

Discussions on RawVet List March 2006

<http://pets.groups.yahoo.com/group/RawVet/>

Tom Lonsdale Letter 18 March 2006

At 08:26 AM 17/03/2006, Carrie Coineandubh wrote:

*** I feed my own dogs, cats, and ferrets either whole prey, or prey model, that is, feeding parts of animals in the proportion in which they are found in the whole animal.

Hi Carrie and all,

The emergence of the hybrid term 'prey model' seems to me to be a retrograde step -- jargon that neither enhances our understanding nor increases our store of knowledge. Or am I mistaken?

It seems to me the term, as I've seen it defined, fails on several counts.

Scientific:

'Parts of animals in which they are found' usually turns out to be an arbitrary and ill-defined set of numbers.

The hide, hair and guts are not included in the 'model'. From the point of view of being tough and chewy the hide and hair has it. But doesn't get a run.

The guts, complete with chyme are the genuinely different part of the prey with distinct nutrient makeup. They never get included in the 'parts list' due to bacterial contamination, putrefaction, storage, smell, health regulations and aesthetic concerns. As a result the chyme of part digested vegetable matter, digestive enzymes and the bodies and breakdown products of the biofilm 'whole prey' don't appear on the menu.

Apart from liver, the 'parts of animals' that are included in this 'model' comprise heart, tongue, kidney, maybe lung and sometimes tripe. Brain that might contribute different fatty acid profiles and pancreas that might include enzymes don't appear to feature much.

But in any case, from a scientific point of view, why would anyone spend much time and effort mixing and matching according to a formula or model (supposing that was an accurate formula or model) if there is no scientific rationale?

Liver apart, can someone tell me what is the nutrient profile difference between the items on a list of 'prey model' offal and say tripe which might form the basis of a diet. Similarly what is the nutrient profile difference between 'prey model' offal compared with the muscle, marrow, collagen framework, vasculature, osteoblasts/clasts and assorted cells in say a chicken backs and frames based diet? What are these 'prey model' offal parts

supposed to add that is not in a predominantly raw meaty bones and table scrap diet with the haphazard addition of liver?

Isn't the calciumhydroxyapatite of bone, apart from where chemical gradients appear, largely an inert substance as far as the carnivore is concerned and excreted accordingly?

It seems to be me that these 'scientific' questions need answers backed up with substantial evidence.

Economy:

Of course whole prey are easily the number one food (and medicine) source for carnivores. But when it comes to the economics it's often, for most folks, hard to feed the optimum diet and a second best needs to be found. How do the dictates of the 'prey model' assist with economy when compared with, say, a raw meaty bones based diet or a tripe and raw meaty bones based diet?

Practicality:

Practicalities perforce prevail. If you can't get it you can't feed it. What does the elaborate, and rather arbitrary offal list offer that should persuade us to battle impracticalities to find, for instance, heart or kidney? For those who find chicken backs and frames an easy practical option with sometimes a pig's head thrown in or for those who can access ruminant stomachs by the barrow load, why should they worry there's no tongue or trachea in the mix? (Of course I assume the tripe/omasum fed animals also get some large pieces of raw meaty bones for variety and tooth cleaning.)

Do those who have hit on economic, practical options need to feel embarrassed or that they are in some way inadequate?

Jargon:

We've seen the discredited barf, vomit, puke, technicolour yawn jargon spew forth. Do we really need more jargon which according to the dictionary is:

- 1 a : confused unintelligible language b : a strange, outlandish, or barbarous language or dialect c : a hybrid language or dialect simplified in vocabulary and grammar and used for communication between peoples of different speech
- 2 : the technical terminology or characteristic idiom of a special activity or group
- 3 : obscure and often pretentious language marked by circumlocutions and long words

Early and mid game:

To my mind anything we do now should be coherent, internally consistent and anticipate the end game.

Right now in the early stages of the raw feeding revolution we need to deal simultaneously with what I believe to be the five facets of the junk (cooked or barf) pet-food fraud:

- Cruelty, ill health and suffering of pets 10%
- Misused and abused 'science' 20%
- Blocking of significant scientific breakthroughs 30%
- Economic, human health and natural environmental consequences 20%
- Failure of the democratic, administrative and legal systems to deal with a cashed-up cabal 20%

The percentages are admittedly approximations; however I reckon they give an indication of the importance of each facet.

'Cruelty, ill health and suffering of pets' is listed at 10% because that's the easy bit to understand and is the most easily fixed. It comprises about 5% dietary information and 5% understanding of disease processes.

The 5% dietary information needs to be unadulterated and clearly articulated. Language and concepts should not create stumbling blocks that impede our attempts to deal with the 95% of issues deserving the bulk of our attention.

End game:

If we anticipate taking this all to a conclusion then we will need to get serious. And that means fighting the political fight and mixing it in the legal arena too. 'Barfmania' has done untold harm to our prospects of fixing things for pets, people and the wider community. If we burden ourselves and dependent public with a further hybrid and misleading term we shall live to rue the day.

The politicians, media and judiciary only need half an excuse to dismiss us as members of an obsessive sect.

To my mind the raw diet revolution is too important to become weighed down with more unwelcome baggage -- or am I mistaken?

Best wishes,

Tom

2.) Carrie Coineandubh letter 20 March 2006

The emergence of the hybrid term 'prey model' seems to me to be a retrograde step -- jargon that neither enhances our understanding nor increases our store of knowledge. Or am I mistaken?

*** It is difficult to avoid jargon. I say "prey model" instead of "feed whole carcasses if possible but if not than feed a variety of meaty bones and organs."

It seems to be me that these 'scientific' questions need answers backed up with substantial evidence.

I don't need a scientific rationale for feeding according to nature's model. Quite the opposite, let science try to prove that nature has it wrong, or that something other than prey-model or whole prey is the ideal carnivore diet.

Economy:

Of course whole prey are easily the number one food (and medicine) source for carnivores. But when it comes to the economics it's often, for most folks, hard to feed the optimum diet and a second best needs to be found. How do the dictates of the 'prey model' assist with economy when compared with, say, a raw meaty bones based diet or a tripe and raw meaty bones based diet?

*** If whole prey is best, then prey-model is second best. The "dictates" of prey-model help people keep the ideal feed (whole carcasses) in mind and choose RMBs and offals best in keeping with that model, within the constraints of the budget.

If you can't get it you can't feed it. What does the elaborate, and rather arbitrary offal list offer that should persuade us to battle impracticalities to find, for instance, heart or kidney?

*** There is no elaborate or arbitrary offal list in the prey-model I talk about. And obviously if you can't get it you can't feed it. Heart, kidney, and liver and generally easy to find, however.

For those who find chicken backs and frames an easy practical option with sometimes a pig's head thrown in or for those who can access ruminant stomachs by the barrow load, why should they worry there's no tongue or trachea in the mix?

*** They should not worry about no tongue or trachea. However, the term prey-model should give people second thoughts about feeding exclusively chicken wings, or exclusively tripe--no prey animal is all wing or all stomach.

Do those who have hit on economic, practical options need to feel embarrassed or that they are in some way inadequate?

*** I am not going to feed or recommend feeding the minimally adequate diet. I am going to feed and to recommend feeding the best possible diet. I go out of my way to feed whole carcasses. If someone else isn't able to do so they should do the best they can with the resources they have. If that means mostly chicken backs with the occasional beef liver thrown in, so be it. It's better than kibble. But it's not the best, either.

'Barfmania' has done untold harm to our prospects of fixing things for pets, people and

the wider community. If we burden ourselves and dependent public with a further hybrid and misleading term we shall live to rue the day.

*** I am certainly open to another term, but a term is needed. If one is not supplied, one will be invented, because nobody wants to articulate the important details every time they talk about the diet. To me, "prey-model" fits the bill nicely. In my mind, it's better to be feeding brains and kidneys that aren't strictly necessary than it is to think that a diet composed entirely of pigs' trotters will be fine. The further one strays from nature's model, the more likely one is to run into trouble. Perhaps the details are in the definition.

To my mind the raw diet revolution is too important to become weighed down with more unwelcome baggage -- or am I mistaken?

*** No, you are quite correct. I am all for ditching the unnecessary recipes, the measuring, the blending, the chopping, etc., and feeding simply, according to nature's model. Wolves at a kill don't each get two eyeballs, a brain, a liver, a pancreas, a heart, etc. Some kills one wolf gets nothing but meat, another time she might get the whole heart to herself. That's what prey-model is all about. Variety and flexibility.

--Carrie

3.) Tom Lonsdale Letter 21 March 2006

Carrie,

OK, you defend that which I suggest is unsatisfactory jargon.

Please don't get me wrong, I don't criticise nature, I invite justification for the use and promotion of a term that has no common usage and needs elaborate explanation. (And with elaborate explanation comes the risk of raising barriers, increasing confusion and error.)

Actually a Google search suggests your understanding and use of the term is quite wrong. Here are the first three Google entries:

- <http://www.tu-dresden.de/fghihb/petzoldt/models.html>
- <http://www.ento.vt.edu/~sharov/PopEcol/lec10/fullmod.html>
- <http://www.stolaf.edu/people/mckelvey/envision.dir/lotka-volt.html>

Google goes on in this way through the first thirty entries vis: highly specific scientific terminology utilised by members of a narrow scientific discipline.

Seeking to redefine and appropriate scientific terminology without justification seems unwise.

When you say:

I don't need a scientific rationale for feeding according to nature's model. Quite the opposite, let science try to prove that nature has it wrong, or that something other than prey-model or whole prey is the ideal carnivore diet.

you seem to imply that 'nature's model' and 'prey model' are equivalent and on the same plane -- though Google indicates that's wide of the mark.

Your expanded thoughts on this would be welcome.

But in any event my request for scientific evidence was not to ask for justification for feeding according to nature's model. (I agree -- nature defines the standard.) I hoped that you might want to provide us with scientifically sound justification for the 'mix and match' formula that you espouse. Or are we to accept your formula as an article of faith?

To repeat earlier questions:

Scientific:

'Parts of animals in which they are found' usually turns out to be an arbitrary and ill-defined set of numbers.

The hide, hair and guts are not included in the 'model'. From the point of view of being tough and chewy the hide and hair has it. But doesn't get a run.

The guts, complete with chyme are the genuinely different part of the prey with distinct nutrient makeup. They never get included in the 'parts list' due to bacterial contamination, putrefaction, storage, smell, health regulations and aesthetic concerns. As a result the chyme of part digested vegetable matter, digestive enzymes and the bodies and breakdown products of the biofilm 'whole prey' don't appear on the menu.

Apart from liver, the 'parts of animals' that are included in this 'model' comprise heart, tongue, kidney, maybe lung and sometimes tripe. Brain that might contribute different fatty acid profiles and pancreas that might include enzymes don't appear to feature much.

But in any case, from a scientific point of view, why would anyone spend much time and effort mixing and matching according to a formula or model (supposing that was an accurate formula or model) if there is no scientific rationale?

Liver apart, can someone tell me what is the nutrient profile difference between the items on a list of 'prey model' offal and say tripe which might form the basis of a diet. Similarly what is the nutrient profile difference

between 'prey model' offal compared with the muscle, marrow, collagen framework, vasculature, osteoblasts/clasts and assorted cells in say a chicken backs and frames based diet? What are these 'prey model' offal parts supposed to add that is not in a predominantly raw meaty bones and table scrap diet with the haphazard addition of liver?

Isn't the calciumhydroxyapatite of bone, apart from where chemical gradients appear, largely an inert substance as far as the carnivore is concerned and excreted accordingly?

It seems to be me that these 'scientific' questions need answers backed up with substantial evidence.

Please address these points without reference to pigs' feet or chickens' wings.

Do you have any comments on the following?:

Early and mid game:

To my mind anything we do now should be coherent, internally consistent and anticipate the end game. Right now in the early stages of the raw feeding revolution we need to deal simultaneously with what I believe to be the five facets of the junk (cooked or barf) pet-food fraud:

- * Cruelty, ill health and suffering of pets 10%
- * Misused and abused 'science' 20%
- * Blocking of significant scientific breakthroughs 30%
- * Economic, human health and natural environmental consequences 20%
- * Failure of the democratic, administrative and legal systems to deal with a cashed-up cabal 20%

The percentages are admittedly approximations, however I reckon they give an indication of the importance of each facet.

'Cruelty, ill health and suffering of pets' is listed at 10% because that's the easy bit to understand and is the most easily fixed. It comprises about 5% dietary information and 5% understanding of disease processes.

The 5% dietary information needs to be unadulterated and clearly articulated. Language and concepts should not create stumbling blocks that impede our attempts to deal with the 95% of issues deserving the bulk of our attention.

End game:

If we anticipate taking this all to a conclusion then we will need to get serious. And that means fighting the political fight and mixing it in the legal arena too. 'Barfmania' has done untold harm to our prospects of fixing things for pets, people and the wider community. If we burden ourselves and dependent public with a further hybrid and misleading term we shall live to rue the day.

The politicians, media and judiciary only need half an excuse to dismiss us as members of an obsessive sect.

It seems to me that these last points are the main points.

Going in circles on 5% of the problem smacks of theological dogma; more about differentiation of sects than resolving a mighty fraud. However, if we are to differ over fundamentals, I think you might agree that it will be better if we know the nature and extent of our differences.

Many thanks,

Tom

Ps. When was 'prey model' dogma introduced into discussions about feeding pets and by whom and what was their purpose? It seems a recent development. How did we manage before?

Carrie Coineandubh letter 22 March 2006

Carrie,

OK, you defend that which I suggest is unsatisfactory jargon.

I invite justification for the use and promotion of a term that has no common usage and needs elaborate explanation.

*** I suggest that there is no satisfactory alternative term. "Raw Meat Diet" suggests meat only, "Raw Meaty Bones" suggests bones rather more bony than meaty, and leaves out the need for organs/offal. Also, the term prey-model diet is in fairly wide use in the rawfeeding community. I agree that BARFing has done harm to the rawfeeding movement, and I think the term prey-model makes it clear we aren't talking about feeding bare bones and veggies. "Prey-model" doesn't mean counting and measuring and sticking to a set list--it is all about variety and flexibility.

Actually a Google search suggests your understanding and use of the term is quite wrong.

*** Sorry, it is you who are mistaken. The model of which you speak is the "Predator-Prey Model", quite distinct from a "prey-model diet". If you do a google search for that, you will find numerous references to the feeding style about which we are talking. Unless one is an ecologist or has studied ecology, one would tend to rely on the dictionary definition of model: an example to be imitated or compared.

Google goes on in this way through the first thirty entries vis: highly specific scientific terminology utilised by members of a narrow scientific discipline.

*** Indeed. I have studied ecology and hold a Restoration Ecology Certificate, so in future, when talking to ecologists, I will keep this point in mind.

you seem to imply that 'nature's model' and 'prey model' are equivalent and on the same plane -- though Google indicates that's wide of the mark.
Your expanded thoughts on this would be welcome.

*** I hold that whole carcass feeding is the benchmark and gold standard. That is nature's model. Prey model attempts to emulate nature's model as closely as possible, within the confines of one's resources. Prey-model feeders might feed a whole rabbit one day, and chicken frames the next. Simple, easy, and flexible.

I hoped that you might want to provide us with scientifically sound justification for the 'mix and match' formula that you espouse. Or are we to accept your formula as an article of faith?

*** I have no formula, other than a little over a million years of evolution. If evolution has a scientific basis, so does prey-model feeding.

To repeat earlier questions:

What are these 'prey model' offal parts supposed to add that is not in a predominantly raw meaty bones and table scrap diet with the haphazard addition of liver?

*** I could come up with nutrient profile differences between these diets, but to do so would be to fall into the same reductionist trap that brought us kibble in the first place.

Please address these points without reference to pigs' feet or chickens' wings.

*** A diet of chicken frames and haphazard additions of liver is inferior to a diet composed of a wide variety of meatier bones and organs, particularly a diet that strives to emulate nature's model of whole carcasses. In other words, a prey-model diet. Since we agree that nature's model is best, I fail to understand why you think striving to emulate nature's model is a bad idea.

Do you have any comments on the following?:

we need to deal simultaneously with what I believe to be the five facets of the junk (cooked or barf) pet-food fraud:

Cruelty, ill health and suffering of pets 10%
Misused and abused 'science' 20%
Blocking of significant scientific breakthroughs 30%
Economic, human health and environmental consequences 20%
Failure of the democratic, administrative and legal systems to deal with a cashed-up cabal 20%

*** I don't disagree, except that these points go far beyond the junk pet-food fraud. The junk-food fraud is a tiny subset of the bigger picture: the hijacking of agriculture to serve big business at the expense of people, the environment, and pets. It doesn't involve only pets and vets, it involves doctors and patients, consumers, scientists, and government. The massive complex is a self-evolving organism that acts to protect itself. If it were merely the pet-food industry, the problem would be manageable, but it goes far far beyond that.

Going in circles on 5% of the problem smacks of theological dogma; more about differentiation of sects than resolving a mighty fraud. However, if we are to differ over fundamentals, I think you might agree that it will be better if we know the nature and extent of our differences.

Ps. When was 'prey model' dogma introduced into discussions about feeding pets and by whom and what was their purpose? It seems a recent development. How did we manage before?

*** A google search of "prey-model diet" led me to numerous references of people who were influenced by your first book to move toward prey-model feeding for their dogs or cats. I don't have a copy of RMBPH at hand, but I do find a reference to prey-model on page 25 of Work Wonders. I agree that these minor differences should not obstruct the bigger picture, which is why I was so startled when you attacked me for using a term I found in your book.

--Carrie

Tom Lonsdale Letter 23 March 2006

REJECTED BY LIST OWNER, JANE ANDERSON

Hi Amanda,

At 07:20 AM 22/03/2006, you wrote:

My question is, why does it matter so much? I call what I feed my dogs "raw food" and refer to myself as a "raw feeder." When asked further questions, I will say that I prefer the "prey model" concept of feeding.

Thanks for your question.

Nuances of language have a beginning, a middle and some continue forever.

'Prey model' is of recent origin and to my way of thinking we don't need a feel-good but smug, pretentious term that distorts the %age composition of the organs of prey animals. Those promoting this mix and match model as a supposedly improved and accurate concept intended to replace other terms are shy about providing their percentages and even shyer about explaining why those percentages are believed to be important.

In the late eighties and early nineties a group of vets in Australia hit on what I believe to be the key concept. Previously much had been made of ingredients by the likes of Juliette de Bairacli Levy, Pitcairn and disciples. (In the same way as prey modelers want to make much of percentages of some organs but have nothing to say about other organs -- for instance of head, hide and guts.)

And that key concept was and I believe still is that texture and tooth cleaning are about as significant in the evolutionary scheme of things as are the component nutrients.

<http://www.rawmeatybones.com/Cybernetic.html> (Please note I say nutrients not organs. The nutrient profile of heart muscle, to my knowledge is much the same as muscle in hamstrings and to make a big song and dance about including heart to 'balance' the diet seems somewhat odd.)

Anyway back to the core issue. Somewhere along the line, and the earliest reference I can find, is that Bill Hood a Sydney vet used the term 'raw meaty bones' as the key factor. In my earliest writing on the subject I did not use the term http://www.rawmeatybones.com/No_3128.html However, importantly did see the reason to include the economic and political framework as well as the biological aspects in denouncing the conduct of the pet food industry/veterinary alliance.

Seeing as though we are required to do the best with the knowledge at our disposal and because I believe I had stumbled on some useful information I wrote *Raw Meaty Bones: Promote Health*. It was a call to concerned individuals to work within our frame of reference to fix a whole range of things, including what goes in the dog's bowl, that may have flow on effects into many aspects of our tenure and stewardship of the planet.

Following on from the rather limited success of *RMBPH* I penned *Work Wonders: Feed your dog raw meaty bones*. Again emphasising the key component of a diet, raw meaty bones, that works wonders for thousands of dogs, cats, ferrets and zoo animals.

Now, we are told that 'raw meaty bones' based diets are not good enough vis:

"Raw Meaty Bones" suggests bones rather more bony than meaty, and leaves out the need for organs/offal."

As you can see Carrie, the proponent in this case, makes a number of assumptions in her dismissal -- most/all of which I would dispute.

Trouble is glib dismissal has consequences. After years of toil by a number of individuals some progress has been made alerting some segments of the community, vets, media and politicians to the need for a 'raw meaty bones' based diet. We've scored some blows against the mad barfers and gained the attention and dented the conceit of a few vet organisations <http://www.rawmeatybones.com/pol-brief.html>

The UK Raw Meaty Bones Group www.ukrmb.co.uk are toiling day and night to help bring about a U-turn in the way our profession does business. There have been two Early Day Motions in the British Parliament and Raw Meaty Bones: Promote Health has been nominated for the Australian College of Veterinary Scientists College Award and three vets regularly do battle with the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons <http://www.rawmeatybones.com/RCVS/RCVS2006.htm>.

What I consider to be fanciful abstractions about what goes in the dog's bowl now serves to give comfort to the barfers, assists the junk pet food/vet alliance and I fear sets back progress to such a significant extent that we should all be most concerned.

However, Amanda, that's about the raw meaty bones (but not the guts) of it.

If you missed earlier posts on the jargon issue I can easily send them through to you.

Next week, <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/CSDogBookReview/> are hosting a discussion about *Work Wonders: Feed your dog raw meaty bones*. You are most welcome to sign up for discussions where we may get to talk about why there is more to this than the label some want to affix to the dog's bowl.

Best wishes,
Tom