

BowWOW

Facts, observations and musings about Our Best Friends

Hi. My name is Tracie. I am new to the Low Country but certainly not new to dogs.

I have been a kennel owner, breeder, trainer (old style), communicator (new style), practitioner of canine massage and acupressure, homeopathy, herbalism and was a vet tech years before it was considered a credible career. In the human world I've earned a few advanced degrees in design, am a personal organizer, a darned good cook and an amusing dinner guest. Currently, as the owner of wholeDog I will be sharing my thoughts about good behavior, good health and common sense for dogs...and their humans.

Let me start with my one of my favorite topics: What's a dog to eat these days?

The pet food industry was sent into a panic recently with the news that some ingredients were tainted with Chinese chemical additives. Sadly, many dogs died, but that misfortune caused many conscientious dog owners to question what they were shoveling into their pets.

As with humans, the better quality food a dog eats, the longer he will last and the healthier he will be. First, purchase the best dog kibble you can afford. Surprisingly, you won't find it at the grocery store. Good brands are carried locally at some feed stores, health food stores and pet shops. The big box pet stores are beginning to wise up and are carrying better product, but your best bet is a local feed and seed.

Second: Read the ingredients. Look for food words. But, you say, what IS this by-product stuff? What ARE all those chemicals I can't pronounce? Why is the bag so greasy? Words like "by-product" usually means the parts of animals that are pretty scary, and not very nutritious - like lips, beaks or spinal membrane. "Meals" are OK because that is simply protein that has been dried and ground. Fruit and vegetables are always a plus to look for, too, but look out for corn.

Dogs cannot metabolize corn effectively so it often creates rashes, skin irritation and, my personal favorite, that smelly ear goo you can never seem to get rid of.

Avoid chemical preservatives and color additives. Those colored bits are mixed in to suggest "goodness" to you, but dogs really don't mind eating uniformly brown food. Simply, if the first six are not food words you recognize, or foods that you would not consider eating yourself, or list corn right up front, put the bag back.

Third: Dogs need fats - the good kinds, just like we do. Look for Omega 3's or high quality fish oils. They're good for the heart and the joints. If an ingredient is simply listed as "fat" you can pretty much guess that it is post-consumer waste grease. Ever wonder where fry oil used in all the fast food chains goes? Now you know. That's also why the bag gets greasy. Dogs love it, just the way we love it, but it makes for fat dogs.

Next episode: Howabout people food?

I love to talk about dogs. Want more information? Have a question? Send a note to me at [letstalk@wholedog.biz](mailto:letstalk@wholedog.biz).

