



**LEASHES & LEADS IS  
COMMITTED TO  
PROMOTING THE  
OVERALL HEALTH AND  
WELLNESS OF YOUR PET.  
THAT'S WHY YOU WILL  
ONLY FIND PREMIUM,  
HIGH QUALITY FOODS  
ON OUR SHELVES.**

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# PET FOODS

## THE REAL STORY ON PREMIUM PET FOODS

We all love our pets and want the very best for them, don't we? Pets, like people, thrive and have a better quality of life when they're getting proper exercise and nutrition. One of our core values at Leashes & Leads is that we are committed to the highest standards of pet care in ALL areas of our services to promote your pets' health and wellness. A central area we apply this value is in our pet food selection.

Why is premium food so much better?

- Premium foods typically contain higher quality ingredients than "commercialized" foods.
- When higher quality ingredients are used (more real meat) the nutrients are more dense, which means they contain higher percentages of protein and fat so your pet eats less to obtain the same nutrition.
- Due to the high nutrient density and quality of ingredients, the average premium food is more digestible than the average "commercialized" food, resulting in less waste cleanup for you.
- Your pets will have a healthier skin and coat, therefore shedding less, and leaving less hair around your house to clean up.
- While premium foods are more expensive up front as you are paying for better ingredients, the more nutrition dense food will last up to twice as long as the cheaper "commercialized" brands (depending on your pet).
- Your pet is going to be healthier, happier, live longer, and have a higher quality of life.

### HELPFUL TIPS ON READING LABELED INGREDIENTS

- Ingredients on the bag are listed in order of weight, with the heaviest (highest quantity) listed first.
- Look for the first source of fat or oil that appears in the ingredient list. Anything listed before the first source of fat, and including it, are the main ingredients of the food.
- What to look for: meat and fat products that are identified by species. If the species cannot be identified, neither can the quality. We suggest avoiding any products that use unidentified "meat", "animal", or "poultry" products in their foods.
- Where grains are used, we look for good quality whole grains. Avoid those products that make prolific use of grain fragments (think floor sweepings) in their foods. These are nutrition-less fillers.

### WHAT TO AVOID

Avoid pet foods containing any form of by-products, most specifically those of indeterminate origin ("animal", "poultry", etc...), artificial colors, flavors, sweeteners or preservatives (especially avoid those believed to be carcinogenic or that are banned from use in the human food chain). In dog food, principally these are BHT, BHA, Ethoxyquin, or Propyl Gallate.

## READING THE FINE PRINT: BLUE MEANS GOOD, RED MEANS BAD

**ANIMAL BY-PRODUCTS:** The word “by-product” is an instant turn off when it comes to pet food. It basically entails that humans most certainly would NOT touch, and would not give to their pet. For instance, would you lay down beaks, feet and random organs for your pet to eat?? How about feathers?? Blood?? Well, those are the primary components of anything labeled “by-products”. Sometimes it’ll say “chicken by-products” so at least you can identify the animal. However, sometimes the label says “meat by-products”, which tells you they want to hide exactly what animal they’re using from you. This is because its been documented that road kill and pests like rats are used in some cheap pet foods.

**ANIMAL DIGEST:** The first two ingredients by alphabetical order are two of the worst. “Animal Digest” is a broth that’s cooked up of stuff that we’d rather just not know about. It can include some of what’s in the aforementioned by-products, but also skin and the contents of the animal’s stomach after it was slaughtered. Yuck. It’s the soup that you won’t find Campbell’s offering anytime soon.

**BARLEY:** Barley is a pretty good quality grain in pet foods. It’s not a main source of allergies and it’s easily digestible. So, if grains are in the pet food, as are in most, this is a welcome sight.

**BEEF TALLOW:** If you’re going to ingest pure fat, what animal would you rather it be from...chicken or cow? Turkey or cow? The reason why cheap pet food companies use beef tallow is simple... it’s cheaper. It’s also a very bad fat source for pets as it is for humans. This is pure, greasy, white cow fat.

**YUMMY. BREWERS RICE OR BREWERS YEAST:** At first, a person may look at the word “brewer” here and be reminded of a person who makes alcohol. Well, there’s a good reason for that, because that’s exactly what these ingredients are. They happen to be the leftovers from the alcohol-making process, which is bought very cheaply by the pet food companies. It’s devoid of nutritional value, being as how it’s been used up by the time it’s used in the food. It’s just filler, but not harmful.

**CANOLA OIL:** A decent fat source, although, not the best. It certainly beats beef tallow, but isn’t as good as any sort of fish oil or sunflower oil.

**CORN GLUTEN MEAL:** This is the remainder of the corn after the best parts of the corn have been removed. This is why I call it “filler of a filler”. One of the absolute worst ingredients, as it does absolutely nothing for the animal and actually is difficult to digest.

**EGGS:** Eggs are one of the best protein sources there are. The best thing to see is “whole eggs”, but even “dried eggs” or “egg product” is going to be a fairly good protein source.

**FISH OIL:** This includes salmon oil. Very rich in Omega 3 and Omega 6 fatty acids, which are absolutely excellent for heart health. This is one of the finest, if not the finest, fat source possible in pet foods.

**FLAXSEED OIL:** Another great fat source with Omega 3 and Omega 6 fatty acids for heart health. Cheap foods will almost never have this.

**FRUITS:** Much like humans, animals benefit from fruits as well. They’re excellent sources of fiber and vitamins. Some you’ll see in foods include blueberries, cranberries, and apples. It’s an expensive ingredient, so expect to find this in your finer foods.

**MEATS (CHICKEN, TURKEY, DUCK, ETC.):** Any time a meat is named on the label, this is a good thing as long as “by-product” isn’t behind it. However, be advised that if the word “meal” is not behind it, they are weighing it BEFORE it is dehydrated for inclusion in the dry food, which gives sort of a false ranking of what proportion of it is really included in the food. This leads us to the next entry.

**MEAT “MEALS” (CHICKEN MEAL, TURKEY MEAL, FISH MEAL, ETC.):** One of the best ingredients you can see in a pet food, this means that the meat is of a decent quality and it was weighed AFTER it was dehydrated...therefore meaning the proteins are more condensed. Seeing these towards the top of the ingredient list is a great thing.

**“MEAT AND BONE” MEAL:** One of the lowest quality meat products used. The origin of the meat is suspect, as it isn’t named. If the manufacturers wanted you to know what the source was, they’d name it. Since it’s probably not braggable, it’s just put down as “meat”. Not only that, but the lowest-quality parts of the animal are generally used as well. Oh, and as the name suggests...ground bone as well. Nothing good about this one.

**NATURAL FLAVORS:** There are varying reports about this. The more expensive companies state they are just using broth created when the animals are being cooked, but I’ve read about there being not-so-flattering methods of getting these flavors with bargain manufactures.

**OATMEAL:** This is another pretty good grain, much like barley and rice. It’s generally found in more expensive food but not exclusively.

**POTATOES (OR SWEET POTATOES):** This is the single best carb source in pet foods, and is a good ingredient to see.

**RICE (OR WHOLE GRAIN RICE):** This is generally thought of as being the best grain that can be put into pet food. Rice “bran” or “flour” is NOT the same, however, as nutritional quality is diminished with those processes are used on the rice. This is easily digestible, and a good source of fiber for animals.

**SALT:** Run, don’t walk, if this is included highly in a pet food. Excess salt isn’t good for humans, and it isn’t good for pets either. If this is included in a pet food, chances are it’s missing something else.

**SOYBEANS:** A rather low-quality grain, and source of food allergies. It’s a cheap ingredient typically used by cheap companies with little benefit to the animals.

**SUGAR (OR CORN SYRUP):** Bad ingredient used by companies to make food more palatable to the animals if the ingredients themselves aren’t enough to make the dog or cat actually want to eat it.

**WHEAT:** Absolutely useless ingredient in pet food and a leading cause of food allergies in dogs. “Wheat middlings” are especially bad, since they are considered to be the “sweepings” off the floor. Absolutely AVOID this if at all possible.

