



ADDITIVES AND PET FOOD

FACT SHEET 8

INTRODUCTION

Despite the growing awareness of the presence of additives in both pet and human foods, a great many prepared pet foods contain artificial additives. For the most part, these are preservatives, colours and flavours, added to help preserve the food and to improve its palatability, texture and appearance.

One of the main problems is that we all expect pet food to have a uniform texture, odour and colour as well as a long shelf life. Both cats and dogs will eat a food regardless of its colour, which is usually only added to make it more appealing to us and to hide some of the less desirable ingredients that might be added. So, in this context, it is not strictly necessary to add colours to pet food.

There should also be no need for artificial flavouring or additives to enhance the palatability or acceptance of the food. Good quality pet food should, in fact, not need any additives of this type at all.

A similar situation exists with preservatives, which are largely added to dry pet foods to prevent the foods going rancid due to oxidation.

WORRIES ABOUT ADDITIVES

A growing number of pet owners and veterinary surgeons are becoming aware of the detrimental effects of some of the artificial additives included in pet foods. Most pet food manufacturers are not required to list all the specific additives in their foods and some are reluctant to disclose exactly what they add and in what quantities.

Some time ago, veterinary surgeons, particularly in the USA, were becoming aware of the problems that some artificial additives can cause. During the 1970s an epidemic of chronic degenerative diseases seemed to be appearing. Around this time, preventative treatment had wiped out many of the common viral diseases and antibiotics were readily available to deal with bacterial infections. Despite this, many veterinary surgeons were aware that another disease factor was now active, causing problems such as allergies, arthritis, dermatitis, cardiac disease, liver failure, kidney disease, diabetes and cancer.

They also observed a notable difference in the conformation of the dogs fed on modern commercial diets (containing chemical residues, preservatives and colourings) compared to those fed on natural diets based on fresh beef, lamb, vegetables and grains. Rather than living to a good age, the average life-span of dogs at that time that were fed on modern, commercial foods appeared to be considerably shorter when compared to those reared more naturally. The conclusion of several leading veterinary surgeons was that chemical additives and residues were largely to blame.

Denes Foods

As a result, some pet food manufacturers are using preservatives, antioxidants and other additives from natural sources instead of artificial ones.

All **Denes** recipes are made from high quality materials, with the meat ingredients coming from animals passed fit for human consumption.

No recipe has added salt or contains any soya and where natural additives are included, only high-grade products are used.

Natural additives include carageenan (from seaweed) as a binding agent, rosemary and vitamins C and E as natural antioxidants and herbs to provide aroma and flavour as well as some natural vitamins and minerals.

Other useful Denes fact sheets to read include:

- Dietary antioxidants
- Dry pet foods

If you have any queries concerning your pet's health or feeding problems, you can contact us for free pet care advice by:

- Visiting our website www.denes.com
- Emailing us at info@denes.com
- Calling us on **01273 325364** Mon-Fri, 9am – 12Noon
- Writing to us at:
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