

# The Whole Dog Journal™



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*A monthly guide to natural dog care and training*

NOVEMBER 2012

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF – Nancy Kerns  
TRAINING EDITOR – Pat Miller  
PUBLISHER – Timothy H. Cole  
CIRCULATION DIRECTOR – Greg King

#### EDITORIAL OFFICE

E-MAIL: [WDJEditor@gmail.com](mailto:WDJEditor@gmail.com)  
ADDRESS: 1655 Robinson Street  
Oroville, CA 95965

#### SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES

PHONE: (800) 829-9165  
INTERNET: [whole-dog-journal.com/cs](http://whole-dog-journal.com/cs)  
U.S. MAIL: PO Box 8535  
Big Sandy, TX 75755-8535  
CANADA: Box 7820 STN Main  
London, Ontario N5Y 5W1

#### REPRINTS

For price quote, contact  
Jennifer Jimolka at (203) 857-3144.  
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#### NEWSSTAND

Jocelyn Donnellon, (203) 857-3100

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# Prime Time

*Enjoying this time with my dog,  
and taking steps to lengthen it.*

BY NANCY KERNS

**T**ime flies when you love dogs, and not in a good way. Otto, the canine love of my life, turns five years old this month. Of course, since he was a stray and I adopted him from my local shelter, I don't know his exact age; he was estimated to be about 7 months old when I adopted him in June 2008. So we assigned him the birthday of November 1, 2007 – which would make him 5. Where has the time gone?

Otto was a challenging adolescent – and working to modify some of his problematic behaviors took at least two years. “Problem,” actually, was one of his early nicknames – just one more variation on my husband's favorite joke. You see, my husband's last name is Maddock, and so Otto is sometimes Otto Maddock and sometimes Problem Maddock. When he has gas, he's Aro Maddock! These days, he's mostly Charis Maddock. But early on, he was highly nocturnal, active and alert (read: barking at anything that moved) at night. On hot days, he would excavate in any shady, wet place (read: under the roots of any plant we water) And he chewed everything chewable in our yard for more than year, even when he was supplied with scads of toys and raw bones.

In his first three years, he was also fearful and anxious with strangers, a trait which has mostly resolved but still pops up occasionally. He loves it when my college-aged son visits, and he runs to all young men enthusiastically, in hopes, I think, that it's my son that he's seeing. However, he will occasionally quail and then growl in fear at the last minute, when he finds himself so physically close to a strange young man, not at all the one he expected.

But for the past two years, this dog has been a total joy. He's healthy, happy, and reliable. I don't fret about him misbehaving at friend's houses, or when their dogs visit our house. I can count on him to be appropriate when he barks (or even snaps) at one of my two adolescent cats, who must know they are perfectly safe when they charge his food bowl, or wave their tails under his chin and

rub up against his chest. He barks ferociously through the fence at FedEx trucks, but if I greet the driver and say, “Off,” I can safely open the gate and sign for a package, and he will politely stand still and graciously wave his tail.

He's also been a valuable partner for me every time I've brought a dog from the shelter to foster at home. We've had several puppies, one mama dog (who wanted nothing to do with him, which he respected), and a wide variety of goofy adolescents who needed guidance. As they follow his *very* reliable lead, they learn not to jump up on people, to come when called, sit on cue, be calm in the house, and sleep in a crate. It's a lot easier to find them homes after they've had a few weeks in Sergeant Otto's platoon.

But here's the thing: I have a number of friends and relatives who have senior dogs, sick dogs, or dogs who passed away this year. Every time I express my condolences, or hear about a dire diagnosis, I shiver, and hug my dog. The time we share on this earth with our dogs just doesn't last long enough, especially this prime time when they are fit, healthy, *and* well-behaved. So I want to do everything in my power to lengthen this period, and set up Otto for long-term health and fitness.

Fortunately, this job permits me to explore every possible physical therapy and diet; and every conventional, complementary, and alternative treatment available; and to employ them when appropriate. Because I love and cherish Otto Maddock; I want to make sure he's never Trau Maddock.

NK



## CORN-CONTAINING DOG FOOD AT INCREASED RISK OF AFLATOXIN

*US drought has created near-perfect conditions for mold growth on corn crops.*

**F**ungus is more than a nuisance when it comes to corn; it can be deadly to dogs (and humans). Actually, it's not fungus itself that's a problem; the peril is a secondary chemical product created by the metabolic process of certain fungal species, in particular, *Aspergillus flavus* and *Aspergillus parasiticus*. Aflatoxin, the chemical produced by these fungi is not just toxic, it's one of the most carcinogenic substances known to science.

Most people associate particularly wet years with fungi, but the two species of fungi that produce aflatoxin tend to proliferate in grains – especially corn – with damaged seed coats. Extreme heat and drought, such as that seen in the Midwest this year, produces a lot of stressed corn with damaged seed and thus, fungal infections.

There isn't much that farmers can do to fight the fungal infections. If they visually observe lots of fungal growth, they try to harvest early, dry the corn well, and pay particular attention to the moisture levels while the corn is stored.

Dog food producers have to be vigilant in testing all the grains they use – to a far lesser extent, aflatoxin can also be produced by wheat, sorghum, and soy – but corn poses the greatest risk of aflatoxin infection. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) set an "action level" for aflatoxin, the maximum amount of aflatoxin allowed in corn meant for human food, pet food, young animals, or dairy cattle, at 20 parts per billion (ppb). Corn meant for breeding beef cattle, swine, and mature poultry is allowed to contain as much as 99 ppb; corn meant for "finishing" swine or cattle can be higher (<200 ppb and <300 ppb, respectively). If the destination of the corn is not known, the maximum allowable level of aflatoxin is <20 ppb.

When pet food is found to be contaminated with aflatoxin, the recalls are generally swift and well-publicized, due to the fact that dogs' lives are dramatically threatened by the chemical. A dog who has exposure to a high level of aflatoxin may suffer



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**The drought that has stressed this year's corn crop in many areas has led to higher-than-usual levels of fungal growth on the corn seeds, and resultant aflatoxin production.**

from acute necrosis of the liver, resulting later (if he survives the acute event) in liver cirrhosis (where liver tissue gets replaced by scar tissue), and/or liver cancer. But chronic, lower levels of aflatoxin poisoning can also sicken and kill dogs; most notably, low, chronic levels of aflatoxin in a dog's diet can cause liver cancer. There is no direct antidote for aflatoxin poisoning, though supportive treatment for the liver may help acute cases.

**W**hile pet food companies obviously don't want their products to be contaminated with a deadly substance, it takes vigilance and a commitment to food safety practices to prevent the inadvertent use of aflatoxin-contaminated corn and other grains. Manufacturing plants that produce a particularly high volume of food and/or lower-cost pet foods are at higher risk of failing to detect ingredients with higher levels of aflatoxin.

Corn that has been harvested from the 2012 summer's crop will be finding its way into pet food soon, and on into next spring and summer. It would be prudent for dog owners to absolutely avoid buying low-cost (i.e., low-quality) dog food that contains corn, especially products with corn high up on the ingredients list. High-quality products that contain small amounts of corn (low on the ingredients list) would be safer; no corn at all may be safest yet, at least until next year's crop can be assessed.

Most WDJ readers aren't buying the least-expensive foods available anyway, but it might be a good time to educate your friends and relatives about the ingredients label of their dogs' food. Let them know that foods containing high levels of corn are especially risky for their pets until at least next fall. And be alert to any signs of liver problems in dogs who eat food that contain corn, such as lethargy, loss of appetite, vomiting, orange-colored urine, and jaundice. – Nancy Kerns



**We wouldn't want you to buy this food anyway, even without the scary corn crop this year. Corn as the first ingredient would disqualify it for us, as would the meat and bone meal, artificially preserved "animal" fat, and artificial colors. But if you know someone who still buys ultra-cheap foods, you might warn them that this year, a food like this might be an especially bad bargain.**

# Prepare for Guests

*Holidays often mean visitors to your home; here's how to make sure your dog is ready.*

BY GINA SPADAFORI

**A**s much as we worry if we're doing the best for our dogs, any veterinarian can tell you that many of the problems they see are accidents, predictable and completely preventable. Around any holiday, that's even more true, when people get busy, routines get changed and visitors come to call. All the changes put both people and dogs at higher risk of accident or illness.

That's the bad news. The good news is that five simple steps will keep most pets from being hurt – and potentially hurting others.

**1 DON'T KNOCK GRANDMA DOWN.** One of my dogs, an agile and athletic young retriever, used to body-slam me for fun. She'd run up alongside me as I walked out to feed the horses, launch herself vertically, slam her body against mine in mid-air then race away with her tongue lolling and a big grin on her face. Her greetings for guests were a little more restrained, but not much.

My mother is almost 80 years old and walks with a cane. Bouncy big dog, unsteady senior citizen: Now that's a bad combination. I changed the pasture game to "fetch the flymasks," giving my high-energy dog a job that fits her natural instincts (retrieving) and her natural drive (powerful). Inside, the alternative to her ill-mannered greetings became fetching a toy, sitting, and waiting to present it. Other dogs might do well when taught to "place" on a mat away from the door when guests arrive.

**2 WATCH FOR POTENTIAL POISONING.** The biggest problem at this time of year may be guests who assume pets will leave pill bottles alone, and set their medications on nightstands in their rooms. Common drugs, including those for humans and animals, prescription and over-the-counter, poison thousands

of pets every year. Remind your guests to keep medications in drawers or behind pet-proof cabinet doors. Make sure purses and backpacks are out of reach, too; those medications and Xylitol-sweetened candies, mints, and gums tucked into carry-ons and other luggage can tempt even a well-mannered pet.

Other poisons to look out for are mistletoe and holly (poinsettia's lethal reputation is an urban myth). Plain old garbage can mean a trip to the ER if your pet gets into it, too. Put leftover-rich garbage up or take it out.

**3 BE READY FOR ESCAPES.** Your dog should wear an ID tag with your current home and/or cell number on it – and a microchip that's registered, with current information. Yes, you can (and

should) train your dog to wait at the door for your permission to go through it; that has prevented many a dog from being hit by a car. For now, though, crates and gates are your dog's best friends when company comes calling.

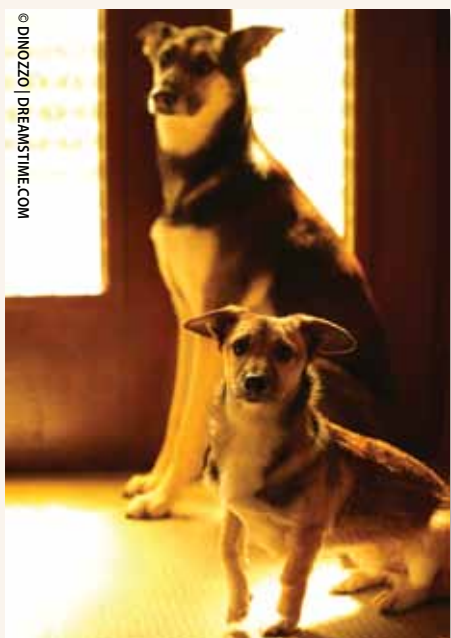
If your dog slips out despite your best intentions, don't run after him. Run the other way to get him to chase you, then kneel and open your arms wide and encourage him to come to you. If you can get him close but not quite close enough to catch, don't order him to "come" – especially if you're pretty sure he won't. Instead, say "sit." Most dogs know "sit" far better and will be more likely to comply. Then make "train my dog" one of your New Year's Resolutions.

**4 ANTICIPATE AND PREVENT RESOURCE-GUARDING.** If your dog is anxious around his dish, it's not a bad idea to pick a more quiet, less-traveled place to feed him than the kitchen while company is in the house. Pick up and put away toys as well. And while you can ask the two-legged guests to give your dog respect and space, things are a little trickier with canine company. If you have any doubts whatsoever about your dog's ability to handle other animals in his own home, don't allow guests to bring their dogs along. Speak up for your dog!

**5 KNOW WHERE TO GET HELP.** All-night emergency veterinary practices are common in big cities, but rare in small towns – unless yours is a college town with a veterinary school. In lieu of an emergency care practice, your veterinarian may share on-call duties, or handle them herself; be sure to ask now. When traveling, bookmark a veterinary locator site on your laptop, or buy an app for your smartphone that will find the nearest 24/7 veterinarian. Better to know and not need the information than to need the information and not have it.

But the fact is you probably won't need an ER if you make sure to reduce the risk of danger to pets and people. A few simple precautions will make sure your holidays stay happy. 🐾

*A resident of Northern California, Gina Spadafori is a syndicated pet-care columnist and the author of more than dozen books on animals and their care.*



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# Share the Feast

*Here's a healthy meal that will cause your four-legged family members to celebrate!*

BY MARY STRAUS

**T**hanksgiving is a time when families gather together to enjoy good food and to remember all the things we have to be grateful for. Unfortunately, one part of our family often gets left out – our dogs! It must be frustrating for them to smell all the wonderful aromas coming from the kitchen, but not be able to share in the feast. We're here to relieve that vexing situation with recipes for some healthy Thanksgiving dishes just for them.

On the next page are recipes you can use to give your dogs a special treat on this wonderful holiday, or to use up leftovers afterwards. Note these recipes are fine to feed occasionally, but they are not a complete diet.

One serving of each of the three recipes together, or three servings of either of the first two recipes alone, would provide a complete meal for a dog weighing about 25 pounds. One serving of any of the three recipes individually could be used to supplement the same dog's regular diet (reduce the amount you usually feed by one-third to account for the extra calories). All recipes are low in fat, and leftovers can be frozen for later use.

## WHY SHOULDN'T THEY JUST SHARE OUR DINNER?

We are warned over and over again that sharing human food with dogs can be dangerous. That's true if you're sharing **fatty foods or scraps**, such as turkey skin or pan drippings, cheese, bacon, or butter. Too much fat can lead to pancreatitis, particularly in dogs accustomed to eating a low-fat commercial diet. **Sugary treats** such as pumpkin pie are also not a good idea, since they may cause tummy upset,

**Etta, one of our designated taste testers, happily takes her place at the kitchen table to sample the results of the recipes found on the next page. Her favorite, as you can see, was the dressing.**

as well as providing unneeded calories that contribute to obesity. **Cooked bones** can perforate the esophagus, stomach, or intestines and cause impactions, and should never be fed to dogs.

In addition to these foods, certain ingredients can also cause problems for dogs, including:

- ✓ Xylitol, used as a sugar substitute in some baked goods, sugar-free gum, candy, and toothpaste, can cause life-

threatening hypoglycemia in dogs, even in small amounts – as little as five sticks of sugar-free gum can sicken a 44-pound dog.

- ✓ Macadamia nuts can cause paralysis; fortunately this resolves within about 24 hours.
- ✓ Grapes and raisins can cause kidney failure in dogs.
- ✓ Onions cause a form of anemia and should not be fed (very small amounts in leftovers would be okay). Garlic is similar but much less potent, so small amounts can be used for flavoring.
- ✓ Nutmeg and sage are safe in very small amounts, but too much can cause gastrointestinal upset and central nervous system depression or excitement.
- ✓ Chocolate, coffee, and caffeine are all dangerous for dogs (dark chocolate is more toxic than milk chocolate).
- ✓ Yeast dough can expand in the



## TURKEY & VEGETABLE FRITTATA

Leftover turkey can be mixed with eggs and a variety of different vegetables to make a healthy meal.

### Ingredients

- ✓ 2 cups (10 oz) cooked turkey meat (light or dark, no skin), cut into pieces
- ✓ 1 cup (5 oz) steamed broccoli
- ✓ 1 cup (5 oz) steamed cauliflower
- ✓ 4 eggs
- ✓ ¼ cup plain, low-fat yogurt

### Preparation

Steam broccoli and cauliflower for 8 minutes or until tender, and cut into bite-sized pieces (other vegetables may be substituted; see suggestions below). Beat eggs and yogurt together. Mix turkey and vegetables together in a quiche or glass pie pan (spray pan first with vegetable or olive oil cooking spray to prevent sticking). Pour egg mixture on top and stir, making sure the meat and vegetables are coated with egg. Bake at 350° F. for 30 minutes (can also be cooked at 375° F. on top shelf if preparing at the same time as the rice dish). Dish is ready when a fork inserted comes out clean. Makes 8 servings (3.5 ounces each).

### Nutritional Analysis (per serving)

100 calories, 15 grams protein, 3 grams fat, 3 grams carbohydrates.

### Substitutions

Zucchini, spinach, asparagus, bell pepper, green beans, or sweet potato. Chicken instead of turkey.

### Optional extras, if you want to share with your dog

Garlic, oregano, dry mustard, paprika, lemon, and a little Parmesan cheese.

### Quick & Easy Version

Mix leftover turkey with egg, plain yogurt, vegetables, mashed potatoes, mashed sweet potatoes, or canned pumpkin.



## RICE, APPLE & GIBLET DRESSING

Broth from giblets gives brown rice an intoxicating flavor for dogs, and the addition of the giblets as well makes this dish suitable for a meal. This recipe can be made with a smaller amount of giblets (such as from a chicken) or a larger amount of rice when combined with other high-protein foods.

### Ingredients

- ✓ Giblets from one turkey (liver, heart, and gizzard, about 6.5 oz)
- ✓ 1 cup brown rice (dry)
- ✓ 2 small apples, diced or cubed
- ✓ 2 ½ cups water

### Preparation

Combine water and giblets and bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer for 20 to 30 minutes. Remove the giblets and let the water cool a bit. Spray a 2-quart baking dish with olive or vegetable oil cooking spray. Add brown rice and cooled water from the giblets and mix together well. Cover and bake at 375° for 45 minutes. Remove from oven; rice should be almost fully cooked with most of the water absorbed. Add chopped giblets and apples. Return to oven and bake for another 15 minutes uncovered. Makes 12 servings (½ cup each).

### Nutritional Analysis (per serving)

100 calories, 4.5 grams protein, 2.3 grams fat, 15.6 grams carbohydrates.

### Optional extras if you want to share with your dog

Dried cranberries, celery, parsley, thyme, poultry seasoning.

### Quick & Easy Version

Mix giblets with cooked rice and/or vegetables.



## MINI PUMPKIN PIES

Pumpkin is good for dogs, but they don't need the extra sugar and spices found in pumpkin pie mix. This recipe uses a low-fat, low-calorie crust suitable for dogs.

### Ingredients

- ✓ 16 oz canned pumpkin (plain)
- ✓ 8 oz plain, low-fat yogurt
- ✓ ¾ cup wheat flour, or a mixture of all purpose and whole wheat flour
- ✓ ½ cup oatmeal
- ✓ ¼ cup applesauce, unsweetened
- ✓ 3-4 Tbsp water

### Preparation

Mix oatmeal and flour together in a food processor. Add applesauce slowly, continuing to run processor. Add water slowly, using only enough to make a ball form (too much water will make the dough sticky). Spray wax paper and muffin tin with olive or vegetable oil cooking spray. Roll out dough onto wax paper and cut out 8 circles, about 4" across (alternatively, divide dough into eight small balls before rolling). Press individual dough circles into bottom and sides of muffin tin. Bake at 375° for 8 minutes. Let crusts cool, then remove from the muffin tin. Fill each crust with about ¼ cup (2 ounces) of canned pumpkin. Top with a dollop of yogurt. Makes 8 mini pumpkin pies.

### Nutritional Analysis (per pie)

100 calories, 4 grams protein, 1 gram fat, 20 grams carbohydrates.

### Optional extras

Cinnamon, ginger, and honey can be mixed in or added on top if desired.

### Quick & Easy Version

Give a scoop of canned pumpkin with a spoonful of plain yogurt on top (crustless version is much lower in calories).

dog's stomach causing pain and even rupture.

- ✓ Milk can cause stomach upset due to lactose intolerance (yogurt and cottage cheese are low in lactose and are good to feed).

## OKAY TO SHARE

There are many foods that *can* be safely shared with dogs. As long as your dog doesn't have a health problem that requires a special diet, there's no reason you can't feed a special meal on this holiday. Just be careful what you offer. Make good choices and limit amounts to help your dog enjoy the holiday without suffering from overindulgence afterward.

Some foods, such as turkey meat (without the skin) can be shared without needing any special preparation, but other dishes may require changes to make them appropriate for dogs. Set aside a portion during preparation, before adding butter, cheese, sugar, onions, or other high-fat and high-calorie ingredients, to make servings appropriate for dogs.

Try putting food into a Kong or other hollow toy. Your dog will enjoy the challenge of removing his treat, and the task will keep your dog occupied while the rest of the family enjoys their dinner. Add plain yogurt and freeze ahead of time to make the treat last even longer.



## RECIPES? WE DON'T NEED NO STINKIN' RECIPES!

Anyone who knows me well knows that I don't cook, so when I was asked to create some Thanksgiving recipes for dogs, I panicked. Recipes? I'm the one who has argued against the use of recipes for homemade diets (I prefer diet guidelines so that the same food is not fed every day), and against the need to create

special recipes for dogs using multiple ingredients and flavorings more suitable for human palates. While it's hard for me to imagine, however, I realize that some people actually *enjoy* cooking, and may find it especially gratifying to prepare a special *and* healthy holiday treat for their dogs.

In desperation, I appealed to my friend Jill Petersen, of Kenmore, Washington, who not only volunteered to help me create the recipes, but also tried them out on her own dogs. Etta, her Norwich Terrier, was the first to volunteer for the "sniff and taste" test, and she gave an enthusiastic two paws up to all the dishes (her favorite was the giblets and rice dish).

My primary goals with these recipes were to ensure that they were each low in fat and included only ingredients that are good for dogs, so that the usual holiday warnings would not apply. It was harder than I expected; I was surprised at the amount of added fat in many dishes. I almost despaired of finding a low-fat, low-calorie pie crust; the low-fat versions substituted light Karo syrup for butter or oil, and there was no way I was going to tell people to feed that to their dogs! Once again, Jill saved the day with her oatmeal and applesauce crust. 🐾

*Author Mary Straus would like to extend special thanks to Jill and her taste testers: Etta, Raisin' (a 15-year-old Cairn Terrier), and Chip, a 12-year-old Norwich Terrier.*

## HEALTHY SUBSTITUTIONS FOR DOGS

### INSTEAD OF THIS:

Turkey skin or drippings  
Fatty ham scraps  
Cooked bones  
Gravy made from drippings  
Stuffing with onions  
Candied yams & marshmallows  
Potatoes w/ butter &/or sour cream  
Cheese and sausage  
Green bean casserole w/ onions  
Broccoli casserole w/ cheese  
Brussels sprouts w/ bacon  
Pearl onions  
Applesauce w/ added sugar  
Grapes or raisins  
Apple pie  
Berry pie  
Pumpkin pie  
Nutmeg  
Whipped cream or other milk products  
Alcohol

### FEED THIS:

Turkey meat (skinless)  
Lean ham meat  
Giblets (not too much at one time)  
Low-fat gravy  
Stuffing without onions  
Sweet potato or yams  
Plain mashed potatoes  
Celery or carrot sticks  
Green beans  
Broccoli  
Brussels sprouts w/ a few bacon bits  
Creamed corn  
Unsweetened applesauce  
Blueberries and dried cranberries  
Apple slices  
Berries  
Canned pumpkin  
Cinnamon  
Yogurt (plain)  
Water flavored with low-fat gravy



# Crate Thanks

*Driving with your dogs to a holiday gathering? Put them in a well-fastened crate.*

BY SHARI A. MANN

An after-dinner family ritual, when I was a kid, was for each person seated at the table to share what they were most grateful for since last Thanksgiving. Those dinners don't happen any more, but each year I ask myself that old question. Sometimes the answer is cause for mental debate, but this year, there was no doubt at all. One thing leaps instantly to mind: the fact that my dogs are both safe, that neither was injured when a speeding bicyclist T-boned my new Subaru in September.

Although there was \$5,000 worth of body damage, and the driver's side passenger seat window shattered, there were no injuries other than my minor glass cuts. Our guardian angels were riding shotgun that sunny Sunday in the park. While there was shattered glass in one crate, neither Meg, our 10-year-old Cardigan Welsh Corgi, nor Zebra, our 5-year-old Bull Terrier, was injured,

or traumatized – and neither dog had an opportunity to either escape or bite somebody in a panic.

## DECISIONS, DECISIONS

The route to car-crating was not easy for me. Along the way there were signs it was the right thing to do, but it took me longer than it should have to heed them.

❖ There was the time in the 1980s when 4-month old Bram, learning to stay quietly in the backseat, leaped out of the drivers' side window before the car had come to a complete stop, so excited was she to be at the dog park. I drove with the window all the way up for a long time thereafter. But it couldn't have happened, had she been properly crated.

❖ Next I was rear-ended by a young man who had lost his license and had "borrowed" his

mother's car. He never noticed that red light I was stopped at. BLAM! Amy, Bram's daughter, sleeping on the back seat, hit the back of my seat so hard it broke loose, shoving me forward into the dashboard. That wouldn't have happened had she been properly crated.

❖ Once at a dog show on a cool day, I left my two un-entered Bull Terriers sleeping on the back seat of my locked car while I went to meet someone. The girls barked and security guards showed up, scaring off three young men in a pickup truck, who by all appearances intended to steal my girls through the open sunroof. That wouldn't have happened had they been properly crated.

❖ In 1993 I traded my mini-car for a maxi-car, one I could get crates into. It was a less-than-perfect solution, as there were no "tie-down" points to secure crates, and the two would not fit side by side in the back. But now that a 2011 Subaru has come to live in our garage, there are tie-downs to secure the crates, and both fit side-by-side. I'd prefer that Zee be in a VariKennel, rather than a wire crate, but better visibility trumps here. I can't see to the rear with a large VariKennel in the back.

❖ Had my girls been loose in the passenger area of the car when that bike hit, they would have been injured. I'm sorry beyond measure that the demonstration proving crates essential happened, but I'm beyond glad that they were crated.

Can you imagine how you'd feel if your dogs were injured or worse and you could have prevented it? I can.

## REASONS TO CRATE

Properly secured crates provide the greatest safety for dogs, as well as for their people. Why secured? So the crate containing the dog does not itself become a projectile if there's a crash.

- A properly sized crate allows dogs to stand, to turn, to lie down, providing some freedom, but not so much as to permit them to rattle around like teacups in an oak barrel.
- A dog crate contains . . . well, everything you don't want all over your car.



The author had her dogs crated in her car (as seen in the photo at right, on a day prior to the accident) and was at a stop when a bicyclist ran into the side of the car at high speed (he was okay), shattering the car window.





Ordinary dog hair, dirt, and mud for sure, but also any unexpected vomitus, diarrhea, slime, or slobber.

- A crated dog cannot leave the car without permission. Even the best-trained canine can sometimes forget to “Wait!”
- Crated dogs in a multi-dog household cannot get into fights. Ever try to drive with two dogs fighting in back? Don’t.
- Crated dogs can’t breathe heavily in the driver’s ear or stomp on or get under the gas pedal. They can’t knock a gear shift from Drive to Neutral. Crated, they must be little ladies and gentlemen; this is management at its finest.
- If there *is* an accident and dogs are injured and / or terrified, total strangers will feel safer helping than if they were loose and potentially threatening. Confined to their car, they will not be loose on the freeway. There is no chance that they’ll be lost, strayed, or stolen.

## ALTERNATIVES

There are other ways to address dog safety in cars, and there are also pros and cons for each.

- **Seat belts** follow crates in effectiveness. However, the part that the dog wears needs to fit properly, and should be easy to put on. Metal hardware, less likely to break, is preferable to plastic. No restraining system should ever attach to a dog’s collar; the risk of tracheal injury or a broken neck looms large. More and more canine seat belts are being crash-tested; this should be a requirement for any product you buy for your dog.
- **Dog car seats** abound. There are many models to choose from. Consensus is that they are best for smaller dogs, and that they are not as safe as crates or seat belts.
- **Barriers**, usually made of metal, though mesh or plastic can be used, are more about safety for humans, rather than safety for dogs. While barriers can effectively prevent canine passengers from distracting the



driver, or from becoming projectiles in the event of an accident, they don’t do much for the safety of the dog.

Since “There’s no place like home for the holidays”, please crate your dogs while you travel there. You might be very thankful, and so might they. 🐾

*Shari A. Mann lives in San Francisco. She mans the “help desk” at bullterrierrescue.org, and enthusiastically supports dog rescue.*



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# Senior Supplements

*These nutraceuticals may offer hope for treating Canine Cognitive Dysfunction.*

BY MARY STRAUS

**C**anine cognitive dysfunction (CCD), also called cognitive dysfunction syndrome, is comparable to Alzheimer's disease in humans. Dogs with CCD may show signs such as confusion, disorientation, anxiety, irritability, apathy, reduced interaction, house soiling, forgetfulness, and aimless wandering or pacing, especially at night. CCD can rob a dog of quality of life, and make living with an old dog difficult.

Anipryl (selegiline, l-deprenyl) is the only medication approved for use in dogs to treat CCD. It is a monoamine oxidase inhibitor (MAOI), which can cause negative side effects and is unsafe to combine with a number of other drugs, including antidepressants, such as fluoxetine (Reconcile, Prozac) and clomipramine (Clomicalm); amitraz (Certifect, Preventic collar); and dl-phenylalanine (DLPA), used to treat chronic pain. There is evidence that it provides some benefit for dogs with CCD, but it is not a cure.

In the last few years, several companies have introduced supplements

designed to help dogs with CCD. While the scientific evidence presented for each is limited and often weak (many studies are not placebo-controlled or double-blinded, most are sponsored by the manufacturer, and results are not always statistically significant), studies and anecdotal reports indicate that these supplements can help many dogs.

## NEWEST TO THE MARKET

**Neutricks**, from Quincy Animal Health, was released in November 2010. It contains a calcium-binding protein called apoaeguorin, derived from jellyfish. The

**Checkers may be out of the question, but just like senior citizens, older dogs benefit from increased mental stimulation, provided by training games or toys. The addition of nutraceutical supplements may also preserve or enhance their cognition.**

parent company, Quincy Bioscience, markets a comparable product for humans called Prevagen.

The company commissioned a couple of small studies to be conducted by CanCog Technologies on senior laboratory dogs that appear to demonstrate improvement in learning and memory when compared to controls and to those given Anipryl. Gary Landsberg, DVM, Dipl. ACVB, Dipl. ECVBM-CA, a veterinary behaviorist and adjunct professor at Ontario Veterinary College in Canada who is also director of scientific affairs for CanCog, feels the product has demonstrated effectiveness.

Dog owners who participated in a 30-day trial reported an overall improvement of 24 percent, primarily in sleep, disorientation, and especially housetraining, with less improvement in interaction, disposition, and pain. Very few side effects are reported, and the supplement has no known interactions with other medications. Improvement is commonly noticed within a few days of starting the supplement.

Neutricks is widely available online. The suggested retail price is \$60 for 60 tablets, with one-third off when you buy multiple bottles. Recommended daily dosage is 1 tablet for dogs under 40 pounds, 2 tablets for dogs weighing 41-



80 pounds, and 3 tablets for dogs over 80 pounds. I found it discounted to as low as \$25.60 for 60 tablets at Amazon.com, where 26 of 29 people gave it 4 or 5 stars in their reviews.

## NOT THE SAME-O

S-adenosylmethionine (SAME, pronounced “sammy”) is a supplement that has been around for a long time, but has only recently been used to treat CCD as well as dementia in humans.

Novifit was developed by Virbac Animal Health and tested on client-owned dogs. A favorable response was seen after one month and increased in the second month. After both 4 and 8 weeks of treatment, there was a 44 percent reduction in problem behaviors (compared to 24 percent in placebo-treated dogs), including significant improvement in activity, playfulness, less housesoiling, and awareness. There was moderate improvement in sleep problems, disorientation, and confusion, though no benefit was demonstrated for anxiety. CanCog also performed studies showing improvement in cognitive processes, such as attention and problem solving in laboratory dogs.

Novifit is packaged in foil blister packs to protect it from moisture, which is important with SAME. It is available in three sizes, with 100, 200, and 400 milligrams per tablet. The company recommends giving the following dosage once a day: 100 mg to dogs weighing up to 22 pounds, 200 mg to dogs weighing 22.1 to 44 pounds, 400 mg to dogs weighing 44.1 to 88 pounds, and 800 mg to dogs weighing over 88 pounds.

SAME can also help with liver disease, arthritis, and depression. Nutramax markets it as **Denosyl**, used for liver support, or you can buy SAME made for

humans. It's absorbed faster when given on an empty stomach, but concentrations are maintained longer if SAME is given with a meal, according to Virbac. Minimal side effects are reported, and SAME is considered safe to use and to combine with other treatments.

Note that, while it is rarely mentioned, SAME requires certain B vitamins to produce full benefits. It may be best to give a B-complex supplement daily when using SAME.

## COMBINATION APPROACH

Another nutraceutical that has been talked about for some time is phosphatidylserine (PS), a phospholipid that may improve learning and memory. Most PS is derived from soy lecithin, though a few supplements use other sources, such as sunflower lecithin. The percentage of PS in lecithin is low, so lecithin alone will not provide therapeutic doses.

Ceva Animal Health introduced **Senilife**, which contains PS along with ginkgo biloba, vitamin E, pyridoxine (vitamin B6), and resveratrol (grape skin extract), in 2008. The company says that its own studies show that Senilife produced significant improvement in sleeping problems, playful behavior, apathy, response to commands, and disorientation, with improvements starting within 7 days and increasing over 30 days. CanCog performed one study on Senilife that showed improved short-term memory that may persist for at least 70 days after the supplement was discontinued, indicating potential long-term benefits.

Senilife is available in two sizes, for dogs up to and over 50 pounds. This product has been on backorder, but I spoke with a company representative

who said Senilife should be available by the time you see this.

## PLAN B

Choline, usually grouped with the B vitamins, has been shown to be effective in treating cognitive disorders and seizures in both humans and pets. It is involved in the same chemical processes as SAME. Choline is a component of phosphatidylcholine, another phospholipid found in lecithin.

Most homemade diets I've analyzed have been short on choline, which is often omitted from multivitamin and mineral supplements. The National Research Council recommends about 100 mg of choline daily for a 5-pound dog, 500 mg for a dog weighing 40 pounds, and 1,000 mg for dogs weighing 100 pounds. The best food sources I've found are eggs (126 mg choline per large egg) and liver, particularly beef liver (more than 100 mg per ounce).

**Cholodin**, a product of MVP Laboratories, provides choline, phosphatidylcholine, methionine, inositol, B vitamins, selenium, vitamin E, and zinc. One small study conducted by Shawn Messonnier, DVM, showed that 9 of 15 client-owned dogs had moderate to significant improvement in clinical signs of CCD after receiving Cholodin.

Other supplements that may help with CCD include DHA (omega-3 fatty acid found in fish oil), acetyl-L-carnitine, and antioxidants, such as vitamins C and E (also found in fresh fruits and vegetables), selenium, Coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10), alpha-lipoic acid, N-acetyl cysteine, and resveratrol.

All of these supplements should produce improvement within a few days to a month. If you don't see any changes by that time, it's unlikely that giving them longer will help.

Keep in mind that some studies have shown that older dogs do best when given behavioral enrichment along with nutritional supplements. The two together work better than either does by itself. Enrichment may include exercise such as walks, learning a new trick or other types of training, puzzle toys, or anything else that engages your dog's mind. Even dogs with little mobility can enjoy games such as scent discrimination. 🐾

*Mary Straus is the owner of DogAware.com. She and her Norwich Terrier, Ella, live in the San Francisco Bay Area.*

## RESOURCES

- ❖ **NEUTRICKS, QUINCY ANIMAL HEALTH** (877) 681-4321, neutricks.com
- ❖ **NOVIFIT, VIRBAC ANIMAL HEALTH** (800) 338-3659, virbacvet.com
- ❖ **DENOSYL, NUTRAMAX LABS** (888) 886-6442, nutramaxlabs.com
- ❖ **SENLIFE, CEVA ANIMAL HEALTH** (800) 999-0297; ceva.us; vetdepot.com/senilife.html
- ❖ **CHOLIDIN, MVP LABORATORIES** (800) 856-4648, mvplabs.com

# Stay Happy

*Teach your dog a rock-solid “stay” – without leash jerks, threats, or yelling.*

BY PAT MILLER, CBCC-KA, CPDT-KA, CDBC

**I**t’s 6 a.m., and barely beginning to get light outside. I trudge to the barn with Bonnie at my side to join my husband Paul, who has already started barn chores with the rest of the dogs. On the way, I stop to pick up empty feed pans from the horses, who have finished their morning grain. I cue Bonnie to sit, and stay, so my energetic dark-colored dog doesn’t disappear into the blackness. I enter the pasture, pick up the pans, and just as I move back toward the gate, I see Bonnie’s ears prick and eyes light up in excited anticipation as she looks to my left.

“Stay!” I remind her, as I follow her gaze just in time to see Dorothy, the neighbor’s mostly-white calico cat fade into the brush. Thankfully, Bonnie stays, although she is quivering with excitement, and on the tips of her toes. I exit the pasture and return to Bonnie’s side, then give her an “Okay!” release cue, trusting that dog-savvy Dorothy has had ample time to find a safe perch in the woods. Bonnie dashes into the brush on her happy but fruitless cat-quest. She

returns a few moments later when I call her back, grinning from ear-to-ear. We just “Premacked” Bonnie’s “stay.”

The cue “Stay,” in my world, means “Stay in the exact position I left you in until I release you,” as opposed to “Wait,” which simply means “Pause.” I tell my dogs to “Wait” when I go out the door, because they are free to move around as soon as the door closes. I use “Stay” when I really do need my dogs to be solidly, reliably parked in one spot for a length

of time. I don’t use it nearly as much as I did when I was actively competing in obedience and rally, but it still comes in handy at times.

## OLD WAY/NEW WAY

When coercion training was the only game in town, we used to teach stays by telling the dog to sit and stay, marching to the end of the leash, and turning around to glare sternly at the dog, as if daring her to move. If she did, we scuttled back in, leash in hand, and delivered a resounding “correction” (i.e. punishment) for the transgression by yanking, hard, on the dog’s choke collar. It was not uncommon to see dogs cringing in fear as their owners rushed back to them, or jumping up and running off across the training ring in an attempt to avoid the impending punishment.

Of course, the enlightened positive reinforcement-based trainer of today wouldn’t dream of using this method. The last thing we want to do is cause our dogs to be fearful and run from us. Rather than punishing the dog for moving, we reinforce her for staying. It’s as simple as that.

---

**This may be your goal – a dog who can demonstrate a solid stay even in the face of distractions – but no one gets here overnight. Slowly build and proof your dog’s “staying” skills.**



A solid stay demonstrated by Elizabeth Adamec, of Sweet Wag Dog Training, near Boston, MA, and her dog, Truman.



**Trainer Jessica Miller finds it useful to have her canine pupils sit or lie on a mat as they learn “stay.” Once they grasp the concept, she “fades” the mat (makes it smaller and then removes it altogether).**

There are lots of different ways to reinforce a stay behavior. In Bonnie’s case above, I used the “Premack Principle,” which says you can use a higher probability/value behavior to reinforce a lower probability/value behavior. I reinforced her for staying (the not-so-fun behavior) by giving her permission to chase the cat (the more-fun behavior).

Of course, Bonnie already knew what stay meant, because I had trained her to stay in a less distracting environment – the safe and quiet confines of the training center. Without corrections; we train the stay behavior with clicker and treats, starting with a stay of very short duration – a second or two, and gradually shaping for longer and longer stays. Here’s how:

## TEACHING THE STAY

While your dog is in a “sit” or “down,” say “Stay” and hold up a treat for one second. If he stays in place, click your clicker or say “Yes!” and feed him the treat. At first, hold the treat right in front of his nose, if necessary, to keep him in place. If he gets up, say “Oops!” in a cheerful voice, whisk the treat behind your back, and ask him to sit again.

Repeat this step until he realizes that getting up makes the treat disappear. Very gradually extend the length of time you ask for the stay, just a second or two longer every half-dozen successful repetitions. As he gets the idea, start taking the treat away from his nose so he’s holding the stay without the lure.

Always use a release word to end the stay. This will help your dog understand that the stay isn’t over until you release him. I suggest you return to him and pause for varying amounts of time before you give the release so he understands



that he doesn’t get up just because you returned, but that he actually has to wait for you to give him the cue. If you release him immediately every time you return, he’ll think your return is the release cue.

The word “Okay” is often used as a release cue (I use it!), but is sometimes not recommended because of its common use in conversation. Perhaps you have your dog on a down-stay at the beach and you turn to your spouse and say, “Okay, let’s go to the movies tonight.” Whoops – there goes your dog! Other frequently used release cues include “free,” “free dog,” “all done,” “at ease,” “release,” “whee!” You can, of course, use any word or words you want; they have no meaning to your dog until you give them meaning by associating them with the release.

When releasing your dog from the stay, get excited, encourage him to get up, and praise him when he does. It’s important that he actually gets up when you give the release – so you know he understands the stay is over.

## MANY ROADS TO ROME

Like all good positively trained behaviors, there are a variety of ways to go about teaching “stay.”

■ **JESSICA MILLER**, one of the PMCTs (Pat Miller Certified Trainers) at Peaceable Paws, likes to use a mat to help a dog stay in place. She says, “I like to start teaching stay as a mat behavior first. Once the dog has a good ‘go to mat’ and gets reinforced for being on the mat a lot (for duration), I then begin to add the ‘stay’ cue as a sort of ‘mat for duration.’ The good thing about this is that once you’ve reinforced being on the mat a lot most dogs don’t want to get up. I then begin working on generalizing it to other areas/surfaces. They get the picture pretty quickly.

“This worked wonderfully for my start-line stay in agility and for group long stays in obedience competition. I started with the mat in both venues (because they were specific situations in which I wanted a solid stay) and then after about

❖ **CHALLENGE:** Your dog gets up before you give the release cue.

❖ **SOLUTION:** Mark the mistake with a cheerful “Oops!” before he gets all the way up, and hide the treat. Timing is very critical here; the quicker you mark the mistake, the quicker the dog will learn stay. Repeat the position cue (“sit” or “down”) and the cue to “stay.” Practice shorter stays so you can reward his success. The biggest mistake people make with stay is trying to go too fast. Give your dog lots of wins (and reinforcement!) for staying, and increase the difficulty slowly.





❖ **CHALLENGE:** Your dog stays in place but changes position (sits until tired, then lies down).

❖ **SOLUTION:** If it's *most* important to you that your dog stays in place, you can let this one go, and continue to reinforce the down-stay. If you want him to stay in the precise position he started in (the obedience definition of stay), return to him, ask for that position, and go back to reinforcing shorter stays, gradually increasing duration as appropriate. Be sure you aren't asking a dog with a physical issue (pain) to stay in an uncomfortable position for long. And make sure he's not too tired or too hot to stay in position for a longer duration.

two sessions I took the mat away and the stay

remained. If the behavior starts to deteriorate, bring the mat back for a few attempts. You could 'fade' the mat (use a smaller and smaller piece until it's gone), but I've never had to. Once the mat was gone the cue and behavior remained pretty solid."

■ **C.C. CASALE**, a PMCT with her own training business, South Paw Pet Care, in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, goes high-tech to reinforce her dogs' stays.

"I like to use the Manners Minder Remote Reward Training System to teach stay. In this instance it works much like a clicker, since it can be set to make a beep sound before dispensing, so the dog receives a positive alert that he is doing the right thing and a reward is on its way!

"This creates further incentive, which tends to speed up the process of moving toward and working on 'stay for duration.' I set the machine to manual so I (and my clients) can use the hand held

remote control to dispense treats based on the schedule of reinforcement we have chosen for that session and moment.

"We first work on prolonged stays with no distance between the dog and trainer. Then we increase the distance based on the rate of success and reward the dog for longer and longer stays. The machine allows us to dispense a single treat or several, so we ending training sessions on a high note by 'jackpotting' with several treats for meeting whichever criteria we have set for that session. It's pretty fun to see dogs (especially high-energy ones) get excited about staying in place.

"This method has worked well for me. As an added benefit, the familiarity the dog and client get with the Manners Minder then translates to using the tool for other training behaviors like 'go to your place.'"

■ **BOB RYDER**, PMCT, CPDT-KA, of Pawsative Transformations in Normal, Illinois, uses arcs, tethers, and exercise to increase his success with stays.

"I keep it pretty simple, starting with a super high rate of reinforcement for a sit or down stay (whichever comes more naturally for the dog), and moving in small arcs around the dog. I might use a tether briefly if necessary. I increase distance in half-step increments making the arcs into portions of concentric circles. Once the dog is solid at that level, I begin moving away in direct lines as I



In the very beginning stage of teaching "stay," trainer Bob Ryder uses a high rate of reinforcement. He might also use a tether, so the dog can't make a mistake while she's learning the right thing to do.

finish each arc, returning each time to reward from up close. First I'll back away while facing the dog. Then I'll work at a shorter distance again, now moving away from the dog and facing 90 degrees away. When that's solid, I work at a short distance again and retreat from the dog facing 180 degrees away.

"For young and energetic dogs, we work after some exercise. It makes a big difference!"

**WAY TO RELAX!**

A number of trainers use the Karen Overall Protocol for Relaxation (PFR) as a tool to teach dogs to stay on cue. Although designed to help anxious dogs learn how to relax, the PFR is a perfect tool for teaching stays, as it breaks the behavior down into very small increments (see "Karen Overall's Protocol for Relaxation," next page). Sean Howard, PMCT, of Up With Pup, in Toronto, Canada, and Elizabeth Adamec, of Sweet Wag, in Boston, Massachusetts, both like to take advantage of the specificity of the PFR.

Adamec says, "I have most of my clients work on Overall's Protocol for

Trainer C.C. Casale uses a remote-controlled treat-dispensing device called the Manners Minder when teaching "stay." It allows her to deliver a single treat (or several!) to the dog without having to return to the dog to do so.





# KAREN OVERALL'S PROTOCOL FOR RELAXATION (PFR)

The Protocol for Relaxation is divided into 15 days of exercises to practice, starting with a very easy "sit for 5 seconds" and working up to leaving the room, knocking on the door, and talking to an imaginary person, all while your dog stays in place.

Although it's divided into 15 days, you can take as long as you like; it's perfectly okay if it takes you 3 days, or 5 days, to get through Day One (below). If your dog has trouble with "two steps back," keep working at "one step back" until he's ready to move on.

After each step in the protocol, reinforce your dog with a treat. He does not have to get up in between each step, but give him a break when you feel he needs it.

The protocol can be found at [dogscouts.org/Protocol\\_for\\_relaxation.html](http://dogscouts.org/Protocol_for_relaxation.html); a recorded version (so you can listen to it instead of having to read as you work with your dog) is here: [championofmyheart.com/relaxation-protocol-mp3-files](http://championofmyheart.com/relaxation-protocol-mp3-files).

## Day 1: Dog's Task

- Sit for 5 seconds
- Sit for 10 seconds
- Sit while you take 1 step back and return
- Sit while you take 2 steps back and return
- Sit for 10 seconds
- Sit while you take 1 step to the right and return
- Sit while you take 1 step to the left and return
- Sit for 10 seconds

- Sit while you take 2 steps back and return
- Sit while you take 2 steps to the right and return
- Sit for 15 seconds
- Sit while you take 2 steps to the left and return
- Sit while you clap your hands softly once
- Sit while you take 3 steps back and return
- Sit while you count out loud to 10
- Sit while you clap your hands softly once
- Sit while you count out loud to 20
- Sit while you take 3 steps to the right and return
- Sit while you clap your hands softly twice
- Sit for 3 seconds
- Sit for 5 seconds
- Sit while you take 1 step back and return
- Sit for 3 seconds
- Sit for 10 seconds
- Sit for 5 seconds
- Sit for 3 seconds

## Day 2 through Day 15:

Continue in this manner, gradually increasing the difficulty of dog's tasks.



**Trainer Shagay Anselment applauds during the Protocol for Relaxation, helping "proof" Rhodie's stay.**

Relaxation starting week one, twice a day. I tell them, now is your chance to talk at your dog non-stop. Say 'Stay' all you want, it doesn't matter. Think of it as doggy yoga. It's about being calm and understanding and not caring if they mess up. Use your Yogi voice. I tell them to try to sound like a new-age DVD on how to be peaceful. Then when we are ready to do stays a few weeks later the dogs are all primed up.

"It works like a dream. Takes the pressure off the client to be perfect at first, and that takes the pressure off the dog. I started doing it this way after I noticed that my private clients with crazy dogs did the best on their stays. It's because all of the work they've been doing with the PFR twice a day."

Howard adds, "I use Karen Overall's PFR with great success to build to an extended series of stays in a variety of stimulating scenarios; my favorites are having a client walk to the door to have a conversation, open their dog's food bin, and so on."

So, for the sake of your neighbor's cat, the squirrels in your yard, your dog's safety and your own peace of mind, it's worth investing the time and energy into teaching your dog a good, reliable stay behavior. For the sake of your relationship with your dog, choose one of the modern, positive, fun methods described here to teach it, so your dog will happily stay without the need for stern gazes and threats of punishment. 🐾

*Thanks to Shagay Anselment of The Canine Connection, Chico, CA, for demonstrating some of the techniques in this article. See "Resources," page 24, for contact information.*

*Pat Miller, CBCC-KA, CPDT-KA, CDBC, is WDJ's Training Editor. She lives in Fairplay, Maryland, site of her Peaceable Paws training center, where she offers dog training classes and courses for trainers. Pat is also author of many books on positive training. See page 24 for more information about her books and classes.*

## RESOURCES

- ❖ **JESSICA MILLER, PMCT**  
Peaceable Paws LLC, Fairplay, MD.  
(301) 582-9420; [peaceablepaws.com](http://peaceablepaws.com)
- ❖ **C.C. CASALE, PMCT**  
South Paw Pet Care, Mount Pleasant, SC. (843) 819-6633;  
[southpaw-petcare.com](http://southpaw-petcare.com)
- ❖ **BOB RYDER, PMCT, CPDT-KA**  
Pawsitive Transformations, Normal, IL. (309) 530-1963; [pawstrans.com](http://pawstrans.com)
- ❖ **ELIZABETH ADAMEC, MA**  
Sweet Wag Professional Dog Training Services, Boston, MA.  
(508) 877-6297; [sweetwag.com](http://sweetwag.com)
- ❖ **SEAN HOWARD, PMCT**  
Up With Pup, Toronto, Ontario.  
(647) 272-9361; [upwithpup.com](http://upwithpup.com)
- ❖ **MANNERS MINDER REMOTE REWARD TRAINING SYSTEM, \$100.** Clean Run Productions, LLC.  
(800) 311-6503; [cleanrun.com](http://cleanrun.com)

# Plant Oils

*Do you know which plant oils may help your dog, and which ones could cause problems?*

BY MARY STRAUS

**T**here are many different types of plant oils that people use to supplement their dogs' diets, including oils from flaxseed, olives, coconut, vegetables, hempseed, and more. Some of these oils can provide benefits, but others are not helpful and may even contribute to inflammation.

Plant oils provide primarily polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFAs), which include omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids. Fish oil is also mostly PUFAs. Some plant oils, such as olive oil, provide monounsaturated fatty acids (MUFAs). Coconut oil is an exception, as it is made up of saturated fats, which is why coconut oil is solid at room temperature (though it becomes liquid at 76 degrees Fahrenheit).

Omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids are considered essential for dogs: they must be provided in the diet. The ratio between the two types is important, but recommendations for the "ideal" ratio vary. In the past, the recommended ratio of omega-6 to omega-3 has been as high as 20:1, but current guidelines generally range between 10:1 and 5:1, and sometimes even lower.

Omega-6 fatty acids are fairly stable, surviving storage without becoming rancid. Most diets, both commercial and homemade, contain ample omega-6 fatty acids, and there is rarely any need to add more. The exception is homemade diets that contain little poultry fat.

Omega-3 fatty acids, particularly those found in fish oil, are fragile and break down easily when exposed to light, heat, and air. For this reason, omega-3 fatty acids are usually lacking in most

diets, even commercial diets with added omega-3 fatty acids, since they are not likely to survive packaging and storage.

Cold-pressed, unrefined oils are healthier than those subjected to heat processing and refinement, which destroy antioxidants and other beneficial properties. Hydrogenated and partially hydrogenated oils should never be fed.

Symptoms of fatty acid deficiency may include a dull, dry coat and skin, excessive shedding, seborrhea, and itching. These can also be signs of a fat imbalance, however. Different types of

fatty acids compete for uptake within the body, so giving too much of one type can lead to deficiencies of another, even if adequate amounts are included in the diet.

■ **BENEFITS:** There are different types of both omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids, some of which are more beneficial than others.

Most vegetable oils, such as corn oil and soybean oil, are high in linoleic acid (LA), the most common and plentiful omega-6 essential fatty acid. Significant amounts of LA are also found in poultry fat, but not in red meat.

Too much LA can contribute to inflammation, making conditions such as allergies and arthritis worse, so unless you feed a homemade diet that does not include poultry, you should not need to add LA to your dog's diet.

Linoleic acid is converted in the body to other omega-6 fatty acids, including gamma-linolenic acid (GLA), a preferred form that is anti-inflammatory. Poor diet or certain health problems can interfere with this conversion, so supplementation with oils containing GLA can be beneficial for some dogs, including those with allergies, autoimmune disease, and seborrhea. Good sources of GLA include borage oil, evening primrose oil, black currant seed oil, and, to some extent, hempseed oil or ground hempseed, all

**Many owners add oils to their dogs' diets in an effort to improve skin and coat. If they're not careful, though, the wrong oils could cause more problems for their dogs than they had before.**





of which also contain LA and other fats. A little GLA goes a long way, so these oils are often available in gelcap form or as part of oil blends.

Flaxseed oil is predominately alpha-linolenic acid (ALA), an omega-3 fatty acid that must be converted inside the body to EPA and DHA (the fatty acids found in fish) in order to be utilized. Dogs can't do this conversion very well, so flaxseed oil provides limited benefits for most dogs, although it may help

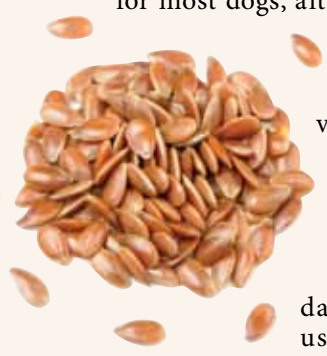
with dull, dry coat in some dogs. ALA can also be provided from ground flaxseed. Both ground flaxseed and flaxseed oil should be refrigerated in dark containers and used within a short period of time, maybe a month or two. Whole seeds will keep longer and are best if ground fresh daily or every few days.

Olive oil provides primarily oleic acid, an omega-9 non-essential MUFA. Pumpkin seed oil also has relatively high levels of oleic acid, and certain vegetable oils, such as safflower and sunflower oil, are available in "high oleic" versions (all of these also provide LA). Oleic acid has been shown to lower cholesterol and reduce the risk of heart disease in people, but dogs don't have the same type of problems with cholesterol that people do, so benefits are likely to be less. Be sure to use only unrefined "virgin" oils, which preserve antioxidant compounds and plant phenols that may be the most important parts.

Coconut oil, unlike other plant oils, is a highly saturated fat. Some of the saturated fat in coconut oil is in the form of medium-chain triglycerides (MCTs), which may provide many of its benefits. MCTs are more easily digested than other fats and can be used to supply fat and calories, and to help prevent deficiency of fat-soluble vitamins, for dogs with fat intolerance.

Proponents claim a host of benefits from coconut oil, including reducing inflammation, improving digestion, reducing the risk of cancer, and preventing and treating infection. Use only virgin, unrefined coconut oil, preferably in glass bottles. Coconut oil should be white when solid and clear when liquid.

Flaxseed oil is predominately alpha-linolenic acid (ALA), an omega-3 fatty acid that must be converted inside the body to EPA and DHA (the fatty acids found in fish) in order to be utilized. Dogs can't do this conversion very well, so flaxseed oil provides limited benefits for most dogs, although it may help with dull, dry coat in some dogs. ALA can also be provided from ground flaxseed. Both ground flaxseed and flaxseed oil should be refrigerated in dark containers and used within a short period of time, maybe a month or two. Whole seeds will keep longer and are best if ground fresh daily or every few days.



(See "Crazy About Coconut Oil," WDJ October 2005.)

■ **CAUTIONS:** Only fresh oils should be used; never feed oils that smell rancid or "off." All oils are fats and provide about 40 calories per teaspoon, so amounts should be limited, particularly in overweight dogs and those already eating a high-fat diet. Too much fat can cause digestive upset and may even lead to pancreatitis in susceptible dogs. When adding oils, always start with small amounts and increase gradually. If you see any negative reaction, such as digestive upset, decreased appetite, or lethargy, stop the supplement.

Adding PUFAs to the diet increases the need for vitamin E, which helps to prevent oxidation within the body as well as without. Just 10 IUs of vitamin E should be enough to balance one teaspoon or 5 grams of oil.

Many oil supplements contain vitamin E, but check the label to be sure. Vitamin E supplementation is especially important in homemade diets, where this vitamin is always low. High amounts of vitamin E are not necessary and may be counterproductive, so limit supplements to no more than 1 to 2 IUs per pound of body weight daily, or you can give higher amounts less often.

While grapes and raisins can cause kidney damage in dogs, no serious problems have been seen so far with grapeseed oil or extract, which are sometimes included in oil blends and other nutritional supplements. Grapeseed oil is predominantly LA. Grapeseed extract is a good source of antioxidants, but the oil is not.

No plant oil can replace the need for fish oil (or fatty fish) in the diet.

■ **DOSAGE:** Because they add fat and calories, plant oils should be given in limited amounts, such as one to two teaspoons daily for a large dog, down to ¼ to ½ teaspoon for a toy breed. Coconut oil can be given in higher amounts, up to a maximum of one teaspoon per 10 pounds of body weight daily, split into multiple servings.

For homemade diets that don't

include poultry fat, which is found in the skin and dark meat, add about 1 teaspoon of walnut, hempseed, corn, or soybean oil, or two teaspoons ground hempseed, per pound of meat and other animal products.

Oil supplements may need to be given for one to three months before any improvement is seen.

■ **RECOMMENDED SOURCES:** Many fatty acid or omega oil blends are predominately vegetable oils supplying linoleic acid. Look for individual oils or blends that provide more beneficial fatty acids instead. While many oil blends tout their "ideal balance" of omega fatty acids, remember that balance must also take diet into account, where linoleic acid is generally high. Here are a few examples of oil blends:



- **Vetri-Science Omega 3-6-9** (800-882-9993; vetriscience.com), a blend of borage seed, flaxseed, and fish oils.
- **Ultra Oil Skin & Coat Supplement** (317-845-7328; ultraoilforpets.com), a blend of hempseed, flaxseed, grape-seed, and fish oils.

- **Udo's Oil Blend and Pet Essentials for Dogs** (800-446-2110; florahealth.com), blends of flaxseed, sunflower, sesame, coconut, and evening primrose oils, along with other ingredients.
- **Thorne Veterinary Omega PlusVET** (800-228-1966; veterinary.thorne.com), a blend of fish and borage oils.
- **NOW Foods Omega 3-6-9** (888-669-3663; nowfoods.com), a blend of flaxseed, evening primrose, canola, black currant, and pumpkin seed oils. 🐾

Mary Straus is the owner of DogAware.com. She and her Norwich Terrier, Ella, live in the San Francisco Bay Area.

# What a Waste!

**Can pressure from animal lovers convince pet food retailers to cut waste – and support animal rescue? Let's find out!**

BY NANCY KERNS

The animal shelter where I often volunteer is less than a mile from a big box super store. Both are located in a low-income town in a low-income county – a rural area in northeastern California (i.e., not one of the parts of the state that you've heard about). Donations to the shelter are welcome, much-needed, and scarce. So, when the shelter gets a call, as it does occasionally, from a manager at that big-box store, saying that he has some dented cans of cat food or ripped bags of dog food or kitty litter that he'd like to donate to the shelter, an animal control officer is immediately dispatched to go pick up that donation, with gratitude. These donations tend to be small, but regular, and they definitely help the shelter feed and care for more animals than it would be able to otherwise.

So I thought it would be a great thing when a big-name chain pet supply store recently opened in our town; surely that store, too, would donate damaged packages of pet food to the only animal shelter serving the town and county. But then I learned that the chain actually has a policy dictating that all the perfectly good pet food in packages that have become damaged is *destroyed and thrown away*.

I've since heard a number of explanations for the policy of that store chain and others. Storage is a problem, especially once packages are open; food needs to be consumed soon after its exposure to air. Also, insects and other pests are attracted to opened packages. And then there are liability issues; what if the donated food made pets at a shelter ill? Or if the shelter sent some of the donated food

home with an adopted animal, and that pet or one of the other pets in the home became ill after eating the donated food?

It was also suggested that if it was widely known that damaged packages of food were donated directly to a specific shelter or rescue group in town, volunteers or even employees of the shelter or rescue group might have an incentive to visit the stores in order to surreptitiously damage packages or slice open bags.

Okay, I get that. It might sound like a petty fear, or an unlikely scenario, but I could see that happening, especially when passionate animal lovers are desperate to do anything they can to save lives and stretch animal shelter budgets.

But it also doesn't seem insurmountable; surely someone could come up with an innovative program that would allow all that perfectly good food to be donated to needy animals, without creating an incentive for tampering.

## LOOKING FOR A MODEL

I started making inquiries, to determine what happens to damaged packages of pet food all across the pet food production chain, and to see if I could find a model of smart charitable diversion of products that would otherwise be wasted.

I called several independent, "mom and pop"-type pet supply stores, and in each case, was told that products from damaged bags are generally taken home by pet store owners, given to store employees for their pets, or donated to local shelters.

Then, eureka – I found it: a chain pet supply store with a formal donation program in place to provide perfectly good food that would otherwise be wasted, to animal-related charities.

Pet Food Express is a relatively local chain, with 43 pet supply stores in the greater San Francisco Bay Area. Mike Murray is the Director of Community Relations for the chain. "We guarantee all of our products, so if a customer's dog doesn't like a food, for example, they can

**Employees of Pet Food Express in Oakland, California, help stage a donation of pet food and supplies for a local animal charity. Damaged items and opened packages of wholesome food are distributed from PFE's loading dock every Thursday to qualified rescue groups.**





return it. We examine the food to make sure it smells and looks okay. We check the date code to make sure it's fresh and not near its expiration date. If it appears to be fine, we collect it and send it to our warehouse, along with any packages that have been damaged in the store. Every Thursday, we open the warehouse to specific animal-related charities and distribute all of that food."

Any food that has been implicated in any sort of recall is discarded or sent back to the manufacturer. So is any food that an owner thinks has made her pet ill.

Pet-related charities in the area apply to participate in Pet Food Express's giveaways. Each must provide proof of their nonprofit status, as well as a sample of their adoption contract. "We want to make sure that we are supporting only those groups who are doing the right thing by their animals." For example, all the groups in Pet Food Express's program must have a spay/neuter requirement in their adoption contracts. They must also agree to take back any animals that don't work out for the adopters.

Once they are qualified for the program, they are invited to the warehouse to pick up donations once every three months. "That way, we can spread the food around widely," says Murray.

But not *too* widely; Pet Food Express caps the number of groups who participate in the program, and maintains a waiting list for others who want to enroll.

"If we worked with every group who was qualified, the amount we gave each group might not be worth the trip," says Murray. By limiting the number of groups who are invited, Pet Food Express makes sure that the amount of goods each organization receives is significant. (This rotating donation also ensures that there isn't an incentive for individuals from any animal rescue group to deliberately damage packages in the stores, a fear expressed by other store managers.)

Pet Food Express donated more than 275,000 pounds of pet food to animal charities last year, as well as many "hard goods" – things like wire crates that are slightly bent or dented dog bowls.

## NO NEWS IS (PROBABLY) BAD NEWS

I received no response from Petco, Costco, or Walmart regarding their policies for dealing with wasted products.

I did receive a very prompt response from PetSmart, confirming the infor-

mation I had heard informally, that damaged pet food is destroyed and discarded. A response from the chain's public relations department said in part, "Our stores destroy pet food products that have been damaged. On the surface, one could easily conclude that it's simply a matter of picking up the damaged bag and giving it away. But in truth, it's a much more complicated and challenging problem given the volume of products we deal with in our stores.

"Damaged food bags can expose the food to contamination which poses a health risk to pets so we do not donate expired food that may be spoiled. Damaged foods also create storage and distribution challenges for our stores. For example, our stores have extremely limited storage space and it becomes a problem to store damaged goods until they can be picked up by a deserving local animal welfare organization."

It's a safe bet that most other pet food chains and big-box stores have similar policies that lead to the destruction of perfectly good food, at least at the retail level. Fortunately, the news is better when you dig deeper down into the distribution chain.

## DISTRIBUTION CENTERS

Most stores, whether independent or chains, receive their products from pet food distributors – companies who pick up products from the manufacturers, and distribute the products to stores. There are a few dozen major pet food distribution companies in the U.S., and each tends to specialize, carrying similar products to similar retail outlets. For example, there are distribution companies that handle only higher-end, "natural and holistic"-type products, delivering them to independent pet supply stores and small chains. Other distributors may specialize in lower-cost products or higher-volume chains.

Large "pet specialty" chains such as Petco and PetSmart have their own distribution centers, as do national retail outlets that carry pet food, such as Tractor Supply and Costco. And of course, giant grocery chains also have their own distribution centers and providers.

Each time a pallet of pet food bags or cans are picked up by a forklift and moved, whether in a warehouse, onto or off of a truck, or onto the receiving dock of a retail outlet, the product packages are vulnerable to damage. Bags can split

## FOOD WASTE IS A NATIONAL PROBLEM

Social media fans are probably familiar with the expression "#firstworldproblem." In the U.S., food waste is a *major* first world problem. Last August, the National Resources Defense Council published a study that asserted that some 40 percent of all the food produced in this country is wasted. And while you may have a little guilt regarding the aging leftovers in your refrigerator or outdated cans in your cupboard, food waste in the home is just one part of the problem. Waste occurs at every phase of food production: harvest, processing, packaging, transportation, storage, and, of course, at the retail level.

I wasn't able to find any industry statistics regarding the amount of waste in the pet food supply chain, but it is likely to be comparable to the waste in human food production. After all, many of the same food production systems and processes are in place for the harvest, processing, packaging, transportation, storage, and sale of pet food.

And the figures I obtained from the sole company I contacted who could quantify – and who *would* share this information – (Pet Food Express) suggest that the waste at the retail level alone is staggering.

Pet Food Express is a relatively small chain, consisting of 43 pet supply stores in Northern California. In 2011, they donated some 275,000 pounds of dog and cat food to animal rescues in northern California. All of that was wholesome, fresh pet food with damaged or open packages. I can't imagine how much food gets thrown away or destroyed in higher-volume retail outlets or in mass market stores.

any time a pallet bumps into a wall or shelf as a forklift operator moves it. A single careless swipe of a box cutter, used to remove the swaths of plastic shrink-wrap that holds a pallet of food together, can slice open a bag of freshly produced, premium food, thus transforming it into “waste” food.

But because they have had control of the product, and know exactly how it came to an unsalable state, distribution centers seem to feel better about redirecting damaged packages of pet food to animal shelters or rescue groups. It seems that distribution centers routinely donate food that can't be sold (but is still wholesome) to shelters or rescue groups fortunate enough to be located near the distribution warehouses. This is part altruism, and part practicality; the cost of shipping pet food is often equal to the cost of producing it in the first place!

A media representative for PetSmart says, “Our distribution centers have a process in place to donate certain food products that have been slightly damaged or discontinued to local, non-profit animal-welfare organizations . . . . To participate in the program, these organizations agree that the food can only be used to feed pets in their care and cannot be sold. We keep track of all products that are donated.” Food that is past its “best by” date and prescription diets are destroyed, not donated.

## HOW DO WE GET RETAILERS TO EMULATE MANUFACTURERS?

Happily, every pet food and treat manufacturer I contacted (including representatives from Natura, WellPet, Cloudstar, and Lotus) said they routinely donate unsalable products to animal-related charities that are located close to their manufacturing sites. The products may have damaged labels, or be out of the company's specification; perhaps



## PET FOOD BANK IS ANOTHER WORTHY MODEL

In 2005, Houston family law attorney Elizabeth Asher and inventor John Kane started shipping much-needed supplies to rescuers who were working in the floodwaters of Hurricane Katrina, helping them recover stranded pets. The experience cemented their passion for helping animals in need, and the following year, they launched another worthy project: Rescue Bank, a nonprofit organization that facilitates transfers of donated pet food from manufacturers and distributors to animal shelters and rescue groups. (For more information, see [rescuebank.org](http://rescuebank.org).)

Before they opened the pet food bank, Kane and Asher were mentored by the Houston (human) Food Bank, and learned as much as possible about the ins and outs of food distribution. They must have learned well; in its first five years of regional operation, Rescue Bank facilitated the donation and charitable redistribution of more than 8 million meals (2 million pounds) of pet food from pet food makers and distributors to animal rescue groups. Since expanding nationally in 2011, and with the support of freight donations from [TheAnimalRescueSite.com](http://TheAnimalRescueSite.com), they've shipped another 30 million meals all across America. Volunteers also raise funds to pay for the costs of transporting the food.

One very significant part of Rescue Bank's work lies in qualifying the groups that receive the donations. On its website, Rescue Bank says, “Our goal is to support – as resources allow – those organizations that exhibit the highest standards of care and demonstrate their ability to make a difference.” It requires recipients to prove that no breeding of animals in the rescue facility occurs; that all housing of animals occurs in species-appropriate, clean, safe, comfortable, and enriching environments; that all animals are spayed/neutered before adoption; that the organization has a comprehensive and effective adoption program; and that an adequate number of employees and volunteers to ensure the group's animals are well cared-for.

the kibble size or color doesn't meet the company's standard, or perhaps the nutrient levels don't quite meet the label minimums, even though the products are wholesome in every way.

These “top down” efforts, and those taken at the distribution level, are admirable. But I'm still peeved about the considerable waste that occurs at the retail level. If only more retailers put some resources into a charitable giving program like the one developed by Pet Food Express, many more lives at needy shelters could be saved. I'd encourage volunteers from animal rescue groups and shelters to push this issue from the bottom up, and implore store managers to encourage the retail companies they work for to coordinate donations of otherwise wasted food with their brand name suppliers.

John Kane and Elizabeth Asher, the founders of Rescue Bank, a Houston-based animal food bank, have written proposed amend-

ments to 42 USC 1791 (the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Act) and the Pension Protection Act of 2006, to include protections for pet food donors. Currently, these Acts establish liability protection and a tax incentive (respectively) for companies donating human food to human food banks. The proposed amendments would extend the laws to pet food donations and pet food banks, removing two chief barriers to donation often cited by retail chains and distributors.

However, the proposed amendments need a Congressional sponsor. If your Congressperson is friendly to animal-related issues, consider petitioning him or her and requesting help with these amendments (available as proposed drafts from Rescue Bank; see [rescuebank.org](http://rescuebank.org)). Once sponsored and introduced to Congress, the proposals couldn't help but find widespread support. After all, who wouldn't want to help combat food waste, and help feed needy pets? 🐾

*Nancy Kerns is Editor of WDJ.*



## Canned Food Review; Mixed-Breeds vs. Pure; Another Harness

**J**ust read your “Canned Food Review” (WDJ October 2012) with interest and definitely learned some stuff. I’d like to get on your radar for next time a fairly-new-to-the-market canned pet food that was recommended to us by our locally owned pet food store, where the owners do a lot of research on pet foods. You won’t find Pedigree or Science Diet there.

The brand is called Hound & Gatos and is advertised to be 98% meat. I’ve used chicken, beef, salmon, and rabbit. There may be other flavors, as well.

The can says the food is free of soy, grain, artificial flavors, preservatives, and color. The can I’m looking at lists the ingredients as beef, water sufficient for processing, guar gum, liver, and vitamins, which are then listed. The analysis is min protein 8%, min fat 6%, max fiber 1.5%, max moisture 78%. More information is available at [houndgatos.com](http://houndgatos.com)

Marilyn Evans  
Monterey, CA

**A**s a many-year subscriber, I look forward to WDJ’s review of both wet and dry food as the ultimate “last word” in healthy food for our dogs. After reading over your list of approved wet foods, I thought I would send along the label of *my* preferred wet dog food, Party Animal. It’s a USDA certified organic dog food made in the USA with the highest quality ingredients, starting with organic chicken, organic chicken broth, organic sweet potatoes, organic liver, organic blueberries, organic eggs, organic broccoli, organic peas, organic guar gum, organic olive oil, and a bunch of vitamins and minerals.

Please check out this company and this dog food and see if you agree that it should be on your “approved” list.

Jo Ruggles  
Via email

**I** am a fairly longtime subscriber to the Whole Dog Journal. This October’s edition is especially interesting because of the article on lipomas (“Take Your Lumps”). Both of my longhaired Dachshunds have them, though none of their predecessors had.

I am also anxious to know if there was reason why Trader Joe’s canned dog food was not included amongst the recommended brands?

Mary Bradley  
Via email

*Thanks so much to all of you who sent comments and criticism of the canned food review, and those who introduced us to products we aren’t familiar with. We’ve never seen the products mentioned in the first two letters above – and there are surely more products out there we haven’t seen.*

*We always try to remind our readers that the foods on our “approved foods” lists are NOT the only good ones out there. If*

*the product meets our selection criteria, and the company will disclose the product’s manufacturing location, the product should be considered just as worthy as anything on our list.*

*However, as far as the Trader Joe’s brand canned dog food goes – it doesn’t meet our selection criteria, as detailed in the article. The ingredients list of its beef flavor variety starts out, “Water, beef, chicken, textured soy protein product, animal liver . . .”*

*You can determine whether a food meets our approval or not, simply by comparing your favorite products, or one you are curious about, to the selection criteria in our article.*

**R**egarding your “New or Used” editorial (WDJ October 2012): Over the years, we have had both purebred AKC registered dogs as well as rescued stray and feral dogs and we must tell you we have never had any behavior or health trouble with any of the rescue dogs, but often enough we’ve encountered health problems with the various purebreds.

Your terms “used,” “damaged,” and your ongoing negative descriptions of various problems with rescued dogs are extremely offensive and very biased. We were beginning to enjoy your periodical but have found this revelation of your short-sighted values (for every animal with a problem there are many who are fine but you do not acknowledge this) completely off-putting. The “purebred puppy of your dreams?” It screams bias.

We loved our Newfoundland, our Standard Poodle, our many Labs, our Bouviers, but the real “dogs of our dreams” are our two feral rescues. They are truly smarter, more alert, funnier, kinder, easier to train, loving and more protective than all the others beyond a doubt and they are beautiful and remarked upon frequently by strangers. So we pick the reality of Ireene and



This is Editor Nancy Kerns’ beloved mixed-breed shelter dog, Otto. She wouldn’t trade him for ANYTHING.

Julian (found as starving, not quite grown feral dogs who had to be trapped), over your misguided illusion of the superiority of breed dogs. Never one accident in the house. Never a bite. Nothing destroyed. Just love and complete loyalty.

Shame on you. You're supposed to be the savvy editor of a decently reported dog newsletter.

Linda Bisaccia-Ammerman and Dr. Frederick Ammerman  
Via email

*I'm afraid you missed my point – as well as the fact that I included the fact that my dog is from a shelter. I wasn't trying to disparage rescued dogs or mixed-breeds. My point was that I have spent some years now rehabilitating and placing damaged dogs (usually juveniles or adults), and sometimes I am jealous of friends who buy a well-bred, well-socialized, perfectly raised puppy. Because, once you know how to raise and train a dog who has fear and anxiety and "issues," it must be soooo easy and fun to raise and train one who has a nice clean slate, confidence, and a lack of fear. That's all.*

*As you'll see from this month's editorial, I wouldn't trade my formerly messed-up shelter mutt for ANYTHING. Like your rescues, he's the best dog I've ever had, too. And you're right about the feeling of accomplishment that one gains from hanging in there with a challenging project dog, and seeing the dog transform to a healthy, confident, happy dog. But just once, MAYBE, I'd like to raise a puppy from sound stock who has had every opportunity in life, and no adversity quite yet. It's not a guarantee that everything will go smoothly, but it might be nice to experience – once!*

*I do appreciate your concerns, but believe me: we're huge fans of both mixed-breed dogs and rescues.*

I own a small pet supply store (Pugnacious Pet Provisions) and I choose my products carefully, as I can't carry everything. In the October issue, you rated no-pull harnesses but omitted a very good one, the only one I'll carry after having tried a few others: Wonder Walker, made in Seattle by a small family business. I've sold quite a few and have had very positive feedback. These are the features that won me over:

- ✓ Reasonably priced (from \$25-29)
- ✓ Only one buckle, making it easy to put on, eliminating some bulk
- ✓ Each has a colored back strap (comes in many colors), which identifies easily how it fits on the dog
- ✓ Two D-rings, one in the front to attach the leash to stop pulling, one in the back when you want to tether the dog either in the car (they also make great seatbelt car straps) or elsewhere
- ✓ Soft nylon
- ✓ 7 sizes (custom sizes available if the dog is hard to fit)
- ✓ Made in Seattle

I wish you had included it.

Doris Meier  
Berkeley, CA

*We wish we had known about it in time for the review! We'll track it down for our next review, but your review will suffice in the meantime. Thanks for sharing your feedback.*

It's rare that I find myself compelled to write a letter to an editor, but I find myself today in just that position. I'm a long-time subscriber to WDJ, and I'm almost ashamed to admit how far behind in my reading I am, but I'd like to tell you why, as a cautionary tale. I'd also like to tell you why I continue to keep my subscription to WDJ, despite our last dog having passed across the Rainbow Bridge well over a year ago.

I find myself so far behind in reading because I have chronic Lyme Disease. It's a very long story, and I'm getting close to being done with my treatment, after over 18 years of living with the disease. So I send this as a cautionary tale to other dog and pet owners: Please be aware of ticks, and please protect yourselves and your pets from ticks.

I also felt compelled to let you know that I just read your Editor's Note from the June 2012 issue. And I must say that this is exactly why I continue my subscription, despite no longer having a dog: I am looking for a small dog at some point in the next year or so to be a service dog. I can't find the valuable insight you provide anywhere else! I truly trust what you have to say, and your mission is exactly how I feel about caring for my pets. (Also, I find information that is helpful to my cats, too!) So I will be a lifelong subscriber, no matter when I become a dog owner again.

Jennifer Surdam  
Sent via BlackBerry

*Jennifer, thanks so much for your warm words. You're right about ticks and Lyme - and I'd add other scary tick-borne diseases, too. Also, I'm going to assign one of my writers to your article idea: How to find a great candidate to be a service dog. Stay tuned! 🐾*

#### STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION

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**TRAINING AND INSTRUCTION**

- ❖ **Pat Miller**, CBCC-KA, CPDT-KA, CDBC, Peaceable Paws Dog and Puppy Training, Fairplay, MD. Group and private training, rally, behavior modification, workshops, intern and apprentice programs. Trainers can become “Pat Miller Certified Trainers” (PMCT) by successfully completing Pat’s Level 1 (Basic Dog Training and Behavior) and both Level 2 Academies (Behavior Modification and Instructors Course). (301) 582-9420; [peaceablepaws.com](http://peaceablepaws.com)
- ❖ **Shagay Anselment**, CPDT-KA, CDBC, The Canine Connection, Chico, CA. Training, puppy classes, socialization sessions, “playcare,” boarding. Force-free, fun, positive training. (530) 345-1912; [thecanineconnection.com](http://thecanineconnection.com)

**HOLISTIC VETERINARIANS**

- ❖ **American Holistic Veterinary Medical Association** (AHVMA). PO Box 630, Abingdon, MD 21009. Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope for a list of holistic veterinarians in your area, or search [ahvma.org](http://ahvma.org)

**BOOKS AND DVDS**

- ❖ WDJ Training Editor Pat Miller is author of *Positive Perspectives: Love Your Dog, Train Your Dog*; *Positive Perspectives 2: Know Your Dog, Train Your Dog*; *Power of Positive Dog Training*; *Play With Your Dog*; and *Do Over Dogs: Give Your Dog a Second Chance at a First Class Life*. Available from [dogwise.com](http://dogwise.com) or [wholedogjournal.com](http://wholedogjournal.com)

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