



The AAFCO Dog and Cat Food Nutrient Profiles were designed to establish practical minimum and some maximum nutrient concentrations for dog and cat foods, formulated from commonly used, non-purified, complex ingredients.

The established profiles are the “AAFCO Dog Food Nutrient Profiles” and “AAFCO Cat Food Nutrient Profiles” as the terms are applied in AAFCO model pet food regulations referring to nutritional adequacy. Under these model regulations, dog and cat foods substantiated for nutritional adequacy by reference to the AAFCO Dog and Cat Food Nutrient Profiles for a designated life stage(s) must be formulated to contain at least the minimum concentrations of nutrients specified in the Profiles, and, for some nutrients, not more than any maximum concentration listed for that specific nutrient in the Profiles as shown in this section.

The AAFCO Dog and Cat Food Nutrient Profiles and the AAFCO Feeding Protocols are the only methods recognized by AAFCO for substantiating the nutritional adequacy of “complete and balanced” dog or cat foods.

AAFCO is a private non-profit corporation featuring:

- A process for defining ingredients used in animal feed and pet food.
- Use expert nutrition opinions to establish nutrient standards (profiles) for dogs and cats.
- A forum where state agencies, federal agencies, and industry develop uniform language that states may adopt or reference in laws.
- Two meetings per year that include specialized trainings for members and industry.

AAFCO’s longstanding purpose has been to serve as a venue for feed regulators to explore the problems encountered in administering feed laws; to develop just and equitable standards, definitions and policies for the enforcement of feed laws; and to promote uniformity in laws, regulations and enforcement policies. AAFCO has created a large number of models providing guidance, definitions, terms and best-management practices in addition to the Model Bill and Model Feed Regulations (including Model Pet Food Regulations).

Although individual AAFCO members have the authority to regulate animal feed within their jurisdictions, AAFCO itself has no regulatory authority whatsoever. AAFCO is not an organisation that performs testing on pet foods. They provide guidelines for nutritional profiles for manufacturers to follow.

The three AAFCO labelling options that can be used for a “complete and balanced” pet food are as follows:

1. “_____ is formulated to meet the nutritional levels established by the AAFCO Dog (or cat) Food Nutrient Profiles for _____.”
 - The first blank must show the product name (the same name on the front of the package).
 - The statement says if the product is for cats or dogs.
 - The second blank says what life stage the product is for.
2. “Animal feeding tests using AAFCO procedures substantiate that _____ provides complete and balanced nutrition for _____.”
 - The first blank must show the product name (the same name on the front of the package).
 - The second blank says what life stage the product is for.
 - “AAFCO procedures” are standardized feeding protocols that define how feeding trials are to be conducted and assessed.
3. “_____ provides complete and balanced nutrition for _____ and is comparable to a product which has been substantiated using AAFCO feeding tests”
 - The first blank must show the product name (the same name on the front of the package).
 - The second blank says what life stage the product is for.

Note that this particular nutritional adequacy statement is not used often. Products justified nutritionally adequate in this way are sometimes referred to as “family products,” meaning the product is similar, but not identical, to one which has been subjected to animal feeding tests. The differences may include minor formulation changes that do not affect the products’ nutritional basis.