NATURAL
Veterinary Diet™
Enhanced with Vitamins, Minerals & Other Nutrients

Introduction: In March 2021, the World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA) Global Nutrition Committee updated its guidelines on selecting pet foods.[1] The helpful resource was developed as a tool for both veterinary professionals and pet owners to, as WSAVA puts it, separate "required and useful information" from "marketing...designed to promote product sales." To that end, we at BLUE created this document to address the questions posed by the WSAVA guidelines. We encourage you to reach out to our team members if you have any further questions.

What to look for in a brand

1. Do they employ a Nutritionist? Who formulates the diet?
    a. **At Blue Buffalo, we have maintained a dedicated in-house Research & Development team since the brand's inception in 2003. Spanning both maintenance and veterinary-exclusive therapeutic diets, BLUE has published over 600 scientific studies and holds more than 50 U.S. patents. Our Pet Innovation, Technology, and Quality (ITQ) team includes veterinarians, PhD animal nutritionists, food scientists, flavor chemists, cereal chemists, biochemists, along with masters level animal nutritionists. Diets are formulated by BLUE full-time PhD animal nutritionists. This team oversees formulation and testing to ensure compliance with our guaranteed analyses and product claims. ITQ also conducts ongoing research and product testing to provide veterinarians and their clients with the best possible nutritional options. Please email info@bluevetconnect.com to obtain a current list of Blue Buffalo nutritionists.**
2. What is the quality control process for ingredients and finished products? Does the diet meet the AAFCO profile based on analysis using a nutrient database or on chemical analysis of the finished product?
    a. **All Blue Buffalo diets are formulated using state-of-the-art software that utilizes an up-to-date nutrient profile on each ingredient, and takes into account specific manufacturing processes and shelf-life. These formulas are designed under the guidance of PhD animal nutritionists, veterinarians, and food scientists.**
    b. **In addition to meeting AAFCO nutrient profiles and nutritional analyses for the intended life stage, AAFCO feeding trials have been conducted on the NVD dry formulas and many of the over-the-counter diets to further establish complete and balanced nutrition.**
    c. **The Blue Buffalo 6-point Quality Assurance program ensures that all BLUE ingredients and diets exceed industry standard in the areas of procurement, testing, manufacturing, and packaging.**
        i. **Ingredient sourcing protocols require rigorous initial screening of ingredients to meet all specifications. Our Sourcing group identifies quality suppliers, and our Quality department screens these suppliers ensuring compliance to our specifications to verify ingredient quality before ingredients arrive at our manufacturing locations. Testing certifications and periodic quality control audits of suppliers ensures consistent quality.**
        ii. **Incoming ingredients arrive at our manufacturing locations and undergo laboratory testing to ensure only ingredients that meet our specifications are being used in BLUE products. Every care is taken to ensure not only the nutritional quality but also the safety and integrity of the ingredients.**

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iii. **Manufacturing protocols include ingredient traceability and formula verification as well as equipment logs to verify all settings.**
iv. **In-process checks are mandated to achieve superior quality finished products including microbiologic testing, magnets, and metal detectors for physical contaminants, calibration and verification of all weights and measures for uniformity, and sample retention of all lots.**
v. **Packaging utilizes metal detectors or x-ray on bagged product, and packaging integrity is examined for seals and tensile strength.**
vi. **Finished products undergo post-process on-site and/or third-party laboratory testing to ensure BLUE products meet our specifications and quality standards.**
vii. **Announced and unannounced on-going quality audits on all ingredient suppliers and manufacturing facilities are a regular part of quality assurance.**

3. What kind of product research or nutrition studies have been conducted? Is it published in peer-reviewed journals?
    a. **Blue Buffalo products undergo stringent tests that include and are not limited to microbiology, nutrient, shelf-life, stool quality, palatability, digestibility, urine pH, and product efficacy. Summaries of these studies for BLUE Natural Veterinary Diet formulas are provided in a series of Blue Buffalo Clinical Reports, and are updated annually as additional studies are completed.**
    b. **In addition, Blue Buffalo is committed to sharing the results of our product and technology research with veterinarians and nutrition scientists via presentations at conferences and submissions to peer-reviewed journals. To obtain a current list of our published, peer-reviewed journal articles, please contact info@bluevetconnect.com.**

What to look for on a label

1. Is there a Nutrition Adequacy Statement (NAS)? Is it a complete diet? Does the food match the nutritional needs of the individual dog or cat?
    a. **All Blue Buffalo pet food product labels identify the contents as complete and balanced, intermittent, or complementary, as the product is intended.**
    b. **All Blue Buffalo pet foods that are complete and balanced indicate on the label the life stages for which that product is appropriate.**
        i. **Adult maintenance**
        ii. **All life stages, which includes:**
            1. **Adult maintenance**
            2. **Growth (in the case of dogs, including both or either small or large breed puppies)**
            3. **Gestation and lactation**
2. How many calories per gram or serving of food?
    a. **Blue Buffalo packaging, websites, and the BLUE Natural Veterinary Diet Product Guide all include information on the caloric value of each Blue Buffalo formula.**

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3. Does the company provide immediate contact information such as phone number or email address?
    a. **Blue Buffalo product packaging provides contact information including the website and call center at 800-919-2833.**
4. Who makes the food?
    a. **Blue Buffalo products, including those sold outside the US, are produced through a hybrid network of owned and contracted manufacturing facilities. This network enables us to support continuous and rapid product innovation. All contracted manufacturing partners are required to undergo an intensive quality assurance certification process that can take up to a year before we allow them to manufacture any of our products. When facilities are authorized to manufacture our products, they must follow strict quality protocols and dictated specifications which are overseen by our team of specialists, and documented thoroughly via audits routinely. Dedicated ITQ teams are assigned to each co-manufacturer and announced and unannounced quality audits of all manufacturing facilities are a regular part of BLUE's quality assurance programs.**
    b. **Blue Buffalo is proud of the two state-of-the-art Heartland manufacturing plants in Joplin, Missouri (established 2014) and Richmond, Indiana (established 2018). These two plants are certified with the Safe Quality Food Institute and manufacture the majority of our Blue Buffalo dry pet food every year.**
    c. **Blue Buffalo has a new treat manufacturing plant in Joplin, Missouri.**
    d. **All Blue Buffalo dry diets and Natural Veterinary Diets are manufactured in the USA.**

Visit www.bluevetconnect.com to learn more.

[1]https://wsava.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Selecting-a-pet-food-for-your-pet-updated-2021_WSAVAGlobal-Nutrition-Toolkit.pdf

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