

**WAC 16-252-044 Intended use statement and nutritional adequacy claims.** (1) A statement identifying the purpose of a PET FOOD OR SPECIALTY PET FOOD is required on the PRINCIPAL DISPLAY PANEL of the LABEL in accordance with the following:

(a) The purpose of a PET FOOD OR SPECIALTY PET FOOD shall be stated as:

(i) "Complete [Species] Food" - For food products intended to be the complete diet for ALL LIFE STAGES and sizes of a PET OR SPECIALTY PET in accordance with the unqualified claims in WAC 16-252-044(2);

(ii) For food products intended to be the complete diet for a limited life stage or size of a PET OR SPECIALTY PET in accordance with the qualified claims in WAC 16-252-044(3) one of the two following statements shall be used:

(A) "Complete Food for [blank]" where the blank shall be filled with one or more of the following:

(I) "Adult [Species]";

(II) "Puppies," "Kittens," or "Juvenile [Species other than dog or cat]";

(III) "Puppies (<70 lb. as an adult)"; or

(IV) "Dogs (except puppies >70 lb. as an adult)"; or

(B) "Complete [Blank] Food" where the blank shall be filled with one or more of the following:

(I) "Adult [Species]";

(II) "Puppy," "Kitten," or "Juvenile [Species other than dog or cat]";

(III) "Puppy (<70 lb. as an adult)"; or

(IV) "Dog (except puppies >70 lb. as an adult)";

(iii) "Veterinary Diet for [Species]" - For food products intended to be used under the supervision or direction of a veterinarian only in accordance with WAC 16-252-044(4);

(iv) "[Species] Treat" - For food products for PETS OR SPECIALTY PETS, provided occasionally for enjoyment, training, entertainment, or other purposes, and not generally intended or represented to be a complete food or nutritional supplement;

(v) "[Species] Food Supplement" - For food products for PETS OR SPECIALTY PETS that are intended to supply specific nutrient(s) or other food components but are not a complete diet;

(vi) "[Species] Food Mixer" - For food products for PETS OR SPECIALTY PETS that are intended to top, accompany, or contribute to a complete diet but are not generally intended or represented to be a complete diet; or

(vii) "Daily [Specialty Pet Species] Food" - For food products that are intended to be the daily diet for SPECIALTY PETS where no recognized nutritional authority exists. A limited life stage may be indicated, i.e., "Daily [Specialty Pet Species] Food for [Juveniles or Adults]."

(b) This purpose statement shall:

(i) Appear within the bottom 30 PERCENT of the area of the LABEL PRINCIPAL DISPLAY PANEL in lines generally parallel to the base on which the package rests as it is designed to be displayed and shall be repeated on the alternate PRINCIPAL DISPLAY PANEL, if present. However, on packages having a PRINCIPAL DISPLAY PANEL of five square inches or less, the requirement for placement within the bottom 30 PERCENT of the area of the LABEL panel shall not apply;

(ii) Be at least as large as the statement of net quantity, consistent with 16 C.F.R. 500.21;

(iii) Appear in the same color and style as the statement of net quantity and on the same background color as the statement of net quantity; and

(iv) Be separated by at least a space equal to the height of the letter "N" used in the statement of net quantity from other printed LABEL information appearing above or below it and by at least a space equal to twice the width of the letter "N" of the style of text used in the quantity of contents statement from other printed LABEL information appearing to the left or right of it.

(2) The LABEL of a PET FOOD OR SPECIALTY PET FOOD which is intended for ALL LIFE STAGES and sizes of the PET OR SPECIALTY PET may make unqualified claims, directly or indirectly, such as "complete and balanced," "perfect," "scientific," or "100% nutritious" if at least one of the following apply:

(a) The product meets the nutrient requirements for ALL LIFE STAGES and sizes established by an AAFCO-recognized nutrient profile; or

(b) The product meets the criteria for ALL LIFE STAGES as substantiated by completion of the appropriate AAFCO-recognized animal feeding protocol(s); or

(c) Unqualified claims of nutritional adequacy that include large size dogs (>70 lb. as an adult) can be substantiated by:

(i) Completing the appropriate protocols using large size dogs; or

(ii) Completing the appropriate protocols using dogs <70 lb. adult weight while containing no more calcium and phosphorus than the maximum limits for large size dogs listed in the AAFCO Dog Food Nutrient Profiles; or

(d) The product is a member of a product family which is nutritionally similar to a lead product which contains a combination of FEED INGREDIENTS that has been fed to a normal animal as the sole source of nourishment in accordance with the testing procedures established by AAFCO for ALL LIFE STAGES, provided that:

(i) The nutritional similarity of the FAMILY product can be substantiated according to the Procedures for Establishing Pet Food Product Families developed by AAFCO; and

(ii) The FAMILY product meets the criteria for ALL LIFE STAGES; and

(iii) Under circumstances of reasonable doubt, the DEPARTMENT may require the manufacturer to perform additional testing of the FAMILY product in order to substantiate the claim of nutritional adequacy.

(3) The LABEL of a PET FOOD OR SPECIALTY PET FOOD which is intended for a limited purpose (such as size of dog) or a specific life stage, but not for ALL LIFE STAGES and sizes, may make qualified claims such as "complete and balanced," "perfect," "scientific," or "100% nutritious" when the product and claim meet both of the following:

(a) The claim is qualified with a statement of the limited purpose or specific life stage for which the product is intended or suitable, for example, "complete and balanced for puppies (or kittens)." The claim and the required qualification shall be juxtaposed (side by side or next to each other) on the same LABEL panel and in the same size, style, and color text; and

(b) The product meets at least one of the following:

(i) The nutrient requirements for the limited purpose or specific life stage established by an AAFCO-recognized nutrient profile; or

(ii) The criteria for a limited purpose or a specific life stage as substantiated by completion of the appropriate AAFCO-recognized animal feeding protocol(s).

Qualified claims of nutritional adequacy that include large size dogs can be substantiated by:

(A) Completing the appropriate protocols using large size dogs;  
or

(B) Completing the appropriate protocols using dogs <70 lb. adult weight while containing no more calcium and phosphorus than the maximum limits for large size dogs listed in the AAFCO Dog Food Nutrient Profiles; or

(iii) The requirements of a product FAMILY which is nutritionally similar to a lead product which contains a combination of FEED INGREDIENTS which, when fed for such limited purpose, will satisfy the nutrient requirements for such limited purpose and has had its capabilities in this regard demonstrated by adequate testing, and provided that:

(A) The nutritional similarity of the FAMILY product can be substantiated according to the Procedures for Establishing Pet Food Product Families developed by AAFCO; and

(B) The FAMILY product meets the criteria for such limited purpose;  
and

(C) Under circumstances of reasonable doubt, the DEPARTMENT may require the GUARANTOR to perform additional testing for the FAMILY product to substantiate the claim of nutritional adequacy.

(4) A product intended for use by, or under the supervision or direction of a veterinarian shall clearly indicate the nutritional adequacy of the product in accordance with WAC 16-252-044 (3) (a) or (c) as would be required for any other PET FOOD OR SPECIALTY PET FOOD.

(5) A signed affidavit attesting that the product meets the requirements of WAC 16-250-044 (2) or (3) shall be submitted to the DEPARTMENT upon request.

(6) If the nutrient content of a product does not meet those nutrient requirements established by an AAFCO-recognized nutrient profile, or if no requirement has been established by an AAFCO-recognized nutritional authority for the life stage(s) of the intended species, the claimed nutritional adequacy of the product shall be scientifically substantiated.

(7) The following AAFCO-recognized nutritional authority, nutrient profile, and/or animal feeding protocol shall be acceptable as the basis for a claim of nutritional adequacy:

(a) As an AAFCO-recognized nutrient profile or nutritional authority:

(i) For dogs, the AAFCO Dog Food Nutrient Profiles;

(ii) For cats, the AAFCO Cat Food Nutrient Profiles;

(iii) For SPECIALTY PETS, the nutrient recommendations approved by the Committee on Animal Nutrition of the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences, provided that, this nutrient recommendation is recognized only for the specific SPECIALTY PETS for which the profile is intended.

(b) As an AAFCO-recognized animal feeding protocol(s), the AAFCO Dog and Cat Food Feeding Protocols.

(8) When the LABEL of a PET FOOD OR SPECIALTY PET FOOD includes a comparison of the nutrient content of the food with levels established by an AAFCO-recognized nutrient profile such as a table of comparison, a PERCENTAGE, or any other designation referring to an individual nutrient or all of the nutrient levels, the following apply:

(a) The product shall meet the AAFCO-recognized nutrient profile;  
and

(b) The statement of comparison shall be preceded by a statement that the product meets the AAFCO-recognized profile; however, the

statement that the product meets the AAFCO-recognized nutrient profile is not required provided that the nutritional adequacy statement, as per WAC 16-252-044 (1)(a) or (2)(b)(i), appears elsewhere on the product LABEL; and

(c) The statement of comparison of the nutrient content shall constitute a GUARANTEE and shall be in the nutrient GUARANTEES within the PET FOOD OR SPECIALTY PET FOOD NUTRITION FACTS; and

(d) The statement of comparison shall appear on the LABEL separate and apart from the nutrient GUARANTEES within the PET FOOD OR SPECIALTY PET FOOD NUTRITION FACTS.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 15.53.9012. WSR 25-13-018, s 16-252-044, filed 6/6/25, effective 7/7/25. Statutory Authority: RCW 15.53.9012, 15.53.9013, 15.53.9016, and chapter 34.05 RCW. WSR 18-21-191, § 16-252-044, filed 10/24/18, effective 11/24/18.]

**Reviser's note:** The brackets and enclosed material in the text of the above section occurred in the copy filed by the agency.