

THE SCOTTIE GUARDIAN

Quarterly Newsletter of the STCA's Health Trust Fund

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Welcome to the second edition of *The Scottie Guardian*, the quarterly e-Newsletter of the STCA's Health Trust Fund!



This issue is dedicated to a topic that is important to all of us, Nutrition. We do not presume to cover all the aspects on this vast topic, but rather to provide some basics, answer a question or two, and stimulate some conversation. We know there are many Scottie owners out there who know a great deal about this topic, and we hope you will be willing to share your thoughts and experiences with us all!

Be sure to check out the Announcement for Regional Clubs regarding an opportunity for Bladder Cancer Screening that you don't want to miss!

Also, included in this issue is a Research News with an update from an important HTF supported study on Hemangiosarcoma from Tufts University School of Veterinary Medicine.

Our editor Ragin has a special message From the *Editor's Desk* you will not want to miss! And huge thanks to Ragin's assistant, Franny, who continues to excel in providing a readable and fun newsletter for you.

Let us know what you think!

Marcia Dawson, Chairman
hijinkscot@gmail.com



Franny's toes as she checked on her flowers. 5/9/19

Be sure to visit the STCA webpage at www.stca.biz for more details on Health and the Health Trust Fund pages, including

\$\$\$ Dog Food Labels 101 %%%

It's estimated that Americans will spend more than \$70 billion on their pets in 2019, and of that figure, \$32 billion will be shelled out on food. Pet stores and on-line businesses supply this huge, hungry market with a staggering variety of foods, treats, toys, and equipment. The food aisles in pet stores are colorful and impressive, but they are also overwhelming. Pet owners often become confused with so many options. Kibble? Semi-moist? Canned? Grain free? Limited ingredient? Organic? Raw? Mega company or boutique dog food producer? What is the healthiest choice for your dog, while still being affordable for you and hopefully palatable to him? *What is the best food??*

The answer to that question is, *there is no best food*. There are probably several that could work very well for your dog. And there is no one food that is perfect for all dogs, at all stages of their lives. One dog might thrive on one specific diet while another dog might react with digestive upset or weight gain on the very same food. How to choose?

First, consider your dog's age, activity level, breed, health and reproductive status.

An "all-purpose" dog food may not provide enough nutrients to meet the needs of all life stages. A puppy and his nursing mother have very different nutritional requirements than that chubby couch potato watching TV with you or your 14-year-old senior dozing by the fireplace. The dogs streaking around the Agility Trial course or the sighthounds running Lure Course put huge demands on their bodies, and they need special nutrition to support their activities. Does your dog have a sensitive stomach? Does he have a medical condition that requires a special diet? Physical characteristics, size, behavior, and overall health are all enormously important when choosing an appropriate dog food. How can you identify the right one?

Learn to read the label.

Pet food manufacturers are regulated by the USDA to follow certain requirements in the production and labeling of their foods. Front and center on the food container label, you will find:

- A Guaranteed Analysis
- List of Ingredients
- Statement of Nutritional Adequacy
- Food name, manufacturer and net weight
- Recommended feeding guidelines
- Caloric content



These are the core bits of information that you need to understand. The pretty colors, pictures and fancy wording are just a distraction. So, let's take a closer look.

•Guaranteed Analysis-

This breakdown tells you the minimum amount (percent) of crude protein and crude fat in the diet, and the maximum crude fiber and moisture in the food, on an "as-fed" basis. As Fed basis refers to the amount of water in the diet right out of the bag or can. Dry kibble is typically 10-12% moisture, while canned food is typically 75% -78% moisture. If you want to compare the nutritional levels in a kibble vs a canned food, for example, you will need to convert the wet foods to a dry matter basis, using a formula devised by the USDA.

(continued on next page...)

***Extra Credit** Read more at this website:

[https://www.fda.gov/animalveterinary/resourcesforyou/ucm047113.htm#Guaranteed Analysis](https://www.fda.gov/animalveterinary/resourcesforyou/ucm047113.htm#Guaranteed%20Analysis)

Additionally, if the food guarantees that it is low-fat or is fortified with specific vitamins or minerals, then the amounts of these items must be listed.

But what, you may ask, are the target numbers for *my dog*?? Consider again the life stage and condition and needs of your own dog. That senior Scottie napping by the fire *should not* get a 40% protein, 18% fat diet. That Border Collie running agility might need *at least* a 35% protein, 20% fat diet to keep up the pace. And the average adult dog sitting at your feet right now might do just fine on a 22% protein and 8% fat kibble.

•List of Ingredients

According to Dr. Jerry Klein, Officer, an important first step is to understand the ingredient list. It should include a protein source (meat and/or carbohydrate source, fiber, vegetable oil) and various minerals. Read the list: what do



Dr. Jerry Klein

AKC's Chief Veterinary Officer is to ensure that the ingredients will consist of a protein source (meat or fish), a grain or carbohydrate source, a fat (animal fat or added vitamins and minerals) and you see?

Dogs are omnivores, and meat is a major ingredient in canine diets. So, meat of some kind (chicken or lamb or fish) in first place is a good thing, right? Maybe. Dog food companies list the individual ingredients in descending order by weight. If the first ingredient listed is chicken, you might think that the diet is mostly a meat based food. But chicken (or any meat) carries a lot of water (weight), so it is listed first because it is *heavier*. Check out the next few ingredients. These may be things like rice, rice bran, brown rice, lentils, oats, barley, beet pulp, and corn gluten meal. Even though the meat is listed first, by the time you add all the fiber and carbohydrate sources together, this diet is actually far more plant based than meat based. Another protein source that you might see are the meat and fish meals, which are high quality, processed dry ingredients that can increase the meat portion of the diet substantially (and the price). Generally speaking the 5-6 ingredients listed before the fat source constitute the bulk of the diet.

A well-balanced diet must also include an appropriate number of minerals, vitamins, certain essential amino acids (from proteins), and specific essential fatty acids (from fats). These components are needed to build and maintain tissue and carry out biological reactions, and the necessary amounts vary somewhat with the dog's stage of life (puppy, adolescent, adult, pregnancy, senior, etc.).

Should all the ingredients listed be something you might serve to your family? Not necessarily.

Dr. Klein writes: “A word about byproducts: While we may not want to eat them, byproducts are not necessarily a bad addition in dog food. They include parts such as the liver, which is rich in vitamin A. Other byproducts include blood, brains, bone, stomach, and cleaned intestines. Meat meal may also contain ingredients we consider byproducts. It sounds gross, but your dog might not agree.”

****More Extra Credit**** For a detailed list of pet food ingredients with definitions, go to the following site:

<https://talkspetfood.aafco.org/whatisinpetfood>

*Statement of Nutritional Adequacy AAFCO



The Association of American Feed Control Officers (AAFCO) has established a scientific based profile of complete and balanced nutritional needs for dogs for the following stages:

- Reproduction
- Growth
- Maintenance
- All life stages

Many dog foods claim to be “complete and balanced” or “100 percent nutritious.” These aren’t just marketing terms. Dr. Klein says, “The phrase means that the food has met specific standards and provides complete and balanced nutrition for the indicated stages, as determined by AAFCO.” The food *has* to contain the proper amount and ratio of essential nutrients for the needs of a healthy dog. So, the good news is, you don’t have to be a feed formulator or a nutritionist to figure out what you need to feed your dog! AAFCO has established this already for you. AAFCO does not do food trials or enforce the guidelines. The pet food companies comply with them by choice. Look for the AAFCO statement on the label.

Take home message: Choosing a high-quality food from the hundreds of available brands and formulas can be challenging. The pet nutrition industry is very competitive, and many of the commercially available foods are very good, balanced diets. Finding the right diet for your dog can be a trial and error process. But maybe now, when you look at the label, you will have a better understanding of the basics. Amounts to feed, special diets, nutrient levels and types of ingredients are all good topics to discuss with your veterinarian, for the best care of your own individual dog.





WHAT ABOUT THOSE RAW DIETS? ONE PERSON'S PERSPECTIVE

Joanne Orth, Ph.D.



As many of us know, there's been a lot of discussion about raw diets for dogs, meals comprised of natural, raw ingredients like chicken, beef, turkey, vegetables, etc. Like many, I've been skeptical, recognizing that a lot of research has gone into formulating and balancing the processed, kibble-like foods that most of us feed our dogs. After spending time researching and choosing a diet, I believe that I'm doing a good job giving my Scotties the very best combination of nutrients, vitamins and minerals that's available on the market. I still believe this. But I've also come to recognize that there may be other factors in a fully balanced, raw diet that can provide extra benefits in some situations. Here's a brief summary of one person's experience – mine – with a raw diet.

One of my Scotties, who is now closing in on 12, has been challenged for most of his life by chronic, unrelenting skin problems, along with some GI symptoms, including intermittent colitis. He was diagnosed early on with a 'food allergy', based on a stomach biopsy that indicated inflammation consistent with this diagnosis. Over the years, I've fed him a non-allergenic, prescription diet, along with recurring rounds of steroids and antibiotics. This has improved the GI symptoms and, to some extent, the skin issues. But his skin problems have become more resistant and slowly worsened, and he has been regularly developing allergic dermatitis and skin staph infections. After multiple treatments with steroids, antibiotics, etc., only short-term improvements appeared. Frustrated and out of options, I chatted with a vet tech whose dog had similar problems that were improved by a switch to a fully balanced raw diet. What the heck, I thought, let's try it. I started my boy on the same raw diet, supplemented with some of his regular prescription, non-allergenic kibble. The bottom line: it's been about nine months, and his skin is perfect! No more crusty spots, no more oiliness and not a staph "collarette" - those ugly, raised red rings – in sight. A great outcome, but I can't give you a definite "why". My suspicion is that the raw, unprocessed food contains small but important amounts of factors – hormones, rare vitamins, etc. – that are destroyed by processing and not added back to commercial foods. If you read the label on any dog food, you'll see the list of what's added after processing: common and important vitamins, minerals, etc. I suspect that, in the case of my dog, it's the rare factors that aren't added back after processing in commercial diets but remain in the raw diet that have made the difference.

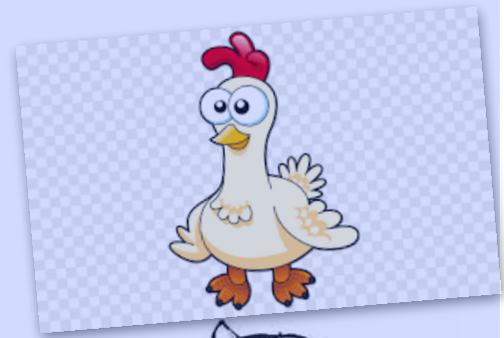
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So, in this one case, a raw diet has been super helpful, and I'll continue to use it. But there are a few important concerns. First, using a *balanced* raw diet is critical, since dogs need a full spectrum of nutrients, just like humans. I chose a turkey diet, recommended by our vet tech, who's had experience with the brand. It's fully balanced, including meat, bone, cartilage, meats, vegetables and fruits, all certified organic. It's shipped frozen, divided into 8 oz., separable packets. Like any raw food, it requires special handling – thawed overnight in the fridge, then kept chilled and useful for only two days. And careful handling is a must: washing the food bowl and utensils in soapy water after use, diligent hand washing, etc. For me, the extra effort has been worth it. My boy's skin is normal – a few scars from old problems – and his coat is the thickest and best it's ever been. I can't identify the specific factors in the food that are responsible, but I have no doubt of the source – that raw diet!



brand. It's balanced, turkey ground tendon, organ plus



*****For details, contact Joanne Orth at orthjo@comcast.net**



ANNOUNCEMENT REGIONAL CLUBS TAKE NOTE



The HTF is offering an opportunity for your clubs!

Prevention and early detection is the name of the game for Bladder Cancer in our dogs. To that end, the HTF will contribute \$2,000 to as many as three Regional Clubs to host a Bladder Screening Clinic in 2020 for your members and other Scottie owners in your area.

What? An HTF-sponsored one day TCC Bladder Cancer Screening Ultrasound clinic in 2020, hosted and organized by (up to 3) STCA regional Scottie clubs. If well received, the HTF will consider another round of clinics for 2021.

Where? At a local veterinarian's clinic with the requisite equipment and skill to scan bladders and detect any abnormalities. Another option would be to arrange with a mobile imaging specialist to visit an appropriate and convenient location on a specific date for the Club.

Who? All STCA Regional Clubs are encouraged to submit a proposal to the HTF for review. This proposal will include all the details of scheduling, organizing and carrying out this clinic with details of the veterinarian and/or specialist in charge. The Club would be responsible for setting up the date, location and times, publicity and recruiting members' dogs for the screening. Clubs will decide individually if they will charge participants a minimal fee for this service. It is suggested that each regional club set up an *ad hoc* committee to organize the details for the Club and for submission of a proposal to the HTF.

Why? Early detection of TCC is critical for a successful outcome in treatment. By funding this clinic, the HTF will be using dollars in support of Scottie owners pursuing early screening, and the benefits of early detection and therapy.

Deadlines: Clubs that wish to be considered must submit their proposals to the HTF Secretary, Helen Prince, by no later than September 30, 2019. This proposal can be either mailed USPS or emailed to Helen as a PDF document. The decision for the clubs will be made at the HTF meeting over Montgomery County weekend in October.

Helen Prince, Secretary STCA HTF

haprince@comcast.net / [2910 Allspice Rd, Port Republic, MD 20676-2619](https://www.google.com/maps/place/2910+Allspice+Rd,+Port+Republic,+MD+20676-2619)

Questions may be directed to Marcia Dawson, HTF Chairman: hjinkscot@gmail.com or 317-430-1272.

Note: *Participants will receive a preliminary report from the ultrasonographer on the day of the screening. If any questions arise from the screening, the participants will be responsible for further diagnostics with their own veterinarians.*

GLAD YOU ASKED!!



This column will appear in each issue of the Newsletter. You ask the question and we'll attempt to answer it.

Q: *Is it true that a Grain-free diet can cause heart disease in my dog?*

A: Yes, there is evidence that this is true, and we need to take it seriously. Research is underway to understand this alarming connection between grain-free diets high in legumes and Dilated Cardiomyopathy in dogs that were fed this diet over a period of time. Here is an important message from the AKC on this subject

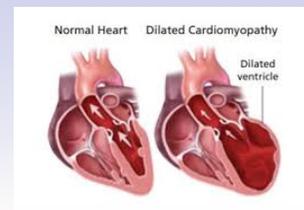
GRAIN FREE FOODS AND HEART DISEASE IN DOGS IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM THE AKC

“The FDA is investigating a potential dietary link between canine dilated cardiomyopathy (DCM) and dogs eating certain grain-free pet foods. The foods of concern are those containing legumes such as peas or lentils, other legume seeds, or potatoes listed as primary ingredients. The FDA began investigating this matter after it received reports of DCM in dogs that had been eating these diets for a period of months to years. DCM itself is not considered rare in dogs, but these reports are unusual because the disease occurred in breeds of dogs not typically prone to the disease.” Dr. Jerry Klein

Is this a real warning? Should we be concerned? YES.

Go to this page on the AKC Website to read more.

<https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/nutrition/what-you-need-to-know-about-the-fdas-grain-free-diet-alert/>



Do you shop on Amazon? Did to the HTF and do your can make a difference by using the STCA Health Trust Fund as receive a percentage of your find out more:



you know that you can donate shopping at the same time? You AmazonSmile and designating the charity of your choice to purchase. Follow this link to smile.amazon.com

RESEARCH

News and Updates



The AKC Canine Health Foundation (CHF) periodically shares updates from the principal investigators of HTF supported grants. In

of *The Guardian*, present a from London, at the Tufts School of Veterinary Medicine.



research
this issue

we
summary
Cheryl
DVM, PhD
University

Dr. London's research is aimed at understanding the genetic pathways of Hemangiosarcoma, a silent and lethal cancer that affects so many dogs. She writes, "Hemangiosarcoma (HSA) is a cancer of the cells lining the blood vessels that is very aggressive and has nearly always spread by the time it is diagnosed. HSA accounts for 5-7% of all cancers in dogs resulting in approximately 25,000-50,000 new cases per year. The treatment of choice is surgical removal followed by chemotherapy administration. Unfortunately, despite aggressive therapy, the majority of dogs diagnosed succumb to their disease within 6-8 months.

Virtually no improvements in outcome for affected dogs have occurred in the past 30 years despite multiple clinical trials and research efforts."

Dr. London and her team are working on a known molecular pathway called the P13K/AKT/mTOR which has previously been implicated in the pathogenesis of many cancers, including HSA. They have now

characterized the expression and function of these mutations in HSA tumor tissue and cell lines, and are using the information to investigate new methods to block or inhibit the pathway, as a form of targeted therapy to kill tumor cells.

Dr. London adds: "We have extended our collaboration with the Broad Institute to more completely explore the genetic targets in HSA and develop techniques for minimally invasive detection of HSA (i.e., a genetic screening test) using a new technique called the blood biopsy. Over the next 6 month we should be able to finish generating the cell lines and then begin the identification of potentially new targets for therapy."

The HTF is proud to have contributed to Dr. London's important research, and we look forward to reading more about her vital work.

Hemangiosarcoma (HSA) is an aggressive, usually lethal canine tumor that affects certain breeds in high numbers, in particular the Golden Retrievers, Boxers and Portuguese Water dogs. But no dog is immune from this cancer, including Scotties, and there have been several cases of this insidious killer growing secretly in a Scottie, in the spleens and/or around the hearts of our dogs, ending in a sudden and catastrophic bleeding event when the tumor ruptures. The HTF pledges to support HSA research until we have some answers to this devastating disease.

Read more about Hemangiosarcoma at the following links:

http://www.modianolab.org/cancer/cancer_hemangiosarcoma.shtml

<http://www.akcchf.org/educational-resources/podcasts/canine-hemangiosarcoma.html>



From Your Editor's Desk

Happy May, although as I write this it's snowing here in Colorado. Springtime in the Rockies, as they say...

This month I'm posting an important message to my Scottie buddies...

What would happen if you or your fur sisters and brothers got lost? When we report the loss to the police, our keeper(s) will be asked to supply a description and, if available, a photo. So, I want to introduce you to the pet driver's license! (Mom tells me that all of their fur babies have had them.)

There are a number of companies that sell pet driver's licenses so I won't endorse any one in particular.

The company I used offers two sets for \$28.85. Each set includes six wee key chain tags and two that are the size of Mom and Dad's driver's license. They are made of sturdy plastic, too. Dad and Mom are carrying one of each size. Of course, I'm chipped and have identifying information on my dog tags but we all know that tags get lost and it may take a long time for that chip to be scanned. Make it a priority to get a pet identification card (like a pet driver's license) soon!!

Ragin (a.k.a. Lamb Chop)



The Scottish Terrier Club of America's Health Trust fund is a 501c3 organization established in 1994 for the purpose of supporting research to benefit all Scotties, investigating and monitoring health issues in the breed using registries, databases and health surveys, and communicating important new health information and research findings to all Scottie owners. All donations made to the HTF are tax deductible to the extent allowed by the law.