

## **WHY FEED YOUR DOG THE HIGH PRICED STUFF?**

Fifty pounds of high-protein dog food for six dollars and fifty cents sounds like a good deal. After all, if it's high protein, it's probably pretty good, right? Well, not necessarily. There are so many misconceptions and myths regarding proper nutrition that it would be impossible to debunk all of them in one discussion. What follows are a few basic, unchanging rules regarding nutrition.

### **1. YOU GET WHAT YOU PAY FOR.**

This should be no surprise. If you buy a cheap car, in all likelihood you're going to get a car that's poorly built and undependable. Buy a cheap dog food and that's what you'll get. The higher the price of the dog food, the higher its quality. Quality Ingredients cost the manufacturer more, therefore, you will pay more for the dog food, however, quality dog food is more easily digested by the dog, is more completely absorbed, and is more concentrated, so you don't have to feed quite as much as you would a cheaper dog food.

### **2. THE CHEAPER THE FOOD, THE MORE THE DOG HAS TO EAT TO SATISFY ITS NUTRIENT REQUIREMENTS.**

This means you must buy more pounds of cheap dog food than you would of a quality dog food. There goes the savings. I have seen dogs consume six to eight cups of cheap dog food a day whose general condition actually improved when fed only Three cups of quality dog food.

### **3. IT'S A MYTH THAT ALL HIGH-PROTEIN DOG FOOD IS GOOD.**

The ad agencies of some dog food companies have foisted this idea on an uninformed public. Dog-food makers learned fast, that if "High Protein" is printed on a bag of dog food, it'll sell. Most dog foods are 22 percent protein. Some are 28 percent protein and thus called high protein. That's a difference of 6 percent. Big deal! You must remember this: Not all protein can be digested and utilized by a dog as a source of nutrition. For example, shoe leather is mostly protein, but it's not the type of protein a dog can digest. A chicken's beak, nails, and feathers are essentially protein too, however, the dog's intestine cannot break down these substances enzymatically into amino acids. And it's the amino acids, absorbed and transported through the intestinal wall into the blood stream, which provides the nutrients derived from protein. So why feed any old protein at any price if the dog derives no nutritional benefit from it? You must look at the source of the protein by reading the ingredients list on the dog food label. The most readily digestible protein and, therefore, the most useful to the dog, is the white of an egg. Nutritionists give the egg white a rating (called a Biological Value) of 1. The biological usefulness of all other protein is measured against an egg white. Here's how some other proteins rate, in descending order, following egg albumen, which, of course, has a biological value of 1: muscle meats (chicken, liver, and so on) -.90; beef-.84; fish-.75; soy-.75; rice-.72; oats-.66; yeast-.63; wheat-.60; and corn-.54. If you were to rate the cost per pound of each of the above ingredients, they would fall in the same order. Dog food ingredients are listed in descending order relative to the percentage of that ingredient in the recipe. Take a look at the cheapest dog foods and see what ingredient is listed first-it's almost always corn. There's nothing wrong with corn; it's just that the dog will need to eat a lot of it compared to eggs, fish or meat to obtain what it requires nutritionally. That means you'll have to buy a lot more of a dog food whose main source of protein is corn and put it in front of the dog and hope he eats enough of it to provide him with the proper nutrients. There are also major differences in the "completeness" of each type of protein. This means that the smaller units that make up the protein, the amino acids (and there are dozens of amino acids, some of which are essential to good health) aren't all present in each source of protein. Egg albumen has lots of amino acids and corn has only a few. That's why more than one source of protein is important for a proper diet. Feed a dog nothing but corn and it won't be long before problems develop. Corn isn't a complete source of protein for dogs. So don't be fooled by the words "high protein" on a label. Look at the ingredients listed on the dog-food bag to determine from what sources the protein is derived.

### **4. ANOTHER MYTH: "ADDING YOUR OWN INGREDIENTS TO DOG FOOD IMPROVES A DOG'S DIET."**

While generally false, this statement can be true on occasion. But why buy a dog food that is so bad you must add foods like cottage cheese, meat or eggs to make it better? Why add a bunch of calcium or Vitamin C to a mediocre dog food, in hopes of improving it, when, in fact, you have actually made it worse? This is definitely not cost-

effective and we can only guess as to what your final product will be. Will your recipe really be better nutritionally? Adding calcium upsets the optimum calcium/phosphorus ratio of 1.2 to 1 and will actually make a poor diet even worse. Why spend the time and money working on your own recipe when there are complete and balanced diets available? A quality dog food needs no supplementation-no extra vitamins, minerals, or protein. And over-supplementing will actually cause problems! Why not spend a little more for quality dog food at the outset and keep the feeding of your dog simple, safe and predictable? If you own a hunting dog and demand that your dog performs at its best, you can't get that performance if you skimp on nutrition. How can you expect the dog to function like an athlete without optimal nutrition? Think how stupid it would be for a race car owner--after all the expense, planning, and practice for a big race--to fill the car's gas tank with cheap fuel. Sure, the car will run, but not up to its potential. Honestly, it is no different with a dog. Fill him with cheap food and you'll never see that dog work up to its potential.

A hard-working dog that gets optimum nutrition will have more stamina; have greater interest in what it's doing; recover faster after a rough day; and feel and look better than a dog being fed an average or poor dog food. Try the high-priced stuff for a month. Odds are you'll see a difference.

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