

Adapt to the humanization of pet food

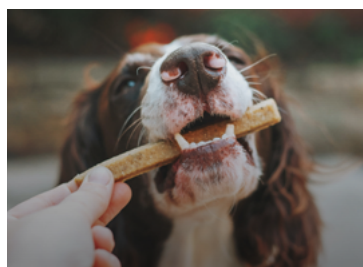
Gain insight into the humanization of pet food, how it affects the pet food industry and ways to adapt to the new demands.



According to the 2021–2022 National Pet Owners Survey conducted by the American Pet Products Association (APPA), around 70% of all U.S. households own a pet.¹ People are spending more time with their pets and value them more like true companions in general. The majority of pet owners consider their pets to be full family members and are willing to go the extra mile to make sure their furry friend is

well pampered. With this shift in understanding the relationship between humans and their pets, it comes as no surprise that pet owners are beginning to demand more premium products for their pets. They are looking to improve their pets' well-being by purchasing pet food with higher quality ingredients and greater nutritional content. Pet food standards and requirements have become higher than before.

Facts



\$42 million

is the value of the U.S. pet food market, seeing a growth of 9.7% since last year.²



90.5 million

families in the U.S. benefited from the love and companionship of a pet.³



95%

of pet owners considered their pets to be a part of the family. This is a 7% increase from 2007.⁴

¹ American Pet Products Association. (2021). 2021–2022 National Pet Owners Survey.

² Semple, J. (2021). State of the US pet food and treat industry, 2021. www.petfoodprocessing.net. Accessed on 14 March 2022, on <https://www.petfoodprocessing.net/articles/15310-state-of-the-us-pet-food-and-treat-industry-2021>.

³ American Pet Products Association. (2021). 2021–2022 National Pet Owners Survey.

⁴ The Nielsen Company. (2016). The Humanization of Pet Food.

Focus on food safety

The increasing demands of pet food customers corresponds with a new and expanding focus on food safety.

Responsible pet owners pay careful attention to what they feed their furry friends and want to know what specific ingredients their pet food contains. In fact, many consumers pass on their purchasing values and preferences to their pets. ADM Outside Voice found that 30% of global pet owners spent a significant amount of time researching the best food options in the last year.⁵ Accurate and responsible animal

nutrition, and the interconnectedness of the supply chain of pet food, are of the utmost importance for today's consumers. Pet owners demand transparency when it comes to the food they consume, and the same goes for what they feed their pets. On top of that, it seems that consumers are willing to pay a premium to make sure their pets have this high-quality, human-grade pet food.

What exactly is human grade pet food?

All pet food falls into two categories, human grade or feed grade. The legal definition of a human grade pet food is: "Every ingredient and the resulting product are stored, handled, processed, and transported in a manner that is consistent and compliant with regulations for good manufacturing practices (GMPs) for human edible foods as specified in 21 CFR 117." This means that every ingredient is human edible. Yes, you could eat the pet food. All other pet foods that don't meet the full definition of human grade are feed grade.⁶

Increased demand for human grade pet food

As consumers change how they feel about their pets, it creates new challenges for pet food manufacturers that must respond to customer demands to feed pets like people.⁷ Therefore, pet owners are shifting expectations of "high quality (for pets)" to "humanized". They desire pet food options that address the same health concerns that currently affect the production of human food, such as unnatural preservatives and genetically modified ingredients—and they're serious about these preferences.⁸

Challenges of the human pet food processing industry

As some pet owners seek pet food options that compare to what they eat themselves, human grade pet food can lead to market success and increased sales. But first, a manufacturer must overcome some challenges of hitting the market with products that are suitable for both the pets' health and the owner's wallet, while also ensuring a profit for the company. That means factoring in the higher costs of ensuring stable supplies of ingredients, possibly changing processing parameters, completing all necessary documentation and complying with labeling and other regulations.⁹

⁵ Schroeder, E. (2021). Pet humanization one of top consumer trends noted by ADM. www.petfoodprocessing.net. Accessed 8 March 2022, on <https://www.petfoodprocessing.net/articles/15197-pet-humanization-one-of-top-consumer-trends-noted-by-adm>.

⁶ Thixton, S. (2016). The Difference Between Human Grade And Feed Grade. www.truthaboutpetfood.com. Accessed on 21 March 2022, on <https://truthaboutpetfood.com/the-difference-between-human-grade-and-feed-grade>

⁷ Spielman, S. (2020) Pet food quality expectations mirror trends in human food. www.foodengineering.com. Accessed 8 March 2022, on <https://www.foodengineeringmag.com/articles/98735-pet-food-quality-expectations-mirror-trends-in-human-food>

⁸ The Nielsen Company. (2016). The Humanization of Pet Food.

⁹ Philips-Donaldson, D. (2022). Human grade pet food on trend but poses challenges. www.petfoodindustry.com. Accessed 8 March 2022, on <https://www.petfoodindustry.com/articles/10979-human-grade-pet-food-on-trend-but-poses-challenges>



Cope with the dynamic and ever-changing landscape of the pet food processing industry

With the growth of the pet food industry and the increasing demand for high-quality pet food, pet food manufacturers need to figure out ways to meet these demands. As a pet food manufacturer, it's key to stay ahead of the competition by adapting to the latest developments.

The importance of pet food traceability

The higher focus on food safety of pet owners means a pet food processing industry with high safety standards that eliminate the risk of cross-contamination. Therefore, a transparent supply chain where traceability of ingredients is possible at all times is essential. This way you know what's happening in every part of the process and, when necessary, you can react to it. Accurate traceability of ingredients allows pet food manufacturers to solve biosecurity problems more quickly and control health concerns about pet food safety, said Ken Wilson, PhD, head of technical services at Simmons Feed Ingredients, at Petfood

Forum. "We need to be able to connect the dots of people, processes and, ultimately, the products so that we can mitigate any exposure our customer might have," said Wilson.¹⁰ Traceability coupled with advanced analytical tools can help spot potential problems in advance and prevent or lessen their impact. The goal is to trace a contaminated food to its source in a matter of minutes, not days or even longer.¹¹ Consequently, a contamination-free system and complete track & tracing in the process are desired. With this kind of system, pet food brands can guarantee the same quality pet food repeatedly.

Flexibility to create customer-based products

As a result of higher pet food standards and requirements, there are also more and more customer-based products in the pet food market such as customized products, extra recipes, and new

brands. This means pet food production needs more raw materials, more recipes, and more variety in batch sizes. As you can imagine: this requires a great amount of flexibility and automation of the production process.

¹⁰ Wall, T. Why pet food ingredient traceability matters. [www.petfoodindustry.com](https://www.petfoodindustry.com/articles/6261-why-pet-food-ingredient-traceability-matters). Accessed 8 March 2022, on <https://www.petfoodindustry.com/articles/6261-why-pet-food-ingredient-traceability-matters>.

¹¹ Shaffer, Erica. (2020). New era of Smarter Food Safety* to focus on tech, traceability food safety culture. [www.petfoodprocessing.net](https://www.petfoodprocessing.net/articles/13982-new-era-of-smarter-food-safety-to-focus-on-tech-traceability-food-safety-culture). Accessed 8 March 2022, on <https://www.petfoodprocessing.net/articles/13982-new-era-of-smarter-food-safety-to-focus-on-tech-traceability-food-safety-culture>.

How to adapt? Innovation is key

Innovation is crucial to adapt to these trends when it comes to pet food production. KSE's [smart solutions](#) are developed to respond to this market demand. They optimize performance, increase productivity, and reduce costs.



Perfect dosing

The importance of accurate dosing of ingredients is the main driver for a consistent, high-quality product. Proper portioning allows a manufacturer to create a consistent, repeatable product and ensures that pets consume an adequate supply of nutrients without excess calories to maintain health and well-being. It also makes it possible to

precisely match the unique needs of an animal. Today's technology offers pet food manufacturers a leg up on regulating precise dosing to guarantee the safety and consistency of the product. Accurate dosing technology ensures the perfect and balanced blend of a finished product with the delicate balance of animal nutrients.¹²

“The value of correct dosing is in the quality of the product, and the accuracy on the mix sets a large part of the final quality of the product and its effect on the pet.”

Rob Habraken, technical consultant at KSE¹³

Special blending techniques

When mixing finished products with different characteristics into one consumer-ready package, KSE uses specialized dosing slides designed to minimize damage on finished kibbles. All while being able to create a large flow for capacity and a small flow for accuracy. The dosing slide enables pet food processors to stay agile while offering a wide variety of products and operating at high capacity.

Maximum control over food safety

Smart process designs help prevent cross-contamination between subsequent batches. Proper dust reduction minimizes the chance of external influences in the product stream. Good practices include the use of equipment designs that avoid ledges, which can collect dust or pose a risk of mold. KSE ensures food safety through good lot control and practicing a first-in, first-out flow of product from the silo.¹⁴

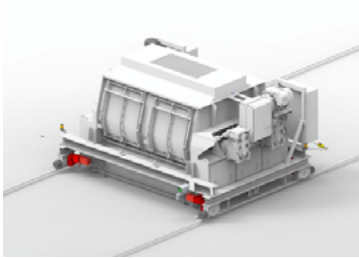
¹² Barnett-Fox, J. (2020, september). Portion Control. Pet Food Processing

¹³ Barnett-Fox, J. (2020, september). Portion Control. Pet Food Processing

¹⁴ Barnett-Fox, J. (2020, september). Portion Control. Pet Food Processing

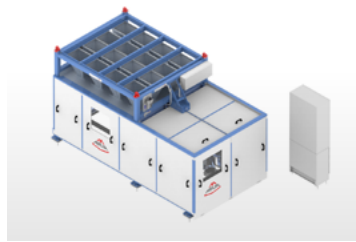
Smart solutions for smart pet food processing

A few examples of KSE's smart solutions that respond to market demand are the **ALFRA BUVM**, **ALFRA FCD** and **ALFRA ACT**.



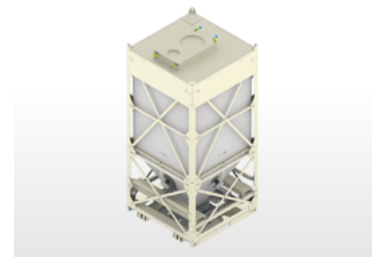
ALFRA BUVM

KSE's [ALFRA BUVM](#) is a weighing mixer for blending and dosing, and all of that on the move to save precious time. It loads trucks cleanly and quickly with much less product damage and contamination than conventional chain or belt conveyors. It collects large volumes of a finished product (meal, pellets, flakes, dry powders, granulates, and other fragile products) and blends the ingredients while they are on the move.



ALFRA FCD

For finer components, the [ALFRA FCD](#) is particularly suitable. This system is engineered for accurate micro component dosing and weighing. With two weighing scales in one hopper (Weigher-in-Weigher) it can dose quantities up to 150 kg but also has a weighing accuracy of 1 gram. It safely doses rarely used ingredients like dry powders, granulates, and pellets that can spoil if they remain in the silo for too long.



ALFRA ACT

Another smart solution is the [ALFRA ACT](#). This system ensures contamination-free batch transport and storage of finished products and ingredients. Comprehensive quality control is possible at all times and complete production transparency is guaranteed thanks to PROMAS ST. The automation system features advanced track and trace capabilities and reporting, which produces each batch according to the requirements. The combination of smart software and modular layout provides a high level of flexibility.



Partner in optimizing production processes

Increasing complexity forms the biggest challenge for animal nutrition manufacturers; more recipes, a growing number of ingredients, additions that are difficult to dose and higher quality standards contribute to this trend. For almost 50 years, KSE has been supplying future-proof solutions to stay ahead of market trends in the form of modular machinery and smart software that fit together

perfectly. We create flexible processing solutions that enable a responsive production process. Automation, accuracy, and contamination control are at the basis of our innovations that help withstand the test of time. Our aim is to not only improve the production process, but also to make a significant contribution to increasing margins and achieving targets.

Curious about the possibilities?

Let's have a chat!

Whether you have a question about options, features, pricing, need a demo, or anything else, our team is ready to answer all your questions.

Get in touch

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