

Solhundur Kennels – Raw Feeding Information

We highly recommend raw feeding. It produces noticeable benefits - when changing to raw food, many dog owners report cleaner teeth, fresh breath, stool is smaller and less odorous, eyes are clearer and brighter. Sluggish dogs become more energetic while hyper dogs become calmer. It will take several weeks to months for skin and coat problems to reverse since the body heals from the inside out. Major improvement will be seen when new skin and coat cells are regrown but the dog's mood and energy level are likely to improve much sooner. Chronic ear infections are often resolved with a switch to raw food, and dogs from breeds that have allergy and other immune system problems will benefit immensely from being on raw.

Higher cost and inconvenience are two of the issues that stop dog owners from switching to raw. Typical pre-made raw food costs about \$4.00 per pound. Premium kibble costs about \$2 a pound but has many more indigestible components. (This means the kibble will be filling up more poop'n scoop bags on it's way out). Raw food diets can be less expensive than kibble if you take the time to locate cheaper sources from butchers, meat packing plants, and raw food co-ops. I am currently paying \$1.29 per pound for lamb, beef, chicken and turkey ground meaty bones. Many raw feeders pay around 50 cents to a dollar per pound for their meaty bones. Raw feeders can also obtain some ingredients for free, as butchers may give away bones and other scraps. The other ingredients (eggs, fish, organ meats, ground veggies and fruit), which I buy at our grocery store, are similar in price. Raw food represents a much better value than kibble since you are paying for higher quality, less processed and more digestible food ingredients than what goes into commercial dog food.

It does take a bit more effort to feed raw food, compared to scooping kibble out of a bag, but then kibble IS a convenience food. It takes us between 1 to 2 hours to prepare about 20 pounds of ground food, which lasts our three dogs for about 12 days. (We also feed whole meaty bones and frozen fish for some of the meals). We pack age the food into Rubbermaid containers which need to be defrosted overnight before feeding. Pre-made raw diets are even more convenient as many are packaged in nuggets, patties or pellets.

Raised on Raw

Raising a raw-fed litter was a great experience. Sóley had an uneventful pregnancy followed by a very easy delivery - five puppies in just over an hour. Five puppies is a good number for a first-time litter in this breed, and Sóley is not a large dog. I am not sure how much raw feeding could have contributed to her litter size and easy delivery but I can confirm it didn't cause any problems. Her puppies were quite vigorous and grew steadily. Soley ate well throughout pregnancy and lactation without any particular quirks.

The real benefits of raw feeding showed as we introduced solid food to the youngsters - it was awesome to see them enjoy chewing on their first bones, chopped up chicken necks and backs. You could see just how natural and fulfilling the activity of eating raw meaty

bones was to them. They got a lot of exercise and mental stimulation from chewing on beef neck bones & they often chewed cooperatively! They seemed to inhale their platters of coarsely ground raw meaty bones and chopped organs. As with the adults , the puppies' stools were smaller and much less smelly than kibble-fed pups. Our dog-walking and pet-sitting experience gives us lots of comparison there!



Small Bones for Small Pups

We haven't had any kibble fed litters, but other raw-feeding breeders comment on how much more robust and vigorous their litters from raw-fed dams are compared to previous litters from kibble-fed dams, with pups being earlier to get up on their feet and more active in moving around the litter box. Visitors commented on how calm, happy and focused our pups were, qualities which are also observed by other raw-feeding breeders.



The pups' first meals were all animal proteins – meat, fish, and eggs. Research shows that puppies develop the enzymes to digest meat proteins first. Although pups do develop enzymes that digest carbohydrates, it's not clear whether they do this naturally or only in response to the presence of carbohydrates in the gut (cited in Optimal Nutrition by Monica Segal). Pups start producing enzymes to digest non-milk proteins between 3 to 5 weeks, so we introduced solid food at 4 weeks old. The pups ate one meal daily for the first week. By seven weeks they had two meals daily (plus training treats throughout the day). At this stage they began eating the same food as the adults, including ground veggies, kelp and fish oil supplements. Soley weaned her pups naturally starting at 8 weeks, she would let them start to nurse and then walk away from them. Even at nine weeks I would see a puppy occasionally latch on and nurse for a few seconds before Soley would call a stop to it. At this point the pups were getting three meals a day.



The First Meal

Since two puppies were going to kibble feeding homes at nine weeks of age, we gave all the puppies Innova Puppy food for four days prior & noticed a significant increase in stool size and odor, increased water drinking, and urination while on kibble. Little Blaze was very suspicious of the kibble and only ate a few pieces the first time it was served. Once those two pups went home we changed right back to raw food for a vast improvement in puppy “output”. Currently three of the pups, including our Blaze, now known as Tindra, are fed raw exclusively; one pup eats a combination of natural foods and kibble; and one pup is fed kibble.

Feeding raw is working great for us and we can't imagine going back to kibble. Raw feeding breeders report that the health of their dogs improves with every generation, especially with benefits to the immune system, joint health and longevity. We are looking forward to seeing our own future generations of raw-fed naturally reared breeding dogs.