

What's in your pet's food? At least 10 million owners don't know

Submitted by: Lucre Marketing Ltd

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As thoughts turn to getting healthy this January, research from True Instinct reveals that 10 million* dog and cat owners are not aware of what's in their pet's food. Despite this, a quarter are pledging to make a healthy New Year's resolution for their four-legged friend.

The poll of UK dog and cat owners** reveals that the nation's knowledge of pet food ingredients is extremely low, with over 62% (equating to 10 million out of 17 million total dog and cat owners in the UK) admitting to not knowing what they're really feeding their pet. More than half say they aren't aware that mainstream dry pet foods contain sugar, meat derivatives, processed ingredients and artificial additives. Less than 15% of those surveyed are aware that shocking ingredients such as bone ash, feathers and synthetics can be found in some of these foods.

The knowledge gap continues with around a third of pet owners not realising dogs can't eat foods such as chocolate or onions which are both toxic. Conversely, owners aren't aware of the many ingredients that can improve pet health either; 14% say dogs can't eat butternut squash, which is a nutritious vegetable, and 20% say blueberries are a no-go but are actually full of antioxidants. Both are found in natural and raw pet foods such as True Instinct, due to the countless health benefits they provide.

But it's not all doom and gloom. Whilst only 40% of UK dog and cat owners are making a healthy New Year's resolution for themselves in 2019, a quarter are putting their pets first and have pledged that they'll make one for their four-legged friend – ensuring they kick start the year to get their pet healthier and happier.

This could be down to the fact that over a third say their dog or cat suffers from a health issue such as bad breath, diabetes or a skin condition, and 10% are overweight. Such conditions can be alleviated simply by switching to a more natural, healthy diet.

Whilst knowledge of ingredients is low, the research does show that 26% of pet parents say that when selecting their pet food brand their dog or cat must visibly enjoy it, and a quarter state it must make a difference to their health and wellbeing.

Top 10 list of New Year's resolutions for our pets this January:

1. Go for more walks (45%)
2. Cut down on unhealthy treats (40%)
3. Give them a better, more natural diet (31%)
4. Spend more time with them (30%)
5. Brush their teeth more often (29%)
6. Pay more attention to their training/behaviour (25%)
7. Take them for regular health checks (21%)
8. Stop bad habits e.g. sleeping on the bed, eating from the table (19%)
9. Give them more regular baths (18%)

10. Ensure they socialise with other dogs/cats (16%)

Melanie Sainsbury, Veterinary Education Manager for True Instinct comments: “January is often a time where our thoughts turn to getting healthier, be it taking part in ‘Dry January’ or just generally being more conscious about what we eat – and this shouldn’t be any different for our pets. Whilst there is clearly a gap in knowledge of what’s really in certain pet foods, we understand that pet owners are often time-poor and often prioritise convenience.

“However, it’s promising to see from the research that pet parents want to make a positive change – and it doesn’t have to be difficult either.

“Pets could take part in their very own ‘Dry January’ – but one where they enjoy a balanced nutritious diet in the form of a more natural, healthy dry food such as True Instinct. Our Raw Boost product includes no nasties and all the ingredients they need to thrive, whilst still in a convenient format.”

For more information, visit www.trueinstinct.co.uk

*Calculated using PFMA data on current dog and cat population 2018 – 17 million

**Survey by OnePoll on 17th December 2018 of 2,000 UK dog and cat owners

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