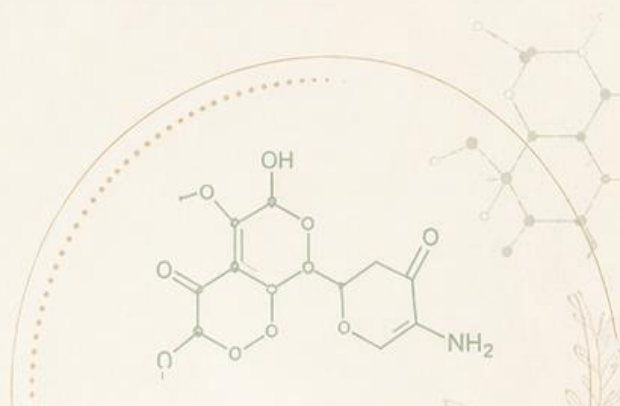




# DAATA / IGS INGREDIENT CLASSIFICATION FRAMEWORK



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Professional Reference  
for Science-Based  
Animal Grooming and Care



ANIMAL HEALTH  
AND SAFETY



PROFESSIONAL HEALTH  
AND EXPOSURE



ENVIRONMENTAL  
RESPONSIBILITY



SCIENCE, TRANSPARENCY  
AND FUNCTIONAL NECESSITY



ETHICS, MANUFACTURING  
AND TRACEABILITY



*Beyond cosmetics. Toward coherent,  
responsible and traceable grooming.*



## 1. WHY THIS FRAMEWORK

Animal grooming products are often evaluated through the same lens as conventional cosmetics: skin tolerance, marketing claims, sensory appeal, regulatory permission, or immediate cosmetic performance.

The DAATA / IGS approach proposes a broader and more demanding perspective.

In animal grooming, an ingredient should not be considered acceptable only because it is legally permitted, commonly used, pleasant to smell, effective in a formula, or apparently well tolerated by the skin.

Grooming products are used in a very specific context. They may be applied to large areas of the body, rinsed into wastewater, inhaled during bathing or drying, licked by animals, used near mucosa, handled repeatedly by professionals, or layered with other products during one grooming session.

For this reason, ingredient evaluation must include not only skin tolerance, but also animal health, professional exposure, coat physiology, sensory comfort, environmental fate, manufacturing impact, and functional necessity.

The DAATA / IGS Ingredient Classification Framework was created to support a more responsible, science-based and coherent language for evaluating ingredients used in animal grooming and care products.

## 2. THE DAATA / IGS EVALUATION PRINCIPLE

The central DAATA / IGS question is:

**Is this ingredient necessary, physiologically coherent, safe for animals and professionals, environmentally responsible, and justified across its full lifecycle?**

This means that an ingredient may be legally permitted and still be considered unsuitable for a strict DAATA / IGS approach.

An ingredient may be rejected or restricted because of:

- animal health concerns;
- repeated professional exposure;
- skin barrier disruption;
- coat damage or cosmetic masking;
- sensory burden for animals;
- inhalation risk;
- licking or oral exposure;
- environmental persistence;
- aquatic toxicity;
- bioaccumulation;
- problematic manufacturing;
- hazardous contaminants;
- lack of true functional necessity.

DAATA does not evaluate ingredients only as isolated cosmetic substances. It evaluates them in the real conditions of animal grooming.

## 3. THE FIVE DAATA / IGS CATEGORIES

The framework organizes ingredients into five categories.

### CATEGORY A — DAATA-COMPATIBLE

Category A ingredients are generally compatible with DAATA when used correctly.

They usually show strong alignment with:

- animal safety;

- human safety;
- skin and coat physiology;
- low professional exposure concern;
- acceptable environmental profile;
- reasonable manufacturing impact;
- clear functional purpose.

Examples may include:

- selected clays and mineral powders;
- simple plant powders;
- mild biodegradable surfactants;
- responsible plant oils and butters;
- biodegradable chelating alternatives;
- simple humectants;
- low-impact texture ingredients.

Category A does not mean “automatically perfect.” Quality, sourcing, concentration, purity, species suitability and product format still matter.

#### CATEGORY B — ACCEPTABLE WITH JUSTIFICATION

Category B ingredients may be acceptable, but only when their use is justified and controlled.

They require attention to:

- concentration;
- rinse-off versus leave-on exposure;
- frequency of use;
- animal species;
- professional exposure;
- environmental profile;
- manufacturing pathway;
- availability of alternatives.

Examples may include:

- lower-concern preservatives;
- selected humectants;
- biodegradable conditioning agents;
- carefully selected botanical extracts;
- controlled essential oils with documented function;
- some technical ingredients with strong safety documentation.

Category B is not a free-use category. It means the ingredient may be acceptable when its function is clear and its exposure is properly managed.

#### CATEGORY C — AVOID WHEN POSSIBLE

Category C ingredients are not necessarily the most dangerous, but they are weakly aligned with DAATA.

They may be legal and common, but they often create unnecessary complexity, avoidable exposure, environmental burden, or cosmetic masking.

Examples may include:

- conventional synthetic solubilizers;
- unnecessary synthetic dyes;
- some synthetic thickeners;
- non-essential luxury-feel agents;

- essential oils used mainly for fragrance;
- non-nano mineral pigments used only for visual opacity or whitening.

Category C ingredients should be replaced when a Category A or B alternative exists.

#### CATEGORY D — NOT DAATA-COMPATIBLE

Category D is the strict exclusion category.

An ingredient or ingredient family belongs in Category D when it presents major concerns such as:

- skin barrier disruption;
- coat stress or residue build-up;
- animal health risk;
- occupational exposure concern;
- persistence;
- bioaccumulation;
- aquatic toxicity;
- genotoxicity or mutagenicity concern;
- carcinogenicity or reproductive toxicity concern;
- microplastic relevance;
- PFAS or “forever chemical” profile;
- inhalation risk;
- licking or mucosal exposure risk;
- problematic manufacturing;
- non-essential cosmetic illusion.

Examples include:

- harsh sulfate surfactants;
- phenoxyethanol in strict DAATA formulations;
- EDTA and EDTA salts;
- D4 / D5 / D6 cyclic silicones;
- PFAS and fluorinated ingredients;
- synthetic polymer microparticles;
- persistent synthetic film-formers;
- high-risk quaternary ammonium compounds;
- synthetic musks;
- formaldehyde releasers;
- isothiazolinone preservatives;
- optical brighteners;
- perfume-heavy systems;
- high-risk or unsafe essential-oil uses;
- Titanium Dioxide [nano] by default;
- inhalable nanomaterials.

Category D does not necessarily mean that every ingredient is illegal everywhere. It means the ingredient is not coherent with a strict DAATA / IGS standard.

#### CATEGORY E — INSUFFICIENT DATA / UNDER REVIEW

Category E is used when available information is incomplete, inconsistent or too context-dependent.

This category is important because a serious professional framework should not pretend certainty where evidence is insufficient.

Examples may include:

- novel biodegradable polymers;
- biosurfactants with limited data;

- nanomaterials with possible functional value;
- encapsulated technologies;
- essential oils requiring further species-specific review;
- new conditioning systems.

Category E ingredients require further documentation before they can be considered acceptable.

#### 4. KEY INGREDIENT FAMILIES OF CONCERN

The full report examines many ingredient families in detail. The following are among the most important.

##### HARSH SULFATE SURFACTANTS

Examples:

- Sodium Lauryl Sulfate / SLS;
- Ammonium Lauryl Sulfate / ALS;
- Sodium Laureth Sulfate / SLES;
- Ammonium Laureth Sulfate / ALES;
- Sodium Coco-Sulfate.

These ingredients are often used because they foam well, degrease strongly and are inexpensive. However, DAATA does not consider foam to be proof of quality.

Harsh sulfate systems can contribute to excessive lipid removal, skin barrier disruption, dryness, coat stress and a “strip and correct” grooming cycle.

DAATA position: **Category D**.

##### EDTA AND EDTA SALTS

Examples:

- EDTA;
- Disodium EDTA;
- Tetrasodium EDTA;
- Trisodium EDTA.

EDTA is used as a chelating agent to improve formula stability and performance in hard water. However, it raises environmental concerns because of poor biodegradability, persistence and metal-mobility issues.

DAATA position: **Category D**.

Possible alternatives to evaluate include sodium phytate, sodium gluconate, GLDA, MGDA and EDDS.

##### PHENOXYETHANOL

Phenoxyethanol is a widely used preservative in cosmetic products. It is legally permitted in many human cosmetic systems under concentration limits.

However, DAATA evaluates it in a different context: repeated professional exposure, animal licking, leave-on products, use near sensitive areas, and availability of lower-burden formulation strategies.

DAATA position: **Category D in strict DAATA formulations**.

This classification does not mean that phenoxyethanol is “banned” or that every product containing it is immediately dangerous. It means that, in a strict DAATA / IGS framework, it introduces avoidable preservative-related exposure.

##### D4 / D5 / D6 CYCLIC SILICONES

Examples:

- Cyclotetrasiloxane / D4;
- Cyclopentasiloxane / D5;

- Cyclohexasiloxane / D6.

These ingredients can create slip, shine, softness and a smooth coat finish. However, they are associated with persistence and bioaccumulation concerns.

DAATA position: **Category D**.

The issue is not only skin tolerance. The issue is lifecycle coherence, environmental persistence and non-essential cosmetic performance.

#### PFAS AND FLUORINATED INGREDIENTS

Examples:

- PTFE;
- Perfluorodecalin;
- Perfluorononyl Dimethicone;
- Polyperfluoromethylisopropyl Ether.

PFAS-type ingredients may provide water resistance, durability, film formation or long-lasting effects. However, their persistence and environmental concerns make them fundamentally incompatible with DAATA.

DAATA position: **Category D**.

#### SYNTHETIC POLYMER MICROPARTICLES AND MICROPLASTIC-RELATED MATERIALS

Examples:

- Polyethylene;
- Polypropylene;
- Nylon-12;
- PMMA;
- synthetic glitter;
- plastic exfoliating particles.

These ingredients may be used for texture, visual effect, exfoliation, shine or product feel. In grooming products, they may be rinsed directly into wastewater.

DAATA position: **Category D**.

#### HIGH-RISK QUATERNARY AMMONIUM COMPOUNDS

Examples:

- Benzalkonium Chloride;
- Cetrimonium Chloride;
- Behentrimonium Chloride;
- Didecylidimonium Chloride;
- certain Polyquaterniums.

These ingredients may provide conditioning, antimicrobial effect, anti-static properties or detangling. However, high-risk QACs raise concerns around aquatic toxicity, wastewater impact and repeated professional exposure.

DAATA position: **Category D for high-risk QACs**.

Lower-risk conditioning alternatives may be reviewed under Category B or C only when supported by strong documentation.

#### SYNTHETIC MUSKS AND PERFUME-HEAVY SYSTEMS

Synthetic musks and persistent fragrance systems are often used to create long-lasting scent and a human perception of cleanliness or luxury.

In animal care, fragrance is not neutral. Animals have strong olfactory sensitivity, and groomers may inhale fragrance compounds repeatedly.

DAATA position: **Category D for persistent synthetic musks and perfume-heavy systems.**

## OPTICAL BRIGHTENERS AND COSMETIC ILLUSION SYSTEMS

Optical brighteners and persistent color-correction systems create the appearance of whiteness, brightness or shine. They do not improve coat health.

DAATA rejects cosmetic illusion when it adds unnecessary chemical exposure, environmental burden or residue.

DAATA position: **Category D.**

## 5. ESSENTIAL OILS: USEFUL, BUT NEVER NEUTRAL

Essential oils require a nuanced classification.

DAATA does not automatically reject essential oils. Some may be useful in aromatherapy, dermatology, repellent strategies or targeted professional protocols.

However, essential oils are not neutral fragrance ingredients. They are concentrated volatile aromatic mixtures with biological activity.

Their classification depends on:

- botanical species;
- chemotype;
- concentration;
- oxidation status;
- animal species;
- product format;
- route of exposure;
- rinse-off or leave-on use;
- licking risk;
- inhalation risk;
- mucosal exposure;
- functional justification.

### Essential oils may be Category B when:

- the function is real and documented;
- the product is species-specific;
- the concentration is low and justified;
- the chemotype is known;
- inhalation and licking risks are minimized;
- the oil is not used merely for fragrance;
- the formulation is professionally designed.

### Essential oils may be Category C when:

- they are mainly used for scent;
- the benefit is vague;
- they are included for “natural” marketing;
- the aromatic load is unnecessary.

### Essential oils are Category D when:

- the oil has a high-risk profile;
- it is used pure or poorly diluted;
- it is used in sprays or aerosols without strong justification;
- it is used in perfume-heavy leave-on products;
- it is used near mucosa;

- it is used on cats or fragile animals without specialist evaluation;
- the blend is not fully documented.

**Essential oils may be Category E when:**

- the oil may have value;
- evidence is promising but incomplete;
- species-specific data are lacking;
- environmental or formulation data are insufficient.

The DAATA position is therefore:

**Essential oils are not automatically excluded from DAATA, but they are never considered neutral.**

## 6. NANOMATERIALS: WHY PRODUCT FORMAT CHANGES EVERYTHING

Nanomaterials require specific evaluation because nanoforms may behave differently from non-nano forms of the same substance.

Their safety depends on:

- particle size;
- shape;
- surface coating;
- solubility;
- aggregation;
- route of exposure;
- product format;
- concentration;
- target species;
- functional necessity.

In grooming, nanomaterial assessment must consider real exposure scenarios:

- powders;
- sprays;
- aerosols;
- products used before blow-drying;
- products brushed out of the coat;
- products applied near the muzzle;
- paw and nose products;
- lickable products;
- mucosal-area products.

**DAATA rule**

**Any nanomaterial in a product format that may generate respirable particles or droplets should be considered Category D for grooming salon use.**

**Titanium Dioxide [nano]**

Titanium Dioxide [nano] is particularly concerning because of oral genotoxicity concerns, possible licking exposure in animals, inhalation concerns and weak necessity when used for whitening or opacity.

DAATA position:

- Titanium Dioxide [nano]: **Category D by default;**
- Titanium Dioxide in powders or sprays: **Category D;**
- Titanium Dioxide in lickable, paw, nose or mucosal products: **Category D;**

- Non-nano Titanium Dioxide in non-inhalable, non-lickable rinse-off formulas: **Category C or E depending on necessity and documentation.**

### Other nanomaterials

Examples requiring strict review:

- Zinc Oxide [nano];
- Colloidal Silver [nano];
- Copper [nano];
- Gold [nano];
- Silica [nano];
- Carbon Black [nano];
- Styrene/Acrylates Copolymer [nano];
- Hydroxyapatite [nano];
- nanoemulsions;
- nanocapsules;
- liposomes;
- fragrance encapsulation technologies.

Some nanomaterials may have legitimate technical or dermatological value, but they should remain **Category E** until a complete material-specific, formulation-specific and species-specific dossier is available.

## 7. PRODUCT FAMILIES REQUIRING SPECIAL ATTENTION

Certain product types often combine several ingredients of concern.

### PROFESSIONAL SHAMPOOS

Frequent concerns:

- harsh sulfates;
- EDTA;
- phenoxyethanol;
- PEG derivatives;
- fragrance;
- dyes;
- titanium dioxide as opacifier or whitening support.

DAATA direction:

- mild surfactant systems;
- no harsh sulfates;
- no EDTA;
- no unnecessary fragrance;
- no cosmetic illusion claims;
- clear dilution and rinsing instructions.

### DETANGLING SPRAYS

Frequent concerns:

- cyclic silicones;
- quaternary ammonium compounds;
- polyquaterniums;
- fragrance;
- PEG solubilizers;
- film-formers;
- aerosol exposure;

- encapsulated actives.

DAATA direction:

- reduce friction without persistent residues;
- avoid cyclic silicones;
- avoid high-risk QACs;
- avoid perfume-heavy systems;
- avoid aerosol formats when possible.

## SHINE AND FINISHING SPRAYS

Frequent concerns:

- cyclic silicones;
- synthetic fragrance;
- persistent film-formers;
- PFAS-like surface modifiers;
- aerosolized exposure;
- gloss polymers;
- nano pigments or nano coating systems.

DAATA direction:

- avoid artificial gloss systems;
- avoid persistent coating;
- avoid fragrance-heavy leave-on products;
- avoid nanomaterials used for visual performance.

## WHITENING AND BRIGHTENING PRODUCTS

Frequent concerns:

- harsh surfactants;
- EDTA;
- optical brighteners;
- blue or violet dyes;
- fragrance;
- titanium dioxide;
- nano pigments.

DAATA direction:

- no optical brighteners;
- no aggressive degreasing;
- no persistent synthetic dyes;
- focus on gentle cleansing and coat integrity.

## DEODORIZING PRODUCTS

Frequent concerns:

- synthetic fragrance;
- synthetic musks;
- QAC antimicrobials;
- alcohol;
- masking polymers;
- essential oils used as perfume;
- encapsulated fragrance systems.

DAATA direction:

- identify the cause of odor;
- avoid masking;
- avoid long-lasting fragrance;
- avoid routine antimicrobial use without reason;
- use aromatic ingredients only when functionally justified.

## PAW AND NOSE PRODUCTS

Frequent concerns:

- petroleum occlusives;
- phenoxyethanol in water-based products;
- fragrance;
- essential oils;
- synthetic waxes;
- titanium dioxide or zinc oxide nano in SPF-style positioning;
- licking exposure.

DAATA direction:

- prefer anhydrous formulas;
- use responsible plant oils, butters and waxes;
- avoid perfume;
- evaluate essential oils case by case;
- consider licking exposure;
- avoid unnecessary preservatives.

## 8. HOW PROFESSIONALS CAN USE THIS FRAMEWORK

This framework can help groomers, educators and product developers:

- read ingredient lists more critically;
- identify red-flag ingredients;
- understand why “natural” is not always safe;
- understand why “legal” is not always ideal;
- evaluate the difference between rinse-off and leave-on products;
- consider professional exposure;
- assess animal licking and inhalation risks;
- avoid cosmetic masking;
- choose products more coherently;
- ask better questions to suppliers and manufacturers.

The framework is not intended to create fear. It is intended to create professional clarity.

## 9. KEY MESSAGES

### SKIN-SAFE IS NOT ENOUGH

An ingredient may appear skin-tolerated but still be problematic because of persistence, bioaccumulation, manufacturing impact, occupational exposure or animal licking.

### NATURAL IS NOT AUTOMATICALLY SAFE

Essential oils and botanical ingredients may be useful, but they can also be irritating, toxic, allergenic, phototoxic, poorly sourced or unsuitable for certain species.

### SYNTHETIC IS NOT AUTOMATICALLY BAD

Some synthetic or semi-synthetic ingredients may be acceptable if they are necessary, well documented, biodegradable, safe and responsibly manufactured.

#### FRAGRANCE IS NOT NEUTRAL IN ANIMAL CARE

Fragrance is mainly designed for human perception. In animal grooming, olfactory sensitivity and repeated professional inhalation must be considered.

#### PRODUCT FORMAT MATTERS

The same ingredient may have a different risk profile in a rinse-off shampoo, a leave-on balm, a spray, a powder or a product used before blow-drying.

#### MANUFACTURING MATTERS

The environmental impact of an ingredient begins before use. Sourcing, synthesis, purification, by-products and production waste are part of the ingredient's lifecycle.

### 10. FINAL STATEMENT

The DAATA / IGS Ingredient Classification Framework is not a simple blacklist.

It is a professional decision-making tool designed to help the grooming industry move beyond simplistic claims such as "natural," "clean," "safe," or "professional."

It supports a more mature and responsible approach based on:

- animal health;
- groomer health;
- skin and coat physiology;
- sensory comfort;
- environmental responsibility;
- manufacturing ethics;
- functional necessity;
- real grooming exposure conditions.

The central principle is:

**A product cannot be considered DAATA-compatible simply because it does not visibly irritate the skin. It must be coherent with animal health, professional health, skin and coat physiology, sensory comfort, environmental responsibility, manufacturing ethics, and the real exposure conditions of grooming practice.**

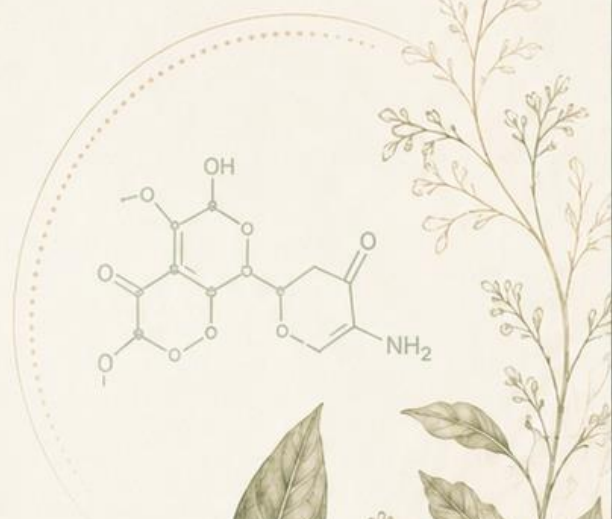


## ABOUT THIS EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Executive Summary presents the core principles of the DAATA / IGS Ingredient Classification Framework, a professional reference developed to evaluate ingredients used in animal grooming and care through a broader and more responsible lens.

It introduces the five DAATA / IGS categories and highlights the key criteria that must guide ingredient evaluation in real grooming conditions: animal health, professional exposure, skin and coat physiology, sensory comfort, environmental responsibility, manufacturing impact, and functional necessity.

This document is designed to help professionals move beyond simplistic claims such as natural, safe, or professional, and toward a more coherent, science-based approach to product selection and ingredient understanding.



*For animals. For humans. For our planet.*



International Grooming Society

