



## **SEATTLE POST-INTELLIGENCER**

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### **Fat or fit, dogs snap up her snacks**

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**By PAUL NYHAN – photo by Phil Webber**

SEATTLE POST-INTELLIGENCER REPORTER

Is your dog looking a little pudgy? Local biscuit entrepreneur Margot Kenly is trying to tap into the nation's love and concern for their dogs with a line of low-fat biscuits.

From a houseboat on Portage Bay, Kenly runs Blue Dog Bakery, hawking low-fat dog treats for chubby and fit canines alike. After selling the peanut butter and molasses treats on the West Coast in recent years, Blue Dog went national this summer.

Blue Dog Bakery isn't alone in selling healthy snacks for the nation's dogs. But Kenly is trying to carve out a niche with an all-natural alternative in unusual shapes, such as elephants. "We see a void in the market," Kenly said. "No more dog bones, everything is a dog bone."

Many dogs could benefit from fewer calories at mealtime, according to local veterinarian John Kelly. In fact, obesity ranks as the No. 1 nutritional disease among U.S. dogs, said Kelly, a veterinarian at Elliott Bay Hospital in Seattle.

"I don't think people recognize when a dog has a nice athletic build," he said. Overweight dogs may develop a litany of maladies, from diabetes to heart disease, Kelly added.

After a quick review of Blue Dog's ingredients, Kelly said the food is likely safe for most canines and likely appealing to dogs. However, he said pet owners should review the ingredients of new pet food and consult their veterinarian. Kelly also recommends offering your pet fresh treats, such as apple slices, pieces of melon or even bits of celery.

Blue Dog Bakery, meanwhile, says its natural biscuits lack preservatives and animal byproducts. While the company is based in Seattle, it contracts out much of the work, manufacturing the biscuits at a factory in Indiana.

Kenly, a former junior high school principal, isn't new to the biscuit business. In 1995, she introduced Seattle-based Mariner Biscuits, which makes high-end biscuits for humans. Three years later she tapped that experience to offer Blue Dog. While Kenly says her company is doing well, Blue Dog is privately held so it doesn't disclose its sales figures.

As far as taste, dogs appear to enjoy the treats, even if the food is apparently good for them. Three dogs -- a spaniel-collie, a Chihuahua, and a chow-Labrador -- tested by the Seattle Post-Intelligencer eagerly ate the biscuits.

The dog cookies are simple concoctions, comprising unbleached wheat flour, whole wheat flour, molasses, peanut butter, eggs, soy flour, vegetable shortening, whey, caramel color, wheat germ, peanuts, non-fat milk, salt, baking soda and brewers yeast, according to the company. Those ingredients create a food that even humans can eat, Kenly says. However, the brown biscuits are a bit dry for human tastes.

Pet owners can find Blue Dog Bakery products at QFC or they can contact Blue Dog Bakery on the Internet at [www.bluedogbakery.com](http://www.bluedogbakery.com)