

Nutritional Adequacy – How to Select the Best Food for Your Pet

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When faced with the wide selection of pet foods available today, you may have the question, “How can I be assured that the food I choose meets the nutritional needs of my pet?” Guidelines established by the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) help to provide standardized means of supporting nutritional adequacy claims. In addition, pet food manufacturers can implement additional quality control measures that help to further ensure the safety and nutritional adequacy of the food you choose for your pet. Understanding these regulations and measures taken by companies such as Natura Pet, can help you make an informed decision to select a pet food that you can trust.

AAFCO Nutritional Adequacy Claims

Pet foods are regulated by states’ Departments of Agriculture or Chemist’s Offices. Many states abide by the guidelines that are published by AAFCO, which is an advisory body made up of state and federal government regulatory officials with a basic goal to provide a mechanism for developing and implementing uniform and equitable laws, regulations, standards and enforcement policies for regulating the manufacture, distribution and sale of animal feeds including pet food; resulting in safe, effective, and useful feeds.

According to AAFCO guidelines, complete and balanced pet foods must provide a nutritional adequacy statement indicating that the product meets the nutritional requirements established for the particular life stage for which the pet food was intended. In addition, this statement should state if the food has been formulated according to AAFCO nutrient requirements, or if it has undergone AAFCO feeding tests to determine adequacy. Foods that have been formulated to be complete and balanced rely on nutrient content calculations to ensure that nutrient levels meet the AAFCO Dog or Cat Food Nutrient Profiles for maintenance or growth and reproduction. While nutrient calculations and formulation of pet foods is a good measure of adequacy, undergoing AAFCO feeding trials provides further evidence of adequacy by demonstrating nutrient bioavailability and performance of the food when fed to dogs or cats.

Additional Nutrient Analysis

In addition to AAFCO guidelines for establishing nutritional adequacy of a pet food, additional non-required nutrient analysis can help to provide additional support and assurance that a food is complete and balanced. At Natura Pet, we take pride in the quality control measures we put in place to ensure that our recipes meet all of our wholesome nutrient goals. We start this process with careful analysis of our raw materials, with stringent guidelines on the nutrient specifications that must be met before an ingredient can be accepted. We follow this up with both in-process and post-production analyses to ensure that each batch of food meets our stringent nutrient specifications. This multi-step quality assurance approach helps us to know that the food your pet receives is consistently meeting our high quality standards and the nutrient needs of your pet.

Additional Feeding Studies

In addition to AAFCO life stage feeding trials, additional optional feeding studies can be conducted to provide further assurance of a food’s nutritional adequacy and performance. Natura strongly believes in the humane and healthful treatment of animals, and is committed to only non-invasive feeding trials of our pet foods. At Natura, we invest in these additional non-invasive studies to evaluate and confirm nutrient digestibility, stool quality, and diet palatability. Digestibility studies are conducted to confirm that our high quality ingredients are highly digestible, and to determine more accurate calorie content values than those based on calculations. Stool quality and palatability studies also help us to ensure that our foods result in healthful stool consistency and an enjoyable pet food. Finally, additional studies to support and learn more about new feeding approaches (such as studies evaluating low carbohydrate foods with the development of EVO®) have helped to provide nutritional advances that we can pass onto pet’s not just eating Natura foods but also to other pet nutrition professionals including those at our competitors for the betterment of all pets. Although not required, we know that these additional efforts have helped to create and improve our natural pet foods and treats and set Natura Pet apart from the competition.



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If you have questions about Natura products, please contact our product advisors at 800-532-7261 or visit us online at naturapet.com.