



PawcredibleTM
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What "Natural" on Dog Food Labels Actually Means (And Why the Answer Surprises Most Owners)

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The Pet Food Manufacturers' Association (PFMA), the UK's official pet food industry body, has released guidance clarifying what "natural" means on dog food labels, addressing growing confusion among owners navigating packaging claims that are often vague or inconsistent. The guidance confirms that "natural" carries no legal definition under current UK pet food regulations, but is generally understood within the industry to describe ingredients derived from plant, animal, or mineral sources without synthetic chemical processing beyond traditional preparation methods. For British dog owners who increasingly scrutinise labels before purchasing, the guidance brings into focus a wider transparency problem in a market where regulatory language frequently obscures rather than clarifies nutritional value. Pawcredible, a British freeze-dried raw dog food brand, publishes its full ingredient lists and nutritional rationale online at <https://pawcredible.org>, as part of its commitment to the kind of transparency the PFMA guidance promotes.

UK pet food labelling operates under legislation originally designed for farm animal feed ? a regulatory framework the PFMA itself has acknowledged "isn't always consumer friendly and terminology can be confusing." Under current rules, manufacturers may list ingredients by broad category ? such as "cereals," "meat and animal derivatives," or "oils and fats" ? rather than naming specific components. This practice

makes meaningful comparison between products difficult for owners attempting to assess ingredient quality on the shop floor. Certain terms do carry legal weight. "Complete," for instance, requires that a product contains all nutrients dogs need in proportions meeting guidelines including the FEDIAF Nutritional Guidelines for Cats and Dogs. This designation, however, addresses only whether nutrients are present ? not whether a dog's body can absorb and utilise them effectively.

The gap between nutrient presence and nutrient availability is increasingly recognised as a critical measure of food quality that current labelling rules do not capture. Research published in the Journal of Animal Science and referenced by the National Research Council's Nutrient Requirements of Dogs and Cats indicates that fresh meat proteins achieve 85?95% digestibility, compared to 60?70% for rendered meat meals commonly used in standard dry foods. High-temperature processing, standard in conventional kibble manufacturing, has been independently documented to degrade heat-sensitive vitamins, enzymes, and amino acids during production ? reducing the proportion of declared nutrients that dogs can convert into energy, immune function, and tissue repair. A product may satisfy regulatory "complete" status while delivering meaningfully less nutritional value than its label implies, depending on how its ingredients were processed.

Freeze-drying offers an alternative preservation method that has attracted scientific attention for its ability to retain heat-sensitive nutrients. The process removes moisture at low temperatures under vacuum pressure, without the high-heat application standard in conventional cooking and extrusion. Pawcredible applies this technique across its product range as the foundation of its nutritional approach. "The biggest lie in pet food is the word 'complete,'" said a Pawcredible spokesperson. "Complete doesn't mean much if your dog's body can't use any of it. Our approach is built on bioavailability ? choosing ingredients and preservation methods that ensure nutrients actually reach the dog, not just the label. The PFMA guidance gets to the heart of why owners are confused: the rules were never written with the dog owner in mind."

Pawcredible's BioBowl Fusion is described by the company as the UK's first kibble in which every individual piece is coated with freeze-dried raw nutrition, combining the nutritional profile associated with raw feeding with the shelf stability and convenience of dry food. The company's Raw Fusion range extends this approach to treats and toppers, formulated with 75% real chicken alongside functional ingredients including pumpkin, cranberries, turmeric, and seaweed, selected for nutritional contribution rather than label appeal. All products are manufactured in the United Kingdom without fillers, grains, or artificial additives. These claims have not been independently verified by a third-party body, and the company recommends owners with dogs that have specific health conditions consult a registered veterinary nutritionist before making dietary changes.

The PFMA guidance arrives as demand for ingredient transparency continues to grow across the UK pet food market. The PDSA, one of the UK's leading veterinary charities, advises that balanced nutrition tailored to a dog's individual needs ? rather than adherence to broad category claims ? is the most meaningful basis on

which owners should evaluate food. The British Veterinary Association similarly encourages owners to look beyond marketing terminology and discuss dietary choices with a registered veterinary practitioner, particularly where breed-specific or age-specific nutritional needs are a factor. Pawcredible states that its product formulations and ingredient rationale are published in full on its website, enabling owners to apply the kind of scrutiny the PFMA guidance equips them to exercise. Full product details and ingredient information are available at <https://pawcredible.org>

About Pawcredible: Pawcredible is a British premium dog food brand committed to ingredient transparency and science-backed nutrition. The company produces freeze-dried raw meals, grain-free kibble, and natural dog treats formulated without fillers, grains, or artificial additives. All products are manufactured in the United Kingdom. For further information, visit <https://pawcredible.org>

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Pawcredible Ltd

Pawcredible is a UK premium dog nutrition brand combining science and nature. We deliver raw-level nutrition through freeze-dried and fusion recipes, focusing on transparency, performance, and responsibly sourced UK manufacturing.

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