

## **CONFUSED ABOUT PET FOOD??**

By Val Clows

If you are confused about how to know if you are feeding your dog or cat the best food for them, **YOU ARE NOT ALONE**. Product packaging is very confusing. You see a commercial on TV showing a food that looks like meat and veggies raining from the sky or big chunks of meat pictured on the front of a bag. This must be good stuff – **WRONG**, it is the old “if it looks too good to be true; it probably isn’t,” especially if it is bargain priced. You might save money on food but it might cost you more in the long run. If you read the ingredient list (that is the hard to find list on the side of the bag) you will see that poor quality foods are full of things like corn, meat by-products, fillers, sugar, artificial colors and very little of what you think you are buying. A high quality food will list whole meats at the beginning of the ingredient list. Then, some whole grains, potatoes, veggies, eggs, and other health beneficial ingredients. If it has no nutritional value, it should not be in your pet’s food.

It is shocking what is in some pet foods. There can be horrible things like “3 D meats” (from dead, diseased, or dying animals rejected by USDA for human consumption), useless grain fragments, rancid old restaurant oils, and, even worse, chemicals like BHA, BHT and the artificial colors and flavors (known to cause cancer).

Many times health problems are the result of poor nutrition and certain ingredients can cause allergic skin reactions. Sometimes just a change to a better and/or more appropriate food can have amazing results for some pets. There are more choices today than ever before. There are grain-free kibbles, kibble made from Salmon, Venison, Buffalo and every other meat you can think of, (some of the canned foods look good enough to eat) and there are raw, frozen foods ready to thaw and serve. Feeding healthy has never been so convenient. So, take advantage of all the choices you have.

Price is no guarantee that it is made with wholesome ingredients. There are some high priced foods out there that are just not worth the money, but they have to pay for those expensive commercials. You must read those labels and know what is really in that bag or can.

What about the company who makes the food? Is it a small family-owned company dedicated to and passionate about making the best pet food they can? Or is it owned by some big conglomerate that is looking at the bottom line and nothing else? Does the company support animal research or donate monies to animal charities? Which company do you want to do business with? There is a lot of information available on-line and in brochures about these companies. Do a little research for the sake of your pet’s health and your conscience.