

Although Premium and Super Premium foods carry a higher retail price, because they are purer, contain less or no fillers, and are more digestible, your cost per day is equal to, and often less than foods that have an attractive retail price.

How do I make my final choice? One logical way is to select 3 or 4 foods you have decided are of your desired quality. You can test-feed for a period of 2 to 4 weeks. See how your dog likes the food. He should eat readily and eagerly. Pay attention to his condition. Eyes should be clear and sparkle. The hair coat should have proper texture - silky or wiry depending on breed type. Skin should be healthy with no itching or flakiness. The dogs stool should be consistently firm and well formed. Bowel movements should indicate neither loose stools or constipation.

So What's the Bottom Line? The quality of pet foods is expressed in a term of digestibility called "Metabolizable Energy," referred to as ME. ME is usually expressed in kilocalories per cup. Most products will not list this vital element on the package. If the company has a website, or toll-free number, you can ask for the ME value expressed in kg/cup. Some companies will be reluctant to share this information. Other companies will gladly provide it to you. The higher the value, the more digestible. An ME value of 400 kg/cup or more indicates a food of high quality for an adult maintenance formula. Puppy formulas will be slightly higher and senior foods normally a bit lower than a standard adult, or maintenance formula.

## IACP MISSION STATEMENT

The International Association of Canine Professionals is an organization established to maintain the highest standards of professional and business practice among canine professionals. Its aim is to provide support and representation for all professional occupations involved with any aspect of canine management, health, training and husbandry.

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# FEEDING YOUR DOG

by Danny Thomason



For additional information about the IACP please visit our web site at: [www.dogpro.org](http://www.dogpro.org)





This brochure will address factors for your consideration and give you some basic knowledge to help you with the important decision of selecting a food that will provide your canine friend with a healthy diet. Considering the fact that dogs can have a variety of needs and conditions, this is basic information dog owners should have and is designed to help you.

Perhaps one of the most important, yet commonly overlooked components to a long-living, happy and healthy dog is his diet. The old saying, “You are what you eat” is also true for our pets. The knowledge of pet nutrition has evolved at light speed in recent years. Although no pet owner desires to intentionally harm their pets, many owners make decisions based on out-dated information and are easily manipulated by the sophisticated marketing commonly used in the pet food industry. This important decision can be bewildering.

How important is my pet's diet? A pet's diet is the foundation to his life. Diet plays a crucial part in his physical condition, overall health, functioning of organs and immune system. Improper diet results in many common ailments including, but not limited to: poor health, decreased lifespan, poor muscle tone, allergies, depressed immunity, and a variety of skin and coat problems.

How do I know what is in a food? By reading the label you can get some idea as to the contents. Although labels can be misleading, understanding them is a place to start.

Government Regulations require companies to list ingredients in descending order based on content. The first ingredient listed is predominant, followed by the second ingredient, the third, ect. If corn is listed first, that is the primary ingredient.

Manufactures are also required to list the amount of protein, fat, fiber, moisture ect. In the form of a percentage. Manufactures are not required to state how digestible each of those categories are.

What should I look for on the label? Understanding the quality is a crucial part of this equation. Select a food with a meat ingredient listed first on the ingredient panel. If the label states Chicken, Turkey, Lamb, ect first, at least you know the food contains a higher amount of meat than a food listing corn or soy first. Here is a simplified explanation of the way meats are defined:

- Chicken, Turkey, Lamb, ect. mean that the meat is clean, non-rendered muscle tissue. These ingredients however are weighed when still in wet form. Some weight is lost due to the drying process.
- Chicken Meal, Turkey Meal, Lamb Meal, ect. is clean, non-rendered muscle tissue, as above, with the moisture already extracted. This offers a more concentrated source of meat protein.

Either of these listed first means you are getting a quality source of meat that is highly digestible.

What should I avoid? Foods listing corn or soy

as the primary ingredient are not as digestible. Any source of meat by-product is of lesser quality. By-products contain parts other than the muscle tissue, and are not as digestible. Artificial colors are added for the eye-appeal to owners. They serve no nutritional purpose, and believed by many to be potentially harmful. Chemical preservatives are also coming under scrutiny. BHA, BHT, and ethoxyquin are commonly used in lower quality foods. They are inexpensive chemical preservatives and best avoided. Excessive amounts of sodium, sugars (often labeled as sucrose) and texture stabilizers (propyl glycolates, glycols, or similar) are used in lower quality foods as flavor enhancers, and best avoided.

Also avoid non-described meats that do not divulge the source such as Meat Meal, Meat and Bone Meal or Meat By-product. These are the lowest quality and often contain slaughterhouse wastes. They may contain Horsemeat, road kill and the carcasses of dead, dying or diseased animals.

Feeding Instructions Keep in mind, the recommended amounts are only guidelines. Your dog may require more or less based on his individual metabolism and activity level. If your dog starts gaining undesired weight, cut back slightly. Undesired loss of weight means he needs more.

The cost of Feeding If you do the math, you will find this can be a misleading factor in your choice of food. Higher quality foods result in a higher purchase price. Check the amounts needed per day, and you will find them to be much less than so-called bargain brands.