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# The Whole



# Dog Journal™

A monthly guide to natural dog care and training

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# In Food We Trust

*What's being done to restore confidence?*

BY NANCY KERNS

How many dogs and cats died as a result of contaminated pet foods early this year? It's become clear that we will probably never know. Last May, Michael Rogers, director of the Division of Field Investigations for the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), said in a telephone conference that the agency received as many as 18,000 calls about the recalled foods, with as many as 50 percent "alleging" an animal death. "Certainly as part of a longer-term process, the agency is going to be evaluating this data, and we'll certainly come out with a final characterization of – in total the number of confirmed deaths associated with these recalled products," he said.

However, our efforts to determine how many people are investigating the reports that FDA received – or whether there are actually any people currently working on those reports at all – led nowhere. Every FDA spokesperson we encountered told us, "We'll release the number as soon as we know it."

Information released by other sources suggests that the final number will be much higher than the 17 or 18 cases that FDA accepts as positively confirmed. The Oregon state veterinarian, Dr. Emilio DeBess, states that he has received reports 127 "suspect cases" of dogs and cats who experienced an adverse response to eating contaminated food; this number includes reports of 49 deaths – 20 dogs and 29 cats.

Also, the 20,000 members of Veterinary Information Network (VIN, an online, subscription-based education and communication forum for veterinary professionals) reported almost 1,500 cases of dog and cat injuries and

deaths related to contaminated pet food. VIN plans to investigate as many of these reports as they can, in an attempt to independently confirm links between contaminated foods and illness.

There *is* a silver lining to this cloud. Pet food companies are doing more than they've ever done to secure better ingredients, establish or enforce traceability of those ingredients, monitor their contract manufacturers (if they use one), and communicate with us, the people buying their products.

Of course, in some cases, "more than they've ever done" isn't much. Makers of low-cost, low-quality foods will still buy bargain ingredients; they'll just be a tad more certain of the ingredients' origin. But the companies who make products aimed at the top end of the market – the so-called "super-premium" foods – are pulling out all the stops to accomplish these tasks and earn consumer confidence. On page 14, seven executives from companies that meet the latter description discuss what they are doing (and what they had already been doing) to make top-quality, safe foods.

Many owners who have lost confidence in *all* commercial pet food makers have found comfort in our series on home-prepared diets, which concludes in this issue. We've received

many letters from owners who have made the switch to home-prepared diets for their dogs and couldn't be happier.

NK



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# A Homemade Diet Stew

*A tasty medley of new products, updates, and answers to your FAQs.*

BY MARY STRAUS

When we first planned a series of articles for WDJ on homemade diets, WDJ Editor Nancy Kerns and I had no idea that massive pet food recalls would erupt almost simultaneously with the publication of the first article, and continue to expand over the following months.

Throughout the aftermath of the recall, I saw a variety of recipes for home-prepared diets, to be fed as a safer replacement for potentially contaminated commercial foods. Presented in newspapers, magazines, and online, most of these diet recipes provided incomplete nutrition, lacked any source of calcium, offered no variety, and were heavily laden with carbohydrates rather than the protein that dogs require to thrive.

As more and more owners made the decision to switch to homemade diets rather than risk feeding contaminated food to their dogs, I grew increasingly aware of the importance and urgency to supply appropriate guidelines that could help



**Kimberly Long, of Berkeley, California, distributes raw meaty bones to two of her five dogs – all rescues who are fed and thrive on a raw diet.**

people create homemade diets that would meet the nutritional needs of their dogs.

Over the past five months, I've presented information on homemade diets, cooked and raw, with whole bones, ground bones, or boneless. During that time, I've learned about some new products, read a great new book, tried out some sample pre-mixes and freeze-dried foods, and responded to questions from people about issues raised in my articles and points that would benefit from clarification. I'll discuss these topics in this final installment of our series.

## New cooked diet book

There are an infinite number of cookbooks with recipes for human diets, and lately I've seen quite a few of them for dogs, too. But I just finished reading the first cookbook I've found with recipes for people to share with their dogs.

Carol Boyle, who discussed the diet she shares with her husband and her two Great Pyrenees in "Reality Cooks" (WDJ July 2007), has published a book on the topic. *Natural Food Recipes for Healthy Dogs: Everything You Need to Know to Make the Greatest Food for Your Friend* is delightful, easy to read, and filled with recipes for dishes you can share with your dogs.

Boyle's simple but thorough guidelines for how to feed a healthy diet to your dogs, as well as to the humans in your household, made me begin to think that maybe even I could learn to cook! While I haven't yet gone that far, I have found myself making larger portions and sharing them with my dog when I feel the meals I'm eating are appropriate, rather than just offering a few tidbits as I've done in the past.

Be sure to get the newly revised version available from [naturaldogfood.com](http://naturaldogfood.com) (or 908-728-0010), not the older edition found elsewhere.

## Supplements for limited diets

Two new supplements designed to balance out limited homemade diets were intro-

## What you can do . . .

- Read at least one recommended book if you want to feed a homemade diet to your dog. Be wary of books whose recipes do not provide for calcium, or appear excessively high in carbohydrates.
- If you are concerned that the homemade diet you're feeding isn't complete, consider using one of the supplements designed for use with limited diets.

- Look for brands of chicken that do not contain arsenic or antibiotics.



duced to the market since I wrote about them, also in July's article. Steve Brown, the creator of Steve's Real Food for Dogs, has developed a new product called **See Spot Live Longer™ Homemade Dinner Mixes**. Designed to balance a meat-based diet, this product can be used by owners who are unable to feed their dogs the variety needed to create a complete diet, or those who simply feel more comfortable using a supplement to ensure that AAFCO (American Association of Feed Control Officials) and NRC (National Research Council) nutritional guidelines are met.

A second product, **Vitamins & Minerals for Home-Cooked Dog Food** made by Furoshnikov's Formulas, is designed to balance out a diet that is higher in carbohydrates. This product is also guaranteed to make a diet meet the AAFCO guidelines for a canine diet when used according to directions.

Both of these new products, as well as the two mentioned in previous articles, Wysong's **Call of the Wild** (designed

for meat-based diets) and **Balance IT** (designed for high-carbohydrate diets), supply calcium as well as other needed vitamins and minerals, so there's no need to add a separate calcium source when using any of them. Because of this, they are not appropriate to use with diets that include edible bone.

## Green beans not toxic

Also in July's article, I said, "Legumes (including green beans) should always be cooked due to a toxin they contain while raw (though small amounts would not be harmful)." Correction: This warning does not apply to green beans after all. It is only the mature beans, such as kidney, lima, and fava beans, that contain significant amounts of toxin prior to cooking. Green beans (also called string beans, snap beans, and French beans) are immature and are fine to be fed raw.

## Grinders

I've discovered three new sources for electric meat grinders since writing about them in WDJ's May article on raw diets, "A Raw Deal." Several raw feeders have recommended stainless steel grinders made and sold by Cabela's, especially the 1 and 1½ horsepower models.

"My 1 HP Cabela's meat grinder will grind up veggies, whole chicken parts, and turkey wings and backs (I haven't tried legs as their bones are quite thick)," says Cary Branthwaite of Durham, North Carolina. "We grind and butcher quite a bit of venison, so we needed the 1 HP capacity, but a ½ HP grinder would be adequate also."

Mary Waugh Swindell of Boyd, Texas, had a mechanical problem with the larger 1¾ HP model that she bought at Cabela's in Fort Worth, but raved about the store's customer service and willingness to take it back with no questions asked. She exchanged it for the 1½ HP model, which both her best friend and her dad have been happy with, and says, "It works like a dream. I needed something big and fast, as I'm feeding six large dogs. I would wholeheartedly recommend their grinder."

These Cabela commercial-grade stainless steel grinders run \$400 to \$600, plus shipping (which is expensive on these heavy items) if you can't find them locally. Cabela's also sells lower-priced models, but I've heard no feedback about them.

Heather Smith, of Fayetteville, Pennsylvania, recently purchased a ¾ HP LEM stainless steel grinder from Bass Pro Shops



**Laura Fulton, her two raw-fed Weims (Violet and Dozer), and Fulton's American Eagle electric meat grinder.**

(they're also available directly from the manufacturer), and says, "It was about \$350 and has worked great on chicken quarters, chicken wings and necks, turkey wings and necks, and oxtails. If you can fit it down the chute, this grinder will grind it." LEM also makes smaller grinders, but I've not heard feedback about them.

Another recommended grinder is the 1.35 HP grinder from Gander Mountain, which costs about \$150. Check with local stores specializing in outdoor gear and hunting and fishing equipment to see if any offer electric meat grinders, often used by hunters to process wild game.

In the past, many people recommended the Tasin grinders sold by Northern Tool, but, according to reports I've heard from dog owners, the quality of those has declined in recent years, so if you're thinking about a grinder, you may want to try one of those listed above instead.

## Commercial alternatives

My dog, Piglet, volunteered to test samples of the four different varieties of dehydrated diets made by **The Honest Kitchen**, and gave them high marks. I've been integrating them into her diet as part of her breakfast every three days, for variety and because she likes them so much.

Laura Fulton, who told us about the diet she feeds her two Weimaraners in last month's article, "Reality Cooks," also offered some samples from The Honest

Kitchen to her dogs and reports that they love it. Her dog Violet, who is prone to gassiness and digestive upset, has had no problems with these foods. Fulton has fed all but the Verve variety, which is beef-based, as Violet is allergic to beef.

Another friend, Sheryl Matzen, of Gold River, California, tried Embark, the variety approved for puppies, mixed half and half with fresh foods, to feed her new German Shepherd moose . . . uh, puppy, Apollo, and she, too, reports that he loves the food and is doing extremely well with it. She wanted to feed him a homemade diet, though she was worried about getting it right for a large-breed puppy; happily, she feels comfortable using the pre-mix. Matzen was cooking the added meat, but a recent heat wave convinced her to try feeding raw instead. In fact, she even gives him meat that is still frozen, as he enjoys chewing on it, and it helps to distract him from the rocks that he otherwise wants to eat.

Piglet also tried some samples of **Stella & Chewy's Freeze Dried Steaks**. This is a complete diet, which comes in both frozen and freeze-dried form. It is available in beef, chicken, and lamb flavors, using free-range meats and human-grade ingredients.

The company recently opened its own processing plant in order to maintain control and ensure the safety of their products. I rehydrated the patties with warm water before feeding, and Piglet whimpered pathetically while waiting for them to be served. The result was a complete success: she ate with enthusiasm and tried to convince me I had not fed her enough. Complete packaged raw diets are too expensive for most people to serve all the time, unless you have very small dogs, but they can be handy to have on hand for quick and easy meals, and freeze-dried foods can be great for traveling, especially camping and backpacking.

## Elemental calcium

A question was raised about the amount of calcium in eggshells due to the difference between calcium carbonate and elemental calcium. "Elemental calcium" is just a way of saying pure calcium, and this is what you will find listed in the nutritional analyses of most supplements.

Eggshells are 95 percent calcium carbonate; calcium carbonate is 40 percent elemental calcium. A large eggshell provides about 5,500 mg (about 1 teaspoon) of ground eggshell. So, 1 teaspoon of

ground eggshell provides about 5,225 mg of calcium carbonate, or 2,100 mg of elemental calcium. Thus, the recommendation to add ½ teaspoon ground eggshell per pound of food (when you do not feed edible bones) supplies about 1,000 mg of elemental calcium.

If a supplement says it contains 500 mg calcium, that means 500 mg elemental calcium, though the amount of the calcium compound used to make the supplement, such as calcium carbonate or calcium lactate, will be greater. That's why it doesn't matter what form of calcium you use, as long as you give the proper amount of elemental calcium as shown on the label.

## Vitamin A

One of the sample diets described in July's article mentioned limiting the amount of liver in the diet due to concerns about vitamin A, and this is a worry I've heard voiced by many other people as well. Vitamin A is fat soluble, so an oversupply of this nutrient can be toxic. The reality, though, is that you would have to feed huge amounts of vitamin A for many months in order to cause toxicity. A diet that was all or mostly liver could lead to vitamin A toxicity over time, but a diet that includes small amounts of liver on a daily basis will not.

Liver is one of the most nutrient-dense foods you can feed, providing not only vitamin A, but also all the B vitamins, choline and inositol, vitamins D, E, and K, and the minerals iron, zinc, copper, manganese, selenium, and potassium, as well as essential fatty acids and high-quality protein. Don't skimp on this nutritious food due to an unreasonable fear of too much vitamin A. Around five percent of the total diet should be liver, if possible.



**Sheryl Matzen's five-month-old GSD puppy, Apollo, enjoys a rehydrated meal from The Honest Kitchen.**

## Whole food versus synthetic supplements

Whole food supplements use beneficial foods and herbs rather than synthetic vitamins. Examples include nutritional or brewer's yeast (source of B vitamins, chromium, selenium, and trace minerals), cod liver oil (source of vitamins A and D), organic apple cider vinegar (provides some trace minerals), and garlic (offers numerous health benefits). Green blends are whole food supplements that include primarily green foods, such as kelp, alfalfa, and spirulina, which provide trace minerals and other nutrients.

It is hard to quantify the benefits of whole food supplements, as little in the way of measurable nutrients will show up on a nutritional analysis. Synthetic supplements generally offer much higher amounts of vitamins. If you want to give megadoses of vitamin C, for example, you will have to rely on synthetic supplements to do so. Whole foods may offer superior nutritional value due to the combinations of nutrients, which may act synergistically and which the body may be better able to utilize than isolated nutrients, and their structure, which may be more bioavailable than synthetics.

As with foods, it can be helpful to rotate among different whole food supplements rather than always using the same one. Different brands, even those with similar ingredients, each offer their own unique combinations of nutrients, so once again variety can help to ensure that all nutritional needs are met while nothing is given in excess.

## Recipes versus diets

One criticism of my raw diet guidelines provided a spreadsheet analysis of a single recipe, and stated that it was incomplete. I don't doubt that any single recipe derived from the guidelines I offered may be incomplete, due to the fact that the diets I recommend strive for balance over time, not in every single meal.

I cannot stress enough the need to feed variety, rather than feeding the same foods all the time. A diet that is half chicken wings will not meet all of your dog's nutritional needs, and will be higher in fat than is desirable. A diet that includes meals of chicken wings rotating with meals of other types of raw meaty bones will have a reduced amount of fat and provide additional nutrients. In addition, of course, the other half of the diet should also include a

variety of different foods such as muscle meat and organ meat of various kinds, along with eggs and dairy.

While fat is a good source of energy for dogs, too much can lead to weight gain, reduced nutrition (if the amount of food has to be limited to keep your dog at the optimal weight), and digestive upset in some dogs. Unless your dog is quite active and has trouble keeping weight on, the diet you feed should not contain an abundance of fatty meats and skin.

## Menadione

There has been a lot of concern lately about the use of menadione, a synthetic form of vitamin K, in pet foods. Menadione has been banned for use in human over-the-counter supplements because it is toxic at excessive dosages. This problem was seen primarily in human infants when they were injected with vitamin K to prevent deficiency.

Since synthetic vitamin K has double the potency of natural vitamin K on a per weight basis, this resulted in toxicity. One nursing encyclopedia says that "prolonged consumption of megadoses of vitamin K (menadione) results in anemia," and that "a daily injection of 10 mg of menadione into an infant for three days can kill the child." It was this tragic discovery that led to its use being banned.

In comparison, the amount of menadione in commercial dog foods is extremely tiny. The Balance IT supplement, which is meant to supply nutrients at AAFCO recommended levels, contains 0.0774 mg menadione per scoop. One usage recommendation I've seen is to use 3 scoops for 900 calories (for a 35 lb dog), which would be 0.2322 mg daily. This amount is just over 2 percent of the dosage that would be considered toxic to a much smaller infant.

Many substances, even water, are safe in recommended amounts but toxic when excessive amounts are ingested. While I agree that the natural forms of vitamin K, phylloquinone (vitamin K<sub>1</sub>), and menaquinone (vitamin K<sub>2</sub>), would be preferable to the synthetic form, my feeling is that the risk presented by feeding foods or supplements that use menadione (vitamin K<sub>3</sub>) is minimal, and I would not avoid a food just because it contains this ingredient.

## Fish and fish oil concerns

Many people worry about the amount of salt in canned fish. It is true that canned fish

is salty, but dogs require a certain amount of salt, and a homemade diet is naturally low in salt, so the amount in canned fish that is fed once or twice a week should not be a concern. If your dog suffers from heart disease or needs a low-sodium diet for some other reason, you can rinse the fish to remove most of the salt.

Concerns also arise over possible contaminants in fish and fish oils, such as mercury, PCBs, and dioxin. Mercury contamination is mostly a concern in larger fish, such as tuna, swordfish, and king mackerel. Salmon, jack mackerel (not the same as king mackerel), and sardines are all low in mercury. Farmed salmon is much more likely than wild-caught salmon to be contaminated with PCBs and dioxin. Canned salmon is almost always wild-caught Pacific (Alaskan) salmon. Check the label if you're unsure.

Both Consumer Reports and ConsumerLab.com have conducted tests on a variety of fish oil supplements and found that none contained a significant amount of mercury, PCBs, or dioxins. They also found that almost all, including the less expensive brands, were fresh and contained the amount of omega-3 fatty acids promised on the label.

If you're still concerned, look for pharmaceutical-grade oils, as they are guaranteed to be free of all impurities.

### Chicken, arsenic, antibiotics

Arsenic and antibiotics are fed to some chickens to encourage rapid growth. While the residual amount of arsenic left in the meat was considered too low to be a concern for human consumption, recent studies have shown that levels are higher than previously acknowledged. Adding arsenic to chicken feed also contributes to environmental contamination, while the indiscriminate use of antibiotics can lead to the development of antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

There are many brands, including supermarket brands, that do not contain arsenic or antibiotics. Organic chicken contains neither arsenic nor antibiotics as well. Check with the supplier to verify that the brands you use are both arsenic- and antibiotic-free.

### Food weights

There is often confusion between different ways of expressing amounts, such as cups vs pounds. While a cup is a measure of volume and a pound is a measure of

weight, the general rule of thumb (and the way to remember it) is, "A pint's a pound, the world 'round." A pint is 16 ounces, which is two cups, so a cup of food will weigh around 8 ounces. This will vary depending on density, but it should give a good approximation for fresh food, which has a high moisture content.

Other measurements and conversions that may be helpful:

- A large egg weighs about 2 ounces, of which 2/3 is the white and 1/3 the yolk
- 1 fluid ounce is 6 teaspoons (2 tablespoons)
- There are about 28 grams per ounce, and 454 grams per pound. To convert ounces to grams, multiply by 28. To convert pounds to grams, multiply by 454. To convert grams to ounces, divide by 28. To convert grams to pounds, divide by 454.

### Cutting up raw meaty bones

A few people objected to my advice to owners who are concerned about the risk of their dogs choking on raw meaty bones. I said that owners could cut up raw meaty bones into bite-sized pieces. Some argue that the way to prevent choking is to feed large pieces that are too big to be swallowed whole. They feel that cutting up raw meaty bones actually makes it more likely that dogs will choke.

In my experience with two dogs who have had problems chewing raw meaty bones, feeding large pieces doesn't always help. If your dog's teeth are too worn to be able to slice off pieces to swallow (as was the case with my dogs), it doesn't matter how long they chew on the piece, eventually they still try to swallow it whole. Even if your dog is able to chew off pieces, that large piece then becomes smaller, and your dog may still try to swallow it when it is large enough to cause choking, particularly if you have a dog who tends to gulp his food.

It is important to cut food up into chunks that are too small to cause choking, even if swallowed whole. For example, turkey necks (or chicken necks for small dogs) need to be cut lengthwise rather than or in addition to crosswise, so that you don't end up with short pieces that are still too thick to go down comfortably. When I cut up raw meaty bones for my dog, Piglet, she still chews the pieces, but has no problem swallowing them despite the

fact that her teeth are too worn to chew a large piece into smaller pieces.

Another objection is that pieces of bone that are swallowed whole without being crushed by chewing are more likely to cause obstruction. In my experience, obstruction from raw bones is quite rare, and dogs have no problem digesting them, even if the bones are not crushed. However, if your dog swallows pieces whole and you see pieces of bone in his stool, you may want to invest in and use a grinder.

For those who do want to cut up their dog's food, I'll say once again that my Joyce Chen Unlimited Scissors work far better than any of a number of poultry shears that I've purchased over the years. They're also great for cutting up gristly meat that is otherwise almost impossible to saw through.

### Q and A

The following are questions that I received from readers about earlier installments in this series.

■ Eden Le Bouton of Cleveland, Ohio, writes, "In May's article on raw diets, you say, 'RMBs should make up 30 to 50 percent of the total diet.' Later in the same paragraph you say, 'While a reasonable amount of raw bone won't harm an adult dog, more than 15 percent is not needed and reduces the amount of other valuable foods that can be fed.' My confusion is: should RMBs make up 15, 30, or 50 percent of the diet and is that the daily diet?"

The confusion lies in the difference between "bone" and "raw meaty bones" (RMBs). Raw meaty bones are, by definition, at least half meat, and so therefore no more than half bone. If you feed a diet that is 30 to 50 percent RMBs, the amount of bone in the diet will be 15 to 30 percent



David Logue's toothless Maltese, Vidal, was rescued from a puppy mill. His raw diet has given him a new lease on life.

or less, depending on the ratio of meat to bone in the parts that you feed.

Dogs need no more than 15 percent bone, so if you feed the higher percentage of RMBs, you should try to use parts that are more than half meat. There is no need to feed an exact percentage of bone on a daily basis, though this is one ingredient that often works best when similar amounts are fed daily, as too much bone at one time can cause hard stools and constipation, while feeding no bone at all one day may lead to looser stools the next.

■ David Logue of Allen, Texas, writes, *“My wife and I have three rescued Maltese who have no teeth. We feed the dogs a home-prepared diet, but with little variety. What suggestions could you offer us?”*

Most foods can be fed to dogs who lack teeth. The only real exception is whole bones. You can purchase products that include ground bone, or buy an inexpensive grinder that will grind softer bones, such as from chicken and rabbit, and do it yourself. Or you can feed a diet that doesn't include bone, and use a different calcium source instead.

Remember that no more than half the diet should be raw meaty bones, so even if you can't provide much variety in that area, you can still feed lots of different kinds of meats, organs, and other foods, including eggs, cottage cheese, yogurt, canned fish with bone (jack mackerel, pink salmon, sardines), and healthy leftovers in the other half (or more) of the diet.

■ Brenda Stoner of Henderson, Arkansas, asks, *“What is your opinion on giving vitamin supplements made for humans to dogs? Is it okay to use yogurt or cottage cheese and eggs every day as long as I use a variety of meats?”*

Human supplements are okay to use, as long as the amounts are appropriate. Adjust as needed for the size of your dog. For example, a large dog could take an adult human dose, while a medium-sized dog would take half that much, and a small dog one quarter or less.

It is fine to feed yogurt, cottage cheese, eggs, or any other food on a daily basis, as long as the rest of the diet provides adequate variety. No one food should ever be more than half the diet, but there's no problem adding the same healthy foods daily, particularly in small amounts. A medium- or large-breed dog could eat an egg every day with no problem, but a

whole egg every day would be too much for a toy breed, as it wouldn't leave enough room for a variety of other foods.

■ Gerda Alexander of Newville, Pennsylvania, asks, *“Can I use eggshells from boiled and uncooked eggs?”*

Yes, eggshells from either cooked or uncooked eggs can be used. Just rinse them out and let them dry overnight before grinding in a clean coffee grinder. Ground eggshell will keep a long time if you remove the inner membrane before grinding. There's no need to refrigerate it, as ground eggshell is just minerals.

■ Winnie Laning of Toronto, Ontario, writes, *“If I feed a home-cooked diet and add canned salmon, will this take care of the calcium requirement so that I don't need to add a supplement? Also, is it beneficial to add sunflower oil to the diet?”*

No, you can't use a single form of meat with bones to provide all the calcium your dog needs. You would end up feeding too much canned salmon (not enough variety), and too little calcium. Canned fish with bones has far more calcium than plain meat, but it actually has more phosphorus than calcium, so it can't be used to balance the phosphorus in the rest of the diet.

It's easy to add ground eggshells or any other calcium supplement when you don't feed edible bone, at a level that provides around 1,000 mg calcium per pound of food. It's fine to feed canned salmon some of the time, maybe once or twice a week, but don't feed it daily, unless you feed very small amounts.

I don't recommend adding vegetable oils to dog diets, especially in large amounts. Vegetable oils such as safflower, corn, and sunflower oil are high in linoleic acid (LA), a form of omega-6 fatty acids that is usually plentiful in the diet, and that can lead to inflammation when too much is given. Fish body oil is high in the omega-3 fatty acids EPA and DHA, which are anti-inflammatory and hard to find in food (other than fatty fish). Note that flaxseed oil and carmelina oil are *not* good choices to replace fish oil, as the form of omega-3 fatty acids found in plant oils (alpha linolenic acid, or ALA) must be converted in the

body to the forms that dogs can utilize (EPA and DHA), and dogs are not able to make this conversion very well, if at all.

If you do add plant oils, the best kinds to use are borage oil and evening primrose oil, as the gamma-linoleic acid (GLA) they contain is preferred over the LA found in vegetable oils. Olive oil, which provides omega-9 fatty acids, is also okay in small amounts. Remember that you need to add some vitamin E when you supplement with either plant or fish oils (the tiny amount of vitamin E included in most supplements is not enough).

Note that some of the oil supplements sold for dogs are mostly vegetable oil. For example, Derm Caps are mostly safflower oil (up to 72 percent linoleic acid). Check the label before making a selection.

## Final note

I hope that the guidelines in this article series help you start feeding healthy foods to your dog, whether you feed a raw diet with bones, a raw or cooked boneless diet, a diet based on pre-mixes, or just a commercial diet with fresh foods such as eggs, meat, and dairy added.

It's important to realize that it is no more difficult to feed your dog a healthy diet than it is to do the same for your family, though there are differences in their nutritional needs. It's not necessary or desirable to feed only “complete and balanced” commercial foods, nor that every

meal be complete and balanced, as long as balance is achieved over time.

Just as with our own diets, fresh, wholesome, species-appropriate foods offer superior nutrition to processed, packaged foods. Remember the three basic rules – variety, balance over time, and calcium in appropriate amounts – and open the door to improving your dog's health in the most natural way possible. 🐾

*For products and resources mentioned in this article, see page 23.*

*Mary Straus does research on canine health and nutrition as an avocation. She is the owner of the DogAware.com website, and lives in the San Francisco Bay Area.*



**Most dogs enjoy their home-prepared meals with gusto, and their health often improves.**

# Shoot for Early Admission

*Get your pup into the best puppygarten, as early as possible.*

BY PAT MILLER

**W**hat's the best age to start training? For most puppy owners, the answer is "Yesterday!" In fact, the optimum time to start a puppy's education is as early as possible: about eight weeks of age.

It's hard to fathom that at one time many trainers insisted that puppies be at least six months old in order to enroll in a training class. Today's positive trainer – and educated, progressive veterinarian – knows that the first four months of your dog's life are the most important time for socialization, to lay the foundation for learning that will serve him (and you) for the rest of his life.

Of course, in "those" days we all trained with choke chains, using solid yanks on the leash ("corrections") to get our training message across. And because choke chains can damage (or even collapse) a dog's trachea, trainers were wise not to inflict that harsh punishment on the tender throats of eight-week-old puppies.

Today, with food treats and clickers as the primary tools in our training arsenal, puppy tracheas are safe, and we can help owners start educating their youngsters at a much more optimum training age, *before* pups have had several months of reinforce-

ment for unwelcome and inappropriate behaviors.

Paradoxically, some veterinarians still counsel owners to wait until their new puppies are six months old and "fully vaccinated" to take them to training class. Unfortunately, this advice is just as outdated as the use of choke chains in puppy classes!

It's true that you shouldn't wantonly expose your pup to high-risk dog populations; you should never take him to a dog park, or let him play with stray dogs on the street. But the risk of contracting an infectious disease in a controlled setting, with other healthy puppies, is quite low. In fact, there is probably a much greater risk of a dog meeting a tragic end due to behavior problems from lack of early training and socialization than from exposure in a well-run puppy class to some deadly disease. (See "Puppy Vaccination and Socialization Should Go Together," page 11.)

## The well-run puppy class

The caveat is that you find a "well-run" puppy class. You want an experienced trainer who uses gentle, effective training methods on her human clients as well as the dogs, and who conducts her classes in

## What you can do . . .

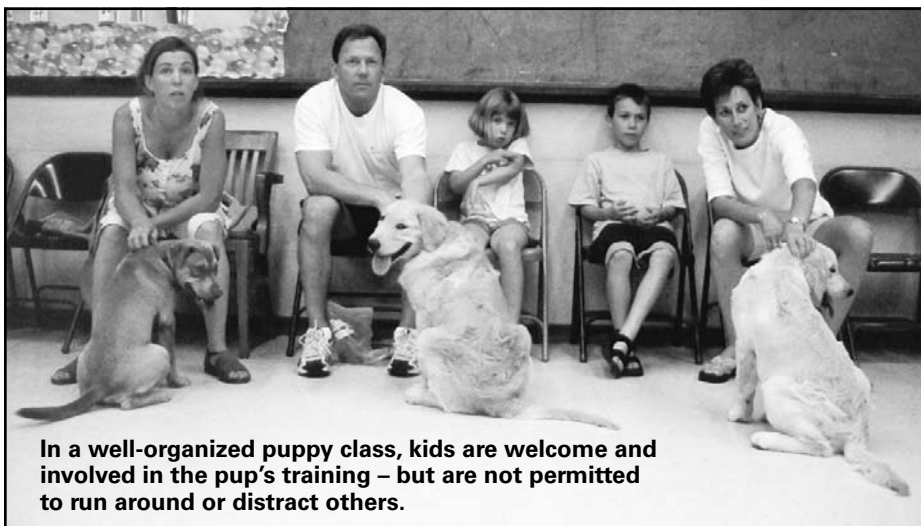
- Do your trainer research *before* you bring your new puppy home so you're ready to get him started in class as soon as he's had a few days to settle into his new home.
- Be an assertive guardian for your pup: don't *ever* let anyone do or make you do anything to him that you're not comfortable with.
- Remember that training's supposed to be fun. Have a blast learning new stuff with your pup!



a safe and clean environment. She should have a good understanding of dog body language and social behavior, and know when to intervene if a puppy is being inappropriate with his playmates. She should also have knowledge of puppy diseases and parasites and require presentation of health records upon registration for class.

Ideally, you'll find an instructor who teaches good manners behaviors in her puppy classes as well as providing puppy socialization (play!) time, and who will also address questions you may have about other topics, such as housetraining, crating, and puppy biting.

Sadly, there are still plenty of old-fashioned trainers who are apt to administer a physical correction to your puppy for perceived transgressions. *Avoid those trainers at all costs.* These trainers may call themselves positive, and in fact may be *more* positive than they used to be, but if they still use leash corrections, loud verbal reprimands, any kind of physical punishment, or restraints such as pinning



**In a well-organized puppy class, kids are welcome and involved in the pup's training – but are not permitted to run around or distract others.**



a puppy on his side, they're not positive enough!

You can find trainers from a variety of sources: the phone book, referrals from dog-owner friends or your veterinarian, dog clubs, business cards on pet supply store bulletin boards, the Internet . . . and any of these might be great – or not. (See “Internet Resources for Finding a Trainer,” below.) To be on the safe side, arrange to sit in on a class or two and watch the trainer in action. If the trainer doesn't allow this, find another trainer.

When you are watching a prospective training class, look for these things:

- The trainer appears friendly, confident, and competent.
- She allows time for questions, and answers them willingly and thoroughly.
- Canine and human students appear to be learning, enjoying themselves, and succeeding at assigned exercises.
- Students receive individual attention and coaching.
- There is adequate concern for dog and human health and safety. The facility is clean, with no strong odors, and the floors have non-slip footing.
- The environment is well controlled to promote calm – no running children, loose dogs (except during playtime), loud noises, excessive barking, etc.
- Dogs are handled gently – without physical force, punishment, strong verbal reprimands, or forcible restraint of a struggling or vocalizing puppy.
- Trainer doesn't do or require owners to do anything that conflicts with the owner's training and dog handling philosophies.
- During playtime, puppies are separated into appropriate playgroups where they are closely monitored and inappropriate play is interrupted.
- The trainer is respectful of dog and owner individual needs and training goals.

## What to expect

You've researched and selected the right class for your pup. If you've watched a

class or two in session, you already have some idea of what to expect from the trainer you've chosen. What you encounter in the actual classes you've signed up for will vary, depending on the trainer's or training school's puppy class curriculum.

Some puppy classes focus primarily on socialization. A good part of the class may be dedicated to puppy play, with other activities included. A trainer might have owners encourage their pups to encounter new surfaces – walking across a board on the ground, stepping through scattered hula hoops, crossing a blanket, a box filled with sand or gravel, or a crinkly substance like aluminum foil.

There might be some time spent with gentle restraint, helping puppies learn that being held makes good things happen, and playing “pass-the-puppy” so baby dogs have good experiences meeting a variety of people. Pups might come nose-to-nose with nail clippers, hair dryers, vacuum cleaners, crutches, and other real-life potentially scary stimuli for the first time. Puppies aren't forced, of course, but rather given a positive association with all these things, and are reinforced for any willingness to be brave.

Other classes may have a stronger emphasis on actual training. Since 8-week-old puppies are perfectly capable of learning all the behaviors that older dogs do, there is huge value in teaching them what *to* do at an early age, well before they have a long history of practicing and being reinforced for behaviors you want them *not* to do.

Some training schools offer both. Legacy Canine Behavior and Training in Sequim, Washington, is operated by long-time positive trainer Terry Ryan. Legacy's Puppy HeadStart class includes socialization, confidence building, leadership exercises, and information on housetraining and other family living skills. The class is free with paid registration for Ryan's “Pet Dog Manners” class, where pups 16 weeks and older (and their owners) learn important life skills such as walking on leash, polite greetings, coming when called, and more.

Many classes, including the ones at Legacy, require owners to come to an initial orientation class without pups, so course goals and expectations, training philosophies, equipment, training center rules, etc. can be discussed and questions answered without concern for restless

## Internet Resources for Finding a Trainer

**peaceablepaws.com:** Pat Miller's website offers three referral lists for trainers worldwide who share her positive training philosophies: graduates of her trainer academies; graduates of her apprentice program; and other trainers she knows personally and to whom she is comfortable sending referrals.

**trulydogfriendly.com:** Website and listing for trainers who are committed to using positive training methods.

**clickerteachers.net:** This is a list of people who use clicker teaching when teaching others. Clicker teachers use the “positive reinforcement” and “negative punishment” parts of the operant conditioning spectrum, an approach that has been proven to be the quickest and most effective way to teach. An added bonus is that it is also a fun, safe, and gentle training method.

**karenpryoracademy.com/find-a-trainer:** These are trainers certified to teach Karen Pryor's clicker courses. Most of them also offer puppy classes and other training services.

**apdt.com:** Website for the Association of Pet Dog Trainers – has a listing of all their trainer/members worldwide. Also has an excellent page on what to look for in a trainer. Not all APDT members are committed to positive training methods, but many are.

**ccpdt.com:** Website for the Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers, has a listing for all Certified Pet Dog Trainers worldwide. Not all CPDTs are committed to positive training methods, but many are.

puppies. This helps ease owner concerns about what to expect, and gives them and their pups a training head start. This way, they've already practiced and had success with some of the training exercises *before* they arrive in a new, sometimes overwhelming, environment the following week.

The traditional format then follows with six to eight weeks of classes. Often the last night of class is a "graduation" celebration of some sort, with certificates handed out to those who successfully complete the class.

A new format gaining in popularity is the "Levels" class. Each level covers only a few exercises, and when pup and human are competent at those, they move on to the next level. Level 1, for example, might include name recognition, sit, and down. One training team might master those in one short week and immediately move on to Level 2, while another may find the down to be challenging and take three weeks to reach Level 2. Level 2 might consist of stand, polite leash walking, and targeting.

The value of this format is that each team can move ahead at its own pace. Dogs and owners don't become overwhelmed when new exercises are introduced each week (especially if they haven't yet mastered the prior week's assignments). Plus, if at any time the team needs a refresher on a previous level behavior, they can drop back and work there until they're ready to move forward again.

This format also allows owners who have missed classes to pick up right where they left off, rather than feeling that they're way behind.

## Attending class

Nervous, you arrive at class with your puppy in tow. You've purchased the equipment and books recommended by your trainer, and diligently practiced the first week's exercises. Now what?

Expect chaos. If your trainer hasn't already suggested it, you should have treats in hand as you walk into class, and

## Puppy Class Drop-Outs

If you're committed to your pup's training program, you'll want to complete his puppy class and see him graduate with honors. No one likes the sense of failure that comes with dropping out of a class. There are, however, legitimate reasons for deciding you can't participate in the remainder of your pup's lessons. Here are some:

1. You've discovered the trainer's methods and philosophies are not a good match for yours. You may be able to compromise, with the trainer agreeing not to require you to do things that you're not comfortable with, but if not, rather than subject your pup to harsh methods, just say good-bye. You are your pup's protector; he relies on you to keep him safe. Whether it's a trainer, a groomer, a veterinarian, or any other friend or animal care provider, trust your instincts. Don't ever let anyone talk you into doing something to your dog that you don't want to do.
2. The training environment makes your pup uncomfortable. You can expect some anxiety or arousal the first night or two of class, but that should gradually subside as your pup has a good time training there. If you see signs of discomfort increase (rather than subside) over time, you may want to talk with the trainer about discontinuing classes and doing some behavior modification instead, to help him gain confidence in new situations.
3. You encounter a health problem with your pup. If he should contract a contagious disease, whether something relatively mild like kennel cough, or the more serious parvo or distemper, you'll need to drop out of class until he's healthy again. This is likely to keep you out of class at least three to four weeks, so rather than trying to come back and catch up, you're better off signing up for a whole new class.
4. You experience a family crisis. A major health problem in the family or some other life-changing experience can also put you out of commission for several weeks – or longer. Again, it makes more sense to start a new class than return to one that's nearing completion.

Whatever your reason for dropping out, it's considerate to let your trainer know why you're not coming back. You can politely agree to disagree on training method, and if your reason for not coming back is health-related or personal, she'll be relieved to know it's not a problem with her teaching that's keeping you away. Also, trainer policies will vary, and while many may advertise a "no-refund" policy, they will often offer you another class when your absence is due to circumstances beyond your control.



Communicate with your instructor, for your dog's sake.

use them to keep your pup focused on you instead of trying to greet other pups. This is a good time to teach your pup that just because he *sees* other dogs doesn't necessarily mean he gets to go say hi. By the same token, if another owner allows her pup to rush up to yours, politely ask her to keep her pup away until a more appropriate greeting time.

Some pups are so overstimulated by all the other dogs and people that they bark, or

act afraid. Your trainer should understand this arousal behavior, and prepared to help you manage it with high-value treats, and some kind of barrier (if necessary) to block visual stimuli and allow your pup to relax. It may take 5 to 15 minutes (or more) to get all the excited dogs and humans settled enough to begin class. Mammals who are highly aroused don't think well, so there's no point in asking your pup to respond to cues until you're both ready to learn.

From there, class should progress more smoothly. Your pup will learn to focus on you and perform the behaviors he does so well at home, even in the presence of distractions. A good trainer will be patient with her students, willing to answer your questions, and able to help you and your dog progress in your training. Remember

this exceedingly important point – training should be *fun!* As the weeks go quickly by and you're astounded by your pup's ability to learn – and your own ability to teach her – you should look eagerly forward to going to class each week because you both enjoy learning new behaviors and showing off your accomplishments. 🐾

*Pat Miller, CPDT, is WDJ's Training Editor. Miller lives in Hagerstown, Maryland, site of her Peaceable Paws training center, with her husband Paul. Pat is also the author of The Power of Positive Dog Training and Positive Perspectives: Love Your Dog, Train Your Dog. For more information, see "Resources," page 24.*

## Puppy Vaccination and Socialization Should Go Together

*Dr. Anderson is a veterinarian and inventor of the Gentle Leader head halter. He is a strong advocate for puppy training, and has made it part of his mission to educate the veterinary community about the importance of starting training for pups at an early age, well before the six months that some veterinarians recommend. He has written the following "open letter to my colleagues in veterinary medicine," and urges dog owners and trainers to share it with their own veterinarians if they encounter resistance to the concept of early puppy training:*

The most common questions I receive from puppy owners, dog trainers, and veterinarians concern two points:

- 1) What is the most favorable age or period of time when puppies learn best?
- 2) What are the health implications of my advice that veterinarians and trainers should offer socialization programs for puppies starting at 8 to 9 weeks of age?

Puppies begin learning at birth. And their brains appear to be *particularly* responsive to learning and retaining experiences that are encountered during the first 13 to 16 weeks after birth. This means that breeders, new puppy owners, veterinarians, trainers, and behaviorists have a responsibility to assist in providing these learning/socialization experiences with other puppies/dogs, with children/adults, and with various environmental situations during this optimal period from birth to 16 weeks.

Experience and epidemiologic data support the relative safety and lack of transmission of disease in these puppy socialization classes.

Many veterinarians are making this early socialization and learning program part of a total wellness plan for breeders and new owners of puppies – the first 7 to 8 weeks with the breeder and the next 8 weeks with the new owners. This socialization program should enroll puppies from 8 to 12 weeks of age as a key part of any preventive medicine program to improve the bond between pets and their people and keep dogs as valued members of the family for 12 to 18 years.

To take full advantage of this early special learning period, many veterinarians recommend that new owners take their puppies to puppy socialization classes at 8 to 9 weeks of age. At this age they should have (and can be required to have) received their first vaccines. Further exposure to these

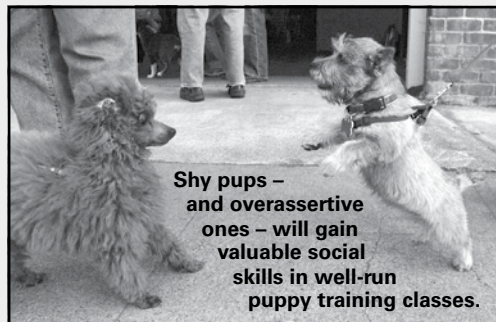
antigens, through repeated vaccination during the next 8 to 12 weeks (and possibly through natural exposure), will help them develop protective antibodies against specific canine infectious diseases. In addition, the owner and trainer should take precautions to have the environment and the participating puppies as free of natural exposure as possible through good hygiene.

Experience and epidemiologic data support the relative safety and lack of transmission of disease in these puppy socialization classes over the past 10 years in many parts of the United States. In fact, the risk of a dog dying because of infection with distemper or parvo disease is far less than the much higher risk of a dog dying (that is, being euthanized) because of a behavior problem. Many veterinarians now offer new puppy owners puppy socialization classes in their hospitals or nearby training facilities in conjunction with trainers and behaviorists because they want socialization and training to be very important parts of a wellness plan for every puppy. We need to recognize that this special sensitive period for learning is the best opportunity we have to influence behavior for dogs and the most important and longest lasting part of a total wellness plan.

Are there risks? Yes. But 10 years of good experience and data, with few exceptions, offers veterinarians the opportunity to generally recommend early socialization and training classes, beginning when puppies are 8 to 9 weeks of age. However, we always suggest following your veterinarian's

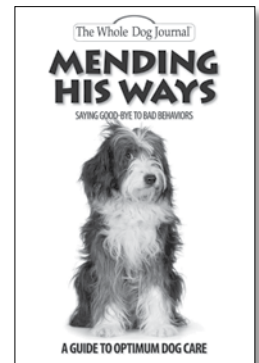
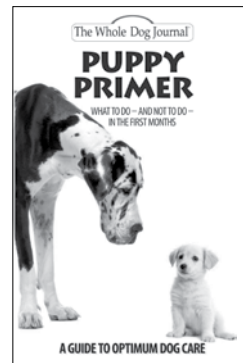
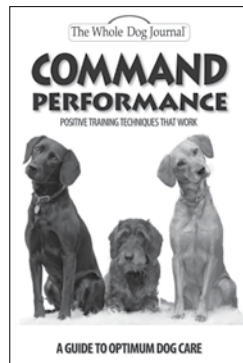
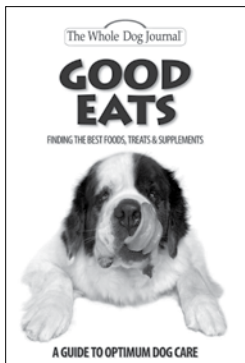
professional judgment, in individual cases or situations where special circumstances warrant further immunization for a special puppy before starting such classes. During any period of delay for puppy classes, owners should begin a program of socialization with children and adults outside their family to take advantage of this special period in a puppy's life.

Veterinarians may call me at (651) 644-7400 for discussion and clarification. – Robert K. Anderson, DVM; Diplomate of American College of Veterinary Preventive Medicine; Diplomate of American College of Veterinary Behaviorists; Professor and Director Emeritus, Animal Behavior Clinic and Center to Study Human/Animal Relationships and Environments, University of Minnesota, Falcon Heights, MN



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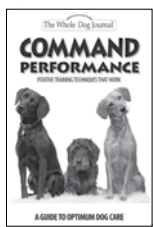
Wet...dry...raw...special formula...homemade. Dog food choices continue to expand. So, how do you select the right diet for your pet? *Good Eats* explores and explains what distinguishes the best foods from the competition. You'll discover the "lasting" advantages of canned foods. You'll learn why you should never buy commercially manufactured treats at the grocery store. Plus, *Good Eats* will share important lessons from recent dog food recalls. You'll read how to improve your dog's digestion...how to combat an eating disorder...the three rules of a homemade diet...the one food you should not add to a commercial diet...why RMBs are an important part of a raw feeding plan...how to prevent a nutrient imbalance...and why there is no one perfect food.



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# ers before the questions arise?



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The first few days and weeks with a new dog will determine the success or failure of your long-term relationship. From preparing your house and family to setting up rules and routines, it’s up to you set the stage. The *Puppy Primer* takes you through the essential steps for getting your pup off to a healthy and confident start. The *Primer* will help you avoid the dangers of overvaccination. You’ll be briefed on how to use the crate most effectively... how to housebreak with fewer mistakes and messes along the way...and how—and when—to socialize your pup. You’ll get insightful guidance for quelling nipping, acclimating your dog to grooming, and even how to institute a “Say Please” program to encourage good manners.



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# Moving On, Moving Up

*Pet food executives tell us how the industry has changed, post-recall.*

BY NANCY KERNS

**T**here have been pet food recalls before, and there will be recalls in the future, but the event of early 2007 will probably be recorded as the costliest pet food recall in history. However, it's my hope, and the opinion of many, that the lessons learned from this infamous event should prevent any similar large-scale pet food disaster from happening ever again.

Note that *none* of the companies whose executives are quoted below had products involved in the recalls. But every pet food company in the country was affected by the firestorm of inquiries from terrified pet owners who sought information about their pet foods.

*I appreciate the seriousness, honesty, and commitment to providing quality foods that these executives exhibit here.*

**In your opinion, what is the most significant aftereffect of the recalls on the pet food industry?**

**Phil Abreo, Breeder's Choice**

The recalls put the pet food industry on alert; we must be more diligent in assuring that all companies involved in the ingredient-sourcing chain are the most reliable and follow the highest food safety procedures.

**Peter Atkins, Natura**

Consumers are interested in more than just a pretty bag and are now reading – more accurately, scrutinizing – labels like never before. There is obviously a heightened state of consumer awareness about pet foods, pet food companies, and the ingredients that go into pet foods. Customers have a new expectation for transparency

– where their food is manufactured, where ingredients come from, and the types of testing employed by the manufacturer to assure safety. Based on the dramatic spike in our sales, customers are obviously seeking products from smaller suppliers of holistic, organic, and natural products.

**Brian Connolly, Castor & Pollux**

There have been several outcomes. One is the need for pet food companies to be more forthcoming with information as to where their products are made and where ingredients are sourced. From the first day of the first recall, we provided pet parents with information on who made our custom formulation canned products for us. This

## Pet Food Industry Participants

**Phil Abreo**, marketing manager

Breeder's Choice Pet Foods, Irwindale, CA  
Third-generation, family-operated Breeder's Choice was purchased in 2006 by Central Garden & Pet. Breeder's Choice makes several lines of its own dry foods, including AvoDerm, Pinnacle, Active Care, and Health Food for Dogs, and manufactures dry foods for other companies.

**Peter Atkins**, cofounder and president

**Natura Pet Products**, Santa Clara, CA  
Founded 15 years ago, privately held Natura is the maker of Innova, California Natural, Evo, Karma (an organic food), and other lines of pet foods. Natura's dry food products are manufactured in its own plant in Nebraska, where it also co-manufactures dry pet food for other companies.

**Brian Connolly**, cofounder

**Castor & Pollux Pet Works**, Clackamas, OR  
A family-owned company, Castor & Pollux debuted its Organix, a line of certified organic food and treats for dogs and cats, in March 2003. Connolly says that Organix was the first pet food made with certified organic free range chicken as the number one ingredient in both dog and cat formulas and the first to meet the USDA National Organic Program labeling regulations.

**Deborah Ellinger**, chief executive officer

**Wellness/Old Mother Hubbard**, Chelmsford, MA  
Old Mother Hubbard, an 80-year-old, privately held company, launched its Wellness line of "natural and holistic" food for pets in 1997 – and the

line now dominates its business. In addition to the Wellness product line, OMH makes biscuits and treats, the Neura (95% meat) line of wet foods, and, in a very recent launch, a new line of grain-free, high-protein pet food called Core.

**John Marsman**, director of marketing and nutritional services  
**Eagle Pack Pet Foods**, Mishawaka, IN

Established in 1970, Eagle Pack makes its own dry dog foods (the Eagle Pack and Holistic Select lines) and co-manufactures products for other companies. In 2003, the family-owned company received a financial infusion from a capital investment company, which has helped Eagle grow its operations. Eagle estimates its size as in the top three largest producers of pet foods in the "natural and holistic" category.

**Lucy Postins**, cofounder

**The Honest Kitchen**, Pacific Beach, CA

Pet foods made by The Honest Kitchen are made with dehydrated fresh food ingredients; all ingredients are "human grade," and the food is made in a human food manufacturing facility. The family-owned and -operated company has enjoyed a reported 100 percent growth per year since its inception in 2002.

**Ron Rompala**, Vice President of Nutrition

**Blue Seal Feeds, Inc.**, Londonderry, NH

A subsidiary of Muscatine Foods Corporation, Blue Seal makes its Blue Seal, byNature, and BrightLife dry pet food lines in its manufacturing facilities in New York and Vermont. Blue Seal also manufactures dry pet food products for other companies.

was done via our website, in the thousands of e-mails that Shelley (my wife and co-founder) personally answered and on the phone with our customer service team. Even though we are a small company (just 17 people), we are committed to being as transparent as possible – unlike some other companies that chose to hide behind automated answering services and answers like “I’m sorry, but I’m not allowed to release that information.”

The other outcome has to do with overall pet food safety. All manufacturers are paying much more attention to where ingredients come from and the quality/safety associated with those ingredients.

You can’t test your way to safety; you need to know that the ingredients are safe from the time the seeds are planted in the field, through the growing, handling, processing, storage, transportation, and manufacturing process.

With our Organix food, pet owners have the benefit of knowing that an independent third-party organic certifying agency under the mandate of the USDA’s National Organic Program has the responsibility of doing this. Each and every ingredient in Organix must be reviewed and approved for inclusion in our formula by the organic certifying agency. This third-party review

and approval process does not apply to “natural,” “holistic,” or “human grade” pet foods. Certified organic pet foods and treats take safety to another level.

#### **Deborah Ellinger, Wellness**

The recall taught consumers how important it is to focus on the ingredient choices and quality standards of the brands behind the products. A positive outcome of the recall is that consumers are more aware of what is in their pet’s food, and are reading labels and asking more questions. The industry as a whole is responding, and this will ultimately improve all products.

#### **John Marsman, Eagle Pack**

The events made both pet food and human food companies more aware of food safety vulnerability. Companies have become more aware that the recalls have heightened pet owner awareness about ingredient quality, ingredient country of origin, where the brand is made, whether they make their own food in their own plant, best manufacturing practices, quality control, and company integrity.

It is no longer good enough (and it was never right), for a company to say ingredients are purchased from US companies when that company is a broker that may

be importing, or is an importer. The brand should know the origin of ingredients. (Eagle Pack is EU certified, which requires disclosure of the country of origin of the ingredients.)

#### **Lucy Postins, The Honest Kitchen**

The industry has been forced to take a very close look at its ingredient-sourcing and manufacturing practices. Above all, pet food manufacturers (as well as the companies who are actually named on the labels) have been forced to become more accountable for their products and the ingredients that go into them. Ignorance and naiveté will no longer be tolerated.

Ultimately, the company whose name is on the bag is responsible to the customer. Contract manufacturers are accountable to their clients but it should be the responsibility of the company that takes the public’s money, to ensure their products are safe and that their labels are truthful.

#### **Ron Rompala, Blue Seal**

Pet owners [now] have a lower degree of confidence in commercial pet food. Owners are more likely to blame the food for problems that their pets may encounter and are less likely to hesitate to find alternative foods.

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## ***Have you changed anything about the way you operate your business since the recall?***

*For example, have you changed the way you source or test ingredients?*

*Made changes to the manner in which you utilize or oversee contract manufacturers?*

*Developed a consumer-response plan in case of any future problems?*

#### **Phil Abreo, Breeder’s Choice**

We continue to test all ingredients and have minimized the few ingredients we source from outside of North America.

We continue to require that every vendor certify all ingredients and provide us with a guaranteed analysis. We also test ingredients in our quality control lab and confirm results prior to being utilized during production. We now require the contract manufacturers that make our wet foods to provide us with manufacturing records for all production runs of our wet products.

Also, we have reviewed and updated our recall procedures and established a crisis management team to ensure 100 percent implementation of the plan.

#### **Peter Atkins, Natura**

We’ve always had quality management programs, validated by third-party certi-

fications, that have enabled us to supply our customers with the highest quality and safest products in the industry.

Because of the recall we have made a huge investment in new testing protocols for melamine and cyanuric acid. We have also directed our buyers to source ingredients from domestic sources and, in the few cases where an ingredient is only available offshore, we have instituted an elevated level of control and testing.

We did make changes to the manner in which we utilize or oversee contract manufacturers [currently, Natura’s wet products are made by a contract manufacturer]. We have a heightened presence at their manufacturing facility and have instituted a rigorous quality management program which requires the contractor to prove their quality controls with detailed reports on each production run.

We have always had a consumer-

response plan as part of our quality management program.

#### **Brian Connolly, Castor & Pollux**

The recalls caused us to really step back and evaluate all aspects of our business from ingredients to providing more information to pet parents.

The battery of tests that we run on all of our Organix and Natural Ultramix production has increased to include tests for melamine and cyanuric acid. We have established even tighter quality control standards and are working to augment our staffing in this area, too. We are posting even more information on our website to allow pet parents to make informed purchasing decisions. And we have changed a number of ingredient suppliers and have more detailed protocols related to our expectations of them.

Even though this was our first expe-

rience with a recall, we already had a consumer-response plan in place but were able to improve upon it as a result of this experience. Most important to us was staying accessible to pet parents and retailers that carried our products.

#### **Deborah Ellinger, Wellness**

We performed a full review of all of our practices, even though we were not impacted by the recall. We already had human-grade auditing processes and controls in place for our manufacturing, along with a robust ingredient sourcing approach, so we did not need to make significant changes to our processes or our manufacturing relationships.

However, like most others, we added testing for melamine and other contaminants that were identified in the recall, and we continue to look for improvement opportunities. We also expanded our phone center and added more product information on our website to help consumers get answers to their questions.

Since our products were not affected by the recall, we have attracted a lot of new consumers. We have had to step up our production dramatically, and are now spending a lot more time forecasting demand and trying to meet our customers' increased needs.

#### **John Marsman, Eagle Pack**

Naturally we started testing ingredients and both dry and canned food for melamine (everything was negative) and reviewed our "best manufacturing practices" plan. Fortunately, due to our program and our EU certification, all safety procedures were in place. While it reaffirmed the way we do business, we also enhanced testing and reviewed sourcing procedures with quality-certified long-term suppliers.

We looked to eliminate any China-sourced ingredients, but this is not possible for taurine, glucosamine, and at least one vitamin. Virtually all brands must buy these ingredients from China; I strongly question any brand that states otherwise. Vitamin premixes are comprised of at least 13 vitamins. Of the two biggest vitamin makers in the world, neither one makes all of its own ingredients. They, too, outsource. A responsible pet food maker must know this if it is to be in control.

We make all our dry food here in Mishawaka, Indiana. For our contract can manufacturing, we specify high quality ingredients. We did review all procedures

and ingredient sourcing with the maker. They will not add or substitute ingredients without asking, and we rejected substitution the times they asked.

#### **Lucy Postins, The Honest Kitchen**

Since our products are made in a human food plant – not in a pet food plant – many of the measures that conventional pet food manufacturers are now adopting were already part of our procedures and protocol. Our production is all under human food standards so ingredient substitutions and formula changes are simply not allowed. That is precisely why we chose a human food plant to make our products.

So, we have not really had to change much ourselves in the way of operations. Our company already takes responsibility for directly sourcing, ordering, and paying for 100 percent of its own ingredients; we do not allow the facility that makes our diets to buy ingredients on our behalf. We know our vendors directly and take direct responsibility for what goes into our foods.

Although we don't buy or use any of the ingredients that were found to be contaminated (we use meats, not plants, as sources of protein), and we had no reason whatsoever to suspect that there was any risk to our products, we did realize that amid the state of panic that ensued, no company's word alone was good enough. Therefore we decided to implement melamine testing immediately on all finished products.

We paid for overnight testing so that we could offer the peace of mind of melamine-free certificates to customers right away (and found it curious that FDA repeatedly stated they would not have results for

two weeks). We also put new measures in place to have each of our raw ingredients screened for melamine prior to production. Going forward, melamine screening has been added to the list of routine screens we run on all finished products.

#### **Ron Rompala, Blue Seal**

We have increased our efforts to better know our suppliers. More stringent requirements are in place for new suppliers. We have accelerated establishing HACCP (hazard analysis and critical control points) plans and having plants in condition to be approved by AIB (the American Institute of Baking). We also have performed spot checks for melamine and increased the number of assays for other contaminants such as heavy metals and PCBs. We have increased the size of our customer service department.

We did not have any products affected by the recall but we were inundated by phone calls from current customers with concerns and from pet owners that had used products that were recalled and looking for alternatives.

We increased the number of people attending the phones and e-mail responses. We established an auto-reply to provide information via e-mail or telephone immediately to concerned customers. I met daily with the people in customer service to keep them updated on the situation and provide information to better answer questions. I also spoke directly with several customers to alleviate technical issues. As I mentioned earlier, pet owners were not hesitating to voice concern and wanted reassurances if their animals exhibited any perceived problems.

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### ***In your opinion, did consumers overreact? What do you think consumers should do differently in case of future recalls?***

#### **Phil Abreo, Breeder's Choice**

The consumer's first concern or priority has to be the safety of their pet. Consumers diligently sought out information through the media, Internet, and in many cases, contacted the manufacturer for information. Consumers acted in a very responsible manner to seek out as much information as possible in order to protect their pets.

#### **Peter Atkins, Natura**

Absolutely not. Perhaps the media can be blamed for creating a panicked frenzy by running constant fear stories without a lot

of specific substance in many cases. But one can't really fault pet loving families for responding aggressively and seeking the truth for the health and safety of their companions. And if the end result is that hundreds of thousands of consumers have abandoned formerly trusted products that were perceived as "premium" for healthier and safer alternatives, can one really say that is an overreaction? In my opinion, it is an appropriate adjustment to the new realities of the market.

God forbid that there is another recall. But should it occur, consumers should



gather good, accurate, and truthful information from trusted sources. They should measure very carefully all the information made available and apply this information rationally, without painting every pet food company with the same soiled brush.

And consumers should not throw away food packaging until the food has been consumed so that if there is an issue, the proper date code numbers are accessible.

### **Brian Connolly, Castor & Pollux**

I don't think consumers overreacted at all given what they knew about pet food manufacturing, and given this entire experience was truly terrifying for them. Rolling recalls like these had never occurred before, and there was so much uncertainty as to what the problem was, what brands were affected, and what might be coming next. Certainly some of the misinformation on the Internet blogs didn't help consumers at all. Most assumed that all pet food manufacturers had their own plants; even though this isn't even true of human food producers, it was a shock to many to learn this.

I also don't think that most people understood that you can't run "one test" to prove something is safe. You need to know what you're testing for and then run the test that is specific to that. And, I think the extent of our global economy was not fully understood. The fact that some ingredients in pet foods just aren't available in this country came as a real surprise to many, too.

Our advice to consumers in the case of future recalls: Get to know – *now* – what the brand stands for that you are feeding your pet. Send the company an e-mail or give them a call to ask questions. Get a sense for how open and honest they are and how quickly they respond to you. See if they have a list that you can be added to for future notification.

### **Deborah Ellinger, Wellness**

No, consumers did not overreact. They did everything they should have done, like watch the news, check the Internet, and call the 800 numbers. Our animal companions are an important part of our lives and they can't advocate for themselves. Consumers did the right thing by looking out for the pets that depend on them.

### **John Marsman, Eagle Pack**

No way. They had every reason to react quickly and strongly. They were fed

misinformation. Correct information was delayed. And the recalls kept snowballing. Pet owners kept wondering if their food was next. This is a "perfect storm" scenario to generate concern and fear among pet owners.

Consumers should not wait for another recall. Just as manufacturers must establish ongoing trust with their suppliers, pet owners must establish trust with a pet food brand. Why ever do pet owners keep coming back to a brand that won't tell you where it is made, or another that lies about it three consecutive times? If another recall were to occur, pet owners should get a vet report stating that whatever caused the recall issue was directly related to the problem with their pet, and send it to FDA.

Here are questions pet owners should ask in an effort to establish confidence and trust in a brand now, not when the next recall happens:

Who makes your food?

Will you disclose the country of origin of any ingredient or component? And include every vitamin and nutrient, including taurine and glucosamine?

Will you disclose the level of any nutrient in your food if that nutrient is listed in the AAFCO nutrient profiles?

### **Lucy Postins, The Honest Kitchen**

I don't think it was an overreaction at all. Particularly as things escalated, people just didn't know where to turn next. I don't think any industry has ever seen a recall of that magnitude and scope, with brand after brand being added to the list. People were shocked and disillusioned that the products they were buying were made with the same low-grade ingredients as many generic grocery brands – and then shocked all over again when other companies announced they didn't even know what ingredients were being put in their diets. People found that absolutely absurd, and rightly so. If I didn't have my own brand of pet food to feed my dogs and complete confidence in my finished products, I think I'd have been in tears, too.

In the face of a future recall, the most important thing is to *know your dog*. That way, it's so much easier to spot when something's up. Tune in to how he behaves at meal times. Does he have a voracious appetite or is it usual to eat more gingerly? What do his eyes look like when he's healthy and happy? How do his eyes change when he's under the weather?

What are her normal urination and

defecation patterns? Pick up poop frequently so you can identify any abnormalities right away; a weekly pickup routine might not reveal blood in the stool quickly enough.

The most important thing where the food itself is concerned, is to hold on to lot codes and manufacture dates. We'll be launching some exciting packaging options that address this, in the fall.

We have never been proponents of feeding one diet exclusively; feeding a variety of brands and incorporating homemade food into your dog's daily ration may possibly lessen the effects of consuming a contaminated product in the worst-case scenario.

The sheer volume of recalled products made this disaster almost impossible to keep up with. Make use of the Internet. Sites like Itchmo and Pet Connection may have saved thousands of lives with their up-to-the-minute recall info. Sign up for alerts right away if a recall strikes and please take responsibility for helping elderly relatives or neighbors, or others without Internet access, keep up to date on which brands are affected.

### **Ron Rompala, Blue Seal**

Given the situation, owners did not overreact. The media *did* overreact and hyped the story. You couldn't blame the customers for their concerns considering that they heard that pets were dying and a large number of companies recalled their foods for unknown reasons. To make things worse, the number of products and companies involved with the recall grew daily.

I don't believe owners will act or are expected to act any differently if the situation presents itself again. However, you'll see a difference in the response of pet food companies; they will be sensitive to complaints and not make any assumptions. Investigations concerning multiple complaints will be taken very seriously and handled more thoroughly and swiftly. I'm sure that pet food companies that did not have a team to handle situations of this nature before, do now.



# A Honey of a Cure

*All the products made by bees have special gifts for dogs.*

BY CJ PUOTINEN

**B**ees may sting, but they create some of the world's most valuable, versatile products. Honey, bee pollen, royal jelly, beeswax, propolis, and even the venom from bee stings are all touted for their human health benefits – and many experts say that dogs derive the same advantages.

Feeding honey to dogs is nothing new. Juliette de Bairacli Levy, whose Natural Rearing philosophy has offered alternatives to conventional treatment for over 60 years (see “Grandmother Nature,” WDJ July 2006), recommends honey in all of her animal care books.

“I believe I could not successfully rear domestic dogs without this remarkable antiseptic food,” she says in *The Complete Herbal Handbook for the Dog and Cat*. She adds that while honey is not a normal item of diet for carnivores, lions in the wild



**New Jersey beekeeper Joe Dallan, who uses organic methods and feeds essential oils to his bees, introduces Chloe, the author's Lab, to honey straight from the hive. Like most dogs, she loves the taste. Photo by Joel Hollenberg.**

## What you can do . . .

- Look for raw local honey; support beekeepers who use organic methods and maintain healthy hives.
- Add honey to your dog's food as an overall health tonic and to help prevent allergies.
- Apply honey to burns, cuts, and wounds for rapid healing.
- Experiment cautiously with bee pollen before using it as a vitamin-protein supplement.
- Keep propolis on hand to fight infections and protect against contagious illnesses.



enjoy honey and it is considered a staple food of the omnivorous bear.

“Honey is the greatest of the natural energizers,” Levy writes, “a nerve tonic and a supreme heart tonic . . . Predigested by its makers, the bees, it is absorbed immediately into the bloodstream of the consumer. A diet of only milk and honey can sustain life for months in humans and animals. It has been well and longtime proved that honey is also highly medicinal and will inhibit growth of harmful bacteria in the entire digestive tract and destroy those of a toxic nature.”

Levy recommends fasting animals who are ill to let their digestive organs rest and the body to heal quickly. In addition to water, the only food she recommends for fasting animals is honey.

An invert sugar, honey contains mostly glucose and fructose, which are monosaccharides or simple sugars. Monosaccharides are more easily assimilated than the disaccharides and polysaccharides

found in table sugar, milk, grains, legumes, and starchy vegetables. A tablespoon of honey supplies 63 calories. Honey does not require refrigeration but keeps best in tightly sealed containers stored away from heat and light. Honey thickens when refrigerated.

Depending on the flowers harvested by the bees, honey is light or dark in color, and its flavors vary from delicate to complex. Raw honey contains vitamins A, B-complex, C, D, E, and K, plus calcium, phosphorus, magnesium, silicon, sulfur, potassium, manganese, copper, and iodine, with darker varieties such as buckwheat containing higher mineral levels. Vitamin C levels vary; some honey contains up to 300 milligrams of vitamin C per 100 grams (about 3½ ounces or 7 tablespoons).

Honey has been a medicine as well as a food for millennia. Ancient Greek, Assyrian, Chinese, and Roman physicians routinely prescribed it for health and longevity and for conditions such as in-

digestion, diarrhea, fevers, coughs, colds, flu, asthma, allergies, and ulcers, and as a revitalizing food for athletes, soldiers, and those recovering from illness or injury. Honey is said to increase the absorption of calcium consumed at the same time, help treat or prevent anemia, reduce arthritis pain, and work as a gentle laxative to help prevent constipation. It was also applied topically to treat open wounds, burns, cuts, abrasions, and skin infections.

## Honey for dogs

Most dogs love the taste of honey, so it's usually easy to feed. Some dogs eat it right off the spoon, some get it in their dinner, and quite a few enjoy their daily honey on toast with butter.

In Denison, Texas, 50 miles north of Dallas, beekeeper and companion dog trainer Michele Crouse considers honey the best medicine for her dogs Bonnie, a four-year-old Staffordshire Terrier, and Cracker, a five-year-old yellow Labrador Retriever.

"Bonnie has always had a hard time with allergies," Crouse says. "Her symptoms used to be worst in the spring and early summer, but they continued through the fall ragweed season. She rubbed her face, licked herself, especially on her feet and the inside of her thighs, and scratched on her stomach like crazy, creating dime-sized sores. She itched so much that the vet prescribed Benadryl and prednisone."

To prevent these attacks, Crouse feeds her dogs a tablespoon of honey twice a day. "I mix it with their food or feed it directly," she says. "Sometimes I'll give them berries as a snack, with the honey mixed in. Both Bonnie and Cracker love the taste. Otis, our mixed-breed, isn't interested in honey or anything sweet. Fortunately, he doesn't have allergy symptoms."

Crouse uses raw honey which she strains through a single filter to remove debris. "Otherwise," she says, "it's straight out of the hive."

As long as Bonnie receives her daily honey, she remains free of allergy symptoms. "But if I forget for a week or so," says Crouse, "the symptoms come right back. I know several other dogs who have had the same response. They react to seasonal allergens until their owners put them on honey, and then they're fine."

Crouse agrees with beekeepers and health experts who have observed that local raw honey works best on allergy symptoms. "It makes sense," she explains.

"When you eat the honey, you ingest minute amounts of local pollen, and after your body adjusts so that it doesn't react to the pollen, you can be exposed to larger amounts, such as when plants or trees are in bloom, without being affected."

In addition to using honey as a food, Crouse washes her dogs with it. "I start with a clear, natural shampoo base from an organic supplier," she says, "and mix it with an equal amount of honey to which I've added aloe vera and essential oils like lemon grass, orange, lemon, lavender, tea tree, citronella, and the Asian herb May Chang (*Litsea cubeba*). All of these plants have disinfecting, deodorizing, or insect-repelling properties. The essential oils make up about 5 percent of the formula, so it's safe for adult dogs and older puppies. To dilute the shampoo and make it easier to use, I add about 25 percent water."

Crouse says that the resulting shampoo doesn't lather much, but it cleans the dog well and soothes the skin. "I let it stand for a minute or so, rinse it off, reapply, and then give a final rinse. I board dogs, and if a visiting dog is scratching and itching, I'll give him a bath in honey shampoo, and that always helps."

In Jacksonville, Oregon, Natural Rearing consultant Marina Zacharias feeds her dogs honey and applies it topically to cuts and wounds.

"The high sugar content of honey is one of the factors that makes it such an excellent infection fighter and wound healer," says Zacharias. "Glucose oxidase, an enzyme in honey, produces hydrogen peroxide, which helps kill harmful bacteria. In addition, there are yet-unidentified substances which bees collect from flowers that give their honey antibacterial properties. For best results, it's important to use raw honey that hasn't had its effectiveness destroyed by processing."

Clinical trials of burn and injury patients show that the application of honey as a wound dressing rapidly clears infection, inflammation, swelling, pain, and odor while speeding the sloughing off of necrotic tissue (dead skin) and the growth of new skin cells. It remains moist, seals wounds – including skin grafts – and protects them from exposure to air, absorbs pus, reduces scarring, and prevents

wounds from sticking to bandages. Unlike other topical antiseptics, honey prevents microbial growth without causing tissue damage.

Raw honey eventually crystallizes or solidifies, making it difficult to apply. In addition, honey crystals can feel sharp on tender or inflamed skin. For best results, apply soft or liquid honey. To liquify crystallized honey, stand the jar in hot water until it can be stirred or poured. Microwaving is not recommended because in addition to destroying enzymes and other nutrients, heating honey in a microwave increases its hydroxymethylfurfural (HMF) content, which adversely affects its flavor.

In addition to applying honey to wounds, Zacharias has successfully treated wart-like growths with honey. "When honey is applied daily, they eventually soften and disappear," she says. "Juliette recommends honey as a treatment for burns. I have personally seen this work, and the healing is remarkable. In one case, a young mixed-breed toy dog tripped his owner and the scalding hot coffee she was carrying burned his back. The skin did not blister but it was very painful and angry looking. Thanks to honey, the dog healed very well, and his hair grew back beautifully."

The procedure Zacharias recommends is to wash the burned area with vinegar and apply honey thickly every 10 minutes until the pain subsides, then apply light bandages over the area. "Unfortunately, the hair will need to be clipped away," she says, "and if the dog wants to bother the bandage, you will need to use an Elizabethan or cervical collar."

On other wounds, Zacharias says, you can apply honey directly without bandaging. If the dog wants to lick it off, try distracting him for 20 minutes or so and give the honey time to be absorbed by the skin. You can reapply it this way three or four times a day.

"Honey applied twice a day healed an open cyst that wouldn't close in one of my older Basset Hounds, Savannah. As soon as I started applying honey, her skin closed over the wound, it healed fast, and we avoided surgery."



**Savannah's cyst healed quickly with topical honey.**

## Honey and herbs

Most dogs enjoy the taste of honey, which simplifies the administration of fresh or dried medicinal herbs. “Canine Allergies and Your Dog’s Health” (May 2007) described how the herb cleavers (*Galium aparine*) helped cure a dog’s allergy-related sores on its legs. Several readers who began feeding their dogs cleavers tea reported that the strategy worked for them as well. Brewing tea is one way to add cleavers to your dog’s diet, but another is to make an herbal honey.

Start by coarsely chopping enough fresh lemon balm (see “It’s the Balm!,” April 2007), thyme, sage, oregano, lavender, basil, or other herbs to loosely fill a glass jar. Alternatively, fill the jar half full with loosely packed dried herbs. Fill the jar with honey, covering the herbs. If the honey is too thick to pour easily, warm it by placing the honey jar in hot water or heat the honey gently in a saucepan or double boiler just until it is liquid.

Seal the jar of herbs and honey and leave it in a warm location, such as a sunny window, for at least two weeks. For a double-strength herbal honey, wait a month or more, then fill another glass jar with herbs, pour the contents of the first jar into the second jar, and let the honey stand another month.

If you’re in a hurry, heat the honey until it’s almost boiling and the pour it over the

herbs. The honey won’t be raw any more, but it will still contain significant healing properties, and it can be strained and used the same day.

Before using herbal honey, filter it through cheesecloth or a strainer to remove plant material and store it at room temperature or in the refrigerator. Add the medicated honey to your dog’s food.

In addition, keep a small jar of honey (herbal or plain) in your first-aid kit or backpack for use in emergencies.

Honey infused with the herbs mentioned above is an effective dressing for cuts, surgical wounds, burns, lick granulomas, abrasions, hot spots, and infected wounds. It can be given orally to prevent infection from viruses or bacteria, soothe a sore throat, help an anxious dog relax, improve sleep, and speed recovery from illness. Added to food, herbal honey helps reduce gas and other symptoms of indigestion.

Another way to feed herbs is to mix them with thick raw honey (refrigerate honey for a thicker consistency if necessary) and shape it into small balls that are easy for the dog to swallow. Use the same technique you would to pill a dog.

All honey, especially organic raw honey, has medicinal benefits, but the honey best known for its antimicrobial properties is manuka honey from New Zealand. More than 20 years of research have shown it to

naturally destroy harmful bacteria such as *Staph aureus* and *Streptococcus* (including drug-resistant strains); *Helicobacter pylori* bacteria associated with stomach ulcers; vancomycin-resistant *Enterococci*; and *Pseudomonas*. The veterinary use of manuka honey includes its application as a dressing for burns, amputations, and wounds, and its internal use for gastrointestinal and digestive problems.

Can honey be given to dogs with diabetes? Experts disagree as to whether honey has all of white sugar’s harmful effects or has a slower blood sugar absorption rate, putting it lower on the glycemic index and making it less likely to disrupt the patient’s blood sugar levels. Some tests have shown honey to cause a significantly lower rise in blood sugar, but results vary according to the type of honey used. Discuss this with your holistic veterinarian.

Also, consider feeding dark raw local honey or raw organic honey. The safest way to feed a therapeutic tablespoon once or twice a day to dogs with diabetes is to start with smaller amounts and always feed it in combination with fats, which by itself lowers a food’s glycemic index. Coconut oil and butter are excellent honey partners. Observe your dog’s reaction before increasing the amount and discontinue use if he displays any adverse symptoms.

## Bee pollen

As they collect nectar from flower blossoms, bees also gather pollen, a high-protein food, to carry back to the hive. While doing so, they spread pollen from flower to flower, fertilizing plants so that they produce berries, fruits, nuts, and vegetables. More than 100 crops grown in the US are pollinated by honeybees.

Bee pollen, which is collected from hives and sold as a health supplement, has long been prized for its proteins, amino acids, vitamins, enzymes, and other nutrients. Approximately half of its protein is made up of free-form amino acids, which require no digestion; they are immediately absorbed and utilized by the body. It is unusually high in the bioflavonoid rutin, which strengthens capillaries, protects against free radical damage and has anti-inflammatory effects.

Proponents claim that bee pollen improves energy, endurance, and vitality, speeds recovery from illness or injury, helps convalescents gain weight, helps the overweight lose weight, reduces cravings and addictions, fights infectious diseases,

## Resources Mentioned in This Article

**Michele Crouse**, Denison, TX. (903) 465-0069, [superk9.com](http://superk9.com) or [crousefarms.com](http://crousefarms.com)

**Marina Zacharias**, Jacksonville, OR. (541) 899-2080, [naturalrearing.com](http://naturalrearing.com)

**The Complete Herbal Handbook for the Dog and Cat**, by Juliette de Bairacli Levy

**Jean’s Greens Herbal Tea Works**, Schodack, NY. Herbal teas, dried herbs, and herbal products. (518) 479-0471, [jeansgreens.com](http://jeansgreens.com)

**Bee venom and bee venom honey**. Information from ApiHealth, New Zealand, [apihealth.com](http://apihealth.com). Sold in the U.S. by Honeybee Therapy, Gillette, WY. (866) 289-9233, [honeybeetherapy.com](http://honeybeetherapy.com)

**Manuka honey from New Zealand**, Manuka Honey USA. Many honey products, including bee venom honey. (407) 523 2205 or (800) 395-2196, [manukahoneyusa.com](http://manukahoneyusa.com)

**Royal jelly**, YS Organic Bee Farms, Sheridan, IL. (815) 496-9416, [ysorganic.com](http://ysorganic.com)

**To find local honey**, visit farmer’s markets and county or state fairs, or contact cooperative extension agencies or state beekeepers associations (most have websites)

**For information about protecting honeybees** from Colony Collapse Disorder using natural methods, contact Professor James W. Amrine Jr., Division of Plant and Soil Sciences, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV, (304) 293-6023, [wvu.edu/~agexten/ipm/insects/pollinat/honeybee/index.htm](http://wvu.edu/~agexten/ipm/insects/pollinat/honeybee/index.htm)

boosts immunity, improves intestinal function, increases fertility, and helps prevent cancer.

Bee pollen is also a widely used remedy for hay fever and allergies. As with raw honey, which contains small amounts of bee pollen, it is said to be most effective when derived from local hives and taken for several weeks prior to allergy season, then continued through the year. This desensitization process begins with tiny amounts, such as a single pollen grain or pellet, and continues in gradually increasing amounts until the maintenance dose, as much as a tablespoon per day for human adults, is reached.

Some canine athletes are fed bee pollen to improve their strength and stamina; some owners give it to their dogs as an all-purpose supplement or to prevent allergy symptoms. For best results, avoid inexpensive imported heat-processed pollen in favor of raw, unprocessed pollen from local beekeepers. Fresh bee pollen is slightly moist and requires refrigeration.

Like people, dogs can have allergic reactions to bee pollen, including wheezing, breathing problems, and even anaphylactic shock. Start with a single grain of bee pollen and carefully check your dog's response. If he shows no symptoms of discomfort, give two grains the next day, and slowly increase the amount over several weeks to a maintenance dose of 1 teaspoon per 30 pounds of body weight per day, mixed with food. Bee pollen is often blended with honey.

## Royal jelly

To appreciate the nutritional value of royal jelly – for bees, at least – consider that all queen bees begin life as worker bees. It is only because they are fed royal jelly and nothing else that they grow larger than worker bees and live far longer. While the average worker bee lives for five to six weeks during summer, queens live for three to six years, laying 2,000 eggs per day.

The queen bee's longevity and fertility gave rise to royal jelly's reputation as a miraculous rejuvenator, fountain of youth, and energy enhancer. Modern researchers have substantiated at least some of these claims, describing royal jelly as a metabolic catalyst, a substance that combats fatigue, increases energy, and supports the adrenal glands. Some of royal jelly's components are natural antidepressants.

Royal jelly has become a popular sup-



**Beekeeper and dog trainer Michele Crouse combines her interests! Imper-sonating a bee is Crouse's four-year-old American Staffordshire Terrier, Bonnie.**

plement for humans and for some canine athletes and breeding dogs. Organic royal jelly is available in natural foods markets. Highly perishable, it requires refrigeration. Most labels recommend taking small amounts, such as ¼ to ½ teaspoon once or twice per day between meals on an empty stomach. Adjust the label dose for your dog's weight, dividing it in half for dogs weighing 60 to 80 pounds.

Because of its slightly sharp, bitter, biting taste, dogs may not care for royal jelly. Blends of royal jelly and honey, which are also popular, may be more to their liking. Try mixing your own by blending 2 ounces (4 tablespoons) organic royal jelly with 6 ounces (¾ cup) of local raw honey. Keep refrigerated. Give your dog ½ to 1 teaspoon of this blend twice per day, morning and night.

Some manufacturers of human and canine grooming products add royal jelly to their shampoos and conditioners, claiming that it enhances hair color and increases volume. Those claims have not been scientifically tested, but royal jelly is certainly a luxury ingredient.

## Propolis

Few substances are as antiseptic as propolis, a sticky, resinous material also known as "bee glue," which is gathered from the buds, bark, and leaves of deciduous trees. Bees seal cracks and holes in their hives with propolis to prevent the entrance of intruders and to disinfect or sterilize bees

brushing against it. When a mouse or other invader is stung to death in the hive, bees seal the body in propolis, preserving it while keeping the inside of the hive sanitary.

Although propolis has been used for millennia to fight infection and improve health, it is unfamiliar to most Americans. However, it's gaining popularity as a natural antibiotic that doesn't disrupt beneficial bacteria or cause other side effects. Propolis, which is rich in bioflavonoids, is effective against viruses, harmful bacteria, yeasts, and fungi. It also has anti-inflammatory properties, helps prevent allergies, and speeds the healing of ulcers and skin problems such as acne, eczema, wounds, cuts, and burns.

The only down side of propolis, especially when it comes to treating dogs, is its awful taste. Freeze-dried propolis is sold in capsules, which can be hidden in food, and small amounts of propolis tincture (liquid extract) can be placed in empty two-part gel caps, which are sold in health food stores, just before using.

Propolis tincture can help protect dogs from canine flu, kennel cough, and other infectious illnesses. It can be applied to cuts, wounds, burns, bites, stings, hot spots, and lick granulomas (its bitter taste helps deter licking). However, its stickiness can complicate topical application. Mix propolis with a small amount of olive oil to create a less sticky disinfecting salve. Mix it with honey to help heal gum disorders.

## Beeswax

Bees produce wax to construct the combs that store honey. Beeswax contains more than 300 different chemicals. It's best known for its use in candles and as an ingredient in cosmetics, floor wax, furniture polish, and salves.

The makers of herbal salves often use beeswax as a thickener. Michele Crouse makes body bars by combining beeswax from her hives with coconut oil, avocado oil, cocoa butter, and mango butter. "They're the consistency of a ChapStick," she says, "and they do a great job of healing sores, moisturizing dry skin, and soothing cracked paw pads."

## Bee venom

Some people pay to get stung by bees or injected with bee venom in medical clinics. Apitherapy, or bee sting therapy, is common in China and gaining popularity

in Europe and the US. It is said to alleviate arthritis, other symptoms of inflammation, and allergic reactions to bee stings.

Now dried bee venom is being added to some New Zealand honeys and topical creams to provide the benefits of apitherapy without the pain. The theory is that venom that is ingested or applied externally has the same health benefits as venom that's injected.

Large-scale venom collection is made possible by a technology developed in Russia and New Zealand in which a bee venom frame is mounted on top of a hive's honey frame. Bees receive a mild shock from the frame's electro-stimulator and in response sting a glass collection sheet. Venom dries on the glass, which is taken to a nearby laboratory for processing. The dried venom is removed from the glass and mixed with honey or used in other bee products.

Arthritis is the human condition for which bee venom honey is said to be most effective, but bee venom honey success stories include the treatment of auto-immune disorders, shingles, tennis elbow, bursitis, lower back pain, ligament injuries, premenstrual syndrome, and other

conditions. Bee venom honey is said to support the body's natural cortisol levels, increase blood flow through affected joints, and inhibit the production of prostaglandins, which are chemicals that increase inflammation.

New Zealand honey producers have received testimonials describing dogs whose arthritis, hind end weakness, torn ligaments, and even hip dysplasia improved as a result of using bee venom honey.

### Bees are in danger

For the past two decades, Juliette de Bairacli Levy has asked her followers not to use honey or other products from honeybees because these helpful insects are under so much environmental stress. Between pesticides, mite infestations, foulbrood disease, hive-damaging moths, and other problems, bee populations have dramatically fallen across North America. Now Colony Collapse Disorder is destroying entire hives. Bees look healthy one day and disappear the next, becoming too weak to return to their hives. In most cases, the victims have been raised for commercial crop pollination, given supplemental feed-

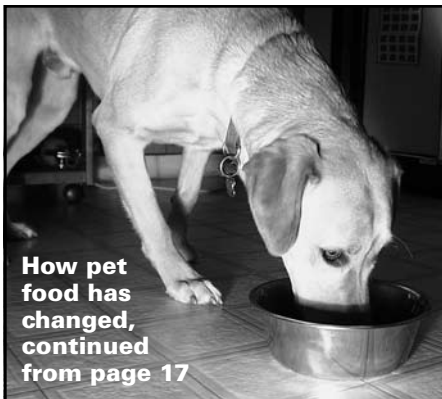
ings containing white sugar, and exposed to chemical pesticides.

At the same time, organic beekeepers and beekeepers who feed their bees disinfecting essential oils report that their hives stay healthy even in areas where Colony Collapse Disorder has become common.

In her many years as a beekeeper, Levy prevented bee diseases by growing disinfecting herbs near her hives. "The bees themselves are natural herbalists," she wrote, "and will gorge themselves on bitter rue or pungent lavender and rosemary. My bees enjoyed excellent health and possessed complete resistance to the many diseases afflicting the local white-sugar-fed bees."

Local organic honey, if you can find it, can be an excellent addition to your dog's diet and health care. A good second choice is organic honey from nearby states. 🐾

*CJ Puotinen is author of The Encyclopedia of Natural Pet Care, Natural Remedies for Dogs and Cats, and other books (see "Resources," page 24 for purchasing information). She lives in New York with her husband, a Labrador, and a tabby cat.*



### Last question: What are your company's post-recall resolutions?

#### Phil Abreo, Breeder's Choice

While no Breeder's Choice products were involved in any of the recalls, it is troubling that any pet would be exposed to harmful food. Our team of pet nutrition professionals continues to work hard and give maximum effort to provide our customers with the best nutritional and safe products that will provide their pets with a long and healthy lifestyle.

#### Peter Atkins, Natura

To buy or build a canning plant so that we can have control over all of our manufacturing. And to keep doing what has made us successful and kept us out of the recall mess – maintain the highest standards for ingredients, processing and quality control. Test, test some more, and then test again.

#### Brian Connolly, Castor & Pollux

Continue the work we started as listed above. We've further developed a program related to ensuring our products are safe. Although we're a small, family-owned company, we're committed to producing safe, healthy, natural, and organic products for dogs and cats. We're all pet parents ourselves and take this commitment very, very seriously.

#### Deborah Ellinger, Wellness

To continue to raise the bar on all aspects of formulation, ingredient choices, ingredient sourcing, quality control, and doing whatever it takes to help pets lead longer, healthier lives. We want to continue to be a company that consumers trust because they know we will always do whatever it takes to provide excellent natural nutrition for their pets.

#### John Marsman, Eagle Pack

We have made a quality food and have been totally forthright with consumers. We have dedicated ourselves to continue on that path to earn the pet owner's trust.

#### Lucy Postins, The Honest Kitchen

We have strengthened our resolve to be 100 percent accountable for everything we produce. We always try to put ourselves in the shoes of the customer, and going forward, every decision we make will be influenced by the question, "How would I feel if I were buying this food, and The Honest Kitchen did this . . . ?" We want to do only things we can be proud of.

Never take anything for granted. Test, test, test. Partner even more with our vendors to ensure they continue to be committed to our values. Make lots of spot checks and have regular meetings at the manufacturing plant.

#### Ron Rompala, Blue Seal

Never feel that a company can do too much quality assurance. Although we did not have any products recalled, you can't feel safe and think that it can never happen to you. 🐾

## Home-Prepared Diet Resources (for article on pages 3-7)



Photo by and courtesy of Heather Smith

**Grinding turkey necks and other raw meaty bones is a snap for heavy-duty electric meat grinders – and eases most owners' fears about the risks of feeding bone.**

### ELECTRIC MEAT GRINDERS

**American Eagle**, [ameagle.biz](http://ameagle.biz), (800) 836-5756

**Cabela's Grinders**, [cabelas.com](http://cabelas.com), (800) 237-4444

**Gander Mountain**, [gandermountain.com](http://gandermountain.com), (888) 635-2614

**LEM Grinders**, [lemproducts.com](http://lemproducts.com), (877) 536-7763 (also available at Bass Pro Shops, [basspro.com](http://basspro.com), 800-227-7776)

**Northern Tool**, [northerntool.com](http://northerntool.com), (800) 221-0516

**Sam Baere Grinders**, [sillypugs.com](http://sillypugs.com), (925) 778-2340

### OTHER TOOLS

**Joyce Chen Unlimited Scissors**, [joycechen.com](http://joycechen.com). May be purchased from many retailers and kitchen supply stores.

### VITAMIN & MINERAL MIXES

Designed to balance out diets that are mostly meat:

**Homemade Dinner Mixes** from See Spot Live Longer, [seespotlivelonger.com](http://seespotlivelonger.com), (541) 685-0538

**Wysong's Call of the Wild**, [wysong.net](http://wysong.net), (800) 748-0188

Designed for diets that are high in carbohydrates:

**Balance IT**, [balanceit.com](http://balanceit.com), (888) 346-6362 or (530) 756-3862 outside the US

**Vitamins & Minerals for Home-Cooked Dog Food**, Furoshnikov's Formulas, [cookforyourdog.com](http://cookforyourdog.com), (612) 388-2315

### COMMERCIAL RAW COMPLETE DIETS

**Dr. Billinghurst's BARF Diet**, [barfworld.com](http://barfworld.com), (866) 282-2273

**FarMore**, [farmoredogfood.com](http://farmoredogfood.com), 866-507-8255

**Home Made 4 Life**, [homemade4life.com](http://homemade4life.com). Manufactured in Ontario, Canada by Pets 4 Life, [pets4life.com](http://pets4life.com), (519) 372-1818, and in the US by Aunt Jeni's Home Made, [auntjeni.com](http://auntjeni.com), (301) 702-0123

**Nature's Variety**, [naturesvariety.com](http://naturesvariety.com), (888) 519-7387

**Northwest Naturals**, [nw-naturals.com](http://nw-naturals.com), 866-637-1872

**Paw Naturaw Organic, Frozen, Raw Diets** (new certified organic line of frozen raw diets, not yet widely available), [pawnaturaw.com](http://pawnaturaw.com), (866) 729-4738

**Stella & Chewy's**, [stellaandchewys.com](http://stellaandchewys.com), (888) 477-8977

**Steve's Real Food for Dogs**, [stevesrealfood.com](http://stevesrealfood.com), (888) 526-1900

**COMMERCIAL RAW DIETS, PARTS AND BLENDS**  
**Bravo!**, [bravorawdiet.com](http://bravorawdiet.com), (866) 922-9222

**Green Tripe and Organ Blend**, [greentripe.com](http://greentripe.com), (831) 635-0724

**Halshan**, [halshan.com](http://halshan.com), (888) 766-9725

**Oma's Pride**, [omaspride.com](http://omaspride.com), (800) 678-6627

**Tripett's Green Tripe** (cooked), [tripett.com](http://tripett.com), (866) 536-8773

### COMMERCIAL DIET PRE-MIXES

**The Honest Kitchen**, [thehonestkitchen.com](http://thehonestkitchen.com), (866) 437-9729

**Know Better Dog Food**, [knowbetterdogfood.com](http://knowbetterdogfood.com), (866) 922-6463

**Sojourner Farms**, [sojos.com](http://sojos.com), (888) 867-6567

**Urban Wolf**, [urbanwolf.cc](http://urbanwolf.cc)

**Wendy Volhard's NDF from PHD Products**, [phdproducts.com](http://phdproducts.com), (800) 743-1502

**West Coast Canine Life**, [westcoastcaninelife.com](http://westcoastcaninelife.com), (250) 598-8370

### BOOKS ABOUT RAW DIETS WITH BONE

***Give Your Dog a Bone; Grow Your Pup With Bones;*** and ***The BARF Diet***, by Dr. Ian Billinghurst

***Raw Dog Food: Make It Easy for You and Your Dog***, by Carina Beth MacDonald

***Switching to Raw***, by Susan Johnson (available only from [switchingtoraw.com](http://switchingtoraw.com))

***Natural Nutrition for Dogs and Cats: The Ultimate Diet***, by Kymthy Schultze, CCN, AHI

### BOOKS ABOUT COOKED OR RAW DIETS WITHOUT BONE

***Dr. Pitcairn's Complete Guide to Natural Health for Dogs & Cats***, by Richard Pitcairn, DVM

***Holistic Guide for a Healthy Dog***, by Wendy Volhard and Kerry Brown, DVM

***Home Prepared Dog & Cat Diets***, by Donald Strombeck, DVM

***Natural Food Recipes for Healthy Dogs***, by Carol Boyle (2006 edition available only at [naturaldogfood.com](http://naturaldogfood.com))

***The Complete Herbal Book for the Dog and Cat***, by Juliette de Bairacli Levy

See the author's Web page at [dogaware.com](http://dogaware.com) for more information on home-prepared diets. On that website, also see the table of nutritional values on the kidney disease page for nutritional information on raw meaty bones.

## RESOURCES

### BOOKS

WDJ Training Editor Pat Miller is author of two books: *The Power of Positive Dog Training* and *Positive Perspectives: Love Your Dog, Train Your Dog*. Both books are available from DogWise, (800) 776-2665 or dogwise.com

*The Encyclopedia of Natural Pet Care* and *Natural Remedies for Dogs and Cats*, by WDJ contributor CJ Puotinen, are available from DogWise, (800) 776-2665 or dogwise.com. Puotinen is also author of several books about human health, including *Natural Relief from Aches and Pains*, available from your favorite bookseller.

### HOLISTIC VETERINARIANS

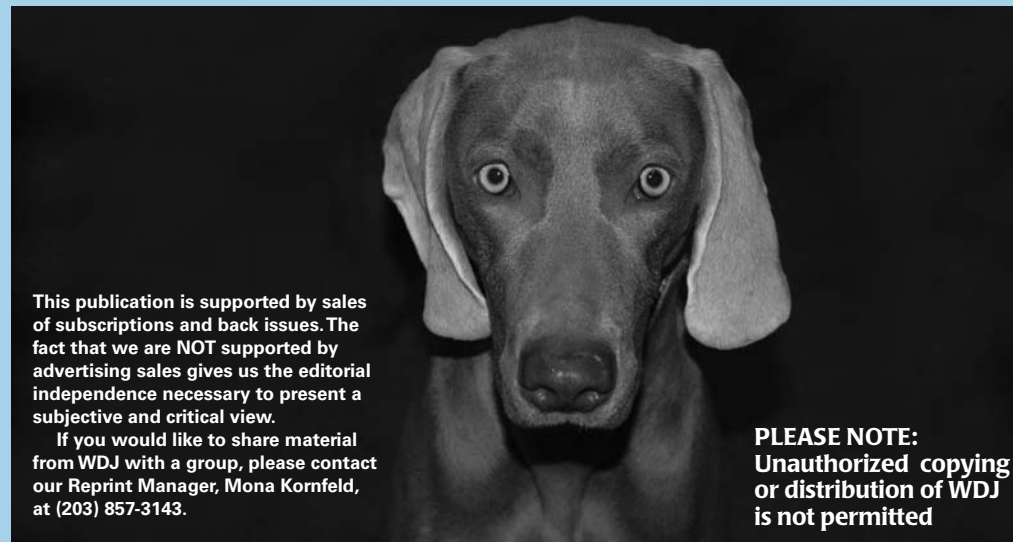
American Holistic Veterinary Medical Association (AHVMA), 2214 Old Emmorton Road, Bel Air, MD 21015. (410) 569-0795. Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope for a list of holistic veterinarians in your area, or search ahvma.org

### TRAINING AND INSTRUCTION

Pat Miller, CPDT, Peaceable Paws Dog and Puppy Training, Hagerstown, MD. Train with modern, dog-friendly positive methods. Group and private training, Rally, behavior modification, workshops, intern and apprentice programs. (301) 582-9420; peaceablepaws.com

The Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT) has references to member trainers in your area. Call (800) 738-3647 or see apdt.com.

APDT is dedicated to building better trainers through education, promoting dog-friendly methods, and encouraging their use. APDT's membership is composed of trainers from across the spectrum of training philosophies. Membership does not necessarily ensure all members employ similar training methods, nor does APDT set standards of skill or competence. APDT encourages (but does not require) its members to use training methods that use reinforcement and rewards, not punishment.



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## WHAT'S AHEAD

### Our Treat!

*What to look for, and what to avoid, when looking for healthy treats for your dog.*

### Stimulus Control

*If your dog "downs" when you tell him to "sit" or "sits/downs/shakes/rolls over" when you tell him to "stay," you need stimulus control! What this is, and how to accomplish it with your dog.*

### Energy Healing

*What it is, who does it, where to go for information, and what you can do to heal your own dog.*

### Looking at the Whole Picture

*Solving your dog's problem – whether behavioral or physical – requires consideration of his whole world.*

### Resource-Guarding

*How to reform a dog who tries to guard her food or toys (and why this is an urgently important task).*

### Terrible Odor, Terrific Food

*Green tripe smells awful! But it offers special benefits to dogs who eat it.*