



Feeding practices of pure-bred dogs in Puducherry

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Abstract

A study was carried out to assess the feeding management practices adopted by dog owners in Puducherry region of the UT of Puducherry. 150 dog owners were selected as respondents who owned 164 dogs of different breeds. All the dogs were fed with either vegetarian or non-vegetarian food comprising homemade and commercial or a combination, with majority of the dogs being fed with non-vegetarian food. It was found that vegetarian dog owners provided only vegetarian food to their dogs, which were completely homemade or combined with commercial food. None of the dogs were fed solely on commercial food. Majority of the dog owners fed their dogs with cooked chicken meat. Other types of meat provided to the dogs were chevon and beef. Other non-vegetarian ingredients included eggs and fish remains. Rice and milk was fed to all the dogs and majority provided vegetables which were mostly cooked.

Keywords: Pet dogs, feeding practices

Introduction

Nutrition is one of the most important facets of life cycle of pet dogs and constitutes an essential determinant of the health and welfare of the animals. The clinical well-being of an animal thus depends greatly on the provision of balanced diet. Reid and Peterson (2000) stated that dogs were living a better life as they were fed properly. Dog owners play an active role in determining their pet's diet. The feeding and nutrition of pet dogs under Indian conditions are quite different (more of homemade diet) compared to that in developed countries, attributable to divergent social, economical and cultural factors (Pattanaik and Sharma, 2006). There is hardly any scientific basis on

which homemade diets are formulated and they are imbalanced to provide adequate nutrition; many of the homemade diets used for feeding pet dogs are not balanced quantitatively or qualitatively (Streiff *et al.*, 2002).

Materials and Methods

A study was undertaken in May 2016 in Puducherry region of the Union Territory of Puducherry wherein, a total of 150 dogs who owned 164 dogs were selected for this study. Primary data for the study was collected personally by the investigator through interview schedule and observation made at the owner's premises.

Results and Discussion

All the 164 dogs in the study region were fed with adequate food. Only in very few cases the dogs were fed on food which has been exclusively cooked for the pets, otherwise they share the food cooked for the consumption of the family members. It was found that vegetarian dog owners (7.32%) provided only vegetarian food to their dogs which were completely homemade or combined with commercial food. This could be attributed to the fact that the pet owners were aware about the importance of balanced nutrition for the health and wellbeing of pets and availability and economic accessibility to pet food. Majority (66.44 per cent) were fed with meat once a week, whereas 33.56 per cent were fed twice a week with meat. Majority of the dogs (86.18 per cent) were fed with chicken meat

followed by 11.84 per cent of dogs with chevon meat and a meager of 1.98 per cent were fed beef. All the dogs were fed with eggs, whereas 40 per cent were fed with fish (remains after human consumption). While interacting with the pet owners it was learnt that the quality of meat (chicken and chevon) cannot be considered as standard, as it comprised mostly offal (74.05 per cent) containing fat and variable quantity of bones. Only a very meager proportion (25.95 per cent) of the dogs was fed with muscle meat *per se*. It has been a tendency in part of most of the pet owners to provide low quality meat containing mostly offal not fit for human consumption because of monetary considerations. However, the three dogs that were fed with beef were provided with meat purchased especially for them.

Table: 1. Feeding practices of pure-bred dogs

Sl. No.	Item	Categories	n	No. of dogs	Percentage
1	Type of food	Vegetarian	164	12	7.32
		Non Vegetarian		152	92.68
2	Type of meat	Chicken	152	131	86.18
		Chevon		18	11.84
		Beef		03	01.98
3	Vegetarian ingredients	Rice / cereal	164	164	100.0
		Milk		164	100.0
		Vegetables		156	95.12
		Bread		138	84.15
4	Feeding of salt and spices	Spices only (Turmeric powder)	164	25	15.24
		Salt and Spices		84	51.22
		Neither salt nor spices		55	33.54
5	Supplements	Given	164	70	42.68
		Not given		94	57.32
6	Water Intake	<i>ad lib</i>	164	110	67.07
		After every meal		54	32.93

Summary

All the dogs were fed with either vegetarian or non-vegetarian food comprising homemade and commercial or a combination, with majority of the dogs being fed with non-vegetarian food. It was found that vegetarian dog owners provided only vegetarian food to their dogs, which were completely homemade or combined with commercial food. None of the dogs were fed solely on commercial food. Majority of the dog owners fed their dogs with cooked chicken meat due to their easy availability and cheaper cost. Other

types of meat provided to the dogs were chevon and beef. None of the dog owners fed pork to their dogs. The meat provided to the dogs mainly comprised of offal. Other non-vegetarian ingredients included eggs and fish remains. Rice and milk was fed to all the dogs and majority provided vegetables which were mostly cooked. Majority of the dogs were fed with a combination of salt and spices along with their food. Of the spices, turmeric powder was the most commonly used. Majority of dogs were not provided with any supplements.

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	Website: www.ijarbs.com
	Subject: Veterinary Sciences
Quick Response Code	
DOI: 10.22192/ijarbs.2019.06.07.001	

How to cite this article:

Radhakrishnan Raghy, D. Sreekumar, Tamizhkumaran J. (2019). Feeding practices of pure-bred dogs in Puducherry. *Int. J. Adv. Res. Biol. Sci.* 6(7): 1-3.
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22192/ijarbs.2019.06.07.001>