



## WEIGHT EXCHANGE:

# Landmark Purina study shows benefits of feeding lean

### What is the Purina Life Span Study?

The Purina Life Span Study was the first completed study of its kind to examine the effects of feeding dogs to a lean body condition vs. control throughout their entire lives! It was conducted by Purina researchers in St. Louis and lasted 14 years.

### How were dogs selected and monitored?

Forty-eight 8-week-old Labrador Retrievers — 24 pairs of littermates — were enrolled. Dogs were paired according to gender and body weight, and randomly assigned to a control group or a lean-fed group.



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Dogs in the lean-fed group were fed 25 percent less food than their paired littermates and maintained in a lean body condition\*. All dogs received the same 100 percent complete and balanced food, only the amount fed differed.

Dogs were weighed periodically throughout their lives, with body condition scores recorded beginning at age 6. Various health indicators, including body fat mass, bone mass, and blood glucose and insulin levels, were measured annually.

### What were the benefits of a lean-fed diet over a lifetime?

Study findings revealed that feeding to an ideal body condition over a lifetime can significantly extend a dog's healthy years. In the study, lean-fed dogs had a median life span of 1.8 years longer than control dogs (who were moderately overweight),

and had healthier blood glucose levels, blood pressures and heart rates. The lean-fed dogs also had a delayed need for treatment of chronic conditions (for example, about a two-year-later onset of treatment for osteoarthritis than dogs in the control group).

Study results prompted Purina to adjust its Body Condition System™ score chart toward a leaner “ideal” score for dogs, from a 5, to a 4 to 5. Purina also revised feeding guidelines on its canine diets, which, if followed properly, can help puppies and dogs stay lean for life.

1. Kealy RD, Lawler DF, Ballam JM, et al. Effects of diet restriction on life span and age-related changes in dogs. *J Am Vet Med Assoc.* 2002 May 1;220(9):1315–20.

\*Lean or ideal body condition refers to the evaluation of body physique in pets as an indicator of their overall health and well-being, generally falling into three categories: too heavy, ideal and too thin.