

# Beet pulp means your dog won't fart as much. Now Dad will have to blame the kids.

Ahhh beet pulp, nature's clever way of ensuring firmer poos and less smelly rear ends. You will find it in every bag of SUPERCOAT along with real meat for a delicious taste and strong muscles, omegas for healthy skin and shiny coats and antioxidants for healthy immune systems. The only thing you won't find is artificial colours, flavours or preservatives. Say goodbye to family drives with the windows down. Fetch the SUPERCOAT. Good owner!



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*"If the pet is happy and alert after feeding with a glossy coat, no itching, bright eyes and clear ears, you know you're probably hitting the diet right."*

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If you're not familiar with 'byproducts derived from chicken' it's defined as what's left over when the lean muscle meat is stripped away. Whatever remains of the carcass not generally consumed by humans—bones, blood, necks, feet, intestines, ligaments, undeveloped eggs and almost all the other parts exclusive of feathers except in such amounts as might occur unavoidably in good processing practice—is used in pet food and known as "by-products" or other names on pet food labels.

So the same goes for beef, lamb or pork—byproducts include hoofs and horns as well as all the other offal and stripped down parts. They are not as high protein as muscle meat but have traditionally been included in the mix.

Look for whole or quality vegetables, and high quality fat sources such as nut and seed oils rather than render or tallow which are boiled up animal fats and other, often unsavoury ingredients. "Animal fat" and "meat proteins" are euphemisms for low-quality, low-priced mixed ingredients of uncertain origin.

Avoid water as the first ingredient and our preference would not be for broth to be the first ingredient either though both are used in processing.

Avoid grains as the first ingredients including corn gluten and other meals. Where grains are listed, the preference is for whole grains, not fragments, 'mill-run' or meals. With the sensitivity of dogs and cats to allergies from grain products becoming more common, you'll see the highest end of pet foods in the US limiting or eliminating them and that is slowly flowing through to here.

Dogs have no biological requirement for any carbohydrates; they thrive without them. Carbohydrate sources are often used in dog food as fillers and binders, though manufacturers will say that they have included their carb sources for some nutrient or another, or because they are an important fibre source, helping slow the dog's digestion and make it more efficient. The latter claims may be true, but the fact remains that all carb sources are less expensive than animal-based proteins and are not required by the dog.

In some wet foods, you may see little more on the ingredients list besides an animal protein source, water or broth (required to help with the physical processing of the material), and the vitamin/mineral sources. The latter are added in amounts that ensure adequate levels of those nutrients even after certain percentages of the vitamins are destroyed by the heat of the sterilization process required for wet foods in cans, trays, and pouches.

Often a carb source is used in a nominal way as a thickener/binder. Various types of "gum" (such as guar gum, from the seed of the guar plant, and carrageenan gum, from seaweed) are also common thickeners.

Totally avoid products with artificial colours and artificial preservatives, especially 220, 222 and 228 which are sulphur based. In our last edition, we extensively went into the problems associated with sulphur dioxide and other sulphur products used to preserve fresh meats. Shortly after our article appeared, the Australian Small Animal Veterinary Association warned families to only buy meat for pets which is fit for humans due to this sulphur problem.

Once you get past deciphering the ingredients panels, you really need to become familiar with what nutrients are present and in what proportions. These are vital according to the dog or cat's age, breed, size and health factors. For example, what is the activity level for caloric considerations as well as growth since puppies need more energy-dense foods while older dogs are less active and need less fat or protein. Consider age, environmental considerations (inside or outside dog, cold weather or tropical), is the dog reproducing, lactating, ill, and how are the skin, coat and insulating qualities of fat versus being overweight?

Check out the Guaranteed Analysis panel to see the proportion of protein, fat, fibre, moisture and if included, carbohydrates. Give points if it includes more than the nutrients only required such as designated vitamin and mineral contents.

Other factors to consider are the outcomes of feeding.

What sort of behaviour does the pet exhibit under the influence of the food? A lethargic, bloated, flatulent pet with messy poo is a warning sign as are bad coat and skin problems. If the pet is happy and alert after feeding with a glossy coat, no itching, bright eyes and clear ears, you know you're probably hitting the diet right. But you'll only know over time, not just after switching food or testing for a week.

Consider what you are feeding your pet and what comes out. Does what comes out look far too much like what went in? Does your dog have firm stools or are they consistently runny and does your dog have regular bowel movements?

I've joked about this before, but the Waltham company which created Advance, actually had a Faecal Grading System which shows explicit photos of the range of poo types and what causes them. Firm brown stools, which are sometimes chalky from bones are the best type and of course runny and dark indicates problems. If you get one or access it online, it's a revelation. Google Waltham Dog Faeces and you can get the full colour PDF.

It's a good idea to keep a written record of what you are feeding with a torn off label showing ingredients and analysis in case vet questions or problems crop up. Is your pet gassy after eating wheat or gluten products? Does he break out in itching when having chicken or high grain products? If signs of intolerance show up, it's time to switch foods and compare results with hits and misses in the long term.

It's also about palatability which pet food manufacturers invest in heavily. If the pet doesn't really eat the food or has to be coerced by adding other ingredients, it may be fine but not be tasty. It may not have enough salt or sugar! Pets favour junk food as we do so funny enough, they may not find the healthiest options as palatable as those loaded with crap and artificial flavours.

Having digested all of the factors above, you're ready to look at what's in the can.

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We took foods submitted and include main contents on each without ranking them in any order. Remember, those foods that were freely submitted to us by manufacturers or importers are being considered regardless of whether that brand has or has not been advertised with us. And to their credit, none of those submitting knew what we were going to do, did not receive the results until this was published and also ran the risk of our submitting products for lab analysis if we chose.

We didn't have to. The ingredients and nutrients speak highly of the products. And the brands that had adequate notice, time and reminders to offer up their products, but elected not to, speaks volumes!

We are detailing only the key ingredients in the foods by volume and not listing those in minor amounts—such as salt, specific vitamin or mineral additives—so you can get a grasp of what the majority of the food is comprised of. We also give the nutritional breakdown.

First, to pick from the low end of the food chain, we'll outline what NoFrills Dog Food from Franklins Chunks with Chicken 700 gram can reads like—which was not submitted and which we picked from the shelf of our local store.



Selected Meat and Meat By Products derived from Poultry, Beef, Mutton and Pork, Ground Poultry Bone, Vegetable Proteins, Cereals Vitamin and Mineral Supplements, Food Colouring.

Crude Protein 6%, Crude Fat 5%, Crude Fibre 1% Salt 1.1%

Made in Australia.

It lives up to its name. No Frills. Lumping Meat and Meat By Products together as one ingredient, you don't know the proportion of either and you have a variety of meats to choose from—poultry, not chicken; Mutton, not Lamb. Vegetable Proteins are not vegetables as we know them and Cereals could be anything. Food colouring, not defined, is not for the dog's eyes and not a necessary ingredient.

Also not submitted was Pedigree pouch product and we picked the Small Dog formulation of Casserole with Lamb and Turkey which uses all the tricks of the marketing trade to make it seem better than it is. Remember the word Casserole as it was used above? And 'with' specifying the proportion of those two items? On the front, next to the smiling pleading doggie face is 'for healthy skin VITACOAT and a shiny coat' and the words 'Specially formulated for Little Champions'. Hits all the bells doesn't it?

Flip the 150 gram pouch over and there's a photo testimonial from a dog and owner. But the ingredients are:



Chicken and/or beef and/or sheep, (but in what proportions?) then lamb and turkey which means due to them being 'with ingredients' they need only comprise 3% by volume. Cereals and cereal derivatives (which could be flours, meals, gluten, mill runs or inferior grains). Gelling agents, vegetable fibre (not the vegetable itself, just the fibre), vegetable oil (unspecified) and colouring agents which are actually greater than the amount of vitamins and minerals which are the last ingredient.

Crude Protein 8%, Crude Fat 4%, Crude Fibre 1% Salt .4%

Made in New Zealand.

Despite the millions of dollars invested in TV ads, sponsorships of breeders, bus shelters, billboards, radio and print ads, the ingredients speak louder than the marketing hype. I wouldn't feed it to my dog.

In Coles and Woolworths, there is a product line from Lovitt's called Excellence and you will also find Nature's Gift brands.

Lovitt's submitted several foods and they also manufacture under contract for other brands.

Lovitt's Excellence Plus Calcium Tender Beef, Rice and Garlic in the 680 gram can lists Meats including:

Beef, lamb, venison, and chicken, brown rice, garlic, gelling agent, vitamins and minerals. Fairly straightforward. The nutritional analysis is Protein 10.5%, Fat 5.5 %, Fibre .5% Salt .4% and it's made in New Zealand.



The front of the can has the requisite happy dog but no hype. Our test dog devoured it, and he can be pretty picky! Another Lovitt's Plus Omega formula listed Succulent Lamb, Pasta and Vegetables, Succulent being the only adjective on the can. The ingredients were meats including lamb, beef, venison, chicken, mixed vegetables, pasta, gelling agent, sunflower oil, flaxseed oil, fish oil, vitamins and minerals

The oils were specified and like the other can, the ingredients were plainly visible, brown rice and garlic pieces in the first, vegetables and pasta bits in the latter.

Nutrience has a number of canned formulas and we chose their Junior Puppy 369 gram can. It lists:

Chicken, chicken broth, chicken liver, brown rice, oceanfish, sunflower oil, guar gum, potassium chloride, brewers dried yeast, dried kelp before 27 other clearly defined ingredients from salt to herbs, vitamins and minerals.

Crude Protein 9%, Crude Fat 6%, Crude Fibre 1% no figure for salt but Ash was 3% and it also detailed moisture at 78%.

Likewise their Duck Rabbit and Potatoes formula listed duck, rabbit, duck broth, potatoes and sunflower oil as its first five ingredients and then a clearly outlined 32 other ingredients.

Made in Canada.



No hype on the front label, it gave the age range and had info in three languages. Very straightforward. Our test dog Scooter devoured the Puppy food even though he can't read French. Two paws up.

To their credit, Nature's Gift sent us a large range of dog and cat formulas and they were all clearly labelled with a minimum of hype. Their ingredients list for the 380 gram Chicken Oats and Vegetables gave the three ingredients only in that order and specified it contained no red meat but was '70% Real Chicken'. It also claimed no by products or additives.



Crude Protein 10%, Crude Fat 8%, Crude Fibre 1.2%, Calcium 1.2%, Phosphorus .6%, Ash 3.1%, Moisture 68% and Salt (occurring naturally) 0%

Made in Australia

Theirs is an excellent product with clear labelling and an admirable amount of nutritional information. Lilly was initially sceptical (health food?) but had no problem knocking back the can once started.

Eagle Pack has their Holistic Select brand which has six different dog and five cat products, all of which they submitted.

Picking the Tuna, Salmon & Shrimp Formula 369 gram can, the list started with:

Tuna, Fish Broth, Chicken, Salmon, Chicken Liver, Shrimp, Oat Bran, Dried Egg Product, Carrots, Peas, Potatoes, Flaxseed, and other minor ingredients. Crude Protein - 9.0%, Crude Fat 6.5%, Crude Fibre - 1%, Moisture 78.0%

The cat Ocean Fish 156 gram can contained:

Ocean Fish, Fish Broth, Chicken, Chicken Liver, Tuna, Rolled Oats, Carrots, Peas, Potatoes, Guar Gum, Brewers Dried Yeast, Dried Egg Product, Cranberry Powder, Flaxseed, Dried Kelp, Choline Chloride, Carrageenan, Yucca Schidigera Extract, Taurine, Vitamins and Minerals.

Crude Protein - 9.0%, Crude Fat 5.0%, Crude Fibre - 1.5%, Moisture 78.0% and it also lists its taurine, magnesium and ash contents

Both promise 75% meat using whole fresh fish and only 2-4% carbohydrates and no by products. Made in the USA in big letters on the cans.

Innova's EVO line is sold only in Pets Paradise and Pet Goods Direct stores and comes from the US as well. Their plain Dog Food formulation lists:

Turkey, Chicken, Turkey Broth, Chicken Broth, Chicken Meal, Herring, Carrots, Whole Eggs, Salmon Meal, Natural Flavors, Guar Gum, Seaweed Extract, Apples, Tomato Flakes, Cottage Cheese, Herring Oil and then 27 mineral and vitamin ingredients.

Crude Protein - 12.0%, Crude Fat 8.0%, Crude Fibre - .5%, Moisture 78.0% and it also lists Vitamin E levels. It also claims no grains, high protein and lo carb, which it is, though the fat level is a bit high.

That's it for what we had submitted and it was as exhausting typing in those ingredients as it was for our dogs to digest them.

Over the past three articles on kibbles, fresh and frozen meat products and treats, many readers have called us to ask what we recommend. We won't be drawn on recommending specific brands over the phone, especially when we don't know the dog or cat and their conditions. Plus we just don't have the time to do it. We hope this article helps for those of you who use or plan to make canned food a part of your pet's diet mix.

As a final note, the best foods have the most responsive and knowledgeable customer service people, toll free services for questions, extensive websites with a wealth of information and quick answers to your specific questions. We urge you to take the time to ask your current brands' hotline staff the sort of questions we have raised here if you wish to know more about the product you are feeding your pet or what may be best if you are looking to change. Feel free to tell them you saw it in Urban Animal. We certainly have nothing to hide!

