to digest. Corn is used as filler.

Meat By-Products – Clean parts of slaughtered animals (not specified), not including meat. These parts include: lungs, liver, kidneys, brain, spleen, bone, blood, stomach, and intestines freed of their contents. It does include hair, teeth, hooves, and horns.

Poultry By-Product – Clean parts of slaughtered poultry including hearts, lungs, liver, kidneys, feet and heads. It cannot contain feces or foreign matter except which is unavoidable during processing and then in only trace amounts.

Wheat Gluten – Corn Gluten Meal – Common source of vegetable protein for pet foods (wheat is sometimes the cause of allergies in dogs)

Beet Pulp – (sugar beet with most of sugar removed) provides fiber and bulk for firm stools

Soy – Is used as a protein instead of meats – can sometimes cause gas problems in dogs

SOME INGREDIENTS TO LOOK FOR:

CHICKEN< BEEF< LAMB OR FISH – naming the protein without by products

Meal – just means reduced in size by removal of water (enabling the food companies to pack more usable meat protein into food)

Lecithin – protects cells from damage caused by oxidation

Taurine – essential amino acid necessary for the proper development and ongoing health of the heart and eyes – dogs can make taurine through the digestion of proteins – more essential for cats

Fish – includes all essential amino acids and is rich in Omega 3 fatty acids, Vit A, K & E, and also contains iodine, calcium, phosphorus, iron, potassium, copper and fluoride.

Omega 6 – essential fatty acid found in plants such as FLAXSEED, evening primrose, black currant. (good for skin and coat)

Linoleic Acid – found in safflower plants and fish oils (sometimes used in place of Omega 3 & Omega 6 sources) (good for skin and coat)

Omega 9 – found in olive oil (good for skin and coat)

Biotin (AKA Vit H) – Biotin is a water soluble vitamin that is a member of the B-complex group; helps body use protein & other B vits & helps synthesize & oxidize essential fatty acids (good for skin and coat)

Folic Acid – aides in cell development and preservation

Chelated Minerals – minerals bonded with amino acids (protein) that aids in absorption into the animals system.

Now...how is dog food made?

In 1957 Purina Laboratories invented the extrusion process and introduced the first extruded hard kibble "Purina Dog Chow" and life in the dog food industry has never been the same! Most dog foods are an extruded food which means that they were prepared by steaming it under extremely high temperatures as quickly as possible, usually less than 3 minutes, then extruding it under pressure through a metal die. This process expands the food with air creating a uniform shape that is then

sprayed with oils (some companies use leftover restaurant grease or fats) to make it palatable for the dogs. This is why your dog food bags are greasy on the inside and sometimes smells funny.

Most of the major pet food companies in the US are subsidiaries of major multinational companies : Nestle (Alpo, Fancy Feast, Friskies, Mighty Dog and Ralston Purina products such as Dog Chow, Proplan & Purina One); Heinz (Nine Lives, Gravy Train, Kibbles-n-Bits, Nature's Recipe); **Colgate-Palmolive** (*Hill's Science Diet Pet Food*); **Proctor & Gamble** (*Eukanuba & Iams*); Mars (Kal Kan, Mealtime, Pedigree and Waltham's). With the large buying power of these parent companies comes the risk of a dip in quality.

I was turned onto a holistic food a few years back and it has been included in the top 10 dog foods in several nutrition books for dogs as well as Whole Dog Journal. It is called **Flint River Ranch** and it is made fresh and shipped straight to your doorstep via UPS. You cannot buy this dog food in any pet stores. This dog food is Oven-Baked, not extruded. **Oven baking changes the hard to digest molecules of "raw" starches into easy to digest dextrines. This process acts as a pre-digest on the food resulting in less strain on the dog's digestive tract.** It has no artificial colorings or preservatives. The minerals used are chelated just like our own vitamins to ensure proper absorption. The grains are purchased from General Mills and Pillsbury – reducing the risks of mold or toxins and they have added probiotics and digestive enzymes to further enhance the food for your pets. The meats are all human grade with the chicken being certified hormone and antibiotic free and the lamb is free range fed from New Zealand. The fish used in Flint River Ranch products is farm raised trout and herring and fresh ocean caught menhaden. Plus, it is delivered right to your doorstep and because this food is a premium dog food, you'll use a lot less of it. You'll feed about 20 – 25% less to your dog, making clean up a lot nicer too! If you do decide to make the switch, remember to do it slowly!

If you have a dog that is at risk for bloat (esp. large deep barrel chest dogs) after eating, do the bloat test with your dog food and FRR. Place ¼ c FRR in one bowl and ¼ c of yours in another and add warm water to both bowls, cover and shake. Keep the food covered by adding water as needed. The food is baked and quite dense without any air pockets so at the end of the day you should find that the FRR food has not broken down or expanded, reducing the possibilities of bloat.

With the pet food recalls these days, there are a few things that you will want to keep in mind as you feed your pets their foods.

- Always try to store your dry foods in their original bags inside an airtight container or at least make sure to cut and save the lower part of the bags that have all of the packaging information with the date codes on it for future reference if you need it. Pet food companies will need that information from you when trying to track down any problems with the food.
- Rinse and keep any canned food cans for about a week for the same reason.
- Don't feed your pet anything that looks or smells funny to you. Watch out for molds and mildew. Extruded foods have oils sprayed on them for flavor and can go rancid.
- If your pet suddenly stops eating his food LISTEN to him! Even if the bag is now half empty and all was fine the week before. You never know what happened to the bag during the week or during packaging.
- Feel confident to contact the food company and report the issue.
- Try feeding your dog from a new bag to rule out bad food or upset tummy issues.

The official Flint River Ranch website is www.frrco.com and you will need my Distributor Flint River Name and Number **Shannon Anderson & 1JPP** to use when placing your order on line. After you become a customer of Flint River Ranch, you will be assigned your own **FRR #** and can use that number when reordering. Please feel free to contact me directly if you would prefer me placing your orders for you. I am happy to help out and I am sure your pets will be happy with their new food as well!