



IHA NEWS



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PROMOTING HEDGEHOG EDUCATION,
RESEARCH, REGISTRATION & RESCUE WORLDWIDE

Hey Mom, What's For Dinner?

By Teresa Johnson

We've probably all asked that question as kids. Even as adults, we ask it. The answer varies depending on any number of factors – costs, cravings, number of folks to serve, ethnicity, season, special occasion, dietary needs or limitations, and geography. But what of our pet companions? They can't tell us if they have a particular flavor craving. They can't tell us if one food is more comforting than another. For the most part, they are subjected to our decision making process for their nutritional needs and dining pleasures. And this means we must be pro-active in the process. Just because a label says "complete and balanced" diet doesn't make it so. Just because advertisement claims boast "most recommended by veterinarians" doesn't mean it is truly most optimal. Just because manufacturers claim "the taste most pets like" doesn't mean every pet will. And just because you make a purchase of a well-known national brand or from a major retailer doesn't make your choice the healthiest or safest. I don't want to raise a major alarm but I do want to raise awareness so your next purchase choice will be a better-informed one.

I'd like to offer a brief and abbreviated history of the pet food industry. It basically began in the late 19th century when James Spratt traveled to London. Wanting to offer his dogs a nutritious treat, he made dog "cakes" using ground wheat, vegetables, beetroot, and dried meat (mostly buffalo he had shipped from the United States).

The industry found its way back to Newark, New Jersey in 1890. Borrowing from Spratt's ideas F. H. Bennett of New York City created the "milk bone biscuit" using the now signature bone shape as a chief selling point.

P. M. Chappel founded Ken-L-Ration in the 1920's as the first canned dog food. The primary meat source was horse meat.

In 1931, the National Biscuit Company (NABISCO), a manufacturer of human food products, bought Milk Bone.

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Our Goal: To promote and improve the care and quality of hedgehogs by means of education and exhibition



Saloo!

The Royal Quill



HRM Orbit the Spy in The
Royal Mirror Chamber
(Image by Don Duval)

Teresa Johnson is at it again, and this time, with the exception of the May Midwest Rendezvous Hedgehog Show results, has commanded this entire issue. I'm not sure how Mr. Gromit captured the Best of Show award, living as he does with those two uncontrollable housemates, Baxter and Kenmore. Must have been sheer willpower.

Teresa launches the first of her three articles with the upbeat title of "Hey Mom, What's For Dinner?" Don't be fooled, as Teresa takes on the pet food industry, which is not known for its altruism. And it doesn't get any more cheerful, for this is an issue of depressing tales, twisted trails, and poisoned pails. Teresa's informative food article explores the history of pet food and describes the myriad of mergers where traditional pet food manufacturers are gobbled up by larger companies known for such yummy things as dish detergent. She notes how these mergers have affected food quality as it is watered down and cheapened. Even our favorite Royal Canin is now owned by a candy company. But, the piece is really worth reading because therein the author goes down a long list of pet food ingredients divided into eight food groups and explains what good things to look for, what bad things to look for, and important details about the food group. Some time back, when the Flash and Thelma Rescue was struggling with the selection good foods for the rescue residents, a hopeful candidate was a cat food called "Pet Promise," which proudly proclaimed that it had none of the dreaded animal "by-products" in its product. However, when an inquiry was made as to the sources of its non-meat ingredients (such as grains) the answer was that they did not know! At the time, cats and dogs were dying all over North America from "gluten" imported from China that had been laced with toxins added in order to raise the protein levels. It would seem to me that a conscientious pet food manufacturer would want to know if any ingredient that they use is coming from a place that has little regard for human rights, let alone animal welfare.

Teresa's other two articles, "Motherhood and Nutrition" and "The Legacy of Seven" speaks to several important aspects of hedgehog motherhood, mainly significant issues about the dietary requirements of both mothers and babies, as well as the risks involved with motherhood generally. Even under the care of the most experienced and conscientious breeders, an infinite number of things can go wrong in the complex and perilous journey called the continuation of life. In the "wild," a hedgehog life is risky and short. In controlled human-orchestrated environments, often (but not always) we stand a better chance of a longer life. Yet, we've been around since the days of the dinosaurs!



In Memoriam - Lieutenant General Biggs,
UHA, IHR 27004, July 2005 - May 2010
Commanding General, III Hedgehog Corps
(Image by Z. G. Standing Bear)

It is with a great deal of sadness that I must announce the traveling on of our senior military commander, Lieutenant General Biggs, IHR 27004, Commander of the III Hedgehog Corps, at nearly age five. The blustery and decisive old fellow will be sorely missed. He served with distinction and was well respected and loved by all of us.

I remain, as my loyal predecessors before me, your most humble servant and Keeper of The Original Instructions.

HRM King Orbit the Spy, IHR 14297
Hedgehog Monarch of North America

Motherhood and Nutrition

By Teresa Johnson

I'm hoping this will be the first of several short articles addressing hedgehog pre-natal, maternity and delivery. I will tell you all up front, I am not a breeder and have relatively little experience in such matters. But because of the few experiences I have had, I thought it well to pass on knowledge gained in an effort to save others from feelings of panic and overwhelming. In the end, I hope anyone who is met with situations, breeders and non-breeders alike, will be better prepared than I was to serve their quilled companions better.



Mom and four nursing babies.
(Image by Brenda Sandoval)

Most any medical professional will advocate healthy diet, nutrition, and life-style for expectant and nursing moms. For us humans, many resources are available from medical professionals to family and friends. Older generation family members will give advice and add suggestions based on their own experiences and those passed down through family history. Doctors and medical professionals also rely on family histories along side the technology and research they have at hand. Family histories and simple tests can thwart a problem before it becomes a problem. Nutritionists can help guide for optimum eating habits to support mother and developing child. Doctors may suggest over-the-counter supplements or prescribe prescription strength ones for special needs or

concerns as well. Proper regulation of nutrients, especially supplements of any kind, is of utmost importance. Still, the unexpected can and does arise. It is no different for our quilled companions.

In the past, I'd only had one pregnancy and delivery within my rescue... And to be quite honest, I didn't even know there was a pregnancy until after the birth! Ahhhh, the joys of rescue. I took in a supposed retired breeding female and got a surprise package ten days later. I did everything wrong. And still the Great Hedgie Gods smiled favorably upon me and the wee little one thrived.

What did I do "wrong?" Well, for starts the mom-to-be was housed with two other rescues when she delivered. I got word of the birth mid-way through a work shift when my husband telephoned to tell me he'd found a baby with the new girls. Not knowing more than mom's and babies should be kept to themselves in a habitat, I instructed my husband to set up a spare Sterilite container with liner, blankets, food and water. Next, he was asked to move mom and baby into the new Sterilite.

All was well when my husband had left to pick me up at work. With that in mind, we visited our local library and I spent time on the computers there. Upon arrival home, I found mom in a corner of the Sterilite, baby under a curl of the Vellux liner, the water bowl tipped and empty on the opposite side of the baby, the food bowl turned completely up-side-down over the food smack in the middle of the blankets mom and baby should have been under. I rushed over, picked up the baby to see if she was still alive and ok, then breathed a sigh of relief to find she was. I placed mom and baby, with a hand warmer tucked into a sock and a blanket to cover, on my sofa. I completely changed out the habitat with dry liner, another blanket, fresh food and water. And then a miracle...as if none had already happened... As I picked up mom and baby to return them to the newly prepared container, a small voice said "Not so fast." I sat on the sofa, both hedgies in hand, and watched in amazement as mom nursed baby while being held. I knew then all would be ok in

spite of my inexperience or lack of competence with newborns.

Hindsight being nearly always 20/20 (and some additional education from breeder friends), I now know it might have been better for all to have removed the two non-mom females and left new mom and baby in the original habitat.



Newborns nursing
(Image by Brenda Sandoval)

Diet might have been changed a bit to better aid a nursing mom. As this hedgehog was a rescue with very little accurate information given over at time of surrender, I'd no idea what kind of diet she had had. I have always tried to supply a well-rounded high quality diet and was fortunate there were no tummy issues upon arrival. Mom adjusted well from the beginning with my mix of kibbles and treats of soft foods. In this case nothing was changed until the baby was being weaned. At that time I placed a little extra canned or softened food in the habitat for the baby to transition from nursing to solids and finally hard kibble. Supplements? Never gave thought to them. Boy was I lucky all over again!

As with many animals, hedgegie moms will often sacrifice their own feedings to care for newborns the first few days after birthing. For this reason alone, you would want to make sure expectant females are fed the most optimum pre-natal diet and maintain it post-delivery. "Most optimum" is a subjective concept as we are still learning what that might be in hedgehog nutrition and diet. Add pre-natal care and more concerns and ideas enter the mix. A good rule of thumb is to avoid any sudden and complete diet changes that may cause digestive upset. Another, while not directly related to the foods, is to regularly document weight while tracking the pregnancy. You may consult with your veterinarian about gentle, gradual changes or additions to the diet such as a kitten formula cat food in the kibble mix for the added calories and nutrients to help mom along. And always make sure there is plenty of clean, fresh water available. No time is a healthy time for dehydration but especially during pregnancy.

Since my first "hands on" experience, I've furthered my education and experience in maternity care. I owe much to Brenda Sandoval and Jeanne Robtoy who, as breeders and friends, allowed me the honor of caring for their own hedgies and coaching me on the more correct do's and don'ts. Still some things are unpredictable and emergencies will rise perhaps more often with maternity cases than any other hedgehog situation. With such a delicate balance of life going on at multiple levels, you must be extremely knowledgeable of your hedgehogs, extremely flexible in your schedule, always have a back-up plan, and be sure to have a veterinarian at the ready. I'd like to give an example of how some of these preparations may need to be implemented.

Case in point:

It's just after 8am. Jeanne has a fairly new litter and nursing mom. A second quick check in the morning revealed mom was very rigid and unresponsive. Quickly thinking of related issues for nursing moms, Jeanne crushed some Tums into water and syringed the mix to mom. Then, worried to the point of panic, she telephoned me...three times. (I was in the shower and did not hear the first two calls come in.) Mom was still very lethargic and Jeanne feared losing her. Having just started a new job and unable to miss any time, she asked if I could take the mom for observation. I agreed. We'd meet at her new place of employment as it was a near half-way point between our homes. Just two minutes out from arriving there, my phone rang

with Standing Bear on the other end. He had contacted one of our veterinarians, apprised her of the situation, and arranged for me to be taken right in. Within an hour of the first phone call, our network of friends and professionals had moved to bring emergency relief to a nursing hedgegie, alerted the veterinary hospital of the emergency, and gotten the hedgegie into care. The initial diagnostic concern Jeanne had was a calcium drop due to nursing young. Her knowledge and quick response with something as simple as the Tums brought rapid temporary life saving relief. By having a network of quick responding friends, calls and transportation were worked out smoothly. The test for blood calcium levels takes a wee bit longer than blood sugar testing to reveal results. As both might have caused similar symptoms, at the veterinary hospital, a quicker blood sugar test, much like human diabetics do daily, ruled out blood sugar problems and the focus was put on the calcium concern. Testing proved a sudden serious drop in calcium was indeed the culprit. The mom hedgehog was given fluids, an injection of calcium and kept under observation for a short time. Now keep in mind, Jeanne had just started training on a new job and absence would have meant loss of that job. Being unemployed proved to have benefits as I was asked if I would keep mom for a few days of observation and provide medication (calcium supplements twice daily for a week).

I should note here that any supplement should not be given to pregnant hedgegies unless otherwise directed by your veterinarian. Calcium issues will occur most likely, if at all, once delivery is done and nursing begun. Russell Welfare, DVM of North Powers Animal Hospital, Colorado Springs, advised giving calcium to still pregnant hedgehogs can interfere with the actual natural absorption and balance of calcium in the body and lead to further complications including *‘‘milk fever’’. It is preferred to have regulated dosage such as the oral calcium gotten from the veterinarian. Tums are a good, inexpensive, easily acquired and stored supplement to have on hand for emergency usage. Melanie Marsden, DVM, of Pikes Peak Veterinary Clinic, Colorado Springs assured me flavor should not be a concern. Either the mint or the fruit Tums will work equally effectively. If needed, simply crush as fine as possible, dissolve in some water, and syringe to your hedgegie. Call the veterinarian immediately to avoid further complications and risks. The babies in Jeanne’s case were fostered to another nursing mom and doing so well as not to raise concerns.



Mother hedgehog and her babies
(Image by Brenda Sandoval)

There were many facets in the resolution of this issue: First, Jeanne is an experienced breeder of many years. Secondly, she knew her hedgegie well enough to be alerted to any changes immediately. Thirdly, a network of friends and relatives rose to the occasion and came to aid both human and hedgegie. The result was a full recovery for mom and the decision not to put her or future babies at risk – she was retired young and lives a hedgies ‘‘happily ever after.’’

The happy endings of both these cases is a result of good pre-natal diet and care, daily observations, support of family and friends, and (especially in my case) a wee bit of luck and blessings. As stated, we are still looking for that ultimate most optimum hedgehog diet. I can only encourage you to read labels on pet foods and know what you are feeding. Try to offer some variety in flavor, texture, and smell. Remember no single food is a complete diet regardless of labeling! The only ‘‘supplements’’ I would suggest for pregnant and new moms are the occasional mealworm, wax worm or cricket, and especially if these treats are



Mother nursing her babies.
(Image by Brenda Sandoval)

a regular part of your feeding program.

Be observant! Watch your hedgie and interact daily. You will more easily recognize signs of discomfort, lethargy, or other distress by knowing your hedgehog. Keep regular weight recordings. While it is normal for moms-to-be to gain weight throughout pregnancy, you don't want obesity to enter the equation.

Have a back-up or support team if possible. Friends, family, and veterinarians can all play roles in seeing your mom hedgehog maintains a healthy life and raises healthy, happy babies.

*Milk fever, known in clinical pathology as hypocalcemia, is a metabolic disease occurring just before or soon after birth.

Signs are muscular weakness, peripheral circulatory failure with cool skin, low pulse and soft heart sounds, lethargy and drowsiness.

The Legacy of Seven

By Teresa Johnson

This is the bittersweet experience of raising and breeding hedgehogs. Being involved with rescue, you eventually get see all of it. The impulse purchases too soon victim of "lost interest." The abused. The neglected. The elderly and those facing a terminal illness. Breeders fallen on hard times needing to re-home "stock." Non-productive and older breeder stock being displaced for new. First time parents to human offspring feeling a pet unhealthy or suddenly overwhelmed by time constraints involving infant care. Beloved but retired breeders given over to loving homes. On rare occasion, a young or healthy one whose caregivers face a life-changing event or circumstance, well kept but surrendered through no fault of their own. Imagine the joy of being asked "Would you mind hedgie sitting?" Friends put into your trust their little bundles of quilled joy. It is a question I've been asked numerous times and always joyfully agreed to.

Over this past Christmas holiday, I was asked by Brenda, breeder friend, to sit three hedgies in my home. One male and two expectant females. The approximate due date would arrive before Brenda would return. That meant a serious possibility of my keeping two new litters until such time they could return home to her more safely. Overjoyed at the prospect, I agreed to undertake the task. Add to the scenario I'd recently lost one of my own females, Spice, leaving Zena alone and mourning. I was offered a female from Jeanne, another breeder friend as companion. This female, Ilini, had had a recent "date night" but it was uncertain if the mating had been successful. If yes, then the expectant delivery date would fall just two days after the other two females. I was now on stand-by for three possible deliveries near at once!

My heart and home were filled with excitement and hopefulness. You see, the only time I'd actually had a newborn hedgie baby came as a surprise package and part of a large rescue operation out of New Jersey in 2004. We'd only had Cinnamon ten days when she delivered Spice, then approximately 18 hours later presented me with Hope, who had been still-born. Cinnamon has a claim to hedgehog fame as being the mom who nursed her baby while both were held in my hands. I knew at that time I was privy to a rare and most beautiful experience. Learning later more of breeding, pregnancy, and newborn care, I realize we

were very VERY fortunate that Cinnamon was the mom she was. So much could have gone wrong and ended in tragedy...But it did not and Spice thrived for just shy of five years before crossing over. But I digress...

A day before Brenda's three were to arrive I prepared three Sterilite containers - wiped them down, aired them out, got liners and blankets ready. Upon arrival, all were settled in rather quickly. Feeding instructions and what to watch for was discussed. Everything seemed in place. After several days and getting closer to the delivery date, habitats were cleaned up in preparation for births. Vellux liners were replaced with white Carefresh bedding. Extra blankets were placed over pigloos. Powdered goat milk was gotten in preparation that emergency formula might be needed. Calcium tablets were gotten should new moms need supplements. I sat up a bit later each night watching the moms-to-be move blankets and bedding preparing their nests. The due day came and passed with no babies. OK, I thought, dating and conception is not an exact science always. The next passed with same results. The third evening while sitting quietly after dinner and a DVD I heard tiny squeaks. I was assembling a hiding box with lights turned down and continued listening. They came again ...and again ...but not from the direction I anticipated most. They came from my own girl's habitat! I carefully looked in to find four babies had been birthed, three of which had survived. Poor Zena! She was immediately up-rooted and moved to another habitat so Ilini could tend her babies without fear or interruption from another hedgie.

Brenda was supposed to arrive next morning around 9 am to reclaim her three hedgie-kids. At 8:30 am my morning check revealed one mom had given birth rather recently. I called to say Tymes Two (male) and Micah (female) could go home with her but Chasta would be staying a while longer. "Ooooooh! How many did she have?", Brenda asked. "Three for sure", I said, "but I didn't want to upset her so you can take a better look when you come over." Half an hour later Brenda was on my living room floor checking mom and babies..."Seven!", she said. "What?!", I exclaimed. Seven babies were born. Chasta was tired but alert. All seemed well. Unwillingly and excited Brenda left for home with Tymes Two and Micah. I sat and watched over Chasta's and Ilini's habitats in awe. ...But the joyfulness was to be short lived.

I had been watching Chasta closely, concerned that she had separated herself from her newborn litter. She drank some water and entered her pigloo. They babies were under a blanket outside the pigloo. A few moments later, Chasta came out for another drink and rested near the water dish but did not approach her babies. I was familiar with Chasta as a mom and this was definitely not her typical behavior. I kept one eye on the clock, the other on her allowing 5 more minutes before making a call. It was about that time Jeanne arrived to see Ilini and her new litter born the night before. I expressed my concerns for Chasta and her babies. In fact, at that time I had one of the babies in my hands - the smallest runt of the litter who was cool to the touch having moved away from her siblings. I was warming her in my hands as Jeanne entered the house. Being an experienced breeder, Jeanne immediately knew something was not right. We placed a call to Brenda to return to my home and gathered all the babies to get them warm.

Brenda arrived and was advised what had transpired over the last half hour. I raised concern that Chasta might yet have another baby to birth and not able after such a large litter already. Armed with cell phones, we each started calling various veterinarians to see who might be available. Jeanne reached Dr. Russell Welfare and plans for an emergency visit went into action. An effort to place Chasta's babies with Ilini to see if she might foster them was met with ill fate. Ilini panicked and one baby was killed. I then found myself holding nine newborns in one hand while reaching for snuggle bags and hand warmers with the other. Chasta was carefully placed in one snuggle bag, her babies along with Ilini's in another. Jeanne and Brenda would take Chasta directly to Dr. Welfare while her babies would be fostered to another of Jeanne's hedgie moms. I was left with a nervous and confused Ilini to calm and assure she'd done nothing wrong

and was loved. Minutes passed like hours.

At last a call came in from Jeanne. Chasta was in emergency surgery with not one, but three, retained babies. Sadly all were stillborn. Ilini's babies were being fostered by another hedgeie mom. Chasta's babies, now five, would be returning to foster with Ilini.

Somewhere during this whole series of events, the tiny runtling had taken hold of my heart and I gave her a name, Seven. I was thrilled that Seven was coming back to my home with her surviving siblings. Ilini was fiercely protective of the five when they arrived to her. She knew from our "talk" that I had faith in her and she would not let me down. For the next two days I barely saw Ilini as she would not leave the wee ones, not even to take food or water for herself. On the third day, she finally came out and ate heartily, took a good long drink and hurried back to the babies. She allowed me only a brief peek and all were thriving thus far. Seven was huddled with her siblings, fed and warm.

Our hopes were guarded. Each day phone calls were made between myself, Brenda and Jeanne for up-dates. Sadly, losses continued. In just days, we lost all babies from both litters. Even sadder, Brenda lost Chasta to post natal and surgical complications.

These wee ones crossed the Rainbow Bridge almost as suddenly as they had entered my home. They left behind lessons and fondly held memories. Lessons include preparing for the worse while hoping for the best, the value of true friendship and trust, and never taking a moment or the smallest of things for granted.

Those tiny paw prints have made some of the deepest impressions in my own heart. Though only with me for a very short time, her will and struggle to thrive against all odds has left a message of hopefulness... and that is the legacy of a very small hedgeie girl I called "Seven".

Pet food, continued from page 1

And so it continues that companies have come into being to provide pet food products and still other companies manufacture human food, and other products, diversify and expand their product lines. One example is the well-known Purina Company. I actually had my younger sister in stitches when I referred to a favorite breakfast cereal of hers as Purina People Chow – poking fun and spoofing on the well-known Purina cat and dog chows. But looking further behind the scenes, Purina is actually owned and part of the Nestle' company, a Swiss corporation that has a checkered past, and is especially villified for their baby formula sales in Africa. Aside from Dog, Cat and Kitten Chow, also under the Purina label is Fancy Feast, Alpo, Friskies, Mighty Dog, Puppy Chow and Tender Vittles. Purina also manufactures foods for animals under the Mazuri label. They produce an insectivore food as well as other "exotic" animal foods usually purchased by zoos and animal reserves.

Del Monte, famous for canned fruit, owns the Heinz pet food division, makers of Gravy Train, 9 Lives, Meow Mix and Natures Recipe.

Mars, Incorporated, makers of chocolate treats for us humans, is now owner of Royal Canin and also manufacturer of Pedigree, Walthams, Sensible Choice and Nutro brands.

Several years ago, Colgate-Palmolive, well known for dish detergent and other household products, bought out Hill's Science Diet. Shortly after Colgate-Palmolive won over Hill's, Proctor & Gamble finally succeeded in buying family owned and operated Iams/Eukanuba. The Iams family had turned away offers for a number of years. I was still serving both Eukanuba dry kibble and Iams canned foods to my hedgehogs when the change

of hands took place. Almost immediately I noticed new labels on canned foods spouting “now made with more broth”... In other words, I was paying for more water, less meats...and the enthusiasm with which my hedgies took to their bowls diminished too.

As I write this article, we await the closing sale of NaturaPets to Proctor & Gamble. NaturaPets has long been the manufacturer of California Naturals, Innova and Evo pet foods. Back in 2001 as Pat Storm and I planned and prepared for the first Mighty Niagara Hedgehog Show, I spoke with a company representative asking for a donation of samples to pass out at that show. The representative was barely aware of pet hedgehogs and happily surprised that NaturaPet foods had found it’s way into hedgehog bowls. She eagerly agreed to send several boxes of sample size bags for us to distribute. At that time, I learned NaturaPet would not say they used “human grade” ingredients in their pet foods because FDA and USDA allowed things in our foods (hot dogs and canned meats in particular) they (NaturaPets) would not allow. I have to wonder how that policy might change with the P & G buyout.

Stir in scares of pet food recalls since early 2007 and you see why being an informed consumer is important not just for yourself and human family, but equally as important for your pet companions. Many larger manufacturers out-source ingredients for their pet foods. In the case of the recalls that began in March 2007, one link was found consistent to contamination – Menu Foods, with a plant in Toronto, Canada, outsourced it’s rice and corn gluten supply from a China based company. The gluten proved to be contaminated with melamine. Melamine, a chemical known for its use in plastics such as cutlery and dishes, is a by-product of coal used in fertilizer manufacturing but nitrogen levels can be misread as protein. Approximately 3,200 pets are known to have died from these tainted foods. Another 6,000 fell ill. Menu Foods manufactures under private labels for seventeen of the top twenty North American retailers of pet foods including Kroger, Safeway, and Wal-Mart.

But grain and grain gluten are not the only matters of concern when purchasing pet foods. Meat sources can also contain hidden risks. Some manufacturers outsource meat and meat by-products. Industry regulations are extremely light by comparison to those of human food regulations. For example, if meat products are treated with preservatives by the original suppliers and not actually added by the pet food manufacturer they technically do not have to be listed in the ingredients. Also, some sources of meat and meat by-products are far below standards acceptable for human consumption and may include already dead or dying animals as opposed to freshly slaughtered and properly handled meats. Some may even be from animals that were “put down” and thus contain traces of sodium pentobarbital, a drug used for euthanasia.

The petfood industry is loosely regulated at best. The Department of Agriculture basically oversees exports only. The Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM), a subdivision of the Federal Food and Drug Administration, regulates manufacture and distribution of food additives and drugs for pets. CVM has no role in monitoring either where food comes from nor protein, fats, grains, and water contents. CVM has minimal power to regulate the actual health and nutrition standards of pet foods.

The Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) oversees package labeling but has no say in what each individual manufacturer puts into the feed itself.

Learning to read and understand labels is your best first step to providing a healthy choice of pet foods. Below is a summary of guidelines provided by Mike’s Natural Pet Market and Wag N’ Wash Healthy Pet Center, both located in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Food Group: MEAT, MEAT PROTEIN

Look For: Beef, Bison, Buffalo, Elk, Pork, Goat, Atlantic Whitefish, Salmon, Menhaden, Sardine, Tuna, Cod, Herring, Chicken, Duck, Kangaroo, Turkey, Ostrich, Lamb

The word MEAL refers to muscle tissue, unless otherwise listed as bone meal

Avoid: By-Products By-products are unfit for human consumption and that makes them unfit for consumption by pets. Chicken by- products may contain ground parts of chickens including feet, feathers, undeveloped eggs, intestines, beaks, etc. Poultry by-products are the same as chicken but may be from any bird, not specifically chicken. Likewise, if a product just says beef, understand that any ad all parts of the animal are used.

Details: Stay away from all products that use ambiguous (non-specific) meat ingredients. Using general terms allows a manufacturer to use varying proteins and different sources for these. Different meat proteins have different nutrient profiles. Certain animals are sourced from polluted environments. Some animals are given drugs and chemicals for a wide variety of reasons. It is legal, but highly unethical and unhealthy to use 4-D animals tissues in pet foods. 4-D means Dead, Dying, Diseased and Decomposing.

Food Group: GRAIN

Look For: Whole or Ground Rice, Wheat, Barley, Corn, Oats, Alfalfa

Avoid: Fractionated Grains – Glutens, flours, bran, concentrate, hulls, middlings, sorghum. Soybean meal, bone meal, corn gluten meal, rice gluten meal are low cost, low quality sources of protein. Less than 50% of the protein is absorbed and retained from these ingredients. Wheat Flour, Rice Flour, Corn Flour, Brewer's Rice, Wheat Mill, Rice Bran, Corn Bran are highly processed sources of carbohydrates from which most of the naturally occurring vitamins have been leached.

Details: Always look for whole grains. When grains are fractionated or subdivided into their individual parts, they lose a great amount of nutritional value. This is also the stage in production where deceptive and unethical practices compromise grain food values. Ground rice is a quality source of carbohydrates.

Food Group: FRUITS & VEGETABLES

Look For: Whole Fruits and Whole Vegetables

Avoid: Vegetable Proteins, pomace, pulp and more

Details: Fruits and Vegetables when not compromised by the addition of chemicals or altered during production are awesome and complete foods. Phytonutrients AKA plant based foods are rich in antioxidants, anticarcinogenics, vitamins, minerals and more. Think Whole and think Organic when shopping for the healthiest fruits and vegetables.

Food Group: DAIRY PRODUCTS

Look For: Organic & Free Range Milk, Cheese, Butter, Yogurt, Ice Cream, etc.

Avoid: Conventionally Processed Milk, Cheese, Butter, Yogurt, Ice Cream

Details: Conventional dairy products have been found to cause more harm than good in our American Diet. Pasteurization destroys nutrient value. Homogenization fractures molecules into microscopic particles that can collect in the mucous membrane and intestinal walls.

Large amounts of fats are consumed through excessive consumption of dairy products. It's also a fact that there is more calcium in carrots than in dairy products.

Food Group: FATS

Look For: Sunflower Oil, Flaxseed Oil, Omega-3 Essential Fatty Acids

Avoid: Animal Fats

Details: While chicken fat might be a good source of fat, like other animal fats is it obtained through a rendering process. This process reduces the linoleic acid, an essential fatty acid important for good skin and coat.

Food Group: VITAMINS & MINERALS

Look For: Naturally sourced vitamins and minerals

Avoid: All chemicals and synthetically sourced

Details: Vitamins and minerals are the most efficient and beneficial in their original and unaltered state. Around 90% of pill and capsule form vitamins and minerals pass through the system without any benefit to the body. Eating fresh foods rich in vitamins and minerals is the best way to get them into the body. Liquid form is second best because liquids are more readily absorbed into the body.

Food Group: PRESERVATIVES

Look For: Natural Preservatives, Mixed Tychopherals, Vitamin E, Rosemary Extract

Avoid: BHA (Butylated Hydroxyanisole), BHT (Butylated Hydroxytoluene), Ethoxyquin

Details: Nothing has an indefinite shelf life but why risk much more harmful side effects from chemical preservatives? BHA, BHT, and Ethoxyquin have all been linked to serious illness, side effects, and carcinogenic effects. BHA and BHT has an interaction with oxygen which helps prevent fats and oils from turning rancid. Both these preservatives are found not only in foods, but also in cosmetics. The very reasons these compounds work as preservatives are the same reasons they cause adverse health effects including metabolic issues for some persons (and animals), as well as links to cancers and tumors.

Food Group: FILLERS vs. FIBER

Look For: Meats by name, whole grains, whole fruits, whole vegetables.

Avoid: Peanut Hulls, Beet Pulp, Wheat Middlings

Details: Often listed as a source of fiber, these are low and non-nutritional additives used as fillers. Likewise, ground corn is more difficultly digested than corn flour therefore creating bulk filler rather than nutritional value. More filler equals more poop/less nutrition per serving.

Resources for this article include:

- Mr. Mike Cavanaugh, Mike's Natural Pet Market, Colorado Springs, Colorado. I owe Mike a deep debt of gratitude and thanks for truly being a friend to all companion pets, a most ethical pet food supplier, and a fount of information about the industry.
- "Pet Food Nation" by Joan Weiskopf, MS, Veterinarian Clinical Nutritionist
- Wag N' Wash Healthy Pet Center, Colorado Springs, Colorado.
- PetfoodList.com

Midwest Rendezvous Hedgehog Show

Conformation Results May 1, 2010 - - Milwaukee, WI Floyd Aprill - judge

JUVENILE MALE

Standard

1st - Hawkeye (Kay Malmquist)

Pinto

1st - Gromit (Linda Woodring)
2nd - Samson (Lois Reetz)
3rd - Squishie (Lora Silvernail)
Snowberry (Tiffany Clark)
Mocha (Barb Milone)
Coca (Barb Milone)

Juvenile Male Grand Champion/ Reserve Grand Champion

Grand Champion - Gromit
Reserve Grand Champion -
Hawkeye

ADULT MALE

Albino

1st - Kenmore (Linda Woodring)

Snowflake

1st - Rockester (Sheila Dempsey)
2nd = Col. Potter (Kay Malmquist)

Pinto

1st - Pina (Greg Gofdeck)
2nd - Snowy (Kathy Guzikowski)
3rd - Baxter (Linda Woodring)

Adult Male Grand Champion/ Reserve Grand Champion

Grand Champion - Rochester
Reserve Grand Champion - Pina

JUVENILE FEMALE

White

1st - Fiona (Kristen Bongard)

Snowflake

1st - S'Bella (Charity Tutt)

Pinto

1st - Celexa (Kristen Bongard)
2nd - Millie (Deb Weaver)
3rd - Tickles (Kate Scher)

Juvenile Female Grand Champion/Reserve Grand Champion

Grand Champion - Celexa
Reserve Grand Champion - Fiona

ADULT FEMALE

Standard

1st - Juniper (Lois Reetz)
2nd - Miss Pickles (Jennifer Hack)

Albino

1st - Star (Sheila Dempsey)
2nd - Harriet (Kristen Bongard)

Pinto

1st - Lucy (Kathy Guzikowski)
2nd - Samantha (Deb Weaver)

Adult Female Grand Champion/ Reserve Grand Champion

Grand Champion - Juniper
Reserve Grand Champion - Star

Best of Show

Best of Show - Gromit
Reserve Best of Show - Rochester



- Midwest Rendezvous Hedgehog Best of Show winner - Gromit (Image by Linda Woodring)

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