

# What Are Rendered Pet Food Ingredients?

How are they made and what from?  
What is important for pet owners to know?

Renderers convert dead animals and animal byproducts into ingredients for a range of industrial and consumer goods, such as animal feed, soaps, candles, pharmaceuticals, and personal care products. Common rendered ingredients in pet food include: chicken meal, beef meal, pork meal, by-product meal and animal fat.

## There are two types of rendering facilities:

1

### Integrated

Integrated plants operate in conjunction with animal slaughter and meat processing plants.

☐ Integrated facilities produce 'edible' and 'inedible' ingredients.

2

### Independent

Independent plants collect material from sites other than slaughter and meat processing facilities.

☐ Independent facilities produce 'inedible' ingredients.

#### Edible

Edible rendering is subject to inspection and safety standards of USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) or its state counterparts (human food safety requirements).

Raw materials are sourced from by-products of inspected and passed carcasses.

The inedible and edible rendering processes are segregated.

#### Inedible

Inedible rendering is not produced under USDA inspection, does not meet safety standards for (human) food.

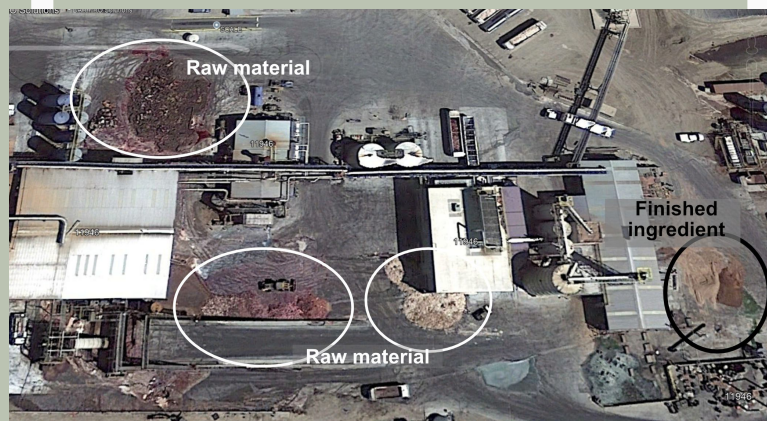
Raw materials are sourced from by-products of inspected and passes carcasses, AND condemned carcasses.

USDA statistics:  
more than **6.5 million** livestock and poultry carcasses were condemned in 2024.

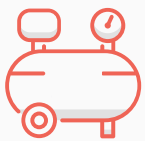
#### Inedible

Not produced under USDA inspection, does not meet safety standards for (human) food.

Raw materials are sourced from fat and bone trimmings, inedible meat scraps, blood, feathers, and dead animals from meat and poultry slaughterhouses and processors, farms, ranches, feedlots, animal shelters, restaurants, butchers, and markets.



Darling Ingredients, Crows Landing, CA



Raw materials are **ground** to a uniform size and placed in **continuous cookers** or in batch cookers, which evaporate moisture and free fat from protein and bone. A series of conveyors, presses, and a centrifuge continue the process of separating **fat** from **solids**.



#### Edible rendered ingredients are used to produce:

- Edible fats
- Soaps
- Pharmaceuticals
- Personal care products
- Crayons

#### Inedible rendered ingredients are used to produce:

- Meat meal ingredients for pet food/livestock feeds  
\* example: chicken fat, chicken meal, byproduct meal
- Inedible fats for pet food/livestock feeds
- Biofuel
- Industrial products

**Important for pet food consumers:** FDA does not require disclosure of inedible ingredient on pet food labels.

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#### SOURCES

Animal Rendering: Economics and Policy

<https://nationalaglawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/assets/crs/RS21771.pdf>

USDA Quarterly Enforcement Reports

<https://www.fsis.usda.gov/inspection/regulatory-enforcement/quarterly-enforcement-reports>

Image: Google Earth