



Choosing a Healthy Dog Food

Introduction

As the health benefits of excellent human nutrition become better publicised, more and more customers are looking for pet foods for their dogs that meet the same high standards that they would choose for themselves. Recent TV programmes such as “Super Size Me” - which highlight the dangers of too much fast-food, have led to sensible consumers cutting back or cutting out such meals. Pet owners are now extending their own healthy regime to include their dogs, and want to substitute what amounts to the doggie equivalent of a burger and fries for a more nutritious and healthy alternative. At Arden Grange, the health benefits of wholesome, natural pet food has always been at the forefront of every recipe.



The most crucial factor when selecting a pet food is to remember that all dogs are individuals. Each has his or her own unique genetic build, digestion and rate of metabolism. Taking these into account as well as variants such as breed size, weight, activity level and temperament mean that what may be the perfect diet for one, may not be ideal for another. This is why sometimes trial and error are necessary in order to establish what diet is truly optimal for your own pet.

Nutrition Overview – including ingredients to look for and those best avoided...

Protein Source



Look for – “A” grade fresh chicken, chicken meal, fresh salmon, fish meal and lamb meal

When choosing a commercial complete dog food, it’s important to remember that although dogs are scientifically classed as omnivores, they are chiefly geared up for digesting animal proteins and fats rather than large volumes of carbohydrate-rich ingredients such as cereals and grains. You can see this from their dentition! Look for a food that contains **high levels of good quality named meat or fish sources.**

Arden Grange use “A” Grade meat and fish in the recipes which is **free from growth hormones and fit for human consumption.** A lot of people wrongly assume that “meal” is a poor quality ingredient and should be avoided. Certainly, blended meals (e.g. poultry meal) are not such good quality as a single source named ingredient such as chicken or lamb meal. The **Arden Grange meals are extremely nutrient-rich and contain no hidden nasties** such as feet, heads, feathers, hooves and wool. Fresh meat and fish are obviously less processed than meals, and for this reason are preferred by some owners. They do however lose moisture during the manufacturing process. An ideal balance is a pet food that contains some fresh meat or fish and some meat or fish meal – this provides the best of both worlds!

Look for **chicken, salmon and white fish as these all contain protein of a higher biological value** than red meats such as beef and pork. This means that they are more easily broken down into their constituent amino acids that are used for structural and functional reactions within the body. Of course, some dogs with dietary allergies will require a novel protein and / or carbohydrate source (i.e. ones to which they have not been previously exposed.)

Some customers are still afraid of high protein levels within a dog food. This has resulted from several myths including the unsubstantiated facts that high protein foods cause hyperactivity and renal problems. If protein is reduced, then a food would need to be much higher in carbohydrate to compensate for this. As we have already discussed; dogs are far better equipped to digest meat and fish rather than grains.

Egg is also an excellent ingredient as it contains very pure protein of the highest biological value. All of the Arden Grange recipes contain egg for this reason.

Avoid: Unspecified meat derivatives, byproducts and meals, proteins derived from cereals such as corn gluten meal, beef and pork (in dogs with sensitive digestions).

Fat Source



Look for – Specified pure sources such as chicken and fish oil

All of the Arden Grange recipes include **premium quality pure chicken oil** as the primary fat source. As with the meat ingredients, when looking for the highest quality fats – remember that **single source named ingredients such as chicken fat are much better than blends such as “poultry fat”**. Arden Grange use pure chicken oil in every product due to its high digestibility. Some customers with dogs suffering from chicken intolerance are concerned by its inclusion; but because a true food allergy is an immune response to a protein – chicken fat is highly unlikely to provoke an adverse reaction. Ingredients such as beef tallow and lard are very tasty to dogs, but are high in saturated fats and low in essential fatty acids and are thus best avoided. Whilst us humans typically associate vegetable oils as being better for us, this is not the case for our dogs who will gain far more nutritional benefit from animal fats and oils. **Fish oil** is a rich natural source of the **Omega 3 fatty acids** which have many benefits to canine health and is also included in the Arden Grange recipes.

Avoid: Blended fats, vegetable fats or oils as the primary fat source, beef tallow, unspecified animal or vegetable fats.

Carbohydrate Source



Look for – Good quality whole grains and wheat gluten free foods

In some inferior pet foods, large amounts of carbohydrates can be used to bulk it out. Such foods use un-specified cereals and cereal derivatives. They are also usually guilty of “splitting ingredients” – which is a sneaky way of making the food label look better. An example is rice, rice flour and rice bran all listed separately. This means that rice can appear lower on the ingredient list (ingredients must be listed with the greatest inclusion first, and as discussed in the “Protein Section” – better foods contain higher levels of meat or fish). It’s also important to consider that although cereals and grain ingredients are primarily carbohydrate, they do also have a protein fraction called gluten. Some sensitive dogs are allergic to this protein, with intolerances to wheat gluten being the most common. For this reason, **all of the Arden Grange recipes are free from wheat gluten**. The gluten fraction in corn is lower and therefore is well-digested by most dogs. In rice, it is even lower still, and thus the majority of dogs do very well on diets containing it. **For those dogs with allergies to corn, Arden Grange have manufactured 2 suitable products – Premium and Sensitive. The Sensitive recipe is also free from rice. Both contain potato as the carbohydrate source.**

Properly cooked (as found in extruded pet foods such as Arden Grange) carbohydrates are highly digestible and a valuable source of energy. The Arden Grange recipes mostly contain both rice and corn as the two are at different positions on the glycaemic index. This helps to maintain a slow and steady energy release throughout the day, rather than glucose peaks and troughs.

As with all of the Arden Grange ingredients, only those of the highest quality are used. **All of the carbohydrate ingredients are sourced from the EU where strict quality-control measures are in place, and none are genetically modified.** Whole grains are used rather than flours because they have a higher nutritional value. Brown rice is typically thought of as being higher quality than white, and some customers have asked why Arden Grange use white

rice. The reason is that brown rice is simply white rice with the husks on. These husks are indigestible fibre, and can irritate a sensitive digestion.

Avoid: Unspecified cereal or grain ingredients, products that split ingredients, wheat gluten (in allergic dogs), highly processed or refined flours.

Fibre



Look for – A fibre source providing both soluble and insoluble fractions

A small proportion of **beet pulp** is added to Arden Grange pet foods as it is a **good source of both soluble and insoluble fibre**. The soluble fibre is a good food source for the friendly bacteria in the large intestine. It also slows the rate of food passage through the gut ensuring a preferential transit time of food, leading to maximum digestion and absorption of nutrients. The insoluble fibre increases peristalsis, helps an animal to feel satisfactorily full and provides a crunchy texture to the kibbles to aid oral hygiene. Fibre is important for maintaining normal gastrointestinal transit time and motility and cats and dogs with stomach upsets can be found eating grass or other vegetation, possibly in the attempt to soothe their gut with increased fibre.

A quality fibre source in the correct proportion may help to reduce the incidence of conditions such as diabetes mellitus and obesity. It may also help to prevent constipation and diarrhoea.

Avoid: Corn bran, peanut hulls, rice hulls, soybean hulls, oat hulls.

Vitamins & Minerals



Look for – Antioxidant vitamins and chelated minerals

Like any other ingredient, vitamins and minerals can vary in quality and in how well the body can absorb them. Arden Grange prefer to derive these nutrients naturally where possible and use stable forms that are easily utilised within the body. **Vitamin C, E and beta carotene all have powerful antioxidant properties and may help provide protection against the harmful effect of free radicals.**

Chelated organic forms of the minerals copper, zinc, iron and selenium are included in the Arden Grange recipes due to their high bioavailability (absorption from the gut) and their efficient transfer to target tissues. These are also a component of antioxidant enzymes.

Together, these antioxidant vitamins and minerals provide excellent immune system support.

Avoid: Products containing menadione (Vitamin K3), sulfate and oxide based mineral supplements (e.g. zinc oxide, iron oxide) that are harmless but poorly absorbed.

Health Promoting Botanicals



Look for – Natural healthCare supplements present at effective levels

All of the Arden Grange recipes contain a number of safe and natural nutrients to optimise canine health. The efficacy of some nutraceuticals included within commercial pet foods has been questioned, but Arden Grange use such ingredients at effective levels. All of the products contain **cranberry extract** (to promote a healthy urinary tract), **prebiotics** (to aid digestion) and **nucleotides**, which are proteins derived from yeast (to promote both optimal digestion and efficient immunity). They also contain **Glucosamine, Chondroitin** and **MSM** for healthy joints. Yucca extract is also included, and this has powerful natural antioxidant properties.

Avoid: Products containing negligible amounts of supplements that are unlikely to be present at a level beneficial to the health of your pet.

Wholesome, Nutritious and Naturally Preserved



Look for – Naturally preserved foods that are free from additives

All of the Arden Grange recipes are **preserved naturally with mixed tocopherols (Vitamin E) and rosemary extract**. There has been much recent media concern regarding the safety of the

synthetic antioxidants ethoxyquin, butylated hydroxyanisole (BHA) and butylated hydroxytoluene (BHT). These preservatives are often added to pet foods and simply listed as EU approved or EEC permitted preservatives. They are sometimes added to the raw materials that contain fats before these ingredients are incorporated into the pet food and therefore are not listed in the ingredients. Arden Grange are pleased to declare that **“ONLY mixed tocopherols and Vitamin E are used to preserve our raw materials and our finished products.”** Artificial additives may have a detrimental effect on some sensitive animals' behaviour, rather like children who suffer from attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) as a result of consuming certain artificial colourants.

Natural tocopherols have no known toxicity associated with them or harmful health effects. Moreover, they have a beneficial role in the body, and may aid in helping to combat the harmful effects of free radicals.

Furthermore, the Arden Grange recipes do not contain any added sugar or salt, artificial colourings and flavourings or genetically modified ingredients. **Arden Grange pet foods are not tested on animals – guaranteed.**

Avoid: Artificial preservatives including BHA, BHT, ethoxyquin, TBHQ (tertiary butylhydroquinone) and sodium metabisulphite; sweeteners and flavourings including cane molasses, corn syrup, sugar, sorbitol, sucrose, fructose, glucose, ammoniated glycyrrhizin, propylene glycol, added salt and unspecified digests and broths; colourings and dyes including Blue 2, Red 40, Yellow 5 and 6 and other "numbered" dyes.

More Information



Look for – Arden Grange! Committed to the provision of optimal nutrition through quality and service

There are a wealth of websites and books that can provide more information on pet foods, but do be careful where you carry out your research. Unfortunately forums are often rife with ill-founded information that has no scientific evidence to back it up. Many are also primarily focused towards raw-feeding, and look upon all commercial complete pet foods as inferior. Arden Grange are happy to provide a complete, thorough and free review of your own dog's nutritional requirements. Queries concerning product selection, feed volumes and the dietary management of nutritionally responsive conditions are all welcome. We are happy to liaise with your vet if your pet is under treatment. Any questions concerning ingredients and the manufacturing process are answered honestly and openly in order to provide the reassurance that you need when selecting the best for your pet. In the rare cases when an Arden Grange diet is going to be unsuitable for a certain animal, the company is able to direct you to suitable alternative manufacturers providing a truly unbiased approach. Please contact the nutrition adviser by email ness@ardengrange.com or telephone the office on the number below.

For more information about the Arden Grange range, please contact: -

Leander International Pet Foods Ltd

Arden Grange

London Road

Albourne

West Sussex

BN6 9BJ

Tel: +44 (0) 1273 833390

Fax: +44 (0) 1273 833612

Email: enquiries@ardengrange.com

Website: www.ardengrange.com

