

What Ingredients Are Used in Commercial Dog Food

AAFCO stands for the Association Of American Feed Control Officials. This association is responsible for setting the standards and guidelines for the commercial production of pet foods. AAFCO tests the ingredients used and applies a minimum nutritional value that pet food manufacturers must follow. Having this minimum value however, allows for much interpretations to the standards, making the quality of the food produced less than desirable. The AAFCO stamp of approval on a label of dog food just means that the food meets minimum requirements.

One can quite easily get misinformed when reading a dog food label. Much of the information provided can be vague or misleading. In order for us to know what exactly it is that we are feeding our dogs, we must learn how to read what is on the label correctly. By doing so we can give our animals a more nutritious variety of foods.

Because of the constant exposure to the marketing tactics of pet food manufacturers, many of us have are loyal to a certain dog food brand or product name. We have been led to believe that this brand has high quality food products. The first rule to remember when reading a label is that if the product label mentions an ingredient such as "beef chow" for example, then that product must contain 95% of that ingredient by weight if the product is a dry product and 70% if it is a wet or canned product. If the label includes words such as "dinner" or "formula" then only 25% of that ingredient is required.

Dog food labels list their ingredients in descending order of their weight. If we take the above "chicken dinner" product as an example, chicken would be listed but it would not be the main ingredient since it only has to weigh 1/4 of the product's total weight. Corn meal or bone meal, found in most cheaper brands, would more than likely be the main ingredient in this dinner product.

In many cases the main ingredient is not mentioned in the title. Instead we see such words as "flavored" as in "chicken flavored." There is no set required percentage for these items. We will also see the words like "Premium" or "Natural" on the labels. Premium dog food is a worthwhile product to checkout. Most premium products do follow the AAFCO standards for a nutritionally balanced dog food product. "Natural" just means that there are no artificial ingredients such as colors, preservatives and flavors in the product.

A sure fire way to find the best dog food products when reading the list of ingredients is to find the first fat ingredient such as "chicken fat." All the ingredients before the fat source are the main part of that food product. The fewer the ingredients the better. All the other items on the list are used for flavoring or preserving the product. By finding where the fat source is listed we can then find ingredients that maybe harmful to our dogs such as corn gluten.

Because of busy schedules many of us have to feed our dogs commercial brands. By just taking a little extra time we can prevent exposing our animals to poor quality foods. If we read an ingredient that we are unfamiliar with or that we would not eat ourselves, then why would we think of feeding it to our dogs. Lets be more careful when reading those dog food labels.

About the Author

As dog owners we are totally in control when it comes to feeding our dogs. Knowing what the best dog food is, what are the right [dog food ingredients](#) and what dog food nutrition they provide can sometimes be overwhelming. Find out more about commercial and homemade [dog food recipes](#) by visiting www.onlinedogfoodrecipes.com.

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