AMIGA ANIMAL RESCUE

Newsletter Series

Newsletter #2, April 24, 2020

Home Cooked Dog Food and

more training tips from Leroy Williams of All4Dogs Training!

Greetings Friends of Amiga Animal Rescue, and welcome to our second newsletter!  If you did not receive our first newsletter, and if you feel like you missed out on something (an obsession of mine since childhood, you know, the not wanting to miss out on anything!), feel free to email me, and I will send you Newsletter #1!  Also, at some point I will be posting these on the developing website of www.amigaanimalrescue.com.  This newsletter, and the attachment to it, where you will find details of recipes and ingredients for preparing home cooked dog food is our first ever food issue!  Another obsession of mine since childhood, and from what I hear, food has turned out to be a diversion for many during this "introverted" moment in history!  Therefore, enjoy!

Let Them Eat Home Cooked Meals!

     Due to the current quarantine situation and the resulting dependence on delivered goods, many pet owners are currently experiencing delays in their regular pet food shipments! Here at Amiga Animal Rescue, I have patched the delays by cooking nutritious stews in the slow cooker. (Full disclosure, I sometimes do that in any case.) I might add, and many of you have already discovered, this period is a great time for cooking and eating!

     Years ago, when I first began studying macrobiotics, I was privileged to know and to receive veterinary consults across the miles from the late, great Dr. Norman Ralston, of Houston, who began his learning about animals as a youngster tending cattle on a Texas ranch.  His original veterinary work was also with cattle, but he advanced into a new direction in mid-life and grew to be a visionary in the movement to use natural and holistic remedies in his practice. He confided in me, "Home cooked food is better for your animals than any processed food. Even if I whip up the food in my laboratory, there is nothing like the nutritional value from fresh food to nurture your animals in a more complete way." He added, "It was really healthier for animals, when they were fed table scraps in the past, instead of all the dead, processed food they get fed today!"  Dr. Ralston's book, published in 1996 with macrobiotic teacher, Gale Jack, continues to be available on Amazon: "Raising Healthy Pets: With Natural Foods, Herbs, Massage, & Love."

     I have always found it easy enough to make a fresh stew in the slow cooker for the dogs in residence.  No seasonings are necessary. This week my dog Samson is eating a stew made of slow-cooked chicken, potatoes, peas, brown rice and carrots!  But, last week I mixed into a fresh cooked chicken, my left-over vegetarian stew of squash, broccoli, collard greens and tofu. I personally like to make a gravy by either adding a pre-made gravy mix to the broth from the cooking chicken, or even just add the usual flour or kuzu to the broth to thicken.  Most of the time I cook the chicken first, cool and debone it.  A chicken with bones gives a great calcium boost to the meal!

     This is an easy, versatile recipe that does not require specific measurements, and it is flexible to what food items you have on hand. As indicated above, you can feel free to combine leftover soups and grains from your own personal menu.  Over the years, I have found yams to be of truly excellent nutritional value for animals, and, I keep them on hand now, for whenever I may be making a batch of food for my dog Samson. Orange vegetables, especially yams, are excellent foods to help heal animals who have gastric problems, such as pancreatitis.

    The cats love to sneak in and try to steal Samson’s home cooked meals! So, I am going to say that this menu can transition to cats as well - especially, if they think they are "stealing" it!  I will address natural foods for cats in another newsletter(s), as is everything with cats *- it is more complicated.*But, I will reference here a comment on Amazon re: Dr. Ralston’s book:  “After reading his book I healed my cat by switching her to a diet of brown rice, cooked root vegies, lightly cooked green vegies and lightly cooked hamburger. At 15, she looks wonderful, shiny coat, clear eyes and as feisty as ever. I'm so grateful to have discovered this wonderful book!

    I definitely can confirm through numerous personal experiences using natural home-cooked foods the resulting “shiny coat,” increased energy, and, as well, balanced weight in my dogs.

[See Attachment A at the end of this newsletter for a more detailed Recipe with Photographs!]

Training Trips from Leroy of All4Dogs!

     In Amiga’s introductory newsletter, which I emailed last week, I introduced Leroy Williams, the very talented trainer and rehabilitator, who is one of the key members of the “Saving Sierra” team.  Leroy is using this period of introversion, which we are all experiencing, to create training videos, and some -- in an abbreviated, but memorable way -- demonstrate important aspects of dog handling and techniques of training that help build a cohesive partnership between person and dog.

     This week Leroy has created a short video to introduce, and discuss, “Tools,” the merits of various collars, and which are favored for training. “Don’t be afraid of a tool that can save your dog’s life!” advises Leroy. Following is a link to Leroy’s video, “Tools”:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X39neSqwj5U&t=3s>

     Leroy expands on this introduction to collars with a short video on the best way to handle the leash aka "leash management" with this brief video insight:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=et7guhEyD3c>

     Leroy further expands on this video in conversation by confirming an important fact, “The leash should be **leading** your dog – not **holding** your dog.”  And, further, the technique is to create/relieve pressure, which gives signals for proper direction to your dog.

     And, in my very favorite video clip, Leroy puts all of the above together in a training session with "Nicholas," who came to him from a rescue organization, after he was returned from his first adoption, because he was a "puller," and the adopter struggled with him for a day or two and then decided Nicholas had to go back to the rescue!  :(  (Obviously, it is invaluable when rescue organizations can train their adoptees before putting them up for adoption, but this is not always easy or possible.)  I have to say, I have become very fond of Nicholas upon watching this video a few times!  Enjoy Nicholas and Leroy!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m-rqMsCynPU>

     You may also receive additional training information directly from Leroy by following him on his ALL4DOGS Facebook page: [https://www.facebook.com/allfordogs.training](https://www.facebook.com/allfordogs.training/) as well as the Amiga Animal Rescue Facebook page  [https://www.facebook.com/pg/amigaanimalrescue](https://www.facebook.com/pg/amigaanimalrescue/photos/?ref=page_internal).  Leroy is also available on Zoom, for either question-level or full training consults.  He is easily reached at 845-590-7120.

     I hope you are enjoying the Amiga Animal Rescue newsletter series "in development!"  We plan to continue to feature Leroy, as well as other friends of Amiga Animal Rescue, who work with or for animals in some way or another.  So, stay tuned!

      And, as always, if you wish, you may donate directly to Amiga Animal Rescue, on our Go Fund Me site, at [www.gofundme.com/amigaanimalrescue](http://www.gofundme.com/amigaanimalrescue).  Thank you for all that you do throughout the year to support the animals of Amiga Animal Rescue.  And, *please do* forward our newsletter to your friends you feel may benefit from the information we are offering, or you may forward their email information to me so that we may add them directly as subscribers on our future newsletters.  Additionally, for those of you ordering items from Amazon.com, we encourage you to order through switching to the Amazon "charity" browser, "Amazon Smile" to order from Amazon, and when selecting the charity to which you would like Amazon to donate, choose "Amiga Animal Rescue"!  (Just google smile.amazon.com and you will receive the Amazon smile browser to make the adjustment.)

 Thank You, Take Care, Stay Safe, and God Bless!

Mary Ellen Hancock

SEE RECIPE ATTACHMENT BEGINNING ON NEXT PAGE!

TIPS AND RECIPES FOR HOME COOKED DOG FOOD

By Mary Ellen Hancock

April 24, 2020

I use a slow cooker to prepare a basic meat and vegetable stew that is filled with fresh, nutritious foods, and it is a meal that I feel quite comfortable eating myself! Right now I feed the stew to one small dog, Samson, my senior Miniature Pinscher, 2x a day. The below recipe makes about 2 quarts of food. Since I have a slow cooker, it is pretty easy to keep food stewing on a regular basis. Keep in mind that this stew can also be used as a “topping” to a high grade kibble that you might already be using to feed your dog(s). They will love you for it!

The basic ingredients for homemade dog food generally follow the below pattern, but it can be simplified or expanded: Chicken/Millet/Yam or Beef/Brown Rice/Butternut Squash/String Beans – and it is quite okay to use frozen vegetables.

1. Protein – Chicken, Beef, Lamb
2. Grain – Brown Rice, Millet, Barley
3. Starch Vegetable – Potatoes or Yams
4. Green Vegetable – String Beans, Kale, Broccoli
5. Orange and Yellow Vegetables – Carrots, Yellow Squash, Butternut Squash or Kabocha Squash
6. Other – Lentils, Beans, Cooked Eggs, Sea Vegetables, Canned Salmon (the leading food source for calcium), Gravy Mix and/or Kuzu Root Starch, Frozen Peas



Here is the recipe for a stew that is an all-time favorite around here, and it is pictured on the last page:

1. Chicken – Chicken thighs are the easiest to use for stew. They are easy to cook, very tasty and easy to debone after cooking, since there are no small bones. I like to cook chicken with bones, as that adds an important, and natural source of calcium. BUT, if you do cook chicken with bones, be sure you remove all of the bones when the stew cools. Or cook chicken first and remove bones; then add all other ingredients to the chicken after bones are removed.
2. Potatoes – Ten-Twelve small golden creamer potatoes cooked with skins on – you can “smash” them before serving!
3. Squash – Two cups of butternut squash.
4. Brown Rice – about two cups.
5. Kale – 1-1/2 Cups chopped
6. Water – 6-8 cups of water
7. Kuzu Root Starch for thickening broth into gravy – Use about a half a cup of cold water and stir in 2-3 tablespoons of Kuzu. Then stir into the stew. It will thicken quickly and easily! I like to use Kuzu Root Starch (similar in texture to arrowroot), because it easily turns broth into gravy, as the starch dissolves in cold water, then when the dissolved kuzu is added to the pot, the broth thickens instantly. And, Kuzu is an extra health booster, as it is made from a root that has a soothing effect to the stomach/GI tract and aids in easy digestion.

Tips for Advanced and Organized Preparing Methods:

1. Cook chickens in water, cool and debone, and freeze chicken and broth in quart containers for future use.
2. Make your own vegetable broth base that can be used for future soups and stews. Save and freeze the cuttings from vegetables, i.e. broccoli stems, potato skins, etc., (I typically freeze these “cuttings”) and on a quiet afternoon cook up broth mixes that can be frozen in quart containers; discard the cuttings after cooking. It is great way to add a nutritious base to slow cooker stew by using home cooked vegetable broth instead of water as the base!
3. I cook vegetables and grain dishes for myself on a fairly regular basis. What I cook for myself often finds its way into the dog food. For instance:

* Lentil Soup – On a regular basis, I cook pots of lentil soup using dry lentils, Kombu seaweed (comes in hard strips that dissolve into a soup or stew upon cooking. They are low in texture/taste but add a very high mineral content!), finely chopped celery and possibly added chopped carrots, kale or chopped butternut squash. I do not add spice or seasoning to this soup, and I use minimum salt. I always have extra containers of this soup in the freezer. Adding this soup to the slow cooker mix for the dog food menu is easy, and it is a great nutrition boost for the dogs.
* Vegetable Saute – Carrots, other root vegetables, squash, tofu, seitan might make a delicious sauté for my dinner over brown rice – but leftovers are a great additive to the slow cooker stew!

WHAT NOT TO USE: Onions are not good for dogs. Dogs do not digest corn well. Additionally, while apples, blueberries, and cranberries are okay for dog food, I am generally pretty cautious about going too wide with exotic fruits, spices, and other potentially “extreme” foods. In fact, I rarely add fruit to my home cooked dog food, but a tour through the cooking for your dog you tubes will reveal that many others do use fruits. Sometimes salt finds its way into home cooked dog food in my kitchen, via human leftovers, but generally not other seasonings. Never chocolate for dogs.

