1-1-1960

How much food should I give my dog?

F C. Wilkinson

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More dogs die from over-feeding than from underfeeding says
F. C. WILKINSON,
Veterinary Surgeon

How Much Food Should I Give My Dog?

This is a question which every veterinary surgeon has heard hundreds of times, and one that it is impossible to answer in general terms because dogs differ so much in their food requirements and because the nutrient values of various foodstuffs vary considerably.

Naturally, the size and weight of the dog will be the best guide to the quantity of food he requires. A dog which is merely a household pet does not need as much food as a sheep-dog or cattle-dog which is working hard every day.

When kangaroos and rabbits were more plentiful than they are today, they provided a substantial part of the average farm dog's rations, augmented periodically with offal from sheep slaughtered for household use.

At the present time, however, meat for the dogs is in short supply on many farms and it is worth remembering that meat need only comprise about one-quarter of the ration, the rest of the diet being made up of carbohydrate foods. Even the 25 per cent. of meat can be effectively replaced by meatmeal.

Among many dog owners, certain misconceptions exist concerning the value of nutrients in foodstuffs other than meat. Dogs for instance, contrary to popular belief, digest and absorb starches and sugars (carbohydrates) as efficiently as we ourselves do. Carbohydrate diets supplemented with vitamins and minerals can be used successfully to make up 50 per cent. to 60 per cent. of the dog's total diet. Fats also are readily digested and efficiently used by dogs, and lard and beef tallow can be used for up to 10 per cent. of the ration. In actual fact the digestive system of the dog is very like that of humans and it can eat and utilise similar foods. Thus a wide variety of foodstuffs can be fed to dogs.

A working dog of 30 lb weight should receive a total feed of 1 lb. of food each

A USEFUL GUIDE FOR FEEDING DOGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Breed</th>
<th>Body Weight lb.</th>
<th>Whole Meat per Day 5-10</th>
<th>Biscuits per Day 2-3</th>
<th>Dog (or Substitutes) per Day 6-9</th>
<th>Total Food per Day 3-6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Pekingese, Miniature Poms, etc.</td>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>2-4</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>3-6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Pomeranians, Cairn Terriers, etc.</td>
<td>10-15</td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>6-9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Pugs, Pomeranians, Sealyhams, Scotch Terriers, Fox Terriers, etc.</td>
<td>15-20</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Cockers, Spaniels, Irish Terriers, Kelpies and Cattle Dogs, etc.</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>10-12</td>
<td>8-9</td>
<td>11-14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Kelpies, Cattle Dogs, Spaniels, etc.</td>
<td>30-40</td>
<td>8-10</td>
<td>12-16</td>
<td>lb.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Bulldogs, Airedales, Field Spaniels, etc.</td>
<td>40-50</td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>1-1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Dalmatians, Chows, Small Greyhounds, Collies, etc.</td>
<td>50-60</td>
<td>2-1</td>
<td>8-9</td>
<td>11-14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Irish Setters, Pointers, Retrievers, Greyhounds, Absatians and dogs of similar size</td>
<td>60-75</td>
<td>1-1</td>
<td>10-12</td>
<td>11-14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Large Absatians, Bloodhounds and dogs of similar size</td>
<td>75-100</td>
<td>11-2</td>
<td>12-15</td>
<td>21-3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Great Danes and dogs of similar size</td>
<td>100-150</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>1-1</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. St. Bernards and dogs of similar size</td>
<td>150-200</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11-2</td>
<td>4-5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
day given in a single feed at night. Of this amount, ideally about one half should be whole meat and half a cereal food such as pollard, porridge, breakfast food or dog biscuits. (Vegetables such as potatoes can be substituted for the cereal food). This amount of 1 lb. should be slightly reduced if the dog is to work the next day. A slightly heavier dog of 40 lb. weight should receive a total amount of 1½ lb. of food each day. If the dog does not receive any bones then about a teaspoonful of bone-meal should be added daily to the food.

When meat is not available, meatmeal can be substituted. Many working dogs have a diet consisting entirely of pollard and meatmeal (¾ lb. pollard to ¼ lb. meatmeal), on which they work and thrive. Dogs should therefore be fed according to their body weight as in the accompanying table. They should receive some meat or meat product, some cereal type food and vegetables if they will eat them. Ideally the prepared food should be fed once a day and preferably at night time.

A final point should be noted—that is, overfeeding is a commoner complaint than underfeeding. Fat, lazy dogs are useless for work, have a shorter life span and commonly suffer from digestive upsets.

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Journal of Agriculture Vol 1 No 2 1960