

Pet Food Guide



What does the type tell me about my pet food?

ECONOMICAL FOODS: Also known as Store Brands

Regular/Mid Grade: Generally contains a high percentage of filler ingredients. These foods need to be fed in larger amounts to satisfy your pet's hunger.

PREMIUM FOODS: Also known as holistic, natural or organic brands - These foods focus on treating hunger with nutrition, and consist of well-balanced, high quality ingredients. Premium foods are more economical than a store brand, because your pet will eat less, as they satisfy your pet faster by providing better cellular nutrition. You will also notice an improved outward appearance of your pet.

Natural: is concerned with the lack of chemicals additives, artificial preservatives, by-products and is free of sugars, indigestible fiber/fillers and generic nutrient sources. These foods focus on the long-term health benefits of your pet.

Holistic: is focused on nutrition as disease prevention. Holistic Pet Foods promote and maintain health, and they prevent illness by avoiding ingredients that may be harmful to the general well being of the pet.

Organic: These foods are Certified Organic by Oregon Tilth. Every ingredient that goes into these formulas are the highest standard in nutrition for your pet and are free of all pesticides, hormones and antibiotics.

Pet Food: The Lowdown on Labels

Guaranteed Analysis- What is "Crude" Protein? The guaranteed analysis specifies the product's minimum percentages of crude protein and crude fat. It also gives the maximum percentages of crude fiber and moisture. "Crude" refers to a specific method of measuring the nutrient, and is not an indication of quality. Although not required, some manufacturers also specify the percentages of other nutrients, such as ash, and taurine in cat food, and calcium and phosphorus in dog food.

Two Nutrient Profiles- AAFCO has established two nutrient profiles each for dogs and cats-**growth/lactation and maintenance** - to fit their life stages.

Every product must meet at least one of these two profiles. A product intended for growing kittens and puppies, or for pregnant or lactating females, must meet AAFCO's nutrient profile for growth/lactation. Products that meet AAFCO's profile for maintenance are suitable for an adult, non-reproducing dog or cat of normal activity level, but may not be adequate for an immature, reproducing, or hard-working animal. A product may claim that it is for "all life stages" if it is suitable for adult maintenance and meets the more stringent nutritional needs for growth and reproduction. **Growth/lactation and maintenance are the only two nutrient profiles authorized by AAFCO and CVM, so terms like "Senior" or "Formulated for large breed adults" mean the food meets the requirements for adult maintenance- and nothing more.**

NOTE: A product that does not meet either of these methods must state that "this product is intended for intermittent or supplemental feeding," except if it is conspicuously identified as a snack or treat.

Pet Food Ingredients must be listed on the label in descending order by weight. However, the weight includes the moisture in the ingredient, which makes it tricky to interpret. "A moist ingredient, such as chicken, which may be 70 percent water, may be listed ahead of a dry ingredient, such as a soybean meal, which is only 10 percent water- yet the soy actually contributes more solids to the diet," says Susan Donoghue, V.M.D., owner of Nutrition Support Services, Inc., and past president of the American Academy of Veterinary Nutrition.

Similar materials listed as separate ingredients may outweigh other ingredients that precede them on the list of ingredients. *For example, chicken may be listed as the first ingredient, then ground barley, ground oats, and oatmeal. The consumer may believe that chicken is the predominant ingredient, but the three grain products- when added together- weigh more than the chicken.*

