

## As we see it.... The Natural Way



It seems like everywhere I turn today, new and old products alike are splashed with banners, starbursts, and names proclaiming them “holistic” and “natural”. If you’ve been following our progress, you know that we are all for and about truly natural and holistic products.

Today’s question for you is this: “Is this product really “natural” or “holistic” and how can I tell?”

According to the Natural Products Association, “anyone could claim their product was ‘natural’

even if it’s 100% synthetic or petroleum based.” You see, for most categories of products, there is no legal definition for “natural”. In pet food, for instance, AFFCO guidelines say that companies may use the term “natural” as long as the ingredients are derived from natural sources. What does this mean? In essence, if I take a bushel of corn and extract all the major nutrients and useful parts from it, whether mechanically or chemically processed, the remaining “by-product” would

still be considered “natural”. Does this sound like something you’d like in your diet?

And what about “holistic”? A quick Google search gave me at least 20 different definitions, the most common tread being a “total or complete approach”. In our case, this would be the approach to both nutrition and its’ affect on the whole body. In the pet food industry, AFFCO has NO guidelines or recognition of the term “holistic”. What does this mean for you? It says that anyone can take a bunch of ingredients and chemicals, mix them into a food or cookie, package them into a beautifully designed package and call them “holistic”. And on the service side, what does the term “holistic Veterinarian” really mean? Does this raise a red flag?

When you look at a “natural or holistic” pet food, let a little common sense sneak in. If it is a kibble or dry food, how natural are the actual ingredients? Is beet pulp or gluten meal naturally

found in nature? Is the extrusion (baking) process of 5 hours at 450 degrees natural? How can it stay in that bag “fresh” for up to 2 years without preservatives? Since all pet foods claim to be meaty, I assume that that bag is full of meat. Why then, does the meat in my refrigerator go bad in a matter of days and the meat in the dry pet food stays fresh forever?

As always, as we see it, there are many more questions about going “natural” than there are answers.

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