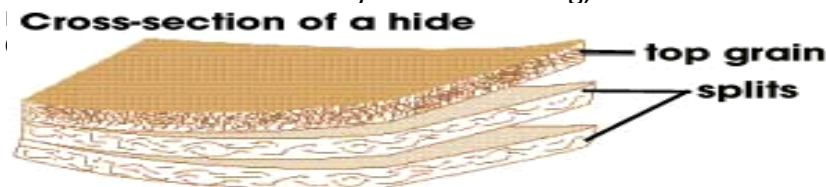


- **BENEFITS OF MADE IN THE USA AMERICAN BEEFHIDE CHEWS**

- **Quality aspects of American vs. Imported Dog Chews - Narrative**

- The primary reason that pet owners purchase rawhide dog chews for their dog is for the comfort their pet derives from chewing and to keep the dog busy, preferably unsupervised. The constant chewing helps keep the dogs teeth clean. The longer the dog chews, the more satisfied an owner becomes with the product they have purchased.
- For over 60% of dog owners, rawhide is a planned purchase. Once an owner has determined that their pet likes a product, those owners will seek out that particular product. In lieu of finding the product, 75% will still purchase a rawhide product, but will make their determination based on what they “think is good for their dog”. Size and durability are cited as the two leading considerations in purchasing rawhide dog chews.
- The basic difference between Pet Factory American Beef hide chews made in the USA and imported dog chews is the raw material used to manufacture the product. Quality differences start with the actual breeding of the cattle in the USA versus other beef producing countries. Cattle are bred for their ability to withstand pests and the environment. Consequently, the cattle raised in the USA are a different breed than what is raised in Southern Hemisphere countries. As a result of feed and diet controls, cattle in the USA are heartier and able to withstand harsher environments, which South American cattle would have trouble withstanding. Heavy Native Steers (HNS) are considered the prime quality cattle produced in the USA, and are only found in the USA. HNS represent the best beef cattle in the world and are the standard by which other countries beef cattle are measured. Pest control procedures in the USA have been implemented by such organizations as the Cattlemen’s Association, to prevent pests and insects from harming cattle, which consequently, has a beneficial effect on the animals hide. The quality cattle breeding practices, which have been implemented by USA ranchers produce the thickest overall hides available in the world market.
- In the US, cowhides are stripped from cattle in the slaughter process by USDA certified meatpacking plants. The hides are typically salted or unsalted (fresh), sprayed with an anti-fungal chemical to inhibit bacteria growth and sold on the open market. The majority of hides produced in the US are salted or further cured for export. Fresh hides, along with non-exported salted hides are sold to domestic tanneries for further processing.
- USA tanneries chemically dehair the hides using a liming and rinse process. Lime expands the hide allowing the hair to fall out. Through rinsing, the hair is carried away, resulting in a clean thick hide.
- The hide is then split (horizontally cut) into two layers, commonly referred to as the top grain (epidermis) and split (dermis & hypodermis). The top grain piece is made up of several strata containing four distinct cell types. Each cell type produce chemicals that make this layer of hide strong, flexible and waterproof. Depending on the eventual finished product, a hide is cut (upholstery). The remaining split will vary in thickness



- A fresh split is the primary material used by Pet Factory to produce 100% Made in the USA “American Dog” chews. The dermis’ major parts are collagen (strength), reticular fibers (support) and elastic fibers (flexibility). The interlocking of fibers and collagen form a strong elastic network. It is this network which defines durability in a dog chew. The hypodermis consists of connective tissue including fat, which is highly palatable to dogs. Studies have shown that dehydrated (salted) hides contribute to collagen becoming fractured and separated from the fiber structure, as well as deterioration of fat content within 24 hours. Heated environments will accelerate this process. For these reasons and in order to maintain quality and integrity of the split, Pet Factory only buys fresh splits obtained from upholstery tanners, transported in refrigerated containers, which require processing by the tannery within 24 hours. Whenever possible, Pet Factory buys splits from Heavy Native Steers, which will result in the thickest freshest split in the world.
- Most South American makers of dog chews will actually re-split the split into two parts (see picture). This re-splitting process weakens the collagen fiber network, and actually reduces the overall fat content (palatability) of the dog chew. Hides are typically gathered from many sources, and refrigeration is non existent.
- After obtaining the split, Pet Factory converts the hide into finished product The hides are first cleaned using a proprietary food grade process of mixes and rinses to remove any residual chemicals residing in the split. Hydrogen peroxide is used in the cleaning process to kill and further inhibit bacteria growth. There are no chemicals added to the hides. This process of cleaning the hide brings the material back to it’s most natural state with little opportunity for bacteria growth. After cleaning, the hide is cut, formed and put into drying ovens within 6 hours. The time frame of three days from slaughter to dry room is integral in maintaining the highest standards for Pet Factory’s “American Dog” chews.
- In some instances, South American makers will do a poor job of cleaning the hides properly. At times, all of the lime is not extracted from the split. This will result in a very hard, rough, very white looking bone that lacks any palatability for the dog. The lime will not harm the dog, but will totally remove any taste from the product. In some instances, makers in foreign countries work with old hides where the collagen has broken down causing the fiber network to fall apart. In these cases, makers resort to coating the hide with additives such as titanium dioxide to make the end product look white. Once again, this is not harmful to the dog, but the titanium removes the taste and covers the real underlying problem of the fiber network breaking down.
- A dog will devour a product that it can get wet and tear apart. The thicker the hide, the longer it will take the dog to get it soaked and be able to sink their teeth into. Thickness can be misleading though when products made with thick hides have no weight to them. This is an indication of collagen and fiber loss, which contributes to the density of a product. Maintaining the strength and makeup of the fiber network within each hide is critical to the overall lasting quality of the chewing action by the dog. The tighter the fiber, the longer the chew will last. Minimizing the opportunity for collagen to degrade will result in a stronger longer lasting dog chew. The more fat content within the hide, the more the dog will enjoy chewing and keep coming back. The longer a dog chews on a product, the more dental benefits of cleaning teeth and tartar control will be maintained.
- All of the industry’s best practices for producing the highest quality 100% Made in the USA Pet Factory. Starting with the thickest and freshest hides available, and maintaining a strict handling, Pet Factory produces the highest quality products in the world.

