

# Why Organic for your Pet?

By Susan Moss, All The Best Pet Care

## **Pet Food Ingredients Risky**

Government standards for pet food ingredients leave much to be desired. Diseased animal parts, rendered by-products, moldy or over-sprayed grains, rat droppings, bugs and mites—all unfit for human consumption—are allowed in foods for dogs and cats. Some of the contaminants are known carcinogens, and we believe this has contributed to the high rates of cancer and shortened lifespans among our pets.

Since the USDA created organic standards in 2002, many dog and cat products have emerged. There are two classifications, “organic” containing 95% or more organic ingredients, and “made with organic ingredients” with 70% or more organic content. While the USDA makes no health claims for organic foods, here’s why we think organic is better:

## **No Antibiotics, Hormones, or Animal By-Products**

Organic meat, poultry, and eggs come from animals fed only certified organic vegetarian feed, free of antibiotics, growth hormones, animal digest or animal by-products, which can transmit serious disease like mad cow (BSE). In factory farming, antibiotics are routinely added to the feed to counter diseases caused by filthy conditions and stressed out animals.

## **No Harmful Pesticides or Fertilizers**

Organic crops are grown without chemical pesticides, synthetic fertilizers, sewage sludge, bioengineering or irradiation. Organic farmers use compost, fish fertilizers, natural insect predators, crop rotation, and plant diversity to grow better crops.

## **More Humane Conditions for Food Animals**

Unlike factory farming, with its stressful overcrowding and indoor confinement, organically raised animals have pastures and yards, proper bedding, and enough open space to practice the behaviors of their species. They are not injured from standing on metal grating, sickened from living in their own manure, de-beaked so they don’t peck one another or cramped in small wire cages.

## **Kind to the Environment**

Organic farmers use renewable resources to conserve our precious soil and water for future generations. They rotate crops to put nutrients back into the soil and prevent millions of tons of chemicals from being dumped into the environment, protecting our planet and ourselves.

## **New Minimum Pet Food Standards**

Many consumers wrongly assume that pet foods are as closely regulated as human food, and that recent safety bans against the spread of mad cow apply to pet food also. While organic pet food is the ideal, at the very least we want to see pet food standards upgraded to match the human standard. Our pets are worthy of the added care and expense.

Also recommended are free-range and traditionally farmed food products from small farmers and suppliers that, while not participating in the USDA organic certification program, use similar drug-free and chemical free methods of raising plants and animals.

## **ALL THE BEST PET CARE**

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