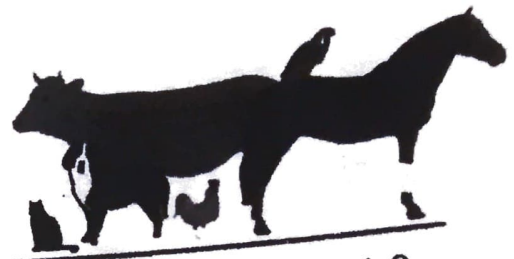


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44 PREFERENCES OF OWNERS OF OVERWEIGHT DOGS WHEN BUYING COMMERCIAL PET FOOD

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Objectives: Most pet dogs in developed countries are fed commercial diets. The aim of this study was to evaluate the preferences of owners of overweight dogs when buying commercial pet food.

Methods: The study was a descriptive observational multi-centre study on a convenience sample of a group of 198 owners of urban household dogs. 61 owners of dogs with normal weight and 137 owners of dogs with excess weight (overweight and obesity). Owners were asked to fill out a questionnaire with questions rating the importance of certain qualities of prepared dog food. The scale ranged from 1= not important to 5 =very important. For statistical analysis the SPSS statistical package, version 17.0 for Windows, was used throughout. A P value < 0.05 was determined as indicating significance.

Results: For owners of dogs with excess weight, a low price and special offers of commercial dog food was more important than for owners of normal weight dogs. For owners of normal weight dogs the quality of ingredients and the nutritional composition was more important than for owners of dogs with excess weight ($p < 0.05$).

Ease of availability of commercial pet food in the nearest supermarket was more important to the owners of dogs with excess weight than to the owners of normal weight dogs, whereas environmentally friendly packaging was less important. The veterinarian was the most important source of information on dog nutrition for both groups.

Conclusions: The owners of dogs with excess weight had less interest in corrected dog nutrition than owners of normal weight dogs. These data are similar in other countries.