

# The Pet Writes® Best Dog Food Label Reading Cheat Sheet

## GOOD DOG FOOD INGREDIENTS

ON THE LABEL	EXAMPLES	WHAT IT MEANS	RATING
The label contains words indicating special care in choosing healthful ingredients	Organic, Grass Fed ('Natural' is a meaningless word)	Organic: Free of pesticides. Grass Fed: better ratios of Omega 3s to 6s to fight inflammation, cancer, etc.	☺☺☺☺☺
High Protein Content	8% to 25% or more	Most canned foods are less than 8% protein; a few are 10%. Raw and pasteurized foods vary, 13% to 25%.	☺☺☺ to☺☺☺☺☺☺
No qualifying words like Dinner, Delight, Platter, Formula, Nuggets, Entrée, etc., <u>AND</u> first ingredient is a <u>specific</u> meat	Beef Dog Food, Lamb and Potatoes for Dogs, Chicken and Rice Dog Food	The first ingredient must make up 95% of the total content by volume.	☺☺☺☺☺
The first meat listed is <u>clearly specified</u>	Beef, Lamb, Chicken, Turkey, Venison, etc.	Since the first ingredient is what you get the most of, you want to see a specific meat here	☺☺☺ to ☺☺☺☺☺
Vegetables, fruits, seeds and sprouts, instead of grain fillers	Yam, spinach, carrots, squash, kelp, carrots, lettuce, alfalfa sprouts, apples, flax seed, pumpkin seed, etc.	The presence of these means a more balanced diet. Many dogs have grain allergies, especially to wheat.	☺☺☺ to ☺☺☺☺☺
Contains "good" oils (with Omega 3s)	Krill oil, flax oil, coconut oil. Fish oil is debatable: most contains heavy metals.	Skin and coat, fight inflammation, cancer, depression	☺☺☺ to ☺☺☺☺☺

## WATCH FOR THESE – SOME ARE TERRIBLE, AND OTHERS YOU HAVE TO THINK ABOUT

ON THE LABEL	EXAMPLES	WHAT IT MEANS	RATING
The <u>first</u> ingredient is something other than meat	Potatoes and Beef, Rice 'n' Chicken Livers	Contains very little meat, as little as 3% of total volume	☹
Use of any <u>qualifying words</u> to describe the food	Dinner, Delight, Platter, Entrée, Nuggets, Formula, Tidbits, Chunks, etc.	The food can be up to 75% non-protein filler, most of which is bad for your dog	Probably ☹, but read the fine print
The label mentions a <u>mix of meats</u> rather than just one	Chicken 'n' Liver (this might be good) Liver 'n' Chicken (maybe not so good)	The one listed second can legally make up only 3% of the total content	☹ to ☺☺☺☺☺, read and evaluate
The name of the <u>meat</u> is preceded by the word 'with'	Dog Food with Lamb, Kibble with Beef	Whatever comes after the word 'with' is present in very small amounts, as low as 3% of content	☹
<u>Grains</u> are used as filler, instead of large amounts of vegetables, fruits, seeds and sprouts	Wheat, Barley, Rice, etc.	Many dogs have grain allergies, especially to wheat.	☹ to ☺☺
Presence of animal <u>by-products</u> or " <u>digests</u> "	May include heads, necks, or stomach contents. By law, no hair, horn, teeth, hooves or manure.	In small amounts these probably are not a problem, but a high quality dog food will not contain them.	☹ to ☺☺☺
Inclusion of " <u>Flavors</u> "	Beef flavor, Chicken flavor, etc.	Mainly from meat by-products or heat-treated meat "digests." Whey may be used for milk flavor.	☹ except whey as milk flavor ☺☺☺☺
Contains "bad" oils	Corn, sunflower, safflower, canola, olive oils. Fish oil debatable: omega 3s vs. heavy metals	Saturated and polyunsaturated fats, oils high in omega 6s (olive oil), contaminated oils (fish oil)	☹ to ☺☺☺.
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