

RMB Newsletter Vol 3:1 Raw meaty bones in New Zealand 1993-2003 May 2003

Dear Reader,

2003 is almost half gone and no RMB Newsletter until now. Please accept my apologies -- its been a busy time.

How have you been? Are you still gaining the satisfaction of feeding pet carnivores on a diet close to Natures specification? Are you spreading the good news?

In September 1993, the then Dean of Massey University Veterinary School, New Zealand, Professor Peter Stockdale invited me to address the students. Recently I spent eight days in Wellington and Auckland. As the Kiwi readers of this newsletter will attest, New Zealand is a wonderful place. Visitors are made welcome and the food, scenery and Kiwi hospitality are superb. This year some journalists invited me onto their TV and radio programs.

New Zealand has a well developed agricultural economy with many sheep, cattle and deer. Together with excellent fisheries, rabbits and possums the country, potentially, could generate a \$multibillion healthy export pet food industry. I say potentially, because the veterinary establishment supports the multinational junk pet food manufacturers -- and opposes the feeding of raw meaty bones.

Heres a brief account.

With best wishes,

Tom Lonsdale and the Raw Meaty Bones crew.

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Raw meaty bones in New Zealand 1993-2003

A constant diet of junk food slowly poisons many dogs (and cats and ferrets) to death. Along the way a plague of diseases descends on the unfortunate animals. Foul mouth-rot runs at between 70 and 100%. Liver, kidney, heart and skin diseases are common. Some animals suffer an

acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

Animals cant speak about their suffering. Some become slow and sad; others become hyperactive and hard to train; some become unpredictable.

Back in 1991 the Raw Meaty Bones Lobby (Drs Alan Bennet, Breck Muir and me) started to campaign within the Australian veterinary community. The essence of a carnivore diet, we reasoned, should be raw meaty bones. If pet owners get that right then most other things fall happily into place -
- with good pet-health and cost savings being the major benefits.

News of the Australian campaign reached New Zealand and the then Dean of Massey University Veterinary School, Professor Peter Stockdale. He contacted me and told me how he believed in the benefits, for all species, of natural food fed in a natural context and invited me to address the students. A date was set in September 1993 and I set to work on the presentation entitled: Pet foods insidious consequences: A modern veterinary snafu.

Pet foods insidious consequences: A modern veterinary snafu
9 September 1993

SUMMARY

A recurring theme is that both content and form of the pro-pet food argument is flawed, making invalid conclusions the rule. The euphemistic use of the term 'pet food' is deplored and the cynical manipulation of the rules of logic, mass psychology, politics and economics is described. Insidious environmental consequences are listed. Veterinary science is seen to be corrupted due to an uncritical appraisal by those responsible for animal health care.

The state of health is dependent upon the correct balance of quantity, quality and frequency of chemical and physical requirements provided by food intake. Examples of failure are provided with the emphasis being placed on periodontal disease. Recent case surveys and research findings are presented on Foul Mouth AIDS, Feline Eosinophilic Disease Complex, Plasma Cell Pododermatitis and FLUTD.

The limitation of the clinical diagnostic pathways are shown to perpetuate the insidious process. A 'Cybernetic Hypothesis of Periodontal Disease' provides an evolutionary, ecological perspective casting the modern feeding practices in a grim light. Arising out of this dark and

corrupted phase a renaissance is predicted providing beneficial insight into health and disease.

(Full transcript at: <http://www.rawmeatybones.com/PFIC.html>)

My lawyer cleared the paper for publication and with a video of TV segments, slide show and 100 printed copies of the lecture I headed for New Zealand. Professor Stockdale provided a warm welcome and introduced Dr Grant Guilford who was to be my host and guide. (Dr Guilford gained his doctorate in nutrition from the University of California.)

Some students were hostile to the natural diet message, but by and large the lecture was a success. After the lecture, over pizza and red wine, Grant Guilford and I talked until the early hours. We found common ground and areas of general agreement and when we parted Dr Guilford took the remaining printed copies for the students.

Now, ten years on, what's changed in New Zealand regarding veterinary education and attitudes to a more natural diet? Professor Stockdale has retired and Grant Guilford is now a Professor and Dean of the Veterinary School. For a list of research activities, biographical and contact details see: http://ivabs.massey.ac.nz/staff_indiv.asp?id=70 Professor Guilford, so I'm informed, recommends commercial foods and opposes the raw meaty bones message.

Since the health of New Zealand pets, the education of New Zealand's future vets and the wellbeing of the agricultural economy are inextricably linked to the attitude of the Dean of the Veterinary School, it might be helpful if Professor Guilford were to publish his reasons for his opposition to the raw meaty bones message.

Dog attacks in New Zealand.

After a spate of dog attacks on small children New Zealanders are concerned to deal with the issues. The government proposes to legislate that, among other things, all dogs are to be microchipped, four breeds of dogs are to be banned from importation and all properties to be fenced in such a way as to allow unimpeded access to the front door.

Governments need to be seen to be diligent, but so often they seek to restrict and prohibit activities when in fact underlying cultural problems remain to be addressed. Since a majority of dog attacks occur in the home the chief victims, New Zealand children, will be unlikely to gain increased protection and the other victims -- dogs and dog owners --

will be further victimised.

Journalists, aware that highly processed junk food can give rise to unpredictable behaviour in people, sought comment from me on the diet and behaviour connection in pets. First, I suggested that a culture exists, a culture promulgated by the junk pet food industry, that dogs are akin to disposable, furry toys with little in the way of maintenance necessary beyond opening a can or packet of junk food. As a result too many unsuitable animals are kept in unsuitable conditions. A more responsible view entails accepting dogs as modified wolves with corresponding modified wolf anatomy, physiology and behaviour. People who take this responsible, realistic view may be less inclined to get a dog unless they can fully provide for its needs -- including keeping it from harming small children.

Acknowledgement that the wolf gene runs through our domestic dog population leads to the acknowledgement that pet dogs need a wolf-type diet -- not junk food. And of course this is the other main area where the junk pet food industry misleads the community. Their simplistic ads persuade people to get a dog and then encourage the feeding of junk pet food at every meal -- with serious health and behavioural consequences.

Dog trainers tell me that a small percentage of dogs switched from a junk food to a raw diet become more aggressive -- its as if those dogs feel more confident and can express their innate aggression. But for the majority the opposite is the case. Dogs with a range of behavioural problems -- hyperactivity, disobedience, aggression -- become content and tractable once fed a more natural diet. (Care should be exercised at feeding time -- dogs tend to guard raw bones.)

On 24 April, Holmes, the main NZ TV current affairs program ran a story on the adverse impact of junk pet foods and later in the evening the topic got a good airing on Kim Hills Face-to-Face program. A number of radio stations covered the topic. For the future, New Zealand vets will have a big part to play in safeguarding their community against the unwelcome effects of artificial feeding. Lets hope the vets take an interest in and research the evidence.

There is a growing community of New Zealand pet owners who take an interest in and research the evidence on natural diets. They can be contacted by visiting www.yahogroups.com and then search for nznaturaldog

The Behavioural and neurological abnormalities passage from Raw Meaty Bones is reproduced below. Please circulate as you see fit.

Behavioural and neurological abnormalities

Probably the most common behavioural abnormality of diet-affected pets is lassitude and prolonged sleeping. Owners do not consider this to be a nuisance, or sign of ill health, and consequently seldom seek advice. When cats and dogs are constantly pacing, vocalising and exhibiting aggression, owners frequently take a different view. Unfortunately antisocial behaviour often leads to the pets early death. Each year, whether at welfare shelters or veterinary clinics, millions of unruly pets are put down by injection.

In the beginning, when I started to change animals to a natural diet, I was surprised when owners reported that previously agitated aggressive animals had become contented. (Some owners worry, unnecessarily, that pets with a taste for raw food might become savage.) On reflection one should not be surprised if artificially fed animals, in chronic pain, appear cantankerous by comparison with their naturally fed counterparts. Gnawing on bones keeps mouths healthy and pain free. Its possible gnawing exercise releases endorphins in the carnivore brain giving rise to a natural high. In humans evidence is being accumulated that some dietary chemicals, dubbed nutraceuticals, travel directly to the brain and thereby improve neuronal activity including ability to memorise facts. (3) Could there be nutraceuticals in the natural food of carnivores?

Back in London in the 1970s I remember an outbreak of frenzied cats. The demented creatures would growl and hiss and race around madly as if pursued by a thousand demons. When it was discovered that not demons but benzoic acid preservative in the food was the cause, the problem subsided almost as quickly as it arose. Modern additives may be having similar if not such dramatic effects. It is now well accepted that food additives can play a part in hyperactivity and Attention Deficit Disorder in young children. Since many pets consume still higher levels of the same additives, similar effects can be expected.

Corn (maize) is the principal ingredient in many processed foods. Tryptophan, an essential amino acid, is in short supply in corn protein and the vitamin niacin is largely unavailable.(4) Tryptophan is a precursor of the important brain chemical serotonin and people lacking niacin suffer a disease known as pellagra, the signs of which include dementia. In 1983 Professor David Kronfeld speculated that peculiar pet

behaviour may be attributable to the high corn levels in processed food.
(5) He also reported that one large pet food company was testing diets for their behaviour impact.(6) In 1986 the animal behaviourist Roger Mugford spoke about aggressive Golden Retrievers at a Waltham Symposium.
(7) Some of the dogs, despite being members of a breed usually noted for docility, had inflicted serious wounds on their owners. When Mugford changed the dogs diet from commercial to home-cooked food he observed some dramatic improvements.

This raises important questions:

What further improvement would have been detected in the Golden Retrievers if Mugford had tried a natural diet?

Since 1983, when Kronfeld said companies were researching behavioural aspects of diet, what have pet food companies discovered?

Are pets being unnecessarily destroyed due to diet-induced aggression?

What are the health, financial and amenity costs of food-induced aggression?

Are manufacturers legally liable for pain, loss and suffering arising from the sale of their products?

One, admittedly isolated, example of an apparent direct connection between diet and brain function occurred when a little white shaker came into my general veterinary practice. White shakers tend to be white, for instance Maltese or West Highland White terriers, and they suffer from the uncontrollable shakes. The textbooks locate the problem in the brain but do not offer much help on an effective cure. Knowing these facts it was easy to propose a diet change for the patient -- there appeared to be little to lose and everything to gain. Within a couple of days the shakes had gone. It is to be hoped that others will obtain similar good results with so little effort.

NOTES

3. Australian Broadcasting Association, Radio National Transcripts, The Health Report, Nutraceuticals, 5th February 1996

Web:

www.abc.net.au/rn/talks/8.30/helthrpt/hstories/hr050201.htm

4. National Academy of Sciences (1985) Nutrient Requirements of Dogs, National Academy Press, Washington, p 32

5. Kronfeld, D S (1983) Hypersensitivity: Food and Nerves, in Nutrition, Proceedings of the Post Graduate Committee in Veterinary Science, University of Sydney, Sydney, 63 p 339

6. Kronfeld, D S (1983) p 230

7. Mugford, R A (1987) The influence of nutrition on canine behaviour,
Journal of Small Animal Practice, 28, 1046--1055

Technical error

During transmission of RMB Newsletter 2:4 in December 2002 a technical error lead to some subscribers missing their copy. That edition and other back-issues are archived at www.rawmeatybones.com under RMB Articles.

We apologise for any inconvenience.

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

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