Information Series

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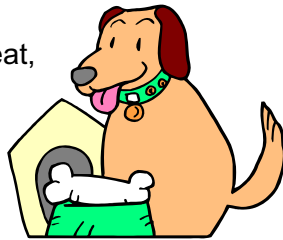
Dog and Cat Food Rating

The following guide is provided by Dr. Michael Lemmon of Highlands Veterinary Hospital in Renton, Washington. Foods are rated from 10 (the most nutritious) to 0 (the lease nutritious).

10-9 For wild animals in nature: wild food

Source: hunting, foraging. Characteristics: study wild animals to learn best diet for domesticated species.

8 The best you can do: balanced, fresh food made by you

Source: Dogs -- 1/3 meat, eggs, dairy; 2/3 grains, vegetables. Cats -- 1/2 meat, eggs, dairy; 1/2 grains, vegetables.

Characteristics: ecological, inexpensive, easy, healthy (includes healthy leftovers)

7-6 Not a bad compromise: "health food" brands

Source: Precise, Wysong, Nature's Recipe, Dynamite, Flint River, ABADY

Characteristics: few or no preservatives, few or no by-products, dates on the bags, more nutrients retained, disease prevention design.

5-4 Getting the idea: "upscale" brands

Source: IAMS, Science Diet, ANF, Tamiami, Cornucopia, Lick Your Chops, Nutro, Waynes, Old Mother Hubbard

Characteristics: digestible, very concentrated, easily available, actually less costly, could be improved.

Note: Animal Services does not feed most dry pet foods in this column:

3 Just mucking along: all grocery store brands

Source: Purina (all), Gaines, Friskies, Alpo, Ken'l Ration, Kal-Kan, Tuffys, Tyrells, Attaboy, Pedigree. Characteristics: Not very digestible, additives, preservatives, chemicals, no date on bags, addictive flavorings added.

2 You get what you pay for: generic brands

Source: Holiday, Super-America, Houles, Fromms

Characteristics: Ultra-cheap ingredients, irregular batch cooking, products are not tested, no reputation to lose.

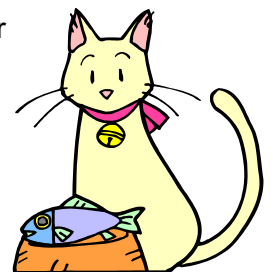**1 Let them eat cake:** soft-moist, gourmet cans, "treat" foods

Source: Tender Vittles, Gaines Burgers, Kibbles and Chunks, Pounce, Crave, Snausages, Jerky Sticks, Happy Cat, Mighty Dog

Characteristics: Fake, plastic, junk food, addictive and deadly, rots teeth and intestines, expensive.

0 We warned you: poorly balanced, randomly-offered, people food

Source: Excess meat, fat, ice cream, candy, sugar, white flour products, tuna, steak, bones, anything microwaved

Characteristics: Cause of obesity, picky-eaters, behavior problems, diabetes, allergies, shedding and dandruff.

Animal Services has provided this information as a guide only. We recommend speaking with your vet about the nutritional needs of your specific pet and any conditions your pet has that may require a special diet.