

# *The Good, The Bad, On A Dog Food Label*

## The hallmarks of a high quality food include the following:

- **Superior sources of protein.** This means either whole, fresh meats or single-source meat meal (for example, chicken meal rather than poultry meal).
- **A whole-meat source as one of the first two ingredients** (chicken or chicken meal, for instance). Better yet would be *two* meat sources among the top three ingredients (say chicken *and* chicken meal). Whole, fresh meat is a wonderful, health food for dogs, but it also contains a lot of water. The extra weight of that moisture usually boosts the fresh meat to the top of the list of ingredients (which, by law, are listed in order of their weight contribution to the food). If a list of ingredients begins with whole chicken, followed by three or more grains and *no* other meat proteins, it's likely that the food contains *way* more grain than meat. There is no way to know for sure, since the makers are not required to specify the amounts or percentages of each ingredient.

By the way, dry foods *can't* contain more than about 50 percent meat or other animal products; any more than that, and the machinery that mixes and extrudes the kibble gets gummed up.

Meat is the most natural source of protein for canines, and contains the amino acids most important to canine health. A mix of meat proteins (such as fish and beef) helps round out the amino acid profile of the proteins included in the food.

- **Whole, unprocessed grains, vegetables, and other foods.** A previously unprocessed food has the best chance of surviving the food-making process with some of its nutrients intact.

## High-quality dry foods should contain a **MINIMUM** of the following:

- **Food fragments.** Fragments are lower-cost by-products of another food manufacturing process, such as brewer's rice (a waste product of the alcohol industry) and wheat bran (the fibrous hull removed from the nutritious wheat kernel). Most foods contain at least one fragment, as makers attempt to keep the food affordable. Beware of a product that contains several fragments of a single food. Some food makers do this to disguise an excess of low-value ingredient. Remember, the law dictates that each ingredient is listed separately by weight. So when you see a list of ingredients that begins "lamb, rice flour, rice bran, brewer's rice . . ." you should be aware that there is far more rice in the product than lamb.
- **Meat by-products.** As a rule, meat by-products are not a good source of nutrients, however, *fresh* by-products may offer more nutrient value than a rendered meat meal. But using an animal by-product (or more than one animal by-product) for a food's *main* protein source is indicative of a low-quality product. By-products should play a supporting role to whole meats or meat meals, say, somewhere below the top five ingredients.

## The hallmarks of a low-quality dry food:

- **"Generic" fats or proteins.** "Animal fat," for example, can be just about anything: recycled grease from restaurants, or an unwholesome mystery mix of various fats. In this case, a preferable ingredient would be "beef fat" or "chicken fat." "Animal protein" and "poultry protein" are far inferior to "beef protein" or "chicken protein."
- **Artificial preservatives** (including BHA, BHT, or Ethoxyquin).
- **Artificial colors.** Your dog doesn't care what color his food is. He doesn't need daily – *lifetime* – exposure to these unnecessary chemicals.
- **Propylene glycol.** Ditto for this chemical, which is added to some "chewy" foods to keep them moist.
- **Sweeteners.** Dogs, like humans, have a taste for sweets. Corn syrup, sucrose, ammoniated glycyrrhizin, and other sweeteners are sometimes added to lower-quality foods to increase their appeal. But dietary sugar can aggravate health problems in dogs, including diabetes.

## How to grade your dog's food:

### Start with a grade of 100:

1. For every listing of "by-product", subtract 10 points
2. For every non-specific animal source ("meat" or "poultry", meat, meal or fat) reference, subtract 10 points
3. If the food contains BHA, BHT, or ethoxyquin, subtract 10 points
4. For every grain "mill run" or non-specific grain source, subtract 5 points
5. If the same grain ingredient is used 2 or more times in the first five ingredients (i.e. "ground brown rice", "brewer's rice", "rice flour" are all the same grain), subtract 5 points
6. If the protein sources are not meat meal and there are less than 2 meats in the top 3 ingredients, subtract 3 points
7. If it contains any artificial colorants, subtract 3 points
8. If it contains ground corn or whole grain corn, subtract 3 points
9. If corn is listed in the top 5 ingredients, subtract 2 more points
10. If the food contains any animal fat other than fish oil, subtract 2 points
11. If lamb is the only animal protein source (unless your dog is allergic to other protein sources), subtract 2 points
12. If it contains soy or soybeans, subtract 2 points
13. If it contains wheat (unless you know that your dog isn't allergic to wheat), subtract 2 points
14. If it contains beef (unless you know that your dog isn't allergic to beef), subtract 1 point
15. If it contains salt, subtract 1 point

### Extra Credit:

1. If any of the meat sources are organic, add 5 points
2. If the food is endorsed by any major breed group or nutritionist, add 5 points
3. If the food is baked not extruded, add 5 points
4. If the food contains probiotics, add 3 points
5. If the food contains fruit, add 3 points
6. If the food contains vegetables (NOT corn or other grains), add 3 points
7. If the animal sources are hormone-free and antibiotic-free, add 2 points
8. If the food contains barley, add 2 points
9. If the food contains flax seed oil (not just the seeds), add 2 points
10. If the food contains oats or oatmeal, add 1 point
11. If the food contains sunflower oil, add 1 point
12. For every different specific animal protein source (other than the first one; count "chicken" and "chicken meal" as only one protein source, but "chicken" and "" as 2 different sources), add 1 point
13. If it contains glucosamine and chondroitin, add 1 point
14. If the vegetables have been tested for pesticides and are pesticide-free, add 1 point

### Grading Scale:

94-100+ = A  
86-93 = B  
78-85 = C  
70-77 = D  
69 = F

Email Bonnie Giacomini at [pavtongold@comcast.net](mailto:pavtongold@comcast.net) with the food you rated and what its score was.

03.01.08

**DOG FOOD**

	<b>SCORE</b>
Alpo Prime Cuts	81 C
Artemis Large/Medium Breed Puppy	114 A+
Authority Harvest baked	116 A+
Authority Harvest Baked Less Active	93 B
Beowulf Back to Basics	101 A+
Bil-Jac Select	68 F
Blackwood 3000 Lamb and Rice	83 C
Blue Buffalo Chicken and Rice	106 A+
Burns Chicken and Brown Rice	107 A+
California Natural Lamb meal & Rice	95 A
California Natural Chicken meal & Rice	96 A
California Natural Low fat Rice & Lamb meal	95 A
California Natural Herring and Sweet Potato	109 A+
California Natural Lamb meal & Rice Puppy	95 A
California Natural Chicken meal & Rice Puppy	96 A
Canidae Lamb & Rice	112 A+
Canidae Chicken & Rice	109 A+
Canidae Platinum	115 A+
Chicken Soup Puppy	115 A+
Chicken Soup Large Breed Adult	114 A+
Chicken Soup Large Breed Puppy	115 A+
Chicken Soup light	113 A+
Chicken Soup adult	114 A+
Chicken Soup Senior	115 A+
Diamond Naturals Chicken & Rice	98 A
Diamond Naturals Lamb & Rice	103 A+
Diamond Lamb & Rice	92 B
Diamond Large Breed 60+ formula	99 A
Diamond maintenance	64 F
Diamond Performance	85 C
Natural Balance Duck & Potato	106 A+
Natural Balance Ultra Premium	122 A+
Natural Balance Venison and Rice	106 A+
Eagle Pack Holistic Select Lamb meal Rice	99 A+
Eagle Pack Holistic Select Lamb meal Rice & Oatmeal	117 A+
Eagle Pack Holistic Select Large Breed	102 A+
Eagle Pack Holistic Select Chicken and Rice	107 A+
Eagle Pack Natural	100 A
Eagle Pack Large & Giant Breed Adult	100 A
Eagle Pack Original	98 A
Eukanuba Adult	81 C
Eukanuba Puppy	79 C
Flint River Senior	101 A+
Foundations	106 A+
Fromm's	129 A+
Iams Natural	88 B
Iams Lamb meal & Rice formula premium	73 D
Innova Dogs	114 A+

Innova Evo	114 A+
Innova Large Breed Puppy	122 A+
Kirkland signature Chicken Rice & Vegetables	110 A+
Kibbles and Bits Chunks	46 F
Life's Abundance	120 A+
Member's Mark Chicken and Rice	84 C
Merrick-Grammy's Pot pie	113 A+
Merrick Wilderness Blend	127 A+
Nature's Recipe	100 A
Nature's Recipe Healthy Skin Venison and Rice	116 A+
Nature's Variety Raw Instinct	122 A+
Newman Org. adult Chicken & rice	109 A+
Newman Org. senior Chicken & rice	109 A+
Noble Chicken & Rice	100 A
Nutrience Junior Medium Breed Puppy	101 A+
Nutrisource Lamb & Rice	101 A+
Nutrisource Large Breed Adult Chicken & Rice	105 A+
Nutrisource Adult Chicken & Rice	100 A
Nutrisouce Senior	100 A
Nutro Ultra Adult	104 A+
Nutro Chicken and Oatmeal	98 A
Nutro Max Adult	93 B
Nutro Natural Choice Large Breed Puppy	87 B
Nutro Natural Choice Senior	95 A
Nutro Natural Choice Lamb & Rice	98 A
Nutro Natural Choice Large Breed Adult	
Nutro Natural Choice Puppy Wheat Free	86 B
Nutra Nuggets Super Premium Lamb Meal and Rice	81 C
Ol'Roy	35 F
Pedigree Complete Nutrition	49 F
Pet Chef Chicken & Rice	101 A+
Pet Chef Fish & Potato	108 A+
Pet Chef Lamb and rice	96 A
Pet Chef lean	97 A
Pet Chef maintainance adult	93 B
Pet Chef Puppy	95 A
Pet Chef Sensitive	106 A+
Pet Gold Adult with Lamb & Rice	23 F
Precise Chicken Meal & Rice Foundation	98 A
Precise Senior	98 A
Precise Chicken Meal & Rice	99 A
Premium Edge Chicken, Rice and Vegetables Adult Dry	109 A+
Pro Nature Puppy	80 C
Pro Plan Sensitive Stomach	94 A
Pro Plan Natural Turkey & Barley	103 A+
Pro Plan Chicken & Rice Formula	76 D
Professional Large Breed Puppy Chicken & Barley	101 A+
Professional Adult Chicken & Barley	102 A+
Professional Adult Lamb & Rice	103 A+
Professional Senior Chicken and Barley	103 A+
Purina Beneful	17 F

Purina Come-n-Get It...Alpo	16 F
Purina Dog	62 F
Purina One	75 D
Royal Canin Bulldog	106 A+
Royal Canin Boxer	103 A+
Royal Canin Natural Blend Adult	106 A+
Science Diet Natures Best Chicken & Rice	98 A
Science Diet Natures Best Lamb & Rice	93 B
Science Diet Lamb & Rice	80 C
Science Diet Advanced Protein Senior 7+	63 F
Science Diet for Large breed puppies	69 F
Sensible Choice Chicken & Rice	97 A
Solid Gold	99 A
Solid Gold Holistic	108 A+
Solid Gold Hund-n-Flocken Adult dog (lamb)	93 B
Solid Gold Woldking Adult Dog(bison)	97 A
Summit	99 A
Timberwolf Organics Wild & Natural Dry	120 A+
Wellness Super5 Mix Chicken	110 A+
Wellness Super Mix5 weight management	108 A+

**Comments:**

Grains: Watch out for some as they tend to be High Allergy. Such as Wheat, Corn and all Soy products. Rice, Barley, and Oats are the 3 best grains. Potatoes can be a great alternative to grains for Carbohydrates

Protein sources: Chicken, Fish, Lamb and Bison Are best Beef is a low quality protein for Dogs. Protein Meals should be the first ingredients and multiple sources are best. You want Chicken meal, Lamb meal etc... As just Chicken, or Lamb usually are before cooking and can be more water than pure protein.

Stay away from all By-products! Chicken By Products, By product Meals these are very low quality and in many cases not Meat even.

Holistic foods. Those that have Fruits and Vegetable can be a great choice because of the Anti Oxidants that they have. They can help fight Diseases such as Cancer.

Orijens senior 125 A+

Orijens puppy 126 A+

Taste of the Wild

High Prairie +115 A+

Pacific Stream 114 A+

Sierra Mountain 113 A+

Wetlands 118 A+