

RMB Newsletter 11:1 20th Anniversary

December 2011

Dear Reader,

Twenty years ago this month Dr Breck Muir and I blew the whistle on the junk pet-food/veterinary alliance.

Breck's letter appeared in the Australian Veterinary Association News and my piece was published in the Sydney University Post Graduate Committee in Veterinary Science Newsletter. At the time we were optimistic that our appeal to the better nature and professional integrity of vets would strike a chord. Now, twenty years on, I believe we've seen some of the worst professional blindness, cruelty, incompetence and corruption that is possible to contemplate.

Instead of investigating and addressing the massive junk pet-food fraud and the highest veterinary involvement in the scam, the global veterinary profession has aligned itself ever more closely with the mass pet poisoners.

Of course there are exceptions — vets who put their heads above the parapet in support of a natural diet. They deserve recognition however I won't name names. In vet circles it's seen as something of a crime or at least a mark of insanity if a vet advocates a natural diet according to nature's teachings. In this junk pet-food dominated world vets are expected to be tame lap dogs who regurgitate junk pet-food inspired dogma.

Had the vet profession shown some leadership then I believe it could have achieved massive benefits for pets, pet owners, the wider community and the planet itself. The medical profession speaks out against junk food. Increasingly doctors investigate the mechanisms whereby junk food and periodontal disease give rise to morbidity and mortality of their patients. Vets by contrast peddle ever more expensive brand name products — as their patients get sicker and sicker.

Twenty years of failed veterinary leadership created a vacuum filled by opportunists, quacks and hucksters. Some vets manufacture junk cooked and raw food and bogus supplements. Profit is their goal. And the internet is alive with self-styled experts who seek power and prestige through promoting their confected concepts.

Perhaps this is a low point. Let's hope so. In an effort to keep the original ideals alive I've reproduced both of the opening statements below. Let's hope that integrity and common sense come back into fashion over the next twenty years.

With only days until Christmas I'd like to end on a happier note. We all enjoy the gift of life on a wondrous planet. This year I turned 62 years of age and I look back with gratitude for the life lived. What does the future hold? Who knows? But I'm eager to find out. I hope that you've got lots of wonderful memories and lots of extraordinary experiences to come.

Wishing you and your pets a Merry Christmas and Happy, Healthful New Year,

Tom

Canned pet food not the healthiest.

Dr Breck Muir, Australian Veterinary Association News, December 1991

The pet food situation has concerned me for some years, my feelings brought to this by the current competitive marketing of various dental work stations for veterinary use.

The scene as I see it goes like this: ‘Here is the best food ever made for your dog Mrs Jones’ handing her a can of commercial dog food or dry food, ‘but he may develop problems with his teeth, so here is a special toothbrush and paste for you to use to clean his teeth regularly, and then if that doesn’t keep the periodontal disease at bay then we have the very latest in dental equipment just like our own dentist has, and we can give Fido that perfectly enamelled ivory grin’— that he would have had had you not fed him the commercial food in the first place.

Here we have the perfectly engineered commercial circle — a problem doesn’t exist, so we create one, and then come up with all the remedial treatments.

Infiltration

The infiltration of the commercial pet foods into our lives is one of the great success stories of the business world. Gross sales figures for a single product type is probably only bettered by petroleum products worldwide.

We as a profession have been led by the nose by vested interests in to a current situation where most younger vets actually recommend commercial pet foods as the best available way of feeding domestic pets — because they have never known of any other way. Before they had their first pet they were bombarded with constant mass media advertising instilling into them that the various commercial foods were the only way to go, and when they graduated and went to postgraduate nutrition courses again they had this idea reinforced by visiting lecturers who actually mentioned brand names in their notes.

My experience with commercial canned and dry pet foods is that they:

- are a prime cause of periodontal disease in all breeds of dogs and cats
- are associated with an increased incidence of gastric dilation and/or torsion.
- are a cause of diarrhoea in a substantial number of dogs
- cause intestinal ‘allergies’ with associated dermal pruritus and behavioural changes in a significant number of cases
- are a prime cause of flatulence and offensive odour in dogs — some brands more than others.

We are objectively educated, of above average intelligence, trained to observe and reason as undergraduates. We should develop the ability to assess products for what they are in spite of extremely effective advertising claiming otherwise. This is a mammoth and ongoing task for all of us and certainly not just with pet foods.

In this case we should be giving clients advice to correct their pets' diet towards more natural one and not justify the financial outlay on the latest dental equipment available by advocating the wholesale feeding of commercial pet foods.

Oral Disease in Cats and Dogs

Dr Tom Lonsdale December 1991 Control and Therapy Series No. 3128;
Mailing No. 163 Post Graduate Committee in Veterinary Science

The stench of stale blood, dung and pus emanating from the mouths of so many of my patients has finally provoked this eruption of dissent.

The sheer numbers passing through the practice, when extrapolated to the world situation, tells me that oral disease is the source of the greatest intractable pain and discomfort experienced by our companion animals.

This is a great and mindless cruelty we visit upon our animals from the whelping box to the grave. Just imagine having a mouth ulcer or toothache for a lifetime.

The internal factors are these:

Puppies and kittens cut their deciduous teeth between two and six weeks of age. An inevitable consequence of this is gingivitis. A diet of processed food ensures lack of gum massage and the gingivitis persists. The growing animal develops grooming behaviour and adds hair and faecal materials to the accumulated food scraps clogging the interdental spaces.

Between four and six months of age the permanent teeth erupt into a soup of blood, pus and saliva. The gingivitis is now well established and not infrequently one finds a young kitten or puppy with a complete set of deciduous teeth hanging from inflamed gingival shreds.

Even on a diet of processed food the deciduous teeth must eventually fall out. The permanent teeth come to occupy a diseased mouth and by this time the animal has learned not to chew on anything because of the pain involved.

The exquisite mechanism of teeth and gums, designed by nature to be cleaned, massaged and stressed daily, is left to rot. Compare mining machinery properly maintained which can excavate a mountain but by disuse can be rendered useless.

A lifetime of inescapable pain is bad enough. The sequelae of endocarditis, iliac thrombosis, nephritis and all those other entities attributable to a permanent septic focus finally condemn this situation as being intolerable.

The external factors are these:

Foremost are the pet foods which are promoted as 'complete diets only water needed'. Along with petroleum and coffee, pet food is one of the biggest industries worldwide.

Reacting to the now universal dental needs of our animals the dental instrument, the dental machine and even the imitation bone industries have flourished.

I believe many veterinary practitioners have reacted passively, perhaps providing some dental care as an afterthought and virtually no advice. Since cats and dogs don't complain, owners don't realize and don't seek advice. Many vets just don't seem to be pro-active in this vital area.

As vets we need to provide more than palliative care. Brushing teeth and regular prophys are not enough when advice on diet and food to massage the gums is so vitally important.

What's to be done?

a. The internal system

Help them to control their two bouts of physiological gingivitis before it becomes pathological. Older larger dogs need raw bones and cats need raw meat on the bone.

b. The external system

The external commerce driven system did not exist before the 50's and now it seems such an inescapable part of life. It may take a while to alter course.

The profession can do much to re-educate itself and in turn the public. A few practice surveys and university based research projects would set the tone.

The pet food manufacturers will need advice on the problems caused by processed food. One pet food company gives bi-annual 'prophys' to its research animals. (personal communication)

However, they may be persuaded to voluntarily print cautionary advice on their packaging.

What benefits can we expect?

Innumerable. Pets will be fed on cheap unprocessed bi-products some of the time. The environment will benefit, clients will be an average \$1000 per animal/per lifetime better off. Certainly the pets can be expected to live longer as they enjoy their lives seeking to 'steal bones out of the freezer'.

As vets we will be happy to see more pain free, healthier pets and grateful owners.

Christmas gift ideas

Work Wonders: Feed your dog raw meaty bones

The easy-reader on canine nutrition suitable for every dog (cat and ferret) owner, young and not so young. Ideal for trainers, breeders, groomers, dog walkers and other professionals who wish to give their clients a gift that goes on giving.

Raw Meaty Bones: Promote Health

Provides essential reading on carnivore diet, health and the junk pet food industry/veterinary/fake animal welfare alliance. Ideal gift for pet owners, veterinarians, lawyers, dentists, doctors, teachers, scientists and anyone needing the facts upon which to build a better world for pets, pet owners and the wider community.

Both books available from good bookshops, www.amazon.com
www.amazon.co.uk www.dogwise.com and
www.rawmeatybones.com/order-book.php

All proceeds help the Raw Meaty Bones campaign.

Bligh Park Pet Health Centre Holiday opening

For readers in the Sydney and Blue Mountains region just a reminder that we shall be open at regular times except on public holidays when we shall be providing an emergency service. Please phone: 02 4577 7061.

Christmas feast for pets

We've got plenty of ox hearts, liver, bibles, tripe and gullets plus sheep and pig heads, chicken frames and quail portions for your dogs, cats and ferrets.

Merry Christmas,

Tom

Apology

Recently inadvertently I deleted some unanswered emails. Sorry if I failed to answer one of your emails.

We welcome copies of correspondence/emails/faxes for possible inclusion in future RMB Newsletters.

Please circulate, distribute or reproduce this newsletter as you wish.

The Raw Meaty Bones Newsletter is published by:

Tom Lonsdale

Rivetco P/L

PO Box 6096

Windsor Delivery Centre

NSW 2756

Australia

Phone: +61 2 4577 7061

Fax: +61 2 4577 7019

Email: rivetco@rawmeatybones.com

Web: <http://www.rawmeatybones.com>

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