

THE DREAM

By Hal Roemer



I watch him as he sleeps at my feet.

He's dreaming.

His legs give a little kick, he makes a soft sound; something between a whimper and a growl. His lips briefly curl up in a snarl. His eyes slightly open now and then, but what he's seeing is not of this world.

What is he remembering?

I watch, and I remember as well...

....I remember.....

He was just a pup. He was brown and squat, and waddled when he walked. His tail hung just so and his head sort of moved to his gait. I had not had any idea what I'd name my new puppy up until the moment I first saw him. He looked exactly like a bear.

So that was it. His name from that moment on was Bear.

His dream has become more active now, all four legs are working. He's either running or swimming. The vocalizations are more intense. Looks like he's really trying to catch some thing.

.... And I remember....

I remember how quickly he learned as a puppy and young dog.

I remember his first live quail.....

He seemed to be amazed that

there was something so wonderful right where I had pointed. We both seemed to acknowledge that something important had happened.

Somewhere deep within him an instinct was awakening.....there was a job to be done and.....He was remembering what that job was.



He gives a little bark in his dream. It makes me smile.

.....and I remember.....

That season..... several years ago, half a lifetime for him, the beginning of a nearly month long hunt, we started in Kansas with 3 full days of pheasant. He quartered the field and retrieved to heel, every single bird I shot. I was so proud of my dog.

We went from Kansas strait to South Louisiana; a floating camp in a canal out in the swamp and hunted puddle ducks in the marsh from an elevated blind for 5 days; he sat like a soldier on the dog platform and retrieved every single duck we knocked down. He refused to come into the blind when the birds were not flying. I could hear his teeth chattering and him groaning from the cold. But he would not stay in the blind, out of the wind and weather. He fought to get back out on the dog platform.

From South Louisiana, we came strait home to Deep East Texas,



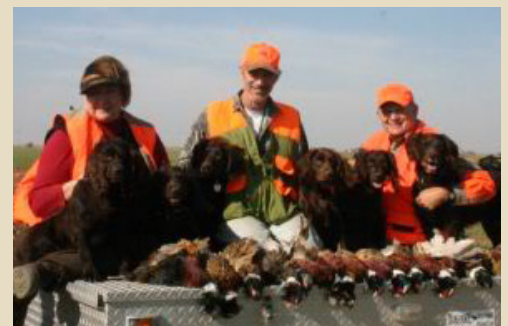
and jumped wood ducks along the creek; he held 5 yards behind me waiting for me to approach the creek bank and check for a woodie.

And I remember being amazed...

I know he remembered the training to quarter and flush pheasants, and I know he remembered the training to hold 5 yards behind for wood ducks. But the thing is, I never did train him on a duck blind, and he had never hunted from a dog platform. How he knew to do that, is still a mystery to me.

How he seamlessly switched from one style of hunting to another is something I am still in awe of. His dream is over. He's awake, though a bit groggy. He lifts his head and looks around till he finds me.

His stubby tail gives a couple of slow thumps when he sees me looking at him. I tell him he's a good boy. He thumps his tail a few more times and lays his head down with a big comfortable sigh for another nap.



Choosing Your Dog's Food - Read the Label!

by Heather Russo

When you decided to get a puppy, you didn't say, "I want the cheapest one I can find," did you? You took some time, read about the breeds, possibly checked out the breeder and made an informed decision. Choosing a dog food for your new pet should be just as informed. It is one of the first things you should do before you go pick up your new family member. It is important that you learn how to read dog food labels and find out what it all means to ensure that you make the best choice for your dog ~ after all, he can't read!

Chances are you already read labels when choosing your own food to avoid foods with high fat, low sodium or grab foods with certain ingredients. You need to do this with your dog's food as well because your dog needs specific amounts of nutrients like proteins, carbohydrates, fiber, fats.

Remember, when you ultimately find a dog food that meets all the criteria and that your dog likes, stick with it! There is no reason to switch from brand to brand, you can change flavors, but don't wreak havoc on your pet's tummy by bouncing around the pet food aisle.

Don't get discouraged if it takes you a while to pick a high quality dog food ~ your new family member is worth it!

Reading Dog Food Labels

First, you want to know what ingredients to avoid. AVOID all dog foods



that contain:

- ☞ Ingredients such as 'meat', by-products, bone meal, animal digest, potatoes, and animal fat.
- ☞ Excessive fillers, such as wheat, rice flour, rice brain, corn, etc., as one of the first five ingredients.
- ☞ An excess amount of ingredients that you just can't pronounce.

Next, you want to make sure that you know what ingredients to look for in a quality dog food. Look for dog foods that contain:

- ↪ Whole meats, that actually tell you what meat, such as chicken, beef and lamb.
- ↪ Whole grains such as oats, rice, barley, and wheat; just make sure that they are not the first ingredient.
- ↪ The following preservatives- Tocopherols (Vitamin E), rosemary, sage, clove extract, ascorbyl palmitate, ascorbic acid, and forms of Vitamin C.

Check if there are any whole vegetables listed in the ingredients label, such as peas, carrots, and sweet potatoes. Remember that canines are carnivores. While it is not necessary to have vegetables in the dog food, fresh produce can be good to add to your dog's diet for the nutrients. Just make sure that you **AVOID** grapes and raisins, onions, caffeine, chocolate, coffee, citrus oil, dairy products, garlic, Macadamia nuts, moldy food, mushrooms, persimmons, pits from peaches and plums, raw eggs and fish, Salt, Sugary foods, yeast dough, and baby foods.

When determining the proteins, make sure that you can understand the difference while reading the following.

"With chicken flavor" - The food is artificially flavored and there may not be any chicken in it at all.

"With chicken" - There is less than 3% of the meat in the food.

"Chicken dinner" - The food is at least 25% of meat.

"Chicken for dogs" - The food is at least 70% meat combined with the water or at least 95% meat total.

Fillers in Your Dog's Food

When finding a quality food for your dog, you want to make sure that it has as few fillers as possible. You also want to ensure that it has as many proteins as possible too. The first ingredient on the label should be a protein of some sort and you want to verify that within the first five ingredients there aren't any fillers.

Fillers cause your dog to eat more because they are not getting the essential nutrients that they need, which in turn causes you to need to buy more dog food than you should. Fillers can, in fact, upset your dog's stomach, so take care to choose a food that will be the healthiest for your dog.

Be cautious - some manufactures attempt hide the true volume of filler by breaking up the same filler into several different names so that it's not listed at the top of ingredients, but when all totaled, they will out-weigh the percent of protein in the food. For example, you may see ground wheat, wheat flour and wheat middling, or you may see corn gluten, corn bran and ground corn.

Corn is currently a controversial ingredient. Some say that it is ok to have in your dog's food, but make sure that it is *NOT* the first ingredient and that 'corn gluten' ingredients are not included. I say that corn is not good to feed your dog. As a whole grain, corn is not easily digestible. Unless the kernel is first refined into a meal or flour and then cooked, corn can be very difficult for a dog to digest. To tell the truth, corn and other grains are only digestible to the extent to which

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