

Tips for Reading Pet Food Labels

Did you ever wonder what your dog was really eating?

Below are 3 dogs food label from popular brand names of dog food. Can you guess what brand each one is?

As you are reading, please take notice that the higher quality the food, the more the manufacturer is willing to tell us about the product.

Example 1

Ingredients:

Ground yellow corn, poultry by-product meal, corn gluten meal, soybean meal, beef tallow preserved with mixed-tocopherols (source of vitamin E), brewers rice, dicalcium phosphate, calcium carbonate, malted barley flour, salt, animal digest, potassium chloride, L-lysine monohydrochloride, choline chloride, zinc oxide, ferrous sulfate, vitamin supplements (A, E, B-12, D-3), manganese sulfate, niacin, calcium pantothenate, brewers dried yeast, riboflavin supplement, biotin, garlic oil, pyridoxine hydrochloride, copper sulfate, thiamine mononitrate, folic acid, menadione sodium bisulfite complex (source of vitamin K activity), calcium iodate.

Guaranteed Analysis %:

Crude Protein (minimum) 21 Moisture (maximum) 12 Crude Fat (minimum) 10
Crude Fiber (maximum) 4.5

Ground yellow corn consists of the corn and the cob, but no husk! This ingredient combined with the 3rd ingredient, **corn gluten meal** (by-product after the manufacture of corn syrup or starch, and is the dried residue after the removal of the bran, germ, and starch) makes corn the main ingredient in this dog food. The ability of a protein to be used by the body and its amount of usable amino acids is summarized as protein quality or biological value. Egg has a biological value (BV) of 100. Dogs can and do take in and utilize grains such as corn, barley, oats, wheat, and soybean meal as nourishment. These grains provide mostly carbohydrates and only limited amino acid (protein) profiles. Wheat and corn, for example, have BV's of only 50 and 45, respectively. Dogs need meat! Dogs will thrive on meat-based diets (diet where the protein is from animal sources such as beef, poultry, lamb, fish, dairy, and meat by-products).

Poultry by-product meal consists of the ground, rendered, clean parts of the carcass of slaughtered fowls, such as necks, feet, underdeveloped eggs and intestines, exclusive of feathers, except in such amounts as might occur unavoidable in good processing practice. Parts used to produce this are never suitable for human consumption. This can also include animals from the "4D's" (Dead, Dying, Diseased, and Decayed).

Salt is listed as ingredient #10 on the label. As with humans, it is always wise to watch salt intake to avoid cardiac heart failure later in life.

CORN IS FOR HOGS, NOT FOR DOGS!

Example 2

Nutritional Information			
Ingredients	Guaranteed Analysis	Feeding Guidelines	Calories
<p>Chicken, Corn Meal, Ground Whole Grain Sorghum, Chicken By-Product Meal, Chicken Fat (preserved with mixed Tocopherols, a source of Vitamin E), Dried Beet Pulp, Chicken Meal, Chicken Flavor, Potassium Chloride, Dried Egg Product, Brewers Dried Yeast, Salt, Flax Meal, Fish Oil (preserved with mixed Tocopherols, a source of Vitamin E), Caramel, Choline Chloride, Minerals (Ferrous Sulfate, Zinc Oxide, Manganese Sulfate, Copper Sulfate, Manganous Oxide, Potassium Iodide, Cobalt Carbonate), Calcium Carbonate, Vitamins (Vitamin E Supplement, Ascorbic Acid, Vitamin A Acetate, Calcium Pantothenate, Biotin, Thiamine Mononitrate (source of vitamin B1), Vitamin B12 Supplement, Niacin, Riboflavin Supplement (source of vitamin B2), Inositol, Pyridoxine Hydrochloride (source of vitamin B6), Vitamin D3 Supplement, Folic Acid), DL-Methionine, Rosemary Extract.</p>			

Chicken is approximately 75% water. This ingredient should be followed by specific meat meal to ensure that the main protein is from an animal source.

Corn Meal and **Ground Whole Grain Sorghum (in grass family)** are the 2nd & 3rd ingredients meaning that the first ingredient of **Chicken** is outweighed by the two of these grains together. Most of the nourishment in this food is from grains, which as mentioned previously have a low biological value. Grain based diets contribute to the carbohydrate load which can lead to overweight pets as extra carbohydrates are stored as fat.

Salt is listed as #12 in the ingredient list. If a dog has heart problems, salt intake should be limited.

Nutritional Information															
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<table border="1"><thead><tr><th>Nutrient</th><th>(percent)</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Crude Protein, minimum</td><td>26.0</td></tr><tr><td>Crude Fat, minimum</td><td>15.0</td></tr><tr><td>Crude Fiber, maximum</td><td>4.0</td></tr><tr><td>Moisture, maximum</td><td>10.0</td></tr><tr><td>Omega-6 Fatty Acids, minimum</td><td>2.5*</td></tr><tr><td>Omega-3 Fatty Acids, minimum</td><td>0.25*</td></tr></tbody></table>		Nutrient	(percent)	Crude Protein, minimum	26.0	Crude Fat, minimum	15.0	Crude Fiber, maximum	4.0	Moisture, maximum	10.0	Omega-6 Fatty Acids, minimum	2.5*	Omega-3 Fatty Acids, minimum	0.25*
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<p>*Not recognized as an essential nutrient by the AAFCO Dog Food Nutrient Profiles.</p> <p>is formulated to meet the nutritional levels established by the AAFCO Dog Food Nutrient Profiles for Maintenance.</p> <p>Manufactured under U.S. Patent Nos. 5,616,569, 5,932,258, 6,093,418 and 6,238,708; other U.S. and foreign patents pending.</p>															

Statement required by Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO). AAFCO develops the guidelines for the production, labeling, and sale of animal foods. This is the first of two statements that can be used by the manufacturer on the label. This statement requires a lower standard for testing requiring only that the food be tested in the laboratory and was found to have the recommended amounts of protein.

GUARANTEED ANALYSIS

Example 3

Crude Protein	24.0%	Minimum
Crude Fat	14.0%	Minimum
Crude Fiber	3.0%	Maximum
Moisture	10.0%	Maximum
Sodium	0.3%	Maximum
Zinc	150 mg/kg	Minimum
Selenium	0.4 mg/kg	Minimum
Vitamin E	300 IU/kg	Minimum
Omega-6 Fatty Acids *	2.2%	Minimum
Omega-3 Fatty Acids *	0.4%	Minimum

← **Salt** is not listed individually in the ingredients, but the manufacturer still willingly discloses the sodium content.

* Not recognized as an essential nutrient by the AAFCO Dog Food Nutrient Profile.

Calorie Content: 3,593 kcal/kg (336 kcal/cup) Calculated Metabolizable Energy.

AAFCO STATEMENT

Animal feeding tests using Association of American Feed Control Officials procedures substantiate that **provides complete and balanced nutrition for the maintenance of adult dogs.**

← Statement required by AAFCO. This is the second of the two statements that can be used by the manufacturer on the label. This statement requires a higher standard for testing as in order to use this statement a pet food had to be tested on a population of animals for six months and shown to provide adequate nutrition.

INGREDIENTS

Chicken, turkey, chicken meal, ocean fish meal, cracked pearled barley, whole grain brown rice, oatmeal, millet, white rice, chicken fat (preserved with mixed tocopherols), potatoes, egg product, tomato pomace, duck, salmon, flaxseed, natural chicken flavor, choline chloride, dried chicory root, kelp, carrots, peas, apples, tomatoes, blueberries, spinach, dried skim milk, cranberry powder, rosemary extract, parsley flake, yucca schidigera extract, L-carnitine, dried fermentation products of *Enterococcus faecium*, *Lactobacillus acidophilus*, *Lactobacillus casei* and *Lactobacillus plantarum*, dried *Trichoderma longibrachiatum* fermentation extract, vitamin E supplement, iron proteinate, zinc proteinate, copper proteinate, ferrous sulfate, zinc sulfate, copper sulfate, potassium iodide, thiamine mononitrate, manganese proteinate, manganous oxide, ascorbic acid, vitamin A supplement, biotin, calcium pantothenate, manganese sulfate, sodium selenite, pyridoxine hydrochloride (vitamin B6), vitamin B12 supplement, riboflavin, vitamin D supplement, folic acid.

Chicken, turkey, chicken meal, and **ocean fish meal** are the first 4 ingredients. Notice that there are 2 meats followed by 2 meals. This ensures that the main protein is from an animal source and is primarily meat, not grains, allowing dogs to thrive, not just survive.

No corn or by-products are used in this food. Due to no corn/grains the digestibility of this food is very high.

Would you like to know what each example was?

Example 1: Dog Chow

Example 2: IAMS Proactive Health Chunks Formula

Example 3: Chicken Soup for the Dog Lover's Soul Adult Dog Formula