



Chic Spotlight: Pure Doggy Organic Bakery's Becky Kuntz

Dogs will eat just about anything, but that doesn't mean it's good for them. One local woman set up shop to spare your socks with tasty treats for your furry friends.



Today, my dogs eat 95 percent organic dog food and, of course, Pure Doggy certified organic dog cookies!

Cincy Chic: How did you start making organic dog treats?

Becky Kuntz, Founder and Owner of Pure Doggy Organic Bakery: Several of my dogs have had terrible allergies, so bad, that their paws would be flaming red! It bothered me to treat them with steroid shots and prednisone because that was only treating the symptoms and causing other side effects.

So I started to research the ingredients in dog food and dog treats. I was amazed at how little substance was in most brands. Since I started incorporating organic foods into my diet, I thought it only made sense to do the same for my dogs. I began to test recipes using only organic human grade ingredients to see what my dogs liked. I also decided to use gluten-free flour to eliminate any digestive issues that some dogs experience. Today, my dogs eat 95 percent organic dog food and, of course, Pure Doggy certified organic dog cookies!

Cincy Chic: What type of initial research did you do?

Kuntz: I looked for statistics in the pet products area and forecasts for organic food sales. According to the American Pet Products Manufacturers Association survey in 2008, over 45 million U.S. households own a dog. In 2009, the association estimates that \$45.4 billion will be spent on our pets in the U.S. According to the Organic Trade Association, U.S. sales of organic food and beverages were projected to reach nearly \$23.6 billion in 2008. Americans love their pets, and I believe they are becoming more conscious of the health benefits of organic food and will translate that to their pets, too. I also researched competitor products, which included tasting their treats!

Cincy Chic: Your dog treats are USDA organic certified by the Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association (OEFFA). What process do you and the treats go through to gain organic certification?

Kuntz: I am so glad you asked this question! I thought it was important to walk-the-walk, so from day one, my goal was to have the USDA organic seal on my product. I wanted dog owners to know that I was committed to using organic human grade ingredients and getting the seal of approval from the USDA.

Most people probably don't know that I had to go through the same certification process as those that make the organic ingredients used in my product (i.e. flour, spices, etc.). I also thought it was important to support an Ohio-based certification agency, so that is why I worked with OEFFA. The organic questionnaire asks detailed questions about material inputs, production system, assurance of organic integrity, audit control system, quality assurance, sanitation, pest management, packaging and labeling, storage, transportation, waste management, product flow chart and product profiles.

"After the questionnaire is completed and approved, a USDA certification inspector did a one-on-one certification review and submitted a report to OEFFA. After ensuring all paperwork was in order, OEFFA granted Pure Doggy with its organic certification. In order to keep my organic certification, I will go through this process every year.

Cincy Chic: Why should a dog owner choose organic foods over non-organic?

Kuntz: I could go on and on about the health benefits of products processed without the use of pesticides, chemicals, fungicides, etc. However, I think the best test for dog owners is to have them do their own taste test. Try tasting an organic red pepper or perhaps, an organic carrot. You can immediately taste the difference between an organically grown product vs. a non-organically grown product! Besides the health benefits, the organic products taste better and smell better!

Cincy Chic: You just launched your Web site in May. What does that mean for customers?

Kuntz: My goal was for customers to have a place to get more information on Pure Doggy products and to purchase online. Sometimes people need to research before committing to purchase. I get that, and I support that. I also think people like to hear the story behind the business, so I hope the personal touch on the "About Us" page will give them that glimpse. It was also important to share the good-for-the-earth packaging because that was just as important as the organic certification seal. Finally, I wanted a venue to thank our customers, so we created the Doggy Gallery so that proud parents could display their beloved dogs for all of us to enjoy! That is one of my favorites on the Web site!

Cincy Chic: Besides your online store, where can we find your healthy creations?

Kuntz: We should be available in the Whole Foods Market Cincinnati location very soon. We are also hoping to have more local pet boutiques carry Pure Doggy products in the near future, as well. We will continue to post this updated information on the Web site.

Cincy Chic: Are there any up-and-coming products for which puppy lovers should get excited?

Kuntz: Pure Doggy is a big fan of Park + Vine in downtown Cincinnati, so I am currently working on an organic vegan doggy treat recipe in hopes that we can offer a local product to their clientele. We welcome hearing from *Cincy Chic* readers to voice their suggestions on our Facebook page (Pure Doggy Organic Bakery), too.

Cincy Chic: When you're not baking up batches of doggy treats, what do you like to do?

Kuntz: I really enjoy volunteering with the Louisville Weimaraner rescue organization. I love seeing rescue dogs get adopted after participating at events like the Cincinnati Pet Expo and the West Chester Dog Fest. I also enjoy spending time with my extended family who resides in the Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky areas. I can usually find a cousin that is interested in going to the Coldplay concert or a grandmother that is interested in seeing "Grease" at the Aronoff!

Cincy Chic: What is your favorite thing about Cincinnati?

Kuntz: Can I pick more than one? I love seeing people getting out and enjoying Cincinnati events, like the Cincinnati Flower show that just took place in Symmes Township this year or the Cincinnati Flying Pig marathon. I'm not a runner, but it is incredible to see people on the streets in Hyde Park and Mariemont yelling their support to the runners as they jog by. Or how about going to a Reds game or a Bengals game?

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