



Choosing The Best Food For Our Dogs



When it comes to dog food, there are more bones of contention than you can shake a stick at. (all puns intended) There are dozens of brands of dog food and many ways of feeding. All claim to take the high ground.

These include, Holistic, BARF, Raw, Free Range, Kibble, Complete, Tinned, Pouched, Organic and the list goes on.....One thing for certain, it is a extremely emotive subject and one that brings out many opinions.

Go on to many of the canine forums, you will see half a dozen back threads where people have argued the merits of their particular way of feeding. Food can have a serious affect on our pet's behaviour, as well as their health; many have additives, ethoxyquin, colourants, preservatives, some of these additives can and do affect our pets dramatically.

It is often obvious from its appearance that a food contains artificial colours. Some almost look as though they were made in Sellafield. Bakers for instance will fall into this category, it looks as though it should glow in the dark. I have now written a critical article reference (1) **Bakers and Pedigree Complete Dog Food**. Explaining the ingredients in these two best selling UK dog foods.

However, it is not so obvious when other additives are present. As Chairman of PAACT the Professional Association of Applied Canine Trainers. I get to discuss and debate food on our behavioural forum. Many members claim to be able to spot a dog that is on certain foods just by their behaviour.

Certainly, a number of well-known brands appear to create aggression and hyperactivity. The behaviour is quite marked and is not that difficult to spot to the trained eye. I am not saying these foods affect every dog the same way. Some dogs are OK on them, but many are not.

In a recent PMFA (Pet Food Manufacturers Association) press release, they state: *"In light of recent media coverage about prepared dog foods, the PFMA speaks out on behalf of an industry deeply committed to enhancing pet welfare through optimum nutrition"*. They trotted out a so called expert called Peter Neville, to confirm their ludicrous statements.

I have commented on their press release and Peter Neville in my (2) **Blog**. I do not pull any punches, I believe they are taking the general public as fools.

I thought it prudent to also write an article about the old wives tale of high protein causing kidney and liver problems and hyperactivity. This is believed to badly affect older dogs. In fact the opposite is true.

Therefore it is worth reading (3) **The Myth of High Protein**.

Before making any appointment to see a problem dog, I always ask a whole series of questions, one of the first on the list is always what food are they feeding? Has there been any recent changes in diet? In some cases this simple question triggers awareness that the behaviour started when they changed brands of food. Therefore, a simple change of diet may be all that is needed to alter the inappropriate behaviour.

Because I have such a motley crew, sizes, breed, temperament etc they are good candidates for testing various preparatory foods including Kibble, Raw and Cooked meat. Though I am more than willing to discuss the merits of the food I found to be excellent, I do not intend to use this article to denigrate or attack other dog food providers, though I will give a list of all the different brands tested..



The Dogs

1. **Guinness The working Cocker Spaniel**
Will eat anything total Gannet
2. **Kai the white German Shepherd**
Is delicate in his eating habits and takes his time, he also has a sensitive stomach
3. **Edward the Springer Spaniel**
Will eat anything and everything, I have to scatter feed him as he bolts his food, almost choking as he eats it so quickly. Though he does have a somewhat sensitive stomach.
4. **Jet the Working Cocker Spaniel**
Total Gannet eats anything and everything cast iron stomach
5. **Charlie The JR/Dachshund Cross**
Is in between the two and enjoys his food but rarely has stomach problems though can be fussy.

Foods Tested

- Arden Grange (Kibble)
- ATTU (Kibble)
- Bakers (Kibble)
- Beta (Kibble)
- Burns Kibble
- Eukanuba (Kibble)
- Eden (Kibble)
- Fish4Dogs
- Forthglade (Wet)
- Forthglade (Raw)
- James Wellbeloved (Kibble)
- Hills Science Plan
- Iams (Kibble)
- Lifestage Menu (Wet)
- Lily's Kitchen
- Naturediet (Wet)
- Natures Menu (Wet) and (Raw)
- Prize Choice Same Company
- Pedigree Tinned (Wet)
- Pedigree (Kibble)
- Royal Canin (Kibble)
- Pro Plan (Kibble)
- Science Plan (Kibble)
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- These brands were tested over a period of 18 months. Obviously these tests were not under laboratory conditions. However, they did cover observable data such as: coat, stools, behaviour, general health and eyes plus a wagability tail test.
- Of the foods I tested it became apparent that cost and quality tend to go together, but not in every case. A 15kg bag of dog food costing £14,95 could not possibly contain the same level of human grade ingredients as the £45.00 or £60.00 a bag foods, they would run at a loss if that was the case. So as a general rule of thumb the more expensive the better the quality the ingredients.
- This exercise also changed my opinion on some RAW foods. Before these tests I was actually strongly against all raw feeding, I was won over by the quality of some of the raw food available. I have changed my opinion on what was my first choice of kibble and Fish4Dogs now gets that pride of place. c2011

• Kibble: Dry Pellet Type Food

- **Of all the brands I tested three came clearly at the top, they were Fish4Dogs, AATU and Eden Multi-Meat and Fish Formula**



Fish4Dogs: They have a selection of large and small bite puppy and adult food. Prestige and weight control. One of the great things about this food is even fussy

eaters and one of my dogs is a very fussy eater woofs it down , therefore this food with with its high proportion of natural fish (over 55%) is ideal. There are three choices Salmon, Fish and Sardine My dogs seemed to like all of them. One thing I have noted about this food is the stools are small and hard and they do not smell.d vitality were excellent. This is a food that will keep them fit. and with lots of vitality No adverse behavioural changes were observed, in fact the opposite was the case. I liked the consistency and ease of this food though it would be nice if it was available at some more outlets. Though any good pet shop will be able to get it in for you.

- The website is informative and up to date. And the people at Fish4Dogs are very helpful. Just give them a call and discuss your particular needs and they are more than happy to help. I now feed my own dogs this food. I also use their wide variety of treats. See at bottom of page. I have also recently tried out their Salmon Oil, and I was very impressed with my dogs overall coat, condition and bright eyes.



- **AATU:** They have three recipes, Chicken Duck and Salmon. All of these have a very high percentage of quality meat products. Dogs really liked this food it is also enriched with fruits, herbs and botanicals. It is based on a 80/20 ratio That is 80% Meat and 20% other high end ingredients. This food is not cheap you are looking at £60 for chicken and £67 for the other two ingredients for 10KG. However because o the meat content you are looking to feed far less per serving.
- It is free of grain, white potato and gluten (a composite known to cause allergic reactions).naturally made without artificial colours, artificial preservatives, artificial flavours and without GM ingredients. I was very impressed with the food and so were the dogs. The care that they take with this food is impressive and it deserves its second place. AATU is the first single protein diet to include freshly prepared, preservative free meat. Availability will not be the Supermarkets. They do have a list of stockists on the website.



- **Eden Multi-Meat and Fish Formula:** Do not have a large variety of recipes,. But they do have a high degree of quality protein. Both fish and meat. Eden has an impressive 80-20-ingredient profile.
- The range of highly nutritious vegetables, fruits and herbs contained in Eden is also very impressive, and includes excellent additions like sweet potato, lucerne (alfalfa), spinach, seaweed and cranberry as well as a wide range of herbs and supplements to help with digestion and joint mobility [80% from animal sources, 20% from veg, fruit and herbs and 0% grains. The idea is to recreate the 'ancestral diet' of the dog, although there is still a lot of discussion over what exactly the 'ancestral diet' should be.](#)

Tinned or Pouched Wet Food Cooked

This included pouched, tinned, tray, sachet type meals that are primarily wet rather than kibble which is dry. All of this food is cooked and the ones I chose have vegetables mixed in.



Barking Heads: The dogs really liked this trayed food, it was their favourite of all the wet type foods and they really appeared to look forward to it, wagability was very evident and the stools were good. Coat and eyes bright. These adult and puppy cooked complete foods come in Chicken, Lamb, and Salmon with Sweet Potato. The Meat Recipe comes with 80% meat, Brown Rice, Carrots, Peas, Potato, Sunflower oil, The Salmon has Salmon oil, Tomato, Seaweed & Basil in it. The puppy version is chicken and salmon which includes Chicken 80%, Brown Rice, Carrots, Peas, Potato, Sunflower Oil, Salmon Oil, Tomato, Seaweed & Basil.

No artificial colourings, No artificial flavourings, No artificial preservatives and no GM ingredients... And they say that's a promise! A great nutritious food from fresh ingredients and smelled really nice as well



Lily's Kitchen: This is a tinned food. The dogs lapped this up. Only real fresh meat used: For example the meat for their tins is delivered fresh in the morning and the food is made that afternoon. No rendered animal parts or derivatives, nothing Genetically Modified, no artificial preservatives, colours or sweeteners. No wheat, corn or soya. Comes in a number of flavours: An English Garden Party, Homestyle Chicken and Turkey Casserole, Slow Cooked Lamb Hotpot, Beef Potato and Vegetable Dinner, Wild Campfire Stew, Fishy Fish Pie with Peas, Goose and Duck Feast with Fruits, and Venison and Wild Rabbit Terrine. Sounds like something we would order and that is clearly the message Lily's Kitchen is putting over. The website has a old style kitchen feel about it, is a bit fussy getting round it but in keeping with the quality of the food. Just tipped out of first place by Forthgl;ade. I intend to test all of these foods on a regular basis, as ingredients do change.

Raw Food

This included minced and free-flow chunks and raw frozen blocks mixed with vegetables and rice and in some cases maize. I was never really a fan of raw food for my dogs, though I have to say I have been swayed by these tests. Therefore I would have no hesitation in recommending Raw to anyone who feels that suits their beliefs and lifestyle. Mine get Raw, Kibble and Cooked.



Natures Menu/Prize Choice: This company has a fairly wide range of different choices which include Tripe, Chicken, Lamb, Heart, Liver. There is a minced menu in frozen blocks that also include peas and carrots and rice. Prize Choice the sister arm offer chunks which include Tripe Chunks, Poultry Necks, Beef Chunks, Liver Chunks, Breast Trim, Heart Chunks, Fish Fillet, Roast Chicken, Chicken Wings. My dogs loved the minced blocks with rice and vegetables mixed in. their favourite was Tripe and Tripe and Chicken. Stools were good small and had very little smell, coat and eyes shining and bright. The favourite of the chunks were without doubt the Tripe. I did not feed the necks or the wings though I fed all the rest. If you are going to feed raw I think the frozen block offers a very good compromise. The tripe chunks were popular. The website was quite good.



Forthglade Frozen: A very good choice of different menus, though it must be said that they do not include vegetables or rice in their frozen blocks as do Natures Menu. The blocks are beef, heart, tripe, chicken, liver, and a nice touch, rabbit and mixtures of these, such as beef and heart, The free-flow version can be served raw or cooked and includes most of the same ingredients. Once again the dogs really enjoyed this food.

The above tests were observational only and were not carried out under laboratory or scientific conditions. Stools very good, coat and eyes shining. Very little smell from the stools. Their favourite was Tripe yet again, though they did like the rabbit and I believe they preferred the free-flow. Behaviour was normal and they were not hyper in any way. The website is rubbish though I am reliably informed that it is being looked at.

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Dog Treats



I have been asked on many occasions what treats I use. If I am training I use Sprats, Jerky and fish4dogs.

For special treats used to occupy the dogs for longer, then I use **Bulls Pizzles Ends or Calves Hooves** They are brilliant for instance as a final treat at night or when you want to give them a treat that lasts a long time such as going out, or leaving in the morning.

I now sell these treats, they are imported from Germany See [Bulls Pizzles Calves Hooves, Beef Jerky and Dried Scalp](#) At the bottom of this page is a link to a number of totally natural treats I now stock and sell, as I was so impressed with them The Fish4dogs treats are small star shaped treats, called [Superstar Training Treats](#). I use these little star shaped treats because they are easy to carry. I generally use them outdoors and indoors dogs love them, and you can leave them loose in your pocket, or in a treat bag and they do not go off like cheese or frankfurter.



For indoor work I now use [Whole Dried Sprats](#). you can break them off for any size dogs and dogs go absolutely mad on them and the coats of my dogs are amazing. I also use them for stuffing Calves Hooves especially for [Separation Anxiety](#)

Super Star Training Treats are made by **Fish4Dogs** a company that does numerous fish based treats. Which range from fish and calamari treats to compressed fish skins. What I like about them is they are all natural and packed full of Omega 3.



