



Pet Nutrition

Wholesome food for healthy pets.

The True Cost of A Pet Food And Feeding Directions

The feeding directions on a package of pet food tell you how much you need to feed the average pet in order for them to get an adequate amount of nutrition. This number is usually given as a range, and it is usually best to start at the low end of the range if you do not want to overfeed your pet. The amount you need to feed your pet is a critical piece of information if you wish to calculate the true cost of a particular food.

Pet food is an expense and many people wish to make sure they are buying a food that fits their budget. Unfortunately, many people erroneously assume that the cheaper the cost per pound, the better the value. This is not the case.

Eagle Pack Original	Hill's Science Diet Original	Pro Pac Adult Chunks	Purina Pro Plan	Purina ONE
33lbs	40lbs	33lbs	37.5lbs	37.5lbs
\$27.93	\$33.99	\$19.99	\$33.99	\$31.99
\$0.85/lb	\$0.85/lb	\$0.61/lb	\$0.91/lb	\$0.85/lb

The table above compares five foods and the cost per pound of food. Based on this information, we would be led to believe that at \$0.61/lb, Pro Pac Adult Chunks is the most economical food. However the above calculations do not take into consideration how much we would have to feed our dog on a daily basis. You see pet foods are not all the same. Depending on the ingredients and the quality of the ingredients the amount you feed a dog on a daily basis can vary substantially.

Let's say our dog weighs 50 pounds. Based on the manufacturers feeding directions, our dog would need the following amounts of food on a daily basis in order to get minimal nutrition.

Eagle Pack Original	Hill's Science Diet Original	Pro Pac Adult Chunks	Purina Pro Plan	Purina ONE
2.0 cups	2.5 cups	3.0 cups	2.5 cups	2.5 cups

Now in order to determine how much each food actually costs to feed on a daily basis, we also need to know how many cups of food are in a bag of each of the foods. In order to calculate that number, we need to know the food density; how much one cup of the food weighs. Not surprisingly, this number is not on most pet food packages and many manufacturers will not even release it if you call them and ask for it. I do happen to have the food density for the 5 foods we are discussing, and the table below lists the actual daily cost for feeding each food to a 50 pound dog.

Eagle Pack Original	Hill's Science Diet Original	Pro Pac Adult Chunks	Purina Pro Plan	Purina ONE
2.0 cups	2.5 cups	3.0 cups	2.5 cups	2.5 cups
3.6	3.5	4.0	4.0	4.0
\$0.38/day	\$0.46/day	\$0.45/day	\$0.57/day	\$0.53/day

If you review the above table, you can see that Pro Pac Adult Chunks, the food with the lowest per pound cost, is actually in the middle of the range of actual costs. Eagle Pack Original, which had one of the highest per pound costs, is actually the most economical of the foods because you feed the least amount.