

Raw Meaty Bones: Costs and Savings

Whichever way you look at it, the benefits of a raw meaty bones diet far outweigh the costs. Your pet(s) can look forward to a long and healthy life, bright shiny teeth, glossy coat and few visits to the vet. You can enjoy a good conscience knowing you have done the best for your pet. Reduction in foul odors from either end and feces that weigh much less than that passed by pets fed processed food.

Before starting your pet on a raw meaty bones diet, first count the costs of the processed diet you now feed. Then add in the cost of pet insurance and all the costs associated with visiting the vet — including the costs of transport, medications and maybe even days off work while you care for your sick pet.

Our aim is to save you money and save your pet from unnecessary discomfort and ill health. In Sydney, Australia, clients tell me that their feed costs come down to about one third of the costs of processed food. Vet bills virtually disappear. In one [TV segment](#), Leah Ryan tells how she used to spend about \$1,200 per month on vet fees for her breeding kennel of collie dogs. When Leah switched to feeding her dogs a more natural diet the costs reduced to 'zilch'. [Channel 9 Money](#) program compared food costs and commented, 'Tom Lonsdale's natural diet will bring you massive savings'.

The lowest cost items are those that are free. Start with water out of the tap which should always be available for your pet. Leftover table scraps can form a valuable addition to a dog's diet. (Some cats and ferrets enjoy table scraps in small amounts.) Once scraps leave your plate they are in a sense 'free'. Although, from an ecological/energy/carbon emissions viewpoint, human food costs us and the planet dearly. Remember the saying: 'Waste not, want not'. Better to give your pets your (healthy) food scraps and thus help the planet and future generations of pets and people.

If you live in a rural district you may have access to road kill. Providing that the dead animals are fresh and not subject to wildlife protection laws, then they make a good free and completely natural source of food. You may know hunters, fishermen and farmers who can supply natural food for little or no money. Sometimes fish markets and abattoirs will allow you to take away their discarded offal for free — your investment being in time, transport and an old freezer to store the food.

Where possible buy in bulk and reap the benefit. In the USA numerous pet-owner co-ops now source bulk supplies of raw meaty bones, offal, rabbits and chickens. Check with other pet owners on internet discussion forums and search for online merchants of whole raw food. The local butcher and the local supermarket can be a good source of food. Items for sale at retail prices (Australian dollars) in my local pet shop today, 2 October 2007, were:

Lamb neck	\$2.00 per kg	\$0.90 per pound
Lamb flap (lower rib cage)	\$2.50 per kg	\$1.10 per pound
Chicken wings	\$2.00 per kg	\$0.90 per pound
Meaty chicken frames	\$1.50 per kg	\$0.70 per pound

By contrast there were a number of 'barf' style products in the pet-shop freezer. The contents varied and included pulped vegetables, rice, minced meat and bone powder. These products, although bearing little resemblance to a natural diet, claimed to be 'natural' and carried dubious health claims. The most expensive in the range was priced at \$6.50 per kilo (\$2.95 per pound) — that's three to four times more than health promoting whole raw meaty bones.

On the odd occasion when you run out of food your pets can fast for a day. But if needs be, simply feed them on fresh plump chicken from the grocery store. At today's price that was \$4.00 per kilo (\$1.8 per pound) and eggs, the highest value protein, were \$3.40 per kilo (\$1.50 per pound).

Good food need not be expensive. Good health is priceless.

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**Wishing you and yours the best of good health,
Tom Lonsdale, October 2007**

