
Living Homegrown Podcast – Episode 165 Real Food For Our Pets

Show Notes are at: www.LivingHomegrown.com/165

Lynn: It's a cheating moment, and so we do it. We'll take a cookie or we'll take a little bit of the chicken and brown rice, and we'll eat it in front of them. We're really trying to get people over the eww, which once they realized that what we're making is real food, then there shouldn't be that association anymore. It should be that we're talking about food. It's not dog food. It's not cat food. It's food.

Theresa: This is the Living Homegrown Podcast, episode 165.

Announcer: Welcome to the Living Homegrown Podcast where it's all about how to live farm fresh without the farm, to help guide the way to a more flavorful and sustainable lifestyle, is your host, National PBS TV Producer and Canning Expert, Theresa Loe.

Theresa: Hey there, everybody. Welcome to the podcast. I'm your host, Theresa Loe, and this podcast is where we talk about living farm fresh without a farm. Now, that includes organic small space food gardening and artisan food crops like canning, fermenting, or even baking your own homemade bread. It's all about the different ways that we can live closer to our food and take small delicious steps towards living a more sustainable lifestyle.

Theresa: If you would like to learn more about any of these topics or my farm fresh courses, my online business coaching, or my Living Homegrown membership site, then just visit my website, livinghomegrown.com. You know how on this website we talk a lot about locally-sourced food, organic food, having real food on our dinner tables.

Theresa: We talk a lot about knowing what's in the food that we are preparing or that we're serving to our families. We talk all of the different ways that you can be closer to your food by going to local farmers markets or getting to know your local farmer, or just being more intentional with the ingredients that you buy before you put it on the table to feed your family, and a lot of you really resonate with that message.

Theresa: Well, one thing I have never talked about before on this podcast is how we can carry our mission of being more into our food or closer to our food. We can carry that over into our pet's food as well. We have talked about the slow food

movement on this podcast and we've talked about making sure you can read and pronounce all the ingredients on what you're putting on the table. You know what? We should be doing this same thing with our pet food, especially if our pets are member of the family.

- Theresa: Now, if you are not into your pet being a member of the family, they're just a dog or a cat to you, then this episode probably will not resonate with you. For many people, their pets are part of their family and they want to have the healthiest lifestyle that they can for their pets, as well as their human family. That's what today's topic is about.
- Theresa: I brought on my friend, Lynn Felici-Gallant, and she is one of the co-owners of Paul's Custom Pet Food Company. Now, Paul is her husband, and they started this company about four years ago, but I have known Lynn forever. Way go way back. We were garden writers. That's how we first met each other, so she's very, very versed in gardening, organic gardening. She's absolutely one of us.
- Theresa: This venture started for them about three or four years ago where they started this company for creating real, locally-sourced, as close as they can be to locally-sourced real food for pets and it has a very interesting story behind it. I want you to listen for several reasons.
- Theresa: I want to open your eyes to the idea of looking at what we're actually feeding our pets and to see if there are some adjustments that we can make to what we're feeding our pets so that they are getting the best nutrition and healthy food as possible. Even if you can't go out and purchase custom food like a company such as Lynn, I want to just to have you be looking at the ingredients so that you are trying to purchase the best food that you can within your budget.
- Theresa: We even go into some of the things that we can supplement food at home that are healthier snacks than what we would probably typically buy at the store. I want you guys to come to this conversation with an open mind just that we're going to have a better understanding of what our choices are so that we can make the best choices within our budget and our timeframe.
- Theresa: What you're going to learn in this episode is a new way at looking at how we feed our pets so that our pets are having real food too. We're going to talk about why slow and locally-sourced food can make such a difference in a pet's health. I want Lynn to tell you the cancer story of one particular dog that shifted everything for them and where that dog is today. Trust me. It's really cool because that dog is still with us.
- Theresa: I also chatted with Lynn about what's really in some of the store-bought food that we typically see on the shelves. Now, one thing that I know a lot of us do is

we may want to give our dogs some treats so we will purchase processed treats at the store, which is really the equivalent to like a bag of potato chips, okay? They are really junk food because there's nothing really nutritional in there when it is those treats.

Theresa: What Lynn is going to share with us today are some really cool simple treats that we can give our pet that we are probably growing in our backyard right now. Since so many of you are gardeners, we're going to talk about what is safe to feed our dogs and what is not. Lynn actually makes dog and cat food, but we focused more on dogs for today's episode.

Theresa: Then, we're also going to talk about where to look for help if you did want to shift to a more natural diet for your pet. There's some things you can make yourself and some things you'll need some help with. We do talk about that as well, just to get you started, to get your foot in the door.

Theresa: As always, in the show notes for today's episode, I have everything that we talked about including a recipe that Lynn is sharing with us that is a little zucchini biscuit that we can make for our pets. To get to the show notes, you'll go to livinghomegrown.com/165 and everything will be there including a list of some bad foods for our dogs, some things that we may be growing in our garden that we should not be feeding our pets.

Theresa: It was interesting as we were having this conversation, I told her about some of the things that my dog, if she ever gets into my vegetable garden, some of the foods that she goes for immediately, and Lynn told me that there are some things that she is eating that are not good for her. I want you guys to get a list of all those bad foods. That will be in the show notes as well at livinghomegrown.com/165.

Theresa: We will also have a link in the show notes to some information Lynn has about byproducts in our dog food. All of that will be in the show notes. Now, before we get started, let me tell you a little bit more about Lynn. Lynn Felici-Gallant is an attorney, a garden designer, and a co-owner with her husband, Paul, of Paul's Custom Pet Food, based in Northwest, Connecticut.

Theresa: Now, Paul's Custom Pet Food creates small batch, homemade, ethically-sourced dog food, treats, and custom pet food based on a unique dietary needs of companion animals. Now, she credits the couple's golden retriever, Hunter, for the start of the business, and her resulting passion for pet nutrition. Hunter was diagnosed with cancer when he was just three years old in the lower jaw of his mouth, and was given six months to live.

Theresa: Today, he is going strong. He is 12-years-old, having survived cancer through a regimen of Chinese herbal medicine and food therapy. What we're going to

focus on today is the food therapy part. They completely revamped what he was eating so that he had no processed food. It was the best nutrition possible for him as a dog, and today, he is still going strong, and the cancer is still in remission, he never had surgery.

- Theresa: It's a really fascinating story that I know you're going to love. Now, before we dive into the interview, I want you to know that today's podcast episode is brought to you by my Living Homegrown Institute, which is my monthly membership site where you can have access to an entire library of monthly master classes that will help you live farm fresh without the farm. Now, in the membership, we cover everything from how to grow heirloom tomatoes or growing food in straw-bales, to raising chickens, or making homemade cheese, or fermented vegetables.
- Theresa: Now, I believe that living in organic farm fresh lifestyle is really a journey in learning. Inside the institute, we cover learning like gang busters, but sometimes you don't know where to get some of your sources before you dive in to growing more food, or making more food, or just living a more balanced lifestyle. I've put together a brand new PDF resource guide. It's my farm fresh resource guide.
- Theresa: It has all of my favorite resources to help you live farm fresh without the farm. Now, all you have to do to get the resource guide is go to livinghomegrown.com/fresh. That's F-R-E-S-H, and the resource guide will be right there for you. Okay. Let's dive into this interview with my friend, Lynn Felici-Gallant, and we're going to talk about real food for your pets. Hey, Lynn, thanks so much for coming on the show today.
- Lynn: Thank you, Theresa, for having me. We're looking forward to talking with you.
- Theresa: Good. Well, you and I have been friends for so long, and I've watched you on this journey, and I'm excited to talk about this. Before we dive into the full story and all the information that I wanted to cover today, could you just give everyone a little bit of like a description of what your company, Paul's Custom Pet Food Company, could you just describe what it is that you guys do?
- Lynn: Sure. We started Paul's Custom Pet Food in 2014 as a custom pet food company where we worked with veterinarians exclusively to prepare foods that they recommended for their clients, for their pet clients, based on their individual needs. Then, we morphed into a company with where we sell now, we make, we source, and we make, and we sell fresh pet food toppers. We now also provide custom food for cats and dogs with special dietary needs.
- Theresa: Very good. Now, I think it's so cool. What I want to make sure everyone wraps their head around is that your food is all locally-sourced and it's less processed.

It's really like the same food that we, especially my listeners, try to feed our families, but it's for your pets. Isn't that right?

Lynn: It is.

Theresa: Yeah.

Lynn: I wish we could say that it is all locally-sourced. We tried to get as many locally-sourced ingredients as possible, primarily the meats, the proteins, because they are really critical to pet food. Our meats are primarily locally-sourced. We literally go to the farm. We pick up. I think my husband Paul is doing that today, picking up 100 pounds of ground beef from a farm within 10 miles, and the vegetables we use are also locally-sourced.

Lynn: When I say to the extent we can, it's because we live in New England, and we are still a small company, so we have an issue with space. We get as much as we can from local farmers during the growing season and we will put up what we're not able to use, or in anticipation of the winter. Sometimes we have to resort to that second tier but it's always human grade ingredients. It's all exactly what a chef would get from a restaurant.

Lynn: It's actually better than most restaurants served. Yes, our philosophy is that we are an extension of the human food movement or the local food movement, and try to source as much as possible that way.

Theresa: Yes, absolutely. You hit on something I was going to hit on during our interview and that is that I know some chefs who shopped at local farmers markets or who have restaurants, and they have relationships with their local farmers, and you guys do too. You are doing exactly what a chef does for humans but you are the chef for people's pets, their dogs and cats.

Theresa: That's why I was so excited when you started going into this because there's the slow food movement. We're all going for real food. We're wanting to make things from scratch, and yet, we aren't doing that for our pets. We go to the grocery store or to the pet store, and we buy things off the shelf, and really, I learned through you how much I was really feeding my pets junk food that I wouldn't feed my family junk food, but I was feeding my pet junk food.

Theresa: We're going to talk about that. That's why I love your mission. I love what you guys are doing, and I just want to really have this conversation to open people's eyes to how they can have a healthier diet for their pets, and we'll talk all around how we can do that. I think what's really cool about what you're doing and with your story is how you guys got into this because, like you said, you just started this in 2014.

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- Theresa: You guys had full careers before that and it was really your dog, Hunter, that got you on this road. Could you just tell that story as to how this call came about, how you even realized that this was a thing?
- Lynn: Absolutely. I tell that story almost every day and it still gives me the chills. In 2010, Hunter, at three and a half years old, he's a golden retriever. At three and a half years old, he was diagnosed with cancer. It was a fibrosarcoma, which is a cancer in the tissues, and his was I say, happily, and manifested it as a tumor in his lower jaw and left-hand jaw.
- Lynn: We were given the diagnosis and we were told that it was a really serious cancer, and that we had to go from our traditional vet recommended that we go to Boston to a very reputable and terrific animal hospital called the Angel Animal Hospital. There, we met with a team of oncologists who told us that it was a really serious cancer and that he had six months to live, unless we pursued surgery to start, and the surgery entailed removing his jaw.
- Lynn: For anyone who knows a golden retriever, they live for their mouths. That's what they do. They're retrievers. They're completely trained and driven by their mouth. They eat. Of course, they all eat, but they are tennis ball dogs. They are stick dogs. They are dogs that the idea of taking his jaw out, his lower left jaw out, was just devastating. We knew it would be devastating to him as a baby really, a three and a half year old. It was a horrible journey home.
- Lynn: My husband and I, and Hunter in the car, just cried all the way from Boston back to New Hampshire where we were living at that time, and made the decision after so much discussion that we weren't going to do that to him. He was too young. It's interesting it wasn't a question of finances then. People have asked us that because as you'll hear, we entered into a holistic therapy that certainly wasn't cheap.
- Lynn: What we had decided, just the two of us, was that we would just give him a great life. We would love him and just be with him until the end. We were told the end would be six months. Of course, I put it out on Facebook looking for all kinds of sympathy. A friend of ours sent me a private message and said, "Are you willing to see a holistic veterinarian for a second opinion?" We said, "Of course." The very next day, we had an appointment with a veterinarian who practices Chinese veterinary medicine, which is based on all eastern principles of medicine and energy healing.
- Lynn: She asked us. She did a review of his charts, a review of the biopsy, and she asked if we were willing, one, to cook for him or to prepare his food. Two, if we were willing to embark on the regimen of herbal medicine. We said, "Yes." That was the beginning of the story. We did whatever she said. We did. We walked

him every night. We changed his food. She gave us a recipe based on his chi, which is so interesting. We didn't know any of this.

Lynn: Yes, we followed her recommendations. He was eating real food and he was on all eastern herbal medicines that if you asked me the name of, I could not pronounce, but intensive, and really intensive medications. Three, four, five, and then she prescribed different levels. This went on for a good year and a half. After a year, the tumor shrunk. It disappeared. We became really convinced in this idea of plant-based medicine and food therapy, which was based on Chinese medicine.

Theresa: Wow. Wow. How old is Hunter now?

Lynn: He'll be 12 in October.

Theresa: I know you always say that when people meet him, they always think he's younger than he is because he's always so energetic and he still eats food that you prepare for him.

Lynn: Correct.

Theresa: Yes.

Lynn: He is no longer on any herbal medicines. He hasn't needed to be. He is on all fresh food. We have a fresh food diet. Actually, a lot of it is the original recipe and that Hanna, Dr. Wells prescribed, and we supplement that with what it might be missing to balance it for all of his nutritional needs. We supplement that with just a couple of things, all plant-based again, kelp, and actually the only synthetic is a Vitamin D, a little drop of Vitamin D, and he's good to go.

Theresa: Wow. Well, I know when I've read some of the ingredients of some of your foods, it's like it sounds delicious. I know like you probably don't put spices in there because the dogs don't need the spices, but I'm just thinking, a little salt and pepper and this would be really good.

Lynn: It's funny you should say that. Paul is very particular and has ... super organized, which is making him a very good canine chef. Everything is just portioned out perfectly. One time, prior to our entering the business, he had made Hunter's food and there were 14, a little tub, little containers in the freezer. Honestly, Theresa, I was hungry one night and I put a little salt and pepper. It was a chicken with brown rice, kale, apples, this is another recipe.

Lynn: Actually, I remember now. It was not Hunter's. It was another recipe. There's chicken, brown rice, kale, apples. It was delicious. I put a little salt and pepper on it, and Paul comes home and said, "Wait a minute, there's one missing."

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- Theresa: You were found out.
- Lynn: I was discovered. I had to confess that I ate the dog food.
- Theresa: That is so funny. That is so funny, but I think I would too, because I look at what the ingredients are and it really ... It's like people food, but it's like not just people food, but people food that is not processed, and people food that is what we would be going to the farmers market and collecting all the ingredients, and coming home and making for our family.
- Theresa: This all makes perfect sense to me that this made such a difference for Hunter. It's like you realized that real food was benefitting him just like it benefits us. When I watched you on this journey, I was like, "Why didn't I ever really think about this?" We just don't think about this. It's like, "Well, of course, like duh." Of course, it would be better for them.
- Theresa: We always think that when we're going into the store and we're buying something off the shelf that, "They probably formulated the perfect balance of vitamins and nutrition, and they may have with the artificial things that they've put in there." When I started watching what you were going through and reading articles, I was a little shocked by what was actually in the pet food that most of us feed our pets.
- Theresa: It started me on a quest for actually reading all the ingredients, and I think that with people doing nothing else, I want them to definitely start thinking about what they're pulling off the shelf, because a lot of times it's all about saving money and some of the things that are in there are not things that we would ever eat. I'd love to chat a little bit about the standard American dog diet for a minute because I think it can be a little surprising to people.
- Theresa: Like, what are some of the things that are typically in the everyday dog food that we might find at the store?
- Lynn: Well, let me tell you first, that unless the food is determined by the USDA to be human grade, it's not, then everything else is not edible for humans. That's like the beginning. I don't know if that made sense, but-
- Theresa: Yes, it did. You're saying that if it doesn't say that it's human-grade food, we shouldn't be eating what's on the shelf for our dogs because it wouldn't be good for us?
- Lynn: Correct.
- Theresa: Yeah.

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- Lynn: Yes, and the more you know, the less you want to eat it.
- Theresa: Right. Not that I'm saying, "Let's all go out and eat dog food," but it just shows that if I wouldn't feed it to myself, it makes me a little nervous about feeding it to my dog.
- Lynn: Exactly. Actually, what's interesting about what you're saying is one of the fun parts of what we do is education. I mean, we'd love to educate people. I think there's a number of things that goes on. One is that that we have a perception that dog food and cat food is like, eww. Now, we've accepted that, which is just very weird. We all understand it's not something we'd want to eat for the most part.
- Lynn: We've accepted that as a culture and there's a whole history and evolution as to how that happened, which is probably more than we can get into here. One of the funniest things I do is, and Paul does this as well, is when we ... We sell at farmers market. Again, we're part of that local food movement. When a kid comes up to the table and they say, "You have dog biscuits or you have dog food?" We say, "Yes." They say, "Cool." Then we say, "Do you want to try some?"
- Theresa: Their eyes must get big and they're like, "What?"
- Lynn: They're like, "No." There you know right away that there's an educational opportunity, right?
- Theresa: Yes.
- Lynn: It's a moment. It's a cheating moment and so we do it. We'll take a cookie or we'll take a little bit of the chicken and brown rice, and we'll eat it in front of them. We're really trying to get people over the eww, which once they realized that what we're making is real food, then there shouldn't be that association anymore. It should be that we're talking about food. It's not dog food. It's not cat food. It's food.
- Theresa: It's real food like what-
- Lynn: Real food.
- Theresa: Right, which is a term that my audience understands because we talk about real food. If you're going to make your own yogurt versus store-bought, or you're going to cook from scratch, we're talking about making real food where you know all the ingredients that you're putting on your table for your family. What we're talking about here is the same thing where you're going to know all of the

ingredients or understand to be able to read and pronounce all the ingredients that you're feeding to your pet.

Lynn: Yep, absolutely. That's exactly it.

Theresa: Yeah. When we look at the dog foods, one of the things that I noticed was that they have a lot of things called byproducts and fillers, and that's what we're talking about that's like they do that too. It makes it cheaper, right? Just to extend what the good stuff, they add in a bunch of junk to fill it out.

Lynn: Sure. I have to be a little careful here as a business owner in the industry. Generally speaking, there's meats and poultry, and that's the top. That's the cream of the crop, pets, dogs and cats. We're talking about companion animals. Dogs and cats are at the very least omnivores, if not carnivores. You want clean meat and that means the exact same clean meat that we would eat.

Lynn: When you get into by product, it gets a little bit more complicated because byproducts can be good or bad. For example, liver is a byproduct. Heart is a byproduct. Kidney is a byproduct, but so as the beak, so as hooves, so as the lungs or the spleen, or the brain. This gets gross, but unless your pet food bag or can, or label specifies what that byproduct is, you don't know. For example, liver screen. We have liver in our recipes, in our beef recipes, and our chicken recipe.

Lynn: Terrific, as long as it's clean liver. This is again goes to the sourcing. We source as locally and ethically as possible, so we know that these are clean meats that we're humanely raised. Liver, heart, kidney, those are all terrific nutritional parts, byproducts, if you will, for an animal, for your pets. Unless the bag says or the can says, "Liver, heart," you're not going to know what by product it is and it could include some of the other things.

Theresa: Yeah. That brings up a good point also with so many of my listeners are trying to avoid industrially-raised meat. They don't want a shot full of antibiotics. They want them humanely-raised. That's one of the reasons why they go for locally-sourced or at least so that they know the farmer, and they know how those animals were treated.

Theresa: That's what I love about what you guys do is you do make sure, you do know everybody that you are sourcing from so that you can safely say that you know how where everything came from, and you know what the ingredients are. Where when buying something of the shelf, it could be something, well, chances are it is something, unless it's an organic food, you don't have any reassurance of how those animals were treated or raised.

Lynn: Yeah, and there are a lot of nutritionists, animal nutritionists, that will tell you, and I think it's true for humans too, that you'll know the difference. The quality

of the way the meat tastes, but also the quality of the protein for the animals. It's an obviously a much better protein source if it's local, if it's raised humanely, and pasture-raised, or grass-fed year round, so yeah. It's really the exact same thinking, the exact same mindset as with human food.

Theresa: Yes, exactly, because the animals are healthier. They have better immune systems. They don't need intervention because they are raised in a healthier way. When we go back and we talk about some of the ingredients that you guys use in your products, what I loved was that you're listing things like, kale and carrots, and sweet potatoes, and things like that, even fruit, I think you include. What things do you ... Don't give me your secret recipe, but what things are you putting in? You have meat, but it is fruit and vegetables too, right?

Lynn: Sure. We'll use anything from broccoli, kale, carrots, green beans, sweet potatoes, apples, blue berries, Swiss chard, summer squash. Those are some the ... Those aren't in all recipes, by the way. Those are in the multiple recipes that we make. Then, I mentioned before that we do a custom recipe. There are dogs out there, we worked with dogs primarily, but there are dogs out there that have food aversions or allergies to some ingredients.

Lynn: From a veterinarian, we might get a recipe that has a test accompanied with it that says they can't have squash or allergic to squash. We'll make a custom recipe. In those recipes, we actually have one recipe with bananas. That's not local, but it's fresh. It's bananas and apples, and then that one's pork. Now, pork isn't one that we have on our menu of our five toppers, but it's one that we'll customize. Lamb, we worked with local lamb.

Lynn: The custom recipes give us an opportunity to work with even more ingredients, local ingredients, and organic ingredients.

Theresa: Well, that's really cool. Is that typically how some people find you is through their vets or if they have a holistic doctor that they get sent your way, or do you find most of your customers because you have a booth at the local farmers market?

Lynn: Both. Really, both. I'd say we started out of farmers market. That's how we got our first break here in Connecticut, four years ago, when we opened the business. We started at a farmers market in Westport, Connecticut, really one of the best markets I've ever attended. We did generate a lot of customers directly through that farmers market, and then subsequent farmers markets over the last few years. We have gone to veterinary offices and to veterinarians and introduced ourselves.

Lynn: The ones that are savvy about food and food therapy, and nutrition, and who do recommend food for their patients to make, we'll make it for them if for some

reason they're not able to and there's a lot of reasons people don't want to. We actually have a large population of vegetarians who just don't want to deal with the meat. They'll come to us. They'll say, "You know what? I know my cat or my dog needs meat. I can't deal with it. Can you prepare this recipe?" and we do.

Theresa: That's so nice. Yes, that's really nice because they know that that's a really solid protein for their pets, but they don't want to have to deal with it. That makes perfect sense, absolutely. Okay. One thing I haven't mentioned that I really want to bring up is the fact that you have a gardening background that's actually how we met, is because we were both garden writers, so I've known you for years and years.

Theresa: You really come to the table with this understanding of fruits and vegetables. Paul is the chef who can put this altogether and I'm sure you help him too because you know the vegetables and the fruits so well. I just find out such an interesting combination. Do you find that you draw on your gardening background a lot in this new business?

Lynn: Absolutely, I do. In fact, I would love to encourage people to grow their own ingredients if they are inclined to make some fresh food of their own, which they have to be careful about. Google is full of a lot of pet food recipes but you want to talk to your veterinarian before you embark on that journey, because there are ... You need to make sure that the dog or the cat has the proper nutrients. Yes, I would love for even if it's just snacking or a topper to dry food that they are currently feeding, I'd love to encourage people to grow their own carrots and spinach, and kale, and watermelon, and zucchini.

Lynn: These are just an example of some foods that are really, really healthy that have huge nutritional benefits and low calorie, and not junk food. It's just a dog. Let me tell you, most dogs are not going to know the difference between you giving them a carrot as a snack and you giving them, God forbid, a milk bone. They just want you to give them something.

Theresa: Yes, and they just know that they want something to eat. Especially, I have a chocolate lab, and she will do anything, I mean, anything for food. She just lives for food and she loves apples and carrots, and things like that. The biggest problem I have with her is that she harvests from my garden if she gets in there. If I let her out and I don't notice that someone left the gate open to the vegetable garden, I will find her sitting there picking tomatoes and picking some apples.

Theresa: She jumps up on her hind legs and pulls the apples off the tree, and just has a field day in there. I always have to watch her really close when she goes out if someone forgot to close that gate. Boy, I'll have no tomatoes in no time. She doesn't care if they're green. She just knows they're delicious. I love that to be

able to grow our own ingredients, and especially with snacks. You and I have talked before about how when we're using some of the snacks that you find at the grocery store or the pet store, t's like giving potato chips or any other junk food to your pet.

Theresa: If we are trying not to eat those things ourselves, it's such an easy thing to give them healthier snacks. That's great. You even have a recipe that we can make a ... I think it's a zucchini biscuit, which I can link to in the show notes. I saw an article that you did and it was a biscuit that ... You said it was bland if you wanted to eat it yourself, but we could eat it ourselves if we wanted to.

Lynn: Yes.

Theresa: Yes.

Lynn: That's generally true. They are bland, but honestly, the dog cookies we make, I dip in hummus all the time. That combination of a nice hummus and peanut butter cookie is just terrific.

Theresa: That sounds good.

Lynn: Yeah. I do want to go back to something you just said about your dog, your own dog eating out of your garden, because not all foods are good. Not all human foods are good for your pets, and it's really, really important that people don't assume that just because we can eat it, they can eat it. That is so far from the truth and there's a list I can give you. We can just talk about it very briefly, a couple of them.

Lynn: Never grapes, no onions, no raisins or currants, or chocolate is deadly. Even tomatoes, maybe winced, just a tiny bit when you said that, because some things in the nightshade family can be problematic.

Theresa: That's so good to know. I should just say, I always ... That's what I'm watching for, is that she goes for the tomatoes, and of course, I don't want her to eat the tomatoes because they're my tomatoes. That's really good to know. She's only actually gotten a hold and actually eaten the whole thing before I reached it. Maybe a few times, a handful of times, but that's really good to know. Tomatoes definitely are a no-no for dogs.

Lynn: Well, yeah. They're not fatal, but they're just not the healthiest, but some are. Raisins and grapes can cause kidney failure so you just don't want to go there. I think it would be probably be helpful for me to give you a list of that to put in the show notes.

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- Theresa: Yeah, that would be great. Let's do that. I'm glad you said something. Definitely, yeah. I know apples are good and that carrots are good, and also sweet potatoes. I know you talked about sweet potatoes a lot. They're okay also?
- Lynn: Apples though, the seeds have arsenic, or I think its arsenic. Apples have to be coked, same with pears. You know they're good for them, for your pet, but they can't eat the seed. It does get a little complicated. The last thing I want to do is to have everyone just have all of their dogs and cats eating all of the foods that we eat. It is important to know what some of the foods that are better for them than others. Then, some of them that are clearly poisonous.
- Lynn: One thing I'd really like to mention about poisons is Xylitol, which is in a lot of peanut butters. That's a fake sugar. That is deadly. A lot of people will make peanut butter cookies. If you're going to do that, because dogs love peanut butter, or they'll just give them a tablespoon of peanut butter, no problem, so long as it is 100% preferably organic peanut butter. No salt, no sugar, no Xylitol, God forbid. It is important to know the limitations too.
- Theresa: Yeah, that's really a good one. We only have in our house, we only have organic peanut butter, and I do know that peanut butter is loved by dogs, but that's so important because if you buy the really cheaply stuff that has a lot of sugar, I'm sure it has that in there. I won't say the brand name but I'm sure that some of the real cheaply ones that are, that maybe I grew up with as a kid, are not the ones that you want to have.
- Theresa: Luckily, the listeners here mostly are organic or going for organic, but that's a really important thing because peanut butter, I know dogs love peanut butter. That's good.
- Lynn: Yes, we do.
- Theresa: Well, I would love to talk real quick about some of the things that you guys offer that you ship, because now someone is listening to this and they are probably saying, "Well, I know you don't typically ship your fresh dog food." If someone was interested in biscuits, that's something that you do ship.
- Lynn: Sure.
- Theresa: Yeah.
- Lynn: Yes, we do. We do two things right now for treats. One is a pumpkin peanut butter, gluten-free pumpkin peanut butter dog cookie, and the other is a dehydrated sweet potato chew or chip. Yes, we're happy to ship those. Those are easy because you don't need any dry ice or any special refrigeration, whereas our food is freshly made, and then frozen.

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- Lynn: To ship that, we can ship in our area which we consider the northeast up down to maybe South Carolina within two days as long as it reaches someone within two days, that's fine. It will still be frozen or at least partially frozen. Anywhere beyond that, we would easily recommend another company that does something similar to what we do or we would ask that you pay overnight shipping, which can get prohibitive.
- Theresa: Yeah, exactly. Well, let's talk about that real quick. If someone is going, "Man, I would love to do this but how in the world would I find a company near me?" Maybe they live in California or Los Angeles, like I do. Now, I know here in Los Angeles, there are companies that do this, but if you're somewhere in the Midwest or if you're some place, or you're outside of a city, how do you ... People go about finding a company like yours?
- Lynn: Well, not to promote the competitors, but since all ... What is it? The rising tide lifts all boats, and our goal is healthy pets, right? There are a number of boxed subscription pet food services that run like on the Blue Apron model, or those models, and they will ship throughout the country.
- Theresa: That's cool. Okay. If they just do some Google searching and foresee what might be local that they could get, then they could also look into something like that?
- Lynn: Sure.
- Theresa: They can still do snacks like what we talked about with the vegetables if they wanted to avoid the treats that you might get at the store. They could still do treats themselves?
- Lynn: Sure. With a little research and some smart and some savvy, you can find reputable sources on Google. I really emphasize reputable. You want to look for someone who's got some background in nutrition and those people do frequently publish recipes and those can be healthy recipes. You have your mom and pop people that just will put anything out there and I would just be careful of those.
- Lynn: If you wanted to make your own treats, there are plenty of really healthy recipes out there. We're going to post one.
- Theresa: Yes.
- Lynn: Honestly, sometimes making something as simple as freezing some yogurt with a little dollop of peanut butter and a blueberry in your own freezer during the hot summer especially, is a terrific treat. I make goat milk kefir for my dog all the time. Then, I freeze them in ice cubes with a blueberry, and a little bit of peanut butter, and he loves them.

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- Theresa: It sounds good to me.
- Lynn: It's probiotic. Yes, it's probiotic. He's happy. I'm happy. He's 12. He's almost 12. Everyone is happy.
- Theresa: Fantastic. Well, Lynn, I can't thank you enough for coming on here and telling me, telling all of us everything that you do, and really giving us some insight into looking at our pet food a new way. Thank you so much for coming on today.
- Lynn: Well, it's my pleasure. Thank you for having me. I got to talk about my favorite topics, plants, pets and food.
- Theresa: Awesome. Well, I hope you enjoyed that interview today with my friend, Lynn Felici-Gallant, all about real food for your pets. Now, if you want more information about her business with her husband, Paul, which is called Paul's Custom Pet Food Company or you want the list of bad foods that we shouldn't be feeding our pets, or if you want information on byproducts that's inside of store-bought pet foods, all of that information will be in the show notes for today's episode.
- Theresa: To get to the show notes, go to livinghomegrown.com/165. I hope you found this episode interesting. I know I'm so inspired by what Lynn and her husband Paul are doing because they really are helping people to raise the healthiest pets possible, especially when a pet has some sort of an ailment or illness, or allergy. They have such a wonderful heart. I hope you will check out everything that they have going on and learn more information so you can find maybe something like this in your own area.
- Theresa: Until next time. Just try to live a little more local, seasonal and homegrown. Take care.
- Announcer: That's all for this episode of the Living Homegrown Podcast. Visit livinghomegrown.com to download Theresa's free canning resource guide and find more tips on how to live farm fresh without the farm. Be sure to join Theresa Loe next time on the Living Homegrown Podcast.

A special note from Lynn regarding USDA Regulations:

The issue of "human-grade pet food" is complicated. I misspoke in saying that the USDA governs "human-grade pet food" and that pet parents should look for pet food that is *labeled by the USDA as human-grade*.

In fact, the USDA governs human food. The FDA oversees pet food (feed). At present, the FDA is trying to define pet food made of fresh, human-grade ingredients, as this is a new concept for the industry.

Rather than look for USDA "human-grade pet food" as I stated, consumers should look on the labels for pet food made with human-grade ingredients.