

Animal proteins used in EU pet food

To ensure the quality and safety of pet food products, the EU sets out strict rules governing the use of ingredients. The pet food industry mainly uses surplus products from the human food chain. Animal proteins must come from animals that have been slaughtered under veterinary supervision or controlled fish or seafood and meet the very high standards of EU legislation.

What animal-based ingredients are used in pet food?

There are many different parts of the animal that are used in pet food. These are often parts that might not sound appealing to the consumer but are enjoyed by our pets. For instance – kidney, spleen, lungs, pig’s trotters, udders and parts of fish left after the processing – are commonly used in pet food. These ingredients provide an excellent source of protein, essential amino acids and other valuable nutrients. The priority of the pet food manufacturer is to source nutritionally valuable ingredients to produce a high quality, nutritionally balanced and palatable pet food.

Animal based ingredients NOT permitted in pet food

- Any ingredients from an animal that has NOT passed vet inspections as being fit for human consumption at the time of slaughter
- Waste products, road kill, diseased animals etc.

What are meat and animal derivatives?

You may have seen the term ‘meat and animal derivatives’ on pet food labels. This simply refers to the animal based ingredients in the recipe and is a term prescribed in law. Most pet foods are made from a recipe using several ingredients which are all combined into a food to meet, in part or entirely, the daily nutritional requirements of the pet. They can be listed on the pet food label under a category description such as ‘meat and animal derivatives’ or as a full ingredients list.

Why to use this term?

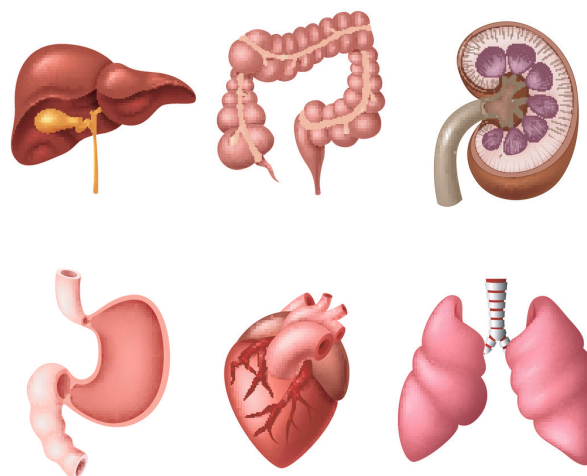
Is it to hide ingredients? No, the term comes from the related labelling legislation the pet food industry must comply with. It doesn’t matter if you use the term ‘meat and animal derivatives’ or list all the animal derived ingredients separately (chicken meal, beef, liver etc.) because all the ingredients are subject to the same strict rules for quality and safety, and all recipes are carefully formulated to ensure they meet the pets’ nutritional needs and are palatable for the animal.

What is a meat meal?

Meals are animal by-products that have been heat treated and dried with most of the moisture and the fat removed. As a result, it provides a concentrated protein source.

Common sources of protein apart from meat products from slaughtered animals may include:

- Hunted animals – after veterinary inspection
- Fish and seafood – from controlled sources
- Dairy products and eggs – inspected
- Vegetable protein from soybeans and other legumes
- Cereals and potatoes (as well as providing a good source of energy, cereals can provide a proportion of the protein)



More advice can be found at www.fediaf.org

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