

## Cook's Corner

**Mix & Match: Find the right combination of fresh ingredients and commercial foods for your dog's diet.**

*By Mary Straus*

Nothing beats a properly prepared homemade diet for nutrition and appeal, but not everyone has the time, knowledge and resources to do this for their dog. That doesn't mean commercial dog food is your only choice, though. There is another option: combination diets. By adding fresh foods to your dog's commercial diet, you provide improved nutrition and more tasty variety for your dog.

### The value of adding protein

Dogs thrive on protein. It helps build lean muscle, contributes to skin and coat health, supports the immune and central-nervous systems, and aids in wound healing. Puppies and seniors especially benefit from increased protein in the diet.

Dogs have no known nutritional requirement for carbohydrates. Yet most commercial foods, particularly dry kibble, are high in carbs and relatively low in protein. Carbohydrates are used in dog foods as an inexpensive source of calories and, in the case of kibble, to help hold the food together. Adding fresh, high-protein foods to a commercial diet can help correct this imbalance.

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