



Fido Files: A Comparison of Dry, Canned, and Raw Pet Foods- Part 2 of a 3 Part Series on Nutrition

Now that you have become a label reading expert, let's talk about the many varieties of pet food available for your cat and dog and the pros and cons of each.

Dry Food

In my opinion the biggest thing that dry food has going for it is convenience and cost. The biggest negatives are that it is the most heavily processed form of pet food and no creature should be expected to live on processed foods alone! If someone told you different, they are likely being educated by a pet food company. Let's think logically here folks. Our pets are pretty much the only creatures living on an almost exclusively processed diet. Even our zoo animals are fed species appropriate fresh foods. What happened to our pets? The good news is that some companies have really gone above and beyond and come up with some very good dry food options.

Canned Food

I call canned food my "happy medium" food for those who are not into dry or raw. Good quality canned food is not always the cheapest option. It is not the most convenient (you can't leave it out all day) it IS cooked, but not as heavily as dry. If you pick an ultra-premium, grain-free canned food you are getting lots of high quality protein along with the moisture to keep your pet hydrated and their elimination organs healthy.

One of the most preposterous things I have ever heard is that dry foods clean teeth and that canned foods cause tartar. I have a dental background and I never once recall recommending croutons instead of a tooth brushing for my clients. There is no way to get out of tooth brushing - well, maybe raw bones – but other than that for healthy teeth and gums you have to brush no matter what food your pet is eating!

Raw Food

Raw food has a lot going for it – it is after all the least altered and closest to natural food option for our pets. It used to be very inconvenient, but you can now buy very good quality commercial raw diets that are thaw-to-bowl.

There are many pros to feeding raw: less/no ear infections, reduced allergic reactions, healthy weight is easily maintained, it's fresh and unprocessed, no doggie body odour, healthy mouth and teeth, improved and more efficient digestion, reduced kidney or urinary tract disease and diabetes (problems that have skyrocketed since the invention of dry, processed pet food), and the list goes on.

The biggest worry I hear about raw food is bacteria. I have heard of people trying to scare people out of feeding raw by using fear tactics instead of facts (these people usually have a vested interest in selling dry/canned foods). Have we forgotten that dogs lick their bottoms, eat their stool, and sometimes worse? Living with dogs and kids means living with bacteria. We just ensure we practice proper hygiene – just like



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when we prepare our own meat.

So, what do I feed MY pets? The answer is – something different almost every day! My cats and dogs are predominately on a raw food diet (everything from chicken to llama) but yes I travel and yes I do forget to thaw food sometimes, so I will usually use an ultra-premium canned food as a replacement or an ultra-premium dry from time to time as well.

I don't subscribe to the "complete and balanced in a bag" theory. I believe that the best way to get a balanced diet is to choose from a large variety of healthy, species appropriate foods (just like we do!).

The bottom line is that there is no reason why you should have to stick to just one of these options. Be sure to follow your label reading guidelines no matter what you choose (even when choosing treats!).

Check in next month when we examine "special" vet food diets and breed specific foods.

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