



DRY DOG FOOD

Part one of Pet Gazette's brand new series focuses on dry dog food

If there's one thing we all agree upon, it's that every pet has its own unique personality and needs. Every day retailers around the country help pet owners match their much-loved pooch with the best possible pet food. Pet Gazette magazine's brand new series will be looking at the many major dog food formats, starting with dry food. We'll be asking experts to share their opinions and finding out exactly what makes each type of chow so loved by its adherents.

Step into any of the country's pet stores or supermarkets and you'll spot a wide array of dry food. This popular option is made by removing moisture from the product in any one of a wide number of ways. The food may be slowly baked, air dried or even cold pressed. Some manufacturers favour extrusion, when a dough-type mixture of food is exposed to heat and pressure to create individual pieces of cooked kibble. Though this isn't an exhaustive list and processes vary widely, it touches upon a few of the popular methods.

CONTENTS AND BENEFITS

Pet owners looking for easy to store products may find that dry foods tick many of the right boxes. The food is available in a range of quantities, shapes and sizes. As long as the area is clean, dry and away from vermin there are few special storage considerations. As an extra bonus, many dry foods are hassle-free to pour and measure.

When a customer is looking for advice it's worth remembering that not all dry dog foods offer the same results. Some products are 'complete' foods which intend to provide all the nutrients necessary for a healthy diet. These may be specialised and aimed at certain breeds, life stages or even working dogs. Others clearly state their complementary nature. Though they can be an important part of a dog's diet they will not offer all the essentials. The customers that purchase these items will need to supplement them with other food to ensure their pet has everything it needs. If pet owners worry that their dogs may be missing essential nutrients, their local vet should

be able to provide a detailed diet plan.

Vicki Larkham (BVSc MRCVS) PDSA Veterinary Surgeon says: 'For many dog owners dry food conveniently fits in with their busy lifestyles. Dry food can be stored in a very straight forward way and does not need to be refrigerated. There is less mess when feeding and it is very easy to weigh out and therefore control how much your dog is eating and maintain a healthy weight.

'Eating dry food will help prevent your dog developing dental disease by controlling tartar build up. Although personally, I would encourage set meal times, if your dog is a fussy or slow eater you can leave dry food down without fear of it spoiling. Remember that dry foods will not provide as much moisture as wet foods so make sure fresh drinking water is available at all times for your dog. This is especially important during hot weather or when exercising. Whether you decide to feed dry food, wet food or a mixture of both, make sure your food is nutritionally matched to your dog's breed, age and lifestyle. If you are concerned or have any questions, the best

thing to do is to speak to your vet.'

Nicole Paley, PFMA

Communications Manager

agrees with a number of these points. She advises 'while some dog owners swear by wet food, others insist dry is the best, but both sides have benefits and if feeding a 'complete' diet, they'll both deliver all the nutrients a dog needs in their daily diet. Dry complete diets have some specific plus points: they are convenient; easy to measure and use; easier to store; have a longer shelf life once opened than wet foods; some may also help to remove plaque from the teeth. If you choose a dry food, you can expect your dog to chew it more actively and take longer to eat and to drink more water.' 🐾

ALL PETS SHOULD HAVE ACCESS TO FRESH, CLEAN DRINKING WATER BUT DOGS ON A DRY FOOD DIET WILL DRINK LARGER QUANTITIES.