



Pet Nutrition

Wholesome food for healthy pets.

Pet Food Ingredients List

The list of ingredients is the most important part of the labeling on any package of pet food. By law, all ingredients must be listed in order, by weight. This portion of the label must indicate if the food is preserved and if so, how. All ingredients on the list are defined by AAFCO. Listed below are some of the ingredient definitions you need to know.

Meat – is the **clean flesh** derived from slaughtered mammals and is limited to that part of the striate muscle which is skeletal or that which is found in the tongue, in the diaphragm, in the heart, or in the esophagus; with or without the accompanying and overlying fat and the portions of the skin, sinew, nerve, and blood vessels which normally accompany the flesh. It shall be suitable for use in animal food. If it bears a name descriptive of its kind, it must correspond thereto.

Meat Meal – is the **rendered product** from mammal tissues, exclusive of any added blood, hair, hoof, horn, hide trimmings, manure, stomach and rumen contents, except in such amounts as may appear unavoidably in good processing practices.... It shall not contain more than 12% pepsin indigestible residue and not more than 9% of the crude protein in the product shall be pepsin indigestible.

The following are all ingredients that I would recommend you avoid.

Meat By-Products – is the non-rendered, clean parts, **other than meat**, derived from slaughtered mammals. It includes but is not limited to, lungs spleen, kidneys, brain, livers, blood, bone, partially defatted low temperature fatty tissue, and stomachs and intestines freed of their contents. It does not include hair, horns, teeth and hoofs. It shall be suitable for use in animal food. If it bears a name descriptive of its kind, it must correspond thereto.

Poultry By-Products – must consist of non-rendered clean parts of the carcasses of slaughtered poultry such as **heads, feet, viscera**, free from fecal content and foreign content and foreign matter except in such trace amounts as might occur unavoidably in good factory practice.

Fish By-Products – must consist of non-rendered clean undecomposed portions of fish (such as, but **not limited to, heads, fins, tails, ends, skin, bone and viscera**), which result from the fish processing industry. If it bears a name descriptive of its kinds, it must correspond thereto. Any single constituent used as such may be labeled according to the common or usual name of the particular portion used (such as fish heads, fish tails etc.)

Poultry By-Product Meal – consists of the ground, rendered, clean parts of the carcass of slaughtered poultry, **such as necks, feet, undeveloped eggs, intestines**, exclusive of feather, except in such amounts as might occur unavoidably in good processing practices.

Meat and Bone Meal – is the rendered product from mammal tissues, including bone, exclusive of any added blood, hair, hoof, horn, hide trimmings, manure, stomach and rumen contents, except in such amounts as may appear unavoidably in good processing practices.... It shall not contain more than 12% pepsin indigestible residue and not more than 9% of the crude protein in the product shall be pepsin indigestible.

Animal Digest – is a material, which results from the chemical and/or enzymatic hydrolysis of clean and undecomposed animal tissue. The animal tissues used shall be exclusive of hair, horns, teeth, hooves and feathers, except in such trace amounts as might occur unavoidably in good factory practice and shall be suitable for animal feed.

As stated previously, law requires that ingredients be listed in order by weight. This means that the heaviest ingredient should appear on the top of the list. We feel that meat should always be the predominant ingredient in any pet food; however, just because it appears first on the list does not mean that is the case. Many manufacturers like to fragment an ingredient which misleads us. Below is an ingredient list from a popular dog food which may appear to have lamb as the predominant ingredient.

*Lamb Meal, **Ground Rice, Rice Flour, Rice Bran**, Sunflower Oil (preserved with mixed Tocopherols, a source of natural Vitamin E), Poultry Fat (preserved with mixed Tocopherols, a source of natural Vitamin E), Natural Flavors, Rice Gluten, Dried Egg Product, Dried Beet Pulp*

While Lamb Meal is the first ingredient listed, if we combined all three rice ingredients into just rice, then rice would probably weigh the most, which means this food is predominantly rice. Not what you thought is it?

Fragment or splitting ingredients as above is bad for two reasons. 1) It is deceptive and 2) it takes away from the nutritional value of the food. Whole grains are always more nutritious when used whole as opposed to being used in a fragmented form. The best pet food manufacturers will only buy whole grains and will not process them until the day the food is made.