

Tips for Choosing the Right Pet Food

Why Pet Food Labels Can Be Misleading

Understanding pet food labels can be tricky due to certain regulations. Both the **ingredient list** and the **guaranteed analysis** may not tell the whole story.

- **Ingredient List:** Ingredients are listed by weight, but companies often use the *pre-processed weight*. For example, fresh meat appears high on the list due to water content, but after processing, the actual amount in the food is much lower. Additionally, this list doesn't reflect ingredient quality.
- **Guaranteed Analysis:** This section shows nutrient content but doesn't address how easily those nutrients are digested by your pet. A food could theoretically use low-quality sources (like shoe leather) to meet protein levels, even though pets can't digest it.

Common Pet Food Myths – and the Truth

1. **Myth:** Dogs need high-protein meat-based diets like their wolf ancestors.
Truth: Dogs evolved to digest carbohydrates well. Senior dogs do need more protein, but high-meat diets aren't essential for all dogs.
2. **Myth:** Grain-free diets are healthier.
Truth: Properly cooked grains are over 90% digestible and provide essential nutrients. *Grain-free diets have been linked to heart disease (DCM) in dogs.*
3. **Myth:** Meat or fish meal is low quality.
Truth: "Meal" just means the ingredient has been dried. It's easier to use in kibble production and doesn't necessarily mean lower quality.
4. **Myth:** Chicken by-products are inferior.
Truth: By-products include nutrient-rich parts like liver and gizzards, which are essential in wild animals' diets.
5. **Myth:** Meat by-products are poor quality.
Truth: These include organs like kidneys and lungs, often richer in nutrients than muscle meat.
6. **Myth:** Animal digest is low quality.
Truth: It's a flavorful protein source made from USDA-inspected meat, enhancing food taste.
7. **Myth:** Corn is just a filler.
Truth: Corn is digestible, protein-rich, and packed with vitamins and antioxidants.
8. **Myth:** Gluten is harmful.
Truth: Gluten is a digestible protein. Gluten intolerance in dogs is rare.
9. **Myth:** Soy is low quality.
Truth: Processed soy provides high-quality protein, vitamins, and fatty acids.

10. **Myth:** High protein equals high energy.

Truth: Protein and carbs provide the same calories. Fat provides the most energy.

Our Recommended Brands

We trust these reputable brands:

- **Hill's Pet Nutrition**
- **Royal Canin**
- **Purina**

These companies invest in extensive research and ensure top-quality care for research animals.

If you're considering another food brand, feel free to contact us for a list of helpful questions to ask the manufacturer.