

HOT TOPIC

The Nutritional Value of Dry Pet Food



In focus

Manufacturing dry pet food is a science that has been studied extensively to safely produce complete and balanced diets that have all the nutrients that pets need to thrive. Understanding the production methods and benefits of dry kibble can help improve communication with owners about commercial pet food.

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How is dry kibble produced?

When manufacturers produce kibble with high quality ingredients, including vitamins and minerals, dry pet food can provide all essential nutrients in the proper amounts and can also provide highly digestible protein.¹ Dry kibble is usually produced through extrusion. During extrusion, finely ground ingredients are mixed, and the mixture is cooked, shaped and cut into kibble, and dried to remove moisture. Some ingredients are then added onto the kibble as an external coating. Coatings add nutritional value and support the palatability of the kibble. Finally, the product is cooled and packaged.

Kibble often has a homogenous look and shape, which is from mixing most of the ingredients before cooking, and then shaping and cutting the food into kibble. Extrusion is a manufacturing technique used for multiple human foods, including pasta and cereal, in addition to pet food.²

What are the benefits of feeding dry pet food?

Dry pet food is usually formulated to be complete and balanced for a dog or cat. Dry food’s nutritional value is maintained over time because of its low moisture content. If a dry pet food is made by a trusted manufacturer, the manufacturing site will utilize quality and food safety processes, giving veterinary health care teams and pet owners security about the food.^{3,4} Additional benefits of feeding dry food produced by a trusted manufacturer are shown in Figure 1.

Additional considerations for dry pet foods

Extrusion has been studied extensively and dry food is produced with specific methodology to produce a complete and balanced finished product.² Some pet food may have additional benefits, such as supporting the health of aging dogs and cats or promoting a healthy weight. These benefits are provided by specific nutrients in the kibble and the benefits are studied by feeding the kibble to dogs and cats.

Dry food also has an advantage over some other forms of pet food because it can use wholesome ingredients that do not compete with the human food supply. For example, meat and poultry ingredients that are co-products of processing human foods can be used for pet food which makes dry kibble a sustainable option.

Figure 1. Benefits of Feeding Dry Pet Food Made By A Trusted Manufacturer



References

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