



PET FOOD LABELLING

A RANGE OF OPTIONS FOR A RANGE OF FOODS AND OWNERS

A COMPLICATED BUSINESS – WHY?

Pet food labelling can be confusing. But, seeing unknown or technical terms on pet food labels doesn't mean that owners should be worried.

Creating healthy and nourishing meals for pets, giving them the daily nutrients they need, in the right proportion for their age and size, and delivering this in convenient and safe formats is a complex process and this is often reflected on a label.

STRICT LAWS – DOES THIS MEAN IT'S SAFE?

Pet owners can rest assured that the UK maintains very robust standards for feed safety and animal welfare.

Pet food is subject to over 50 pieces of legislation – and so while you might not understand all the individual terms used on a label, you can rest assured that ALL commercially prepared pet food manufactured and sold here, meets the highest standards of quality and safety in the world.

We want to help you understand the labels – as much as possible! There is lots of detail in our [Understanding Pet Food Labelling Factsheet](#) but here we highlight and summarise a few of the main differences.

THE FIRST LABELLING DIFFERENCE YOU MIGHT SEE IS THE PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

01

COMPLETE

Meaning the food meets the daily nutritional needs of the cat or dog, without the need for anything additional added to their diet, if you follow the feeding guidelines.



The label must say what animal the food is for. It may also include the life stage (e.g. adult dog, senior cat etc).



02

COMPLEMENTARY

Should be paired with other food, to meet daily nutritional needs. Includes mixers, treats and supplements.

Ingredients must be also listed in order of descending weight under the title 'Composition'. This can be by 'specific name' or 'category name'. Both approaches come with different benefits – but the overall quality and safety of the ingredients used in any given product is not impacted no matter which label type a manufacturer chooses to use.

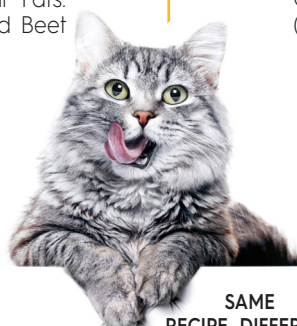
BY SPECIFIC NAME

COMPOSITION

Wheat, Rice (X%), Chicken (Y%), Animal Fats. Carrot (Z%), Peas, Wheat Middlings, Dried Beet Pulp, Dried Chicory Root, Minerals.



Allows pet owners to see the exact individual ingredients added to the food, which is useful for owners trying to avoid certain ingredients.



SAME RECIPE, DIFFERENT WAY OF LISTING!

BY CATEGORY NAME

COMPOSITION

Cereals (X% Rice), Meat and Animal Derivatives* (Y% Chicken), Oils and Fats, Vegetables (Z% Carrot), Derivatives of Vegetable Origin, Minerals.



Allows manufacturers to make best use of seasonally available ingredients, which enables a more affordable option.



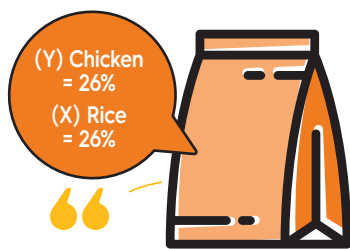
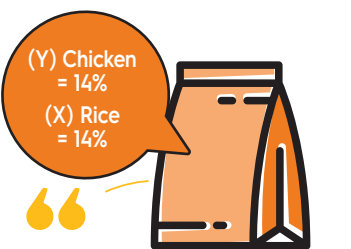
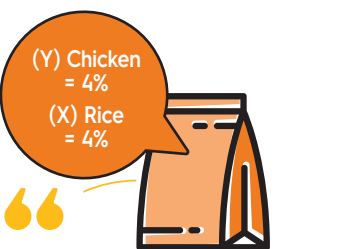

*For more information about this term, see our footnote.

INGREDIENT CLAIMS ON PACK – WHY ARE THERE DIFFERENT PERCENTAGES?

Most pet foods will include ingredients to give variety or particular characteristics to the food. If a particular ingredient is emphasised on the label in words, pictures or graphics, the amount of that ingredient in the product must be stated as a percentage. This helps consumers know exactly how much of that ingredient is included in the product.

There are strict rules about what you can say on a pack, depending on what you say – or show on the label. For example, if the recipe says ‘Chicken and Rice food’ then it must have over 26% and if the text says ‘Rich in Chicken, the food must contain at least 14%.

Here are some examples:

<p>CHICKEN & RICE, CHICKEN & RICE MENU/DINNER</p>  <p>“ ‘Chicken Pet Food’ - must have at least 26% of chicken and rice ”</p>	<p>RICH IN CHICKEN & RICE, HIGH IN CHICKEN & RICE</p>  <p>“ ‘rich in/high in has extra’ chicken – must have at least 14% of chicken and rice ”</p>	<p>WITH CHICKEN & RICE, CONTAINS CHICKEN & RICE</p>  <p>“ ‘contains’ chicken – must have at least 4% of chicken and rice ”</p>
<p>“ If you have photos or illustrations like this, you have to declare the percentage in the composition ”</p> 		

A BIT ABOUT UK PET FOOD AND WHY OWNERS SHOULD FEEL CONFIDENT BUYING FROM A MEMBER

UK Pet Food (formerly the Pet Food Manufacturers Association) continues to raise standards and provide educational resources to advance pet health and wellbeing with quality nutrition.

We all want to ensure our pets are as happy and healthy as possible. Providing them with optimal nutrition through commercially produced, complete and balanced food is one of the crucial building blocks to help them live their best lives.

Whatever the format and labelling, all complete pet foods are carefully formulated to meet pets’ nutritional needs and are subject to the same stringent regulations.

We don’t promote one food over another as every pet is different and every purse is different.

1. Meat and animal derivatives are common ingredients in pet food. They include various parts of animals, such as meat, organs, and other tissues. When the material is a blend there can be some fluctuation but it is always mixed to ensure the nutritional needs are met. So, when you see ‘meat and animal derivatives’ on the label, you can feel confident that your pet’s food contains wholesome ingredients that are good for them!

