

Claims on Pet Foods

There is a wide range of pet food products available to meet all consumer needs and preferences. To help owners with the decision of which pet food to choose, some pet food labels include claims which may make an emphasis on certain ingredients or attributes. The PFMA explain.

Whilst there may not be specific legal definitions for some of these claims, the European Pet Food Industry Federation (FEDIAF) has a set of standards for manufacturers that are written in line with general EU regulations. Below we explain some of the most common pet food claims.

Natural Ingredients:

The term “natural” can only be used to describe those pet food ingredients to which nothing has been added and the food must not contain any chemically synthesised ingredients. Additionally, “they should only be subjected to such physical processing as to make them suitable for pet food production and maintaining the natural composition.”

Examples of processing methods that can support the term “natural” include:

Freezing, concentration, extraction (without chemicals), drying, pasteurisation or smoking (without chemicals) as far as they maintain the natural composition. Microbiological and enzymatic processes or hydrolysis and natural fermentation (without the use of GMOs²) can also support the term ‘natural’. The term “made with natural...” may be used provided that the natural components are clearly identified.

“Fresh” ingredients

The terms “fresh” may be used to describe pet food ingredients that have not been subjected to any treatment except refrigeration. Therefore, treatments such as cooking, drying, freezing, hydrolysis, or similar

processes, or the addition of salt, curing agents, natural or synthetic chemical preservatives or other processing aids are not considered as “fresh”.

“No added...”, “without added...”:

Some manufacturers may use the words “no added”, “without added”, “formulated without” or “made without” to describe pet foods that have not had specific ingredients added to the product either directly (via formulation) or indirectly (via feed materials or additives). An example can be “made without wheat”.

“Light” pet food:

When a product is called “light”, the term refers to a reduction in energy content compared to a comparable pet food. In order to make the claim, the energy density of the product should be at least 15% lower than a comparable standard adult maintenance pet food within the same brand or a competitor’s comparable products.

“Increased” or “Reduced”:

Manufacturers may also make “increased...” or “reduced...” claims where an ingredient is at least 15% more or 15% less than the standard product of the same product range within the same brand or, alternatively,

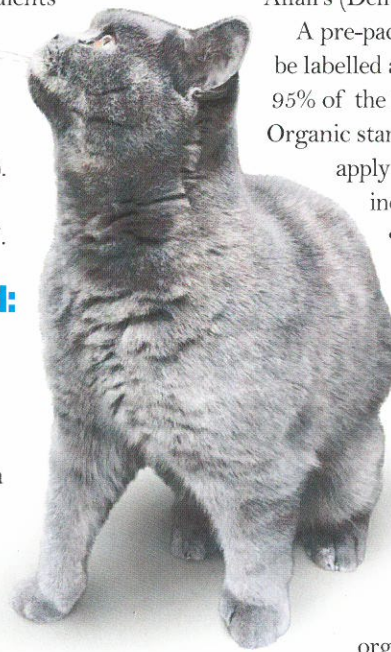
a comparable standard pet food from another producer.

“Organic” Ingredients:

Whilst there is no legal definition for organic pet food, companies growing, processing and importing organic ingredients must be registered and approved by an organic certification body that has been approved by the Department of Environment and Rural Affairs (Defra).

A pre-packed product can only be labelled as “organic” if at least 95% of the ingredients are organic. Organic standards, which also apply to pet food ingredients, include:

- Cleaning materials and pest control methods are restricted
- Genetically modified organisms (GMO’s) are strictly prohibited
- Flavourings must be either naturally or organically produced



Which pet foods are better for pets?

The best way to ensure a healthy diet is to feed a complete pet food (or combination of appropriate complementary products) designed for the pet type and their life stage. After that, it comes down to consumers’ choice and preference and what works best for their pet.

Always keep an eye on your pet’s appetite, energy level, stool quality ▼