



## MYTH vs FACT

### Pet food edition



#### THE MYTH

**When it comes to pet food, “natural,” “organic” and “holistic” are the same.**

#### IT'S A MYTH

In grocery and pet stores, the terms “natural,” “organic” and “holistic” are frequently and freely used on packages to imply that these foods are healthier than those without the label.

Although pet foods with these labels are increasingly popular, the use of these terms can be misleading; they do not guarantee better nutrition for your pet.

#### THE FACTS

“Natural,” “organic” and “holistic” do not mean the same thing.

- “Natural” means a feed or ingredient derived from plant, animal or mined sources that have not been chemically synthesized. Vitamins and minerals are excluded in this definition.
- “Organic” refers to the way a crop or animal is grown or raised and handled. Crops must be grown on land free from pesticides for three years. Livestock is fed organic feed, without antibiotics/hormones, and have outdoor access.
- “Holistic” is not defined.

The Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) regulates the term “natural” for pet food/animal feed. The U.S. Department of Agriculture National Organic Program defines and regulates the term “organic.” “Holistic” as referring to pet food is not defined or regulated by any regulatory body.

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**Pet foods should be grain-free.**

Many pet owners believe that grain-free pet foods are easier to digest and provide pets with better nutrition than pet food that contain grains.

Grains supply energy as a carbohydrate; the body’s primary source of energy. The brain requires the carbohydrate glucose to support normal function.

Properly processed grains provide needed nutrients as part of a balanced diet.

If carbs aren’t available, the body diverts protein away from its main function of protein synthesis – proteins maintain/build muscle and tissue – to make glucose.

Grains provide fiber, which contributes to gastrointestinal health.

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**Corn is a poorly digested “filler” that causes allergies.**

Plant-based ingredient such as a “filler,” shouldn’t be included in a pet’s diet because it is poorly digested and can cause allergies.

A “filler” is a feed ingredient with little or no nutritional value. Corn, by definition, is therefore not a filler. Corn is a good source of carbs, protein, essential fatty acids and antioxidants.



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### THE MYTH

**Corn is a poorly digested “filler” that causes allergies.**

### IT'S A MYTH

It's the overall quality of the pet food that makes it a good choice for your pet. Corn is available in many forms and is used to create digestible and nutritious diets that deliver all the essential nutrient dogs and cats need.

### THE FACTS

Dogs and cats develop allergies to any protein, including meats and grains. However, it is estimated that only 10% of allergies in dogs and cats are caused by food.

The most common food allergies for dogs are:

- 1) Beef
- 2) Dairy products and wheat
- 3) Lamb
- 4) Egg
- 5) Chicken
- 6) Soy

The most common food allergies for cats are:

- 1) Beef
- 2) Dairy products
- 3) Fish

Corn gluten meal is easy to digest, making its nutrients readily available to your pet.

**By-products are poor-quality ingredients.**

By-products are sometimes thought to be low-quality ingredients that shouldn't be in pet foods.

A by-product is any ingredient that is produced or left over when some other product or ingredient is made.

By-products in pet foods approved by the AAFCO must come from clean animal parts of the organs below

Can Be	Cannot Be
Liver	Feathers/hair
Kidneys	Hide
Lungs	Hooves
Spleen	Intestinal contents

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By-products can be an excellent source of protein and other nutrients and can boost the nutritional value of a pet food.

Muscle meat is deficient in many nutrients, including calcium. These nutrients are often abundant in meat by-products.<sup>i</sup>

<sup>i</sup> Information provided by journals of veterinary clinical nutrition and Nestle Purina