



Frequently Asked Diet Questions

How can I pick the best diet for my pet?

- We recommend looking for reputable companies that have a long history of producing quality foods.
- An AAFCO statement on the label saying the diet has undergone feeding trials for the appropriate life stage is preferable to a label that says the diet has been formulated (by a computer) to meet the requirements for a specific life stage.
- We recommend avoiding companies that tout unverifiable claims, marked by bashing products made by other companies, or perpetuate nutrition myths by marketing emotionally to the consumer.

Are grains – especially corn – bad for pets? I hear they are allergenic and just “filler”.

- Whole grains (including corn) in pet foods (like in human foods) contribute valuable vitamins and minerals, essential fatty acids, and fiber while helping to keep the fat and calories lower.
- Dogs and cats are very efficient at digesting and utilizing the nutrients from grains.
- Certain pets can be allergic to certain grains, but not in a higher proportion than those that are allergic to poultry, beef, pork and dairy – things that are very commonly used in grain free diets.
- Grain-free diets have been used as a marketing strategy that perpetuates myths to increase certain companies' market share. Grains in the diet are often replaced with highly refined starches that contain fewer nutrients and cost more.

By-products are just hair, feathers, feet and other indigestible things and feeding a pet food that contains them is bad for them, right?

- The AAFCO (Association of American Feed Control Officials) definition of animal by-products excludes hair, hoof, horn, hide, trimmings, intestinal contents, and floor sweepings from being included.
- By-products are highly digestible organ meat and contain more nutrients per pound than muscle meat.
- Most organ meats are considered delicacies in other cultures due to their high nutritious value.
- Reputable companies obtain their by-products from high quality sources so their diets have excellent nutritional value that is consistent from batch to batch.

Can you determine the best quality pet food by reading the ingredient list?

- Pets require nutrients – not ingredients. Ingredient lists that sound appealing to the consumer can be deficient in nutrients for the pet.
- Ingredients are listed by weight – so ingredients that contain a lot of water (like fresh meat and vegetables) will be listed higher on the ingredient list even though they are not as nutrient dense and contribute fewer nutrients than ingredients farther down on the list.
- Ingredient lists can be manipulated by companies for marketing purposes. Ingredients can be split into separate components to make them appear further down a list, making them appear to be a smaller part of the diet.