

Pet Food Deep Dive:

Using our Clean Label Enthusiasts Community to Uncover Attitudes and Behaviors

The Study

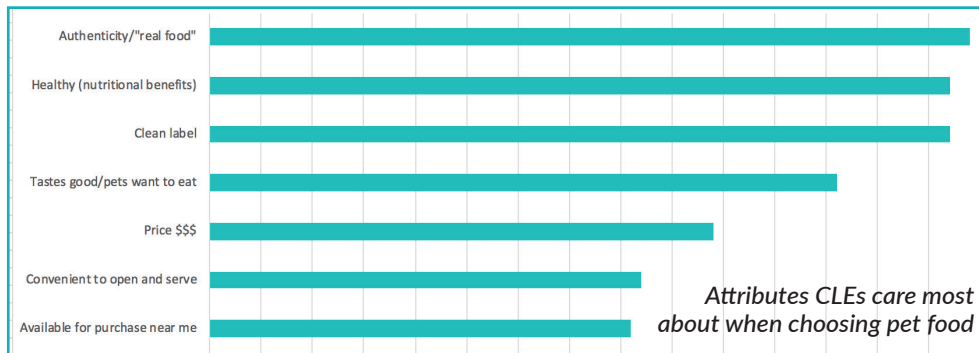
We know human food trends are impacting consumer behavior in the pet care industry. And just as a growing number of consumers are seeking clean labels for themselves, those shopping for pet food are putting more and more importance on buying clean label for their furry friends. InsightsNow set out to understand the thoughts, feelings and perceptions of pet-owning Clean Label Enthusiasts (CLE). Some questions we sought to uncover were:

- What are some examples of clean label pet food brands? What makes their labels clean?
- What ingredients are considered “not clean” when it comes to pet food? Why is that?
- What claims/benefits contribute to a desire to purchase a product? Which are meaningless?
- What attributes are most important in a pet food or treat?



The Process

We conducted a qualitative deep dive with members of our CLE community who (a) had pets and (b) said a clean label was “Extremely Important” to have a for pet food and pet treats. Participants screened according to our desired recruitment criteria logged onto our custom platform over the course of one day to answer approximately 30 open-ended questions. They returned to the platform later that day to address follow-up questions and moderator probes.



The Key Insights

Insight #1: CLE pet owners/guardians provide the best they can for their pets because they consider them family and their role is that of primary caregiver.

Insight #2: CLEs want the dietary makeup of their pets’ food to be as authentic and clean as their own because they value them as family members.

Insight #3: Because treats are given much less regularly and aren’t the primary source of nutrition for pets, Clean Labels on pet treats appear to be less important than Clean Labels on pet food.

“It’s my responsibility as a dog owner to make sure that I make the best decisions in terms of choosing food, treats, and supplements...”

“I don’t pay as close attention to the treats. As long as they are not super unhealthy, and the cats love them, I look at treats as exactly that—treats.”

“A clean label in the context of pet food and pet treats means no by products and chemicals added into the food.”

The Outcome

The Clean Label movement and the Pet Humanization trend both have implications for retailers and pet food manufacturers. This study revealed that CLE are looking for pet food labels that are as clean as those sought for food served to human family members—and that CLE might be projecting human emotions and needs onto their pets. This is manifested in the concept that dogs would enjoy a less clean, indulgent treat, with permissibility for a less clean label. For future success in this industry, it is necessary to understand the responsibility CLE pet owners feel for the health and wellness of their pet and find ways to convey that empathetic understanding with them through claims and other communications.

Want to take a deep dive into pet food buyer behavior to better inform your product and marketing decisions? Reach out to us:

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CLEAN LABEL ENTHUSIASTS™

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