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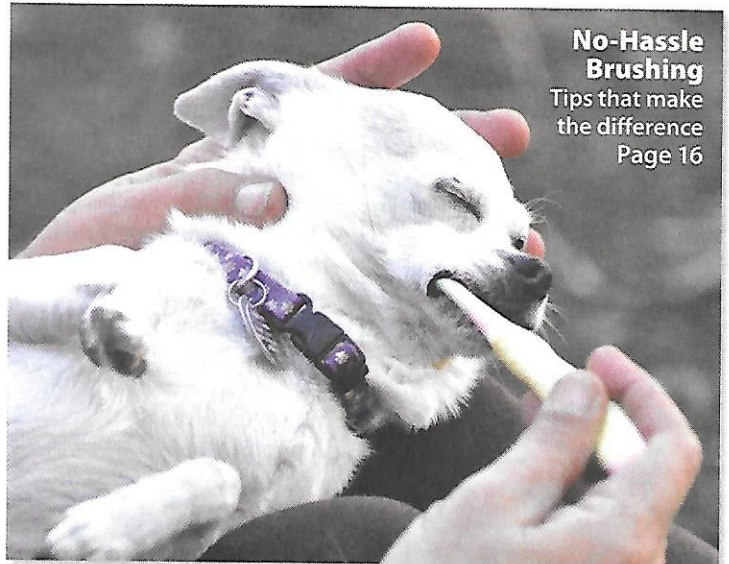
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PHOTO BY LEAH VALENTINE

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# Dried and True

*As much information as we think you can digest about finding the very best dry dog foods.*

BY NANCY KERNS

**W**e've reviewed dog foods annually for 17 years now, and we try, every year, to tell you something new about the food you feed (or should be feeding!) your dog, something you may not have known before. We also tell you how we define and identify good-quality foods, and how to tell them apart from the products of lesser quality. And finally, we give you a list of foods that meet all of our selection criteria and meet our approval. We're doing all that again this year, but in a slightly different format.

There are a lot of different factors that should be considered when selecting the right food for your dog. The most important ones, in our opinion, are the ingredients in the food themselves, which is why we spend so much time through the course of the year and space in the magazine talking about dog food ingredients. On the facing page, we have again listed the "things to look for" (desirable traits) on a dog food ingredients list, as well as "things to look out for" (undesirable traits). This really is the most important information to know about choosing good (healthy) dog foods.

If a food doesn't have good ingredients, there is no point in talking about where it's made, where you have to go to buy it, whether it is grain-free or not, how much fat is in it, whether the company that makes it has ever had a recall, or how much it costs. Learning to look at the ingredients panel before you buy is half the battle; the other half is identifying good ingredients (so you can buy that food) and bad ingredients (so you can avoid buying that food).

For some of you, this will be brand-new information. If you've never before looked past the pretty pictures on the label of your dog's food – the juicy steaks, glistening cubes of pink chicken breast, dewy carrots, steaming bowls of rice, and so on – to look at the extremely fine print of the actual ingredients list, you may be shocked to see that what's *actually* in the bag is mostly corn, with steak *flavor*, chicken *by-product meal*, carrot *powder*, and *brewers rice*.

Those of you veteran label readers, we salute you! Your reward is a lot of new information about the foods you should (if you don't already) love, buy, and feed your dog (shouldn't all of those always be the same thing?).

## NEW CHARTS

So, trying to mix things up and add to your store of knowledge about the products on our list of "Approved Dry Dog Foods for 2014," we've put together a table of new information about these

foods (which starts on page 9). Let's walk through the information that is included on the table, so we can explain what we've added and why.

## COMPANY INFO

The foods that we like and that meet our selection criteria appear on the chart under their **maker's name**. These companies are listed alphabetically. So, for example, please don't freak out when you don't see Orijen under the O's; it's listed under the name of the company that owns it: Champion Pet Foods.

## MFG: SELF OR CO-PACK?

Some companies own and operate their own manufacturing plants; some of these make only their own products, and others make their own and other companies' foods, too. Other companies, especially the smaller ones, use "contract manufacturers," a.k.a., "co-packers," to make their foods for them. As we have observed many times, there are benefits and challenges of both arrangements.

When a company owns and operates its own plant, it has full control of the entire food-making process: sourcing ingredients and managing their inflow and storage; hiring, training, and managing workers; equipment maintenance and cleaning; product testing (requiring at least a minimal lab and space and a system for retaining product samples); and so on. When things go wrong, there is no one to blame but yourself; on the other hand, if you are in full control of the whole process, and you know what you are doing, theoretically, you should be able to prevent things from going wrong.

But owning and running a plant is unthinkably costly; few small companies can afford the expense, so they contract the services of a co-packer.

When a pet food company does this, it can build as little or as much control or oversight of the manufacturing process into its contract as it





# WDJ'S DRY FOOD SELECTION CRITERIA

## THINGS TO LOOK FOR: HALLMARKS OF QUALITY

The following are desired traits – things you *want to see* on the label.

- ✓ **Lots of animal protein at the top of the ingredients list.** Ingredients are listed by weight, so you want to see a lot of top quality animal protein at the top of the list; the first ingredient should be a “named” animal protein source (see next bullet).
- ✓ **A named animal protein – chicken, beef, lamb, and so on.** “Meat” is an example of a low-quality protein source of dubious origin. Animal protein “meals” should also be from named species (look for “chicken meal” but avoid “meat meal” or “poultry meal”).
- ✓ **When a fresh meat is first on the ingredient list, there should be an animal protein meal in a supporting role to augment the total animal protein in the diet.** Meat contains a lot of (heavy) water, so if meat is first on the list, another source of animal protein should appear in the top three or so ingredients.
- ✓ **Whole vegetables, fruits, and grains.** Fresh, unprocessed food ingredients contain nutrients in all their complex glory, with their vitamins, enzymes, and antioxidants intact. Don't be alarmed by one or two “fractions” (a by-product or part of an ingredient, like tomato pomace or rice bran), especially if they are low on the ingredients list. But the more fractions present in the food, and the higher they appear on the list, the lower-quality the result.
- ✓ **A “best by” date that's at least six months away.** A best by date that's 10 or 11 months away is ideal; it means the food was

made very recently. Note: Foods made with synthetic preservatives (BHA, BHT, ethoxyquin) may have a “best by” date that is as much as two years past the date of manufacture.

## LOOK OUT FOR: AVOID THESE TRAITS

The following are things you *don't* want to see in the ingredients.

- ✓ **Meat by-products or poultry by-products.** Higher-value ingredients are processed and stored more carefully (kept clean and cold) than lower-cost ingredients (such as by-products) by meat processors.
- ✓ **A “generic” fat source such as “animal fat.”** This can literally be any fat of animal origin, including used restaurant grease. “Poultry” fat is not quite as suspect as “animal fat,” but “chicken fat” or “duck fat” is better (and traceable).
- ✓ **Added sweeteners.** Dogs, like humans, enjoy the taste of sweet foods. Sweeteners effectively persuade many dogs to eat foods comprised mainly of grain fragments (and containing little healthy animal protein).
- ✓ **Artificial colors, flavors, or preservatives (i.e., BHA, BHT, ethoxyquin).** The color of the food doesn't matter to your dog. And it should be flavored well enough to be enticing with healthy meats and fats. Natural preservatives, such as tocopherols (vitamin E), vitamin C, and rosemary extract, can be used instead. Note that natural preservatives do not preserve foods as long as artificial preservatives, so owners should always check the “best by” date on the label and look for relatively fresh products.

likes. Some companies “leave it to the experts,” taking a hands-off approach to the production of its products, while others insist on things like sourcing its own ingredients and having a company representative present for every run of its products, from start to finish.

When a food company hires a competent, ethical contract manufacturer and is educated enough to provide meaningful oversight of the services it hired, the relationship can work out well for all concerned, including you and your dogs.

When we started our annual dry dog food reviews (some 17 years ago), pet food companies would not, did not, disclose where their products were made. “Proprietary information” was the perennial excuse – which made us crazy, because we suspected, and later learned we were correct, that all the companies absolutely knew where their competitors' products were made; it was just us, the consumers, who weren't supposed to know. But why? It never made sense to us. If you were proud of your manufacturer, why not tell the world?

This argument worked with some of the companies whose foods we admired – and we admired them even more for disclosing the information to us and consumers everywhere.

We had several reasons for wanting companies to disclose this. First, we wanted to see if there was a pattern; did all the best foods come from certain co-packers? Did the ones that were recalled originate from certain others?

We also *hated* the helpless feeling we had in 2007, when company after company announced that their products, too, were apparently adulterated with a substance that could sicken and kill dogs – and the companies whose names were on the label of the foods we were feeding our dogs wouldn't tell us whether their products were manufactured in the same place as the location where all those first deadly foods were produced. That's when we decided to draw a line in the sand and insist that if a company wouldn't tell its consumers where its products were made, we wouldn't include them on our “approved lists.”

The companies that already disclosed their manufacturing sites were thrilled; they hoped to see many of their competitors fall off our lists. But after coping with the outrage of the pet-owning public in the wake of the 2007 melamine disaster, few companies wanted to be called out for nondisclosure anymore, and *almost* every company on our previous “approved foods” lists disclosed their manufacturing sites then and has done so ever since.

There have been a couple of curious hold-outs – curious because in every other way, their products met all of our other selection criteria as quality foods: Halo and Newman's Own. Both companies sell great products, interesting foods, and both have an impeccable record so far – no recalls for anything, ever. Why won't they tell?

We don't know. Ask them. We've gotten tired of explaining why these products, which so obviously meet all of our (other) selection criteria, are not on our lists. **And so, this year, we didn't ask each of the 57 companies with products**



on our “approved list” to tell us where all of their products are made (some of the larger companies might use half a dozen co-packers!). You ask them, when you call their toll-free number to ask for a free sample and get more information about their products. See what they tell you and how you feel about it.

(By the way, when you call these and every other company whose products you are interested in, or whose products you feed to your dog now, note whether you got an answering machine and no call back, or a real person. Did the company have accessible and knowledgeable customer service people? As you put this to the test, think about how you would feel about the company’s accessibility if you just heard that a recall of its products had been announced and that’s what you were feeding your dog.)

### SALES LOCATIONS

Many of the companies that make the kind of foods we like are small, and may have only a regional sales presence. Even some of the larger companies’ products may be difficult to find, especially for those of you who are unused to shopping at independent pet supply stores, or even national pet specialty chains like Petco, PetSmart, and Pet Supplies Plus.

All credit to developing this “natural/holistic” or “super-premium” market should go to the independent pet supply stores; it’s at this level where educated, passionate salespeople can educate dog owners, one at a time, about the many health benefits of better-quality foods. (That’s why independent store operators get really mad when a company whose food they have been promoting for years succeeds to the point where it inks a distribution deal with a national chain – whose sales volume can empower the chain to undercut the price that the indie was charging by a lot, killing sales at the indie’s store.)

We strongly suggest shopping at independent pet supply stores if you are lucky enough to have one nearby. The salespeople (who are often the owners) will be a wealth of information about the best foods for your dog that are in your price range. Those of you who don’t have a good indie close by, or those who struggle to afford better-quality foods, the pet specialty chains and online sources are your next-best bets. Also, some of the companies have direct-shipping options that might work for you.

### VARIETIES, GRAIN-FREE?

We listed the number of varieties of food offered by each company, and, further, broke down these offerings into separate lines when said lines have been formulated with a unifying approach or purpose. We’ve also noted the number of grain-free varieties offered within the total – not because we think every dog should be on grain-free (it’s *not* right for *all* dogs) – but just to help those of you who *do* want a grain-free food to see which makers have them.

### MEAT, MEAL, OR BOTH?

When we say “meat,” rest assured that what we are talking about is a named species (beef, chicken, whitefish, etc.) of fresh or frozen animal flesh. If you are confused, read that list of selection criteria again. If a dog food ingredients list on the label says “meat,” it indicates *any* type of meat from *any* species of animal – you don’t and can’t know what they mean. But on our table, “meat” is *the clean flesh derived from (named, specific) slaughtered animals, with or without the accompanying fat and portions of the skin, sinew, nerves, and blood vessels that normally accompany the flesh* (that’s a slightly edited version of the legal definition of meat).

When we say “meal,” we mean rendered meat – meat that meets the above definition, but has been cooked and then dried to a granular powdered form. This is *very* different from dehydrated or freeze-dried meat; don’t let any pet food company try to convince you otherwise. Rendering is a drastic process; it alters the nutrient content of the food. Fat is boiled off; so is bacteria. But most importantly, the ground-up result is made unidentifiable and uniform. You don’t know what tissues, in what relative amounts, went into it. However, because the water has been mostly removed (to about 10% moisture), protein is concentrated in the finished product. Meat meal can bring the protein content of a food to a nice high level that can’t be reached with meat alone.

When used in a dry food formula, meat offers a less-processed ingredient, and a taste and odor that dogs uniformly prefer. But meat meal is key to a high-protein food that most dogs thrive on, so many manufacturers use both.

We’ve noted the few instances when a company uses *genuinely* dehydrated or freeze-dried meats. These unprocessed

ingredients add both concentrated protein and taste to a finished product, but are wickedly expensive, so they aren’t often used in dry food.

### PROTEIN RANGE, FAT RANGE

In this column, we listed the lowest and highest percentage of protein found in any of the company’s foods, followed on the next line by the lowest and highest percentage of fat found in the company’s foods. If you are looking for a food for your dog that has protein or fat in a certain range, you can easily see whether that company makes a variety that might meet your dog’s needs.

### RECALLS?

The FDA has a site where all the pet food recalls since 2008 are listed. We’ve indicated which products on our list have had a recall since 2008, what it was for, and when it happened. (Here is the FDA’s site: [fda.gov/animalVeterinary/safetyhealth/recallswithdrawals/default.htm](http://fda.gov/animalVeterinary/safetyhealth/recallswithdrawals/default.htm).)

Keep in mind that we are not terribly concerned about recalls for Salmonella in dry dog food. (See “Do You Recall,” WDJ April 2013, and “Why Are There So Many Recalls?” October 2013.)

### PRICE

This is a bit of a sticky wicket, since the price of any particular bag of food varies so much based on geography and sales site. We gathered prices from a variety of retailers – brick-and-mortar and online. We also checked prices on each variety, in large bags and small bags; the price per pound is much less in large bags than small bags, but not everybody buys (or should buy) large bags. We averaged these prices per pound and came up with these categories:

- \$ Food is less than \$2.50/lb.
- \$\$ Food is \$2.50 to \$3.50/lb.
- \$\$\$ Food is more than \$3.50/lb.

Because of the number of variables, it may not be accurate for all foods in all places, but rather a rough guide to help some of you identify which foods may or may not be in your budget. Just remember: to some extent, price does equal quality. While it’s highly possible to pay a lot for a mediocre food, you *cannot* buy a great food for less than the cost of the superior ingredients that are needed to make it. 🐾



# WDJ'S APPROVED DRY DOG FOODS FOR 2014

NEW PRODUCTS FOR THIS LIST  
APPEAR IN YELLOW BARS

COMPANY INFO	MFR: SELF OR CO-PACK?	SALES LOCATIONS	VARIETIES, GRAIN-FREE?	MEAT, MEAL, OR BOTH?	PROTEIN RANGE FAT RANGE	RECALLS?	PRICE	NOTES
<b>ADDITION FOODS</b> Kent, WA (425) 251-0330 additionfoods.com	Self, in New Zealand	Ind. stores, direct-ship, online	7, 2 grain-free	Meals	22% - 28% 8% - 14%	No	\$\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very novel proteins for dogs who need them</li> <li>• Foreign manufacturing</li> </ul>
<b>AINSWORTH PET NUTRITION (BACK TO BASICS)</b> Meadville, PA (800) 219-2558; backtobasicspetfood.com	Self	Pet Supplies Plus chain, few other ind. stores, online	7, 3 grain-free	Both	24% - 28% 14% - 18%	No	\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interesting approach: made with organ meat as primary protein source</li> </ul>
<b>ANNA MAET</b> Telford, PA (888) 723-0367 annamaet.com	Co-packed	Ind. stores, online	9, 4 grain-free	Meals	23% - 32% 7% - 20%	No	\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In formulas containing chicken, company says only low-ash chicken used</li> </ul>
<b>ARTEMIS</b> Carson, CA (800) 282-5876 artemiscompany.com	Co-packed	Ind. stores, online	<b>FreshMix:</b> 8	Both	20% - 28% 6% - 17%	No	\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch the fat content; varies a lot across the product line</li> </ul>
			<b>Osopure:</b> 3 grain-free	Both	23% 14%			
<b>BENCH &amp; FIELD</b> Grand Rapids, MI (800) 525-4802 benchandfield.com	Co-packed	Ind. stores, health food stores, Trader Joes, direct shipped	1	Meals	24% 15%	No	\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only one variety is offered</li> </ul>
<b>BLUE BUFFALO</b> Wilton, CT (800) 919-2833 bluebuffalo.com	Co-packed	Ind. stores, pet specialty chains	<b>Basics:</b> 8, 1 grain-free	Both	22% - 26% 8% - 15%	Yes; vit. D excesses in Oct 2010	\$\$- \$\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each line contains food for puppies, adults, and seniors</li> <li>• Basics line contains only one animal protein per variety (most have turkey; one has salmon); Freedom line is entirely grain-free, but with moderate protein and fat; Life Protection line contains moderate protein and fat; Longevity line is lower in protein and fat; Wilderness line is completely grain-free with high protein and moderate fat levels.</li> </ul>
			<b>Freedom:</b> 5 grain-free	Both	24% - 27% 14% - 16%			
			<b>Life Protection:</b> 21	Both	18% - 28% 6% - 16%			
			<b>Longevity:</b> 3	Both	22% - 26% 8% - 13%			
			<b>Wilderness:</b> 13 grain-free	Both	30% - 37% 13% - 16%			
<b>BORÉAL</b> Beamsville, ON (800) 253-8128 borealpetfood.com	Co-packed	Ind. stores, online	3 grain-free	Both	28% - 29% 15% - 18%	No	\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Available only in Canada</li> <li>• Uses Zinpro, a highly bioavailable zinc</li> </ul>
<b>BURNS</b> Valparaiso, IN (877) 983-9651 burnspethealth.com	Co-packed	Ind. stores, direct-shipped	3	Meals	18.5% - 22% 7.5% - 11%	No	\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very simple, limited ingredient lists</li> </ul>
<b>CANIDAE</b> San Luis Obispo, CA (800) 398-1600 canidae.com	Some made in-house, some co-packed	Ind. stores, pet specialty chain (Petco)	10, 4 grain-free	Meals in most; both in grain-free foods	20% - 32% 8.5% - 18%	Yes; Salmonella in May 2012	\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Five of Canidae's foods are EU-certified</li> </ul>

COMPANY INFO	MFR: SELF OR CO-PACK?	SALES LOCATIONS	VARIETIES, GRAIN-FREE?	MEAT, MEAL, OR BOTH?	PROTEIN RANGE FAT RANGE	RECALLS?	PRICE	NOTES
<b>CANINE CAVIAR</b> Norco, CA (800) 392-7898 caninecaviar.com	Co-packed	Ind. stores, online	8, 4 grain-free	Meals (Some are dehydrated meats, rather than rendered meals)	18% - 31% 8% - 19%	No	\$\$- \$\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maker claims no GMO ingredients are used</li> <li>• Formulated to be alkaline</li> </ul>
<b>CARNA4</b> Toronto, Ontario (855) 422-7624 carna4.com	Co-packed	Ind. stores, pet specialty (Global Pet Supply), online	2, 1 grain-free	Meat	27% - 29% 16%	No	\$\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maker claims no GMO ingredients are used</li> <li>• Food is baked, not extruded</li> </ul>
<b>CASTOR &amp; POLLUX</b> Amarillo, TX (800) 875-7518 castorpolluxpet.com	Self	Ind. stores, pet specialty chains (Petco, Petsmart); online	<b>Organix:</b> 7, 2 grain-free	Both	21.4% - 30% 10% - 15%	No	\$\$	• Organix line is made with all organic ingredients
			<b>Ultramix:</b> 8, 2 grain-free	Both	22% - 38% 9.5% - 17%			
<b>CENTRAL GARDEN &amp; PET</b> Walnut Creek, CA (866) 500-6286 goactivedog.com	Self	Ind. stores	<b>Active Care:</b> 2	Meals	22% - 25% 12% - 15%	No	\$	• Active Care line boasts high levels of glucosamine and chondroitin for healthy joints.
apdselectchoice.com	Self	Ind. stores	<b>Advanced Pet Diets:</b> 6	Meals	17% - 28% 8% - 17%	No	\$	• Three of AvoDerm's varieties are baked, not extruded. All contain avocado.
avodermnatural.com	Self	Ind. stores, pet specialty chains	<b>AvoDerm:</b> 18, 2 grain-free	Most with meals (baked lamb food contains both)	20% - 28% 8% - 20%	Yes: Salmonella in 2012	\$	• Pinnacle foods contain only one animal protein per variety
pinnaclepet.com	Self	Ind. stores, online	<b>Pinnacle:</b> 6, 3 grain-free	Meals	22% - 42% 10% - 22%	No	\$\$-	
<b>CHAMPION PETFOODS</b> Morinville, Alberta (877) 939-0006 championpetfoods.com	Self	Ind. stores, online	<b>Acana:</b> 15, 4 grain-free	11 use meals; grain-free foods use both	25% - 33% 10% - 24%	No	\$\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acana has three lines: 9 "Classics" varieties with 55-65% meat; 4 "Regionals" with 60-65% meat; and 2 "Singles" with 45-50% single-source protein.</li> <li>• Company claims Orijen line contains 80% meat</li> </ul>
			<b>Orijen:</b> 6, 6 grain-free	Both	38% 15% - 20%			
<b>DIAMOND</b> Meta, MO (800) 658-0624 chickensoupforthepetloverssoul.com	Self	Ind. stores, online	<b>Chicken Soup:</b> 6	Both	20% - 28% 6% - 14%	Yes: Salmonella in 2012	\$	• Chicken Soup, Premium Edge, and Professional are lower-cost foods compared to many on this list, yet fresh meat is included in each formula
(800) 977-8797 premiumedge petfood.com			<b>Premium Edge:</b> 8	Both	20% - 44% 10% - 18%		\$	• Taste of the Wild grain-free foods each contain multiple protein sources
(800) 342-4808 professionalpet food.com			<b>Professional:</b> 7	Both	20% - 29% 8% - 20%		\$	
(800) 977-8797 tasteofthewild petfood.com			<b>Taste of the Wild:</b> 7 grain-free	Both	25% - 32% 15% - 18%		\$\$-	



COMPANY INFO	MFR: SELF OR CO-PACK?	SALES LOCATIONS	VARIETIES, GRAIN-FREE?	MEAT, MEAL, OR BOTH?	PROTEIN RANGE FAT RANGE	RECALLS?	PRICE	NOTES
<b>DOGSWELL</b> Los Angeles, CA (888) 559-8833 dogswell.com	Co-pack	Ind. stores, pet specialty chains (Petco)	<b>Happy Hips:</b> 1	Both	24% 12%	No	\$- \$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Happy Hips has high levels of glucosamine/chondroitin</li> <li>• Live Free is Dogswell's new line of grain-free, potato-free foods</li> <li>• Nutrisca is also grain- and potato-free</li> <li>• Vitality is intended to help eyes, skin, coat</li> </ul>
			<b>Live Free:</b> 6 grain-free	Both	24% - 32% 125 - 18%			
			<b>Nutrisca:</b> 3 grain-free	Both	38% - 40% 145 - 18%			
			<b>Vitality:</b> 1	Both	24% 12%			
<b>DR. GARY'S BEST BREED</b> Findlay, OH (800) 500-5999 bestbreed.com	Co-packed	Ind. stores, direct-shipped	14, 2 grain-free	Meals	21% - 32% 7% - 22%	No	\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Company claims products are GMO-free</li> <li>• Product line includes 6 specific breed foods</li> </ul>
<b>DR. TIM'S PET FOOD</b> Marquette, MI (906) 249-8486 drtims.com	Co-packed	Ind. stores, online	4, 1 grain-free	Meals	26% - 35% 16% - 25%	No	\$	• Company says all foods are low-ash, with high levels of quality fats a priority
<b>DRS. FOSTER &amp; SMITH</b> Rhineland, WI (800) 562-7169 drsfostersmith.com	Co-packed	Direct-shipped	5	Both	21% - 26% 8% - 14%	No	\$	• First ingredients, especially fresh meat, are great. Lower-cost ingredients start to appear 5th to 7th on list
<b>EVANGER'S</b> Wheeling, IL (800) 288-6796 evangersdogfood.com	Co-packed	Ind. stores, direct-shipped	5, 2 grain-free	Both	24% - 33% 12% - 16%	No	\$	• Three formulas are chicken-free, for those looking for an alternative to this common ingredient
<b>FIRSTMATE</b> North Vancouver, BC (800) 658-1166 firstmate.com	Self	Ind. stores	14, 9 grain-free	Meals	18% - 32% 6% - 18%	No	\$\$\$	• Grain-free varieties all use only one animal protein and one carbohydrate source each
<b>FROMM FAMILY FOODS</b> Mequon, WI (262) 242-2200 frommfamily.com	Self	Ind. stores, online	<b>Classics:</b> 2	Both	21% - 23% 11% - 15%	No	\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classics line is made with chicken and chicken meal</li> <li>• Four-Star line offers a wide variety of animal proteins</li> <li>• Gold line is formulated so each product contains several animal proteins</li> </ul>
			<b>Four-Star Nutritionals:</b> 10, 5 grain-free	Both	23% - 30% 11% - 19%		\$\$	
			<b>Gold:</b> 7	Both	24% - 27% 10% - 18%		\$	
<b>GRANDMA MAE'S</b> New York, NY (888) 653-8021 grandmamaes.com	Co-pack	Ind. stores	6, 1 grain-free	3 varieties contain both; 3 contain meals only	23% - 30% 7% - 15%	No	\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sold only in independent stores in the midwest</li> <li>• Senior variety includes dried chicken liver</li> </ul>
<b>GREAT LIFE</b> Simi Valley, CA (805) 577-9663 doctorsfinest.com	Co-pack	Ind. stores, direct-shipped	<b>Great Life:</b> 7, 3 grain-free	Meat and freeze-dried meat	22% - 30% 13%	No	\$\$- \$\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grain-free foods are also potato-free</li> <li>• Maker claims products are GMO-free</li> <li>• Lots of freeze-dried ingredients (including a few freeze dried meats) in these products</li> </ul>
			<b>Dr. E's Limited Ingredient:</b> 4, 2 grain-free	Meat and freeze-dried meat	19% - 27% 9.5% - 12%		\$	
			<b>Pioneer Naturals:</b> 9, 4 grain-free	Meals and freeze-dried meats	20% - 30% 10% - 14%		\$	

COMPANY INFO	MFR: SELF OR CO-PACK?	SALES LOCATIONS	VARIETIES, GRAIN-FREE?	MEAT, MEAL, OR BOTH?	PROTEIN RANGE FAT RANGE	RECALLS?	PRICE	NOTES
<b>HALO</b> Tampa, FL (800) 426-4256 halopets.com	Co-pack (company does not disclose location)	Ind. stores, pet specialty chains (Petco), direct-shipped, online	10, 2 grain-free	Meats only, with the exception of the 1 vegan variety	20% - 30% 10% - 20%	No	\$\$- \$\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All varieties (except the vegan one) contain fresh meat and eggs</li> <li>Vegan variety should be used only for dogs with allergies to multiple animal proteins</li> </ul>
<b>HILL'S (IDEAL BALANCE)</b> Topeka, KS (800) 445-5777 hillspet.com	Self	Ind. stores, pet specialty chains (Petco, Petsmart), online	7, 2 grain-free	Both	18% - 25% 12% - 16.5%	No	\$\$- \$\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hill's shows 6 more foods in this line on its website, but these do not appear to be available yet.</li> <li>Note that the ingredients have changed and, in our opinion, declined a bit since the introduction of this line last year</li> </ul>
<b>HI-TEK</b> Dublin, GA (800) 284-4835 hitektrations.com	Self	Ind. stores, online	<b>Hi-Tek Naturals:</b> 8, 3 grain-free	Meals	21% - 35% 12% - 16%	No	\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hi-Tek Naturals is lowest-cost line</li> <li>Leonard Powell Signature has two "classic" formulas, two baked formulas, and two with novel animal proteins</li> </ul>
leonardpowell.com	Self	Ind. stores, online	<b>Leonard Powell Signature:</b> 6	Both	24% - 28% 12% - 16%		\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Life4K9 line is baked, not extruded</li> </ul>
life4K9.com	Self	Ind. stores, online	<b>Life4K9:</b> 2	Both	21% 9%		\$	
<b>HORIZON</b> Rosthern, SK (403) 279-5874 horizonpetfood.com	Self	Ind. stores	<b>Amicus:</b> 3 grain-free	Both	30% - 32% 10% - 18%	No	\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Amicus foods are formulated for mini and small-breed dogs</li> <li>Legacy line claims an 80% meat inclusion</li> <li>Pulsar line is made with peas and lentils (pulses)</li> <li>Company claims no GMO foods are in its products</li> </ul>
			<b>Complete:</b> 4	Meals	24% - 28% 10% - 14%			
			<b>Legacy:</b> 3 grain-free	Both	34% - 36% 14% - 18%			
			<b>Pulsar:</b> 2 grain-free	Meals	28% 15%			
<b>KENT NUTRITION (BYNATURE)</b> Muscatine, IA (877) 367-9225 bynaturepetfoods.com	Self	Ind. stores, online	9, 1 grain-free, 1 organic	Meals (sole exception is organic variety, contains both)	24% - 37% 12% - 20%	No	\$\$- \$\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organic variety is the most expensive, and the only one to contain fresh meat</li> </ul>
<b>LOTUS</b> Torrance, CA (888) 995-6887 lotuspetfoods.com	Co-pack	Ind. stores, online	9, 4 grain-free	Both, except for the fish and senior foods, which have only meat	18% - 27% 8% - 16%	No	\$\$- \$\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All Lotus foods are baked, not extruded</li> <li>Three of the foods are also available in "small bites" with the same GA and ingredients</li> </ul>
<b>MERRICK</b> Amarillo, TX (800) 664-7387 merrickpetcare.com	Self	Ind. stores, pet specialty (Petco), and online	<b>Merrick:</b> 12, 5 grain-free	Both	25% - 38% 11% - 17%	No	\$\$- \$\$\$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Company says Merrick line is 60% animal proteins, 70% in the grain-free varieties</li> <li>Whole Earth line is made with meals and is the company's economy line</li> </ul>
			<b>Whole Earth Farms:</b> 3	Meals	24% - 28% 10% - 17%		\$	



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<b>MIDWESTERN PET FOODS, INC. (EARTHBOURN HOLISTIC)</b> Evansville, IN (800) 752-2319 earthbornholisticpetfood.com	Self	Ind. stores, online	10, 6 grain-free	Meals	22% -38% 12% - 20%	No	\$- \$\$	• Company has a "UPC for Trees" program; return the barcode from the label and it will plant a tree
<b>MULLIGAN STEW</b> Jackson, WY (888) 364-7839 mulliganstewpetfood.com	Co-packed	Ind. stores, direct-shipped	3	Both	26% 10%	No	\$\$\$	• Company offers a buying club (the "Stew Crew") with up to 25% discounts for frequent buyers (direct-ship)
<b>NATURA</b> Fremont, NE (800) 532-7261 naturapet.com	Self	Ind. stores	<b>California Natural:</b> 15, 6 grain-free	Most utilize only meals; 3 contain both	21% - 34.2% 7% - 16.7%	Yes; Salmonella in March-June 2013	\$- \$\$	• California Natural is the company's "limited ingredient" line, with just 4-6 major ingredients in each  • Evo line offers highest protein levels, with moderate fat levels  • Healthwise is the company's economy line  • Check out Natura's seebeyondthebag.com; interesting.
		Ind. stores	<b>Evo:</b> 7 grain-free	Both	43% - 52% 18% - 22%		\$\$	
		Ind. stores	<b>Health-Wise:</b> 4	Meals	20% - 28% 7% - 18%		\$	
		Ind. stores, pet specialty (Petco, Petsmart, Pet Supplies Plus)	<b>Innova:</b> 12, 3 grain-free	Both	20% - 38% 7% - 16%			
<b>NATURE'S SELECT</b> Anaheim, CA (888) 814-7387 naturalpetfooddelivery.com	Co-packed	Direct-shipped, local distributors	8, 1 grain-free	Most utilize only meals; 2 contain meat	16% - 33% 10% - 17%	No	\$	• Availability limited to areas with local distributors
<b>NATURAL BALANCE</b> Pacoima, CA (800) 829-4493 naturalbalanceinc.com	Self	Ind. stores, pet specialty chains (Petco), online	<b>Alpha:</b> 3 grain-free	Both	26% 11.5%	Yes; Salmonella in May/June 2012	\$\$	• Del Monte Foods bought the company in early 2013.  • Misc. includes a vegetarian variety, an organic chicken variety (containing both meat and meal), and a "fat dogs" (lower fat) variety (made with meal).
			<b>Limited Ingredient Diets (LID):</b> 13, 10 grain-free	Most have both, and a few contain meat only	20% - 22.5% 10% - 12%		\$\$	
			<b>Misc:</b> 3	Misc.	18% - 26% 8% - 13%		\$- \$\$	
			<b>Ultra Premium:</b> 4	Both	18% - 28% 8% - 16%		\$	
<b>NATURE'S VARIETY</b> St. Louis, MO (888) 519-7387 naturevariety.com	Co-packed	Ind. stores, pet specialty chains (Petco), online	<b>Instinct:</b> 9	Meal	27% - 42% 16.5% - 22%	No	\$- \$\$\$	• Instinct line has 9 foods, 5 with multiple animal proteins, and 4 limited ingredient foods, each with a single animal protein  • Instinct Raw Boost line is kibble with freeze-dried meats included in formulas  • Raw Boost line has two "healthy weight" formulas with lower (still moderate) protein and fat
			<b>Instinct Raw Boost:</b> 7	Meal and freeze-dried meat	27% - 29% 16.5% - 18%		\$\$\$	
			<b>Prairie:</b> 8	Both, except puppy foods have meal only	22.5% - 26% 12% - 13%		\$- \$\$	



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<b>NEWMAN'S OWN</b> Aptos, CA (800) 865-2866 newmansownorganics.com	Co-packed (company does not disclose location)	Ind. stores, fine grocery stores, online	2	Both	21% - 24% 10% - 12%	No	\$- \$\$	• Major ingredients (except chicken and chicken meal, which are the sole animal proteins used) are organic
<b>NUTRO ULTRA</b> Franklin, TN (800) 833-5330 ultraholistic.com	Self	Ind. stores, pet specialty (Petco, Petsmart)	11	Both	23% - 29% 10% - 16%	No	\$\$- \$\$\$	• Ingredients start well, with fresh meat, meat meal, and whole grains . . . but things like pea protein and potato protein are also present
<b>OHIO PET FOODS (BLACKWOOD)</b> Lisbon, OH (888) 843-1738 blackwoodpetfood.com	Self	Ind. stores, online	10, 2 grain-free	Meals	20.5% - 28 % 9% - 18%	No	\$	• Blackwood foods are the manufacturer's "house brand"
<b>OVEN-BAKED TRADITION</b> Saint-Hyacinthe, QE (888) 224-4140 ovenbakedtradition.com	Self	Ind. stores	16, 4 grain-free	Both	20% - 34% 8% - 18%	No	\$\$	• All varieties are baked  • Available only in Canada  • This is the manufacturer's house brand
<b>PARTY ANIMAL</b> West Hollywood, CA (855) 727-8926 partyanimalpetfood.com	Co-packed	Ind. stores, Whole Foods	1	Both	24% 14%	No	\$\$	• Only one variety offered: Organic chicken (with chicken meal), and several whole organic grains
<b>PERFORMANCE PET (SPRING NATURALS)</b> Mitchell, SD (866) 868-0874 springnaturals.com	Self	Ind. stores, online	12, 5 grain-free	Meat only	23.5% - 26% 11% - 17%	No	\$\$	• Each food contains proteins from 1 species  • This is the manufacturer's house brand
<b>PETCUREAN</b> Chilliwack, BC (866) 864-6112 petcurean.com	Co-packed	Ind. stores, online	<b>Go!</b> : 8, 3 grain-free	Both	22% - 36% 12% - 18%	No	\$\$	• Go! line has 3 types: "Fit + Free" (grain-free); "Sensitivity + Shine" (single protein); "Daily Defense" (single protein, no potato)  • Summit line available only in Canada
			<b>Now Fresh:</b> 7 grain-free	Meat only	24% - 29% 10% - 18%		\$\$- \$\$\$	
			<b>Summit:</b> 3	Meal only	21% - 28% 8% - 17 %		\$	
<b>PETGUARD</b> Green Cove Springs, FL (800) 874-3221 petguard.com	Co-packed	Ind. stores, online	3	1 contains meat; 1 contains both; 1 is vegetarian	16% - 27% 9% - 15%	No	\$\$- \$\$\$	• "Lifepath" is organic variety; organic vegetarian food is also offered  • "LifeSpan" contains chicken and chicken meal
<b>PETS GLOBAL (SIGNATURE)</b> Gardena, CA (888) 897-7207 signature.com	Co-packed	Ind. stores, online	<b>Signature:</b> 5 grain-free	Both	27% - 32% 14% - 18%	No	\$\$	• None of the formulas contain grain, potatoes, or any chicken or chicken egg ingredients
<b>PET VALU (PERFORMATRIN ULTRA)</b> Markham, ON (800) 738-8258 performatrinultra.com	Co-packed	PetValue (chain) stores	8, 3 grain-free	Most contain both; 1 contains meal	22% - 37% 8% - 16%	No	\$\$- \$\$\$	• We like Performatrin Ultra, but not the low-cost Performatrin line containing corn gluten and other low-quality ingredients
<b>PRECISE (PRECISE HOLISTIC COMPLETE)</b> Nacogdoches, TX (888) 477-3247 precisepet.com	Self	Ind. stores	9, 2 grain-free	5 contain both; 4 contain meal only	23% - 32% 12% - 20%	No	\$- \$\$	• This is the manufacturer's house brand, but the "Precise Holistic Select" line is its best product (we're not fans of the lower-quality economy lines)



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<b>PYRAMID (TUSCAN NATURAL)</b> Las Vegas, NV (888) 408-0895 pyramidpet.com	Co-packed	Ind. stores	4, 1 grain-free	2 contain meal only; 2 contain both	21% - 35% 11% - 20%	No	\$\$	• "Carne" variety is grain-free and has far higher protein and fat levels (35% & 20%) than the rest of the line.	
<b>SMARTPAK CANINE</b> Plymouth, MA (800) 461-8898 smartpak.com	Co-packed	Direct-shipped	5	Meal	21% - 24% 8% - 14%	No	\$	• 3 life stage formulas containing chicken meal, and 3 containing lamb meal	
<b>THREE DOG BAKERY (BAKE TO NATURE)</b> Kansas City, MO (800) 487-3287 threedog.com	Co-packed	Direct shipped, Three Dog Bakery stores	4	Both	18% - 26% 5% - 15%	No	\$- \$\$	• All foods are baked, not extruded	
<b>SOLID GOLD</b> El Cajon, CA (800) 364-4863 solidgoldhealth.com	Co-packed	Ind. stores, pet specialty chains (Petco), direct-shipped	9, 2 grain-free	Most contain both; 2 contain meal only	22% - 41% 9% - 18%	Yes; Salmonella in May 2012	\$\$	• Highest protein foods are the two grain-free varieties: Barking at the Moon (41%) and Sun Dancer (30%); puppy varieties and small breed follow with 28%	
<b>TUFFY'S PET FOODS (NATURAL PLANET, NUTRISOURCE)</b> Perham, MN (800) 525-9155 naturalplanetorganics.com nutrisourcedogfood.com	Self	Ind. stores, direct shipped	<b>Natural Planet:</b> 4, 3 grain-free	Both	23% - 25% 14% - 15%	No	\$	• 2 of the Natural Planet foods are organic  • These are the manufacturer's house brand	
			<b>Nutri-source:</b> 16, 5 grain-free	Most use both; 4 contain meal only	21% - 32% 9% - 21%		\$		
			<b>PureVita:</b> 6, 3 grain-free	Both	24% - 26% 13% - 16%		\$\$		
<b>VERUS PET FOODS</b> Abingdon, MD (888) 828-3787 veruspetfoods.com	Co-packed	Ind. stores, online	5	Meals	17% - 24% 8% - 16%	No	\$	• Verus offers simple formulas with quality ingredients	
<b>VETS CHOICE</b> Melville, NY (800) 992-9738 vetschoice.com	Co-packed	Ind. stores, online	5, 1 grain-free	Both	24% - 27% 9% - 18%	No	\$	• All contain fish oil, primrose oil, GAGs, colostrum, blue green algae, prebiotics, probiotics	
<b>VIAND</b> Elmsford, NY (800) 743-1502 viandpet.com	Co-packed	Direct-shipped	3	Meals	18% - 26% 8% - 16%	No	\$	• Company was formerly known as PHD	
<b>WELLPET (HOLISTIC SELECT, WELLNESS)</b> Tewksbury, MA (800) 225-0904 holisticselect.com wellnesspetfood.com	Co-packed and self	Ind. stores, pet specialty chains	<b>Holistic Select:</b> 12, 1 grain-free	Meals, except 1 grain-free food (both)	21% - 30% 7.5% - 20%	No	\$- \$\$	• Holistic Select line has "digestive health support" features  • Company says no GMO ingredients are used in the Wellness line of foods  • Each Wellness line has small breed, large breed, puppy, adult, senior, and weight management varieties  • Wellness Simple foods contain a single animal protein and easily digestible carbs	
			<b>Wellness Complete Health:</b> 13	Both	21% - 30% 6% - 18%		Yes; Salmonella in May 2012		\$- \$\$
			<b>Wellness Core:</b> 7 grain-free	Both	33% - 36% 10% - 18%		No		\$\$- \$\$\$
			<b>Wellness Simple:</b> 4, 2 grain-free	Both	21% - 26% 11% - 12%		No		\$\$- \$\$\$