

Know what you are feeding your Pet!

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Know what is in your pet's food!

The many recent dog foods scares led me to do research and comparisons against my previous so-called Premium Dog Food and the many other commercial foods out there on the market as well as the research of overall pet nutritional requirements. In my first round of comparisons, I determined that the premium commercial food that I was feeding my dog Nikki was among the very best available commercially but to my dismay came no where close to the quality of food that I should be feeding my pet and contained many areas of concern. One of the first things that I realized was the nutritional needs differences between pets and humans. I also discovered how much the pet food industry disregarded the nutritional requirements and health concerns by manufacturing their products with inferior ingredients to the benefit of their profitability. Many of the ingredients used in the commercial pet foods even today have many fillers and ingredients that are simply not healthy for our pets. All of the commercial pet food companies researched also used inferior ingredients that are deemed not suitable, and rejected for Human consumption, in their pet foods.

After understanding the actual nutritional requirements of our pets and recognizing the poor quality and harmful ingredients in all of the pet foods among the commercial market, led me to continue my quest for quality food for my pet; It also, left me with the feeling of being ashamed that I had not done this before now.

In my search I discovered a quality pet food market out there. The term used was *Holistic* Pet foods. In short, meaning quality pet food using human quality products and ingredients with the elimination of the harmful fillers and preservatives used in the commercial foods.

I am an Engineer by trade, feeding on my logical side and a skeptic by nature. Both of these personality traits forces me to typically not accept things at stated or at face value. I continued my research on these holistic pet foods and my research proved that the claims made by the few holistic companies out there were valid and full of merit and truth. The intention of this document is to provide the benefits of my research to others that are and should be concerned with the quality of food that they are feeding their pets. If you care about your pets then I ask you to read this document and I welcome you to do your own research to validate the facts that I have provided, and I am confident that you will agree that there is a real concern in the pet food industry regarding healthy foods for your pet.

Details of the recent Pet Food Scares

As I stated above, the recent pet food scares led me to do research on pet foods. At first the intention of my research was to validate that the food that I was feeding my dog Nikki was not part of the recall that made many pets across the US sick and in many cases the pets died.

The suspected ingredient that was the root cause of the issue was an ingredient called Wheat Gluten. Wheat Gluten is used in pet foods for two main reasons, to increase the stated protein levels of the food and also as an ingredient to simply hold the food chunks together (primarily in the wet foods). Wheat Gluten is produced by a wash/strip process leaving only the provided proteins on the surface it sounds simple enough and healthy, right?

The Wheat Gluten itself was not the culprit but rather a chemical that was introduced and remained in the gluten supply. The chemical was Melamine which is a polymer based product

primarily used to make counter-tops and other polymer based products in the US as well as pesticides overseas. Melamine is not legal for pesticide here in the US which coincides with this particular supplier (new supplier to the food manufacturer) of the Wheat Gluten being based in China. So, problem solved it was just simply a bad shipment of wheat gluten. We have to accept that the inexpensive China based supplier of wheat gluten for the pet food company may have some contaminants such as Melamine, in the supply from time to time, right? Did I mention that on top of being logical, and skeptical, I can also be cynical.....

Let's now talk about Wheat Gluten itself for a minute. Wheat gluten sounds harmless enough. After all it is used in human foods, made from Wheat, and provide a supply of inexpensive source of protein.

Well, yes it works very well in the human foods for this reason. However, as I stated before our pets' digestive system is much different than the human digestive system. As it turns out, our pets digestive system can not benefit from the proteins in wheat gluten because their systems can not process the wheat gluten properly to obtain the nutritional gain. So, why do the pet food companies use it? The answer is simple; the Nutritional Analysis for their product can make claims of high levels of protein by using inexpensive ingredients like wheat gluten rather than using more expensive meat products, regardless of your pet being able to actually process and benefit from this protein source.

Summary

- The commercial pet food industry is using inexpensive products such as wheat gluten in this case, to artificially increase the protein levels of their product rather than using high, human quality ingredients such as Chicken.
- They are using inferior product from inexpensive suppliers where the high risk of contaminants exists.

The pet food company, after this happened, released a media announcement that stated; "*They care about our pets*".

Pet Food ingredients defined

Industry Terms

Not all commercial pets foods are created equal. There are a lot of ingredient differences especially, between the most inexpensive to the more expensive brands and manufacturers. I will start by defining some of the industry terms used by the manufacturers and then addressing each ingredient typically found in pet foods.

By-Products – typically stated as Chicken By-Products or Meat By-Products. By-Products typically consist of organs, feathers, beaks, hoofs, bone, feet etc..... By-Products are an inexpensive source of proteins and preferred by the commercial manufacturers to reduce production cost.

Chicken or Beef Meal – It is basically meat that has been cleaned, dried, cooked and ground for concentration. Meal provides a good source of concentrated Proteins and Amino acids. Note: depending upon the manufacturer it can also include flesh, skin and bone as part of the meal.

FIRST 5 INGREDIENTS - Ingredients in pet food products are listed on the product label in descending order of weight. This can be deceptive because some manufacturers practice "ingredient splitting" in order to give some ingredients more prominence than others. For example, chicken meal can appear as the first ingredient in a food even when there are actually more grains in the product, which can total a higher percentage of protein than the chicken meal. The primary source of protein in all pet foods (except for weight loss formulas) should come from animal, not vegetable protein or grains. Foods that list 2 or more grains in the first 5 ingredients may have more vegetable protein than animal protein.

Ingredients to look for in your pet food

Chicken – Most of the premium commercial pet food uses Chicken meat as the #1 source for protein as it is a preferred safe alternative to Beef due to the recent diseases and strains that have plagued Beef. However, all of the premium commercial foods researched use lower grade Chicken that has been rejected for Human consumption. Look for pet foods that guarantee the use of chicken or chicken meal made from USDA certified Chicken.

Chicken Meal - Some manufacturers use chicken in their pet foods; however, there are many benefits of using Chicken Meal. Chicken meat contains a certain amount of moisture in the flesh; however, chicken meal is a concentrated source of chicken protein because most of the water has been removed. Therefore, it only stands to reason that you get a greater "protein content" in 1 pound of chicken meal versus 1 pound of chicken.

Antioxidant Source – Typical high quality sources of antioxidants are Grapeseed Extract, and Fresh Vegetables and fruits.

Premium All Natural Chicken Meal, Catfish Meal, and Eggs - provide high quality easily digested animal protein sources to support strong muscles, healthy organs, and overall health.

Chicken Fat, Catfish Meal, Flaxseed Meal, and Eggs - provide a natural balance of Omega-3 and Omega-6 fatty acids to promote healthy skin and shiny coat.

Whole Brown Rice - provides an excellent source of highly digestible carbohydrates for short-term energy and dietary fiber that is gentle on the stomach.

Fresh Vegetables and Fruit - provide natural plant sources of phytonutrients, antioxidants, vitamins and minerals that help support an active immune system.

Natural Bacteria Cultures - Typical sources can be from Beet Fiber and Brewers Yeast. Helps your pets digestive system work at peak efficiency, allowing your pet to get even more nutrition from their food.

Ingredients to avoid in Pet Food

Meat By-Products – typically stated as Chicken By-Products, Meat By-Products, Chicken By-Products Meal. By-Products are an inexpensive source of proteins and other nutritional benefits such as iron, and calcium. By-Products and By-Product Meal are preferred by the commercial manufacturers as opposed to more healthy and expensive quality meat, to reduce production cost. However, because BPs typically consist of organs, feathers, beaks, hoofs, bone, feet etc . . they provide an un-healthy and inadequate complete source for nutrition.

Statement obtained from a leading commercial Pet Food Company regarding Chicken by-Product Meal. ***“Only chicken and egg are judged to be better. Chicken and egg go mostly for human consumption, so that leaves CBPM as the best available source.”***

Grains - Soy, Corn and Wheat are often used as Carbohydrate sources. They are nearly indigestible sources and can be harmful to your pet's Kidneys and Liver. They are also known allergens even though used often in most commercial pet foods.

Corn Gluten and Wheat Gluten - often used as protein sources; however, they are generally inferior, difficult to digest and offer little benefits to the Pet digestive system as a source of protein. Used by Pet Food companies for their Nutritional Analysis of their product. They can make claims of high levels of protein by using inexpensive ingredients like wheat gluten rather than using more expensive meat products, regardless of your pet being able to actually process and benefit from this protein source.

Chemical Preservatives & Artificial Colors - BHA, BHT and ethoxyquin can be very harmful to pets. Artificial colors are also linked to pet health problems. Many large manufacturers make pet food in tremendous batches and they see the need to use preservatives giving their food a long shelf life. You may be feeding food that is six months to a year old and is very typical to larger manufacturers.

Alternatives to Commercial Pet Food

Make your own food

Making food for your pet is a viable option as long as you take the time and research recipes to ensure you are making good nutritional meals for your pet. One of the key things to remember when making pet food is you must make the food based upon the nutritional needs of pet's and not human's. This is more complicated than it may first seem. Picture trying the create a single recipe for yourself that you will eat everyday that contain all of your nutriitional needs. To make a complete nutritional meal for your pet will require supplements to be added to the pet food. Supplements can be obtain by many suppliers including [Pet Health First](#); visit our site for healthy pet supplies.

If interested in making your own pet food, then I would suggest the following site to get you started on healthy recipes:

BalancelT.com

Holistic Foods

The benefits of holistic foods are that they use all natural top quality products and ingredients that have been proven to be of the upmost nutritional benefits of the pets. The companies producing the foods focus on the healthy aspects of their products as opposed to meeting the price point for their optimal profitability. Obviously, the consumer price of these holistic foods come at a premium compared to the commercial foods, but are well worth the cost to ensure that our pets are getting quality healthy foods. The best holistic food that I have found on the market is Life's Abundance made by Trilogy. I have listed a few benefits of Life's Abundance above, in the already discussed benefits of holistic pet foods.

Life's Abundance (Holistic) Pet Food

Here are important benefits of Life's Abundance:

Your dog eats the same food every day. The brand you feed is your dog's **main source of nutrition** and vital to a long and healthy life. So it makes sense to look past attractive labels and clever marketing ploys when deciding which food to buy.

Although you may think all pet food manufacturers have your pet's best interests in mind, this is not always the case. Current pet food regulations allow manufacturers to use ingredients that you would never knowingly give to your pet. **In fact, you may be shocked to learn what some brands of dog food really contain.** For example: the use of by-products (feet, bones and intestines, etc.), chemical preservatives (BHA and BHT) and grains that are often difficult to digest (corn, wheat, gluten and soy), which are often used as a protein source instead of meat.

Life's Abundance Premium Dog Food is made using only fresh, human-quality ingredients. It is a nutrient dense food with high quality meat proteins and NO by-products, corn, wheat, gluten or soy. NO artificial flavors, colors, sugars or chemical preservatives.

- Their manufacturer is **APHIS** certified to sell pet food in the European market, which has more stringent regulations than in the U.S. for pet food manufacturing.
- They make small, frequent batches to insure that you get the freshest food possible. The **Life's Abundance** food that you get delivered to your door may be no more than 6 weeks old. Some store bought pet food could be anywhere from 6 months to a year old.
- They never use any chemical additives or preservatives.

Life's Abundance	
Ingredient	Benefit Description
Alfalfa	Alfalfa is one of the most nutritionally complete foods, providing nutrients needed by dogs to sustain wellbeing. The green leaves of the alfalfa plant are an excellent source of digestible soluble fiber and chlorophyll. Alfalfa has also been shown to be a source of protein and rich source of minerals such as calcium, magnesium, potassium, manganese, phosphorus, iron, and zinc. It also contains the entire spectrum of known vitamins including Vitamin A (Beta Carotene), Vitamin B1, Vitamin B2, Niacin, Biotin, Choline, Pantothenic acid, Folic Acid, Vitamin C, Vitamin E (Tocopherols), and Vitamin K.
Antioxidants	<p>Antioxidants are a necessity to every diet, including your dogs. Antioxidants are powerful compounds that neutralize free radicals – natural substances produced by the body as it ages – to help your dog maintain a healthy, active life. Dogs naturally produce their own antioxidant Vitamin C, but other antioxidant nutrients such as Vitamin E, Beta Carotene, and the trace mineral Selenium must be consumed in their daily diets. The best food sources of antioxidant nutrients are fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole grains – all foods most dogs like but don't regularly get to eat.</p> <p>This is why we included lots of antioxidant rich fruits and vegetables in Life's Abundance®, something most pet food manufacturers don't do. It's also why we made the healthy decision to enhance our food with a patented grapeseed extract. The all-natural, red grape seed extract used in our food is rich in powerful plant-based antioxidants called proanthocyanidins. Some of these proanthocyanidins, most notably oligomeric proanthocyanidins (OPCs), are very powerful antioxidants – many times more potent than Vitamins E, C and Beta-Carotene.</p>
Apples	Apples provide a powerhouse of vitamins and minerals including Vitamin C, Potassium, Calcium, Magnesium, and Folate which help protect cells and keep them healthy. Apples are also loaded with Quercetin, a powerful antioxidant that may be a major reason why the old saying about eating "an apple a day" has been associated with good health.

Bacteria Cultures:	Life's Abundance® contains a source of live (viable) naturally occurring microorganisms. Lactobacillus Acidophilus, Lactobacillus Casei, Bifidobacterium Thermophilum and Enterococcus Faecium are specially selected active cultures provided by Life's Abundance® to help maintain a healthy immune and digestive function. They are specially processed to remain active even after cooking and are guaranteed to be in every serving of Life's Abundance® your dog enjoys!
Brewer's Dried Yeast	Brewer's dried yeast is loaded with highly digestible protein with an exceptional amino acid balance and contains an abundance of natural minerals and vitamins, especially B Complex Vitamins (except B12). Brewer's dried yeast helps the digestive system work at peak efficiency, allowing your pet to get even more nutrition from our wholesome foods.
Carrots	Carrots are bursting with beta-carotene (or Vitamin A), a powerful antioxidant that helps to keep your dog's skin and eyesight healthy. Carrots also contain Vitamins C, D, E, and K, Riboflavin, Niacin, Calcium, Potassium, Phosphorus, Sodium, and Iron.
Catfish Meal	Our top quality fish meal is made by drying the freshest catfish at a low temperature, creating a concentrated, highly-digestible protein source. In addition to being an excellent source of protein, catfish meal provides natural DHA and EPA, the most important of all the Omega-3 fatty acids. Vital for a strong healthy heart and central nervous system, DHA and EPA can also help promote healthy skin and a shiny coat.
Celery	Celery is packed with beneficial fiber, Potassium and Vitamin C to help your dog maintain good health. It also contains some Vitamin A, Calcium, and the antioxidants Lutein and Zeaxanthin.
Chicken Fat	Chicken fat is a high quality fat source rich in Omega-6 fatty acids for outstanding skin and coat condition. In addition to providing essential fatty acids, it is more digestible than most fats and provides a superior long term energy source. The chicken fat used in Life's Abundance® foods is naturally preserved with mixed tocopherols (a source of natural Vitamin E) to maintain freshness.
Chicken Meal	the FIRST ingredient in Life's Abundance® Meat is the most natural source of protein for dogs and contains the amino acids most important to pet health. With chicken meal as our first ingredient, you can be assured that not only does your dog get a generous portion of real chicken, but also a superior balance of amino acids, fatty acids, vitamins, and minerals for muscle development, energy and healthy organs. We use only naturally grown chicken for our chicken meal - every batch is made using a slow roasting method that allows the fat and water to be released as the chicken cooks, creating a concentrated, highly-digestible protein and fat source.
Dried Beet Pulp (sugar removed)	Beet Pulp is the vegetable matter that remains after sugar is extracted from sliced grey sugar beets. It is an excellent source of soluble fiber and helps to maintain a healthy digestive tract and promote normal stools.

Eggs	Eggs are one of nature's most nutrient dense foods and play an important part of a balanced diet. They are considered a complete protein source providing essential amino acids, vitamins and minerals (Vitamins A, B, E, K, Biotin, and Sulfur) that can make a significant contribution to healthy growth and muscle development. Eggs also provide healthy fats such as Omega-6 for healthy skin and coat.
Flax Seed Meal	Flax seed meal is the richest plant source of antioxidant lignans and Omega-3 fatty acids that both help support an active immune system. The high levels of Omega-3 fatty acids in flax seed meal also help promote healthy skin and a shiny coat. Flax seed meal also has a very high level of highly digestible protein and essential amino acids needed to keep dogs fit and healthy. In addition, flax seed meal contains high amounts of fiber (aids in digestion), Vitamin E, Folic Acid, Riboflavin, Niacin, Vitamin B6 and is extremely high in the minerals Potassium, Calcium and Phosphorus.
Ground Brown Rice	Brown rice is natural whole grain rice that provides fiber as well as valuable quantities of minerals and essential B vitamins. It is highly digestible and an excellent high quality complex carbohydrate source for energy and fiber for colon health.
Potatoes	Potatoes are a real energy provider for your dog as they provide an excellent source of highly digestible complex carbohydrates. They contain an abundance of potassium and magnesium, minerals required for healthy muscles and a strong heart. Potatoes are also a good source of Vitamin C.
Proteinated Mineral Package:	(Copper Proteinate, Iron Proteinate, Manganese Proteinate, and Zinc Proteinate) Proteinated minerals are organic minerals complexed with natural protein amino acids. By acting like a protein they offer better absorption, resulting in more efficient use of the regular trace minerals.
Spinach	Spinach is packed with vitamins and minerals, particularly Folate, Vitamin K, Magnesium, Iron and Manganese. It is exceptionally rich in Beta Carotene and Lutein which keep your dog's eyesight healthy and also Quercetin, a 'phytochemical' with antioxidant properties.

How to buy Life's Abundance (holistic) Pet Food

I went from researching my pet's food to solely ensure the recent pet food contamination was not in her brand of food. The research led into a much deeper understanding of pet food and the issues surrounding the pet food quality and manufacturers to the level of major concern.

After the research, I had determined that Life's Abundance brand holistic food was the best available. We switched to Life's Abundance, and immediately within a week, started seeing a level of enthusiasm from her at feeding time. After a few more days we began seeing a new energy level in her that we had not seen since she was a puppy. We never realized the level of energy difference before the new food, and what little difference we had seen was written off in our minds as simply her turning into an adult dog. We since have been convinced that our pet was seeing the difference in how she feels that this has confirmed at a whole new level the ingredients are making even more of a difference than we ever expected.

We have been so impressed with the company that we have become distributors of their products, and wish to spread the word to other pet owners that they should really consider what they are feeding their pets and to strongly consider switching to a better quality food. I believe that if you consider everything that I have documented here and even research for yourself the difference in this food you will want to switch and give your pet the advantage and healthy life that we have given our dog, Nikki.

You can order this premium pet food from us by calling or by visiting us at our web site. Also, please feel free to call or email us with any questions you may have regarding our products.

- John and Shelley Howe

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