



WSAVA GUIDELINES

RECOMMENDATIONS ON SELECTING PET FOODS

The World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA) publishes guidelines to assist veterinarians in making recommendations to pet owners for selecting safe, nutritious pet foods. The guidelines can be found [here](#).

These guidelines focus on two evaluations – what to look for in a brand, and what to look for on a pet food label. The ideal pet food can be chosen using the answers to the questions below.

What to look for in a brand

1. Do they employ a PhD or DACVIM (Nutrition)?

Yes, Instinct® has a full-time board certified veterinary nutritionist®, Susan G. Wynn, DVM, DACVIM (Nutrition). Our chief formulator has a PhD in Food Science.

2. Who formulates the diet?

Our formulators have college or advanced degrees in technical areas with over 50 years combined experience in formulating products for big companies—both in the human and pet food industry. Formulators collaborate with our board certified veterinary nutritionist® to develop advanced products.

3. What is the quality control process for ingredients and finished products?

Similar to the largest companies in the industry, our leading Instinct® Raw Longevity™ formulas are undergoing an AAFCO feeding trial for all-life stages. All of our kibble and canned products are formulated to meet the AAFCO Canine or Feline Nutrient Profiles. We confirm key nutrient levels by a 3rd party laboratory analysis, and run digestibility and palatability studies on our recipes. We audit our suppliers and co-packers and perform nutritional analyses on finished products on a regular basis.

In addition:

- Instinct is the only raw pet food company in North America to earn SQF's highest level of certification: an "Excellent" Food Safety rating and certification in Quality.
- Our facilities are FSMA compliant.
- We check our facilities for cleanliness—both visually and using microbiologic testing—prior to production at all of our facilities.

- We monitor and microbiologically test our raw ingredients.
- We check and verify the correct ingredients are being used & in the correct amounts.
- We perform metal detection testing to prevent foreign material contamination.
- When packing our raw frozen recipes, we check for correct weights, clumping, product shape, color, temperature & water activity (for freeze-dried).
- Once blended, our raw recipes are sent to a reputable 3rd party SQF-certified company where they go through a pathogen reduction step called Cold Pressure Processing (also known as High Pressure Processing or HPP).
- After Cold Pressure, our food is tested to validate that it does not contain pathogens.
- Our finished frozen and freeze-dried raw recipes go through pathogen testing to ensure we achieve Zero Tolerance for target pathogens prior to distribution to the customers.
- Our Environmental Monitoring Program is designed to prevent pathogens from contaminating our products.
- We have a training program in place to ensure employee competency.

4. What kind of product research or nutrition studies have been conducted? Is it published in peer-reviewed journals?

We are the sole U.S. Sponsor of the DogRisk study from the Veterinary Faculty at the University of Helsinki. We recently awarded a grant to support research on dilated cardiomyopathy at University of California, Davis. We conduct in-house research, most recently on biochemical attributes of raw vs processed foods. Finally, we are proud to sponsor a nutrition resident and her studies at the University of Georgia during 2021-2022.

Studies we support have been published, and we look forward to more:

- Hemida M, et al. Early Life Modifiable Exposures and their Association with Owner Reported Inflammatory Bowel Disease Symptoms in Adult Dogs (2021) *Front. Vet. Sci.* 2021; 8:552350. doi:10.3389/fvets.2021.552350 [View link](#)
- Anturaniemi J, et al. The Effect of Atopic Dermatitis and Diet on the Skin Transcriptome in Staffordshire Bull Terriers. *Front. Vet. Sci.* 2020; 7:552251. doi: 10.3389/fvets.2020.552251 [View link](#)
- Moore R, et al. Targeted Metabolomics With Ultrapformance Liquid Chromatography–Mass Spectrometry (UPLC-MS) Highlights Metabolic Differences in Healthy and Atopic Staffordshire Bull Terriers Fed Two Different Diets, A Pilot Study. *Front. Vet. Sci.* 2020; 7:554296. doi: 10.3389/fvets.2020.554296 [View link](#)
- Hemida M, et al. Identification of modifiable pre- and postnatal dietary and environmental exposures associated with owner-reported canine atopic dermatitis in Finland using a web-based questionnaire. *PLoS ONE* 2020; 15(5): e0225675. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0225675> [View link](#)
- Anturaniemi J, et al. Owners' perception of acquiring infections through raw pet food: a comprehensive internet-based survey. *Veterinary Record* 2019; doi:10.1136/vetrec-2018-105122 [View link](#)
- Anturaniemi J, et al. The effect of a raw vs dry diet on serum biochemical, hematologic, blood iron, B12 and folate levels in Staffordshire bull terriers. *Vet Clin Pathol.* 2020;00:1–12. [View link](#)

- Beloshapka AN, Duclos LM, Vester Boler BM, Swanson KS. Effects of inulin or yeast cell-wall extract on nutrient digestibility, fecal fermentative end-product concentrations, and blood metabolite concentrations in adult dogs fed raw meat-based diets. AJVR 2012; 73(7):1016-1023 [View link](#)

What to look for on a label

1. Nutrition Adequacy Statement?

Our diets all bear AAFCO-specified nutritional adequacy statements, indicating whether the diet is complete and balanced or for intermittent/supplemental feeding, the appropriate life stage for feeding that diet, and how nutritional adequacy was determined.

2. How many calories per gram or serving of food?

That varies depending on the food. Please visit our website for a complete listing or contact our customer service department.

Phone: 1-888-519-7387

Email: cservice@instinctpetfood.com

Live Chat: [instinctpetfood.com](https://www.instinctpetfood.com) Monday-Friday 8 am-5 pm CST

3. Does the company provide immediate contact information such as a phone number or email address?

Phone: 1-888-519-7387

Website: [instinctpetfood.com](https://www.instinctpetfood.com) can be found on every package.

This question also indicates that a company should be able to provide a typical nutrient analysis for all of their formulas. These are available on our website, or please contact our customer service department for more information.

Phone: 1-888-519-7387

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4. Who makes the food?

All our raw recipes are made in the USA. Instinct® frozen and freeze-dried raw meals recipes are made in our own state-of-the-art facility, over which we have 100% control. Our canned and dry foods are produced by the largest co-packers in the industry, who also produce products for the largest pet food companies. If you are interested, please reach out to our customer service department and we will share the name of our co-packers.

If the manufacturer cannot or will not provide any of this information, veterinarians and owners should be cautious about feeding that brand.

We agree!