

How to Read a Pet Food Label

Pet food label regulations can create confusion.

Ingredients

- Ingredients are listed in descending order by weight
- Because chicken, beef and lamb have high water content, they can weigh more than dry ingredients such as grains, meals and vitamins, so they are often listed first

Guaranteed Analysis

- Indicates minimum or maximum levels of nutrients
- Not an indication of the actual nutrient content of the pet food
- Not a guarantee of nutritional quality
- Moisture levels in pet foods vary, making it virtually impossible for the average pet owner to accurately compare nutritional information

AAFCO Statement

- Verifies the method of testing used to determine the nutritional adequacy of a pet food
- Indicates the food provides complete and balanced nutrition for each specific lifestage (growing animals, pregnant and nursing mothers, or adults), or it might say the product is nutritionally adequate for all lifestages

Pet Nutrition Facts

Ingredients: Chicken By-Product Meal, Whole Grain Corn, Brewers Rice, Corn Gluten Meal, Animal Fat (preserved with mixed tocopherols and citric acid), Chicken Liver Flavor, Choline Chloride, Potassium Chloride, Calcium Sulfate, DL-Methionine, Vitamin E Supplement, Iodized Salt, vitamins (L-Ascorbyl-2-Polyphosphate (source of Vitamin C), Vitamin E Supplement, Niacin, Thiamine Mononitrate, Vitamin A Supplement, Calcium Pantothenate, Riboflavin, Biotin, Vitamin B12 Supplement, Pyridoxine Hydrochloride, Folic Acid, Vitamin D3 Supplement), Taurine, minerals (Ferrous Sulfate, Zinc Oxide, Copper Sulfate, Manganous Oxide, Calcium Iodate, Sodium Selenite), preserved with Mixed Tocopherols and Citric Acid, Phosphoric Acid, Beta-Carotene, Rosemary Extract.

Guaranteed Analysis:

Crude Protein	Min. 30.0 %
Crude Fat	Min. 19.0 %
Crude Fiber	Max. 2.0 %
Moisture	Max. 9.5 %
Ash.	Max. 6.0 %
Calcium	Min. 0.6 %
Phosphorus	Min. 0.5 %
Phosphorus	Max. 1.0 %
Magnesium.	Max. 0.095 %
Vitamin E.	Min. 525 IU/kg
Taurine.	Min. 0.10 %
Ascorbic Acid* (Vitamin C)	Min. 85 mg/kg

*Not recognized as an essential nutrient by the AAFCO Cat Food Nutrient Profiles.

AAFCO Statement: Animal feeding tests using AAFCO procedures substantiate that Science Diet® Adult Optimal Care™ Original Cat Food provides complete and balanced nutrition for maintenance of adult cats.

Protect from moisture. Store in a cool, dry place.

Caution: Check the statement from the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) before you purchase a bag of pet food. If it states that the food is an “all lifestage” product, then the food contains high levels of nutrients designed to support the growth of puppies or kittens, and could result in excess nutrients that may be detrimental to an adult or mature adult pet’s health.



For more information, please visit HillsPet.com

AAFCO Standards

AAFCO stands for Association of American Feed Control Officials. This organization sets the nutritional standards for pet foods sold in the United States. The nutritional adequacy of a pet food is determined by one of two methods based on nutritional levels and procedures defined by AAFCO.

Formulation Method

- The formulation method does not require feeding the product to an animal
- This method is less expensive and results are determined more quickly, as actual feeding or digestibility trials are not required
- There is no guarantee of pet acceptance or nutrient bioavailability when utilizing this method

Brand X Dog Formula is **formulated** to meet the nutritional levels established by the Association of American Feed Control Officials Dog Food Nutrient Profiles for **all lifestages**.

Feeding Trial Method

- The feeding trial method requires feeding the product to animals
- This method is also known as the **Gold Standard** for determining nutritional adequacy and is the preferred method
- The manufacturer must perform an AAFCO protocol feeding trial using the formula being tested as the sole source of nutrition
- Feeding trials are the best way to document how a pet will perform when fed a specific food

Animal feeding tests using AAFCO procedures substantiate that Brand Y Adult dog food provides complete and balanced nutrition for **maintenance of adult dogs**.

Reading pet food labels can be confusing. There is no way to determine the true quality of a pet food by reading the ingredient listing or the guaranteed analysis. Individual ingredients do not determine the quality of a pet food. **It's the nutritional value of each ingredient blended together that delivers a product appropriate for a pet's specific age or condition.**

