

HEALTH & NUTRITION

Nutrition—Ferret Diet & Totally Ferret®

Ferrets are strict obligate carnivores and their true scientific name is: Order—*Carnivora*; Genus—*Mustela*; Family - *Mustelidae*. They are true meat eaters and should not be confused with their cousins, the mink or otter. As meat eaters, they require high quality animal protein, not fish as their primary source of protein. Most other ferret foods contain fish or fish meal as one or two of their primary protein sources. These are modified mink diets!

Fish vs Meat

Fish based diets were preferred by mink and mink ranchers because they enhanced rapid growth, which was needed for pelting in the fur industry. Though ferrets are no longer pelted for their fur within the U.S., there are still carry-overs in product manufacturing concerning these fish based diets. And, as some companies have not published research concerning their diets, the consumer must rely on their own knowledge and available product information for guidance. *Totally Ferret®* was designed specifically for ferrets. Primary protein sources as chicken by-product meal, rice flour, egg product, chicken fat, poultry fat, with guaranteed analysis of 36% protein; 22% fat.

Low Fiber

The ferret has no caecum. They require low amounts of fiber because they cannot digest it. *Totally Ferret®* has a fiber level of 1.5%. Other ferret foods contain higher fiber, an average of 3-4%. Also, the ferret's digestive tract is much shorter than the cat. The ferret only requires 3.5 to 4 hours for digestion, while it takes a cat as much as 8 hours. Most cat and kitten foods also contain 3-4% fiber. This is also why cat foods should not be fed to pet ferrets.

Pelleted vs Extruded

The ferret has a "V" shaped mouth and certain shapes of food, such as round or long pellets, can become lodged in the roof of their mouths. The unique triangular star shape of *Totally Ferret®* was designed to be just right, so that each bite has acceptable mouth feel and taste. Ferrets have sharp canine teeth and their predecessors, before domestication, shredded their food. Because of this, even as young kits, they are able to easily chew dry food. *Totally Ferret®*, an extruded diet, is crunchy and has high density. The cook is at a higher temperature to insure a more even distribution and cook of all ingredients. Pelleted or baked diets have a softer texture. They have a lower cooking time and temperature, which means they do not cook the starches properly and are less digestible. This in turn, may cause intestinal upset and/or loose stools in the ferret.

No Odor

Research studies have proven feeding *Totally Ferret®* means less odor and stool volume. Fish diets will cause the food to smell and taste fishy which will cause the ferret to retain the smell on his body and will also expel through the stool. What this means to your ferret and to you is less stool and body odor plus a better smelling litter pan when feeding *Totally Ferret®*.

Performance Foods, Inc., manufacturers of *Totally Ferret®*, is the only company that supports their nutritional claims with published research data. This was presented at a Vet-Tech Conference in 1994. Our feeding studies were done with breeders of pet ferrets, not laboratory animals. We spent over 2 years developing and testing *Totally Ferret® for Active Show and Pet Ferrets™* and another 2 years developing *Totally Ferret® for Older Ferrets™*. As the recognized "Leader in ferret nutrition", Performance Foods, Inc. takes its role within the ferret community very seriously. By purchasing the highest quality ingredients, rigorous quality control checks, and state-of-the-art manufacturing technology, we are able to offer what is considered the "Cadillac of Ferret Foods!"

Totally Ferret® for Active Show and Pet Ferrets™ is a complete and balanced diet. With 36% protein and 22% fat, this food was developed for all life stages which are gestation, lactation, weaning kits, active and adult ferrets.

Totally Ferret® for Older Ferrets™ is a maintenance food for ferrets four years and older, especially if they have a weight problem. It is NOT a reducing diet and was not developed as such.

There is no need for any nutrient additives or supplements, nor are they recommended without the express instructions of your veterinarian! You can buy and feed with 100% satisfaction guaranteed the first proven super premium ferret food—*Totally Ferret®*.