

## The Doberman Diet

**Help your Dobe be all it can be by feeding nutrient-rich meals.**

*By Christina Cox-Evick*

The Show Dobe For the Doberman Pinscher owner who plans on hitting the show circuit, stress becomes an elevated determinant when it comes to diet. Many dogs experience digestive upset when exposed to strange drinking water, noisy show conditions and constant contact with unfamiliar dogs. Acidophilus and yogurt can be beneficial to dogs suffering from gastrointestinal upsets such as diarrhea, vomiting or excessive gas. For those who aren't familiar with it, acidophilus is a concentrated source of probiotics (friendly bacteria) available in liquid, powder or capsule form.

An area that suffers visibly when a dog is over-stressed is the skin and coat, a consequence that can quickly kill an otherwise promising show career. Excessive dandruff, skin irritations or just a lackluster appearance can immediately push your show dog toward the end of the line. Margaret Bailey of Mount Perry, Ohio, has been a Doberman enthusiast for 32 years and has titled Dobs in conformation, obedience and agility. Bailey has found that her dogs handle stress most effectively when fed a high-fat food. The diet I feed has an 18 percent fat level. I believe this has kept my dogs coats shiny and healthy. Bailey adds that the high-calorie diet also provides the energy her dogs need to compete in a variety of canine arenas.

Are supplements necessary to achieve the special look of a show dog? Common sense supplementation can be beneficial, but the old cliché, Too much of a good thing could be bad for you, definitely holds true here. Although some vitamins such as C can be given separately, a balanced blend of vitamins and minerals is preferable to attempting supplementation with each individually. Excess can be dangerous. Veterinary technician and Doberman fancier Kim Poling of Columbus, Ohio, adds a vitamin and mineral supplement to her dogs diets in addition to feeding a premium brand. There is no doubt that commercial foods have come a long way nutritionally, but there is always room for improvement. Supplementing with a vitamin and mineral formula provides my dogs access to nutrients that they might otherwise find lacking.

Fatty acid supplements have also gained a following among dog fanciers. Oils such as flaxseed, safflower or combination supplements made specifically for dogs are popular choices. Poling gives her Dobermans vegetable oil. Although fatty acids are well known for their contributions to skin and coat health, they are essential for far more. Without an adequate supply of fatty acids, your dogs health can suffer just as it would were vitamins and minerals lacking. Correct body functioning depends on a quality source of fatty acids. Still, an owner should be careful not to get carried away. Adding oil to an already high-fat diet can be too much.