

This is part 2 of the two part newsletter on what to feed, and what not to feed your pet. If you missed part one on what not to feed, check the archives for the September/October newsletter titled “They Are What They Eat”.

I realize that most pet owners want to treat their pets by feeding them special things either from their food during a meal or something specifically prepared for their pet. That is the reason part 1 focused on what to avoid.

I would prefer if dog and cat owners ONLY fed their pets commercially made dry dog or cat food and fresh water. The problem is that there are so many choices. There are many stores that sell food for pets and a wide range in quality. Grocery stores and superstores all have a wide variety and lower prices. Some of the food they carry are of reasonable quality, most aren't. The major pet stores also carry an array of foods. These are usually better quality but not all of them.

Veterinarians also sell food. Some clinics sell maintenance foods where some clinics, like ours, only sells food needed to treat specific problems.

Now that we've covered where you can get food, how do you decide what to buy for your pet? The decision is made according to several factors: Quality, availability and price. Obviously the family with one small dog or cat can probably afford to get the best food made. If you have several large dogs pet food can exceed what you spend for people in the family. There is a misconception in dog food I want to address. Higher prices don't mean better quality. “You get what you pay for” doesn't always apply to dog food. Several less quality brands charge high prices so they are perceived to be quality when they're not.

Whether bought from a veterinary clinic or pet store, food costs are out of control. In my opinion the three best foods are **Royal Canin, Eukanuba, and Hill's Science diet**. These three companies use research and science as well as high quality ingredients to formulate their diets. There are also diets that are made with all organic ingredients and don't have preservatives like most food. They can be obtained locally and are priced similar to the other quality foods.

If quality food from pet stores or veterinarians doesn't fit your budget, grocery stores have dog and cat food that is adequate. The top grocery store diet is **Iams**.

There is no perfect food for every pet. Finding the best food for your pet and your budget is sometimes challenging, but there's always a diet for everyone.