

Standard vs. Premium Cat Foods

Some manufacturers label their pet foods as "premium." What earns this food distinction?

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If we compare the guaranteed analysis statement on the labels of standard and premium cat food products, a few differences are noticeable. Slightly higher concentrations of protein and the presence of animal-source ingredients at the top of the ingredients list suggest that premium cat foods might be more palatable and have a higher protein digestibility than standard products. Also, quality can vary and manufacturers can specify that the ingredients they use meet specific analytical criteria. This can also affect digestibility. Higher concentrations of fat in premium foods will also increase palatability as well as overall dry-matter digestibility.

Higher digestibility and increased caloric density of premium cat foods mean the nutritional needs of cats are met by feeding smaller amounts of premium food compared with standard food. This may offset the greater expense of premium products. But the increased palatability and caloric density mean that owners must monitor food intake, because cats are more likely to overeat when fed premium products.

It's difficult to say definitively whether premium foods will make a major difference in the health, happiness and longevity of your cat. Owners must choose a food based on what they believe is best for their cat.

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