

**Mountainview Animal Hospital**  
**SPRING NEWSLETTER**

**The bottom  
Line**

There are over 15 000 different pet foods on the market today, no wonder it is so difficult to pick a pet food.



4 pairs of old leather work shoes, 1 gallon of used oil, 1 pair of crushed coal and 68 lbs. of water has the same guaranteed analysis as a can of dog food.

Surprised?

The ingredient list and analysis labels on pet foods are not guarantees of nutritional quality.

**WHAT'S IN A LABEL?**

By now most of you are likely aware of the recent recall on pet foods contaminated with rodenticide; there has been extensive media coverage of this tragic and devastating event. Numerous pets have become seriously ill and several have died from kidney failure associated with this poisoning. The pet food companies implicated in the recall recently changed their supplier of wheat to a company in China. According to press information, rat poison used to rid the silos of rodents somehow contaminated the wheat. The contaminated wheat was only used in the canned or pouched foods. A list of the implicated companies can be found on the net - [www.menufoods.com/recall](http://www.menufoods.com/recall). If you are feeding any of these brands of food to your pets, please be sure to check and compare the manufacturer name and date with the list. If you have been feeding the recalled food and have any doubts about your pet's health please call us; we can run blood and urine tests to alleviate any worries.



incident is a tragic accident, it should prompt us to think a little about how much we really understand about what we are feeding our pets. Most people rely on convenience, commercials, pet store clerks or pet food labels for their information on the quality of the food they choose. But do you really have the knowledge to accurately understand and judge the validity of that information? Well, even with three biochemistry courses, a nutrition course and a degree in veterinary medicine, deciphering the marketing propaganda and the hidden messages from the truth is difficult.

But fear not, help is here. Because this article cannot possibly teach you all there is to know about how to read pet food labels, we are having a seminar and you are invited. **On Tuesday May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2007 at 7:00pm we are hosting an educational seminar on how to read a pet food label.** The speaker is Carrie Skeels from Veterinary Medical Diets. We only have room for 20 people so if you are interested in attending please book your space immediately. Refreshments will be served.

In the meantime, here is some food for thought --- pun intended;

Think all of those big words in the ingredients list are bad cancer causing chemicals? Here are some that are definitely not bad words:

- Ferrous sulfate:** this would be an iron supplement
- Thiamin:** more commonly known as vitamin B1
- Niacin:** more commonly known as vitamin B3
- Alpha Tocopherol:** more commonly known as vitamin E
- Calcium Pantothenate:** also called coenzyme A, an important metabolic cofactor
- Pyridoxine Hydrochloride:** more commonly known as vitamin B6
- Riboflavin:** more commonly known as vitamin B2

Does the word "by-product" scare you? Rumor has it that "by-products" include hair, feathers, hooves and other poorly digestible tissues. If your pet's food is an Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) approved product then rest assured these animal parts are banned. In approved pet foods, "by-products" are generally the organ meats like liver, kidney, heart etc..

# The bottom Line

Many pet foods will put feeding directions on the label. There is a great variation in the energy requirements between animals. When feeding your pet according to these directions, remember that they are only an estimate or starting point.

Pet foods labeled as snacks or treats, and which carry no statements of adequacy, should not make up more than 10 to 15 percent of your pet's total diet.



Corn has received a bad rap lately. Many people think of corn as a filler with no significant nutritional value. That couldn't be further from the truth. Corn is a great source of plant protein and omega fatty acids.

## Where's the Beef?

Believe it or not, there is a difference in the meat quantity of food named Beef, Beef dinner, Beef Platter, or Beef flavour. The wording on the label actually can reflect the amount of beef, chicken, fish etc that is in the food. For instance:

Beef for Dogs	Beef must comprise at least 70% of the total product
Beef Dinner	Beef must comprise at least 25% of the total product
Formula with Beef	Beef must comprise at least 3% of the total product
Formula Beef Flavour	There can be less than 3% beef in the total product

Did you know that many of the dog and cat foods that are available on the market today were never fed to an animal by the manufacturer. They were designed in a laboratory and chemically tested to obtain the nutrient profile analysis but feeding and digestibility trials were never performed to see if an animal's body is even able to process the diet. Those pet food labels will state "meets or exceeds the minimal nutritional levels established by NRC". Pet foods that have been through feeding trials to determine the palatability, digestibility and bioavailability of its nutrients will state "...substantiated by feeding tests performed in accordance with the procedures established by AAFCO". So, when choosing a food for your pet, make sure it has been through a feeding trial.

## Which Food Has More Protein?

<p><b>Skippy Premium Canned Food</b> <u>Guaranteed Analysis (from label)</u></p> <p>Crude Protein: Min 8.0% Crude Fat: Min 2.0% Crude Fiber: Max 1.5% Moisture: Max 82.0%</p>	<p><b>Hill's Canine R/D (20 pound bag)</b> <u>Guaranteed Analysis (from label)</u></p> <p>Crude Protein: Min 20% Crude Fat: Min 5.5% Crude Fiber: Max 9.0% Moisture: Max 11.0% Calcium: Min 0.5% Phosphorus: Min 0.35% Carnitine: Min 200 ppm</p>
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By reading the labels it would seem obvious that the Hill's Canine R/D has 20% crude protein while the Skippy Premium Canned Food has only 8%. However, to compare foods, one has to remember that food consist of water plus the actual nutrients. To compare the protein content of two different foods, the water factor must be removed; that is, the foods must be compared on a dry matter basis.

<p><b>Skippy Premium Canned Food</b> <u>Guaranteed Analysis (from label)</u></p> <p>Since the moisture content is 82%, the dry matter is 18%. To calculate the actual percent protein, divide the % protein by the % dry matter</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><math>8/18 = 44\%</math></p>	<p><b>Hill's Canine R/D (20 pound bag)</b> <u>Guaranteed Analysis (from label)</u></p> <p>Since the moisture content is 11%, the dry matter is 89%. To calculate the actual percent protein, divide the % protein by the % dry matter</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><math>20/89 = 22\%</math></p>
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It is the Skippy food in this example that has the substantially higher protein content.

The moral of this story, there are some wonderful pet foods on the market; they are safe, nutritionally balanced, easy to use and readily available; but you need to know what you are looking for. Inform yourselves, be a critical thinker and be cautious about whose advice you listen to. Finally, if you are still confused, call us, that is why we are here.

## The bottom Line

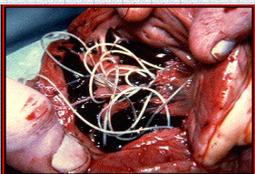
The sharp increase in the prevalence of Leptospirosis in recent years may be associated with the growing urban wildlife population and warmer fall temperatures.

Although the newer Leptospirosis vaccine is considered safe, some dogs do have reactions to this vaccine. If your dog has had any type of reaction to medication in the past, please inform us prior to having him or her vaccinated against Leptospirosis.



**Caution!** Some flea products marketed in the pet stores to dogs are extremely toxic to cats. Always read the label carefully; better yet, ask us about choosing the safest products for your pets.

An infected dog can have over 200 heartworms in the heart and adjoining blood vessels.



## IMPORTANT SUMMER TIME REMINDERS

### DOES YOUR DOG NEED A LEPTOSPIROSIS VACCINE THIS SPRING?

Leptospirosis is a serious and often fatal bacterial disease that can afflict dogs, and occasionally humans.

Dogs most commonly become infected by drinking from rivers, streams, puddles or ponds that have become contaminated by the urine of other infected animals (raccoons, rats and skunks).

Fortunately, there is a vaccine available. If your dog has not been vaccinated for Leptospirosis in the past six months, and he or she goes camping, cottaging or for runs in areas where there may be standing bodies of water to drink from, please call us to schedule an appointment to have your dog protected against this terrible disease.

### IT'S HEARTWORM & FLEA SEASON AGAIN.

Because we know how important your pets are to you, we are reminding you that flea and heartworm season is once again fast approaching and your pets will need protection against these aggressive parasites.

Both cats and dogs are at risk of becoming infested with fleas during our warm summer months. Fleas are extremely irritating to your pet. Flea bites can cause itchy skin rashes and even serious allergic reactions. Left untreated, just 10 adult fleas can multiply to over 250,000 fleas in only 30 days!

Your pet can come into contact with fleas on walks, at the park, or even in your backyard; though most pets get fleas by having contact with other animals that are infested with fleas.



Those of you who have had fleas in the past know how difficult it is to get rid of them; prevention of flea infestations is much easier, cost effective and safe.

Our dogs have an additional risk during the summer; the common mosquito can spread the deadly heartworm to your dog. The heartworm is a long slender worm that lives in your dog's heart and lungs causing permanent and potentially fatal damage.

Fortunately, prevention is so easy. Simply give your dog the preventative medication once a month from June through November. There are various types of heartworm medication available; some will also include prevention for intestinal worms and/or fleas. Blood testing your dog prior to starting the medication is an important part of prevention and is strongly recommended. Early detection of a heartworm infection before your dog gets sick will not only increase the success of the treatment and ensure a complete recovery, but will also help reduce the spread of the disease.

**Please do not hesitate to contact our office for guidance in choosing the safest and most effective flea and heartworm protection for your pet.**

## The bottom Line

On a 22°C day, the temperature inside your car can rise above 66°C in minutes.

It is extremely dangerous and the number one cause of heatstroke.



Signs of heatstroke include rapid panting, hot skin, twitching muscles or a dazed look. If you suspect that your pet has heat stroke wrap him or her in a towel soaked with cool, not cold water. In severe cases, place him/her in the bathtub. Heatstroke can be fatal. See us as soon as possible.

## SUMMERTIME SAFETY TIPS

- ☺ Never leave your pet in a parked car during the summer. Even with the windows open, the temperature in the car rises rapidly.
- ☺ Always provide plenty of fresh water.
- ☺ Do not encourage exercise during the hottest part of the day.
- ☺ Dogs and cats can get sunburn, particularly short coated pets or those with pink skin.
- ☺ Be cautious of pesticides and herbicides. Read the precautions for lawn chemicals carefully and keep pets away from newly-treated yards.
- ☺ Intestinal parasites are a common problem, have your pet's poop checked for microscopic eggs.
- ☺ Never leave pets unsupervised in yards with swimming pools, not all animals swim well.

## LIFE ACCORDING TO NIKE

On the surface it would appear that Nike leads a fairly simple life; she eats, she sleeps, she eats, she snuggles with us, she eats. So it would make sense that her likes and dislike should be fairly simple too; she likes food (any kind of food), warm surfaces, and peace and quite. She dislikes other cats, particularly if they are getting a lot of our attention, she dislikes physical examinations, daylight savings time changes and dieting. But there is one thing she really, really, really, really hates----Dr. Ewing's new dog Bear. Nike has had the opportunity to meet a lot of dogs face to face. Admittedly, not all of them are to her liking, but none of them have induced such a visceral loathing as Bear. From the moment he enters the clinic, her attitude changes; she is ready for a fight. Our sweet, lazy Nike growls, pins her ears back, her fur stands on end and she hisses and bears her teeth at him. Bear is large, young, goofy, clumsy, noisy and just a bit hyperactive but otherwise harmless. Yet, she hates him, more than anything in the world. Wonder why????? Oh ya, he ate her food once.



## WWW. EMAIL THE NEWLETTER.GOOD IDEA

We are considering using the World Wide Web to send you our newsletter in the future. It would certainly be a more efficient way of communicating with you, but would you read it or delete it with the rest of the s.p.a.m.? We would like your input. Please fill out this ballot and return it to us before June 1<sup>st</sup> 2007. Returned ballots will be entered in a draw for free Advantage flea protection for your pets (up to a total of 3 pets per household).

Do you have internet at your home?      Yes      No

Would you prefer to receive our newsletter via the internet?      Yes      No      Indifferent

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your pet's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your email address: \_\_\_\_\_



Thank you for your trouble and good luck in the draw!