

RMB Newsletter 5:2 July 2005
www.rawmeatybones.com

A debilitating case of disinformation

Dear Reader,

Hope this edition of the *RMB Newsletter* finds you in good form, fighting the good fight.

The cover story, A debilitating case of disinformation, sheds some light on the emerging pet-food industry/veterinary involvement with the medical profession. I hope that you can make use of the links at the bottom of the article to let the authorities know your opinions.

There's some good news too.

The UK Raw Meaty Bones Support & Action group is doing terrific work exposing the pet-food industry/veterinary alliance. The recently revamped website www.ukrmb.co.uk contains chilling reminders of veterinary attitudes and incompetence.

News from the US reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald* June 27, 2005 tells of pet-owners suing veterinarians for malpractice: 'In Florida, for example, Adam Riff is suing a vet for alleged negligence because his sheepdog, Lucky, died after dental surgery. . . The biggest damages award so far for veterinary malpractice is \$US39,000 granted to Marc Bluestone by a jury in Orange County, California, last year. His sandy-haired dog, Shane - bought for \$US100 at a local shelter - died of liver failure following a misdiagnosis and \$21,000 worth of treatment.'

What penalties will courts impose on vets for promoting and selling junk pet food, the source of most dental and liver disease? What defense will vets employ in an attempt to justify injuring their patients' health and misleading their clients? I hope that you can spread the word, even launch a legal action. That way we may get some answers.

Wishing you and your animals the best of good health,

Tom Lonsdale

A debilitating case of disinformation

We can, or at least should be able to learn from our mistakes and the bigger the mistakes the bigger the lessons. For too long we've failed to unite the medical, dental and veterinary professions under the banner of 'one medicine' for the benefit of all Earth's inhabitants. But before embarking on such a noble cause we need to investigate and resolve a debilitating case of disinformation.

A majority of veterinarians in the western world depend on junk food induced ill health of pets and the sale of junk food in their waiting rooms. Veterinary schools, propped-up by pet-food money, program their students to ignore the origins of the dietary disease epidemics; to disparage healthy natural diets and to promote junk food at every opportunity. Veterinary associations fill their journals with pet-food propaganda whilst barring healthy discussion of healthy options. Effectively, then, the veterinary profession acts as a marketing arm of the junk pet-food industry.

And effective marketing it is too. The public have been duped, governments have been duped and now it seems it's the medical profession's turn to be recruited into the scam. According to a 16 April 2005 editorial in the journals of both the British Medical Association and the British Veterinary Association: 'The *BMJ* and the *Veterinary Record* plan simultaneous publication of theme issues exploring how the two professions can collaborate for mutual benefit.' After listing SARS, potential bioterrorist attack and antimicrobial resistance as subjects warranting a joint approach the *British Medical Journal* promotes pet keeping and the Pet Food Manufacturers' Association web site:

With increasing urbanisation we can easily forget the extent to which people depend on animals. In the developing world many people rely on animals for food and transport (whether of people or goods)—and the health of those animals can mean the difference between life and death. Closer to home, livestock are important economically but animals are also a source of companionship. Half of all households in the United Kingdom own a pet (www.pfma.com/public/petownership_stats.htm), and many pets are just as important as a family member or friend, sometimes more; for them, the same level of health care is expected. Cost of treatment and subsequent quality of life is an issue for the care of animals and humans.

Doctors may not fully appreciate the importance of the relationship between owners and their animals. This may be relevant when, for example, advising immunocompromised patients of any risk from their pets, or considering the implications of taking an elderly pet owner into care in an environment where animals are banned. When advising patients about owning pets, doctors now have to weigh up the risks of developing allergies.

Following the *BMJ* exhortations will doctors copy the vets and sell junk pet food to their patients? No, it's unlikely. If doctors collaborate with and thus endorse vets they will automatically join the protective cordon around the junk pet-food industry.

- Due to concerns about possible transmission of disease from pets many doctors express reservations about pet keeping. If medical opposition can be deflected and converted into enthusiastic acceptance then pet-food sales will rise — hence the establishment of university 'research' into the human animal bond and lavish international conferences funded by the junk pet-food industry.
- For many years the tobacco industry escaped scrutiny in part because the industry bought innocence by association with the medical profession. As a strategy for buying time it worked well. Huge revenue was generated before the doctors finally woke-up to their involvement with disease promotion. For the junk pet-food industry, with annual revenues of \$30 billion, positive comments (and absence of negative comments) in medical journals are priceless.
- The veterinary profession avoids research that might reflect badly on the junk food producers. Independent medical and dental researchers, if they knew the scope and potential for new research of benefit to man and animals, could fill the void. However, if the junk food/veterinary alliance maintains the fiction that all is well and under control it's less likely that independent-minded medical researchers will venture onto veterinary turf.
- If the proposals, as published in the *BMJ*, come to fruition then research teams of vets and doctors will likely become more common — and it could be that the funds will come from confectionary giants Mars and Nestlé, the world's biggest junk pet-food producers. Research funds buy silence, a precious commodity for junk food companies wanting to limit knowledge of dietary disease affecting man and animals.

As citizens, doctors can join with the rest of us in decrying the mass cruelty of forcing pets to consume products known to give rise to serious ill health and death. Doctors may be appalled at the economic costs and waste of resources, both human and environmental, which arise from the junk pet-food industry. But it's in the area of human health that doctors are uniquely qualified and responsible for protecting the interests of their patients.

In subtle and not so subtle ways the junk pet-food industry injures human health. Let's take a look at what's known and in need of attention.

Dog bites

In the USA there are almost 5 million dog bites every year — over 13,000 every day. Extrapolated worldwide that's a considerable problem and for individuals it can be devastating. Children are often victims and often suffer bites to the face.

In almost every case the dog is fed junk food. The question arises: Was the diet the main factor influencing the dog's behavior, a contributory factor or not a factor at all? We can say that dogs fed junk food tend to be excitable and harder to train. One significant trial found some Golden Retrievers, normally a docile breed, attacked their owners when fed junk food, but became docile when fed cooked lamb and rice. How might the dogs have behaved if fed on raw natural food? Objective research is now an urgent priority; thousands of victims every day need answers.

Working dogs

Human health and welfare sometimes depends on dog health — for instance the health of assistance dogs, search and rescue dogs and bomb detection dogs. As we know, dogs fed junk food are seldom truly healthy and consequently perform below par.

Researchers studied a group of beagles that, over a period of months, suffered from a progressive accumulation of dental tartar and simultaneously lost the ability to detect odors. The dogs' teeth were cleaned and within one day their odor detecting abilities returned to normal. Imagine the consequences if a junk-food-fed dog, its teeth encrusted with tartar, failed to detect a terrorist bomb. (*RMB Newsletter* 4:2 www.rawmeatybones.com)

Human anxiety

The pet-food industry spends lots of money on advertisements, on university departments and international symposia promoting the unqualified notion that dogs are good for human health and wellbeing.

In April 2004 *The Sydney Morning Herald* reported a study:

Older Australians who own a pet are more likely to be depressed and in poorer physical health than people who don't own pets, according to a major new Australian study. Flying in the face of claims from the pet-food industry, and others, the study shows pet ownership confers no health benefits to older people. [Parslow RA, et al, *Gerontology*, 2005 Jan-Feb;51(1):40-7]

Could this compromised mental and physical health be due, at least in part, to the ill health of pets maintained on commercial diets? Could it be due to the worry associated with escalating vet bills?

Immune system depression

In 1995 the *Journal of Small Animal Practice*, journal of the British Small Animal Veterinary Association, published results of my research on dogs and cats affected by immune deficiency and diet-induced periodontal disease. By cleaning the teeth and changing the diets the animals' immune systems bounced back to a much healthier state. (Lonsdale T, *JSAP* 1995 36, 542-546) The implications for immune system research in general, AIDS research in particular and wider aspects of animal and human health are immense.

Rather than promote further inquiry the Editor of the *Journal of Small Animal Practice* bowed to pressure from angry veterinarians and banned discussion within the pages of the *Journal*. The Editor also revoked written undertakings and prevented re-publication of the paper — thus stopping a wider readership from learning about and acting on the implications.

The veterinary research community enjoys many privileges; they also have obligations. When published research challenges established beliefs or has the potential to transform the lives of millions researchers need to promptly repeat the work to verify or refute the new information. In 2002, seven years after publication of the original paper, Professor Tony Buffington, a spokesperson for American veterinary researchers, stated: ‘I’ve seen the paper. I haven’t seen it reproduced by anyone anywhere else.’ (Radio Interviews, www.rawmeatybones.com)

Dogs in medical research

New medical treatments and pharmaceuticals are often tested on dogs before use on humans. Dogs used in medical research are invariably fed junk food. I mentioned to one researcher, who was working on a new anti-inflammatory drug, that most dogs fed commercial food are suffering from gum inflammation (known to be linked to heart disease, stroke, cancer and Alzheimer’s) and that my research showed that the so called normal blood values could not be relied upon. He shrugged and said his research team used more dogs in each experiment to help compensate for statistical errors!

Unexplored opportunities

The junk pet-food industry and its allies insist that dogs fed processed food are the healthiest; whereas the opposite is the case. Dogs are subject to a range of illnesses like ourselves — diabetes, arthritis, kidney disease and cancer — and often show dramatic health improvements when switched from junk food to a natural diet. Why *do* previously sick, debilitated animals, in the space of a few days, become ‘like puppies again’? The question needs to be asked because the biological mechanisms could have dramatic implications for human diets and health.

There are enough known junk pet-food issues to mobilize an army of medical and dental researchers working in collaboration with veterinarians. First, though, veterinarians must desist from their folly, they must turn their backs on their pet-food paymasters and resolve to atone for past mistakes. The doctors and their journals could play a valuable part. They could help transform the health of the veterinary profession and thus provide the foundations for a medical, dental and veterinary collaboration — for the benefit of all Earth’s inhabitants.

The full British Medical Journal 16 April 2005 article, Human and veterinary medicine, can be found at:

<http://bmj.bmjournals.com/cgi/content/full/330/7496/858>

There's a 'Rapid Response' link that enables you to tell the BMJ of your experiences and concerns. To contact BMJ editors directly click on 'Home' and then 'Contact Us'.

British politicians are starting to take an interest in the pet-food industry/veterinary shenanigans.

You can find details of British MPs at:

<http://www.locata.co.uk/commons/>

Letters addressed to an MP's constituency office or to Parliament House are best and email messages are OK.

To fax British MPs go to:

<http://www.faxyourmp.com/>

Tell MPs (and political representatives of any state or nation) about the pet-food industry/veterinary alliance that harms our pets whilst purporting to do the opposite. Let them know about the efforts to recruit human doctors to the pet-food scam. However, if you are stuck for words or need help please contact the folks at info@ukrmb.co.uk

PLEASE PROVIDE US WITH COPIES OF CORRESPONDENCE FOR POSSIBLE FUTURE PUBLICATION.

Many thanks.

Best wishes,

Tom Lonsdale