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A Tale Of Four Dog Foods: Finding The Best Chow For Your Hound

By Nathan Fischer

We all love our dogs and want to give them the best life has to offer. But with so many variations of dog food in the market, it isn't always easy to identify the best food for our dog. Who can possibly feel confident when so many brands trumpet buzzwords that hit the human aisles not long ago, such as "rich in antioxidants," "highly digestible," "Omega-3 fatty acids" and "Ultra Premium Formula"?

What we can do, though, is to conduct a simple dog food comparison to determine which foods best fit our dog's requirements and our personal schedule. After all, some foods offer much greater convenience than the more natural, less processed types of food which may require freezing, thawing, cooking and preparation.

Convenience aside, the best food to give your dog depends not on the brand or the style, but rather on your dog's age and any special requirements he might have. For example, older dogs require food containing a careful balance of protein, fat and fiber. Most commercial dog food companies address this need with offerings such as senior dog food, containing about 18 % protein, and food for dogs diagnosed with renal failure, containing about 14% protein.

Dare to Compare Dry Dog Food

The vast majority of dog owners go for dry dog food. Between the supermarket and specialty pet stores, owners enjoy many brands to choose from. Dry dog food consists of kibble typically made from one primary ingredient such as chicken, beef or lamb. More specifically, the main ingredient is usually a meat byproduct that's been processed, dried and sold in packs or bags for easy dispensing. Needless to say, meat byproducts are far cheaper than meat, so this type of dog food is not only easy to store, it's much less expensive than other types.

Hard kibble comes with some advantages. For example, it gives your dog's mouth some exercise, and kibble's less likely to contribute to plaque than softer foods.

When comparing brands, it helps to remember that there are essentially two types of dry dog food on the market: premium dog food and economy dog food. A smart owner will avoid purchasing the

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economy food, which is made from lower grade ingredients (for example, economy dog food will often substitute cheap corn for the more expensive meat byproducts). The "end" result, as it were, is that your dog can't absorb many nutrients but simply passes the food through his body. So in addition to enjoying less nutrition, your dog will produce larger stools — and you might find yourself with more frequent vet bills.

Other Popular Contenders: Canned, Semi-Moist and More

Other categories of dog food include the semi-moist type and canned food. Many owners like to mix in some canned food with dry food, to potentially cover more nutritional bases without taking too big a hit to the pocketbook.

Semi-moist food is attractively convenient to owners, and dogs love it. Unfortunately, it may cause dental problems in the mid-term and worse in the long term, because semi-moist food is loaded with

corn syrup and other sugars, which dogs just aren't designed to process.

Recently, more natural, "premium" dog food has been introduced to the market, in which higher quantities of quality, nutritious ingredients are used to manufacture the food — often human-grade, in fact. Since vegetables, fruits, real meat and quality grains are used as the primary protein source in the highest-quality dog foods, these foods are a fast route to healthy skin and beautiful fur. For the most part, they contain no artificial coloring and preservatives, but are chock-full of vitamins and minerals instead.

Although this food costs more, you can feed your dog less of it, because it's more nutritionally dense. So in terms of both convenience and nutrition, a premium, natural dog food is one of the best choices available to your dog, whether off-the-shelf or purchased online.

Nathan Fischer writes for Poodle-oo, a site for teacup and small dog clothes and wedding dresses for dogs. Visit

<http://www.poodle-oo.com/>

Know Your Afghan Hound

By Dakota Dog

The Afghan Hound is a medium to large 55 to 65 pound dog that grows to between 24 and 29" in height. The Afghan Hound has long, silky hair and appears to be both elegant, reserved and agile. But, don't let the looks fool you. They can run, frolic and play with the best of the dogs.

Afghan Hounds comes in a variety of colors including Black, red, cream, fawn and brindle. Fawn, cream and brindle Afghans typically have a black mask on face or on fringe of ears. White markings are discouraged by the AKC. In contrast to the long hair on its body, the Afghan Hound has a long, thin

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tail that curls on the end and is covered with short hair. Because of their long, thick hair, the Afghan Hound requires regular grooming.

They are very energetic and affectionate dogs. They get along with children, other dogs and pets, especially those that they know from puppyhood. They do not always get along with cats, especially those that they aren't familiar with. Some Afghan Hounds can be more on the timid or high strung side, so they are recommended more for older or well behaved children. The Afghan Hound is an ideal dog for homes where they will get plenty of exercise, outside play and where there is ample room to roam and explore.

The breed can date itself back over 5000 years. It is native to Afghanistan. It is a sight hound and was originally used for herding, hunting and as a watchdog. Due to its quick speed, it made an excellent hunting animal to pursue game. It only reached Europe and the United States in the 1900s because its exportation was prohibited. The Afghan Hound is now used mainly as companion, watchdog and hunting dog.

This dog with a dignified air is a loyal and faithful companion. They make good watchdogs and a great companion for an active family that enjoys exercise and play. If you choose an Afghan then plan on a lifetime of love and enjoyment from your new pet.

Dakota Dog is the owner of

<http://www.deardoggy.com/>

and its sister dog blog

<http://www.doggylog.com/>

You can also learn more about the Afghan Hound at

http://www.deardoggy.com/dog_breeds/afghan_hound/

in our dog breeds section.



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