

FIVE MORE PET FOOD SECRETS REVEALED

1. Life Stage Concept - Bogus

There is only one justification for making pet foods for young, middle aged and older dogs and that is SHELF SPACE. The company that introduced golf ball sized dog food kibble way back when also dreamt up this notion. Ask yourself, "In the wild, do wolves or bobcats seek out different prey according to how old they are?" The whole notion is absurd. Call the maker of your pet food brand and ask them to support the assertion that puppies need a different food than adults. True, a puppy needs to eat more and active dogs need to eat more than inactive dogs. But does the bag have to be another color and cost more? HmMMM.... Pet foods routinely display a notice declaring, "Complete and Balanced for all life stages". Oh, if this is true, why do we need the other 5 types you offer then? Even some dog biscuits have this lunacy printed on the package. The facts are these: Find the best pet food you can and use it from youth to old age. If it is a commercial brand, understand it has strengths and gaps. Fill in the gaps yourself. The "best" pet food would be a brand that is naturally preserved, highly digestible (whole ingredients) and that doesn't contain stool hardeners or dyes. The biggest gap is the lack of enzymes which are cooked to death.

2. What "Complete and Balanced" Really Means

This sweet sounding but vacuous tag really means that whatever is in the package will keep the animal alive sufficiently long to reproduce itself if fed as a sole ration. That's ALL it means. Most pet owners would prefer to have their dog or cat live beyond 10 months however. The responsibility for finding and feeding a good diet is on the owner. Don't be satisfied with empty slogans.

3. What's "Fresh" about a food that's 13 months old?

When buying pet food, look for a fresh bag. What's that? You can't read some production code that substitutes letters for numbers and dates. Maybe you're not supposed to understand that that bag is 13 months (or 17 months) old. Nutrients degrade over time if exposed to air. Unless you are buying frozen, freeze-dried or vacuum sealed, its best to get the most recently made. Pet food manufacturers like to have a shelf life of 18 months.

To get it, they use preservatives to keep oxygen from interacting with the oils (fats) in the food and turning them rancid. Fine, but this isn't an all or none process. It happens over time. Additionally, the vitamins and minerals also degrade over time. While you're talking to your pet food maker, ask how to read the date code on their bags if it isn't reasonably clear. Then, buy the freshest bag you can find. Best bet, feed frozen or freeze-dried food with some good real ingredients mixed in.

4. The Joke about "Lite" Diets

So, your pet is overweight. How did that happen anyway? There is really no mystery here. Too many calories, too little activity. Wait! The fix is right here in the bag marked, "Lite and Fit". Right? Doubtful at best. Since the advent of these "Lite" diets, has there been a decrease in the number of overweight pets? Hmmmm... These are major profit centers for the makers. They contain less meat and fat (the costlier) ingredients and more (much) of the grains and fillers to reduce the number of calories. Then, guess what? You get to pay more! Guess what again? Your pet won't lose weight! Fact is, your pet will feel even less like moving around with a belly full of chaff than formerly with another diet. Don't buy into this ruse. It is much better to feed a good food in the amount sufficient to provide the calories for the desired body weight and to INCREASE the activity level by 300%. You've heard it said, "Diet without exercise doesn't work". That's true for pets as well.

5. Those Oh-So-Expensive Rx Diets

This will undoubtedly rankle some folks. Oh well... A company in Kansas makes a line (a BIG line) of prescription only foods that get dispensed through vets. First, they diagnose then they prescribe and sell you the "medicine". Hmmmm, this isn't allowed on the people side is it? Have you ever read the label on this bag of stuff that cost you dearly? See any "medicine" in there? See anything that could possibly justify the price? Not to pick on one company alone, many want in on this cash cow and are beating each other up to get the vet's push. Shine the light over here! This practice is suspicious at best and deplorable at worst. You have an ailing pet and now we'll saddle you with expensive pet food forever. Ask your vet instead what to control in the animal's diet. Hopefully, he or she knows. Some of these "foods" are so low in one aspect or high in another that they actually should be medically managed while fed. Problem is, they aren't. Another problem is that they don't usually solve anything unless

other methods are undertaken and get owner compliance. There is no magic in that overpriced bag. Don't rely on it to fix problems. Best bet... find out what caused the malady and if your pet's diet can be modified to prevent recurrence, modify it.

Note:

Your pets depend on you to make the right choice when it comes to feeding them a nutritious diet. Their quality of life is at stake. Become a label reader! Take the time to bone up on nutrition. Call the Company if you have questions. Most have a toll free number on their bag. Ask to speak to a Nutritionist or the person who formulated the food you are using. Dig until you are satisfied or until you know it's time to switch to another food. For your pet's sake, don't be content with the miserable status quo.

Not all currently available pet foods are totally rotten and not all companies engage in the above practices. Some are much better and more ethical than others. It is far beyond the scope of this ditty to list them or to make specific recommendations. You are the boss. Now, you're the boss with the inside track on what to watch out for. Please take your pet's diet seriously. It's the right thing to do. Feel free to pass this article along to interested parties.