

Dog foods and treats

■ BY HARRY KALAJIAN

This topic is very controversial. Everyone, including pet food companies, claims to have the best food for dogs. The truth is, it depends on the individual dog. As long as your dog likes it and has no allergies to the ingredients in the food, it's fine to give it to him. If you have a puppy, stick to puppy food. Which brand? With so many brands to choose from, that would be your choice. You can discuss it with your breeder or your vet. An alternative is sometimes getting samples or small bags from different brands to try. See which food brand your puppy does well on. Because puppies have very delicate stomachs, it's best to stick to commercial brands that are out there. Again always check with your vet or breeder if unsure.

With adult dogs you can go with commercial brands, or raw food if you want to cook for your dog. Make the change gradual when starting a new food. Don't be fooled by the eye-catching, beautiful bags that dog food is sold in. That's done for you, not the dog. Your dog only cares what's inside. Another marketing technique is to advocate a food as if it was made for a particular breed. It's all marketing to get pet owners to buy it. Remember, you can always add some water or broth over the dry kibble if needed. That would soften the kibble and make it tastier.

How much to feed is another issue many dog owners face. You can start by simply looking on the bag to see what it recommends, and start from there. You must also take many factors into consideration: Is my dog active or very active? Is my dog a

couch potato? The activity level of the dog plays a big part in the amount of feed. If your dog is always outdoors, running and playing, then Fido needs more intake.

Use common sense. If you notice your dog is getting fat, that means

you are overfeeding according to his level of activity. If he is underweight, then more food is required. Think of it this way: An office worker does not need to consume the same amount of calories as a football player.

As for treats, you can either buy

them or make your own. The most budget-friendly treat is Cheerios cereal. You get a lot for the price, and it's easy on your dog's stomach. You can also buy bacon, cut it to small quarter-size bites, and microwave it. Another alternative is cheese or hot dogs sliced to dime size. You can also use different fruits sliced up. In the summer freeze the slices, and Fido will enjoy them. Vegetables also are good as long as your dog likes them, and if he does, freeze the slices and offer them to him. An assortment will make him happier.

The topic of dog foods or treats can be discussed in pages and pages, with pros and cons according to every household's particular pet. The issues can be related to the time and frequency of feeding, the ease of preparation, the availability of different food choices and much more. It's best to discuss this topic with your vet, breeder, nutritionist or your trainer. This way they can ask questions about the dog's lifestyle and activity level and more. Then they can guide you down the right path. There is no single right answer, only what is best for your dog and you.

Fruit for thought: What do you think your great-grandfather fed his dog?

Have a woof woof of a month.

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CAN MY DOG EAT...

YES

- APPLES
- WATERMELON
- PINEAPPLE
- PUMPKIN
- CARROTS
- CANTALOUPE
- BLUEBERRIES
- EGGS
- YOGURT
- SMALL FISH
- RAW BONES
- GOAT'S MILK

NOT IDEAL

- CHERRIES
- AVOCADO
- CHOCOLATE
- ICE CREAM
- POTATO
- ONION
- LARGE FISH
- PEANUT BUTTER