

MAKE YOUR OWN DOG FOOD

We have sought the perfect dog food for years and have never been completely happy with our choices. We breed champion Weimaraners and have had as many as nine at once in the house. Yes, I know, that's way over the top. We're down to six now which is still too many but headed in the right direction. Point is, we burn through a lot of dog food.

Early on, like most owners, we fed kibble. Not the stuff on sale at Big Boxes, but top quality kibble from feed stores heavily researched from the best sources. A few years ago, we realized that even the best (aka most expensive) kibble can sit in a warehouse for three months unrefrigerated while meat in my fridge goes bad in a week. That just ain't right. There's junk in kibble I don't want in my dogs.

Next we turned to raw, dehydrated food. After a couple of years, we thought: 'Why buy processed and dehydrated food and pay to ship it in packaging?' If the goal is for our pack to eat wholesome food, I'm pretty sure they sell that in grocery stores. Let's just make our own. (picture light bulb here)

With a jump start from a couple of good books and some revisions from our holistic vet, we concocted the following (remember, this is for six large dogs):

Breakfast

24 ounces of beans of all colors
16 ounce package of frozen veggies (not corn or onions)
two hard-boiled eggs per dog
drizzle of oil (canola, vegetable, olive etc.)
supplements as need for joint lubrication etc.
nutritional yeast

We slow cook the beans in a crock pot all night. The veggies cool the beans which thaw the veggies.

Dinner

24 ounces of white rice
16 ounce package of frozen veggies (not corn or onions)
two raw chicken legs per dog
24 ounces of nuked sweet potato or yam chunks
appropriate human dinner left-overs
2 fish oil caps per dog

We have a rice cooker that takes about twenty minutes.

Of course you can change this up this to add variety but this seems to be a great basic menu. After six months, our dogs look great, healthy, shiny coats and have abundant energy (Weim owners cringe here). Something else I really like is that all these foods have an ingredient list of one word e.g. eggs = eggs, rice = rice...you get it. Wholesome food our ancestors ate with gusto; not ingredient lists the size of a short story and...*nothing* from China.

Let's talk about cost. This is running about \$1.00 per meal per dog That's about what we spent for top-shelf kibble and dehydrated dog food. I buy the beans, rice and veggies from the Dollar Store and the eggs from a nearby Grocery Outlet (six dozen for \$7, a real deal).

We also enjoy shopping for and cooking for our kids. A little Miles on the boom box and a glass of Merlot and it's a *Big Chill* event. Why shouldn't we put as much effort and joy into making our dogs' food as we do our own?

If you saw what we prepare, you'd say: 'Hey, I'd eat that.' 'Nuff said.