

FACTS ON NUTRITION

The truth about corn, grains, raw diets and by-products



CORN

Corn is a valuable ingredient with many beneficial nutrients.

MYTH. It's just a filler.

FACT. Fillers have no nutritional value. Corn is packed full of valuable nutrients that support the skin and coat, such as antioxidants (part of the vibrant yellow colour), vitamins A and B, selenium and zinc, amino acids cysteine and methionine and fatty acids.

MYTH. It's not digestible.

FACT. Whole corn is covered by a protective fibrous layer called the hull. When this layer is broken, it allows digestive enzymes to break down the fat, carbohydrates and protein. Study results have shown that grinding corn increases digestibility¹, increasing the availability of nutrients.

GRAINS

Grains are full of important nutrients, such as vitamins, minerals, proteins and carbohydrates.

MYTH. Too high in carbohydrates.

FACT. Carbohydrates are energy supplying nutrients essential to diet balance. Aside from grains, formulators may use fruits, legumes or vegetables as the carbohydrate source in pet food. Not only do your pets need them, but carbohydrates are required for kibble structure.

MYTH. Cause allergies.

FACT. An allergy can be caused by any ingredient with a protein. Food allergies to grains do occur but less than commonly perceived. Grains have shown to be no more allergenic than any other ingredient (fruit, vegetable or animal protein)².

RAW & HOME PREPARED

These diets are very challenging and may be harmful for both your pet and anyone who comes in contact with your pet.

MYTH. Easy to balance.

FACT. Making a diet is never easy, unless you have a scientific lab to measure every ingredient's digestibility and nutrient levels. Many studies have shown homemade diets are not nutritionally balanced³. In a 2013 study, 200 home prepared recipes were analyzed and 95% were found to be deficient in at least one essential nutrient⁴. Some recipes actually exceeded the safe upper limit in certain nutrients.

MYTH. Safe.

FACT. When dealing with raw and home prepared diets the chances for bacterial contamination are significant⁵. While your pet may be able to deal with these different pathogens, humans usually cannot. You may take every precaution in your kitchen for safety, but your pet can carry these pathogens and potentially contaminate anyone who comes in contact with your pet or pet's feces⁶. Raw diets are considered a community health issue, not supported by, the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association or the Public Health Agency of Canada⁷.

BY-PRODUCTS

A by-product is a term used to classify an ingredient; it does not represent the quality or nutritional value.

MYTH. Low quality.

FACT. By-products are a secondary product in addition to the principal product. Numerous ingredients can actually be considered a by-product by this standard such as wheat bran, tripe, salami, beef liver, etc. The term by-product is not an indication of the nutritional quality.

MYTH. Not safe.

FACT. By-products are as safe as any other meat ingredient. Any meat by-product, when sourced from a high-quality facility, is selected from clean, fresh parts of a healthy animal. Sometimes by-products are incorrectly associated with diseased animals but this is absolutely not the case with reputable pet food manufacturers.

1. Morris J, et al. Carbohydrate digestion by the domestic cat (*Felis catus*). *Br J Nutr.* 1977; 37: 365 - 373.
2. Roudebush P, et al. Adverse Reactions to Food. Hand M, Thatcher C, Remillard R, Roudebush P (Eds). *Small Animal Clinical Nutrition* 4th ed. Mark Morris Institute: Topeka, KA. 2000: pp. 431 - 453.
3. Lauren S, et al. Computer analysis of nutrient sufficiency of published home-cooked diets for dogs and cats. *In: Proc ACVIM Forum* 2005
4. Stockman J, et al. Evaluation of recipes of home-prepared maintenance diets for dogs. *JAVMA* 2013; 242(11): 1500 - 1505.

5. Finley R, Reid-Smith R, Boerlin P, Weese JS. The occurrence and antimicrobial susceptibility of salmonellae isolated from commercially available canine raw food diets in three Canadian cities. *Zoonoses Public Health.* 2008; 55(8-10):462-469.
6. Weese SJ. Survival of *Salmonella* Copenhagen in food bowls following contamination with experimentally inoculated raw meat: Effects of time, cleaning, and disinfection. *Can Vet J.* 2006; 47(9): 887 - 889.
7. Canadian Veterinary Medical Association, Accessed on August 2013: <http://www.canadianveterinarians.net/documents/raw-food-diets-for-pets>