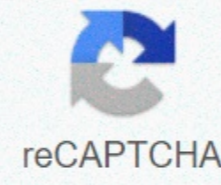




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Aafco guidelines for natural claims

Product nameNet quantity StatementManufacturerist name and addressIntendent listGaranty analysisNewing report On adequacyEducation directionsOperation of statementominationO further Label ClaimsSummarie Pat food labeling is regulated on two levels. Federal rules enforced by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) set standards applicable for all animal feeds: correct product identification, net application count, manufacturer name and address, and correct ingredient list. Some states also apply their own labeling rules. Many states have adopted a model of pet food rules set by the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO). These rules are more specific in nature, covering aspects of labeling such as product name, guaranteed analysis, nutritional adequacy statement, feeding directions and calorie statements. Product name Product name The product name can be a key factor in the consumer's decision to purchase the product. For this reason, manufacturers often use bizarre names or other methods to emphasize a certain aspect of the product. Since many consumers buy the product based on the presence of a particular ingredient, many product names include the name of the ingredient to highlight its inclusion in the product. The percentages of named ingredients in the common product are dictated by four AAFCO rules. The 95% rule applies to products consisting mainly of very few ingredients. They have simple names such as Beef for Dogs or Tuna Cat Food. In these examples, at least 95% of the product should be called an ingredient (beef or tuna, respectively), not counting the water added for processing and infields. Upon ingesting the added water, the named ingredient should still make up 70% of the product. Since ingredient lists must be declared in the proper order of prevailing by weight, beef or tuna should be the first ingredient listed and then other components such as vitamins and minerals. If the name includes a combination of ingredients such as Chicken 'n Liver Dog Food, the two named ingredients together should consist of 95% of the total weight. The first ingredient named in the product name should be one of the higher prevailing in the product. For example, the product could not be named Omar and salmon for cats if the product has more salmon than lobster. The 25% or dinner rule applies to many canned and dry foods. If these ingredients make up at least 25% of the product (not counting water for processing), but less than 95%, the name should include a qualifying descriptive term such as Dinner, as in beef dinner for dogs. By 20% of the added water, these ingredients should still make up 10% of the product. Many desecrators besides dinner are used, however, with Dish, Entree, Nuggets and Formula One there are few examples. In the example of Beef Dinner for Dogs only should be beef, and beef is likely to be the third or fourth ingredient on the ingredient list. Since the main ingredient is not always a named ingredient and can actually be an ingredient that the consumer is reluctant to feed, the ingredient list should always be checked before buying. For example, a cat owner may have learned from his quirky feline not to buy fish products in it because the cat doesn't like fish. However, Cat Food chicken formula may not always be the best choice, as some chicken formulas can indeed contain fish and can sometimes contain even more fish than chicken. Quickly checking the ingredient list will avert this error. If more than one ingredient is included in the name dinner, the combination of these ingredients should be a total of 25% of the product and be specified in the same order as in the ingredient list. In addition, each named ingredient should be at least 3% of the total. Therefore, the Chicken Drinking Dinner Cat Food should have 25% chicken and fish combined, and at least 3% fish. The 3% or out rule was originally only supposed to apply to ingredients highlighted on the main display, but outside the product name to allow manufacturers to indicate the presence of minor ingredients that have not been added in sufficient quantities to merit a dinner claim. For example, a cheese dinner, with 25% cheese, would not be feasible or economical to produce, but either beef dinner for dogs or Chicken Formula Cat Food could include a side spike with cheese if at least 3% cheese is added. AAFCO model rules now allow the use of the term with as part of the product name, such as Beef Dog Food or Cat Food with Chicken. Now even a slight change in the wording of the name has a dramatic effect on the minimum amount of named ingredient needed, for example, it is possible cat food with Tuna can be confused with the possible Tuna feed, but while the latter example should contain at least 95% tuna, the former only needs 3%. Therefore, the consumer should carefully read the labels before buying to make sure that the right product is obtained. Under the fragrance rule, a certain percentage is optional, but the product must contain an amount sufficient to be able to be detected. There are specific test methods using animals trained to prefer specific flavors that can be used to confirm this claim. In the example of Beef Flavor Dog Food, the label should have the word fragrance in the same size, style and color as the word beef. The appropriate ingredient may be beef, but more often it is another substance that will add a characterful flavour, such as beef or beef by-products. As for flavorings, pet food often contains digestes, which are materials treated with heat, enzymes and/or acids to form concentrated natural flavors. Only a small amount of chicken necessary for the production of chicken flavored cat food, although not chicken is added to food. Stocks or broths are also added from time to time. Serum is often used to add milk flavor. Often labels will carry claims there are no artificial flavors. Actually, artificial flavors are rarely used in pet food. The main exception to this will be artificial smoke or bacon flavourings, which are added to some treats. Back to the top net number of statements The net quantity operator tells you how much the product is in the container. There are many FDA rules dictating the format, size and placement of a net application count. None of them does any good if the consumer does not check the number of applications, especially when comparing the cost of products. For example, a 14-ounce may be food may look identical to a single-kilogram meal right next to it. Also, dry foods can vary greatly in density, especially some of the lightweight products. So a bag that can usually hold 400 pounds of food can only hold 35 pounds of food that plumps upwards. Comparisons between products per ounce or pound are always reasonable. Back to the top manufacturer name and production address ... determines the party responsible for the quality and safety of the product and its location. If the label is made for ... or distributed ..., the food was manufactured by an external manufacturer, but the name on the label still denotes the responsible side. Not all labels contain a street address along with the city, state and zip code, but by law, it must be listed either in the city's catalog or in the telephone directory. Many manufacturers also voluntarily include a toll-free number on the label for consumer requests. If a consumer has a question or complaint about a product, he should not hesitate to use this information to contact the responsible party. Back to the top ingredient list All ingredients must be listed in the order of prevailing by weight. The weight of the ingredients is determined because they are added to the formulations, including their inherent water content. This latter fact is important in assessing the relative number of claims, especially when the ingredients of different moisture content are compared. For example, one pet food can list meat as its first ingredient, and corn as the second ingredient. The manufacturer is not shy about assuming that its competitor lists corn first (meat flour is the second), suggesting that the competitor's product has less animal protein than its own. However, meat is very high in moisture (approximately 75% water). On the other hand, water and fat are removed from meat food, so it's only 10% moisture (something that's left mostly protein and minerals). If we could compare both foods based on dry matter (mathematically remove water from both ingredients), one could see that the second product had more animal protein from meat food than the first meat product, if the ingredient list suggests otherwise. Other, we can not say that the second product has more meat than the first, or indeed, any meat at all. Meat food is not meat in itself, as most fat and water have been removed by rendering. Ingredients must be listed by their common or common name. Most ingredients on pet food labels have an appropriate definition in the official edition of AAFCO. For example, meat is defined as pure flesh of stabbed mammals and is limited to... potriate muscles ... with or without accompanying and excessive fat and portions of skin, sinus, nerves and blood vessels that usually accompany the flesh. On the other hand, meat food is a product provided from mammalian tissues, exclusive from any added blood, hair, horn, hiding scraps, manure, stomach and blush contents. So in addition to recycling, it can also contain parts of animals that couldn't be considered as meat. Meat food may not be very nice to think about eating yourself, even if it may contain more minerals than meat. However, animals do not share in people's aesthetics concerns about the source and composition of their food. Despite this, the distinction should be made in the list of ingredients (and in the product name). For this reason, a product containing lamb food cannot be called Lamb Dinner. Further down the list of ingredients, common or conventional names become less common or common to most consumers. Most ingredients with chemical names sound, in fact, vitamins, minerals or other nutrients. Other possible ingredients may include artificial colors, stabilizers and preservatives. All must either be universally recognized as safe (GRAS) or approved dietary supplements for their intended use. If presented with scientific data showing the health risk of an animal ingredient or supplement, the FDA's Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM) may act to prohibit or change its use in pet food. For example, propienglycool was used as a humecant in soft wet pet food, which helps to retain water and gives these products its unique texture and taste. It has been confirmed as universally recognized as safe (GRAS) for use in human and animal food before the appearance of soft wet foods. For some time it has been known that propienglycol caused heinz's body to form in the red blood cells of cats (small lumps of proteins seen in cells when viewed under a microscope), but this could not be shown to cause explicit anaemia or other clinical effects. However, reports in the veterinary literature of science-based studies have shown that propienglycol reduces the survival time of red blood cells, makes red blood cells more susceptible to edging damage, and has other adverse effects in cats that consume the substance at levels found in mild wet foods. In light of this new data, CVM has amended regulations to directly the use of propylene glycol in cat feed. Another pet food supplement of some controversy is ethoxykin, which has been approved as a dietary supplement supplement forty-five years ago for use as an antioxidant chemical preservative to help prevent the destruction of some vitamins and accompanying compounds in animal feed and help prevent peroxide from forming in canned pet foods. In the 1990s CVM began receiving messages from dog owners attributing the presence of etoxicine in dog food with a host of side effects such as allergic reactions, skin problems, underlying organ failure, behavioral problems and cancer. However, there has been paucity of available scientific data to support these disputes, or to show other adverse effects in dogs at levels approved for use in dog food. Further studies by the manufacturer of etoxicine have shown a dose-dependent accumulation of hemoglobin-related pigment in the liver, as well as increased levels of liver-related enzymes in the blood. Although these changes are due to ethoxykin in the diet, pigment is not made from the etoxicine itself, and the health value of these findings is unknown. However, CVM has approached the pet food industry with a voluntary reduction in the maximum level of eating etoxicine in dog food from 150 ppm (0.015%) up to 75 ppm. Despite this, most pet food that contained ethoxykin never exceeded a smaller number, even before this recommended change. Back to the top Guaranteed Analysis At a minimum, many government regulations require pet food to guarantee minimum percentages of raw protein and raw fat, as well as maximum percentages of raw fiber and moisture. The crude term refers to a specific method of testing the product, not the quality of the nutrient itself. Some manufacturers include guarantees for other nutrients as well. The maximum percentage of ash (mineral component) is often guaranteed, especially on cat feed. Cat products usually carry warranties for taurine and magnesium as well. For dog food, some products contain minimum percentage levels of calcium, phosphorus, sodium and linoleic acid. Guarantees are declared on the basis of as fed or as is, that is, the amounts present in the product, as it is in a jar or bag. This does not matter much when the guarantees of two products of similar moisture content are compared (for example, dry dog food against other dry dog food). However, when comparing the guaranteed analysis between dry and canned foods, it should be noted that the levels of raw protein and most other nutrients are much lower for the canned product. This can be explained by looking at the relative moisture content. Canned food usually contains 75-78% moisture, while dry foods contain only 10-12% moisture. To make meaningful comparisons of nutrient levels between canned and dry foods, they should be expressed on the same moisture base. The most accurate means for this is to convert warranties for both products to no moisture or dry matter. Percentage substance equals 100% minus the percentage of moisture guaranteed on the Dry food is approximately 88-90% of dry matter, while canned food makes up only about 22-25% of dry matter. To convert the nutrient guarantee to the base of a dry matter, the percentage of the warranty should be divided by a percentage of dry matter, then multiplied by 100. For example, canned foods guarantee 8% raw protein and 75% moisture (or 25% dry matter), while dry food contains 27% raw protein and 10% moisture (or 90% dry matter). Which has more protein, dry or canned? Counting the dry protein of both, canned contains 32% crude protein based on dry matter (8/25 X 100 = 32), while dry has only 30% based on dry matter (27/90 X 100 = 30). So while it appears dry has a lot more protein when the water is deducted, canned food actually has a bit more. It is easier to remember that the amount of dry matter in dry food is about four times the amount in the canned product. To compare the guarantees between dry and canned food, multiply the guarantees by canned food four times first. It is especially important to look at the moisture guarantee for canned food, even when comparing canned food with another canned one. Under AAFCO rules, the maximum percentage of pet food humidity is 78%, excluding foods labelled as stews, in sauce, in gravy or similar conditions. Additional water gives the product the quality necessary in order to have the appropriate texture and fluidity. Some of these released products were found to contain as much as 87.5% moisture. It doesn't sound like a big difference until the dry matter content is comparative. For example, a product with a guarantee of 87.5% moisture contains 12.5% dry matter, only twice as much as a product with a moisture guarantee of 75% (25% dry matter). Back to top food adequacy Assertions Any claim that the product is full, balanced, 100% nutritious, or a claim of a similar nature, which suggests that the product is suitable for a single nourishment when it is not, in fact, nutritionally adequate for such purposes is a potentially dangerous product. For this reason, the AAFCO Food Adequacy Statement is one of the most important aspects of label food for dogs or cats. Complete and balanced pet food should be grounded for nutritional adequacy by one of the two remedies. The first way is for pet food to contain ingredients formulated to ensure levels of nutrients that fit the established profile. AAFCO Dog or Cat Food nutrient profiles are currently used. Foods justified by this method should include the words: (Product name) formulated to meet nutritional levels set by AAFCO (Dog/Cat) Food nutrient profiles. This means that the product contains the proper amount of all the recognised essential nutrients needed to meet the needs of a healthy animal. An alternative means of justification for food adequacy is to test the product according to the AAFCO feeding trial protocol. This means that the product, or a leading family member of the products, was fed to dogs or cats in accordance with strict guidelines and found to provide proper nutrition. These products should carry a nutritional adequacy statement Animal Feeding Tests using AAFCO procedures justifying that (product name) provides a full and balanced diet. Regardless of the method used, the nutritional adequacy statement will also indicate for which life stages (s) the product is suitable, for example, for support or for growth. The product, designed for all life stages, meets stricter nutritional needs for growth and reproduction. The maintenance diet will meet the needs of an adult, non-reproductive dog or cat of normal activity, but may not be sufficient for a growing, reproducible or hardworking animal. On the other hand, the diet of all life stages can be fed for maintenance. While higher levels of nutrients won't be harmful to a healthy adult animal, they're not really needed. Sometimes a product can be labeled for more specific use or stage of life, such as older or for a certain size or breed. However, there is little information about the genuine dietary needs of these more specific goals, and no rules governing these types of allegations have been established. Thus, the older diet must meet the requirements for adult abstinence, but no more than that. A product that does not comply with any of the methods of justification for nutritional adequacy should indicate that this product is intended only for periodic or additional feeding, unless the product is markedly identified as a snack treat. Back to the top feeding directions instruct the consumer on how much product should be offered to the animal. At a minimum, they should include recruitment, such as feeding ___ cups at ___ pounds of body weight daily. On some small plaques it can be all the information that can fit. Feeding directions should be adopted as adult guidelines, a place to start. Breed, temperament, environment and many other factors can affect food intake. Manufacturers are trying to cover almost all unforeseen circumstances, setting directions for the most demanding. The best deal is to offer a set amount first and then increase or cut back as needed to maintain body weight in adults or to achieve the proper rate of benefit in puppies and kittens. A lactating mother should be offered all the food she wants to eat. Back to top calorie statement Pet foods can vary greatly in calorie content, even among foods of the same type of moisture and formulated for the same life stage. Feeding directions also vary among manufacturers, so the number of calories delivered in one meal's daily meal can vary greatly from another. calories in the product roughly refers to the amount of fat, although different levels of non-calorie components, such as water and fiber, can reset this correlation. The best way to compare foods and determine how much to feed to know the calorie content. The AAFCO rules were designed to require manufacturers to substantiate calorie content and include a calorie statement on all pet food products. The calorie claim should be expressed on the basis of kilocalories per kilogram. Kilocaloria is the same as calorie consumers are used to seeing on food labels. A kilogram is a unit of measurement of metric indicators equal to 2.2 pounds. Manufacturers are also obliged to express calories in familiar household units (for example, per cup or for a jar) together with the necessary kilocalories per kilogram application. As with guaranteed analysis, the calorie statement is made on the basis of how it is fed, so it is necessary to make corrections to the moisture content as described above. To roughly compare the calorie content between canned food and dry food, multiply the values for canned food by four. Back to the top other claim labels Many pet food is labeled as premium, and some now have super premium and even ultra premium. Other products are tossed up as exquisite items. Foods labeled as premium or gourmet are not required to contain any different or higher quality ingredients, nor will it fit any higher food standards than any other complete and balanced foods. The term natural is often used on pet food labels. AAFCO has developed a definition of the term feed for what types of ingredients can be considered natural and guidelines for natural claims for pet food. Mostly natural can be interpreted as the equivalent of the absence of artificial flavors, colors or artificial preservatives in the product. As mentioned above, artificial flavors are rarely used anyway. Colored additives are not really needed, except to please the eye of the owner of the animal. If used, they must be from approved sources. Especially for high-fat dry products, you need to use a certain form of preservative to prevent ailments. In place of artificial preservatives can be used preservatives with a natural source, such as mixed tocopheroli (source of vitamin E). However, they may not be as effective. Natural is not the same as organic. The last term refers to the conditions under which plants were grown or animals were grown. There are currently no official rules governing the labeling of organic pet products, but the United States Department of Agriculture is developing regulations dictating what types of synthetic supplements, such as vitamins and purified amino acids, can be used in pet food labeled as organic. Back to the best pet owners and veterinary professionals have a right to know that they are feeding their animals. The pet food label contains a large amount of information if it knows how to read it. Not many marketing tricks or attractive claims. If you have questions about the product, contact the manufacturer or ask the appropriate regulatory authority. Back to the top of the top