Use of Food-Stuffed Kongs

Toys that contain food can be a useful tool in helping puppies learn to settle and giving higher-energy puppies something to do when the raiser cannot give them sufficient stimulation in other ways. There are many food dispensing toys on the market but most are not safe and/or not practical for GDB puppies. The Kong has been tested extensively and although they are very durable, care must always be taken with any type of toy left with a puppy. Black Kongs are stronger than red Kongs but some pups can destroy even black Kongs (and may be especially motivated to do so if there is food inside!)

Permission is not needed to utilize food-stuffed Kongs with puppies under 16 weeks of age so long as the guidelines below are followed. Raisers of puppies over 16 weeks of age should receive permission from their leader to utilize food-stuffed Kongs. Usage should be noted on the monthly report and communicated to the CFR. The puppy should be weaned off the stuffed Kong as it matures and/or the behavioral reason it was utilized for is resolved.

Situations where a stuffed Kong may be beneficial:
- Introducing puppies to being left alone in a crate
- When riding in vehicles for nervous puppies
- As part of a behavior modification program for puppies with anxiety in the crate
- In an ex-pen or on tie down at work with a higher-energy puppy

Stuffing the Kong
The puppy’s regular kibble should be soaked and stuffed into the Kong. For young puppies, or to get an older puppy interested in the stuffed Kong, it should not be frozen as this makes it harder for the pup to get the kibble out and it may lose interest. Once the puppy is enjoying the stuffed Kongs, the kibble should be lightly soaked before inserting and the Kong frozen. If the kibble is just lightly soaked small pieces will fall out as it defrosts making it more enticing than a ‘block’ of food in the Kong, which may be hard for the pup to reach and discouraging.

The amount of kibble used should be deducted from the pup’s normal feeding ration.

Very occasionally, a puppy with lower food drive will have no interest in a kibble-stuffed Kong. The CFR, via the leader, may give permission for higher value food to be used such as canned dog food (following guidelines for unfrozen/freezing above). Peanut butter may
be used but a smaller amount and care must be taken that the product does not contain Xylitol, an artificial sweetener that is poisonous to dogs.

When higher value stuffings are used it must be noted on monthly report. The puppy should be gradually weaned off the higher value stuffing to regular kibble.

Consideration should be given to puppies with sensitive GI systems when looking at alternative stuffings. Raisers and leaders should check with the CFR for suggestions.