

Dog Food Comparison

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Read Your Pet Food Label!

The best way to determine the quality of your pet food is to carefully read and understand the label. While reading the label, ask the following questions: Does the food use high quality ingredients? Is there a quality meat source as one of the first two ingredients? Better yet, are the ingredients human-grade? Is the bag dated for freshness?

There are literally hundreds of brands and varieties of dog food. Below is a table listing a few popular dog food brands, with the less desirable ingredients highlighted in red. Keep in mind that ingredients are listed in descending order by weight. For example, corn listed as one of the first three ingredients is less desirable than if listed as the eight ingredient.

Dog Food Comparison Chart

Dog Food	First Eight Ingredients	Human Grade
Bil-Jac Select	Fresh chicken by-products ¹ (organ meat only), fresh chicken, corn ² , chicken by-product meal ¹ , dried beet pulp (sugar removed), ⁷ fresh chicken liver, brewers dried yeast, cane molasses ⁷	No
Eukenuba Adult	Chicken, chicken by-product meal ¹ , corn meal ² , ground whole grain sorghum, ground whole grain barley, chicken fat, fish meal, Brewers rice ³	No
Flint River Ranch	Chicken meal, whole wheat flour, ground rice, lamb meal, poultry fat, ground wheat, flax seed, dried whole egg	Yes
Flint River Ranch Lamb/Millet/Rice	Lamb Meal, Ground Whole Millet, Ground Whole Rice, Rice Bran, Menhaden Fish Meal, Grapeseed Oil, Flaxseed Meal, Lecithin	Yes
Iams Adult	Chicken, corn meal ² , ground whole grain sorghum, chicken by-product meal ¹ , ground whole grain barley meal, fish meal, chicken fat, dried beet pulp	No
Kibbles 'N Bits	Corn ² , soybean meal, ground wheat, beef & bone meal ⁴ , animal fat ⁵ (BHA ⁶ and citric acid used as preservatives), corn syrup ⁷ , wheat middlings, water sufficient for processing	No
Nutro Max	Chicken meal, wheat flour, ground whole wheat, rice bran, poultry fat, corn gluten meal ² , ground rice, lamb meal	No
Pedigree	Ground yellow corn ² , meat and bone meal ⁴ , corn gluten meal ² , chicken by-product meal ¹ , animal fat ⁵ (preserved with BHA/BHT ⁶), wheat mill run, natural poultry flavor, rice, salt ⁷	No
Proplan Adult	Chicken, Brewers rice ³ , whole grain wheat, poultry by-product meal ¹ , corn gluten meal ² , beef tallow ⁸ , whole grain corn ² , corn bran ²	No
Purina Beneful	Ground yellow corn ² , chicken by-product meal ¹ , corn gluten meal ² , whole wheat flour, beef tallow ⁸ , rice flour, beef soy flour,	No

	sugar ⁷	
Purina Dog Chow	Ground yellow corn ² , poultry by-product meal ¹ , corn gluten meal ² , soybean meal, beef tallow ⁸ preserved with mixed-tocopherols, brewers rice ³ , dicalcium phosphate, calcium carbonate	No
Purina One Chicken and Rice	Chicken, brewers rice ³ , whole grain corn ² , corn gluten meal ² , poultry by-product meal ¹ , whole grain wheat, beef tallow ⁸ preserved with mixed tocopherols, natural flavors	No
Science Diet Natures Best Chicken	Brewers rice ³ , ground wheat, turkey meal, corn gluten meal ² , soybean meal, animal fat ⁵ , chicken, vegetable oil	No
Science Diet Original	Chicken, corn meal ² , ground grain sorghum, ground wheat, chicken by-product meal ¹ , brewers rice ³ , soybean meal, animal fat ⁵ (preserved with BHA ⁶ , propyl gallate ⁶ and citric acid)	No

¹**Meat by-products:** Pet grade meat by-products consist of organs and parts either not desired, or condemned, for human consumption. This can include bones, blood, intestines, lungs, ligaments, heads, feet, and feathers.

²**Corn:** Corn products are difficult for dogs to digest.

³**Food Fragments:** Lower cost by-products of another food manufacturing process. Examples include wheat bran and brewer's rice (a waste product of the alcohol industry).

⁴**Meat and bone meal:** "Meat and bone meal" and "beef and bone meal" are inexpensive sources of animal protein. The protein in a meal containing a large amount of bone may be poorly digestible and fail to provide adequate nutrition.

⁵**Animal Fat:** Animal fat is a "generic" fat source that is most often made up of rendered animal fat, restaurant grease, or other oils too rancid or deemed inedible for humans. Look for a named fat source, such as poultry or chicken fat, that is naturally preserved.

⁶**Chemical Preservatives:** Chemical preservatives include butylated hydroxyanisole (BHA), butylated hydroxytoluene (BHT), propyl gallate, propylene glycol (also used as a less-toxic version of automotive antifreeze), and ethoxyquin. BHA, BHT, and ethoxyquin are potentially cancer-causing agents. The long term build-up of these chemicals (that may be eaten every day for the life of your pet!) have not been thoroughly studied and may ultimately be harmful.

⁷**Sweeteners:** Sweeteners such as corn syrup, sugar, and cane mallasses are usually added to lower quality foods to increase their appeal. Dietary sugars can aggravate health problems, including diabetes.

⁸**Beef Tallow:** A low quality fat product.

References:

[1] The Animal Protection Institute, "What's Really in Pet Food.", January 29, 2002.

[2] Kerns, Nancy "Choose the Best Dry Food.", *The Whole Dog Journal*, February 2000, 13-17.

[3] The Animal Protection Institute, "Selecting a Commercial Pet Food. ", October 25, 2001.

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