

Understanding Pet Food Labels

Pet food labelling falls under EU legislation for animal feed. It doesn't have its own set of rules and it doesn't fall under the rules for human food either. Some of the terms are more tailored to the farmer than the pet owner.

The law requires that the label contains certain key pieces of information including a list of ingredients (referred to on the label as 'Composition'), additives and a nutrition analysis (referred to as 'Analytical Constituents') along with feeding guidelines.



The term 'complete' is a legal definition. Complete means that the product contains all the nutrients a pet needs to support its daily life when fed as directed.

'Complementary' pet foods are also available. A complementary food means that other food must be added in order to provide nutritional balance, for example a mixer biscuit or treats.

Various sugars – The term 'various sugars' is a category description which may refer to sucrose (cane sugar, commonly known as table sugar), fructose and glucose, or even honey, all of which are natural products.

Additives: which can be used in pet foods may include vitamins, flavours, preservatives, antioxidants and colours. All additives must go through rigorous safety and efficacy tests before they can be used in pet food and this is strictly governed by EU legislation. To find out about specific additives used, please contact the manufacturer.

Crude ash / Inorganic matter / Incinerated residue – These are legal definitions (one of which will be used) which simply refer to the mineral content of the pet food. They are not added as ingredients.

BLOGGO COMPLETE PET FOOD FOR ADULT DOGS

The nutritional requirement of individual dogs varies according to size, age and activity level. The information given below is a guide only, more detailed information can be obtained from the contact numbers given below.

If feeding together with canned dog food it is recommended that these figures are halved and the meal is a 50:50 mix of dry and canned foods.

A bowl of fresh water should always be available.

Composition: meat and animal derivatives (4% chicken), cereals, oils and fats, minerals, various sugars

Additives (per kg): Colourants, Nutritional Additives: Vitamin D2 xy IU, Vitamin A xz IU, Copper sulphate monohydrate x mg, Zinc sulphate heptahydrate, y mg

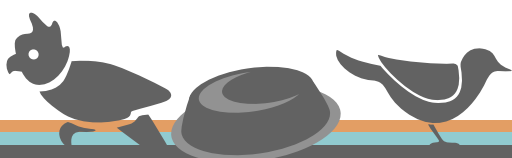
Analytical constituents (%): Protein 28, Crude Fibres 1.5, Fat content 10, Incinerated Residue 5.

Most pet foods are made from a recipe using several ingredients. These ingredients will be listed under '**composition**' in descending order of weight. This can be indicated by category e.g. meat and animal derivatives, which have been set by the regulations, or the label might provide a full individual ingredients listing which looks more like a human food label.

Meat and animal derivatives – This category describes animal based ingredients used in pet foods (not including dairy which has its own category) which are by-products of the human food industry. For instance, offal – a highly nutritious ingredient enjoyed by many people in other countries but not popular with the UK consumer. The ingredients come from animals slaughtered under veterinary supervision.

What does 'Meat and animal derivatives (4% chicken)' mean?

Each pet food recipe includes a blend of different ingredients which are all combined into a food which will meet, in part or entirely, the daily nutritional requirements of the pet. The 4% declaration is a legal labelling requirement which represents the minimum percentage content of the named ingredient, for example chicken, that is guaranteed to be present by the manufacturer. Other nutritious meat and animal derivatives can also be present.



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➤ **Where can I find out more information about a product?** Pet food companies have customer care lines to answer any questions about their products (contact details are on the back of the pack), many also have full product information on company websites. For more general information on pet food ingredients, please visit: www.pfma.org.uk

Feeding Guidelines

Feeding guidelines are for the average pet and you also need to consider size, age and the level of activity when deciding how much to feed your pet. Start by feeding the suggested amount and keep an eye on your pet's weight and body condition.

Size of Dog	Weight of Dog	Quantity to Feed
Small	5 – 10 kg	A grams/day
Medium	10 – 20 kg	B grams/day
Large	20 – 40 kg	C grams/day
Giant	40+ kg	D grams/day

The best way to check how things are going is to perform a body condition score on your pet. The Pet Size-O-Meter is a tool to help you do this and is available through the PFMA website: www.pfma.org.uk.



For further advice please contact the vet, your pet food manufacturer, or a pet care professional.

Cat Size-O-Meter

Size-O-Meter Score:

1	Very Thin <small>Very thin, ribs are easily felt</small>			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rib cage very prominent• No fat over ribs• No muscle over ribs• No fat over spine
2	Thin <small>Thin, ribs are easily felt</small>			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rib cage is visible• No fat over ribs• No muscle over ribs
3	Ideal <small>Just the right amount of fat</small>			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rib cage is visible• No fat over ribs• No muscle over ribs
4	Overweight <small>Too much fat</small>			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rib cage is not visible• Fat over ribs• Fat over spine
5	Obese <small>Too much fat</small>			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rib cage is not visible• Fat over ribs• Fat over spine• Fat over belly

Check for dehydration:

- Gently pinch the skin on the back of the neck
- Skin should snap back quickly

Warning:

• This is a guide only and should not be used as a sole basis for diagnosis. If you are unsure, please consult your vet. The Pet Size-O-Meter is a guide only and should not be used as a sole basis for diagnosis. If you are unsure, please consult your vet.

www.pfma.org.uk

