Grain-Free vs. Wholesome Grains (The DCM Facts)

What the FDA Actually Found • Ancient & Wholesome Grains vs. Grain-Free Carbohydrates

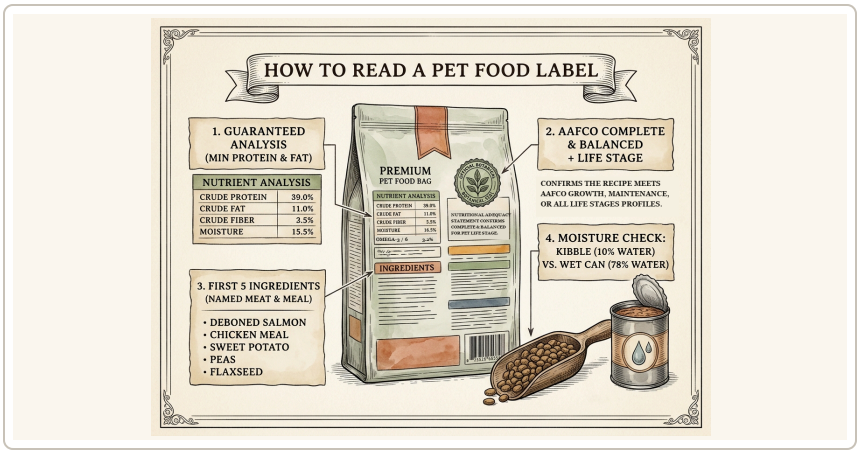
The Quick Version: Since 2018, many dog owners have heard headlines asking whether grain-free food causes heart disease (DCM). Here are the plain facts: **the FDA investigated reports for four years, never found that grain-free food causes DCM, never issued a recall, and ended routine updates in December 2022** because the data did not establish a cause-and-effect link. Whether you prefer **wholesome ancient grains** or **grain-free recipes**, we stock flagship options in both styles!



APPLIES TO	FDA DCM FINDING	FDA UPDATES ENDED	GRAIN-INCLUSIVE	GRAIN-FREE
Dogs & Cats	No Cause-and-Effect Found	December 2022	Oats, Barley, Brown Rice, Quinoa	Sweet Potato, Pumpkin, Lentils, Peas

1. What Happened With the FDA & DCM — And How to Choose Confidently

WE CARRY BOTH GRAIN-INCLUSIVE AND GRAIN-FREE LINES ACROSS EVERY FLAGSHIP BRAND!



2018 FDA Investigation
FDA looked into reports of canine DCM, many involving grain-free diets
Investigation Opened

Dec 2022 FDA Update
FDA stated it found no firm causal link and stopped routine updates
No Recall / No Link

Wholesome / Ancient Grains
Oats, pearled barley, brown rice, spelt, millet, sorghum & quinoa
Steady Digestion

Grain-Free Carbs
Sweet potatoes, pumpkin, squash, chickpeas, lentils & green peas
Zero Corn/Wheat/Grains

Vet Heart Plans First
If your dog has a diagnosed heart condition, your vet's diet plan always wins
Follow Vet Plan

2. Two Ways That Work — Pick What Fits Your Home

SHORT & SWEET: BOTH OPTIONS WORK GREAT

The 3 Questions to Ask When Deciding Between Grain-Inclusive & Grain-Free

Both styles are complete, balanced, and thriving in millions of bowls — pick what fits your pet and your peace of mind:

1. HAS YOUR VETERINARIAN DIAGNOSED A HEART CONDITION?
If your dog has a diagnosed heart condition or is on a veterinarian's treatment plan, **your vet's plan always comes first**. Tell us what

Same Trusted Brand, Your Choice of Grain-Inclusive or Grain-Free

Almost every flagship maker on our shelves crafts both grain-inclusive and grain-free lines so you don't have to switch makers:

WHOLESOME & ANCIENT GRAIN FAVORITES
Farmina N&D Ancestral Grain (spelt & oats), **NutriSource Choice / Classic Grains** (brown rice, oatmeal & barley), **Fromm Classic / Gold / Four-Star, Nulo Challenger /**

Check the First 5 Ingredients (Meat First vs. Carbohydrate Splitting)

Whether a bag has grains or legumes, the most helpful label check is looking at how much animal protein leads the recipe:

LOOK FOR NAMED MEAT & NAMED MEAT MEAL AT THE TOP
Flip the bag over and read the **first five ingredients**. A recipe where #1 and #2 are named meats and meals (like deboned salmon + menhaden fish meal) is meat-led

3. Side-by-Side Brand Guide: Grain-Inclusive & Grain-Free Options

WANT TO SWITCH BETWEEN GRAIN-FREE AND GRAIN-INCLUSIVE? YOU CAN OFTEN STAY WITHIN THE SAME BRAND!

NutriSource & Fromm Grain-Inclusive & Grain-Free	Both family-owned makers make it easy to move between grain-inclusive (brown rice, oatmeal, barley) and grain-free (lentils, peas, sweet potato) while keeping the same probiotic/digestive system.
Farmina N&D, Nulo & Open Farm Ancestral / Ancient Grains & Grain-Free	**Farmina N&D** offers Pumpkin/Quinoa (Grain-Free) alongside Ancestral Grain (spelt & oats, 'Low Glycemic Index'); **Nulo** and **Open Farm** offer high-meat options in both styles.
Taste of the Wild, Acana & Orijen Ancient Grains / Wholesome Grains & Original	**Taste of the Wild Ancient Grains** uses ancient sorghum, millet, quinoa, and chia seed; **Acana Wholesome Grains** and **Orijen Amazing Grains** pair high meat with oats, quinoa, and chia.

Important Rules on Heart Health & Supplements:

- **Both Styles Supported** — We stand behind both our grain-free and grain-inclusive shelves — pick what you feel best feeding!
- **No Supplement Claims** — We never sell taurine or supplements as a heart fix or quote unverified dosages — always read the label
- **Emergency Heart Signs** — Coughing, tiring fast on walks, fainting, or trouble breathing require an immediate veterinary visit
- **Smooth Transitions** — Switching from grain-free to grain-inclusive (or back)? Follow the new bag's gradual transition guide

When to See Your Veterinarian: If your dog ever shows signs of coughing, tiring quickly on normal walks, fainting, or difficulty breathing, that calls for a veterinary exam right away — whatever food they are eating. For healthy pets, our crew is always happy to compare grain-inclusive and grain-free labels side by side with you!

4. Tips, Tricks & Big No-Nos from Our Pet Nutrition Team

REAL-WORLD HABITS THAT KEEP THEM THRIVING

What the FDA Concluded

In December 2022, the FDA announced it would stop routine DCM updates unless new scientific evidence emerged, noting that the reports did not prove grain-free diets cause DCM.

Easy Same-Brand Switches

If you'd feel more comfortable feeding grains (or switching off grains), ask us for the matching recipe inside your current brand so the protein stays familiar.

Read the Whole Top 5

Whether you pick oats/barley or sweet potato/lentils, check that named animal proteins lead the first five ingredients.

Cats Are Obligate Carnivores

Cats naturally have no dietary requirement for grains — moisture-rich, meat-first wet and dry diets remain the foundation of feline nutrition.

5. Grab-and-Go Setup Checklist

ASK US ON THE FLOOR — WE'LL HELP YOU MATCH EVERYTHING!

1. CHOOSE YOUR CARBOHYDRATE STYLE

- [ ] Wholesome/Ancient Grains (Oats, Barley, Brown Rice, Spelt, Quinoa)
- [ ] OR Grain-Free (Sweet Potato, Pumpkin, Squash, Lentils, Chickpeas)
- [ ] Confirm With Your Vet If Your Dog Has Any Diagnosed Heart Condition

2. VERIFY THE LABEL TOGETHER

- [ ] First 5 Ingredients Checked (Named Meat & Named Meal at the Top)
- [ ] AAFCO Complete & Balanced Statement + Life Stage Verified
- [ ] Check for Ingredient Splitting (Multiple Forms of the Same Carb)

3. TRANSITION & FREQUENT BUYER SETUP

- [ ] Follow the New Bag's Gradual Mixing Schedule
- [ ] Enroll Your Phone Number in Our Frequent Buyer Program at Checkout

A Quick Note from Our Team — Keep Learning & Ask Us Anytime!

The quick version: there's more than one right way to feed a healthy, thriving dog or cat! Flip the bag over with our crew anytime — we're happy to check the Guaranteed Analysis, AAFCO life-stage statement, and first five ingredients with you for **every healthy year** — use these two pages as your home-base cheat sheet, use your phone number at the register for our Frequent Buyer Program (buy 10–12 bags of most brands, get the next free!), and stop by or call any of our 6 stores anytime!

MY PET'S FOOD PREFERENCE

Pet Name & Age: _____

Current Brand & Protein: _____

Frequent Buyer Phone: _____