



# Dog Food Analysis and Grading



Choosing dog food is a very personal decision, and no one formula is ideal for any breed. High protein, meat-based diets are not simply for pets with kidney/urinary issues or high metabolism pets. Grains are fillers and metabolize into sugar, causing a gammit of problems including allergies, behavior issues and also poor muscle building. Food companies add corn/wheat etc to keep the price down and an important factor to keep in mind is that when you feed a higher quality food, you don't end up paying more in the long run because your pet needs to eat less in order to receive optimal nutrition from the food, not to mention the money saved on vet bills resulting from problems caused by poor quality nutrition. Foods full of fillers equal "garbage in/garbage out", meaning more food is required in order to receive the necessary nutrition, more stool is output to rid the body of grains and fillers that are unnecessary and undigestible (such as corn). We believe you should spend your money on your pet, not your vet.

The most important thing for anyone considering a new food is to read the label. First ingredient should be a human grade meat-meal is ideal because it means the water has been removed prior to weighing. Corn, Wheat, Glutens, BHA, BHT, Ethoxyquin, Byproducts, Animal Digest and chemicals/preservatives are all ingredients you want to avoid! It is not as important where you shop as it is to be informed about what your pet requires for ultimate health, and to be informed about the toxic effects of many ingredients that are in grocery store/big box/mass produced brands. Be sure that whatever pet food you choose to feed your furry friend, you are informed about your choices and feel that you have a good relationship with your pet store to feel comfortable that they are knowledgeable about ingredients in each of the formulas available. Please tell other dog lovers and puppy parents you know, about this information. Their dog deserves the best too!

To grade any dog food, you need to start with the list of ingredients. Start with a grade of 100 points, then . . . :

1. For every listing of "by-product", subtract 10 points
2. For every non-specific animal source ("meat" or "poultry", meat, meal or fat) reference, subtract 10 points
3. If the food contains BHA, BHT, or ethoxyquin, subtract 10 points
4. For every grain "mill run" or non-specific grain source subtract 5 points. If the same grain ingredient is used 2 or more times in the first five ingredients (i.e. "ground brown rice", "brewer's rice", "rice flour" are all the same grain), subtract 5 points
5. If the protein sources are not meat meal and there are less than 2 meats in the top 3 ingredients, subtract 3 points
6. If it contains any artificial colorants, subtract 3 points
7. If it contains ground corn or whole grain corn, subtract 3 points
8. If corn is listed in the top 5 ingredients, subtract 2 more points
9. If the food contains any animal fat other than fish oil, subtract 2 points
10. If lamb is the only animal protein source (unless your dog is allergic to other protein sources), subtract 2 points
11. If it contains soy or soybeans, subtract 2 points
12. If it contains wheat, subtract 2 points
13. If it contains beef (unless you know that your dog isn't allergic to beef), subtract 1 point
14. If it contains salt, subtract 1 point

Extra Credit:

- If any of the meat sources are organic, add 5 points
- If the food is endorsed by any major breed group or nutritionist, add 5 points
- If the food is baked not extruded, add 5 points
- If the food contains probiotics, add 3 points
- If the food contains fruit, add 3 points
- If the food contains vegetables (NOT corn or other grains), add 3 points
- If the animal sources are hormone-free and antibiotic-free, add 2 points
- If the food contains barley, add 2 points
- If the food contains flax seed oil (not just the seeds), add 2 points; If the food contains sunflower oil, add 1 point
- If the food contains oats or oatmeal, add 1 point
- For every different specific animal protein source (other than the first one; count "chicken" and "chicken meal" as only one protein source, but "chicken" and "fish" as 2 different sources), add 1 point
- If it contains glucosamine and chondroitin, add 1 point
- If the vegetables have been tested for pesticides and are pesticide-free, add 1 point

## Glossary of Terms Used in Dog Food

- **Animal Digest:** This is the dry by-product of rendered meat. During rendering, all usable animal parts (including fetal tissues and glandular wastes) are heated in vats and the liquid is separated from the dry meal. This meal is covered with charcoal and labeled "unfit for human consumption" before processing it into pet food. Digest can also include intestines, as well as the contents of those intestines, such as stool, bile, parasites and chemicals.
- **Animal Fat and Tallow:** Animal fat is a "generic" fat source that is most often made up of rendered animal fat, rancid restaurant grease or other oils that are deemed inedible for humans. Tallow is low quality hard white fat that most animals find hard to digest, not to mention the cardiac risks resulting.
- **Chemical Preservatives:** Chemical preservatives include BHA (butylated hydroxyanisole), BHT (butylated hydroxytoluene), propyl gallate, propylene glycol (also used in automotive antifreeze and is suspected of causing red blood cell damage) and ethoxquin, are all potentially cancer causing agents that your pets are eating every day.
- **Chicken By-products:** These are ground parts from poultry carcasses such as feet, heads, feathers, intestines, necks and undeveloped eggs and can include any rendered material.
- **Corn Products:** including corn meal, gluten and grits are cheap, allergy causing fillers & are very difficult for animals to digest.
- **Food Fragments:** Lower end by-products of the food manufacturing process, examples include wheat bran and brewers rice which are a waste product of the alcohol industry.
- **Ground Whole Grain Sorghum:** The feed value of grain sorghum is similar to corn and is grown primarily as a feed grain for livestock.
- **Meat and Bone Meal:** "Meat" and bone meal are inexpensive sources of animal protein. Note that these companies do not clarify the source of "meat", nor are they human-grade meat. The protein in Meat meal containing a large amount of processed bone may not be digestible and fail to provide adequate nutrition.
- **Meat Based:** A label that say "meat based" may also include blood vessels, tendons, organs and other parts of the rendered animal. Note again that these companies do not clarify the source of "meat", nor are they human-grade meat products.
- **Meat By-products:** Pet grade meat by-products consist of organs and parts not desired or not fit for human consumption. This can include organs, bones, blood and fatty tissue. It can also include brains, feet, heads, intestines and any other internal parts. Unbelievably, by-products can also contain cancerous or diseased tissue containing parasites, euthanized animals.

DOG FOOD	SCORE	GRADE
Artemis	114	A+
Authority Harvest Baked	116	A+
Beowulf Back to Basics	101	A+
Blue Buffalo	107	A+
Canidae	112	A+
Chicken Soup for the Doggy Soul	115	A+
Eagle Pack	102	A+
Innova	114	A+
Kirkland Signature Chicken, Rice & Vegetables	110	A+
Merrick	127	A++
Natural Balance	122	A++
Nature's Recipe	100	A
ProPlan Natural	94	A
Royal Canin Natural	96	A
Taste of the Wild	118	A+
Timberwolf	120	A++
Wellness	110	A+
Solid Gold	99	A
Verus	120	A++
Nutro Max	86	B
Alpo	81	C
Eukanuba	80	C
Members Mark Chicken & Rice	84	C
IAMS	73	D
Bil-Jac	68	F
Pedigree	20	F
Purina Beneful	17	F
Purina Dog Chow	62	F
Purina One	62	F
Science Diet	63	F

**\*Dogs with allergies (paw chewing, hair loss, chronic ear infections) should avoid: WHEAT, CORN & CHICKEN\***



# TOXIC FOODS FOR DOGS



**Onions:** Both onions and garlic contain the toxic ingredient Thiosulphate, but onions are a greater danger. Many dog biscuits contain \*small\* amounts of garlic. Because garlic contains less of this toxin, huge amounts would need to be consumed to be toxic. This poison builds up the system; it can be toxic in one large dose or with repeated consumption of small amounts.

**Chocolate:** Chocolate contains Theobromine, a compound that is a cardiac stimulant and a diuretic. This can be fatal to dogs.

**Grapes & Raisins:** Grapes are dangerous because of an unknown substance which is toxic to dogs – affects canine's kidneys.

**Most Fruit Pits and Seeds:** These seeds contain Cyanogenic Glycosides that result in cyanide poisoning, but the fruit itself is OK. (e.g. apple seeds, cherry pits, peach pits).

**Macadamia Nuts:** These contain an unknown substance that is toxic to dogs.

**Bones:** Most cooked bones should \*not\* be given to dogs (especially chicken bones) because they can splinter and cause laceration of the digestive system and/or become lodged in your pet's throat.

**Potato Peelings, Green parts of Tomatoes or Green Potatoes:** All contain Oxalates, which can affect the digestive, nervous, and urinary systems.

**Broccoli:** Broccoli is only toxic in large quantities.

**Yeast Dough:** Yeast Dough can produce gas and swell in your pet's stomach and may lead to rupture of the digestive system.

**Beer/Wine/Liquor/ Alcohol:** Alcohol of any kind may lead to coma or even death.

**Human Vitamins:** Vitamins intended for humans, especially those containing iron, can cause damage to the lining of the digestive system as well as cause kidney and liver damage.

**Persimmons:** Persimmons can cause intestinal blockage.

**Raw Eggs and Raw Fish :** Raw eggs and fish can cause Salmonella poisoning.

**Salt, Baking Soda, Baking Powder:** In large amounts these can cause an electrolyte imbalance. Severe electrolyte imbalances can lead to muscle spasm or even congestive heart failure.

**Mushrooms:** Mushrooms may contain toxins which could cause liver and kidney damage.

**Sugar-Free Foods:** Sugar-free foods containing Xylitol have been found to cause liver failure in some dogs.

**Nutmeg:** Nutmeg may cause tremors, seizures, and central nervous system damage.

**Avocado:** All parts of the avocado fruit and tree are toxic to dogs.

**Mustard Seeds**

**Tea (Caffeinated Blends)**

**Walnuts**

**There may be other foods that your dog should not consume;  
so always ask your vet when you are unsure.**